Governmentality, Pedagogy and Membership

Categorization:
A case of enrolling the citizen in sustainable regional planning

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Sustainable development, civic participation, community consultation, participative democracy, regional planning, program theory, spontaneous sociology, epistemological break, governmentality, rights and responsibilities, pedagogic practice, classification and framing, membership categorization analysis, moral order, policy development, policy evaluation, Nikolas Rose, Basil Bernstein, Harvey Sacks, Pierre Bourdieu,
ABSTRACT

Over the past twenty years, the idea that planning and development practices should be ‘sustainable’ has become a key tenet of discourses characterising the field of planning and development. As part of the agenda to balance and integrate economic, environmental and social interests, democratic participatory governance arrangements are frequently purported to be necessary to achieve ‘sustainable development’ at both local and global levels. Despite the theoretical disjuncture between ideas of democratic civic participation, on the one hand, and civic participation as a means to achieve pre-determined sustainability goals on the other, notions of civic participation for sustainability have become integral features of sustainable development discourses.

Underpinned by a conceptual and methodological intent to perform an epistemological ‘break’ with notions of civic participation for sustainability, this thesis explicates how citizens are enrolled in the sustainable development agenda in the discourse of policy. More specifically, it examines how assumptions about civic participation in sustainable development policy discourses operate, and unpacks some discursive strategies through which policy language ‘enrols’ citizens in the same set of assumptions around their normative requirement for participation in sustainable development. Focussing in on a case study sustainable development policy document – a draft regional plan representing a case of ‘enrolling the citizen in sustainability’ - it employs three sociological perspectives/methods that progressively highlight some of the
ways that the policy language enjoins citizens as active participants in ‘sustainable’ regional planning. As a thesis-by-publication, the application of each perspective/method is reported in the form of an article prepared for publication in an academic journal.

In a departure from common-sense understandings of civic participation for sustainability, the first article examines the governmentality of sustainable development policy. Specifically, this article explores how civic community – particularly community rights and responsibilities – are deployed in the policy discourse as techniques of government that shape and regulate the conduct of subjects. In this respect, rather than seeing civic community as a specific ‘thing’ and participation as corresponding to particular types of ‘activities’, this paper demonstrates how notions of civic participation are constructed and mobilised in the language of sustainable development policy in ways that facilitate government ‘at a distance’.

The second article begs another kind of question of the policy – one concerned more specifically with how the everyday practices of subjects become aligned with the principles of sustainable development. This paper, therefore, investigates the role of pedagogy in establishing governance relations in which citizens are called to participate as part of the problematic of sustainability. The analysis suggests that viewing the case study policy in terms of relationships of informal pedagogy provided insights into the positioning of the citizen as an
'acquirer' of sustainability principles. In this instance, the pedagogic values of the text provide for low levels of discretion in how citizens could position themselves in the moral order of the discourse. This results in a strong injunction for citizens to subscribe to sustainability principles in a participatory spirit coupled with the requirement for citizens to delegate to the experts to carry out these principles.

The third article represents a further breakdown of the ways in which citizens become enrolled in ‘sustainable’ regional planning within the language of the case study policy. Applying an ethnomethodological perspective, specifically Membership Categorization Analysis, this article examines the way ‘the citizen’ and ‘civic values and obligations’ are produced in the interactional context of the text. This study shows how the generation of a substantive moral order that ties the citizen to sustainable values and obligations with respect to the region, is underpinned by a normative morality associated with the production of orderliness in ‘text-in-interaction’. As such, it demonstrates how the production and positioning of ‘the citizen’ in relation to the institutional authors of the policy, and the region more generally, are practical accomplishments that orient the reader to identify him/herself as a ‘citizen’ and embrace the ‘civic values and obligations’ to which he/she is bound.

Together, the different conceptual and methodological approaches applied in the thesis provide a more holistic picture of the different ways in which citizens
are discursively enrolled in the sustainability agenda. At the substantive level, each analysis reveals a different dimension of how the active citizen is mobilised as a responsible agent for sustainable development. In this respect, civic participation for sustainability is actualised and reproduced through the realms of language, not necessarily through applied occasions of civic participation in the 'taken-for-granted' sense. Furthermore, at the conceptual and methodological level, the thesis makes a significant contribution to sociological inquiry into relationships of governance. Rather than residing within the boundaries of a specific sociological perspective, it shows how different approaches that would traditionally be applied in a mutually exclusive manner, can complement each other to advance understanding of how governance discourses operate. In this respect, it provides a rigorous conceptual and methodological platform for further investigations into how citizens become enrolled in programmes of government.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**PARAGRAPH OF KEY WORDS** ................................................................. ii

**ABSTRACT** .......................................................................................... iii

**RELATED PUBLICATIONS** ................................................................. vii

**TABLE OF CONTENTS** ........................................................................... viii

**STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP** ......................................... xii

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** ....................................................................... xiii

**CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION** ............................................................... 1

1.1 A DESCRIPTION OF THE SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM INVESTIGATED 1

1.2 Background to the Study................................................................. 3

1.3 Purpose and Aims of the Study....................................................... 6

1.4 An Account of the Scientific Progress Linking the Scientific Papers....8

**CHAPTER 2: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION - AN OVERVIEW:** ................................................................. 17

2.1 Sustainable Development: a contested phenomenon....................... 18

2.2 Sustainable Development: philosophical underpinnings ............... 21

2.3 Civic Participation for Sustainability............................................... 28

2.4 Civic Participation, Community and Sustainability: key issues........ 33

**CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY – ‘BREAKING’ WITH CIVIC PARTICIPATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY** ........................................................................ 45

3.1 Performing a break with ‘common-sense’....................................... 45

3.2 The Methodological Development of the Thesis............................. 52

3.2.1 Break One: The Governmentality Perspective............................. 53
3.2.1.1 Break One: The Selection of Case Study Data............................. 54

3.2.2 Break Two: Pedagogic Relations between the Text and the

   Acquirer........................................................................................................ 55

3.2.2.1 Break Two: The Refinement of Case Study Data....................... 57

3.2.3 Break Three: The Interactional Production of ‘the Citizen’........... 59

3.2.3.1 Break Three: The Refinement of Case Study Data.................... 61

3.3 The Overarching Problematic: A Case of Enrolling the Citizen in

   ‘Sustainable’ Regional Planning.............................................................. 62

CHAPTER 4: JOURNAL ARTICLE 1 – Community Participation, Rights and
Responsibilities: The Governmentality of Sustainable Development Policy
.................................................................................................................. 63

Abstract ........................................................................................................ 65

Introduction...................................................................................................... 66

Sustainable Development Policy ............................................................... 69

Agenda 21.................................................................................................... 71

The Australian National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable

   Development .............................................................................................. 78

The Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan ................................. 86

Conclusion ................................................................................................... 95

CHAPTER 5: JOURNAL ARTICLE 2 – Acquiring the Skills for Civic
Participation: Informal Pedagogy and the Moral Order in a Sustainable
Development Policy Text ....................................................................... 103
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION – ENROLLING THE CITIZEN IN SUSTAINABILITY

7.1 Introduction ................................................................. 174

7.2 Significance of the Findings ........................................... 175

7.2.1 Aim 1: The Governmentality of Sustainable Development Policy......175

7.2.2 Aim 2: The Pedagogy of Sustainable Development Policy.......... 176

7.2.3 Aim 3: Membership Categorization and the Production of ‘the Citizen’ ................................................................. 184

7.3 Enrolling the Citizen in Sustainability: Implications for Understanding Civic Participation in the context of Sustainable Development ....... 186

7.4 Enrolling the Citizen: Implications for Sociological Inquiry........... 188

7.5 Some Final Remarks on ‘Enrolment’ .................................... 193

LIST OF REFERENCES ................................................................. 195

APPENDIX A ...................................................................... 203
STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature……………………………

Date………………………………
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 A DESCRIPTION OF THE SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM INVESTIGATED

Since 1987, when ‘sustainable development’ was formally placed on the international agenda by the World Commission on Environment and Development (Bruntland, 1987), discourses on ‘sustainability’ have come to dominate the field of planning and development. Underpinned by a basic rationale to balance environmental, economic, and social interests, ‘sustainable development’ has become the foundation for an extensive range of policies and legislation at the global, national, regional and local levels. However, the fundamentally contentious nature of sustainable development has meant that discourses on sustainability have become as much concerned with governance arrangements as with the more substantive aspects of what it means to be sustainable. In this respect, many discourses on sustainability are cross-cut by those that proffer participative democratic principles, particularly the view that active civic participation is an essential part of contemporary democracies in the context of globalisation.

In this context, discourses on sustainable development frequently incorporate generic assumptions involving the notion that civic participatory governance arrangements will inevitably lead to sustainable outcomes. The fact that these assumptions have come to inhabit everyday understandings of sustainability and governance, has meant that they have also become ‘default’ assumptions in the domain of sustainability policy. In line with an approach described by
Bourdieu as the “craft of sociology”, this thesis explicates the ways in which citizens become enrolled\textsuperscript{1} in the sustainability agenda in policy discourse. It examines how assumptions operate in sustainable development policy discourses and unpacks some discursive strategies through which citizens become enrolled in the same set of assumptions around their normative requirement for participation in sustainable development. In this regard, it makes a substantive contribution to understanding a key aspect of contexts of governance relationships in the field planning and development.

Specifically, the thesis examines a discrete aspect of the relationship between civic participation and sustainability using a case study of a draft regional planning policy document that was released ‘for consultation’ in South East Queensland, Australia, in 2004. In a departure from popular accounts that routinely presume a complementary relationship between civic participation and sustainability, the thesis critically examines how citizens become enrolled in the sustainability agenda through the discourse of the consultation document. Using three different constructivist perspectives, it deconstructs the language of the document to show how ‘the community’ and ‘the citizen’ are enjoined as active participants in ‘sustainable’ regional planning.

\textsuperscript{1} The issue of ‘enrolment’ may be readily associated with the work of Bruno Latour, specifically his body of work on Actor-Network Theory (ANT) (1987; 1999). Simplistically, from this perspective an actor-network is configured by processes of enrolment where humans and non-humans (eg: texts; machines) seek to impose definitions of a situation, or way of seeing the world, onto others. While some theoretical parallels may exist, this thesis does not invoke the concept of ‘enrolment’ within the framework of ANT.
However, at a deeper level, the examination and analysis of this aspect of sustainability policy discourse has been informed also by a meta-level methodological approach drawn from sociological perspectives on the development of knowledge as involving epistemological ‘breaks’ or ‘ruptures’ with the ‘common-sense’ world. In this respect, the perspectives adopted to examine the discourse of the case study sustainable planning policy act as ‘thinking tools’ that are subservient to the broader goal of achieving a ‘break’ with the assumptions about civic participation that are embedded in the discourse. This approach provides for a more systematic analysis of assumptions surrounding governance relationships in policy discourse which, in turn, enables a re-conceptualisation of these relationships in terms of processes of ‘enrolment’. This contributes to the development of a new kind of problematic for sociological inquiry into contexts of governance and, particularly, the key role of policy discourses themselves as an important component of these contexts.

1.2 Background to the Study

Most arguments put forward to justify the need for participatory approaches to sustainability are underpinned by the generic principle that democratic civic participation – in decision-making, policy development and everyday practice – is necessary to achieve sustainability goals. Indeed, in many academic and practice-based contexts, the idea of ‘civic participation for sustainability’ is so appealing that it frequently escapes critical reflection. Regardless of any
evidence that highlights the potential disjuncture between democratic and sustainability goals, the discursive alignment of the two is almost guaranteed in any applied participatory context where sustainability is involved.

Drawing from Dahler-Larsen’s (2001) work, the tendency to conceptually marry notions of civic participation and sustainability can be seen to display a programme logic that is frequently ‘taken-for-granted’ by those who apply it. According to Dahler-Larsen (2001, p.332), it is not unusual to find that practitioners, including evaluators, remain unaware of their own programme theories and subsequently fail to identify any gaps between “the espoused theory and theory-in-use”. This would readily explain why civic participation is still celebrated as a primary means of achieving sustainability, despite several cases that would call this theory into question. Indeed, even at the most logical level, the idea that participation, particularly democratic participation, necessarily leads to sustainability is incongruous with the very notion of democracy (Eckersley, 1996). If ‘communities’ and ‘citizens’ are truly allowed to decide for themselves, what is there to suggest that they will necessarily choose sustainability? Nevertheless, this does appear to be a fundamental assumption of programme theories that implicitly construct a causal relationship between civic participation and sustainability. More specifically, these theories tend to carry with them, as a central presupposition, the idea that engaged ‘communities’ and ‘citizens’ will routinely appreciate that sustainability represents the ‘greater good’ for themselves and society, regardless of context.
As Dahler-Larsen (2001) points out, the ‘truth value’ of any programme theory is relative to the context in which the theory plays out. Departing from Pawson & Tilly’s (1997) critique of constructivist evaluations, Dahler-Larsen (2001) highlights the way in which macro-level social constructions (structures and institutions in which a programme is embedded) and micro-level (meanings and typifications ascribed to the programme) constructions are analytically relevant to programme evaluations. Promoting a constructivist view of causality, he explicates how “the truth value of a programme theory does not reside in the programme theory as such, but in the combination of the theory and the unfinished processes embedded in the programme’s social context” (Dahler-Larsen, 2001, p.336). In this respect, to understand and appropriately evaluate the ‘truth value’ of a programme theory, it is necessary to understand the context as ‘produced’, ‘distributed’ and ‘enacted’ on an on-going basis. It is through these processes that the theory and its ‘truth value’ are reflexively shaped and conditioned.

Dahler-Larsen’s insights draw into focus the relationship between contextual processes and people’s – civic participants’ - motivations and orientations toward the sustainability agenda. On any occasion of ‘civic participation’ where sustainability is a theme, the nature and extent of agents’ orientations to sustainability, and indeed to different versions of sustainability, is shaped and conditioned by “constructed and emergent phenomena such as value
orientations, cultural habits and institutional arrangements” (Dahler-Larsen, 2001, p. 346) - phenomena that emerge through discourse.

1.3 PURPOSE AND AIMS OF THE STUDY

Stemming from the recognition that contexts of ‘civic participation for sustainability’ are produced and generated through discourse, the purpose of this thesis is to understand how people are discursively enrolled in the sustainability agenda on a specific occasion of ‘civic participation’. Focussing on a draft planning policy document as a case study, it applies three constructivist perspectives to analyse the linguistic strategies and techniques that enjoin the policy reader as an active participant in ‘sustainable’ regional planning. Specifically, the research aims to:

1. explore how participative democratic principles, specifically those associated with civic participation in decision-making processes, are framed as community rights and/or responsibilities in sustainable development policy at different levels of government.

2. investigate the pedagogic processes, implicit in the discourse of the case study document, through which citizens acquire the conceptual principles associated with what it means to be sustainable in a context where there is no formal pedagogy.
3. explicate the ‘common-sense’ and methodical ways that the case study text interactionally produces and enrols ‘the citizen’ as an active participant in ‘sustainable’ regional planning.

The aims of the research reflect a process of deconstructing the different layers and dimensions of the case study text, all of which collude together to produce a discursive process of enrolment. Each aim is addressed using a different method selected for its capacity to draw out specific kinds of discursive features of the text. Aim 1 is addressed through an application of the governmentality perspective that highlights the way techniques of rights and responsibilities are deployed in the case study text (as well as sustainable development policies) to shape the conduct of citizens with respect to the ethic of sustainability. To address Aim 2, Bernstein’s theory of pedagogic practice is drawn on to examine how principles of classification and framing are used in the case study document to select citizens as pedagogic subjects who must acquire the skills to recognise and realise the moral context of ‘sustainability’. Finally, Aim 3 is addressed through applying Membership Categorization Analysis to the Foreword of the case study text, to demonstrate how ‘common-sense’ categorization procedures are used to interactionally produce a morally-constitutive hearing of the reader as a ‘citizen’ with certain moral values and obligations that reflect ‘sustainability’ objectives.
1.4 AN ACCOUNT OF THE SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS LINKING THE SCIENTIFIC PAPERS

The thesis includes three papers, each designed to address a specific aim of the study. The first paper, entitled *Community Participation, Rights and Responsibilities: The Governmentality of Sustainable Development Policy*, applies a governmentality perspective to address Aim 1. The governmentality perspective represents a departure from common understandings of ‘civic community’, particularly as it appears in the language of Britain’s New Labour and other proponents of the Third Way. For Nikolas Rose (2000, p.1), the Third Way should not be seen as a political project, but rather “a certain way of visualizing political problems, a rationality for rendering them thinkable and manageable, and a set of moral principles by which solutions may be generated and legitimized”. From this perspective, ‘community’ and notions of civic ‘rights and responsibilities’ are viewed as ‘techniques of government’ that are used to ethically shape and normalise the conduct of individuals to facilitate government from a distance.

This paper applies the governmentality perspective to three sustainable development policy documents: *Agenda 21* (1992), the *Australian National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development* (1992) and the *Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan: For Consultation* (2004). In relation to each document, the article maps out the ways in which techniques of government – specifically techniques of civic rights and responsibilities - orient to the creation of a space of ‘community’ through which to shape and mould the
conduct and behaviours of subjects of government. In Agenda 21, rights-oriented notions of ‘inclusion’, ‘local knowledge’ and ‘capacity building’ are mediated by the overarching obligation for citizens to take responsibility for sustainable development. Here, participative democratic rights become conditional upon a commitment to sustainable development. In the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development, members of the Australian ‘community’ are constructed to have already been afforded their right to democratically participate. Subsequently, notions of participation are displaced from the context of democracy and shifted into a framework denoting participation as a community responsibility for sustainable development. Finally, the discourse of the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan displays a somewhat tautological logic. On the one hand, its introduction displays a heavily responsibilised version of community participation as a means to achieve the draft plan’s version of sustainable development. On the other hand, in having to consider ‘community’ issues as a component of the sustainability of the region, community’s right to participate re-emerges as a theme, this time as a consequence of, rather than a means to, sustainable development.

Applying the governmentality perspective to three policies results in three significant findings. First, it dispels popular conceptions of government as a centralised ‘institution’ or as a rational set of activities involving means-end logic. In this respect, the discrepancies and contradictions that occur within and across the language of the three documents highlights how governing ‘at
arms length’ involves a range of essentially arbitrary, abstract and sometimes unrelated activities. Second, it challenges notions that ‘community’ represents a tangible ‘thing’ and that participation necessarily corresponds to specific ‘activities’. Instead, it demonstrates how notions of ‘community’ and ‘civic participation’ are constructed and mobilised through the language of policy in ways that facilitate ‘government at a distance’. Third, it allows for a reconceptualisation of sustainable development - not as a deducible set of physical activities, informed choices or strategic approaches to balance economic, environmental and social needs, but as a broad rationality, or ethic, through which programmes of government are formulated. In other words, sustainable development comprises an assemblage of philosophies (eg: human rights, environmental protection, capitalist advantage), and constructed realities (eg: poverty, environmental degradation, urban sprawl, inequality) that permit the formation and management of certain kinds of problems - and prevent the conceivability of others.

The first paper reflects a problematisation of the ‘lines of force’ through which the behaviour of free citizens is aligned and regulated through principles of civic participation and sustainability. As such, it represents the first point of rupture with common-sense understandings of civic participation for sustainability pertaining to the requirement that citizens need to be enrolled in this discourse sufficiently for the principle to be seen as a legitimate. However, this raises the question of the means by which the processes of alignment between the everyday practices of subjects and the principles of sustainable development
are achieved. Hence, the second paper draws into focus a discrete aspect of the relationship between civic participation and the sustainable development agenda by examining issues associated with the appropriate acquisition of sustainable practices on the part of citizens and addresses Aim 2 of the overarching study.

This paper, entitled *Acquiring the skills for Civic Participation: Informal Pedagogy and the Moral Order in a Sustainable Development Policy Text*, investigates the processes through which citizens acquire the conceptual principles associated with what it means to be sustainable in a context where there is no formal pedagogy. The paper departs from the observation that ‘sustainability’ involves a generic requirement for the integration of different fields of knowledge and practice, demonstrated most aptly in professional courses at universities where sustainability is seen to represent a fluid set of integrative principles that link disciplines within the university, and also higher education with the requirements of the workplace and the broader society. However, while some aspects of these principles are taught as part of courses in higher education, there is also a much more generic requirement for citizens to understand and apply them outside any formalised context for pedagogic transmission in the domain of civic life. Discourses surrounding the governance of urban and regional development are a case in point, where citizens are required to contribute to the sustainability of their regions, cities and towns, regardless of their formal training background. This raises the question of how
citizens are meant to acquire the specific skills necessary to participate in ‘sustainable’ planning and management.

To address this question, the paper focuses on the discourse of the *Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan: For Consultation* as a case of ‘civic participation’ requiring citizens to participate in activities associated with ‘sustainable’ regional planning. Drawing on two key concepts developed in the work of sociologist Basil Bernstein - classification, or the principle through which power relations are translated and disguised; and framing, through which control is exercised to regulate and legitimise different forms of communication - it shows how the recontextualising principles implicit in the text constitute a new social order complicit with the logics of the regional planning field and the principles of sustainability.

In the document, the principles of integration, and thus weak classification, are applied in relation to the ‘sustainability’ context. However, in apparent compensation for the likelihood that many citizens may not appropriately recognise the speciality of the sustainability context, a sub-set of strong classifications, coupled with strong framing, are used to select citizens as pedagogic subjects and orient them to the moral expectations of the setting. Through organising themes in a way akin to a ‘fairy-tale’ genre, the roles of victim (the region), villain (‘unsustainable’ development) and hero (sustainability) are used to generate a strongly classified moral context through
which to read and interpret the text. This provides for an alternative context of recognition that does not rely on the acquirer’s ability to recognise the weakly classified sustainability context, but rather his/her ability to recognise the value of the sustainability context. Furthermore, the strong internal framing values further act to shape expectation about the acquirer’s conduct and character in relation to the hero/villain roles. As such, the text’s strong framing values facilitate the realisation of sustainability at the level of the acquirer who must endorse the draft plan in support of sustainability, whether or not he/she adequately recognises the speciality of the weakly classified sustainability context.

The examination of the pedagogic relationships implicit in the discourse of the case study document reveals a significant dimension of the process through which citizens become enrolled in sustainability. Despite the fact that civic participation may seemingly reflect a certain kind of democratic governance arrangement, in this case of ‘civic participation’ the text selects citizens as pedagogic subjects who must acquire the skills necessary to contribute to ‘sustainable’ regional planning. As such, the acquisition of these skills operates as an implicit prerequisite for participation in the political system so that responsible citizens must first become pedagogic subjects.

However, while the second paper demonstrates how the language of the draft policy text selects ‘the citizen’ as a pedagogic subject who must be taught to
‘act’ for the good of the region, a different kind of problem emerges in the course of the analysis: who is ‘the citizen’ and how does ‘the citizen’ become enrolled as an active participant in ‘sustainable’ regional planning? In other words, how is it that particular people, and not others, come to understand themselves as ‘citizens’ for whom the sustainability of the region is relevant? Hence, the third paper, entitled Enrolling ‘the Citizen’ in Sustainability: Membership Categorization, Morality and Civic Participation turns to ethnomethodology as a means to explicate the ‘common-sense’ and methodical ways in which ‘the citizen’ is interactionally produced and enrolled in the sustainability agenda. This paper addresses Aim 3 of the thesis.

This paper applies Membership Categorization Analysis to the Foreword of the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan: For Consultation to examine how the procedural organisation of multiple identities produces a morally-constitutive hearing of ‘the citizen’ and ‘civic values and obligations’. First, through the application of place-identity categorizations that define the text’s audience as ‘residents’ of the region, and a further set of categorizations that distinguish ‘residents’ from ‘government’, ‘the citizen’ is produced. Second, categorization procedures in the text tie ‘citizen’ incumbents to a set of moral values and obligations with respect to the region. Notably, it is also inferred that these attributes are shared by ‘government’ incumbents. Finally, the use of pronouns in the text interactionally position the participants to the interaction – the authors and readers – in ways that inferentially ascribe the reader with the identity of
The Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) undertaken in the third paper reveals an important aspect of the production of the moral order in which ‘the citizen’ is produced and situated. Indeed, at the substantive level, the moral order that is produced in the Foreword of the document relates particularly to the moral values and obligations that are tied to ‘citizens’ incumbents. As such, those who are made recognisable as ‘citizens’ are attributed a certain kind of moral character that makes them available for assessment or judgement. In this respect, ‘the citizen’ is made morally accountable for his/her values and behaviours, particularly if they contradict those produced in the text. However, what MCA also reveals is how the substantive values and moral stances of the authors of the text in relation to ‘the citizen’ are only hearable and locatable as such by competent members, through the application of a normative morality – the morality associated with the mundane activity of sense-making. Hence, the moral order through which ‘the citizen’ is produced and situated is constituted within, and constitutive of, the procedural and temporal organisation of the text.
In summary, the three articles included in this thesis reflect a process of unpacking the different layers of discourse to demonstrate the ways in which citizens become enrolled in the sustainability agenda. The governmentality perspective reveals how techniques of rights and responsibilities are used to shape the conduct of citizens as responsible agents for sustainability as a means to govern ‘at arms length’. Bernstein’s theory of pedagogic practice provides a means to examine the pedagogic relationships associated with the acquisition of the skills necessary for citizens to contribute to sustainability in an informal pedagogic context. Finally, Membership Categorization Analysis reveals how ‘the citizen’ and an associated set of ‘civic values and obligations’ are produced and organised in practical and methodical ways on specific occasions of interaction.
CHAPTER 2: Sustainable Development and Civic Participation – An Overview

Sustainable development is by no means a simple concept, nor is its meaning universally accepted. The considerable controversies over its definition, as well as the vast range of interpretations on offer, have ensured that, almost from the moment of its conception, sustainable development has been widely recognised as a contested phenomenon. However, the seemingly endless debate surrounding sustainable development has not impeded its ability to achieve endorsement and affirmation on an international scale. It appears that amidst the controversy there is widespread agreement that sustainable development, whatever it may be, is something that is desirable and necessary for the ‘greater good’.

A similar claim could be made about the notion of civic participation. In the face of globalisation, contemporary governance discourses frequently celebrate the idea of active civic participation in political and decision-making processes as a means to generate ‘local solutions to global problems’. The devolution of authority (and responsibility) to local levels, government-community partnerships, bottom-up decision-making and participatory and deliberative governance have all become common themes in the language of government in recent years. Despite widespread recognition of practical, cultural and political barriers to democratic civic participation, it is nevertheless hailed as the way forward for democracy and contemporary politics.
As topics in their own right, the literature on both sustainable development and civic participation is vast. This chapter provides a critical account of the key tenets of sustainable development and its purported relationship with democratic civic participation. It should not be considered an exhaustive review of the literature available on sustainability, but rather a critique of key sources that assist in exposing the implicit assumptions about civic participation that are embedded in sustainability discourse. First, it outlines the difficulties associated with engendering agreement about what sustainable development actually is and provides a general description of sustainability’s central philosophy, which involves achieving a balance between environmental, economic and social interests. Second, it highlights the way the ‘social’ component of sustainable development, often denoted by the term ‘community’, tends to unproblematically invoked in sustainability literature as a set of participatory governance arrangements that will facilitate the achievement of sustainability goals. Finally, it draws on some critical perspectives, concerned mostly democratic implications of participatory approaches in the context of environmental politics, as a means to raise some critical questions about the intersection of discourses on sustainability and civic participatory governance arrangements.
2.1 Sustainable Development: a contested phenomenon

Over the last two decades, sustainable development has undeniably become the dominant ideology characterising the field of planning and development. It continues to infiltrate a range of other fields with the increasing trend towards Triple Bottom Line reporting in the private and public sectors and the emergence of a full-range of policies and legislation at the global, national, regional and local levels that take sustainability as their theme. However, despite its increasing prominence, sustainable development remains a fundamentally contentious notion (Wood, 2004).

Particularly since the Brundtland World Commission of Environment and Development (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987) the definition of sustainable development has been a source of endless debate among members of the field of planning and development. Among the vast array of definitions on offer, the definition published in the Brundtland Report (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987) is arguably still quoted more often than any other:

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains two key concepts:

- the concept of ‘needs’, in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
• the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs.

(WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT, 1987, P.43)

Nevertheless, the prevalence of the Brundtland definition is more likely a result of its frequent contestation rather than its broad corroboration. Its dependence on the concept of ‘needs’ has been subject to considerable reproach, as has its use of the term ‘development’ (Yearly, 1996). (The latter may well be considered a necessary evil so long as the term sustainable development remains at the centre of the definitional debate.) In response to the definitional dilemmas identified in the Brundtland version of sustainable development, an abundance of literature has emerged containing a comparable number of definitions. For the best part of fifteen years, authors have persistently imposed their own definitions of the term in light of the apparent flaws and inadequacies of previous propositions.

While the problems associated with defining sustainable development could easily lead to a lengthy discussion about the range of definitions on offer, along with their associated merits and inadequacies, this would be counterproductive to the task at hand. For the purpose of this review, the salience of the definitional dilemma surrounding sustainable development lies in its being markedly symptomatic of a discursive process through which its conceptual ambiguity “becomes part of the process of enriching and renewing the concept” (MYERSON & RYDIN, 1996, P. 99).
Simplistically, the contest over definition may be characterised in terms of a search for meaning. However, the sheer volume of literature on the subject alone attests far more convincingly to the possibility that sustainable development draws its meaning through the contest that is aptly disguised as a search. From this perspective, the meaning(s) of sustainable development is produced and shaped through conceptual struggles, of which the struggle for definition is a pointed example. Understanding sustainable development, in these terms allows for a critical reading of the literature that focuses on the core themes that impute the term with meaning. The following section, therefore, provides a review of literature on sustainable development that emphasises the central conceptual and theoretical orientations that contribute to the general ‘understanding’ of the term, rather than specific viewpoints and perspectives.

2.2 Sustainable Development: philosophical underpinnings

Articulating the meaning of sustainable development in the literature is a complex task in light of the wide range of interpretations available. What is abundantly clear from the outset, however, is that sustainable development relies fundamentally on current conceptions of the ‘environment’ and the ways in which it should be treated. Of course, this in itself is subject to an abundance of differing viewpoints and belief systems. Nevertheless, in the generic sense it suffices to say that the past four decades have witnessed a shift in thinking whereby the ‘environment’ has come to be viewed as something that should be
valued and protected. This said, however, it would be erroneous to suggest that sustainable development constitutes the full extent of environmental discourse(s) to which this description broadly refers, given its concern with economic interests reflected in the term ‘development’. Finally, a third concept, often represented by the terms community or ‘social’, is frequently invoked in discourses on sustainable development. It is usually in relation to this dimension that governance arrangements involving civic or community participation are brought into focus.

While the exact meaning of sustainable development is nigh impossible to pin down, it is clear that contemporary environmental politics has provided the impetus for its conception. New ways of conceptualising the ‘environment’ and its importance for the future of the human race have contributed significantly to the understanding that development practices should be altered in a way that facilitates sustainability. This, of course, derives from the basic premise that processes of modernisation and industrialisation that have taken place over the past two hundred years have led to a hazardous depletion of the world’s natural resources. The historically recent recognition that natural resources are finite, accompanied by the identification of a wide range of other irreversible and often invisible environmental consequences of human behaviour, has led to the increasing pervasiveness of the notion of environmental ‘risk’ over the last thirty to forty years (Beck, 1992). The ‘risk’ posed to both human and non-human inhabitants of the planet has sparked a range of campaigns that fit neatly under
the ‘environmental’ umbrella. Energy efficiency, biodiversity, endangered species, ozone depletion, air and water pollution and waste disposal are examples of the myriad of issues that have come to the fore in recent times (see De Sombre, 2002; Porter & Brown, 1991).

The fight for a cleaner, greener and healthier earth has manifested in many forms - from vigilante ‘green’ campaigning through to more modest approaches such as the consumption of “environmentally friendly” goods and environmental educational programs. These are founded on a range of theoretical approaches to the global environmental crisis, not all of which are easily compatible with the concept of sustainable development. For example, some proponents of “survivalism” who are concerned mainly with the limits of the world’s natural resources would argue that ‘development’ that may be construed as unnecessary for survival places too great a stress on an already dangerously depleted stock of resources. A “green romanticist” may invoke a similar attitude toward ‘development’ and instead promote “new kinds of human sensibilities, ones that are less destructive to nature” (Dryzek, 1997, p.37).

There is a range of environmental perspectives that are not entirely complicit with the notion of sustainable development. However, it is worthwhile noting the capacity of the concept to apparently incorporate a wide enough range of ideology to accommodate “diverse and sometimes radically opposing concepts” (Adams, 1993, p.208). Dryzek (1997, p.125) notes that, “for [survivalists]
Meadows and colleagues sustainability means an end to economic growth; for the Business Council on Sustainable Development, sustainability means the perpetuation of economic growth”. The latter is arguably informed to a degree by the Promethean response to environmental issues that takes the view that growth is virtually limitless. This premise is based upon faith in human ingenuity to overcome the problems thrown up by ‘nature’ and humankind’s manipulation of it. Here, great emphasis is placed on the ability of science and technology, rather than ‘nature’, to provide for humans in the future (Dryzek, 1997). Obviously the ‘Survivalist’ and ‘Promethean’ approaches to environmental problems represent two extremes on the scale. In general, sustainable development can be seen as a compromise between environmental protection and economic growth and often is not framed in terms of either extreme.

To an extent, the assimilation of environmental protection and economic growth does appear to be contradictory, given that the current poor state of the environment is usually attributed to capitalist production and consumption practices that often operate under the guise of ‘economic growth’. This inconsistency has led to suspicion on the part of many, especially those who believe that ‘zero growth’ is the optimal way to mitigate, and reverse where possible, the devastating effects of industrialisation on the environment. The idea that sustainable development glosses over the conflicts between environment and economy is regularly invoked by its critics who point to the
dangers of “sustainable development effectively [providing] a green cover for ‘business as usual’” (Jacobs, 1991, p.59). Nevertheless, this has obviously not prevented the rapid proliferation of the concept among both environmentalists and economists alike, and a variety of ways and means to balance the competing needs of environment and economy have been advanced in the name of sustainability.

The economic component of sustainable development is not appropriately explained through sole reference to the ‘Promethean’ stance. There are many arguments as to why attention to economic factors is desirable in conjunction with environmental protection. A central argument in favour of balancing both environmental and economic interests stems from the recognised gap between rich and poor, often articulated in terms of the global inequity between first and third world nations. Achterberg summarises the basic argument:

...sustainability ought not be achieved at the expense of the legitimate aspirations of poor(er) countries to reach a level of development and welfare comparable to that of the richer nations. In other words, and because poverty is an important cause of environmental degradation, development is a moral and practical condition for achieving sustainability.

(Achterberg, 1996, p.171)

In addition to this, there are less ‘humanitarian’ arguments that broadly point to the degree to which people (in the first-world) would be prepared to give up
economic prosperity in favour of the environmental protection. Describing this as the “Orthodox Economist’s’ approach to environmental protection”, Jacobs (1991) says:

So a logical approach might be to say that we should protect the environment insofar as its value to us exceeds the cost of preserving it. When that point is reached, any further protection will cause us to forgo other things that we value more. This then gives us a clear criterion for making choices about what aspects of the environment should be conserved, which enhanced, which changed and so on.

(Jacobs, 1991, p.63)

Of course, this perspective can be critiqued on the basis that it assumes that the environment is something that can be ‘measured’, regardless of inevitable differences between the value placed on particular aspects of the environment by people in different places, times, and with different motives (Jacobs, 1991). Nevertheless, it does perhaps provide a ‘reality check’ in terms of the actual willingness of many people to forgo material wealth in exchange for a cleaner environment – a scenario that ‘zero growth’ advocates tend to take for granted.

In the plight to reconcile the competing interests of environment and economy, notions such as “greening capitalism” and “ecological consumption” have become popular. In general, the belief that capitalism can be ‘greened’ requires an understanding that it is not capitalism or market forces per se that have led to the current levels of environmental degradation. There are two broad
arguments that can be applied here. The first is that it is not the economy, but rather social values, that are responsible for the environmental crisis. This argument is backed up by analyses that point to the similar environmental problems experienced in socialist as well as capitalist states. The second position is less likely to absolve the economic system from all responsibility for environmental outcomes, yet does invoke some optimism with regard to the type of outcomes possible. This view holds fast to the capability of market-driven capitalism to respond to increasing environmental concern through the use of production technologies that are environmentally safe (Jacobs, 1991). Some, like Prothero & Fitchett (2000), even suggest that the achievement of environmental goals is dependent on, rather than in conflict with, the utilisation and mobilisation of capitalist commodity culture. These arguments generally emphasise the role of consumer demand in promoting the production of environmentally benign goods. Put simply, the increasing concern for the environment and potential for the development of a ‘green’ commodity discourse will result in an increasing demand for ‘environmentally sound’ products. This in turn will encourage manufacturers to meet demand by introducing products with environmentally friendly features and by adopting environmentally friendly production techniques. Despite its best-of-both-worlds appeal, authors such as Jacobs (1991) remain sceptical about the likelihood of this occurring on a broad scale. He notes that the ‘success stories’ that are oft cited by defenders of ‘green capitalism’ - the augmentation of environmentally friendly products like organic foods and cosmetics, ‘green’ companies with their
own environmental policies, and consumer preference for more expensive
environmentally friendly alternatives - are few and far between in terms of the
full range of products available and production practices utilised under the
current economic system. He proposes, therefore, that:
a ‘green capitalism’, then, whether it is based on the development of new,
environmentally-motivated firms or on environmentally-sensitive consumer behaviour,
cannot be the solution to the crisis. Market forces have to be controlled, not promoted,
if the overall environmental impact of economic activity is to be reduced.

(Jacobs, 1991, p.43).

The regulation and management of both environment and economy pose a new
set of problems for sustainable development proponents. The multitude of
perspectives that can be incorporated into a sustainability framework ensure
that there is no clear cut or singular approach to monitoring and regulating
‘development’ (broadly defined) practices. It is arguably in the context of
management and regulation of ‘global’ problems that civic or community
participation comes to play a role in sustainable development literature.

2.3 Civic Participation for Sustainability

According to Dryzek (1997):

Sustainable development’s purview is global; its justification rests in present stresses
imposed on global ecosystems. But unlike survivalism, it does not rest at that global
level. Sustainability is an issue at regional and local levels too, for that is where solutions will have to be found.

(Dryzek, 1997, p.129)

The global-local paradigm is obviously not unique to the issue of sustainable development and is identifiable in a plethora of literature that addresses the theme of globalisation in one respect or another. Complexities aside, it is generally proposed that processes of globalisation - often attributed to the environmental crisis and economic relations that more and more frequently transcend national boarders - have resulted in, among other things, the dissolution of national and traditional community identities (Lipschutz, 1996). Consequently, it is argued that new forms of locally constructed identities and affiliations have/will/should arise(n) in response to these conditions. While there is widespread recognition that these new community identities may be virtual rather than place-based, sustainability literature tends to favour the latter.

Lipschutz (1996) emphasises the salience of ‘place’ in the achievement of sustainability. He claims that scholars of new social movements such as environmentalism have often disregarded the importance of ‘place’ in favour of notions of the global reconfiguration of “space”. While concurring with the view that “environmental degradation [is], in many instances, a product of long chains of economic and social activities, running through global “space,” whose beginnings and endings [are] by no means clearly delineable”, he argues that both the causes and consequences of such degradation are experienced at the
level of ‘place’ (Lipschutz, 1996, p.229). He makes a similar argument with respect to relations of consumption. While consumption practices cannot be linked to any fixed place, geographically shifting production sites have direct and specific consequences for the places that acquire, or conversely lose, productive capital. For Lipschutz (1996, p.221), it is at the latter point “that place, and place-based community, begins to acquire its importance, inasmuch as it can be invested with a meaning that begins to re-establish frayed social relations and, perhaps, new relations of production”. The infusion of identity through social and cultural markers that are found in ‘place’ is central to this argument:

... identity cannot be constituted without reference to place, to the “conditions of existence” that help to define “who we are” and “what we are doing here”... Thus, for example, while there may be rivers and creeks all over Europe and the United States, and groups dedicated to restoration of creeks in many of those places, one does not find these organizations dedicating themselves to some universalized creek or river. It is the specific river or creek in one’s community, and the symbolic significance of that creek or river to the community, that is important. That significance can have economic content, of course, but it is also as likely to be a constitutive element of the community – a reason for its founding, the literal lifeblood of the original settlement, a point of connection to other places – even when such notions are not wholly-accurate. These reasons, rooted in the history and political economy of specific places, may be almost forgotten, leaving behind only a symbol. Such symbols are by definition, location-specific.

(Lipschutz, 1996, p.220)
Based on these observations, Lipschutz argues that achieving “global environmental sustainability” requires the efforts of locally established social institutions such as “common-pool property resource systems or bioregions or restoration projects” that are appropriately networked with similar institutions in different places (Lipschutz, 1996). Together, these place-based civil societies will come to represent what he calls “global” civil society.

The call for local community activism to contribute to building a sustainable world is wide-spread among sustainable development proponents, even though many lack the theoretical grounding applied by Lipschutz. By far the most commonly delineated role for community in this context is with regard to active civic participation. Indeed, it is often implied that sustainability is unattainable without the active efforts of community members for the betterment of their community. Civic participation in the development of local and regional planning and development policy, community projects that address local environmental, economic and social concerns and community based capacity-building and educational programs that address issues of sustainability are regularly celebrated by sustainable development advocates (see Warburton, 1998; Van den hove, 2000). This, of course, is not unique to academic accounts of sustainable development. International, national, state and local environmental and economic policy initiatives increasingly invoke civic and community participation as an apparatus through which to meet sustainability and other social and political objectives. An obvious example of international
policy that places emphasis on the role of local communities in sustainable
development is Agenda 21 (United Nations Division for Sustainable
Development, 1992). Resulting from the United Nations Conference on
Environment and Development, Agenda 21 (United Nations Division for
Sustainable Development, 1992) marks an attempt to develop international
policy that would lead to the application of sustainable development practices
and a consequential improvement in the quality of life for the world’s
Agenda 21 is underpinned by some firm principles that emphasise the
importance of community:

- The issues being addressed have real local relevance.
- Making real the links between environmental sustainability and lifestyle decisions
  and expectations.
- The process of community engagement seeks to improve the relationship between
  ‘top and bottom’ in order to find new directions together.
- Increasing meaningful dialogue between communities and local government,
  leading to more informed policies.
- Identifying and removing the blocks and barriers that inhibit community participation
  in local government.
- Enabling all participants to develop and practice new skills.
- Local people prepare a local plan which identifies their own role, as well as that of
  other organisations.
- There is no single right answer.

(Webster, 1998, p.183)
For the sake of expediency, yet perhaps at the risk of overlooking some of the finer points, it is sufficient to say that notions such as these evident in *Agenda 21* tend to characterise a great deal of sustainable development policy and literature. Despite some recognition that community is by no means a straightforward concept and that the use of the term is often criticised on the basis of its ‘warm and cuddly’ appeal over any proven capacity to provide workable solutions to problems, the idea of civic/community participation appears to have achieved a level of ascendancy similar to that of sustainable development. These *Agenda 21* principles provide a pointed example of the way in which active civic participation is unproblematically invoked as a tool for the management of sustainability issues. What is also evident here is that the community or ‘social’ dimension tends to take on a different role from that of ‘environment’ and ‘economy’ within the framework of sustainable development. More specifically, while environmental and economic sustainability tend to be explicated as the goals of sustainable development, it is often unclear whether community interests comprise a part of these goals, or whether community is a means to achieving them. It is here that the intersection between sustainability discourses and broader discourses on governance becomes apparent.

**2.4 Civic Participation, Community and Sustainability: Key Issues**

Given the range of perspectives that fall under the sustainability umbrella, the role of community participation in sustainable development is not
indiscriminately subscribed to by all sustainability proponents. According to Warburton (1998):

The role of community in sustainable development has caused excitement and confusion in almost equal measure amongst practitioners and policy makers over recent years, and particularly since the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio in 1992, when world leaders signed up to Agenda 21 as the agenda for the twenty-first century, confirming that sustainable development requires community participation in practice as well as principle.

(Warburton, 1998, p.1)

This quotation highlights an essential paradox that exists within much of the sustainable development literature that appeals to notions of community or civic participation in one way or another. On the one hand, it acknowledges the essentially contested nature of community and its role in sustainable development initiatives. This recognition might logically suggest that, given the degree of dissension pertaining to community, it may or may not be imperative to achieving sustainability. On the other hand, it readily asserts that community, specifically community participation, is fundamental to the sustainable development agenda based upon a consensus of world leaders in this regard. In effect, it assumes that induction of community and civic participation into international policy is evidence enough of its indispensability despite its apparent ambiguity. This inconsistency is a contextual exemplar of the paradox of community noted by Nikolas Rose (2000) in relation to Third Way discourse.
That is, community is simultaneously asserted as something that already exists and is yet to be achieved.

Nevertheless, many arguments pertaining to sustainable development, or environmental protection in general, stress the role of community participation in achieving positive and sustainable ecological outcomes. While there is a general consensus that community participation is necessary, the specific type of community that is needed remains the subject of speculation and debate. For example, according to Kenny (1996):

Many greens – not just deep and dark ones – refer to a naturalistic ideal of community and suggest that it would be ecologically and socially advantageous if we lived in tightly knit, solidaristic communities akin to these which characterised pre-industrial society.

(Kenny, 1996, p.20)

In addition to the obvious practical difficulties associated with this picture of community, given that most of the world’s population live in urban settings, Kenny points to the ideological tensions between this form of community and ecological principles that are often overlooked. He suggests that ecological communitarians who often subscribe to *gemeinschaft* models of community often take for granted that these ‘communities’ will automatically “uphold an ecological version of the ‘good life’” (Kenny, 1996, p.21).
Similar to many communitarians, ecological communitarians often utilise a critique of modern society that combines nostalgic interpretations of community as the basis of social relations in the past, sociological critiques of the detrimental effects of the market on the bonds of community, and normative beliefs that construct community as a necessary directive for political and economic relations in society. For Kenny (1996), the indiscriminate interweaving of these perspectives has resulted in a lack of reflection about the degree to which community and ecology, or indeed community and democracy, are related. In his view, the imposition of ecological principles onto community has a number of inherent dangers. First, it runs the risk of being insensitive and disparaging to minority groups and individual rights. This relates to the general question of to what degree the interests, needs and wants of minorities and individuals should be traded off against the ‘higher cause’ of ecological sustainability. Given the tendency for some greens to attribute minority or individual concerns to the selfish and wasteful ‘wants’ invited by contemporary society, Kenny (1996, p.22) suggests that this “assumption... ignores the coercive possibilities arising from the connection between ecological goals and communitarian politics”. Second, Kenny proposes that the extent to which many greens promote notions of ecological solidarity and cohesion at the expense of other aspects of identity may be at odds with notions of social and cultural pluralism. Despite the recognition on the part of many greens that other identities are important and even desirable, their persistence that an ecological
identity will/should/must be the dominant identity in any said community is problematic.

Third, and again potentially due to their prioritisation of ecology over all else, greens are often accused of failing to produce or contribute to the production of a coherent political theory that might broaden and deepen political life. According to critics, the secondary status of the democratisation of civil life to ecological values has often resulted in greens frequently engendering romantic versions of a world where power relations have disappeared and humans and nature exist harmoniously. Kenny (1996) suggests that many greens remain oblivious to the idea that power networks operate at all levels of society, even within ‘communities’, despite how ecologically motivated they may be. Their failure to pay attention to the micro-politics of community life has resulted in a lack of thought into how individual interests might be consolidated with ecological goals.

Finally, and on a more general level, Kenny (1996, p.24) contends that “the relationship between democracy and ecology is more problematic than the rhetoric of political ecology generally allows”. This critique is built primarily on the idea that the links between community and democracy are not as straightforward as many communitarians might assume. Liberal critics, in response to communitarian philosophy, often highlight problems associated with principles of autonomy, individual rights, and justice. They argue that so long as
Communitarians prioritise the will of the community over the individual, they run the risk of lapsing into moral and political conservatism or even authoritarianism. This would arguably be in opposition to, rather than conducive to, the application of democratic principles. In light of these problems, when greens promote community as a necessary intermediary connection between ecology and democracy, the problems inevitably increase. Not only do they introduce an additional level of complexity into the notion of community by incorporating within it both human and biotic components, they presume that community, and therefore democracy, will automatically lead to the pre-determined outcome of ecological emancipation. Consequently, and even more so than communitarian arguments in general, ecological communitarianism can be accused of being founded on assumptions that distinctly counter democratic principles.

At this point, it is necessary to acknowledge that these critiques have been developed with respect to a particularly romanticised version of community that is not endorsed by all proponents of sustainable development. Obviously, Kenny (1996) has taken some liberties to emphasise the ‘extremes’ in summarising the viewpoints of “many greens” in order to highlight the inadequacies that are evident when ‘ecology’, community and democracy are presumptuously linked. This said, however, even more sophisticated considerations of these relationships, many of which attempt to address the problems outlined above, tend to run into similar problems. For example,
Christoff (1996) considers the difficulties associated with establishing a “green democracy” in the context of current social and political structures that favour the nation state. In developing a model of “deliberative democracy”, he draws on Habermas, suggesting that the way of the future is identity based upon active civic participation rather than ethnic or cultural attributes. Given that many environmental issues transcend the borders of nation states, he argues that it is necessary to re-define notions of citizenship that are currently founded on notions of national legal citizenship. For Christoff (1996, p.160), the capacity of environmental decisions made in one nation state to impact upon the citizens of another means that the “‘relevant community’ and the ‘relevant actors’ for democratic participation and representation of environmental issues” has shifted. Consequently it is necessary to institute “double democratisation” in which the state and civil society are adequately balanced for ecological democracy. He states:

The distinctly ecological value of such a system would depend on the integration of legal guarantees of deliberative democratic processes with the means and rights legally to challenge actions which contravene ecological principles enshrined in law and constitution. However, the ‘strong green state’ must be framed simultaneously by the essential, restraining guarantees for ‘strong democracy’ – constitutional, legal and regulatory guarantees of the rights, powers and resources for citizens to engage in a variety of deliberative democratic actions – and, separately, by the principles of
ecological sustainability and environmental rights, similarly established at the heart of the legal and constitutional mechanisms of such a state.

(Christoff, 1996, p.165)

In contrast with the community of ecological communitarianism, Christoff’s (1996) account is arguably more credible on the basis that he does not proffer an over-determined understanding of community and instead leaves room for variation within a participatory democratic framework. Of course, this may be subject to the converse critique that it is too general rather than too specific. Nevertheless, of more consequence here is the fact that his perspective, despite its apparent merit in addressing a crucial aspect of the relationship between ecological values and democracy, tends to fall victim to the same contradiction as that of ecological communitarianism in one central way. On the one hand, Christoff (1996) pays attention to issues pertaining to the democratisation of civil life that many greens overlook. Here he posits a potentially democratic model through which ecological issues can be subject to participatory decision making on the part of all people who may be affected by such decisions. On the other hand, however, he assumes that an extension of citizenship rights, specifically participatory rights, coupled with legal and constitutional shifts that support ecological principles, will inevitably result in a more ecologically ‘sustainable’ world. In short, he appears to presuppose that as long as ‘citizens’ are given the appropriate opportunity to participate, they will be automatically supportive of sustainable development. In this way, he does not appear to even entertain the possibility that sometimes a democratic
participatory process may produce decisions that are not ecologically sound. As Eckersley (1996, p.212) states so succinctly, “people must be ‘free’ to make ecologically bad decisions”. Some authors concerned with democracy and sustainability recognise this difficulty. For example, Achterberg (1996), in developing his argument for “associative democracy” as a means to achieving ecological sustainability, cautions against making this assumption:

I do not mean to suggest that a society, associatively transformed, will on that account alone decide to pursue sustainability. My purpose here is more modest: to argue that, if (a big if!) a liberal democracy has reached a clear and unambiguous political consensus about sustainability... the chances of achieving sustainability might be better in an associatively transformed liberal democracy.

(Achterberg, 1996, p.180)

Regardless of this recognition, Achterberg (1996) promotes community as an important means to achieving sustainability on three counts. First, he contends that a certain level of co-operation and co-ordination among citizens is necessary in order to institute specific measures to minimise environmental degradation and maximise sustainability. This would require adherence to a common set of values typically associated with traditional understandings of community. Second, sustainability requires a moral obligation to equality which in turn requires a sense of solidarity between rich and poor. Here, Achterberg embraces a minimalist version of communitarianism that links distributive justice
with communal ties and adds “mutual identification” as an important moral component of community. The third way in which sustainability presupposes community, according to Achterberg (1996, p.178), relates to “how we conceive of our relations to future generations”. Like O’Neill (1993) and Adams (1989), he suggests that “mutual identification” associated with tradition and a desire for a better society for current and future generations is advantageous to the pursuit for sustainability. Achterberg (1996) proposes that “associative democracy” - broadly characterised by commonalities defined through primary and secondary associations with others - is the most likely means to strengthen community ties and mutual identification that, in turn, will enhance the chances of achieving ‘sustainable’ outcomes. Arguably, Achterberg (1996) departs from the romanticised version of the ecological communitarian community even more so than Christoff (1996). In fact, he regularly admits considerable doubt with respect to the likelihood of elements of his community manifesting to any great extent and often proposes minimalist alternatives in this respect. Yet even with this degree of scepticism, there still exists the underlying assumption that community, and indeed democracy, are somehow self-evident conduits to the achievement of ecological sustainability.

While it would be possible to continue to outline various accounts of the role of community and civic participation in sustainable development and discuss the merits and inadequacies of each, it is unlikely that this would shed any further light on the issues at hand. Indeed, most sustainability advocates, whether they
critically consider issues surrounding notions of community and civic participation or not, tend to ‘take-for-granted’ the idea that civic participation will necessarily lead to sustainable solutions and outcomes. Not only is this regardless of the conceptual ambiguities and irregularities that have been outlined above, but also despite a range of practical examples where participatory approaches have failed. Bloomfield et. al. (2001) point to the potential conflicts that arise when participatory approaches in land use planning are mediated by political structures and cultures aligned with representative democracy; Barriers to participation in Environmental Integrated Assessment resulting from tensions between lay-expert knowledges are explored in Darier et al’s (1999) research; Kitchen et al. (2002) discuss the dissonance between community participation as a concept and experiential evidence drawn from operational forestry personnel and local forested communities in South Wales; and Roy and Tisdell (1998) note that the decentralisation of power has, in some cases, had environmentally unsustainable consequences such as rapid deforestation and biodiversity loss. Nevertheless, even in the face of these short-comings and failures, the orientation of most authors in the field of sustainability is to use such cases as ‘lessons’ and seek to find new and innovative ways to ‘fix’ or ‘improve’ participatory approaches to sustainable development, rather than question their efficacy or merit.

The tendency to assume the essential worth of notions such as sustainable development or, indeed, civic participation as a means to achieve it, is markedly
symptomatic of their discursive roots. Even though many authors have been able to recognise their ambiguities, persistent attempts to resolve these ambiguities are part of a discursive process that produces and renews their ‘common-sensibility’, ethical value and legitimacy in the field. In their work, Harré, Brockmeier and Mühlhäusler (1999) examine the ways that discourse has been central to the construction, representation and negotiation of environmental problems in what they call, “Greanspeak”. They situate environmental discourses in specific social and historical circumstances and show how a range of discursive resources (linguistic and cultural) are drawn upon to establish “environmental matters as issues of concern” (Harré, et al, 1999, pp.4-5). This thesis is concerned with a similar issue. Beginning with the recognition that civic participation and sustainability are, first and foremost, discursive constructs, it examines the ways policy discourse shapes notions of civic participation and sustainability in ways that engender identification with the sustainability agenda on the part of citizens. By performing an ‘epistemological break’ with notions of civic participation and sustainability, it demonstrates how the citizen is discursively enrolled as an active moral participant in ‘sustainable’ regional planning.
CHAPTER 3: Methodology – ‘breaking’ with ‘civic participation for sustainability’

Epistemological vigilance is particularly necessary in the social science, where the separation between everyday opinion and scientific discourse is more blurred than elsewhere... for the sociologist, familiarity with his social universe is the epistemological obstacle par excellence, because it continuously produces fictitious conceptions or systematizations and, at the same time, the conditions of their credibility. The sociologist’s struggle with spontaneous sociology is never finally won, and he must conduct unending polemics against the blinding self-evidences which all too easily provide the illusion of immediate knowledge and its insuperable wealth.

(Bourdieu, Chamboredon & Passeron, 1991, p.13)

3.1 Performing a break with ‘common-sense’

In chapter two, a range of ambiguities associated with civic participation as a necessary means to achieve sustainable development were highlighted. Despite this, it is clear that notions of democratic civic participation and sustainable development, both independently and together, possess a degree of pervasiveness that disable attempts to challenge their utility or value within the field of planning and development. In essence, while the lack of consensus on the ‘whats’ and ‘hows’ of civic participation and sustainable development is widely recognised, they are persistently asserted as salient and necessary in the achievement of environmental, economic and social and political goals.
The omnipotence of notions of civic participation and sustainable development is not exclusive to scholarly accounts of current environmental and political issues. One need only take a brief look at most policy, legislation, and political ‘talk’ that addresses any theme of a ‘social’ nature to find that civic participation features recurrently in such accounts, often without any reference to, or recognition of, its conjectural complexities. ‘Sustainable development’ does not feature in the discourses of as many fields, as it seems to be tied more firmly to a particular body of professional expertise. This need not imply, however, that it is only utilised in a ‘technical’ sense like an engineer might refer to “pressure loadings” or a medical practitioner to “white cell count”. Indeed, like notions of civic participation, sustainable development tends to demonstrate an ability to be ‘loosely’ and unproblematically applied in a range of settings.

The ability for notions of civic participation and sustainability to be unproblematically applied in many contexts and to maintain a level of ascendancy among scholars, even when subjected to critique, attests to the taken-for-granted nature of these phenomena. While scholars persistently illustrate their theoretical instability, it appears that civic participation and sustainable development have become instituted within ‘common-sense’ representations of the world that are near impossible to penetrate. Durkheim (1982) identifies this as a problem commonly encountered in the practice of sociology:
In our present state of knowledge we do not know exactly what the state is, nor sovereignty, political freedom, democracy, socialism, communism, etc. Thus our method should make us forswear any use of these concepts so long as they have not been scientifically worked out. Yet the words that express them recur continually in the discussions of sociologists. They are commonly used with assurance, as if they corresponded to things well known and well defined, while in fact they evoke in us only confused notions, an amalgam of vague impressions, prejudices and passions.

(Durkheim, 1982, pp. 65-66)

Borrowing from Bacon, Durkheim (1982) describes these self-evident socially produced notions as “preconceptions” or “praenotions” - common-sense representations of a world known in common that deceptively appear to the social agent as self-evident, even natural. Their taken-for-granted character typically operates to conceal that their sensibility relies on, and is utterly effected by, social and historical conditions. Of course, any sociologist is apt to recognise this in so far as ‘prenotions’ are seen to exist in the logics of the ‘social agent’ as distinct from the ‘professional sociologist’. However, Durkheim's (1982) interest in ‘prenotions’ is less to do with the way in which they are internalised and subsequently taken-for-granted by lay social agents. Indeed, in The Rules of Sociological Method Durkheim’s (1982) concern lies more in the way in which these socially produced and entrenched preconceptions have tainted sociological thought via their spontaneous
application or, rather, misapplication. He posits that while ‘prenotions’ provide the foundation for the sciences, they are inherently misleading by way of their ability to “distort the true appearance of things” while being commonly mistaken for the “things themselves” (Durkheim, 1982, p.62). For Durkheim (1956, pp. 64-65) this is an indulgent feature of “spontaneous sociology” wherein the “illusion of transparency” manifests in presumptive sociological accounts that erroneously prescribe humans with the ability to act and induce institutional change independent of social and historical conditions. It is Durkheim’s (1956) supposition that sociology cannot hope to understand “the objective reality of social facts” so long as it remains bound by the ‘truths’ of the subjective experience of the social agent disguised as sociologist.

Bourdieu, Chamboredon & Passeron (1991) extend Durkheim’s critique of spontaneous sociology to include any approach that denounces preconceptions while it simultaneously constructs a scientific discourse that is founded on them. In such an event, the artificiality of immediate knowledge is perhaps masked even more effectively than through the indiscriminate application of spontaneous sociology. Arguably, this occurs frequently in academic literature on civic participation and sustainable development. Many authors readily point out that notions of community or civic participation and sustainable development are built on social, discursive and/or nostalgic assumptions. In spite of this, however, the very same authors will often advance definitions and arguments that rely on the same implicit assumptions from which they claim to
depart. Any claim to sociology in these accounts can be described as “prophetic” - through borrowing from the “fund of common-sense knowledge”, the sociologist merely provides common-sense with a more ‘sophisticated’ dialect and subsequently takes on the role of prophet in relation to his/her audience (Bourdieu et al, 1991, pp.24-25).

Bourdieu, Chamboredon & Passeron (1991) are similarly critical of empiricist assertions of ‘truth’ that readily propose to depart from spontaneous sociology. They note that the blind application of pre-determined methods and methodologies, often borrowed from the natural sciences, customarily embody the pretence that this will automatically lead to the identification of ‘truths’ or ‘facts’ or tenable ‘theory’. This position stems from the recognition that empiricist methods developed with respect to problematics of the natural sciences are not directly transferable onto the realms of the social. In the first instance, the very idea that a ‘fact’ can exist external to the minds, rationales and discourses that produce it is subject to criticism since “it is not the ‘actual’ interconnections of ‘things’ but the conceptual interconnections of problems which define the scope of the various sciences” (Weber, 1949, p.68). In other words, any ‘fact’ is socially constructed and may consequently shift in its relevance, ‘truth-value’ and even its very status as a ‘fact’ when subjected to, or produced through, different conceptual frameworks. Scientific ‘facts’, therefore, are dependent entirely on the theoretical problematics that enable particular questions to be asked of particular aspects of ‘reality’ (Bourdieu et al, 1991,
p.35). In a sense, then, the very authority afforded positivist scientific methods can itself be a pervasive element of spontaneous sociology since it enables ‘common-sense’ to be concealed under the guise of ‘true’ science. This is no more evident than in the frequent conduct of ‘objective’ empiricist research that ‘measures’ various relationships made relevant through theories and activities recognisable as civic participation and/or sustainability. In instances such as this, while the method may be viewed presumptuously to identify the ‘facts’, the theory upon which the study is based is in the first place a product of ‘common-sense’. Empiricism, therefore, far from providing a necessary departure from spontaneous sociology, may instead intensify the illusion of transparency from which it derives its credibility.

In light of these propositions, the sociologist interested in producing sociological accounts that are not ‘spontaneous’, ‘prophetic’ or ‘empiricist for its own sake’ is faced with an arduous task. Shedding the illusion of transparency is perhaps more difficult for the sociologist than any other scientist since the ‘common-sense’ world is both his/her scientific interest and impediment. While seeking to understand and scientifically delineate facets of the social world that are invariably comprised by ‘common-sense’, he/she is habitually tempted to utilise the social preconceptions from which he/she seeks to escape. A central task for the circumspect sociologist, therefore, is to apply techniques that will enable him/her to achieve a ‘break’ with ‘prenotions’. In the absence of a clear formula through which to perform such a break, epistemological vigilance is necessary.
in order to ensure that a “break” is truly achieved rather than simply proclaimed (Bourdieu, et al, 1991).

There are many techniques – provisional definition, “logical critique of ideas, statistical testing of spurious self-evidences, radical and methodical challenging of appearances” - that may perform “break-inducing function[s]” (Bourdieu, et al, 1991, p.14-15). While many of these can be broadly applied, taking heed of the warning against the blind application of the positivist method, it is foreseeable that the impulsive use of any technique or method runs the risk of presupposing the performance of a ‘break’ without basis. Rather, the practice of epistemological vigilance demands continuous reflection on the problem at hand coupled by a rigorous yet sufficiently flexible application of methods and methodologies that can best answer the research questions posed. This points to a logic of research that is process oriented rather than predetermined. With the appreciation that social research cannot discover or extract the ‘facts’ but rather constructs its object in relation to the problem that is posed, epistemological rigour only can arise through a process that is self-reflective and reflexive. In this way, ‘truths’ are seen to be ascertained via the on-going rectification and avoidance of error, rather than accessible through any fixed or formal procedures whereby error is seen to arise only through their transgression (Bourdieu, et al, 1991).
3.2 The Methodological Development of the Thesis

In light of these observations, the methodology applied in the course of research for this thesis has been developed retroductively in relation to the identification of aims, the selection and refinement of the case study data and the selection and application of methods. Rather than represent the methodological development of the thesis as a linear process deriving from a set of pre-determined research questions, it is necessary to acknowledge from the outset that the research questions cited in Chapter One emerged from an iterative conceptual and methodological process involving:

a) the application of different methods, each of which performed different kinds of ‘break-inducing’ functions in relation to notions of civic participation and sustainability and;

b) the application of data reduction techniques that, relative to the methods and findings, enabled the on-going refinement of the nature of the case.

The remainder of this chapter maps out the central processes involved in the conceptual and methodological development of the thesis. More detailed accounts of the specific methods used to address the research questions are provided in the papers prepared for publication presented in chapters four, five and six.
3.2.1 Break One: The Governmentality Perspective

Beginning with the general task of performing a ‘break’ with common-sense applications of civic participation and sustainable development in research and literature, the governmentality perspective presented as an obvious choice given the body of work that already existed in relation to the topic area. In light of the work of Nikolas Rose on ‘civic community’ as a technology of government, the governmentality perspective was first identified as a means to perform a ‘break’ with common-sense applications of civic participation in the context of sustainable development discourse. Rather than take-for-granted notions of civic community, as they are frequently conveyed in perspectives promoting the ‘Third Way’ for politics, the governmentality perspective provides a conceptual framework through which to examine how notions of civic participation and sustainability are deployed as ‘techniques of government’.

For Rose (1993), the governmentality perspective provides a means to rupture with traditional political sociological models that view liberalism as a “political philosophy”, political epoch, or particular societal form and, instead, understand it as “formula of rule” (Rose, 1993, p.283). In this context, ‘politics’, or more specifically the activity of ‘politics’, is no longer taken-for-granted, and instead becomes the object of analysis (Rose, 1996, p.38). This involves an articulation of the liberal mentalities of rule and the problematisation of the ‘lines of force’ through which the behaviour of free citizens is regulated and aligned with political principles (Murdoch, 2000). In short, the governmentality perspective
problematises the ways in which reality is made ‘thinkable’, and rule ‘operable’, under the guise of liberalism.

3.2.1.1 Break One: The Selection of Case Study Data

Given its roots in Foucauldian thought, documents comprise the central data source for applications of the governmentality perspective. Traditionally, Foucault’s (1979, 1981) method, and the governmentality perspective more specifically, involves historically tracking the ‘invention’ of phenomena that have come to form part of the everyday mentalities and governmentalities characteristic of contemporary society. However, in this case, a different approach was taken that would allow for inquiry into how governmentalities involving ‘civic participation for sustainable development’ presented themselves at different ‘institutional’ levels of government. This diversion from the traditional application of the governmentality perspective was inspired by a specific interest in how the ‘global-local’ governance rationale, so readily promoted in discourses on sustainability and governance more broadly, played out in the policy language of government institutions at these levels and at the mid-level of the nation state. Hence, in order to explore how civic participation – particularly with respect to civic rights and responsibilities – were deployed in the institutional language of government at the different levels, three sustainable development policy documents were selected: Agenda 21 (United Nations Division for Sustainable Development, 1992) to represent global policy; the Australian National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development
(Ecologically Sustainable Development Steering Committee, 1992) to represent national policy; and the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan (Queensland Government Office of Urban Management, 2004) to represent regional policy. In governmentality terms, these documents can be seen as programmatic artefacts of the exercise of Third Way political rationalities. As such, they provide the opportunity to ‘break’ with taken-for-granted conceptions of civic participation and sustainability by exploring how sustainable development policy discourse deploys and manages civic rights and responsibilities as techniques of government.

3.2.2 Break Two: Pedagogic Relations between the Text and the Acquirer

Applying the governmentality perspective involved the adoption of a conceptual framework that purported to talk about relationships of governmentality as they work through the texts in question. However, as much as the findings did reveal some ways in which ‘civic community’ was deployed in the language of sustainable development policy as a technique of government, the reflective methodological significance of examining documents from the viewpoint of the governmentality perspective resides in the opportunity to scrutinise the qualities of the perspective and reflect on the value of the approach. In examining the language of the policy documents using the governmentality perspective, it became apparent that the texts contained some implicit qualities resembling ‘lines of force’ that were not made explicit so much in the work performed by Rose (1993; 1996; 2000). In this respect, while common applications of the
governmentality perspective might enhance understanding of the nature of the discourse and the way it might possibly work as ‘lines of force’, it arguably takes for granted – or is not interested in – some of the more specific social processes going on between the text and its audience that also comprise a part of these ‘lines of force’.

This observation prompted a search for a framework that was both conceptual and methodological and that would enhance understanding of the text and its audience as ‘acquirers’ in a seemingly pedagogic relationship. This turn was underpinned by the rationale that if the language of the policy documents was oriented to shaping the conduct and behaviours of subjects involving a process of responsibilisation, then it must, at least in part, be oriented to teaching subjects how to be responsible, which in this case meant being ‘sustainable’. Here, Bernstein’s (2000) work in relation to pedagogic discourse and practice was identified as a useful ‘thinking tool’ in terms of how to examine sustainable development policy discourse in terms of the pedagogic relationships between text and its audience. Bernstein’s concepts of classification and framing help to illustrate the way the pedagogic qualities implicit in one of the policy texts facilitate the transmission of the ‘rules’ of civic participation for sustainability. The pedagogic relations between the text and the acquirer therefore might be seen to form part of the ‘lines of force’ through which the conduct of agents is aligned with the principles of active citizenship and sustainable development.
3.2.2.1 Break Two: The Refinement of Case Study Data

In order to achieve the second ‘break’ with common-sense conceptions of civic participation and sustainability, it was necessary to identify a specific site of sustainable development policy discourse that would enable a detailed analysis of how pedagogic relations were constructed and managed in the text. Hence, a data reduction process was undertaken that took account of the following:

a) *Comparative consistency:* Since the second research question emerged from the application of the governmentality perspective to three sustainable development policy documents, it was considered important to maintain a level of consistency in terms of the data sources. This would provide for a level of comparative reliability and validity in relation to any conclusions that may be drawn in relation to the two different ‘break-inducing’ approaches.

b) *Manageability:* While maintaining consistency in data sources was important, addressing questions about the nature of the pedagogic relationship between policy texts and their audience required a detailed analysis of the specific linguistic strategies embodied in the discourse. In light of the limits of the study, it was therefore necessary to reduce the volume of data to ensure that the appropriate level of specificity could be achieved.

c) *Principles of case study refinement:* Conceptually and methodologically, the use of data that would best enable a focussed examination of the pedagogic relationships between the text and its audience was of the
greatest importance. The Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan: For Consultation was selected on the basis of three principles: First, the application of the governmentality perspective revealed that this document, out of the three policy documents examined, contained language that emphasised civic responsibilities over civic rights. As such, it presented as a probable site for communications that were pedagogic in nature. Second, since it was originally selected to represent 'local-level' policy document – the site where civic participation is espoused to be most necessary in discourses on sustainable development – this document was seen as the most likely site for pedagogic transmissions that directly selected citizens (as opposed to governments and citizens in the case of the global and national policies) as pedagogic subjects. Third, as a consultation document, it was produced with the intent (or at least partial intent) of being used in the context of a civic participatory process where regional citizens would be provided the opportunity to provide feedback to its institutional authors that, in theory, would require citizens to enact their responsibility for ‘sustainable’ regional planning. Consequently, it served as an instrumental case of the discursive production of civic participation in ‘sustainable’ regional planning, bounded, of course, by the discourse intrinsic to the document itself (Stake, 2000).

d) Implications for the generalisability of the study: The data reduction process utilised resulted in the refinement of the case – from one of
sustainable development policy discourse more generally into a singular case of the discursive production of civic participation in ‘sustainable’ regional planning. In this respect, the case study was selected not for its generalisability to other cases or contexts, but rather because of its potential to exhibit “crucial features whose interrelations are of theoretical significance” (Adkins, 1997, p.72).

3.2.3 Break Three: The Interactional Production of ‘the Citizen’

In the course of analysing the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan: For Consultation for its pedagogic qualities, it became evident that another layer of ‘common-sense’ was being unwittingly relied upon. As much as it was possible to show how ‘the citizen’ was selected as a pedagogic subject, who ‘the citizen’ was had been taken for granted. Indeed, when reading and analysing the text in question, it was immediately clear who ‘the citizen’ was and who he/she was not and this recognition had been incorporated into the analysis a pre-given ‘fact’ and, to a great extent, a generalised phenomena. In many ways, and despite the intention to ‘break’ with the world of ‘common-sense’, the treatment of ‘the citizen’ in this way represents a confounding of topic and resource, much like that seen in conventional sociology. According to Zimmerman and Pollner:

In terms of both the substantive themes brought under examination and the formal properties of the structures examined, professional and lay sociologist are in tacit agreement. For example, while the sociologist and the policeman may entertain very
different theories of how a person comes to be a juvenile delinquent, and while each may appeal to disparate criteria and evidence for support of their respective versions, they have no trouble in agreeing that there are persons recognizable as juvenile delinquents and that there are structured ways in which these persons come to be juvenile delinquents. It is in this agreement – agreement as to the fundamental and ordered existence of the phenomenon independent of its having been addressed by some method of inquiry – that professional and lay sociologists are mutually oriented to a common factual domain.

(Zimmerman & Pollner, 1970, p.81)

This recognition led to a new kind of problematic – one that was ethnomethodological in nature. Ethnomethodology is centrally concerned with the ways in which parties to an interaction actively and procedurally constitute their social realities (Garfinkel, 1967). For the ethnomethodologist, therefore, ‘the citizen’ and the social order within which the citizen is situated is produced and reproduced on specific occasions of interaction. In this context, the task of the analyst is to explicate and understand the processes through which such reasoning is ‘done’ by participants in the course of interaction. Hence, in order to further unpack the ‘common-sense’ bases through which civic participation for sustainability is produced and constructed in the text of the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan: For Consultation, Membership Categorization Analysis – allied with Conversation Analysis – was selected as a means to explicate the methodic and common-sense ways in which ‘the citizen’ is produced in the text and enrolled in the sustainability agenda.
3.2.3.1 Break Three: The Refinement of Case Study Data

Taking an ethnomethodological approach to examine the methods through which ‘the citizen’ is produced in text involved a further reduction in the case study data. The same rationales as those described above involving data consistency, manageability and the generalisability of the case study were applied in the data reduction process. In terms of the principles of case study selection, in this instance, it was necessary to isolate a component of the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan: For Consultation that would enable an examination of how ‘the citizen’ and ‘civic values and obligations’ are produced in the context of the text. The Foreword of the document was selected as a refined case of civic participation in ‘sustainable’ regional planning on the basis that:

a) it provided the first point of interactional contact between the authors and readers, aside from the title page

b) it is the only part of the document that speaks directly to the reader and hearably produces a specific kind of relationship between authors and readers in the context of the civic participatory exercise

c) it hearably describes who the reader is – ‘the citizen’ - and what his/her civic values and obligations are in relation to ‘sustainable’ regional planning
3.3 The Overarching Problematic: A Case of Enrolling the Citizen in ‘Sustainable’ Regional Planning

The conceptual and methodological processes adopted to achieve a ‘break’, or in this case ‘breaks’, with the taken-for-granted world, involved a process of reflexively developing an overarching problematic regarding the ‘conditions of possibility’ under which notions of civic participation for sustainability are incorporated into the everyday logics of social agents (Bourdieu, 1990). While each study – including each case and the method used to examine the case – is conceptually and methodologically rigorous in their own right, the reflective processes that underpinned the methodological development of the thesis as a whole resulted in a revelation that each study was progressively unpacking the ways in which the policy discourse oriented to enrolling social agents as active citizens for ‘sustainable’ regional planning. In this respect, as a whole, the policy discourse examined in the thesis represents a case of enrolling the citizen in sustainable development.
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Governmentality of Sustainable Development Policy

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Community Participation, Rights and Responsibilities:
The Governmentality of Sustainable Development Policy

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Abstract
This article explores how participative democratic principles, specifically the idea of community participation in decision-making processes, are framed as community rights and/or responsibilities in sustainable development policy at different levels of government. In doing this, the paper examines the contribution of the governmentality perspective to an understanding of the nature of relationships involved in regulation through community. The paper first briefly reviews key tenets of ‘third way’ politics and the alternative view proffered by critiques from the governmentality perspective. It then turns to an analysis of how techniques of rights and responsibilities are implicit in the language of sustainable development policy at three levels: global (Agenda 21), national (Australian national policy - Australian National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development), and regional (Queensland Regional Policy - Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan). Finally, we consider some implications of our application of a governmentality perspective for how we understand government, community and community participation, and sustainable development. In doing so, we argue that neither community, nor sustainable development, can be separated from the techniques of rights and responsibilities that enable ‘government at a distance’.
Introduction

The notion of community has become a prominent theme in the language of governments across the western world. With the emergence of the Third Way political agenda, the participation of community in political decision making is now viewed an almost sacrosanct part of the democratic process. Underpinned by a critique of nation-based representative democracy – particularly in the face of global issues such as those pertaining to the environment and culture - the Third Way emphasises a move towards associative democracy whereby community comes to play an active role in political decision-making. According to Giddens (2000), the Third Way for politics transcends the left/right divide and proffers a policy framework that is capable of managing the complexities of the modern world that traditional policy responses could not. Giddens (1998) points out that:

The theme of community is fundamental to the new politics, but not just as an abstract slogan. The advance of globalization makes a community focus both necessary and possible, because of the downward pressure it exerts. Community doesn’t imply trying to recapture lost forms of local solidarity; it refers to practical means of furthering the social and material refurbishment of neighbourhoods, towns and larger local areas.

(Giddens, 1998: 79)

In this context, the common themes in the language of government are: active civic participation, community participation in decision-making, the
decentralisation of power to local levels and the development of policies and initiatives that are sensitive to local contexts and community needs.

However, a body of literature has emerged that provides an alternative perspective to the Third Way’s normative assertions of community as something that is inherently positive and ‘necessary’ in the light of an ever-globalising world and the subsequent concern with reconceptualising the democratic model (Marinetto, 2003). Informed by Foucault’s (1979; 1981) concept of ‘governmentality’, this approach finesses a conceptualisation of the Third Way as a political project, rather emphasising it as “a certain way of visualizing political problems, a rationality for rendering them thinkable and manageable, and a set of moral principles by which solutions may be generated and legitimized” (Rose, 2000: 1). For Foucauldians such as Rose (2000), therefore, the significance of the Third Way is its orientation to govern, at ‘arms length’, the behaviour of individuals through community. In this context, the Third Way can be seen as one of the many strategies of advanced liberalism.

While recognising that community is not a new concept in political theory or the social sciences (Marinetto, 2003), Rose’s (1996) perspective derives from the central argument that liberal political rationalities and techniques - oriented to governing the ‘social’ through the mechanisms of the nation state - have given way to a governmentality that invokes community as a means to collectivise and organise “subjects of government” in ways that facilitate ethico-political
governance. This transition is characterised by a shift whereby “responsibility is no longer understood as a relationship with the state, but as one of obligation to those for whom the individual cares most: the family, the neighbourhood, the workplace, and ultimately, the community” (Crawshaw et al, 2003: 37). Thus, behaviour is increasingly governed through the realm of ethics, whereby individuals are ethically obliged to act for the benefit of their group – to become masters of their own collective destinies by becoming ethical citizens of their community. In light of these observations, Rose (1993; 1996; 2000; Miller & Rose, 1990) and others who have sought to describe advanced liberal governmentalities (see Cruikshank, 1994; Raco & Imrie, 2000; Atkinson, 1999) have come to characterise community as a new “technology of government” that is used to “shape, normalise and instrumentalise the conduct, thought, decisions and aspirations of others in order to achieve the objectives [authorities of various sorts] consider desirable” (Miller & Rose, 1990: 8). This process is referred to generally as one of responsibilisation (Rose, 1996; 1999).

Given the inseparability of Third Way ideas of community and active citizen participation, a number of studies invoking a governmentality perspective have noted how notions of community participation in political decision-making (while often asserted in communitarian and associative democratic frameworks as inherently positive) are inextricably tied with the implicit agenda “to govern without governing society, to govern through regulated choices made by discrete and autonomous actors in the context of particular commitments to
families and communities" (Rose, 1996: 328). In particular, notions of local empowerment and engagement, capacity building and local knowledge are seen as strategies that create a moral subjectivity of responsible self-help and self-reliance (Marinetto, 2003: 109). Raco and Imrie (2000) link these strategies with overarching rights and responsibility agendas in their account of governmentality in UK urban policy. They propose that, alongside community, rights and responsibilities operate as “technologies of government action” whereby responsibility is characterised “in dynamic and positive terms, or as an essential part of the relations and interdependence of connected societies” (Raco & Imrie, 2000: 2197). We explore this notion further by describing the way in which participative democratic principles, specifically the idea of community participation in decision-making processes, are framed as community rights and/or responsibilities in sustainable development policy at different levels of government.

**Sustainable Development Policy**

Even a superficial reading of the sustainability literature and associated policy documents reveals arguments that emphasise the salience of local and regional community participation in achieving and managing sustainable development. ‘Community’ participation in the development of local and regional planning and development policy, ‘community’ projects that address local environmental,
economic and social concerns, and ‘community’ based capacity-building and educational programs that address issues of ‘sustainability’ - all of these are regularly celebrated by sustainable development advocates (see Lipschutz, 1996; Warburton, 1998). In light of this, the parallels with the Third Way’s emphasis on local community participation in political decision-making processes are striking. Sustainable development policy, therefore, presents as an interesting case through which to examine how community and participative democratic principles are deployed governmentally in this context.

For this purpose, three sustainable development policies were selected: *Agenda 21* (United Nations Division for Sustainable Development, 1992) to represent global policy; the Australian *National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development* (Ecologically Sustainable Development Steering Committee, 1992) to represent national policy; and the *Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan* (Queensland Government Office of Urban Management) to represent regional policy. In governmentality terms, these documents can be seen as programmatic artefacts of the exercise of Third Way political rationalities. Hence, they provide the opportunity to explore how sustainable development policy discourse deploys and manages participative community rights and responsibilities as techniques of government. These policies are, in principle, consistent in so far as the logics of sustainability and community participation are concerned, yet take increasingly localised settings as their theme. Their selection allows investigation into how these logics are
manifest at different ‘taken-for-granted’ socio-spatial and political levels. While our claims about the Australian NSESD and DSEQRP are not necessarily generalisable to other national and regional contexts, they nevertheless provide a foundation for further investigation into other national and regional policies that take sustainable development as their theme.

**Agenda 21**

At the global level, *Agenda 21* is the principal policy that formally placed sustainable development on the international agenda. Resulting from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992, *Agenda 21* marks an attempt to develop policy that would lead to the application of ‘sustainable development’ practices and a consequential improvement in the quality of life for the world’s populations (Meister & Japp, 1998). Framed in the context of humanity facing “a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy, and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which we depend for our well-being”, *Agenda 21* formulates objectives in relation to a number of Programme Areas, all constructed as being a part of sustainable development. Consistent with broader sustainable development ideology, the Programme Areas identified in the policy address two key aspects - the ‘whats’ of sustainable development relating broadly to social, economic, ecological and resource management issues (Chapters 2 – 22); and the ‘hows’ of sustainable development, defined in terms of strengthening the role of major groups and
the implementation of the policy (Chapters 24 – 40). In respect to the latter, governments, particularly national governments, are considered primarily responsible for facilitation and implementation of the ‘hows’ of the policy and, by implication, are also given overarching responsibility for the ‘whats’.

*Agenda 21* provides a strong basis for understanding local democratic participation in a *rights-oriented* framework. Endorsed by the international community alongside the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* (UN General Assembly, 1992), *Agenda 21* was born out of a context of human rights. While promoting, first and foremost, global citizens’ right to sustainable development and its sub-components (i.e. the ‘whats’), *Agenda 21* speaks of community within the same *rights* framework. Community’s *right* (whether the community be defined as indigenous, rural, local, or other) to participate in decision-making processes at the local level is promoted through themes of inclusion, local knowledge and, tentatively, empowerment and capacity building.

*Inclusion*

Throughout *Agenda 21*’s text are a number of statements that promote the participation of those affected by the implementation of policies, programmes and projects that further sustainable development. In this context, references to community are frequently aligned with groups such as local, rural, indigenous, women and youth, all of whom are recognisable (within a United Nations context) as having rights, yet a history whereby these rights often have been disregarded. This facilitates the understanding that “local communities”, “rural
communities”, and “indigenous peoples and their communities” are at risk of being excluded from participating in decision-making exercises. Hence, their inclusion in participatory processes is established as a right, and reinforced through repeated acknowledgements that governments should engage in a range of activities that foster community involvement. For example, governments are directed to “institutionalise” (7.20 (a)) “promote” (11.3 (b); 14.17 (a)) “facilitate and encourage” (10.10; 17.81 (a), 21.26 (c)) “launch or improve opportunities for” (11.13 (i)) “take into account the need for” (13.16 (h)), “mobilise and facilitate” (18.62) and “establish arrangements to strengthen” (26.3 (b)) the participation of communities in decisions and policy development pertaining to sustainable development and its sub-components.

Knowledge

Closely related to issues of inclusion, the language of Agenda 21 also incorporates the promotion of 'local' and 'traditional' knowledge as a legitimate and valuable source of information in the pursuit for sustainable development. Statements of this nature tend to be preceded or followed by directives to governments, institutions and/or experts to “support” (3.7, 17.94 (b)), “take account of” (5.8, 17.74 (b)), “draw on” (12.25 (d)), “recognise and foster” (15.4 (g); 16.7 (b)), “record, protect and promote” (15.5 (e)), “incorporate” (26.5, 26.6 (b)) “respect” (36.5 (b); 15.5 (e)), and “apply” (40.11) local and traditional knowledge in relation to decision-making, policy formulation, management strategies, research and the like. Directives such as these subtly imply that
local and traditional ‘knowledges’ have been or may be ignored without explicit
instruction to governing and expert bodies to acknowledge and appreciate
them. This reinforces the understanding that local and indigenous communities,
and other lay groups, have a right to be heard and to participate.

**Empowerment and Capacity Building**

Fortifying the *rights-oriented* version of community participation, established
through notions of inclusion and local knowledge, are a number of references
that can be interpreted as attending to issues of empowerment and capacity
building for participation. These are typified by accounts of specific needs: the
need for local community education and training (3.7 (e); 10.16 (c); 11.3 (b); 14.7 (c); 18.62; 18.80 (d); 26.9), ensuring community access to information
(10.11 (c); 11.3 (b); 40.11), the provision of resources and support (3.7; 11.18 (c); 18.22; 26.9); and the decentralisation and delegation of power and control
to local levels “where appropriate” (3.7 (d); 14.17 (c); 18.19; 18.54; 32.4). In
terms of a dialogue about rights, these matters can be interpreted as necessary
for enabling members of communities to exercise their right to participate in
decision-making processes.

We can anticipate that some suspicion has already been raised in the minds of
Rose-like critics of neo-liberalism in light of this account. Ultimately, it would be
difficult to argue with the idea that communities – local, indigenous, rural or the
like – should be included in decisions that affect them. It is equally unappealing
to challenge the notion that local knowledge should be respected and taken into
consideration in decision-making processes. Indeed, it may appear quite abhorrent to argue that the inclusion of communities and the incorporation of local knowledge in local decisions pertaining to sustainable development should not, morally and ethically, be basic community rights – and in principle we do not. However, the integration of notions of empowerment and capacity building into Agenda 21’s text may be seen to implicitly seed a second kind of logic that frames community in a different light. It is here that it becomes possible to see how rights and responsibilities in Agenda 21 operate as techniques of government.

Ostensibly, empowerment and capacity building may appear as basic necessities and a general public ‘good’, since they support and facilitate community’s right to democratic participation. From this perspective, training, access to information, the provision of resources and support, and the decentralisation of power can all be seen to provide the necessary conditions for communities to participate in decisions that affect them. However, notions such as empowerment and capacity building have instilled within them a fundamental ‘trade-off’ between community rights and community responsibility and, as such, can be seen as techniques “for the transformation of subjectivity from powerlessness to active citizenship” (Dean, 1999: 67). This is exemplified by the frequent slippage in the language of Agenda 21 between empowerment and capacity building for the sake of enabling community to participate, and empowerment and capacity building for the purpose of furthering sustainability objectives as they are defined within the text: For example, in chapter 11.3, an
activity that will contribute to “supporting sustainable development and environmental conservation” is “promoting participation... and access to information and training programs”; in chapter 14.16, the promotion for greater “community control over the resources on which it relies” is linked with the need for “training and capacity building to assume greater responsibilities in sustainable development efforts”; in chapter 18.22(d), “Strengthening the managerial capabilities of water user-groups, including women, youth, indigenous people and local communities” is for the express purpose of improving “water-use efficiency at the local level”; and in chapter 32.4, “The decentralization of decision-making towards local and community organizations” is described as being “the key in changing people’s behaviour and implementing sustainable farming strategies”.

Examples such as these expose how community rights and responsibilities work in concert as techniques of government. In this case, community’s right to participate, no doubt understood as inherently positive, is moderated by the ultimate responsibility to participate in a manner that contributes to achieving pre-defined sustainability objectives such as environmental conservation, water-use efficiency, behaviour change and sustainable farming strategies. This has implications for understanding the rights-oriented notions of inclusion and local knowledge. Here, the right of groups (at risk of exclusion) to be included in decision-making processes translates into a responsibility to become active agents in the pursuit for sustainability. Similarly, the right to be recognised as having meaningful knowledge that can inform decisions is arbitrated by a
responsibility to appreciate and accept that local knowledge is only of value so long as it contributes to a ‘higher-order’ knowledge that recognises the governmental objective of sustainable development as the prevailing goal. If local knowledge (and practice) happens to detract from this goal, communities must be empowered, trained, informed and resourced in order to modify their knowledge and behaviours appropriately. It is only then – after the participatory conduct of citizens has been appropriately ‘shaped, channelled and guided’ (Hunt & Wickham, 1994) - that the decentralisation of power is viable. Here, the liberty afforded to community to democratically participate in decisions, underpinned by an ethic of freedom (Rose, 1999), becomes contingent on the exercise of another kind of ethic that embraces sustainable development. In short, democracy in the discourse of Agenda 21 is provisional upon its commitment to sustainable development.

The analysis of the discourse of sustainability at the level of global government thus resonates in a very generic way with the principles of governmentality. However, the discursive framework of Agenda 21 refers largely to abstract principles that must lend themselves to applicability in national, regional and local contexts. The examination of policies at these levels reveals added dimensions to the techniques involved in regulation through community. The paper now turns to an outline of these at the level of national and regional sustainability discourses.
The Australian National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development

The Australian *National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development* (NSESD) was developed in 1992, fulfilling the *Agenda 21* requirement. The NSESD contains a number of themes that overlap the *Agenda 21* Programme Areas and was promoted as having legitimately addressed the *Agenda 21* themes relevant to the Australian context (Department of Environment, Sport and Territories, 1996). Its main chapters are divided into two sections. The first, “sectoral issues”, is organised in a manner that reflects different departmental interests represented in current Australian government structures (e.g.: agriculture, mining, tourism, etc). The second, “intersectoral issues”, incorporates a number of themes that generally reflect *Agenda 21*’s Programme Areas, although many chapters utilise different wording - for example, “Gender Issues” rather than “Women”, “Employment and Adjustment” rather than “Poverty” and “Public Health” rather than “Health”. Unlike *Agenda 21*, chapters are not easily recognisable as representing either the ‘whats’ or ‘hows’ of sustainable development. Instead, within each chapter, the ‘whats’ are defined through ‘objectives’, and the ‘hows’ articulated beneath each objective identifiable by the preface “Governments will:”. It suffices to say that akin with *Agenda 21*, the NSESD also places responsibility for sustainable development in Australia in the hands of governments. However, since the NSESD itself

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2 For those unfamiliar with the Australian context, “Ecological” is broadly defined to include economic and social dimensions as well as those typically implied by the term.
stands as the Federal Government’s contribution, it effectively devolves responsibility for both the ‘whats’ and the ‘hows’ to sub-level governments.

**Realising the Active Citizen**

In parallel with *Agenda 21*, the NSESD contains a number of references that employ the competing, yet governmentally complementary, logics of community *rights* and community *responsibility*. In this case, however, the strategic application of rights and responsibilities shifts to reflect the institutional, spatial and cultural proximity of the nation state (as opposed to a global government body) to its subjects. While ‘governing at a distance’ remains the primary task-at-hand, the techniques involved are evidently modified to accommodate, or subjugate, the official regulatory relationship between ‘the governors’ and ‘the governed’. This is first evident in the NSESD’s attendance to issues that substantiate that community *has* been included in the development of the strategy itself. In one respect, this has to do with the subordinate relationship of the NSESD to *Agenda 21*, whereby the former represents a governmental ‘answer’ to the participative demands and directives of the latter. The NSESD implicitly asserts, through its account of the community consultation undertaken, that the federal government has met its participative burden as stipulated by *Agenda 21*. In another respect, however, this reflects the technical use of participatory rights as a means to construct community as an active agency of government. For example, in Part 1 of the NSESD under the heading “How has this Strategy been developed?”, it states:
Community consultation formed an important part of this process, with a series of one day consultation forums being held around Australia to discuss mechanisms for integrating economic and environmental concerns, and an opportunity for broader community comment on the interim reports of the Working Groups.

This emphasis on ‘community consultation’ is reinforced through references to the Ecologically Sustainable Development Working Group having engaged in “extensive consultation”, “promoted a continuing dialogue with interests and community groups” and “promote[d] discussion and obtain[ed] community views on possible future policy directions”. By referring to a range of consultative exercises with community groups in Part 1, the text affirms that community’s right to participate, in so far as the Strategy itself goes, has already been afforded. In so doing, it implicitly asserts that the strategy, and the sustainable development values that it promotes, are reflections of community values and opinions. Community, then, becomes its own government, and dissention from the NSESD would be a denunciation of one’s own ‘community’ values. Hence, by affording community its right to participate, ‘democracy’ is actualised and active citizens emerge, characterised by their inherent support for the NSESD and sustainable development.

**The Included Community**

Parts 2 and 3 of the policy incorporate a number of directives to governments that construct community participation in decision-making exercises as a community right. Like Agenda 21, inclusion is a detectable theme in the
NSESD. However, in keeping with the articulation of the “extensive consultation” undertaken, the degree to which it rhetorically promotes the understanding of participation as a community right is mediated by the implicit assertion that the Australian context does not yield the possibility of outright exclusion. In this respect, the theme of inclusion is framed by a logic of enhancement of inclusive participatory processes rather than the initiation of such. This understanding is encouraged through objectives to improve “mechanisms for community participation in decision making” (1.1), “community consultation” (5.3) and “consultative or joint working group arrangements with the community” (16.3). In a similar vein, governments are directed to provide for effective “input and participation by… the community” (2.3), “consultative mechanisms with community…” (12) and “communication on ESD issues and policies between governments, industry, conservation groups, unions and community groups” (32.2). The objectives to improve and provide effective mechanisms for community participation in decisions subsequently allows for the understanding that the NSESD’s role is to enhance pre-established participatory democratic processes and hence augment the rights already afforded to Australian communities.

Arguably it is the NSESD’s premise that Australians already enjoy basic participatory rights that enables the responsibilisation (Rose 1996; 1999) of community to be manifested through references implying local knowledge. Here, communities are often constructed as already having sufficient knowledge to “provide input on the acceptability of… [regulatory] measures” for
tourism development (7.2), “develop effective and efficient measures to achieve environmental protection” (Challenge 12) and take “action to develop local strategies for ESD” (16.3). In this context, the theme of ‘partnerships’ between community and government, as well as other relevant stakeholders, becomes salient. For example, in the NSESD “Governments will”: “work with industry and community groups to develop guidelines on environmentally appropriate tourism development…” (7.1); “in association with the automotive industry and community groups, conduct driver education programs…” (8.4); and facilitate and programmatically formalise a range of consultative mechanisms that enable these partnerships (1.1, 2.3, 3.2, 5.3, 7.1, 7.2, 16.3, 23.2, 32.2, 32.3, 33.1). Statements such as these promote the notion of government-community partnerships and may be seen to endorse a rights oriented impression of participation - whereby communities have a right to be heard, and a right to expect that local knowledge will be respected and incorporated into decision-making processes. However, in line with Rose’s (2000) account of local government, the NSESD’s multiplication of agencies of government to include community within a framework of rights, inevitably masks its regulatory motive. Indeed, inherent in the concept of ‘partnerships’ as a means to enhance the community’s enjoyment of its democratic right to participate is a significant trade-off between rights and responsibilities. This is almost made explicit in Part 1 of the NSESD:

Australia's potential for successfully embracing ESD depends in large part on our ability to recognise and utilise the full range of [private enterprise and community]
experience. This can be facilitated by creating a partnership between government, the corporate world and community groups that have a particular interest in, or capacity to contribute to ESD. (Part 1)

In this quotation, the need to “recognise and utilise” community experience is counter-balanced by the proposal of a partnership between only those who “have a particular interest in, or capacity to contribute to ESD”. This enables the notion of a democratic ‘partnership’ to be understood as one that requires responsibility on the part of community and other stakeholders to recognise that contributing to the pre-determined goal – sustainable development – is a condition of membership. This stance also paves the way for capacity building to be smuggled into a discourse that apparently assumes the inclusion of community and the utility and value of local knowledge in the Australian democratic context.

Like Agenda 21, the NSESD attends to issues of capacity building by incorporating a number of references to community education and awareness-raising (11, 32, 32.1, 32.3) ensuring community access to information (2.3, 7.3, 14.2, 32.1) and the promotion of “community based self-help approaches” (1.2). An apparent disparity may be noted here. On the one hand, the NSESD promotes the understanding that in Australia, community’s participatory right is already respected - subsequently justifying the document’s concern with enhancing (rather than initiating) inclusive participatory processes that incorporate the application of local knowledge.
On the other hand, capacity building is still promoted, suggesting that community may not be participating to its full potential. This apparent contradiction, while perhaps not entirely resolved within the policy, is managed through maintaining a focus on capacity building for the purpose of achieving ESD, rather than for the purpose of enabling community participation in decisions pertaining to ESD. In other words, the ethic of sustainability, not democracy, drives the agenda.

In this respect, the theme of empowerment that complements capacity building in *Agenda 21*, is replaced in the NSESD with one more overtly associated with *responsibilisation*. This is evident within a number of statements in the NSESD whereby the effective implementation of ESD is viewed as dependent on the “participation of every Australian – through all levels of government… and the community” (Part 1), and embracing ESD is said to rest “on the ability of all Australians to contribute individually, through modifying everyday behaviour, and through the opportunities open to us to influence community practices” (Part 1). Capacity building is therefore inextricably linked to a number of objectives: to ensuring that “progress towards ecologically sustainable development is supported by community understanding and action” (32); to developing “a high level of community awareness and understanding of the goal, objectives and principles of this ESD Strategy” (32.1); and to encouraging “business, industry and community groups to establish their own priorities and processes for embracing ESD as part of the nationally-coordinated effort” (32.2). In essence, capacity-building
strategies such as education, awareness-raising and providing access to information are oriented to encouraging community and other groups to take responsibility for achieving ESD. This functions to displace participation from the context of democracy, where it may be seen as a community right, and shift it further into a framework denoting participation as a community responsibility for the achievement of ESD.

Hence, while *Agenda 21* sets a scene whereby democratic participation is provisional upon a commitment to sustainable development, the NSES D ‘raises the stakes’. Through its implicit assertion of the pre-existing democratic character of Australian society, the explication of the steps taken to ensure opportunities for participation in the development of the Strategy itself, and its constructed commitment to *enhancing* participatory processes, the discourse of the NSESD reminds community that its right to participate has been afforded. It then, however, demands reparation in the form of community taking on the obligation to actively participate for the purpose of its own agenda – sustainability. In this respect, the NSESD enrols community as a responsible agent in exchange for its right to participate and, in the process, begins to more explicitly skew the purpose of participation from one of a democratic nature to one that pays homage to the sustainability ethic.

At the National level, then, the language of community, through the establishment of links between rights and responsibilities in the Australian democratic context, constitutes a device through which citizens become...
available as candidates for participation by virtue of their “capacity” and “interest”. By contrast, at a state level, Queensland Regional sustainable development policy makes more explicit reference to relationships that are more directly aligned with the experience of its audience. Therefore, the paper now turns to an analysis of the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan.

**The Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan**

The Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan (DSEQRP) represents an evolutionary response to the NSESD’s call for sub-level governments to promote and achieve sustainable development. In this case, the Queensland State Government has responded by focusing policy on particular geographic regions within Queensland, with South East Queensland being the region that has the highest population in the State and the fastest growing population in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2005). Subsequently, the DSEQRP takes regional growth management as its central theme and marks out the “Desired Regional Outcomes” and associated “Principles” that are proposed to represent sustainable growth and development in the South East Queensland region until 2026. The chapters of the DSEQRP do not correspond neatly to those of the NSESD, but rather reflect the key themes relevant to regional planning, including ecological, economic and social dimensions. The Principles

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3 The DSEQRP was preceded by the South East Queensland Regional Framework for Growth Management 2026 and the South East Queensland Regional Framework for Growth Management 2000; the latter was a direct response to the NSESD.
within each chapter are said to be based on the principles for Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) in the Integrated Planning Act 1995 (the Queensland legislative framework for ESD) and the NSESD (Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation, 2004: 16). Unlike Agenda 21 and the NSESD, the DSEQRP does not clearly define its primary audience, but notably has statutory implications for both the Queensland State Government itself as well as local governments in the South East Queensland region. There is further recognition within the foreword and introduction to the plan that the extent to which the planned urban pattern of growth is achieved will be dependent on community attitudes and behaviours. The fact that the DSEQRP is still in its consultation phase makes it a particularly interesting case for exploring how the policy constructs the participative role of the regional community. In this respect, it provides an opportunity to analyse, not only how community’s role is constructed in the policy itself, but also how community is enjoined by the surrounding text to participate in a particular way.

The ‘Third Space’ of Community

The approach taken by the DSEQRP represents another shift in the way technologies of rights and responsibilities intersect with the language of community in different policy contexts. In this instance, the plan centres on issues pertaining to land use and the built environment. Sustainable development is thereby instituted with physical qualities where the built environment is brought into focus. The DSEQRP proposes dramatic changes...
to existing ‘unsustainable’ development patterns in the region are likely to impact directly on the communities (the regional community generally, and local communities within its boundaries) to whom the policy speaks. This presents a new kind of governmental problem whereby the task of ‘governing at a distance’ must be discerning in light of direct assertions and practical implications of the policy - through changes to the built environment, residential densities and, in some rural cases, development caps. As such, the potential tensions between ‘representative’ and ‘participative’ agendas must be carefully managed. On the one hand, the Queensland government is bound to assert that the draft plan reflects the ‘greater good’, lest it throw doubt on its own abilities to govern. On the other hand, it must simultaneously promote the ethic of participation to take account of the opinions of its subjects, particularly given that the draft is in its consultative phase. This tension is managed in the DSEQRP by the construction of a ‘third space’ of community (Rose, 1999) whereby the ‘regional community’ is instilled with, and characterised by, an ethic that supports not only sustainable development in principle, but the particular version of sustainability promoted in the draft plan. This ethico-political and rhetorically persuasive construction and linguistic mobilisation of an alliance between community and governmental objectives (Miller & Rose, 1990) becomes, in and of itself, a technique of responsibilisation.

In comparison with Agenda 21 and the NSES D, the DSEQRP represents a more acute case of community responsibilisation. This is initially evident in the
foreword and introduction where, on the one hand, community views on the
draft plan are ‘welcomed’ and ‘sought’ (p.2) while, on the other hand, the
community is firmly guided to accept the plan’s approach to managing growth in
South East Queensland (SEQ). In this section, the SEQ community is
encouraged “to ensure that the qualities that make South East Queensland
such an attractive place to call home are preserved for future generations” (p.2),
“to consider… the issues and decide to opt for a better future for the region”
(p.2), and “to ensure the communal outcome overrides self-interest”. These
appeals are made in the context of a number of statements emphasising the
need to carefully manage “the assets making South East Queensland such a
livable place…” (p.2):

We need Smart State planning now to protect our magnificent coastline and
waterways, regional landscape, rural production areas and environmental treasures.
We must also ensure the region remains economically vibrant, so we can continue to
provide jobs, maintain our unique sense of identity and place and improve the design
quality of our urban areas.

(DSEQRP, 2004: 2)

Subsequently, the ‘better future’ and ‘communal outcome’ are defined within
these parameters and community is enjoined as a part of the ‘we’ who value
the SEQ environment, economy and sense of identity. In this respect, part of
the plan’s effectiveness in constructing community as a responsible agent for
sustainable development lies in its capacity to prescribe a set of values for the
community that is consistent with sustainable development. The “choices community can make” are thereby defined within a set of ethical limits that support the objectives and principles of the DSEQRP and prohibit the promotion of values, activities or growth options that have been characterised as ‘unsustainable’ in the policy. As a result, the right of the SEQ community to participate in decisions pertaining to the draft plan during its consultation phase is subjugated by an overwhelming responsibility to endorse the version of sustainability put forth in the plan.

In the remainder of the DSEQRP, there is a notable lack of references to community that imply or emphasise community’s right or responsibility to participate in decision-making processes, possibly indicative of an assumption that this right is being afforded to community through the consultation phase. The only significant exception to this is Part E, section 3, entitled “Strong Communities”. This section outlines the Principles and Strategies required in order to achieve Desired Regional Outcome 3: “Cohesive, inclusive and healthy communities with a strong sense of identity and place – with access to a full range of services and facilities and appropriate housing to meet diverse needs.” (p.42). This section appeals to the notion of community participation as a right through its attention to themes of inclusion and capacity building. Apart from Desired Regional Outcome 3, the only express reference to inclusion is made in Principle 3.3: “Well designed, safe and healthy local environments to encourage active community participation; inclusive, engaged communities; and healthy lifestyle choices” (p. 43). Here, inclusion is closely associated with community
participation, constructing the understanding that the two are complementary, and hence both can be heard as community rights.

Some slippage, however, occurs in the subsequent references to community participation, whereby “community engagement” and “involving local communities in planning activities” are seen as a means to “improve the health of the community” and “create safe urban and rural environments” (p.43). This situation represents an interesting twist to Rose’s (1999) observations that discourses of community “present themselves simultaneously as a description of certain social and economic ills, a diagnosis of the causes of these ills and a solution to them”. Here, the ethic of sustainability takes on the same features. On the one hand, ‘safe and healthy communities’, understood as a component of sustainable development, are seen to be a pre-requisite for the affordance of community’s right to participate. Sustainable development is seen to be necessary in order to afford community its right to participate in decision-making processes. On the other hand, however, the participation of community is seen as necessary for the creation of ‘safe and healthy communities’, transforming the right to participate into a responsibility to participate for a pre-defined purpose. Community participation and sustainable development thereby become inter-changeable entities where one relies upon the other.

This anomaly carries through to statements that refer to capacity building. In the chapter entitled “Strong Communities”, community capacity building is
described as “the set of skills, relationships and networks that collectively exist in a community”. These capacities are linked with the ability of communities to provide “social support... when people need assistance”, “create community events and to build relationships and connections with each other and other communities”, “develop social capital and help to create a strong sense of identity and belonging in a community”, “influence decisions and processes for change”, and “become involved in planning” (p.44). In this context, community participation becomes inseparable from social support, building relationships and connections, and creating a sense of identity and belonging, all of which can be understood as components of sustainable development. Here, an apparent paradox emerges whereby sustainable development, on the one hand, is implied as a precondition for affording community its right to participate in Section 3. However, on the other hand, the overarching text presupposes that community is being afforded its right through the consultation phase, and subsequently functions to responsibilise the SEQ community to participate in a manner that supports the DSEQRP’s version of sustainable development.

While perhaps logically irreconcilable, this situation results from the application of responsibilising techniques designed to manage the tenuous relationship between the different community identities that are constructed within the text. When providing the overarching framework for the policy, the SEQ community is presented as having a coherent identity – one that values the SEQ environment, economy and quality of life, and one that already has a “unique
sense of identity and place” (p.2). In Section 3, however, the SEQ community is broken down into ‘sub-communities’, such as “greenfield”, “redevelopment”, “existing”, “rural”, “local” and “newly developed” (p. 44). These come to be understood as communities that either lack or, by default, possess the capacity to participate in decision-making processes. For example, capacity building programs are proposed to “support planning for greenfield and redevelopment projects” (p.42) and capacity is described as especially lacking in “newly developed communities” (p. 44). Similarly, rural communities require “improved community capacity to contribute to the development of land use and infrastructure plans, and other regional engagement processes” (p.45), assistance “to identify strategies for development and growth” (p. 44) and the opportunity “to explore alternative strategies for economic development and growth” (p.45). Given that, the SEQ community can now be understood as comprising different communities - some who have, and some who lack the capacity to exercise their democratic right to participate in decisions that affect them - the paradoxical representation of community participation as a means to, and a result of, sustainable development can be understood as a responsibilising device. That is, those who have the capacity to participate - those to whom the DSEQRP speaks - are constructed as responsible not only for participating in a manner that supports the draft plan’s version of sustainable development, but also (by implication) for affording the right to participate to communities and community members within SEQ who currently do not have
the capacity to do so. The community’s right to participate thereby becomes a responsibility to participate to enable the right to participate.

The tautological logic inherent in the discourse of the DSEQRP is potentially reflective of the burden placed on the Queensland State Government to meet the demands of the international and national governments to develop a local planning agenda that suitably promotes sustainable development while maintaining a participative democratic stance. While the NSESD makes inferences pertaining to the pre-existing democratic nature of Australian society, the heavily responsibilised version of community participation evident in the foreword and introduction of the DSEQRP completely takes-for-granted that the right to participate is being afforded to the SEQ community. However, in having then to consider ‘community’ issues as a component of sustainable development, community’s right to participate re-emerges as a theme, this time as a consequence of, rather than a means to, sustainable development. Hence, while Agenda 21 constructs community’s right to participate as provisional on taking responsibility for sustainable development, and the NSESD expects community to take responsibility for sustainable development in return for its pre-existing right to participate in the Australian context, the DSEQRP demands that community take responsibility for sustainable development that incorporates, as an outcome, the right to participate. Therefore, through the strategic application of techniques of rights and responsibilities at different levels of government, democracy is transformed
from a participative means to make decisions that produce outcomes - sustainable development or other – to the outcome in and of itself.

**Conclusion**

The fact that community and, indeed, sustainable development, are so readily presumed to represent an inherent ‘good’ also means that they have frequently evaded critical reflection. However, as this paper demonstrates, neither can be isolated from the rationalities and techniques of rights and responsibilities that facilitate ‘government at a distance’. Hence, applying a governmentality perspective to sustainable development policies associated with different levels of government has implications for the way in which community, participative democracy and sustainable development may be understood:

1. **Implications for Community and Participative Democracy**

In advanced liberal societies, it is difficult to conceptualise community participation in political decision-making processes as something other than essentially positive. Participative democracy is so frequently asserted to be the way forward for democracy – a necessary response to globalisation and a means of ensuring the social and material well-being of communities, as Giddens (1998) might argue – it is almost impossible to perceive it in an alternative light. However, these cases of sustainable development policy illustrate how community, and community participation, are manifest in techniques of rights and responsibilities. This perspective challenges notions
that community represents tangible ‘things’ and that participation corresponds
to specific ‘activities’. Instead, both can now be understood as constructed and
mobilised through the language of policy (and other programmatic actions) that
facilitate ‘government at a distance’: in Agenda 21, constructions of the *rights-
bearing* community generate a *space* through which the participatory conduct of
subjects is ethically shaped by implicitly coding notions of inclusion, local
knowledge and capacity building within a sustainability framework; in the
NSESD conduct and aspirations that support sustainable development are
mobilised via concepts of the *included* community; and the DSEQR produces
two versions of community that together create an obligatory framework,
whereby the self-regulated sustainable conduct of one community is required
for the good of the other. In each of these cases, community cannot be
reduced to corporeal ties and associations amongst actual people. It is, rather,
an ethically-laden construct of an intelligible domain through which to govern, at
arms length, “the conduct, thought, decisions and aspirations of others” in order
to advance sustainability objectives (Miller & Rose, 1990, p.8). Further, as
much as it may be tempting to hang on to the idea that these objectives are
stable and concrete, even these cannot be separated from mechanisms
enabling ‘action at a distance’.

2. Implications for Sustainable Development

Like community, sustainable development can be seen as embedded within
techniques of rights and responsibilities that produce and mould the enabling
conditions for the regulation of subjects. This presents an interesting scenario for how we might understand sustainable development - not as a deducible set of physical activities, informed choices or strategic approaches to balance economic, environmental and social needs, but as a broad rationality, or ethic, through which programmes of government are formulated (see Miller & Rose, 1990). In other words, sustainable development may be seen to comprise an assemblage of philosophies (eg: human rights, environmental protection, capitalist advantage, etc), and constructed realities (eg: poverty, environmental degradation, urban sprawl, inequality), that permit the formation and management of certain kinds of problems - and prevent the conceivability of others.

On the one hand, the language of sustainable development allows for a broad scope of problematisations: from the state of the global environment, the Australian economy and the South East Queensland urban landscape through to the specific needs and desires of particular groups or communities - local, rural, indigenous, regional, included, excluded, active/inactive, informed/uniformed, etc. In this respect, sustainable development embraces a diverse, and even incongruous, range of formulations and elaborations of political problems that provide the “bases for the organization and mobilization of social life” (Miller & Rose, 1990: 6). On the other hand, the vocabulary of sustainable development is also restrictive in nature. In the course of enabling a potentially endless array of schemas, agendas and dilemmas that justify and
legitimise intervention, it also renders others unthinkable. A prime example of this is the way in which sustainable development, in these cases, constitutes a morally compelling context in which expectations with respect to participation become established. Through techniques of rights and responsibility, the ethic of sustainability is used to normatively shape conduct in particular ways. More specifically, it shapes the sorts of conduct required for entry into the ‘democratic’ participatory process. The inscription of participatory values that embrace the sustainability ethic – that is, responsible values - immediately restricts the exercise of participatory rights inconsistent with this ethic. In *Agenda 21*, this is most evident through notions of community capacity building that imply that communities must be schooled to participate appropriately in the decision-making process. In the NSESD, communities are compelled to participate in a pro-sustainable manner in exchange for the affordance of their participatory rights in the Australian context. And in the DSEQRP, communities are obliged to support the principles of sustainable development in order to afford others their right to participate. The mutually inviting and prohibitive nature of the language of sustainable development, therefore, opens up realms of opportunities for the exercise of techniques of rights and responsibilities that organise, manage and regulate subjects through community.

In summary, drawing these implications together, a governmentality perspective would suggest that neither sustainable development, nor community, can be separated from the techniques and rationalities involved in ‘governing at a
distance’. In these cases, sustainable development, community and techniques of rights and responsibilities are organised symbiotically – despite variation in the ways in which techniques construct the contexts through which different levels of government, different types of communities, and different problems for sustainable development become discernable, in all cases of the policies examined, it is not possible to separate one mechanism from the other. As such, sustainable development cannot be seen to exist outside of notions of community and the techniques of rights and responsibilities in which they are embedded. Together they work to construct, define and organise the conduct of subjects who, through the language of policy, are mobilised to become the active and responsible citizens required for the practice of participative ‘democracy’.
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CHAPTER 5: JOURNAL ARTICLE 2

STATEMENT OF JOINT AUTHORSHIP AND AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS
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Acquiring the skills for Civic Participation: Informal Pedagogy and the Moral Order in a Sustainable Development Policy Text

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Acquiring the skills for Civic Participation: Informal Pedagogy and the Moral Order in a Sustainable Development Policy Text

Discourses surrounding the governance of urban and regional planning frequently include the requirement for citizens to contribute to the sustainability of their regions, cities and towns, regardless of their formal training backgrounds. This article examines the processes through which citizens acquire the conceptual principles associated with what it means to be sustainable in a context where there is no formal pedagogy. Focusing on a case study draft regional planning policy document, it draws on Basil Bernstein’s principles of classification and framing to explicate the pedagogic principles implicit in the text. It reveals how the text selects citizens as pedagogic subjects and situates them within a moral order requiring their support for sustainability, specifically the expert’s version of sustainability.

Introduction

Over the last two decades, sustainable development has become a dominant principle in the field of planning and development with the trend towards Triple Bottom Line reporting in the private and public sectors, and the emergence of a full-range of policies and legislation at the global, national, regional and local levels that take ‘sustainability’ as their theme. However, despite its growing prominence, sustainable development remains a fundamentally contentious notion (Wood, 2004), particularly concerning issues pertaining to its definition.
The proliferation of definitions, reflecting an increasing array of interests invested in the principle of sustainability, has intensified since the Brundtland World Commission of Environment and Development in 1987. Among the 80 plus definitions on offer (Williams & Millington, 2004), the definition published in the Brundtland Report (World Commission of Environment and Development, 1987, pp.24) is still quoted more often than any other - “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

While definitions of this kind constitute a rationale for the widespread adoption of sustainable development principles, other contextually specific discourses refer to the kinds of processes at stake for the realisation of sustainable development in practice. In this respect, the appeal of sustainable development lies, not in any explicit definition or meaning, but rather in its integrative qualities – the generic requirement for the integration of different fields of knowledge and practice in line with the principles inscribed in the Brundtland definition. This is no more apparent than in the enthusiastic incorporation of sustainable development into university curricula. In professional courses at universities, sustainability is seen to represent a fluid set of integrative principles that link disciplines within the university, and higher education with the requirements of the workplace and the broader society. These principles relate to both the generic capabilities or basic life skills - the capacity to look after one’s health, education, family, community, environment – and the more specialised
competencies and skills associated with professional practice that pertain to specific workplace principles, guidelines and applications of ‘sustainable’ practice.

The impetus to embed principles of sustainability in daily practice has also generated a requirement for less formalised contexts and processes for transmission. The discourses surrounding the governance of urban and regional development are a case in point. These requirements are embedded in discourses that link participatory approaches to sustainable development (see Van den hove, 2000; Warburton, 1998), where cooperative civic participation – in decision-making, policy development and everyday practice – are seen as necessary to achieve sustainability goals. A central consequence of merging the principles of sustainability with those of participative governance arrangements has been the devolution of responsibility to ‘communities’ who are required to actively participate in efforts to realise sustainable development at the local level. Thus, while some aspects of principles of sustainability are taught as part of courses in higher education, there is also a much more generic requirement for citizens to understand and apply them outside any formalised context for transmission in the domain of civic life.

This paper broadens current understandings of the nature of the relationships in which discourses of sustainability are embedded, by examining the processes through which citizens are enrolled in these discourses in the social
organisation of policy and program documents. The responsibilising tendencies of participative democratic discourses, particularly those that feature in the language of governments that espouse the “Third Way” for politics, have been widely critiqued in sociological literature. Arguably, Nikolas Rose’s (1996; 1999; 2000; Miller & Rose, 1990) application of a governmentality perspective is most frequently invoked in this respect. From a governmentality perspective, the language of civic participation can be seen as a means to implicitly regulate the conduct and choices made by apparently autonomous individuals. The positive ‘spin’ placed on notions of civic responsibility, in the context of participatory governance arrangements, can therefore be seen as a ‘technique of government’ that is used to ethically shape and organise the behaviours of subjects compelled to act for the benefit of their community and themselves (Raco & Imrie, 2000). For Rose, this characterises the processes of liberal governance that do not seek to repress the capacity to act but rather to utilise it for its own ends (Rose, 1999). In other words, it is a process that appropriates practices in non-political arenas for political purposes. Thus Rose has sought to problematise the ‘lines of force’ through which the behaviour of free citizens is aligned and regulated such that they are consistent with political principles (Murdoch, 2000).

In the case of planning for housing in Britain, Murdoch’s (2000) analysis of these processes suggests that a key strategy lies in processes of abstraction involved in housing projections that disembled meanings and problems
associated with specific locales into a coherent and governable framework. While there have been critiques of these approaches based on the need to take localities into account, Murdoch (2000) argues that these tend also to be met with strategies of abstraction in the service of another kind of political rationality. In the domain of urban and regional development, the integration of governance with principles of sustainability potentially represents a set of additional issues associated with alignment and regulation. These pertain to the requirement that citizens need to be enrolled in this discourse sufficiently for the principle to be seen as legitimate. It may not be an overstatement to suggest that sustainable development provides the ethical underpinnings through which ‘responsible’ and/or ‘irresponsible’ conduct derive their meaning. However, this raises the question of the means through which the processes of alignment between everyday practices and principles of sustainable development are achieved.

In this paper, we draw into focus a discrete aspect of the relationship between civic participation and the sustainable development agenda by examining issues associated with appropriate acquisition of sustainable practices on the part of citizens. Our analysis of policy discourses that frame processes of urban and regional development in Queensland, Australia, provides an opportunity to investigate the processes through which citizens acquire the conceptual principles associated with what it means to be sustainable. The paper investigates these relationships through the conceptual framework provided by Basil Bernstein (2000) in the sociology of education, enabling a focus on the
ways in which sustainable development discourse operates as informal pedagogy.

**Basil Bernstein and the process of acquisition of legitimate discourses**

The social trend to increasing requirements for a more informal pedagogy has been noted by the sociologist of education Basil Bernstein (2000). While most of Bernstein’s own work is concerned specifically with pedagogic practice at the level of the school, or in the *Official Recontextualising Field*, his understanding of pedagogic practice extends beyond this to incorporate any social context through which cultural production and reproduction occurs (Bernstein, 2000, p.3). He states:

….pedagogy is the focus of my theory to the extent that pedagogic modalities are crucial realisations of symbolic control, and thus of the process of cultural production and reproduction. Symbolic control, through its pedagogic modalities attempts to shape and distribute forms of consciousness, identity and desire...My own work has concentrated on a limited field of inquiry, essentially official and local pedagogic modalities. I should add here that official is not limited to formal educational institutions, but includes medical, psychiatric, social service, penal, planning and informational agencies.

(Bernstein, 2000, p. 201-2)

For Bernstein (2000, p.33), “pedagogic discourse is constructed by a recontextualising principle which selectively appropriates, relocates, refocuses and relates other discourses to constitute its own order”. In this respect,
pedagogic discourse and practice cannot be identified with the discourses it recontextualises, but rather must be seen as a discourse, albeit with various modalities, in and of itself. Bernstein’s concern, therefore, was to uncover the internal workings and structure of pedagogic discourse, seen as a crucial site for the relay of relations of power and control (Bernstein, 2000). Two concepts that provide the rules of the pedagogic code are at the heart of his theory: classification, or the principle through which power relations are translated and disguised; and framing, through which control is exercised to regulate and legitimise different forms of communication.

The concept of classification is used to refer to the organisation of knowledge (Sadovnik, 2001), specifically the relations between categories. For Bernstein (2000), the principle of classification is the means through which a voice or message is established and recognised. Where strong classification occurs, there is a high degree of insulation between categories such that each category is viewed as discrete and independent from others in any given context. For example, in a strongly classified school curriculum, subjects are highly differentiated whereby subjects such as mathematics, English and science each have a unique identity and its own internal set of specific and specialised rules (Bernstein, 2000). Weak classification, on the other hand, occurs when the degree of boundary maintenance between categories is low and discourses are less specialised and often inter-dependent. In the case of weak classification, then, the disciplinary boundaries between school-based subjects are broken
down, and staff identities are not connected to the organisational structure. Rather, they are established through a more complex and fluid set of power relations through which identities are constructed, negotiated and contested (Bernstein, 2000).

Framing relates to how meanings are constructed, organised and conveyed in pedagogic interactions between transmitters and acquirers. Hence, in so far as “the principle of classification provides us with our voice and the means of its recognition, then the principle of framing is the means of acquiring the legitimate message” (Bernstein, 2000, p.12). Like classification, framing values can vary in strength depending on the respective levels of control transmitters and acquirers have over the selection, sequencing, and pacing of communication as well as the social base of the interaction. When the transmitter has explicit control over the communication and its social base the framing is strong and, conversely, when the acquirer has more apparent control, the framing is weak (Bernstein, 2000). The strengths of framing can also vary in relation to the different elements of the communication where, for example, the framing over selection may be strong, while the framing over the social base is weak, or vice versa.

The concepts of classification and framing are useful to examine the pedagogic relations involved in the transmission and acquisition of skills required for ‘sustainable’ civic participation. First, we can consider how these might operate
theoretically. As we alluded to earlier, sustainable development can be seen as embodying a principle of integration amongst traditionally disparate discourses. At the most basic level, sustainable development only makes sense in terms of the integration of economic, environmental and social domains. These can be further broken down to constitute any range of categories and sub-categories in different organisational and geographic contexts so that issues that would conventionally be treated as quite distinct – eg: poverty, health, mining, transport, tourism, urban form, social capital – can be unproblematically seen to belong together, provided that the integrative basis of sustainability is appropriately understood. In pedagogic terms, then, sustainable development might be said to comprise a principle of weak classification, where the insulation between categories is being continuously eroded.

A similar argument might be made when one considers the central tenets of discourses that espouse participative democratic values. In this case, however, it is not necessarily disciplinary or subject-based categories that are imputed with values of weak classification, but rather the categories representing various kinds of political agents – government, business, community and often specific stakeholder groups such as women, indigenous peoples etc. Whether arguments for participative governance arrangements are based on the practicalities of governing in a context of increasing globalisation, the need to ensure that communities and other groups are appropriately included in decision-making processes, or the need for communities and individuals to take
increased responsibility for their own welfare, the one thing that is common to all discourses of civic participation is their propensity to cross-cut and blur the distinction between those who govern and those who are governed. Hence, the boundaries between traditional political roles such as representative-constituent, ‘welfare provider’-‘welfare recipient’ and ‘law-maker’–‘law-abider’ are broken down and, theoretically, authority and responsibility redistributed more equally across the different groups.

Of course, these descriptions over-simplify the complexities and inner-workings of the discourses of sustainable development and civic participation. Nevertheless, they provide an adequate back-drop for more explicit consideration and analysis of the informal pedagogic relationships involved when two discourses, both underpinned theoretically by the principle of weak classification, intersect. More specifically, they beg questions about how citizens are supposed to acquire the specific skills necessary to realise sustainable development at the level of practice. In the following section, we examine the way in which implicit pedagogic transmissions are framed in the text of a consultative regional planning policy document. In doing so, we explicate the way in which the strong framing in the text discursively acts upon the acquirer to induce a pro-sustainability response, regardless of whether he/she recognises the speciality of the sustainable development context.
The Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan: a case study

In 2004, the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan: For Consultation (DRP) was prepared as a provisional regional planning policy for the South East Queensland region in Queensland, Australia. Mirroring the shift towards ‘regionalisation’ in the United States and the UK (Elcock, 2003), the DRP represents the first formal and statutory planning instrument for the region comprising eighteen local government areas. Its development was underpinned by the rationale that, as the fastest growing metropolitan region in Australia with its population set to increase by over 1 million people by 2026, there is a need to “accommodate future growth on a more sustainable basis” (OUM, 2004, p.8). The revised post-draft South East Queensland Regional Plan has since been sanctioned by the Queensland State Government and took effect on 1st July 2005. Regardless, we focus our analysis on the draft version released for consultation during the October 2004 to February 2005 period. As such, it represents a textual interface between the Queensland State Government, who prepared the draft plan, and the South East Queensland residents who were invited to provide feedback on the draft.

The DRP is set out in five parts: Parts A and B serve as introductory chapters with Part A outlining the context and legislative function of the Plan, and Part B formulating a case supporting the need for a regional planning instrument and summarising the approach taken in the DRP; Parts C and D outline the overarching “Regional Vision” and “Strategic Directions” of the plan and
classifies all land in the region into five broad categories that provide a spatial (and social) context for regulatory provisions; Part E of the plan comprises the “Regional Growth Management Strategy” and includes the “ Desired Regional Outcomes”, “Principles” and “Strategies” that are proposed to represent sustainable growth and development in the region until 2026; and Part G contains the “Draft Regulatory Provisions” that set out the specific laws that will govern development assessment for the region and that notably “come into effect when the Draft Regional Plan is released for consultation” (p.5). In the following section, most of our analysis focuses on the Foreword and Part B of the DRP since it is in these sections that pedagogic communications specifically select citizens as pedagogic subjects. As such, it provides ‘the acquirer’ with the particular rules that will shape his/her reading of the text and, quite likely, the nature of his/her response to the DRP during the consultation process.

The consultation program undertaken in relation to the DRP involved a mix of quasi-consultative/quasi-promotional activities including public information sessions, speaker engagements and presentations to key stakeholder groups, media advertising campaigns, the distribution of a glossy leaflet to all households in the region, an interactive website, email campaign, on-line survey and free-call inquiry service. Many of these can be easily equated with two ‘participatory’ practices, or ‘legitimising exercises’, frequently associated with government under New Labour (Fairclough, 2000). The first involves ‘government by media “spin”’ where, through the strategic use of particular
representations, the lines blur between an authentic opportunity for community input and feedback and a promotional campaign to engender community support for a government policy that, according to the State Premier upon the release of the DRP, “is about guaranteeing the future quality of life of southeast Queensland residents” (Beattie in Johnstone, 2004). The second entails ‘experiments in democracy’ that provide opportunities to test “reactions to government initiatives as part of a wider strategy for managing consent” (Fairclough, 2000, p.174). This analogy with experimentation seems quite fitting with many of the consultation exercises undertaken in this case, since only “properly made submissions” were considered in the review of the DRP after the consultation period. Under the relevant State legislation, a “properly made submission” must: be made in writing; include the names and addresses of all people making the submission; received during the consultation period; state the grounds for the submission and the facts and circumstances relied upon; and be forwarded to the Minister (Queensland Government Office of Urban Management, 2005a). The upshot, therefore, is that, despite a range of ‘opportunities’ for civic participation in the decision-making process, this participation was heavily regulated at the official level so that the views of citizens who could recognise the speciality of the different participatory contexts were privileged over those who could not. This privileging process is reinforced through the recontextualising principles implicit in the document at the centre of these consultation processes – the DRP.
**Classification in the Draft Regional Plan**

At the most obvious level, the text of the DRP recontextualises certain practices to constitute a new social order complicit with the logics of the regional planning field and the principles of sustainability. At the core of this process is the recontextualisation of the past and current ‘unsustainable’ regional development practices into a set of principles and practices that represent a ‘sustainable’ approach to future growth management and regional development. Its use of planning terminology, statistics, graphs, tables and maps work together to align the discourse with the integrative principles of sustainable development such that effective growth management is seen to require an integrated approach to planning to achieve an integrated pattern of development across the region. Hence, in an overarching sense, the document recontextualises the existing ‘unsustainable’ pattern of regional development into a future scenario comprising more ‘sustainable’ practices of urban consolidation where residential areas, business activity centres, employment locations, transport systems, open space areas, community services, industry and production zones are appropriately integrated within and across the region.

However, whilst this weakly classified framework, along with the technically specialised language and images, may be easily recognised and understood on the part of an expert within the field, the capacity of a non-expert to recognise the speciality of the context, and to provide contextually appropriate feedback, is less clear. Here, the problem is not so much about the relations within the
text, whereby sustainability is constructed and reproduced in a regional planning context, but rather the nature of the relationship between the text and its civic audience. More specifically, the problem is about the way in which the text normatively selects and positions its audience to elicit a particular kind of response to its request for feedback. This pertains to the relationship between the principles of classification and framing at the level of the pedagogic text, and the recognition and realisation rules that exist at the level of the acquirer.

The Problem for the Acquirer
The capacity of the acquirer – in this case the citizen – to produce contextually legitimate feedback on the DRP, depends, first, on the degree to which he/she can *recognise* the special demands of the context and, second, on whether he/she can produce or *realise* legitimate communication about it. If the acquirer does not possess the necessary recognition and realisation rules to carry out these tasks, then he/she is likely to “remain silent or offer what other members would consider inappropriate talk or conduct” (Bernstein, 2000, p.17). While this problem for the acquirer may not seem necessarily relevant to the source of pedagogic transmissions – the ‘teacher’, or in this case the text – the consultation activity brings its own contextually specific pedagogic demands to ensure that the legitimacy of the participative exercise is not compromised. Hence, the fact that the weakly classified sustainability context may create ambiguity in contextual recognitions for the acquirer (Bernstein, 2000) creates a burden for the institutional authors of the DRP to ensure that the text elicits
sufficient legitimate feedback, to ward off criticism of the quality of the consultation process.

To address this burden, a sub-level of the DRP text incorporates implicit pedagogic codes that specifically target lay citizens as pedagogic subjects. In apparent anticipation of the likelihood that many citizens may not appropriately recognise the speciality of the sustainability context, a sub-set of strong classifications, coupled with strong framing, are used to orient the reader to the moral expectations of the setting. In this respect, the discourse of the DRP organises themes in ways that incites recognition of a context akin to the fairytale genre. Parallel with Adger et al's (2001) findings about the narrative structures of global environmental discourses, the text of the DRP can be seen to comprise an archetypal cast of heroes, villains and victims.

The story of the victimisation of the South East Queensland region begins in the foreword of the DRP with a variety of descriptions of the “unique” and “magnificent” features of the region such as its “relaxed lifestyle, strong economic growth and so many varying opportunities” and its “diversity of natural environments ranging from beaches and marine reserves to mountains and sweeping hinterlands” (p.2). However, like any good fairytale narrative, by the third paragraph the looming threat of population growth, coupled with bad planning and management, is established. As such, “the assets making South East Queensland such a liveable place must be managed carefully”, its
“magnificent coastline and waterways, regional landscape, rural production areas and environmental treasures” must be protected; and its vibrant economy and “unique sense of identity and place” must be maintained (p.2).

Having laid the foundations for the epic in the foreword, the second section of the introduction entitled *Regional Issues and Opportunities* depicts in greater detail the menace posed by the continuation of past regional development practices and the redemption offered by a more sustainable approach to regional development. This is achieved primarily through creating an analytic framework through which to compare past and current development practices with the alternative future practices proposed by the plan. The section begins with an account of development trends that include high levels of population growth along the coast, very low urban densities with a high proportion of detached housing, a low proportion of small lots and the fragmentation of rural land, all of which culminate in the direct assertion that “this trend pattern of development is not sustainable” (p.8). This is followed by an account of a “strategy for a different and more sustainable future” that, at its core, represents the opposite pattern of development to that previously described, including accommodating a higher proportion of growth in the Western parts of the region to relieve pressure on the coast and a move towards urban consolidation and higher-density development.
The clear-cut dualism between ‘unsustainable development’ (villain) and ‘sustainable development’ (hero) set up in the foreword and introduction appeal to the recognition rules acquired by most during the early stages of childhood development. The distinct ‘black and white’ roles personified in the villain–hero prototype generate a strongly classified moral order through which to read and interpret the text. This provides an alternative context of recognition that does not rely on the acquirer’s ability to recognise the weakly classified sustainability context. In essence, regardless of whether the acquirer understands the integrative principles of sustainability, or the planning-specific language of the text, the moral code that clearly delineates the difference between unsustainable development practices from their sustainable alternatives, provides a basis for recognition of the value of the sustainability context embodied in the text. Hence, in compensation for any failure to recognise the speciality of the sustainability context, the acquirer is morally compelled to recognise that sustainability, specifically the DRP’s version of sustainability, represents the ‘greater good’ for the region.

Of course, the capacity to recognise the speciality of the moral context portrayed in the DRP does not automatically provide the acquirer with the skills required for the production of legitimate communication with respect to the draft plan. If citizens are to make effective submissions, as required by the consultation process, then they must also possess the realisation rules that enable the production of contextually legitimate text (Bernstein, 2000).
Simultaneously, the text must incorporate principles of framing that act effectively upon the realisation rules of the acquirer to ensure that a reasonable degree of feedback is received. As the following section shows, however, these framing values also contribute to the broader process of managing consent.

**Framing Morality**

As general principles of school-based pedagogic practice, Bernstein asserts that strong framing produces visible pedagogic practice while weak framing is likely to result in pedagogic practice that is invisible to the acquirer (Bernstein, 2000, p.14). However, in a field where there is no formal pedagogy, such as the field of regional planning, these principles are subject to some variation. In this case, the DRP cannot be described as an overtly pedagogic text, nor would it be likely that its audience explicitly recognise the pedagogic practices implicit in its language and structure. Despite this, the text incorporates decidedly strong internal framing values as a means of situating the acquirer in the moral order constructed through the sustainability (hero) versus unsustainability (villain) scenario.

From the outset, it must be acknowledged that, by the nature of the situation, the external framing values – the framing between the pedagogic context of the text and the contexts external to it – are necessarily weak. More specifically, the locus of control over communications about the text, outside of the text itself, is distributed and negotiated amongst any number of agents in any variety
of settings. In a manner that appears to compensate for this, the internal framing values of the DRP are such that the pedagogic subject is granted little control over pedagogic relations. In spite of the fact that the text is a draft intended for revision post-consultation, its strong principles of framing result in the acquirer having little opportunity to do anything but endorse its intent and subject matter. This is achieved primarily through inter-related framing techniques that regulate the identity, conduct and character of the acquirer in relation to the roles of hero and villain. For example, consider the final paragraphs of the foreword of the DRP (p.2):

**Extract 1**

Your views are welcome and, indeed, sought for the future of an exciting South East Queensland. It is essential that governments and the community work together to ensure that the qualities that make South East Queensland such an attractive place to call home are preserved for future generations (p.2).

**Extract 2**

We believe this is an important reference point for planning in South East Queensland. In the future, we will look back to this as the time when the community considered the issues and decided to opt for a better future for the region (p.2).

Ostensibly, the various calls for input on the DRP in these extracts position the acquirer as a civic agent capable of informing the development of the regional plan, regardless of his/her knowledge base or expertise. In this respect, the
discourse superficially constructs an egalitarian distribution of control over the
text and the acquirer’s capacity to influence it. However, entwined within these
apparently transparent and suitably democratic invitations to participate are a
number of assertions that cogently shape expectations about the type of
feedback required. Provided that the acquirer can adequately recognise the
moral context of the discourse, then the text’s petition to ensure that the
attractive qualities of the region are preserved (Extract 1) and to “opt for a better
future for the region” (Extract 2) can be read as explicit instructions to endorse
the DRP’s ‘sustainable’ approach to regional planning. In effect, then, the
acquirer is metaphorically positioned as having a choice to back the hero — and
achieve a “better future” for the region — or the villain — by permitting the
continued degradation of the region’s natural, economic and cultural assets.

This morally compelling use of strong principles of framing is further reinforced
through the text’s use of indexical terms that encourage the acquirer to identify
with the text and the regional ‘community’. For instance, the use of the terms
‘we’ and ‘our’ rhetorically motivate the reader to identify as a member of the
community. In this sense, statements such as “Our region is one of the most
sought after places to live in Australia” and “We have an affinity with outdoor
recreation and live alongside a diversity of natural environments…” not only
position the acquirer as a member of the regional community, but also as a
person who shares in the same values and benefits offered by membership.
However, the conditions of membership in the regional community extend
beyond the mere status of resident who lives in a desirable region and who
enjoys the outdoors. Indeed, to realise this membership, the acquirer is also
compelled to accept responsibility for the region’s future. More specifically, the
acquirer must engage in the Smart State planning that “we need… to protect
our magnificent coastlines… and ensure that the region remains economically
vibrant, so we can continue to provide jobs, maintain our unique sense of
identity and place and improve the design qualities of our urban areas” (p.2). In
this respect, not only is the acquirer supposed to support the plan’s
’sustainable’ approach, but must also become ‘sustainable’ as a condition of
membership in the community.

In terms of Bernstein’s (2000, p.136) outline of languages of description, the
acquirer is highly abstract, positioned as having “general” – as opposed to
“specific” – attributes. In this respect, any reader can be heard as an eligible
target and addressee. However, the control of the text is exerted through the
low level of “discretion” accorded the acquirer, the binary of hero and villain
according them very little discursive space. The generic and fluid
characterisation utilised in the foreword – that is, ‘we are one of you’ or ‘you are
one of us’ – enables the goals, objectives and strategies described in the
remainder of the document to be read effectively as a set of moral instructions
about what it means to be ‘one of us’. Here, as a function of strong framing
through low levels of discretion the acquirer becomes a potential candidate for
labels (Bernstein, 2000) that clearly denote a virtuous or villainous character.
Hence, where the “community’s long-term aspirations for the region” are listed as “a basis for discussion” (p.9) they can be read as what the acquirer’s aspirations should be. Indeed, if the acquirer were to dispute values such as “communities that are safe, healthy, accessible and inclusive”, “diverse employment opportunities”, development that “is sustainable and well-designed” and the protection of “our environment” (p.9), he/she would become available for moral reproach. Similarly, where each of the “Strategic Directions” and “Desired Regional Outcomes” are listed in Parts D and E of the text, the acquirer is left with little choice but to support the prescribed regional planning objectives, or risk his/her character or conduct being described as morally reprehensible.

In summary, through the framing principles of the text, the rules of the social order (which in this case comprises a moral order) are established, and expectations about the acquirer’s conduct and character are shaped. The DRP’s strong framing values facilitate the realisation of sustainability at the level of the acquirer, whether or not he/she adequately recognises the speciality of the weakly classified sustainability context. This presents as somewhat of an irony: How can the acquirer adequately realise a context that he/she does not fully recognise? In many respects, it may be this irony that underpins the very process of managing consent. The acquirer, particularly the lay acquirer, is not expected to realise sustainability through contributing his/her knowledge or skills to produce a ‘sustainable’ regional planning code. All he/she must do is
acknowledge and endorse the code that has already been developed in the DRP. Hence, the realisation of sustainable regional planning at the level of the acquire is effected through providing support and encouragement to the experts and institutions – those who can adequately recognise and realise the weakly classified sustainability context - to do what they do best.

Conclusion

This paper illustrates the potentially important moral role played by policy and program texts in the governance of sustainability. In these contexts, where the transmission of principles of sustainability is informal, the text plays a key role in social positioning of the citizen. First, as Rose (1996;1999; 2000) and Murdoch (2000) have argued, the discourse works at a substantive level, linking various dispositions and practices into a framework pertaining to the governance of sustainability. However, this paper has proposed that the Draft Regional Plan also overlaid this with a framework of governance relations in which citizens are called to participate as part of the problematic of sustainability. The analysis suggests that viewing the text in terms of relationships of informal pedagogy provides insights into the positioning of the citizen as an ‘acquirer’ of sustainability principles. In this framework, the weak external framing values are more than compensated for through an internal framing that provides very low levels of discretion in the way citizens can position themselves in the discourse. Further, while this amounts to strong implicit injunction to subscribe to sustainability principles in a participatory spirit, the text also requires an
extensive delegation on the part of the citizen to the experts who advocate and carry out these principles.

This analysis further draws attention to policy frameworks as key agents in themselves, in the implementation of principles. The relationships set up in the case study text are not merely operating at a substantive level but, in fact, setting up a web of governance relationships that could be seen as ultimately hospitable to a framework that depends for its legitimacy on commitment to civic participation, but also to high levels of delegation and deference on the part of the citizen to experts and officials of government.
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CHAPTER 6: JOURNAL ARTICLE 3

STATEMENT OF JOINT AUTHORSHIP AND AUTHORS’ CONTRIBUTIONS
IN THE
RESEARCH MANUSCRIPT WITH THE TITLE OF:

Enrolling the Citizen in Sustainability: Membership Categorization,
Morality and Civic Participation

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Signed

Date...18/01/07
Enrolling the Citizen in Sustainability:
Membership Categorization, Morality and Civic Participation

This article examines the common-sense and methodical ways in which ‘the citizen’ is produced and enrolled as an active participant in ‘sustainable’ regional planning. Using Membership Categorization Analysis, it explicates how the categorization procedures in the Foreword of a draft regional planning policy interactionally produce the identity of ‘the citizen’ and ‘civic values and obligations’ in relation to geographic place and institutional categories. Furthermore, it shows how positioning practices establish a relationship between authors (government) and readers (citizens) where both are ascribed with the same moral values and obligations toward the region. Hence, ‘the citizen’, as an active participant in ‘sustainable’ regional planning, is viewed as a practical accomplishment that is underpinned by a normative morality associated with the task of producing orderliness in ‘text-in-interaction’.

Introduction
With the rise of Third Way politics, civic participation in political decision-making processes has become a significant theme in contemporary political and academic discourses. No more so than in those that are concerned with sustainability, where participative democratic arrangements are seen as fundamental to achieving sustainable development at the local and global
levels. However, while there is ample literature examining civic participatory approaches to sustainability, what is often left missing is any consideration of how people, at the most basic level, become enrolled as citizens in the first place. Typical approaches to dealing with issues of civic participation and sustainability focus on the substantive arrangements of the participative process and their relationship to achieving sustainable solutions and outcomes. In these accounts, ‘the citizen’ is an assumed fact – an entity that exists and participates, and for whom sustainability is immediately relevant (whether he/she knows it or not).

In our previous work, we noted the way in which sustainability discourses, particularly those surrounding the governance of urban and regional development, tend to have a built in requirement for citizens to contribute to sustainability in the domain of civic life. Given the absence of any formal pedagogy in this domain, we questioned how citizens acquire the conceptual principles associated with what it means to ‘be sustainable’ in order to make this contribution. Hence, using a consultation planning policy document as a case study, we examined how the text implicitly schooled its audience – citizens who had the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft plan – in a moral order that distinguishes ‘sustainable’ and ‘unsustainable’ planning practice. We found that through this moral order, citizens were morally compelled to support sustainability and, more specifically, the draft policy’s version of sustainability as it applied to the region in question. However, as
much as it was possible to analyse how the language of the draft policy text selected ‘the citizen’ as a pedagogic subject who must be taught to ‘act’ for the good of the region, a different kind of problem emerged in the course of the analysis: who is ‘the citizen’ and how does ‘the citizen’ become enrolled as a pedagogic subject in the context of sustainable regional planning? In other words, how is it that particular people, and not others, come to understand themselves as ‘citizens’ for whom the sustainability of the region is relevant?

In this paper, we turn to ethnomethodology as a means to explicate the ‘common-sense’ and methodical ways in which ‘the citizen’ is interactionally produced and enrolled in the sustainability agenda in the ‘occasioned setting’ of a political decision-making exercise. We apply Membership Categorization Analysis (Sacks, 1992) to the Foreword of the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan: For Consultation to examine how the procedural organisation of multiple identities produces a particular kind of hearing of ‘the citizen’ and ‘civic values and obligations’. Furthermore, we show how the use of pronouns interactionally position the participants to the interaction – the authors and readers – in ways that inferentially ascribe the reader with the identity of ‘citizen’ who shares the same values and obligations as those of the authors. In this way, the reader is procedurally and sequentially situated within the moral order of the text, and enrolled as an active participant in ‘sustainable’ regional planning.
The Case Study: The Foreword of the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan

In October 2004, the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan (DRP) was released by the Queensland Office of Urban Management (OUM) for public consultation. The draft plan represented the first statutory planning instrument for the South East Queensland region in Queensland, Australia. The plan was underpinned by the central rationale that as the fastest growing metropolitan region in Australia, with its population set to increase by over 1 million people by 2026, there was a need to “accommodate future growth on a more sustainable basis” (OUM, 2004, p.8). As such, the plan proposed radical changes to regional patterns of development and urban densities, and set out a number of other provisions pertaining to the protection of the natural environment, employment generation and social objectives, which might be seen as typical of any plan framed by ‘sustainable development’ imperatives.

Despite the fact that the DRP has since been revised, with the South East Queensland Regional Plan having been sanctioned by the Queensland Government in June 2005, we focus our analysis on the Foreword of the DRP, since it represents an ‘occasioned setting’ of interaction between three elected government representatives (the authors of the document) and ‘the citizen’ (the intended reader) as a part of a community consultation process. The consultation program undertaken in relation to the DRP involved a mix of quasi-consultative/quasi-promotional activities including public information sessions,
speaker engagements and presentations to key stakeholder groups, media advertising campaigns, the distribution of a glossy leaflet to all households in the region, an interactive website, email campaign, on-line survey, and free-call inquiry service. These various modes of communication independently, and in relation to each other, represent interactionally produced occasions of consultation with ‘citizens’ and, in this respect, would all contain examples of categorization that would engender particular contextually-specific understandings of ‘the citizen’ and ‘citizenship’. However, treated as a discrete instance of interaction, the Foreword of the DRP provides the opportunity to examine in detail how ‘the citizen’ is constructed and organised within the text in ways that facilitate certain ‘hearings’ or ‘readings’ that enrol the reader as a ‘citizen’ within a specific moral order. In this respect, it provides an opportunity to examine the methods that shape an understanding of who ‘the citizen’ is, and what is expected of him/her, in the context of the regional planning field.

**Ethnomethodology and Membership Categorization**

Based on the work of Harold Garfinkel, ethnomethodology seeks to make scientifically ‘interesting’ what conventional professional sociology takes for granted. In *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967), Garfinkel notes how the ‘topics’ with which conventional sociological investigation is usually concerned - ‘class’, ‘status’, ‘delinquency’, ‘gender’, ‘community’, etc - are themselves products of a practical sociological reasoning that is carried out at a taken-for-
granted level. More specifically, regardless of the ‘objectivity’ or ‘empirical vigilance’ that the professional sociologist applies to the topic, the topic itself is only delineable and identifiable through the same kind of practical investigations that are undertaken by lay inquirers (Douglas, 1970). Hence, for Garfinkel (1967, p.1), the task of ethnomethodology is to redirect the focus of sociological investigation so that “practical activities, practical circumstances, and practical sociological reasoning [are treated] as topics of empirical study” in their own right. In this respect, ethnomethodology is concerned with the mundane aspects of everyday life through which social life and the ‘social order’ is interactionally produced and reproduced.

Following Garfinkel’s lead, Harvey Sacks and other conversation analysts have produced a comprehensive body of works comprising the ethnomethodological study of talk-in-interaction. Conversation Analysis (CA) involves the study of members’ methods that produce “order/organisation/orderliness” in situated conversational (and textual) interactions (Psathas, 1995, p.2). As such, it can be described simply as the study of ‘sense-making’:

...there are two sides to the study of sense-making: namely, the production ‘problem’ and the recognition ‘problem’. The former speaks to the practical interactional uses to which persons may put the formal structures of action for the accomplishment of recognizable actions and activities. The latter refers to the hearer’s or reader’s work of using the same structures to make out what actions and activities are being produced.

(Eglin & Hester, 1998, p.250)
Early in his work, Sacks (1992) noted the significance of categories and the methodical process of categorization in giving, and making sense of, descriptions in conversation. From this, Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) emerged as an allied branch of CA that is explicitly concerned with locating members’ own devices for categorization in talk and text (Roulston, 2001). MCA therefore allows for an investigation of the “logico-grammatical relationships between concepts” (Jayyusi, 1984: 27) that are actively, and for all practical purposes, produced in the writing, and reproduced in the reading, of a text.

Sacks (1992) identifies a number of analytic concepts that describe the methods involved when doing membership categorization in situated occasions of talk-in-interaction. These are best described with reference to his well cited example of a child’s story: *The baby cried. The mommy picked it up* (Sacks, 1992). Sacks analytically identifies a collection of categories and some associated ‘rules of application’ that are applied in the telling and common-sense reading of this story that together form a Membership Categorization Device (MCD). First, he notes that the story refers to two categories – ‘baby’ and ‘mommy’ - that can be heard to belong to a collection of categories, namely ‘family’. Hence, a collection occurs wherever a group of categories can be heard to belong together such as male/female, employer/employee, etc. Sacks then proceeds to question how the story can be heard to involve the particular collection of ‘family’, since the category ‘baby’, for example, could also belong
to the ‘stage of life’ collection – that is, ‘baby’, ‘child’, ‘teenager’, ‘adult’. In
doing so, he identifies some further ‘rules of application’ of membership categorization:

*The Economy Rule*

In recognising that any member of a population may be categorised in a variety of ways that would hold as ‘true’ and ‘reasonable’ descriptors of that member, Sacks (1992, p.246) notes that a single category from a single membership device can be “referentially adequate”. Hence, it is through members’ application of the economy rule that ‘mommy’, in the child’s story, is a recognisably adequate description without the need for further categorization of the ‘mommy’ in terms of her gender, race, occupation, political affiliation, etc.

*The Consistency Rule*

The consistency rule holds that:

If some population of persons is being categorized, and if some category from a device’s collection has been used to categorize a first member of the population, then that category or other categories of the same collection may be used to categorize further members of the population (Sacks, 1972, p.33).

So, when ‘baby’ from the ‘family’ collection is used, then by the consistency rule the descriptor ‘mommy’ is a suitable characterisation of a further member of that device’s collection. The consistency rule corollary can then be used as a
maxim for hearers where “if there are two categories used, which can be found to be part of the same collection, hear them as part of the same collection” (Sacks, 1992, p.239) In this case, ‘baby’ is heard as a part of the ‘family’ collection rather than the ‘stage of life’ collection.

_Duplicative Organisation_

A further recognisable property of the membership devices is that they may be ‘duplicatively organised’. This is the case with the ‘family’ device whereby the ‘mommy’ and ‘baby’ are heard not only to belong to the same collection in a general sense, but also to the same family unit. Hence, the hearer’s maxim that applies to devices that are duplicatively organised is that:

If some population has been categorized by use of categories from some device whose collection has the ‘duplicative organization’ property, and a member is presented with a categorized population which can be heard as co-incumbents of a case of that device’s unit, then hear it that way (Sacks, 1992, p.248).

This provides for a hearing of the child’s story such that the ‘mommy’ can be heard as the ‘mommy’ of the ‘baby’ who cried, rather than another ‘baby’.

_Category Bound Activities_

The child’s story further relies on a taken-for-granted association between certain kinds of categories with certain kinds of activities or attributes. For example, the activity of ‘crying’ is tied to the category of ‘baby’ as part of the stage-of-life device in a way that does not make it appear out of the ordinary. In
this respect, viewers may be seen to “use norms to provide some of the orderliness, and proper orderliness of the activities they observe” (Sacks, 1992, p.260). Sacks identifies two viewer’s maxims for category-bound activities, or predicates, that create this categorial orderliness. First, so long as an activity can be seen to be performed by a member of a category to which that activity is bound, then viewers will see it that way. This is why when one sees a ‘baby’ cry, one associates the behaviour with a ‘baby’ who is bound to cry, rather than a ‘male’ or ‘female’ who is not. Second, if a pair of activities can be seen as related causally and sequentially by way of categorial norms, then they will be seen that way. This is why the ‘mommy’ can be seen to pick up the ‘baby’ because it was crying.

For Sacks (1992), category bound activities provide a mechanism for praising or degrading members for performing or avoiding activities that are bound to their category-incumbency (Silverman, 2001). Incumbents of categories that are positioned - so that one is higher or lower than the other (such as in the ‘stage of life’ device) - or that are part of a Standardised Relational Pair - have certain rights and obligations with respect to the other (such as ‘mommy’ and ‘baby’) and are particularly susceptible to these kinds of moral assessments. For example, as part of the ‘stage of life’ device, an older child can be called a ‘baby’ if he/she cries as a means of insult, and a ‘baby’ who resists crying may be praised as a ‘big girl’ or ‘big boy’. Similarly, as part of the ‘family’ device, if
the ‘mommy’ did not pick up the ‘baby’ and fulfil her category-bound obligation, she may be subject to criticism.

Indexicals and Positioning Practices

A final feature of membership categorization procedures used on occasions of interaction is the use of pronouns in place of explicit categorial referents. Pronouns, like other indexical terms and expressions, are noted by Sacks (1992, p.164) to have a “transience of reference”. For example, terms such as ‘I’ ‘you’, ‘we’, and ‘our’, require the application of “tying rules” to determine its contextual referent. Moreover, the use of pronouns, on occasions of talk or text, effectively ‘position’ participants to the interaction in relation to their different categorial identities and, hence, each other. In this respect, the identities of speakers and hearers, or writers and readers, are “written and talked into being, and positions… actively constituted” on any occasion of interaction.

In the following analysis, we show how membership categorization procedures are utilised in the Foreword of the DRP to produce various categorial identities and associated category bound attributes. While the text includes no explicit reference to ‘citizens’, ‘civic duty’ or the like, the procedural application of categories and devices provides for a morally constitutive hearing of ‘citizens’ as tied to certain contextually specific behaviours and attributes. Furthermore, the pronominal positioning practices employed by the authors enable the reader
to hear him/herself as a ‘citizen’ situated within the moral order of the text. In this respect, the enrolment of the reader as a ‘citizen’ with particular values and obligations can be seen as a practical accomplishment of the text.

**Place-Identity Categorizations: ‘We’ as the ‘residents of SEQ’**

As a regional planning document, it stands to reason that geographic categorizations will be commonly invoked, and indeed play a constituent role in the “topic talk” of the DRP (Schegloff, 1972, p.79). Indeed, the entirety of the draft policy is premised on the activity of planning for “South East Queensland” with its structure and content organised around the methodical and componential breakdown of the region’s various predicate features – its natural, urban and rural environments; transport systems; economy; and social make-up – all of which are bound by the culturally produced boarders that define the ‘space’ or ‘place’ of the region (Schegloff, 1972, p.85). In this respect, the **South East Queensland region** provides an overarching contextual setting that provides for the partial remedy for any of the indexical features of the text (Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970, p. 350). More specifically, it provides the inferential frame, or the categorially organised “wider social structure” (Housely & Fitzgerald, 2002), through which to interpret any potential ambiguities of meaning, at least in so far as everything that occurs within the text can be heard as situated within the context of ‘the region’. This is particularly so in the case of the Foreword’s pronominal selection, where references to ‘we’ and ‘our’ are
tied to the South East Queensland region in contrast with other unspecified regions in Australia. This is exemplified in the first two sentences of the text:

### Extract 1

South East Queensland is a unique part of the world. Our region is one of the most sought after places to live in Australia, with our relaxed lifestyle, strong economic growth and so many varying opportunities.

As the first two sentences of the Foreword, the authors rely on the reader’s cultural familiarity with place names and the ‘common-sense’ notion of the concentric organisation of geographic space, so that the South East Queensland (SEQ) region is readily recognised as one of many regions comprising the nation of Australia. While the consistency rule provides for the possibility of naming these other regions, in this case, it is the fact that the consistency rule is *not* applied that enables the appropriate hearing of the ‘region’ as the central focus or ‘topic’ of the text. In this context, the use of ‘our’ can be heard to refer to the “place-identity” (McCabe & Stokoe, 2004) membership category ‘residents of SEQ’ in contrast to members of any other unspecified region in the device ‘Australian residents’. The distinguishing features of this membership category are further reinforced through the citation of a number of predicates such as “our relaxed lifestyle”, “strong economic growth” and “varying opportunities” that can be heard as attractive to members of other regions who ‘seek’ to live in this region, or become a co-incumbents of the ‘residents of SEQ’ category.
Shortly after in the text, however, categorization procedures generate another set of category predicates that this time represent a set of obligations for ‘residents of SEQ’ category incumbents. For example, consider the following extracts:

**Extract 2**
We have an affinity with outdoor recreation, and live alongside a diversity of natural environments ranging from beaches and marine reserves to mountains and sweeping hinterlands (p.2)

**Extract 3**
We need Smart State planning now to protect our magnificent coastline and waterways, regional landscape, rural production areas and environmental treasures. We must also ensure that the region remains economically vibrant, so we can continue to provide jobs, maintain our unique sense of identity and place and improve the design quality of our urban areas (p.2).

Extract 2 ascribes ‘residents of SEQ’ with category-constitutive attributes including having an “affinity with outdoor recreation” and living “alongside a diversity of natural environments…”. In his discussion of *We: Category-Bound Activities*, Sacks (1992) demonstrates how this kind of knowledge – where a category is combined with a categorial attribute – is procedurally recognised as correct by virtue of its being “protected against induction”. Thus, any individual
incumbent of the ‘residents of SEQ’ category who does not enjoy outdoor recreation, or recognise the virtue in living alongside a diversity of natural environments, cannot dispute the statement as untrue for the group, but instead can make only an exception for him/herself and subsequently risk exclusion from the group. Extract 3, which occurs shortly after in the text, further elaborates the hearably positive category attributes in a way that inferentially generates a set of associated obligations to “protect”, “ensure”, “maintain” and “improve” these attributes. In this respect, the knowledge embodied in the positive information about the ‘residents of SEQ’, while procedurally protected from induction on the part of a hearing member, is subject to a form of temporal induction on the part of the speakers. Here, the inference is that the current category-constitutive features are temporally unstable and are at risk of being lost or degraded over time. Hence, category-incumbents are obligated to engage in “Smart State planning now” to ward against the threat of time.

However, the pronominal choice of ‘our’ and ‘we’, particularly in the first half of the Foreword, represents another kind of practical accomplishment that stems beyond the situated application of membership categorization procedures in the text. This relates specifically to the way the hearer is positioned in relation to the ‘residents of SEQ’ category and, subsequently, the authors of the text. According to Hester & Eglin (1997), the category incumbency of participants to an interaction plays a salient role in how membership categorizations are understood. On any interactional occasion, particularly one that takes place in
an institutional setting, the *relevant* identities and categorizations of speaker(s) and hearer(s) are attended to by participants and used to make sense of the categorizations invoked in talk (Hester & Eglin, 1997). In this case, the lexical selection of ‘our’ and ‘we’, as opposed to any other possible namings – ‘your’, ‘they’, ‘the people who live in SEQ’, etc - economically generates a shared membership category that bridges the gap between the contextually relevant institutional identities of the authors (government) and readers (people, community, political constituents, citizens, or the like). Hence, the text’s accounts of positive category predicates and the category bound obligations of incumbents accomplishes a distribution of responsibility amongst all ‘residents of SEQ’ category incumbents (Wilson, 1990).

**Government and Citizens: ‘We’ and ‘You’**

For Jayyusi (1984, p.125), collective standardised relational (S-R) pairs such as ‘government / people’ represent an asymmetric category set that is “descriptively tied to an *occasioned* relationship”. More specifically, for practical purposes they can be heard as mutually exclusive asymmetric categories on specific occasions of their use, despite that members of the first “stable” category may on any other occasion be seen as a member of the second “occasioned” categorization. Formally, Jayyusi (1984, p.127) describes this hearing as an asymmetry convention where “in the use of two categorizations treatable as an asymmetric category set, do not hear the incumbent of the second pair part (the asymmetrically occasioned categorization) as also an
incumbent of the first pair part category identity unless special provision is made”. Hence, ‘people’ are not hearable as co-incumbents of ‘government’ and vice versa. The specifically occasioned nature of this relationship is clearly demonstrated in the membership categorizations invoked in the text. After the first four paragraphs use ‘our’ and ‘we’ to establish speakers and hearers as co-incumbents of the same ‘residents of SEQ’ category, the remaining paragraphs display an analytically formulable shift where the category incumbency of speakers and hearers is split into ‘government’ and ‘residents’ as part of a ‘political’ membership device. This is demonstrated in the following extracts:

**Extract 4**

Development of the Draft Regional Plan has been a partnership between the State Government and the South East Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils. Implementing this regional plan to achieve a sustainable future for the region demands a continuation of this strong partnership.

Input has also been received from a variety of community-based reference groups. Now the Draft Regional Plan needs feedback from the region’s most important assets – the residents of South East Queensland

In Extract 4, membership categorization procedures inferentially generate an occasioned asymmetric relationship between government (including State and Local governments) and “the residents of South East Queensland”. Here, the consistency rule is applicable so that ‘residents’ are heard as distinct from
'government' and an asymmetry convention is produced via the accounts of temporally organised predicate activities that distinguish incumbents of 'government' – who, in partnership, have already developed the Draft Regional Plan – and 'residents' – whose feedback on the Draft Plan is now needed. This consolidates the standardised task-oriented relations between the government/residents pair where it is hearably appropriate that government develop the plan while residents provide “feedback” to their government. It is through the procedural combination of two different uses of ‘residents of SEQ’ – the first describing the whole SEQ population, and the second only the non-government population, that the second use can be heard as inferring ‘citizens’.

The text's almost adjacent use of occasioned categorizations that first imply the co-incumbency of speakers and hearers, and then infer a further set of disparate incumbencies associated with a collective asymmetric S-R pair, has implications for how the combination of apparently disjunct devices “are articulated together to accomplish the task at hand” (Jayyusi, 1984, p.128). On the one hand, authors and readers are all incumbent ‘residents of SEQ’ as part of the ‘geographic region’ device, and are category bound to live in the region. On the other hand, the speakers as incumbents of the ‘government’ category are asymmetrically distinct from the ‘residents of SEQ’, inferring the category of ‘citizens’, in the ‘political’ device. It is only through members' procedural knowledge of positioning practices that this potential disjuncture is overlooked in favour of a more logical (for all practical purposes) formulation. In this
respect, rather than hear the combination of devices as necessarily
inconsistent, an inferential consistency is generated through treating the first
‘residents of SEQ’ category as an MCD that frames the internal geographic and
social context of the text. Thus, ‘government’ and ‘residents’, or ‘citizens’, can
be heard as categories embedded within the ‘residents of SEQ’ device who
share certain predicates, like ‘mommy’ and ‘baby’ might share the same blood
line or surname, but are simultaneously differentiated by other category-specific
predicates, rights and obligations.

At this stage of our analysis, it is possible to see the way in which membership
categorization procedures in the Foreword of the DRP inferentially produce two
kinds of relationships between authors and readers, both of which may be seen,
in some ways, as responsive to the overarching contextual demands of the
setting. The first shared place-identity categorization produces incumbencies
relevant to the situated activity of planning for the SEQ region, while
categorizations that produce the ‘political’ MCD are germane to the culturally
relevant identities associated with the activity of ‘community consultation’ or
‘civic participation’. Further, through recognisably embedding one set of
identities within the other, these potentially inconsistent categorizations can be
heard as complimentary. In the next section we explore this relationship further
by examining the way in which the categorial work of the text produces a set of
moral values and obligations generic to the ‘residents of SEQ’ MCD. This, in
turn, organises the activities associated with civic participation within a moral
framework that legitimises certain civic activities in relation to the content of the
draft plan, at the expense of others.

The Moral Citizen

The DRP’s production of the ‘residents of SEQ’ device has implications for the
way in which readers procedurally recognise the predicate values and
obligations of incumbents of the ‘citizens’ category. For example, consider the
following extracts from the Foreword:

Extract 5

Your views are welcome and, indeed, sought for the future of an exciting South East
Queensland. It is essential that governments and the community work together to
ensure that the qualities that make South East Queensland such an attractive place to
call home are preserved for future generations.

Extract 6

We believe this is an important reference point for planning in South East Queensland.
In the future, we will look back to this as the time when the community considered the
issues and decided to opt for a better future for the region.

Categorization procedures in extracts 5 and 6 accomplish the assimilation of
the hearably distinct ‘government’ and ‘citizens’ categories through the
production of shared predicate values. Each extract includes initial utterances
that attend to the institutionally discrete incumbencies of authors (‘government’)

155
and readers (‘civic community’) paying credence to the demands of the consultation context. This is achieved through the use of pronouns ‘your’ in extract 5, and ‘we’ in extract 6, which can be heard to distinguish authors and readers. However, the second sentence in each extract produces predicate activities and values that align and integrate ‘government’ and ‘citizens’ through the ascription of a common set of predicate obligations and values. In extract 5, the positive category-constitutive, and now device-constitutive, attributes of the ‘residents of SEQ’ discussed above, are used to generate a category bound obligation for ‘citizens’ incumbents to work together with incumbents of ‘government’. This preventatively repeals other possible applications of ‘citizens’ predicates such as to ‘debate’, ‘challenge’, or ‘critically assess’ the activities or motives of ‘government’. Extract 6 incorporates similar categorization procedures so that deciding to “opt for a better future for the region” is tied procedurally to the obligation to work with ‘government’ to protect and maintain the positive attributes of the region as collective incumbents of the ‘residents of SEQ’ device. Here, however, the temporal organisation of the utterance transforms the predicate obligations of ‘citizens’ into a category bound activity. More specifically, it is taken-for-granted that ‘citizens’, specifically the readers of the text, will behave favourably and in accordance with their category bound – and device bound - obligations that are necessarily aligned with those of ‘government’.

Category-bound entitlements, obligations, knowledge, etc., can... give us a picture or profile of a given state of events. If an incumbent of a given category does not claim particular entitlements, does not enact category-bound obligations, or does not display category-bound knowledge, then these matters may be claimed as noticeably absent and as specifically accountable.


The recognisably moral obligations of ‘citizens’ incumbents, produced in the Foreword of the DRP, position readers in a way that makes them specifically accountable for their response to the draft plan. In this respect, readers become available candidates for either praise or degradation, depending on whether they are seen to fulfil or neglect the obligations that are bound to their category-incumbency. Here, the fact that readers - ‘citizens’ incumbents - are inferred to have the same category-bound values and obligations as the authors - incumbents of ‘government’ – has specific consequences for understanding the type of civic feedback required of them. More specifically, given that the draft plan has been developed by incumbents of ‘government’, who situatedly share in the same values and obligations of ‘citizens’, the latter are also categorically obliged to infer that the DRP necessarily embodies the values, and meets the obligations predicated to their own category-incumbency. Subsequently, to accomplish contextually legitimate and praiseworthy civic feedback, members of the ‘citizens’ category are obliged to endorse the plan and support the ‘government’ who, as co-members of the ‘residents of SEQ’
device, can already be seen to be acting in the best interests of the region and its ‘citizens’.

The Citizen as a Practical Accomplishment

MCA, with its focus on locating members’ own devices for producing categorizations in talk-in-interaction, provides a useful means to expose how ‘the citizen’ and particular kinds of ‘civic obligations’ are locally and interactionally produced on a specific occasion of ‘consultation’. In this instance of textual interaction, what ‘the citizen’ is, who ‘the citizen’ is, and what ‘the citizen’ must do, is hearable and discernable only through the authors’ and readers’ practical knowledge of the methodic application of membership categorizations and positioning practices. Moreover, the moral order that is generated through categorization procedures cannot be seen as generic to any occasion of ‘civic participation’, but rather is specific to this instance, where ‘the citizen’ is defined by membership in a specific region and specific governments, and his/her ‘civic obligations’ tied to the specific context of ‘sustainable’ regional planning for SEQ. Hence, ‘the citizen’ and the moral order that is produced through categorization procedures in the text in question only can be seen as a situated practical accomplishment that implicates the intended reader, as a ‘citizen’, in a particular set of moral arrangements.

Of course, as a practical accomplishment, ‘the citizen’, and the moral arrangements in which ‘the citizen’ is situated, are not immune to reformulation
on any occasion of interaction with the text. As such, ‘citizens’ category-incumbents are not rendered ineffectual in their capacity to re-order, reconstitute, or even directly challenge the categorial moral order produced in the Foreword of the DRP. Indeed, moral principles made publicly available in situated occasions of talk or text such as the Foreword, “may be defeated in methodic orderly ways and have conventionally formulatable exceptions or non-applicability contingencies” (Jayyusi, 1984, p.210). Hence, it should not be assumed that SEQ ‘citizens’ unanimously endorsed the draft plan based on the moral organisation of their category-incumbency, but rather that objections to the draft plan, or any part of it, would likely be organised in ways that attend to the procedurally produced moral demands of the interactional context.

This observation draws into focus a specific point of interest about the nature of the moral order that is produced in the text. This has to do with the idea that “moral reasoning is practically organised, and how, at the same time, and perhaps more significantly, practical reasoning in morally organised” (Jayyusi, 1991, p.241). Both dimensions of morality are displayed in the text, suggesting that the ‘moral order’ that we speak of, and to which participants of the interaction are held accountable in a practical sense, is reflexively constituted in substance and form. At the substantive level, the moral order that is produced in the Foreword of the DRP relates particularly to the moral values and obligations that are tied to ‘citizens’ incumbents. As such, those who are made recognisable as ‘citizens’ are instituted with a certain kind of moral character
that makes them available for assessment or judgement. In this respect, ‘the citizen’ is made morally accountable for his/her values and behaviours, particularly if they contradict those produced in the text. However, what MCA also reveals is how the substantive values and moral stances of the authors of the text in relation to ‘the citizen’ are only hearable and locatable as such by competent members through the application of a normative morality – the morality associated with the mundane activity of sense-making. Hence, the moral order through which ‘the citizen’ is produced and situated, is constituted within, and constitutive of, the procedural and temporal organisation of the text.

The Practico-moral sequencing of the text
Following from Sacks’ lead, the work of Jayyusi (1984) has been instrumental in enhancing our understanding of the way in which members’ own membership categorization procedures are morally organised. From this perspective, the procedures locatable in the Foreword of the DRP can be analytically broken down to show how the text displays a morality ‘for all practical purposes’, and a ‘trust’ that the reader will display a mutual orientation to this morality by accepting the discourse as sincere and relevant on face value. It is because of an orientation to this practical morality that ‘residents of SEQ’ are routinely recognised as referring to two separate membership groups at different points in the text, rather than representing an inherent contradiction; that ‘citizens’ incumbents are heard as having the same values and moral obligations as ‘government’ even in light of other distinguishing predicates; and that any
reader who meets the base-line criteria of being a ‘resident of SEQ’ can identify
him/herself as a ‘citizens’ incumbent who has the same values and obligations
of all ‘citizens’ incumbents on this particular occasion of ‘consultation’.
However, while MCA provides the means to elucidate the practical moral
groundings of the production and recognition of membership categorization
procedures, our analysis of the text highlights the way in which another
dimension of the practical moral order, usually articulated in relation to
conversational form, is also present in text.

Many conversation analytic studies have noted the moral order implicit in the
sequential organisation of conversation. In this respect, when conversational
participants ‘do’ activities such as turn allocation and turn-type allocation,
preference organisation, repair, and conversational openings and closings
(Sacks et al. 1974; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Schegloff, 1968), they display a
moral orientation to the production of orderliness in talk-in-interaction. The
same may be said of the sequential ordering locatable in the generation and
elaboration of topic. In their work, Button & Casey (1985) show how the
sequential organisation of topic is not necessarily confined to a two-part pair,
but that conversational participants mutually orient to producing the sequential
conditions for the elaboration of ‘news’ in extended talk. This raises significant
questions for the way in which ‘news announcements’ are sequentially
elaborated in text when the recipient of the news is temporally ‘removed’ from
the initial making of the announcement. Our analysis of the Foreword of the
DRP provides an opportunity to make some initial observations about how authors of text orient to the production of a sequential environment for the elaboration of news as if the reader were displaying a mutual orientation to the elaboration. To this end, observations made by Button & Casey (1985), in relation to news announcements in specific conversational extracts, appear to have some relevance to the sequential organisation of the text.

In conversational settings, news announcements provide one means to begin a topic. Button and Casey (1985) identify three characteristic features of news announcements represented as activity reports. First, they are speaker-related since they display first-hand knowledge on the part of the speaker and a knowledge deficiency on the part of the recipient. Second, in making a news announcement, the announcer displays an orientation to the recipient as having some knowledge of certain features of the setting to which the news relates. In this way, the recipient is made a relevant candidate for hearing the news. Finally, news announcements are frequently produced as partial reports or ‘headlines’ “designed to receive a response that will provide the sequential opportunity to go on and fill in the news” (Button & Casey, 1985, p.24). What is notable about the text in question, is that its sequential organisation tends to orient to the same principles associated with the giving of news announcements, despite that there is no immediate recipient who can verbally or physically provide a sequentially implicated invitation or request for elaboration of the news.
Let us return for a moment to Extract 1 to consider how this might operate:

South East Queensland is a unique part of the world. Our region is one of the most sought after places to live in Australia, with our relaxed lifestyle, strong economic growth and so many varying opportunities.

Extract 1 of the text is clearly delineable as the *prima facie* ‘news announcement’ of the text. Not only is it the first line of the Foreword, it is in large print, a different colour and in a different format from the remainder of text. It has all the characteristics of Button and Casey’s description of news announcements. First, it contains ‘newsworthy’ statements regarding the uniqueness of the region and its being one of the most sought after places to live in Australia and, as such, positions the authors as having first-hand knowledge of the news. Second, its membership categorization procedures generate a shared knowledge-base of particular features of the setting between the authors and readers that makes particular readers available candidates for hearing the news. This is a significant finding since it highlights how, in this case, categorization procedures display a moral orientation to eliciting the sequential conditions for further elaboration as much as they accomplish the ascription of identities, attributes, moral character, and so on. Finally, and closely related to the previous point, the extract reads as a ‘headline’ by selectively representing certain aspects of the topic, “but projecting that there is more which could be told” (Button & Casey, 1985, p.23).
The formulation of Extract 1 as a news announcement might be seen as fundamental to the task of creating a sequential environment that elicits collaboration from the reader in the elaboration of topic. Indeed, this could be said of every new utterance introduced in the text, given that on any occasion of interaction with the text, if a reader were to curtail the elaboration of topic, this could only be achieved through ceasing to read the text. Hence, throughout the Foreword, each elaboration of topic, produced textually in the presentation of sentences and paragraphs, proceeds as if the reader is mutually orienting to, and producing, the sequential environment and as if agreement from the reader – about the relevance of topic, topical motivations, ascriptions of identity, moral values and obligations – is forthcoming. The ‘as if principle (as a practically applied principle) thereby displays a moral inferential logic that is normatively applied by both authors and readers in the sequential writing and reading of the whole text. It is only in reading the whole text, in sequence, that the membership categorization procedures described above can be applied to generate an understanding of what it means to be ‘a citizen’ in the context of ‘sustainable’ regional planning or, more specifically, what it means to “opt for a better future for the region” (Extract 6).
Conclusion

Our MCA of the Foreword of the DRP demonstrates how ‘the citizen’ is interactionally produced in a situated occasion of text-in-interaction. In this case of ‘community consultation’, membership categorization procedures are used to produce a morally constitutive hearing of ‘citizens’ as tied to a particular set of moral values and obligations with respect to the region. Moreover, through the use of pronominal positioning practices, the reader is able to hear him/herself as a ‘citizen’ who is distinct from the authors based on the asymmetric standardised relationship between the ‘government’/’citizens’ pair, yet the same as the authors based on their shared moral values and obligations as ‘residents of SEQ’. This has implications for the way in which we understand how ‘the citizen’ becomes enrolled in the first instance, as a ‘citizen’ and, in the second, as someone to whom the ‘sustainability’ of the region is immediately relevant. Indeed, while much of the sociological literature may be concerned with the meaning and nature of ‘good’ citizenship (O’Neill, 2003, Wheeler & Dunne, 1998) the fostering of citizenship (Hickman, 2004;), the erosion of citizenship (Turner, 2001), education for citizenship (Garratt & Piper, 2003; Halliday, 1999) and citizenship rights and obligations (Giddens, 2000; 1998; Janoski, 1998), all of these perspectives fail to recognise the fundamentally practical and ‘taken-for-granted’ ways in which ‘citizens’ are defined and ‘civic values and obligations’ are made relevant to particular people on particular occasions of interaction. On this occasion, it is only through the
display of a practical morality – one that is oriented to the activity of sense-making – that ‘the citizen’ and the associated moral stances and values of the authors are locatable by competent members (Jayussi, 1984).

This recognition has also brought into focus another issue of specific concern to CA involving the morality associated with the sequential organisation of text. While much work in the CA field has highlighted how interactional participants orient to the production of a sequential environment in talk, there has been little concern with understanding how this occurs in the context of text. Our observations about the sequential organisation of the Foreword of the DRP provide a basis for further investigation into this issue. We found that the text was sequenced as if recipients were orienting to the production of the sequential environment and, moreover, as if agreement from recipients about the topic relevance, categorizations, and moral values and stances of the authors was forthcoming. Asking questions about whether and how the as if principle is displayed in other instances of text would make a valuable contribution to the field.
List of References


CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION: Enrolling the Citizen in Sustainability

7.1 Introduction

In the field of planning and development, participative democratic governance arrangements are frequently promoted as the most effective means to achieve sustainable development. Despite that the programmatic logic inherent in the presupposition that active civic participation will necessarily lead to sustainability is not conceptually sound (Eckersley, 1996), nor supported by evidence from several applied civic participatory exercises (Bloomfield et. al., 2001; Darier et. al., 1999; Kitchen et. al., 2002; Roy & Tisdell, 1998), it continues to be espoused in a range of theoretical and applied settings. This observation draws attention to the discursive relationships through which notions of civic participation and sustainability are produced as common-sense phenomena representing the ‘greater good’ for society.

In a departure from approaches that treat civic participation for sustainability as a pre-given social ‘fact’, this thesis has applied three constructivist perspectives as a means to ‘break’ with their common-sense roots. Through a reflexive conceptual and methodological process it has unpacked some of the discursive relationships that work to enrol the citizen as an active and moral participant in sustainable development, and more specifically ‘sustainable’ regional planning.
This has resulted in several theoretically and methodologically significant findings.

7.2 Significance of the Findings

7.2.1 Aim 1: The Governmentality of Sustainable Development Policy

*Explore how participative democratic principles, specifically the idea of civic participation in decision-making processes, are framed as community rights and/or responsibilities in sustainable development policy at different levels of government.*

Applying the governmentality perspective as a means to provide an initial ‘break’ with ideas of civic participation for sustainability allowed a focus on how notions of civic participatory rights and responsibilities, locatable in sustainable development policy discourse, facilitate government ‘at a distance’. This perspective provided for a rupture with the common-sense foundation of civic participation for sustainability by demonstrating how community rights and responsibilities are deployed as ‘techniques of government’ in order to shape and regulate the conduct of subjects in accordance with the ethic of sustainability. Examining the discourse of the three policy documents in this way enabled notions of civic participation for sustainability – tied by the discourse to community rights and responsibilities – to be removed from their common-sense frameworks into a realm that addressed questions of how they were being used as tools of government. This approach led to several significant findings.
First, the process of mapping out the different ways in which techniques of community rights and responsibilities were applied in each document studied had specific implications for how processes of government are understood. In this respect, the effort to achieve a ‘break’ with notions of civic participation for sustainability resulted in a second kind of rupture with taken-for-granted ideas about how governments work and inter-relate. A typical approach might assume that the three policies under examination would display logical consistencies on the basis that institutionally, the local level policy (Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan: For Consultation) is governed by the national level policy (Australian National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development) that, in turn, is governed by the global level policy (Agenda 21). However, the range of different, and sometimes contradictory, logics that emerged both within and across the policies suggests that processes of government are far more arbitrary. Hence, it is not the case that we should assume that the three governmental institutions, nor any members of these institutions, conspired tactically to responsibilise communities for the sake of achieving sustainability, nor for the sake of manipulating the conduct of individuals for any other purpose. Rather, the language of the policies in question tacitly orients to another kind of purpose - the task of ‘governing at a distance’. In this respect, ‘community’ as well as ‘institutions’, ‘territories’, ‘cultures’ and ‘political bodies’ can be seen as spaces for government that are produced and constituted through the policy language.
Second, through showing how notions of community rights and responsibilities are deployed as ‘techniques of government’ in the policy discourse, it became evident that ‘community’ does not exist as a specific ‘thing’ in the world, nor that civic participation necessarily corresponds to a particular kind of ‘activity’. This dispels ideas that community, civic participation, participatory democracy or the like, essentially represent inherent societal or political ‘goods’ and the way forward for democracy in a globalised world that is so frequently purported to be the case in Third Way thought. Rather, they are discursively produced constructs that shape and regulate the conduct of subjects to facilitate government ‘at arms length’.

Third, and closely related to the implications for how civic participation can now be understood, sustainable development can also be seen as embedded within ‘techniques of government’. It is not, as many might propose, a set of activities that will produce a balance between environmental, economic and social objectives, but rather a rationality through which programmes of government are formulated: On the one hand, the ethic of sustainability provides the conditions for the formulation of a broad range of political problematisations that legitimise the activity of government. On the other hand, however, it is necessarily restrictive by rendering the formulation of other kinds of political problems ‘unthinkable’. This is most evident in the way that the sustainability
ethic is used to generate a context in which expectations about civic participation and ‘responsible’ civic conduct are shaped.

In many respects, one should exercise some caution in extrapolating the findings derived from this application of the governmentality perspective, even when the extrapolation might be suggestive of a new research agenda. This is because of the emphasis the perspective grants to the contingent social and historical conditions under which a discourse or ‘ethic’ might become ‘thinkable’, or alternatively, remain ‘unthinkable’. Hence, to a great extent, it would not be possible to propose many of the ways the sustainability ethic restricts the formulation of certain kinds of political problems since these would only become ‘thinkable’ under different social and historical conditions. Nevertheless, the revelations offered by the governmentality perspective do open the door for some further applied exploration into way in which the sustainability ethic, or indeed any kind of ethic that helps shape civic conduct, constrains recognition of the way a policy discourse discriminates against some individuals and groups at a taken-for-granted level. This kind of approach could provide the conceptual tools through which to undertake more comprehensive evaluations of policy documents that intentionally disengage with the program logic of policy frameworks.
Overall, the application of the governmentality perspective achieved a ‘break’ with common-sense notions of civic participation and sustainability through showing how they are inextricably tied to processes of government, and more specifically, to the overarching problem of creating a space through which to govern ‘at a distance’. Furthermore, and of conceptual and methodological significance, applying the perspective created the opportunity to ask some more explicit questions about the relationship between the discourse, in which techniques of government reside, and subjects of government whose conduct is being shaped by the discourse. With full appreciation that discourse and subjects of government cannot be separated in a manner that treats them as discrete entities – after all, discourse creates its subjects and subjects produce discourse – it is the dimensions of this very relationship that became interesting.

One dimension that revealed itself in the context of sustainable development policy discourse was the apparent pedagogic relationship between a text and its audience. In this respect, and in light of the reflexive methodological process, Aim 2 can be seen as a significant finding of the application of the governmentality perspective, since it is only through this application that research question reflected in Aim 2 emerged as conceptually and theoretically relevant.
7.2.2 Aim 2: The Pedagogy of Sustainable Development Policy

Investigate the pedagogic processes, implicit in the discourse of the case study document, through which citizens acquire the conceptual principles associated with what it means to be sustainable in a context where there is no formal pedagogy.

Examining the text of the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan: For Consultation for its implicit pedagogic principles enabled a second kind of ‘break’ – one that appears concentric to that achieved by the governmentality perspective - with common-sense notions of civic participation for sustainability. In an overarching sense, this study investigated how pedagogic practice operates as a discrete dimension of the ‘lines of force’ that are produced through techniques of government. Specifically, the study problematised how citizens were supposed to acquire the skills required for ‘responsible’ civic participation in sustainable development in a context where there is no formal pedagogy. Through probing the text for its principles of classification and framing, it was possible to show how informal pedagogy played a role in the transmission of a moral order through which citizens were schooled on how to participate in ‘sustainable’ regional planning.

In terms of principles of classification, it was found that the text adopts two value frames that appear to attend to two separate kinds of audiences. Given the sustainability concept is underpinned by principles of integration, the discourse of the text necessarily attended to these principles in the context of
the plan itself. In this respect, ideas of integrated planning and achieving an integrated pattern of development across the region attend to the weakly classified sustainability context, easily recognisable by experts within the planning field. However, in apparent anticipation that many people may not recognise the speciality of the weakly classified sustainability context, the text was also noted to produce another system of strong classification that was targeted at a more generic civic audience. This comprised the generation of a moral order that clearly distinguished ‘sustainable’ regional planning from ‘unsustainable’ regional planning in a hero-villain type dualism. As such, the acquirer was provided with an alternative moral context of recognition that does not necessarily require him/her to recognise the speciality of the sustainability context.

Strong framing values were also located in the text. While the informal pedagogic setting meant that there was a weak locus of control over communications external to the text, the internal framing values of the text ensured that the acquirer was granted little control over the pedagogic relations. This was achieved through the text’s use of inter-related framing techniques that regulated the identity, conduct and character of the acquirer in relation to the roles of hero and villain. In this respect, the acquirer was morally positioned in a way that afforded him/her little discretion as to whether he/she would back the hero (sustainability) or the villain (‘unsustainable’ development) or, indeed, whether he would be the hero or villain. Therefore, through the text’s strong
framing values, expectations about the acquirer’s values and conduct were shaped in ways that would enable the acquirer to realise ‘sustainable’ regional planning by endorsing the draft plan, regardless of whether he/she could recognise the speciality of the weakly classified sustainability context.

The examination of the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan: For Consultation revealed how pedagogic principles were applied in an informal pedagogic context representing a case of civic participation in sustainability. It highlighted how the relationship between the text and its audience – in this case a pedagogic relationship – is central to the process of shaping and regulating the behaviour of citizens in relation to the ethic of sustainability. In this respect, it has shown the ways in which an instance of text selects the citizen as a pedagogic subject and transmits to him/her the principles of that ethic so that he/she can carry out his/her duty as a ‘responsible’ civic participant.

Of course, these findings should not imply that any text produced in a civic participatory context will necessarily exercise the same kind of classification and framing values as the case in question. Nevertheless, the recognition that pedagogic values are at play in a policy context has, in its own right, significant implications for how processes of government, particularly in ‘civic participatory’ settings, are understood. Indeed, with the exception of face-value pedagogic processes that are present in civic educational initiatives, the role of pedagogy in shaping participatory responses to political proposals is rarely recognised or
explored. Yet, if pedagogy is implicit in a range of participatory decision-making settings, this could have profound implications for how participatory activities and contexts are evaluated in relation to their democratic intent. In this case, one could proffer that an evaluation of the DSEQRP that included pedagogic values as part of its evaluation criteria would reveal the ‘top down’ nature of a purportedly ‘bottom up’ civic participatory process.

Nevertheless, before pedagogic values could be implemented as a criteria in an evaluation sense, it would first be necessary to engage with some further theoretical exploration of the way pedagogy is implicit in contexts outside of the formal educational field. Indeed, while it appears straightforward to assume that the pedagogic transmission of a moral order in a policy document would unnecessarily influence the nature of the civic response to such a document, it would be equally reasonable to question how civic participants are supposed to acquire the skills for participation in a field where they have no pre-existing expertise. In this sense, the incorporation of pedagogy into public documents may be a necessary evil in contexts where civic participation is encouraged regardless of expertise. Hence, future exploration into the role of pedagogy in civic participatory contexts could be guided by a concern with developing an interpretive framework to make judgements about the influence of the pedagogic values at work and the degree to which they are necessary and/or detract from citizens’ capacity to influence programs of government.
From a conceptual and methodological point of view, this study also resulted in a significant ‘finding’ – the development of another kind of problematic involving the relationship between the text and its audience. Here, it became clear that the text’s capacity to establish a pedagogic relationship between itself and its audience was made possible via the application of another level of common-sense reasoning – that which involves the activity of sense-making. The analysis so far had invoked the notion of ‘the citizen’ as a generic reference for the text’s audience, yet had not questioned how a single reader of the text could readily, and at a taken-for-granted level, decide whether he/she qualified as a ‘citizen’ in this particular case of civic participation for sustainability. Hence, a new research question was generated that enquired about the common-sense methods through which ‘the citizen’ was produced and enrolled in the interactional context of the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan: For Consultation.

7.2.3 Aim 3: Membership Categorization and the Production of ‘the Citizen’

Explicate the ‘common-sense’ and methodical ways that the case study text interactionally produces and enrols ‘the citizen’ as an active participant in ‘sustainable’ regional planning

The use of Membership Categorization Analysis to examine the Foreword of the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan: For Consultation achieved the
final, concentrically organised ‘break’ with notions of civic participation for sustainability. This study derived from a problematisation of who ‘the citizen’ was and why ‘sustainable’ regional planning would necessarily be seen as a relevant to ‘the citizen’. Through using Membership Categorization Analysis, it was possible to describe how the reader was procedurally ascribed the identity of ‘the citizen’ with an associated set of ‘civic values and obligations’ in relation to ‘sustainable’ regional planning. Through this process, it became evident that the substantive moral order that enjoined people as citizens ‘responsible’ for sustainability was underpinned, first and foremost, by a normative moral order associated with the mundane activity of sense-making.

The study revealed how several dimensions of the categorization procedures used in the text worked together to inferentially generate a particular kind of hearing of ‘the citizen’ and ‘civic values and obligations’. First, it identified how place-identity categorizations were used initially to isolate a particular group of people as incumbent ‘residents of SEQ’ based on their predicate residency in the region. Through the use of indexicals ‘we’ and ‘our’, authors and readers (provided they qualified as residents) could be heard to belong to this category and to share the same values and obligations in relation to the region. Second, the analysis showed how the introduction of the asymmetric standardised relational pair, ‘government / residents’, produced a second kind of hearing of the relationship between authors and readers. In this respect, the relevant institutional category incumbency of the authors was, by the nature of the
interactional community consultation context, ‘government’. Hence, ‘Residents of SEQ’ could now be heard to exclude ‘government’ incumbents, resulting in a hearing of ‘Residents’ inferring ‘Citizens’. In this way, the reader was ascribed the identity of ‘the Citizen’ who is category-bound to participate by providing feedback to the ‘government’ on the draft plan, yet who is also predicated to share the same values and obligations as ‘government’ in relation to the region.

The procedural ascription of a shared set of moral values and obligations with respect to both the authors and readers of the text resulted in the reader becoming categorically – and morally – bound to support the author’s version of ‘sustainable’ regional planning. This, however, is not a reflection of any kind of higher-order moral reasoning but rather a practical accomplishment of the participants to the interaction through the application of a practical moral reasoning. In this respect, participants must display a moral orientation to the production and recognition of orderliness in text-in-interaction in relation to both membership categorization procedures and the sequencing of the text in order to produce and recognise ‘the Citizen’ and their ‘civic rights and obligations’ as active participants in ‘sustainable’ regional planning.

The conceptual and methodological significance of this final study lies in its capacity to expose the ethnomethodological foundation, not only of processes of enrolment in sustainability, but of the sociological perspectives applied in the thesis as a whole. As the final ‘break’ with notions of civic participation for
sustainability in this thesis, it exposes the way in which the application of
techniques of government, at a general level, and pedagogic practice, as a
discrete aspect of these techniques, are underpinned and made possible by the
situated application of ethnomethods that produce and make visible the moral
universe in which civic participation and sustainability are situated. In this
respect, and regardless of the ‘break-inducing’ capacity of the governmentality
perspective, and the insights offered by Bernstein in his problematisation of the
acquisition of legitimate discourse, both approaches take-for-granted the
ethnomethodological requirements for the production and recognition of moral
discourse. Hence, the governmentality perspective’s capacity to show how the
contingent relationship between civic community, and the sustainability ethic
facilitates government ‘at arms length’, is enabled by the application of
ethnomethods that make visible the ethical underpinnings of processes of
government. Similarly, locating the informal pedagogic principles through which
citizens acquire the skills to participate in sustainability is only possible through
the application of ‘common-sense’ methods that make discernable the
substantive moral context of ‘sustainable’ regional planning. In essence,
‘making sense’ of notions of civic participation for sustainability, regardless of
how critical the perspective offered, is always a methodological problem – an
*ethnomethodological* problem.
7.3 Enrolling the Citizen in Sustainability: Implications for understanding Civic Participation in the context of Sustainable Development

As a whole, this thesis provides a basis to depart from taken-for-granted programme theories that routinely assume a complementary or causal relationship between civic participation and sustainability, and instead begin to understand how this relationship is produced through discourse. Each study undertaken has demonstrated, in varying ways, how civic participation for sustainability is brought to life through in the language of sustainable development policy. In this respect, actualising civic participation for sustainability requires neither the participation of citizens nor the ‘doing’ of sustainability in an applied sense. Rather, in this case, the ‘truth-value’ of civic participation for sustainability is produced and reproduced through text.

However, this recognition should not detract from an understanding of the context as being more than purely linguistic. Indeed, while civic participation for sustainability is produced through language, the language itself is reflexively oriented to a context that represents more than words on a page. In this respect, the discursive context of sustainable development policy is situated within, and simultaneously produces, a broader social context through which certain kinds of relationships become significant. Here, it is not only a matter of the discursive production of a ‘civic participation for sustainability’ programme theory, but also a question of the mechanisms through which the programme secures the appropriate participation from citizens in a socially prospective
sense. In the case of the *Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan: For Consultation*, the social relationship that revealed itself as particularly significant was that between the text and its audience. In this regard, the case did not simply represent one of the discursive production of the programme theory itself, but one of enjoining its audience in the same logic. In many respects, what occurs in the case study text can be likened to a process of enrolling the citizen in what H.L.A. Hart (1961) identifies as the ‘internal point of view’ in the sociology of law.

For Hart (1961), any system of laws can be evaluated from two different points of view. People with the ‘external’ point of view recognise the rules as they apply to and regulate the conduct of others, but do not necessarily accept that the rules apply to them. Alternatively, those who are governed by the rules, and accept the rules as standards of conduct have an ‘internal’ point of view. Here, “what distinguishes ‘legal rules’ from customs, habits, conventions, etc (but not from morality) is that they involve some distinctive attitude or subjective response” such as ‘ought’, ‘should’, ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ (Morrison, 1997, p.372). Hart’s distinction between the ‘external’ and ‘internal’ points of view provides an analogy that is useful for describing the social context of the case study text, and potentially any occasion of civic participation – whether it be for sustainability or any other purpose. Specifically, the text is situated within a social context that is comprised of a practical problematic involving the transition from the ‘external point of view’ to the ‘internal point of view’ on the
part of those who are being asked to accept the laws of ‘sustainable’ regional planning.

This analogy assists in explaining why the social policy that is implicitly, yet persuasively, scripted within the case study text, and possibly in many other instances of discourse produced in civic participatory and/or sustainability contexts, is so often overlooked. Indeed, reflecting on the literature outlined in Chapter 2, most accounts - whether critical or not - tend to focus on the tangible laws of democratic civic participation and/or sustainability, rather than the processes through which these laws are instituted and internalised into the everyday logics of social agents. When these processes become the focus of analysis, it becomes clear why the logical disjuncture between democratic civic participation and sustainability goals is of little consequence to the production and proliferation of the ‘civic participation for sustainability’ programme. The strength of the programme does not lie in its rational or moral merits but rather in the social and discursive mechanisms that are used to enrol citizens in the production and reproduction of the programme at everyday levels and in everyday ‘participatory’ contexts.

7.4 Enrolling the Citizen: Implications for Sociological Inquiry

The conceptual and methodological process undertaken in the course of this research has facilitated the on-going refinement of the case in question to one of ‘enrolling the citizen’. As such, the context of sustainability has provided the
opportunity to identify a particular kind of problem for sociological inquiry that relates to the more general domain of governance. Of course, the governmentality perspective is already concerned with this domain and, in terms of its common historical emphasis, is well equipped to show how techniques of government shape and regulate the conduct of subjects to facilitate government ‘at arms length’ – a form, no doubt, of ‘enrolment’. However, in most applications of the governmentality perspective, it is rare to find that questions are raised that may require a shift out of the perspective itself and into other methodological domains that do not necessarily fit neatly within the Foucauldian framework.

As this thesis has shown, the governmentality perspective provides one form of rupture with the common-sense world, however not the only one. Furthermore, an application of the perspective provides a strong foundation to raise other kinds of questions that cannot be answered necessarily through the perspective itself, but are nevertheless conceptually relevant to the field of sociological inquiry. In this respect, if the task of the sociologist is to achieve an epistemological ‘break’ with the ‘taken-for-granted’ world, he/she cannot be bound to a single method, perspective or theory. Rather, he/she must be free to reflexively and retroductively use the methods, perspectives and theories that are available to him/her in ways that best facilitate the ‘break’. It is through exercising this freedom that issues to do with pedagogic practice and the
acquisition of legitimate discourses could be identified as salient to the process of ‘enrolment’.

While the production and recognition of pedagogic discourse is a key site for inquiry in the field of sociology of education, investigations into pedagogic practice in contexts other than formal educational settings are rare. Despite Bernstein’s recognition that pedagogic modalities are features of any context that involves cultural production and reproduction, little research has been undertaken in relation to pedagogic practice in domains where there is no formal pedagogy. On its own, therefore, revealing how informal pedagogic practice plays a role in a specific context of governance makes a significant contribution to the sociology of education field. With respect to the broader sociological field, recognising pedagogy as an important element of the processes through which social agents become ‘enrolled’ in governance discourses and structures is both theoretically and methodologically significant.

First, most theory pertaining to the role of education in contemporary governance arrangements has been limited to face-value curriculum issues, and occasionally conceptual issues, associated with formal education for citizenship (see Lawy & Biesta, 2006; Davies et al, 2005; Garratt & Piper, 2003; Halliday, 1999). In this respect, education in the context of governance has been theorised at the same taken-for-granted level as notions of ‘civic participation for sustainability’. The insights afforded by this thesis, however,
provide a basis to shift substantive issues of ‘education for governance’ into the
arena of critical theory by understanding pedagogy as an implicit mechanism
through which social agents are enjoined in governance-related strategies and
goals. This is an area of inquiry that could be developed further as part of the
broader sociological interest in contemporary governance arrangements.
Closely linked to this is the methodological implications of examining the
pedagogic aspects of governance discourses. The fact that, to date, pedagogic
practice has not been identified as a salient feature of governance discourses is
potentially because locating pedagogic principles in discourse requires a
conceptual and methodological approach that specifically targets such
principles. This thesis has shown how Bernstein’s concepts of classification
and framing provide useful tools in this respect. These concepts could be used
as conceptual and methodological tools to facilitate further inquiry into the
pedagogic aspects of governance discourses.

A third set of methodological insights derived from this thesis are with regard to
the ethnomethodological foundation of everyday talk and text. As a discrete
discipline, ethnomethodology, and specifically conversation analysis, has been
primarily concerned with the methods used by members in producing
orderliness in talk-in-interaction. While conversation analysts consistently
transform conversational interactions into text in the form of transcripts,
interactional occasions originating in text have received comparatively little
attention from this group with the exception of Alec McHoul’s (1982) work on
“Telling How Texts Talk” and D.R. Watson’s chapter on “Ethnomethodology and Textual Analysis” (Silverman, 1997, pp. 80-98). Hence, this thesis has provided a contribution to the ethnomethodological discipline through drawing into focus the study of ‘text-in-interaction’. Not only did the third study show how membership categorization procedures are a significant feature of text, it also highlighted the ways in which sequencing in text is salient to the task of producing orderliness in text-based interactions. Furthermore, the thesis demonstrated how the ethnomethodological perspective can provide a valuable tool to examine ‘topic-based’ issues such as those concerned with governance. Traditionally, ethnomethodologists hold fast to the specific sociological concern with how members practically accomplish a ‘world-known-in-common’. From a CA perspective, this concern is focussed in on how members produce orderliness in ‘talk-in-interaction’. In this context, while conversational analysts frequently examine the ways in which members produce ‘topic talk’, they rarely proclaim to have an interest in the ‘topic of the talk’. Obviously, in light of the overarching concern of this thesis, the ‘topic of the talk’ was an explicit interest in this case. This should not be seen to detract from the ethnomethodological perspective itself, but rather to demonstrate how the perspective can be applied to enhance understanding of ‘topics’ such as governance and sustainability. In this instance, examining the ethnomethods applied in the Foreword of the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan: For Consultation highlighted how these ethnomethods oriented not only to the practical task of ‘sense-making’, but also the broader task of ‘enrolment’. This signals the potential for ethnomethodology
to make a broader contribution to studies of governance, particularly in the context of text-based policy discourses that must, to a great extent, be self-legitimating and engender the appropriate response from policy subjects to be considered effective. Given that the readership of many policy documents is potentially unlimited, the use of practical strategies to socially position the audience in ways that enjoin particular readers in the policy agenda may be a salient feature of text-based policy discourses. In this respect, further ethnomethodological studies of policy discourse would make a significant contribution to sociological perspectives on governance.

7.5 Some Final Remarks on ‘Enrolment’

As a whole, the methodological approach utilised in this thesis may provide a ‘blue-print’ for future research into the subject of ‘enrolment’. While each of the methods used independently represent legitimate and rigorous approaches to the examination of issues of ‘enrolment’, used together, they provide a more holistic picture of the discursive ways in which social agents are enjoined in programmes of government. Indeed, it was only through their combination that the case of ‘enrolment’ was identified in this instance. While it is not viable to generalise this particular case to other instances of sustainable development policy, policy concerned with any other topic, or governance discourses in general, the approach taken here provides a platform for further research into the area. In this respect, the combination of methods provides a means to unpack the different layers of discourse, all of which intersect and collude to
carry out the task of ‘enrolment’. As this thesis has shown, techniques of
government, pedagogic practice and ethnomethods all form a part of the
process of enrolling the citizen in ‘sustainable’ regional planning in this case.
While so much of sociology tends to be carried out within the limits of particular
perspectives, an approach such as this suggests that the methods are not so
much mutually exclusive, but rather complement each other in ways that enable
the performance of a comprehensive ‘break’ with the common-sense world.
List of References


APPENDIX A


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