

STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR FACILITY PROVISION: A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE NIMBY PHENOMENON

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The conflict between the provision of facilities that provide public service and the community responses to those facilities is of crucial concern to those planning and managing such facilities. The NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) phenomenon exemplifies a community response to the provision of facilities intended to provide public service. The facilities may be provided either by government or the private sector. This paper uses content analysis to examine the language used in the public domain from a recent NIMBY case in Melbourne, Victoria and the NIMBY literature. The NIMBY literature contains approaches that treat the responses to facilities as reasoned and rational, the result of ignorance, or are irrational and selfish. A re-examination of the language used shows that this is a limited interpretation of the responses. The public domain language from the local newspaper provides a case study of the, particularly, community responses to the issue of facility provision. A number of response modes are possible, however, the language used in both instances suggests that affective responses are a dominant response mode. An understanding of affective responses to facility provision is important to providers of such facilities and the strategic management of their processes in planning for and providing service facilities.

Keywords: community, conflict, facilities management, government, NIMBY, strategic management.

INTRODUCTION

Conflict over the provision of facilities providing public service is of crucial concern to those planning and managing such facilities, particularly when strategic issues for planning and managing processes are considered. The literature discussing this situation identifies 3 possible sources of the community responses that give rise to the conflict. However, a review of the conflict and attitudes within it, through the lens of the psychological processes that give rise to attitudes shows that individually these assumptions are flawed and that a more comprehensive understanding of community responses is required.

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NIMBYs defined

The provision of community services and facilities are key parts of government's mandate². However, proposals for new facilities, or closing and changing existing

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ones are problematic. These proposals frequently provoke political and civic protest. Known by a variety of acronyms – LULU (locally unwanted land uses), NOOS (not in our street) and NOPE (not on planet Earth) (Dear 1992, Takahashi & Dear 1997) – the phenomenon of protest is frequently exemplified as NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard). While primarily an issue of placement of new facilities, similar protests about development generally, are known as ‘anti-growth’ (Pendall 1999). NIMBYism’s corollaries are:

- Desire for new facilities (IMBY) (Whiteaker 1999); and
- Desire to retain existing facilities (Weisberg 1993) where change or closure is proposed giving rise to NOOMBY (Not Out Of My Backyard).

NIMBY protestors are frequently not direct consumers of the services provided by the facility (Dear, Fincher & Currie 1977), however when service consumers protest, NOOMBY and IMBY protests are prevalent.

For (Luton 1997) and (Dear 1992) the phenomenon exhibits a 3-phase process:

- Youthful stage – selfish, emotional, short-term participants;
- Maturing phase – characterised by more measured, rational approaches; and
- Old age (mature) phase – endurance and long-term pursuit of public interest.

Scholarly literature on NIMBYism and resident attitudes to facilities and land uses indicates that

- Such attitudes are reasoned and rationally formed (Takahashi & Gaber 1998);
- A conventional view that they are irrationally founded on ignorance and selfish attitudes (Luton 1997, Takahashi & Dear 1997); and
- They are the ‘product of structural processes that serve to stigmatise and marginalize specific groups’ (Takahashi 1997, 129).

Community attitudes

The NIMBY phenomenon has previously been shown to be more complex than simply the result of selfish actions, reasoned decisions, or ignorance (Takahashi 1997). Likewise, community attitudes that give rise to NIMBYism are complex and any explanation of those attitudes needs to equally accommodate complexity.

(Takahashi 1997) states that attitudes are a psychological phenomenon with 3 components that intervene and interact between the environment (the originating stimuli) and behavior. The components are a mentally based (cognitive) component, an emotionally related (affective) component, and a behavioural (conative) component. This tripartite formation can be seen to match the 3-phase life of NIMBYs identified by both (Luton 1997) and (Dear 1992) where 1 = affective, 2 = cognitive and 3 = conative³.

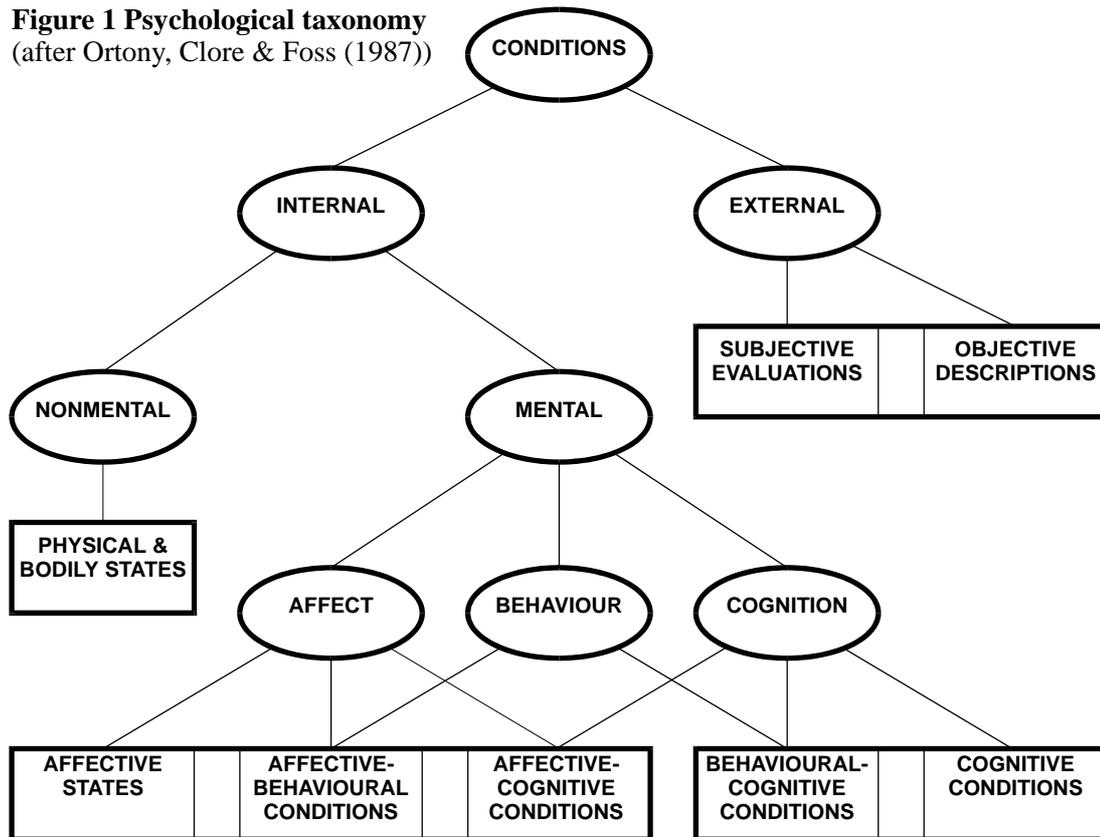
A more complete description of the structure of psychological functions is Ortony, Clore & Foss's (1987) taxonomy of psychological conditions (Figure 1). This includes the tripartite model of attitudes, and other non-mental feeling states and external

² Government is used in a very broad sense including national, state and local, government agencies and authorities. The form and manner of that provision takes may vary, with some governments providing both the facility and the service, the private sector providing both on behalf of government, or some combination of facility and service between the two poles.

³ How these three phases specifically relate to psychological functions is beyond the scope of this paper.

conditions of a psychological nature. There are a number of possible responses including each of the individual components plus their hybrid interactions.

Figure 1 Psychological taxonomy
(after Ortony, Clore & Foss (1987))



Affect is the general psychological category that includes feelings, emotion, moods (Amedeo 1993), dispositions, appraisals and episodes (Russell & Snodgrass 1987). Affect also provides a semantic lexicon classified on the same structure as the psychological taxonomy (Clore & Ortony 1988, Clore, Ortony & Foss 1987, Ortony, Clore & Foss 1987). The taxonomy is presented as a word list of affective terms sorted according to the classification system as an Appendix to their papers. Non-affective classifications, not derived specifically from the affectively based lexicon but that are consistent with its logic, may extend the affective taxonomy, for example - non-affective objective descriptions, purely cognitive and behaviour responses. Storm & Storm (1987) provide an alternative taxonomy of emotion with the vocabulary classified in positive and negative terms.

A number of taxonomic sub-classifications are provided, such as state, frames of mind and state-like conditions. States are short-term internal conditions. Longer-term non-states are termed frames of mind. Cases that don't fit either category are classified as state-like (Ortony, Clore & Foss 1987).

Attitudes to facilities

The community responses to facilities exposed by the NIMBY phenomenon have been attributed to ignorance and reasoned rationality (cognitive processes), selfish actions (conative) or emotional (affective) processes. Intangible external effects of public service facilities that spill over into community attitudes have dimensions attributable to subjective evaluations and objective descriptions (Dear, Fincher & Currie 1977). Community assessments of facilities' contribution to Quality of Life

(QOL) have both subjective evaluation and affective components (Sirgy, Rahtz & Underwood 2000).

AIM

This paper aims to understand community responses to facility siting issues through an examination of the language of community responses to facility proposals and the scholarly literature describing such responses. Three specific questions follow:

1. What form do community responses take to NIMBYs when analysed from the perspective of a comprehensive framework of psychological processes and functions?
2. Similarly, what language is used in the NIMBY literature to describe community responses to NIMBY facilities?
3. What are the implications for facility providers' strategic management?

METHOD

This study uses content analysis to analyse community responses to facility provision. Content analysis involves the systematic, objective quantification of the message content of texts (Carney 1972). It may be 'classical' content analysis based on counting words and phrases (manifest content) (Carney 1972, Neuman 1994, Sedlack & Stanley 1992), or it may be analysis of the latent content of themes (Carney 1972), semantics (Neuman 1994), and reading between the lines (Sedlack & Stanley 1992). Content analysis relies on the applicable theory being defined prior to engaging with the data (Rice & Ezzy 1999).

Community responses to facility proposals are frequently considered emotional as expressed through the language of those responses. Therefore, applying a taxonomy of emotional semantics is appropriate to their analysis. This study applies the lexical taxonomy from Ortony, Clore & Foss (1987) to the content analysis of community responses recorded in the public domain from a recent NIMBY case and the NIMBY scholarly literature. A mixture of manifest and latent coding methods was used. Two coding passes were made to both data sets. A preliminary one based on a preliminary form of the framework and a data extractive one coded as per the taxonomy.

Sampling – Community response public domain items

The proposed facility was for 20 independent living units for older adults at risk of homelessness. It was to be located in a South-East Melbourne suburb, on the site of a closed primary school, and was as vigorously conflictual as any recent case in Melbourne.

The community's response data was the public domain material published in the local suburban paper – *Moorabbin Glen Eira Leader*. The paper (typically about 60 tabloid-sized pages) has local issues' news, 'advertorials' for local businesses, classifieds for local businesses and services, and residential property advertisements.

27 Articles were collected from the beginning of 2001. This spans from the end of the land use rezoning, the planning application for development of the site, council approval up until just prior to the residents' appeal hearing against the council's decision at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). Date of publication, page number and area occupied by the item were recorded as a measure of significance, which is not discussed in this paper. Items were classified by type – news article, or Letter to the editor. Items were further classified by the points of view

they contain – opposing community, supporting community, applicant, politician (council or other), or neutral. Three articles contained more than one point of view. In total 32 points of view are available for analysis.

Sampling – NIMBY literature

A web-based literature search of academic planning and environmental texts based on NIMBY, community, citizen and opposition keywords was conducted. A bibliographic search of general environmental psychology texts that refer to the NIMBY phenomenon was also used.

14 articles were identified for analysis. Selection was based on the article containing a description of community responses. No other issues of significance were recorded, as this description was the significance.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Public domain data

This data contained actual responses from the community rather than descriptions of responses as characterised by the scholarly NIMBY literature. This permitted more analyses to be performed. The first analysis was of the points of view presented in the newspaper item (Table 1). Analysis thereafter is restricted to only the community points of view.

The majority of points of view were from the community opposing the facility, the majority of which were letters to the editor. The community supporting the facility was only represented in their published letters to the editor. The neutral article was a description of the project from its earliest phase. The points of view of those with a political role were expressed by the Mayor, ward councillors, State (opposition) member, State Minister responsible for funding and, because this episode occurred during a Federal election, a federal (non-sitting) candidate. These were roughly numerically equal in terms of support or opposition.

Table 1 – Points of view represented in the data (n=32)

	Sole focus	In a multiple focus	Total	% of no. of articles	Article	% of total items	Letter	% of total items
Opposing community	15	3	18	56.3%	8	25.0%	10	31.3%
Supporting community	2	0	2	6.3%	0	0.0%	2	6.3%
Development applicant	3	2	5	15.6%	4	12.5%	1	3.1%
Politician	3	3	6	18.8%	5	15.7%	1	3.1%
Neutral	1	0	1	3.1%	1	3.1%	0	0.0%

Analysis of this form of data must be aware of points of view in the newspaper being affected by editorial selection. The reporting of opposition may be considered more newsworthy than support. The supporting and opposing points of view in the news articles were roughly numerically equal indicating that editorial bias was not significant here. A comparison of letters received by the editor and those published would be required to show any selection bias.

Coding

244 community responses were coded from the public domain data. These are tabled as affective and non-affective responses (Tables 2a & 2b) in accordance with the lexical taxonomy. The non-affective tables (Table 2b & 3b) include cognitive and behavioural responses that originated within the affective taxonomy in addition to non-affective classifications from the extension to that taxonomy.

Separating the two parts of the taxonomy emphasises those responses that have the greater affective bases.

Table 2a – Affective community responses (local paper) n=244

Affective evaluation		Affective condition		Affective-cognitive condition			Affective-behavioural condition		Total affective
Objective description	Subjective evaluation	State-like	State	Frame of mind	State-like	State	Frame of mind	State	
46	36	0	30	4	5	21	3	1	146 59.8%
18.9%	14.8%	12.3%		12.3%			1.6%		

Table 2b – Non- affective community responses (local paper) n=244

Cognitive condition		Other Cognitive	Cognitive-behavioural condition	Other Behaviour	Non-affective evaluation		Total non-affective
Frame of mind	State				Objective description	Subjective evaluation	
10	10	10	15	12	38	3	98 40.2%
8.2%		4.1%	6.1%	4.9%	15.6%	1.2%	

The aggregate of all classes of affective responses constitutes the majority (59.8%) of community responses. Pure emotions (affective condition) are 20% of those responses. ‘Fear’ and ‘anger’ were typical of these. Affective-cognitive conditions, where cognitive processes influence the condition, also constitute 20% of the affective responses. ‘Concern’ is prominent among these.

25% of community responses were affective subjective evaluations. Here assessments of ‘fact’ are made through an emotional lens. These assessments included statements of fact that were erroneous. An often repeated community evaluation was that there was limited public transport serving the site, when a bus service operates to within 150m of the site, with 3 bus services within 500m and 5 with 1km. This evaluation is, clearly, influenced by the affective state of the evaluator. Objective descriptions of factual matters are 30% of the affective responses, for example ‘It’s very shabby,’ or ‘They have ignored our objections.’

Non-affective responses (Table 2b) are the minority of responses (40.2%). 30% of these are cognitive responses that would include the rational classes of response and other mental processes, such as ‘The residents are aware of the facts.’ Behavioural based responses are 27% of the non-affective responses. These include descriptions of action such as ‘I am writing ...’ or ‘I oppose ...’

Non-affective evaluations most usually were objective descriptions of statements of fact regarding the project that were uncontested (or uncontestable).

NIMBY literature

Analysis of the scholarly NIMBY literature provided 133 coded descriptions of community response (Tables 3a & 3b). They are separated on the same basis as Table 2.

Table 3a – Affective community responses (NIMBY literature) (n=133)

Affective evaluation		Affective condition		Affective-cognitive Condition			Affective-behavioural condition		Total affective
Objective description	Subjective evaluation	State-like	State	Frame of mind	State-like	State	Frame of mind	State	
2	14	1	27	0	5	22	6	0	77 57.9%
1.5%	10.5%	28 21.1%		27 20.3%			6 4.5%		

Table 3b – Non-affective community responses (NIMBY literature) (n=133)

Cognitive condition		Other Cognitive	Cognitive-behavioural condition	Other Behaviour	Non-affective evaluation		Total non-affective
Frame of mind	State				Objective description	Subjective evaluation	
17	0	2	7	7	17	6	56 42.1%
17 12.8%		1.5%	5.3%	5.3%	12.8%	4.5%	

The scholarly NIMBY literature's descriptions of community responses correspond with the data from the community. Affective responses are the majority of responses (57.9% C/F 59.8%). However, the scholars describe the responses as much more affective (fear, anger) and affective-cognitive (concern) than the public domain response data and much less in terms of subjective evaluations.

Cognitive responses are 34% of the non-affective total, while behaviour responses are 25% of the non-affective total. This is comparable to the public domain data.

DISCUSSION

The strategic management of facility provision and management contains a human dimension which includes a wide range of human responses to those facilities (Heywood, Kenley & Missingham 2002). Response to facility proposals is one of these human responses. This analysis shows that community responses to facility proposals, as encapsulated in the NIMBY phenomenon, span the full spectrum of psychological responses. Cognitive responses, attributable to rationality, are clearly present in the community's NIMBY responses. Emotional responses likewise.

Before proceeding further, there are a number of considerations to be mindful of in the analysis of language. The use of a semantic lexicon, as in this case, may constrain the interpretations available due to the semantic definitions it contains. Further, language is only an indication of a response; it is not the response itself (Shwerder 1994). In the absence of those actual responses this linguistic evidence may be the only useful surrogate for analysis. Other issues of language used by public voices in civic protests are, or may be, affected by class and/or education level (Bernstein 1971), personality type, expert knowledge, or other dimensions of language use.

When considered as a whole, the affective domain dominates the language of community responses and also the scholarly literature's description of those responses. Purely emotional responses (the affective condition) are only a part of the overall affective domain of language and responses. In community responses, purely affective responses, like 'fear' and 'anger,' appear equally with affective cognitive

states, like 'concern,' whereas affective behavioural responses are quite minor (<3%). The scholarly literature describes responses more frequently in terms of 'fear' (affective) and 'concern' (affective-cognitive) than the community expresses them themselves. This may be due to this literature being an abstraction of the responses rather than actual responses. The balance of community responses is based on affective evaluations, or classifications hybridised from other 'pure' psychological functions. These 'pure' functions have a varying influence on the hybrid form of response and provide the basis of the complexity of community responses.

Public domain community responses from this study show that most affective responses are evaluations (56% of the total affective responses). This is more than attributed to them in the scholarly literature (12%). Again, this may be due to the abstractions in the literature. These affective evaluations may also contribute significantly to other affective responses.

Providers of facilities frequently adopt a technical-rational approach to considering facility proposals (Luton 1997). With this approach it is natural to assume that others will similarly appraise facility proposals and to then attribute civic protest to such proposals as the result of lack of technical knowledge (ignorance) or emotionality (non-rationality). The obvious solution to this problem is to provide more knowledge (information) in anticipation that knowledge will overcome non-rational processes. However, if information being supplied by providers of facilities is being evaluated affectively and responded to in such fashion, it difficult for facility providers to quell NIMBY protest through supplying more facts. Rather than achieving more rationality through cognition of more information, such facts are similarly evaluated with the affective subjective filter. This may lead facility providers to dismissively label community responses as emotional and therefore intractable. This dismissal is inadequate as it omits a dominant mode in community responses to service facilities proposals.

Strategic management of proposals for service facilities needs to, at least, acknowledge the full range of responses to their proposals and derive practices to address them. It is likely that different tactical approaches may be required within an overall strategic framework to address the full range of responses. Further research is required to identify such tactics.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the affective domain (in its fullest expression) is a dominant mode of community responses, within a complex framework of possible responses, to facility proposals. Understanding this and adopting processes in planning for and providing service facilities is a key requirement for strategic management of these service facilities. This understanding may not provide a 'silver bullet' causing the conflict and protest to disappear but may contribute to processes that are more strategic and more accepted in communities targeted for service facilities.

Further research from this affective perspective includes analysis of other points of view contained in the data from this study and investigation of a more extensive range of responses from community and others in the management processes using a similar framework. Also, investigations of the language usage in the public domain in civic protest warrants further investigation, as does the relationship between the phase of the protest and psychological function it embodies.

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