

Participation in environmental governance and assessment

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Outline

- Environmental governance and participation
- Functions and levels of participation
- Criticism to participation
- The participation debate

Participation in scientific assessments, why?

- Scientists do not know everything
- Models have their limitations
- Scientific uncertainties
- Value conflicts
- Stakeholders have valuable knowledge
- Socially robust knowledge



Participatory environmental governance

- Early phase (1960s – early 1980s): consensual, only state and industry were involved, involvement as deviation from the formal model
- Contemporary practice: wider range of stakeholders, involvement as part of the formal model

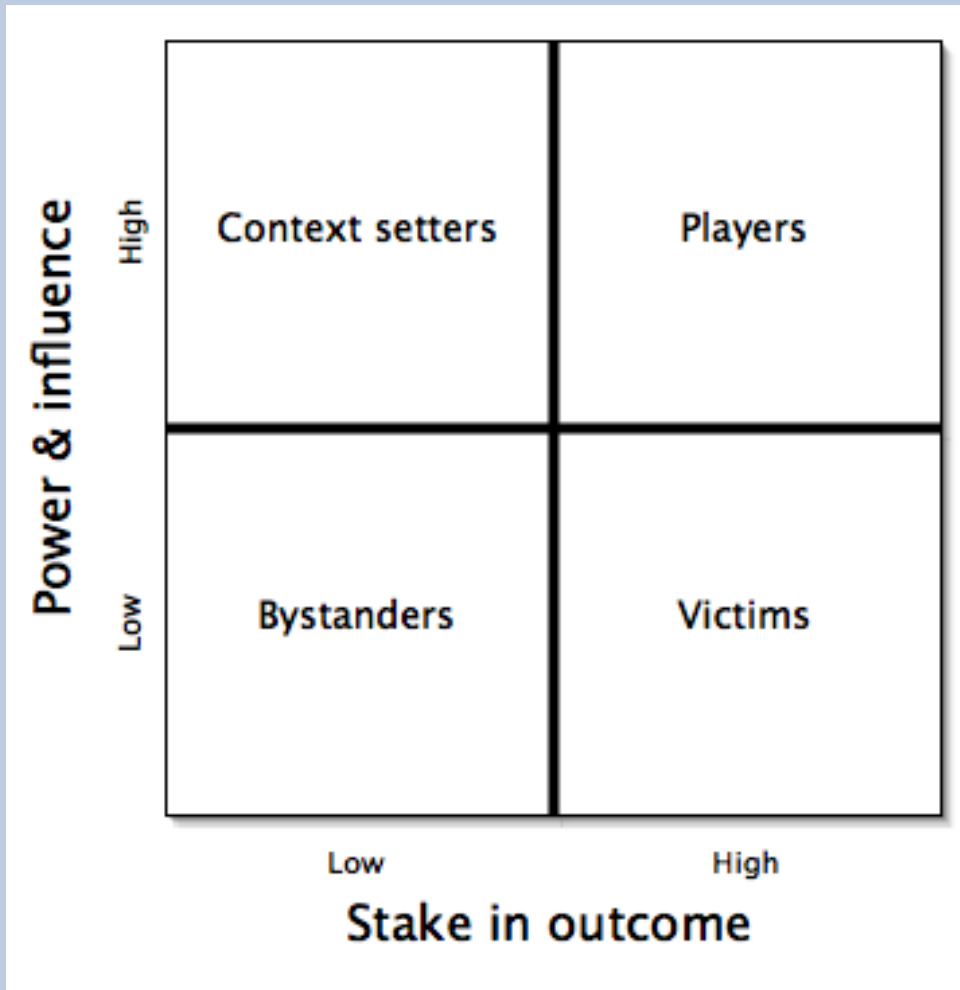
Participation by who?

Stakeholder:

Someone with an interest in a certain issue or decision (industry, NGOs, citizens, scientists, politicians, etc).

- An individual or a group
- A stake now or in the future
- Stakes may be rather unclear
- Different perceptions of what the stakes are
- Stakeholders come and go

How to classify stakeholders?



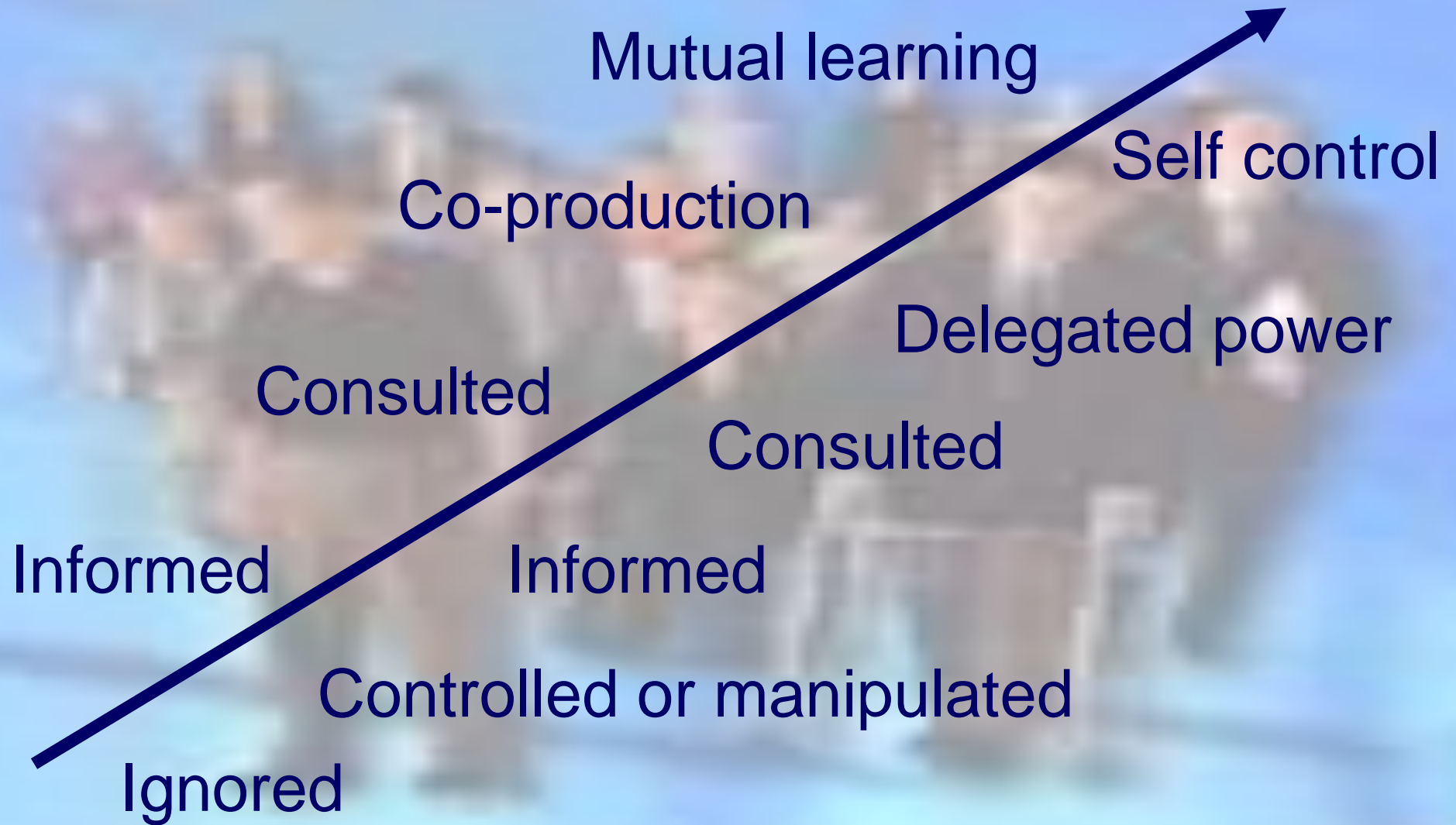
Important:

- The power to block
- Victim can also be a profiteer

Functions of participation

Content-oriented functions	Expanding the knowledge base
	Making knowledge useful for the policy-making process
	Reaching a better decision through articulating the spectrum of alternative (innovative) decision options
	Reaching a better decision through building a consensus on the best decision option(s)
Process-oriented functions	Enhancing the legitimacy of policy institutions and mechanisms
	Enhancing the accountability of policy institutions and mechanisms
	Enhancing trust in policy institutions and mechanisms
	Increasing public awareness and policy support
	Reducing obstacles for policy implementation
	Building capacity
	Building new networks
	Educating and informing people

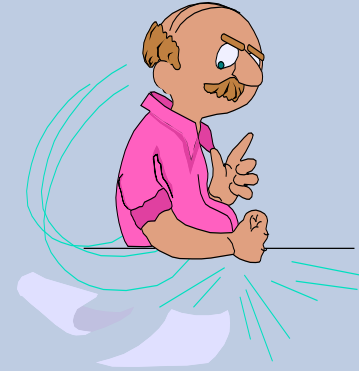
Gradations of stakeholder participation



Pitfalls for participation

The critics say..

- The public is incompetent
- Only interested in private interests
- balancing interests difficult
- Overriding existing decision-making structures
- Powerful groups dominate – the participation paradox
- Time consuming and costly
- Lack of representativeness



Balancing interests difficult...

How to take decisions?

On the basis of consensus:

- Deliberation: strive for common understanding and shared meanings, leading to a consensus
- Negotiation: aggregation of individual interests in a common collective



On the basis of the majority rule:

- Voting



Other ways?

Representativeness (1)

“The more people that participate, the better”

Or:

“Not everyone can participate, so we need to make a selection”

How?

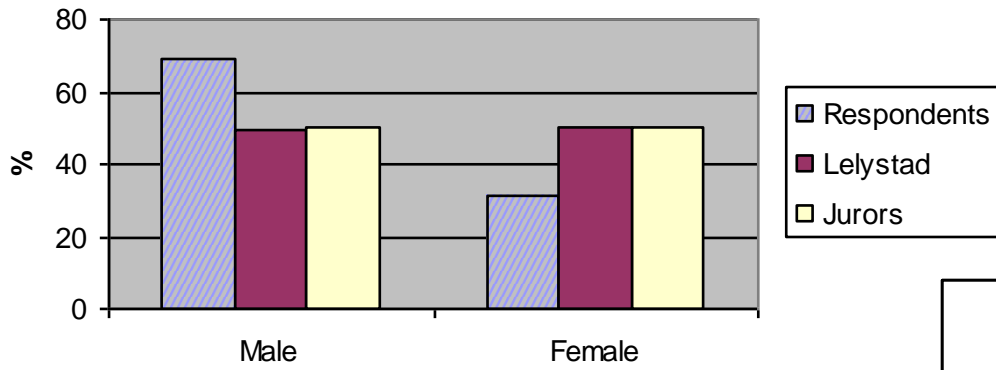
- Self selection
- Stakeholder representation
- Demographic representation



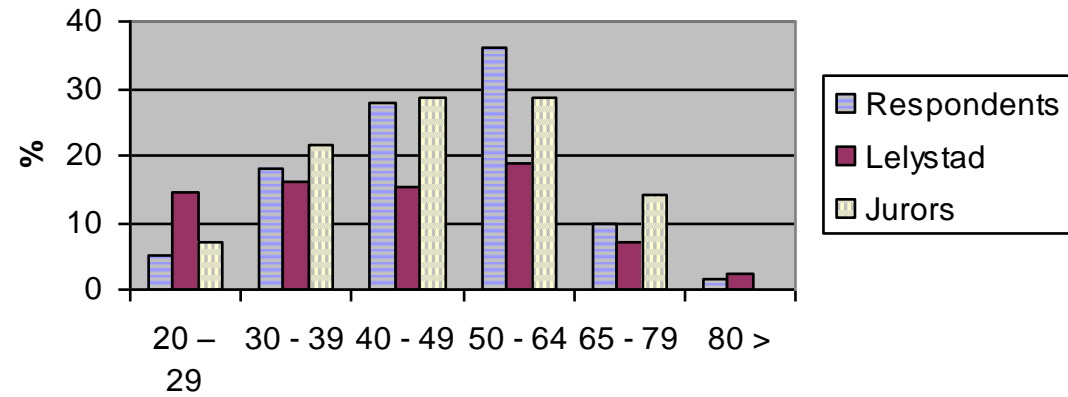
Representativeness (2): an example

- A citizens' jury on water management in the NL
- A microcosm of the community they are drawn from (the city of Lelystad)
- 2000 invitations sent to random people
- 60 positive responses (3%)
- Gender, age, and education
- Profession as a 'negative' criterion

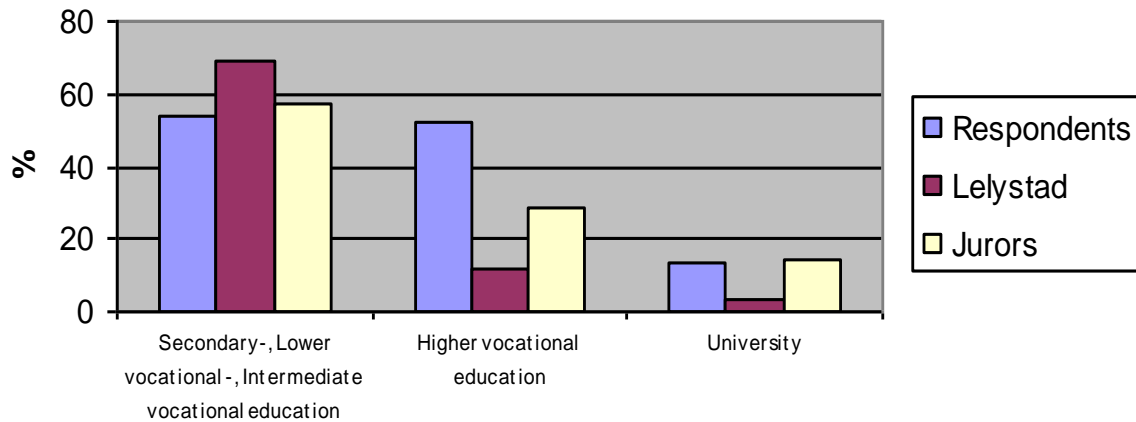
Gender



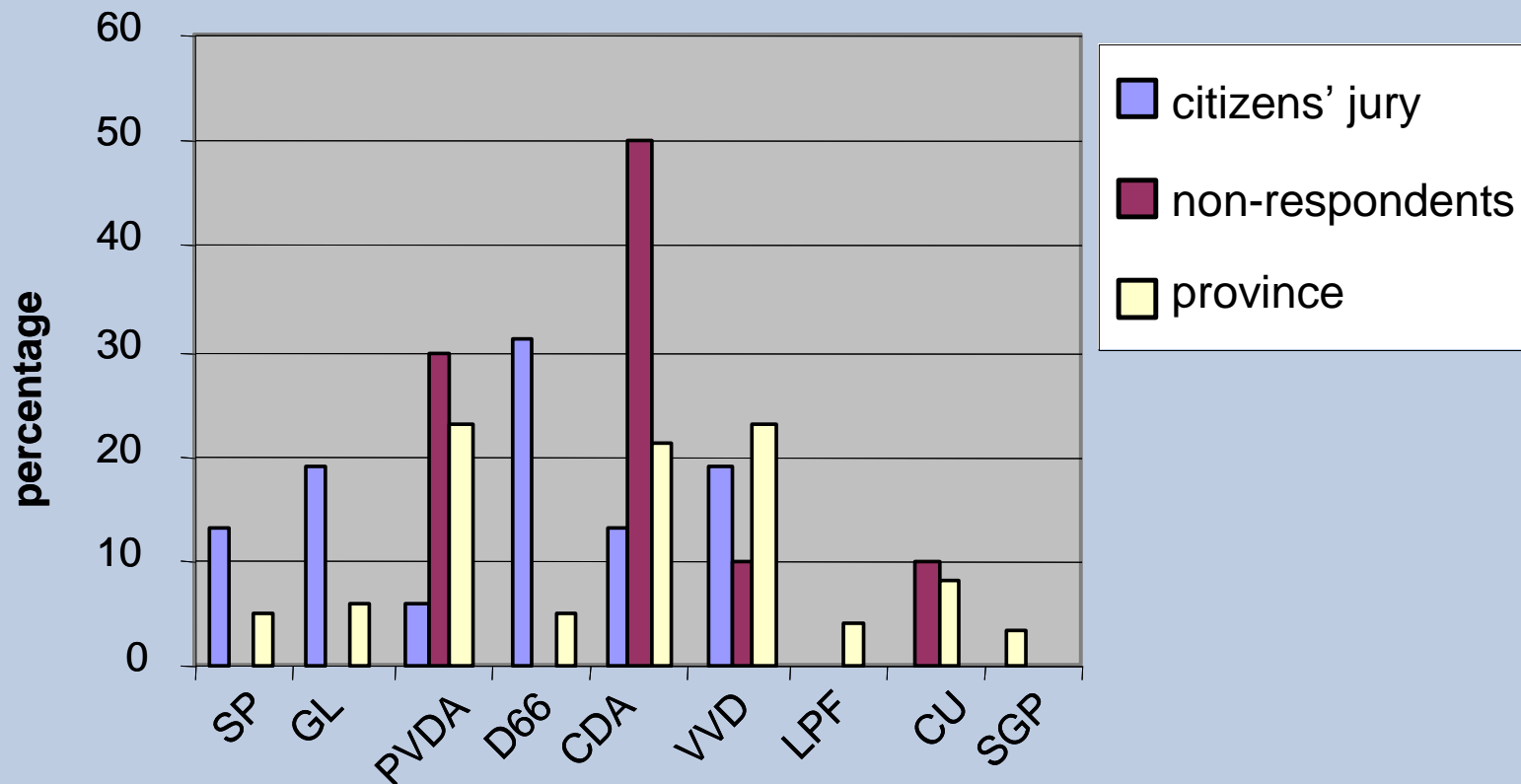
Age



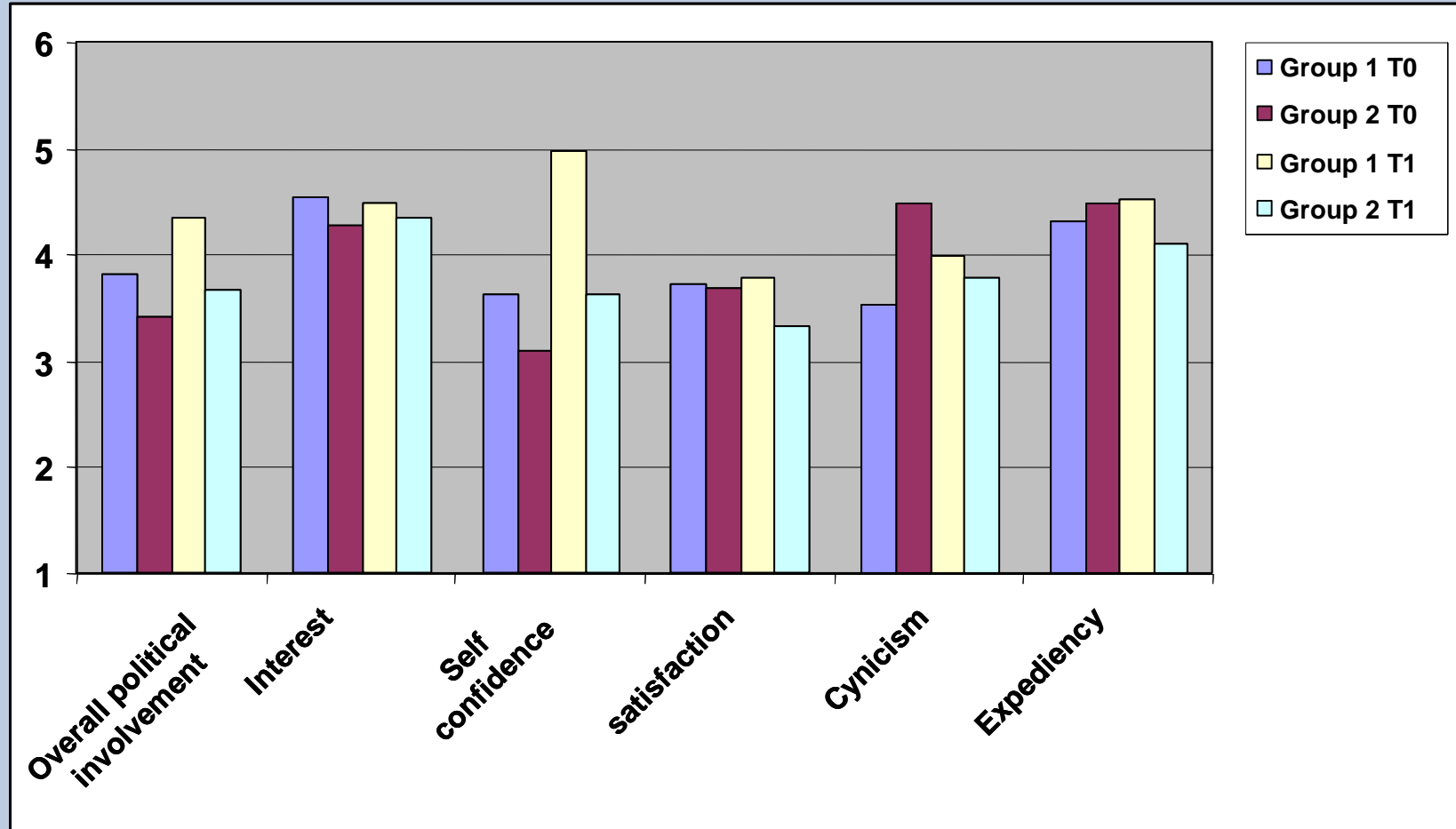
Education



Provincial election



About the functions of participation...



Proposition 1

“Environmental problems are too urgent to delay the policy process with public involvement processes”

Proposition 2

“A participatory process can be considered successful if the participants have been able to reach a consensus on a certain policy strategy”

Proposition 3

“The results of a participatory process should be binding for policy”