Community Organising or Organising Community?

Exploring the Rhetoric and Reality of Community Participation in English Urban Regeneration Policy 1997-2015

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PhD

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Abstract

This thesis is a critical examination of English social and urban regeneration policy and programme delivery implemented between 1997 and 2015 under New Labour and the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government. It assesses the extent to which the community empowerment rhetoric of both governments translated into increased opportunities for community-led regeneration and reflected genuine shifts in power from central government to the local and neighbourhood level. The thesis argues that the opportunities have not been fully realised due to systematic failures in acknowledging and supporting the enabling conditions necessary for meaningful community participation and empowerment. This hypothesis is tested using an adapted version of the Institute of Development Studies 'Place, Space and Power' framework, interviews conducted with residents and community development practitioners in England and the USA, and by a comprehensive review of policy literature and programme evaluations spanning this period. By doing so, this thesis identifies a top-down-bottom-up dichotomy, whereby government promotes community-led regeneration but continues to control the parameters within which the activity takes place. The impact of which can be disempowerment and disillusionment at the local and community level - ultimately hindering regeneration practice and the achievement of sustainable community development.

The influence of American social policy and community development practice on English policy design and rhetoric is strong, with America's less centralised model of community development cited as an aspirational model. Presenting empirical research conducted with community development stakeholders in England and the USA, this thesis compares and contrasts the government-led community development approach adopted in England with the experiences of community organisations and intermediaries in the USA. By demonstrating a number of findings which would enhance participatory programme design and delivery in England going forwards, this thesis aims to fill a gap in the understanding of what regeneration policy can and should be and contribute to knowledge in the tradition of law and geography, social policy, and in sustainable regeneration.

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months. This has not been an easy task for either of us at times, and I hope you know just how much you, and all that you do means to me.

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Table of Abbreviations

ABI	Area-Based Initiative
ACORN	Association of Community Organisations for Reform Now
BYNC	Back of the Yards Neighbourhood Council
CASE	Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion (London School of Economics)
CCI	Comprehensive Community Initiative
CDC	Community Development Corporation
CEC	Commission of European Communities
CEF	Community Empowerment Fund
CEN	Community Empowerment Network
CNCS	Corporation for National and Community Service
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DETR	Department of Environment Transport and Regions
GLA	Greater London Authority
GO	Government Office
GOL	Government Office for London
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency
HLC	Healthy Living Centre
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationary Office
HUD	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
IAF	Industrial Areas Foundation
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
JRF	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
LISC	Local Initiatives Support Corporation
LNRS	Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
MDRC	Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation
NCP	New Communities Programme
NCS	National Citizenship Service
NDC	New Deal for Communities

NMP	Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder
NRF	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
NRT	Neighbourhood Renewal Teams
NRU	Neighbourhood Renewal Unit
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NSNR	National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPDM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PMSU	Prime Minister's Strategy Unit
QUANGO	Quasi-Autonomous Non-Governmental Agencies
RDA	Regional Development Agency
RBM	Resident Board Member
SCS	Sustainable Community Strategy
SEU	Social Exclusion Unit
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
TIF	Tax Increment Financing
TCO	Trainee Community Organisers
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector

Chapter One - Introduction, Structure and Key Concepts

1.1 Introduction

On the 19th July 2010 David Cameron, two months into his tenure as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, gave a rousing speech to community leaders, volunteers and third sector workers in Liverpool about his vision for devolving powers to communities and local government, promising;

> *The biggest, most dramatic redistribution of power from elites in Whitehall to the man and woman on the street. … You can call it liberalism. You can call it empowerment. You can call it freedom. You can call it responsibility. I call it the Big Society.*[1]

The 'Big Society', or localism agenda as it was also referred, was a cornerstone of the Conservative Party's 2010 election campaign and later became a key pillar in the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition's *programme for government*.[2] At the heart of this rhetoric was the message that it was time for individuals and communities to accept greater accountability and responsibility for the services that shape their everyday lives; creating greater autonomy for citizens in place of a reliance on the state. 'Mutualism', 'devolution' and 'empowerment' became key terms. Relating to communities, the message was that it was time to organise, to rally-round and to take control of the development, organisation, and the running of local services. The Coalition proclaimed they wanted to see the emergence of community leaders in the guise of the American community activist Saul Alinsky,[3] and that through this civic activism communities could go some way to overcoming some of the social ills and deprivation that blighted many parts of the UK, and had done so for some time. In doing so, communities were framed as agents of their own destiny, as opposed to passive recipients, and government

[1] D. Cameron, (Speech) *The Big Society: Transcript of a Speech by the Prime Minister on the Big Society, 19 July 2010'* (2010) (Online) <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/big-society-speech/> Last Accessed 26th January 2019.

[2] Henceforth referred to as 'the Coalition'. See: Cabinet Office, *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government*, (Cabinet Office, 2010).

[3] See Conservative Party's description of the Big Society which stated '*The plan is directly based on the successful community organising movement established by Saul Alinsky in the United States and has successfully trained generations of community organisers including President Obama*' (2010) cited in D. Beck and R. Purcell, *International Community Organising: Taking Power, Making Change,* (The Policy Press, 2013), 77. This assessment was reiterated by Lord Glasman, David Cameron's 'civil society adviser', who linked the Big Society project to Saul Alinsky's work around social action in alienated communities in 1930s Chicago, stating to a House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee on the Big Society, that: '*basically, it started off in Chicago in the 1930s with a guy called Saul Alinsky. The idea was that poor, local, demoralised communities would generate power, build relationships, and be able to act in Mayor Daley's Chicago, where they were completely cut out [...] community organising is based on building relationships, action and power: giving local communities power through their own leadership and setting their own agenda*.' See: Public Administration Select Committee, *House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee: The Big Society Seventeenth Report of Session 2010–12 Volume I'*, (The Stationary Office, 2011), Ev 6.

cast in the role of 'enabler', empowering communities to do more.[4] In an earlier 2009 speech Cameron also outlined this 'vision' for a Big Society:

> *The first step must be a new focus on empowering and enabling individuals, families and communities to take control of their lives so we create the avenues through which responsibility and opportunity can develop. But I also want to argue that the re-imagined state must actively help people take advantage of this new freedom. This means a new role for the state: actively helping to create the Big Society; directly agitating for, catalysing and galvanising social renewal.*[5]

Interestingly the word 'control' appears nine times throughout that speech, each time in relation to communities having more of it, though is not made explicit how this would translate into policy or practice for individuals, families or their communities. Supporting social entrepreneurs to scale their operations through '*funding and franchising*' is cited as one approach to bringing the Big Society vision to fruition. '*Training'*, '*capacity building*' and '*other support*' to provide existing community groups and activists opportunities to do more in their communities is identified as another, with the Prime Minister citing Chicago's Alternative Policing Strategy and the role of 'Block Captains' in New York's Harlem Children's Zone as two American examples of local people being given the opportunity to do more through devolved policies and programmes.

Of particular interest to this research was a third strand of activity which sought '*the engagement of that significant percentage of the population who have no record of getting involved – or desire to do so*.'[6] Cameron goes on to outline some of the ways this may be achieved, including: building on the work of behavioural scientists (see the work of Cass Sunstein and Richard Thaler around 'nudge theory' and Robert Cialdini's work on 'social norms' who were both referenced by Cameron[7]); an increased role for large corporations through philanthropy and promoting volunteering; and

[4] J. Norman, *The Big Society: The Anatomy of the New Politics,* (The University of Buckingham Press, 2010);
P. Alcock, 'Building the Big Society: A New Policy Environment for the Third Sector in England', (2010) 1(3) *Voluntary Sector Review,* 379-89.
N. Bailey and M. Pill, 'The Continuing Popularity of the Neighbourhood and Neighbourhood Governance in the Transition from the 'Big State' to the 'Big Society' Paradigm', (2011) 29 (5) *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy,* 927-942.

[5] D.Cameron, (speech) *The Big Society: The Hugo Young Lecture* 10 *November 2009',* (2009) (Online) Available at: <https://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601246> Last accessed: 25th September 2019.

[6] D. Cameron, (speech) *The Big Society: The Hugo Young Lecture* 10 *November 2009',* (2009) (Online) Available at: <https://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601246> Last accessed: 25th September 2019.

[7] R. Thaler and C. Sunstein, *Nudge,* (Yale University Press, 2008); R. Cialdini, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion,* (Collins Business Essentials, 1984). 'Nudge theory' and other theorists of behavioural insights explore the science behind subtly leading people into the 'right' decision, through encouraging changes in behaviour through the design of policy, incentives, and communications. David Cameron and his government were so enamoured by the potential of behavioural insight theory they would go on to set up a 'Behavioural Insights Team' within the Cabinet Office. This still exists but is now independent of government as a 'social purpose organisation,' although the Cabinet Office continue to '*part own'* the company. See: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/behavioural-insights-team Last accessed: 25th September 2019. For the theories influence on the government's localist agenda see: P. John and L. Richardson, *Nudging Citizens Towards Localism,* (British Academy, 2012).

the strengthening of 'civic institutions' such as local shops, post offices and town halls. A new youth volunteering and social action programme (the National Citizens Service); new powers for and the proliferation of city mayors; increased roles for parents as part of a schools reform; and the establishment of new Local Housing Trusts were cited as other examples of where power and responsibility would be devolved to provide for greater local control.

Given the language that heralded the arrival of the Coalition's localism agenda it could be misconstrued that this was one of the first attempts by the UK central government to encourage greater citizenship or to promote the capacity of individuals and neighbourhoods to overcome issues of deprivation. The reality, as this thesis will explore, is that consecutive governments and key political figures have on many occasions stated similar beliefs in the importance of 'community' and proclaimed an ambition to incite change through devolution of powers and increased responsibilities to the neighbourhood level. Indeed, in the thirteen years preceding the Coalition's election, successive Labour governments had introduced a wide range of programmes and legislation that sought to improve the physical appearance, economic performance, and social cohesion of some of the country's most deprived areas, and in doing so made their own promises to place communities at the centre of planning and delivering these initiatives.

Just as community participation and accompanying interventions were seen as a vital part of the Big Society, government interventions to inspire greater community participation were proclaimed to be an integral part of New Labour's vision for a 'Third Way' in British politics.[8] As with the localist agenda, many of the initiatives under the banner of the Third Way were introduced with a great deal of rhetoric about how the strengthening of community ties and civic participation could bring about solutions to many of the issues the country faced. The ideas underpinning this vision were encapsulated in a March 2000 speech in which then Prime Minister Tony Blair proclaimed:

> *Of course, there are things that need the full power and force of government. But governments don't create societies. A society is a community of people, who share common values and purpose ….and if we do succeed in making a more active community, I'm convinced that there will also be other benefits - less antisocial behaviour; less crime; less of the corrosion of values that worries so many people - and a better understanding that every community rests on how much people give as well as what they take.*[9]

[8] For example see SEU, *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal,* (The Stationary Office, 1998); Home Office, *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team* (The Cantle Report), (Home Office, 2001); SEU, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal - National Strategy Action Plan, (Cabinet Office, 2001);* Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (PMSU), *Improving the Prospects of People Living in Areas of Multiple Deprivation in England,* (Cabinet Office, 2005); Urban Task Force*, Towards a Strong Urban Renaissance*, (Urban Task Force, 2005); DCLG, *Communities and Local Government Economics Paper 1: A Framework for Intervention,* (DCLG, 2007).

[9] Extract of a speech given by Prime Minister Tony Blair to the Active Community Convention and Awards 2nd March 2000, cited in Civil Exchange, *The Big Society Audit 2012*, (Civic Exchange, 2012).

Seven years later, Blair's successor Gordon Brown made similar claims declaring a vision for fostering more 'active citizenship' across the country:

> *Call it community, call it civic patriotism, call it the giving age, or call it the new active citizenship, call it the great British society – it is Britain becoming Britain again*.[10]

Indeed, a theme linking the Third Way of New Labour, and the Coalition's Big Society ideology was the stated importance of community participation.[11] The political period of 1997 to 2015 under New Labour and later the Coalition saw a proliferation of keynote speeches and official publications which cited the decline of community, erosion of local ties or the disappearance of neighbourliness as key contributors to many of the socio-economic issues blighting England's most deprived areas. The response to this was to pass legislation, publish manifestos and launch government-funded programmes that stated an intention to increase civic participation in the design and delivery of local services and empower the so-called disenfranchised within these communities as a vehicle for tackling entrenched poverty. At the heart of these guiding philosophies was a stated belief that communities have the potential to do more for themselves to enhance their quality of life, rather than relying on central government to improve their circumstances.

As this thesis will show, the two parties adopted differing approaches to implementing their visions, however, a consistent premise was that in return for government encouragement and (in some cases) resources to build community capacity and engagement, stakeholders within the community would assume responsibility for the design and delivery of some local services and for the maintenance of community ties and facilities within their locality. The outcomes, according to the rhetoric above, being: a boost to local democracy; increased confidence and skills among local people; higher numbers of people volunteering in their communities; more satisfaction with the quality of life in the UK's neighbourhoods; and the delivery of better, more responsive services.[12] Connections are also made with the goals of sustainable development which

[10] Extract from a speech on 'Civic Patriotism' given by Prime Minister, Gordon Brown to the NCVO Annual Conference, 3 September 2007, cited in Civil Exchange, *The Big Society Audit 2012*, (Civic Exchange, 2012).

[11] It is important at this juncture to note that the terminology surrounding regeneration programmes often comes with a limited political shelf-life, the notion of the 'Big Society' has already largely disappeared from the political lexicon, as did mentions of 'active citizenship' and to arguably a lesser extent 'the third way' under New Labour. They are, however, representative of the guiding philosophies that underpinned the social policy of the time and were terms that generated a great deal of commentary and research as this thesis will show. Therefore, the terms will be used throughout, not as an acceptance of a new and sustained political ideology, but as useful terminology to position this work alongside other enquiries into this period of British social policy and as a vehicle for summarising the guiding philosophies underpinning particular programmes to emerge from these areas of social policy at that time.

[12] Key policy documents included DETR, *Modernising Government: Local Democracy and Community Leadership*, (The Stationary Office, 1998); Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal,* Cmnd 4045, (The Stationary Office, 1998); DETR, *Towards an Urban Renaissance. Final Report of the Urban Task Force, chaired by Lord Roger of Riverside,* (The Stationary Office, 1999), DETR, *Involving Communities in Urban and Rural Regeneration*, (The Stationary Office, 1999); SEU, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan*, (The Stationary Office, 2001); Cabinet Office, *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government, (*Cabinet Office, 2010); Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), *Regeneration to Enable Growth: What the Government is Doing in Support of Community-Led Regeneration*, (DCLG, 2010).

was a growing area of political importance at the time.[13]

However, as subsequent chapters will demonstrate, some of the proposals and policies put forward by the government have been cause for much debate in the community development sector, and in political and academic spheres. While some advocates for community activism have heralded the promotion of greater rights and freedom for local people to influence or run local services, others have questioned the underlying motivations of politicians calling for greater community control during a time of recession and government-initiated austerity measures following the 2008 financial crash.[14] Other theorists point to the tension between 'the community' being seen as both the source of a neighbourhood's problems and at the same time its best chance of redemption once activated through the aforementioned government programmes.[15] The extent to which both governments achieved their stated aims of enhanced community participation is a primary research focus of this thesis and something that will be explored in detail throughout.

Four programmes or strands of government policy are of particular interest: the *New Deal for Communities* and *Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder* programmes launched under New Labour which made provisions for community leadership through resident-led boards and funding to promote greater civic participation. As well as the launch of the *Community Organisers programme* and introduction of the Localism Act 2011 under the Coalition, the latter of which introduced a number of 'community rights' that were intended to increase community participation in neighbourhood planning and make it easier for local people to acquire local assets and run local services. The New Labour programmes providing examples of programmes that were substantially resourced and spatially targeted by the government, while the Coalition methods represented attempts to mobilise community action through legislation and more 'grassroots' approaches. The merits and pitfalls of each approach form part of the discussion that follows over the subsequent chapters.

Interviews conducted with resident volunteers and practitioners involved in the delivery of the programmes mentioned

[13] See DETR, *Sustainable Regeneration: Good Practice Guide*, (HMSO, 1998) - which set out a number of standards or outcomes that regeneration partnerships should look to adhere to in any future development, with the involvement of local people and assets and the adoption of a long-term view at the heart of them. Also see: Commission of European Communities (CEC), *Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: A Framework for Action,* COM (98) 605 final, (European Commission, 1998); A. Colantonio, T. Dixon, R. Ganser, J. Carpenter and A. Ngombe, *Measuring Socially Sustainable Urban Regeneration in Europe: Final Report,* (Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development, 2009); N. Dempsey, G. Bramley, S. Power and C. Brown, 'The Social Dimension of Sustainable Development: Defining Urban Social Sustainability', (2009) 19(5) *Sustainable Development,* 289-300; J. Langstraat, 'The Urban Regeneration Industry in Leeds: Measuring Sustainable Urban Regeneration Performance', (2006) 2 *Earth and Environment*, 167-210.

[14] P. Alcock, 'Building the Big Society: A New Policy Environment for the Third Sector in England' (2010) 1(3) *Voluntary Sector Review,* 379-89; B. Kisby, 'The Big Society: Power to the People?', (2011) 81(4) *Political Quarterly*, 484-491; G. Jones, R. Meegan, P. Kennett and J. Croft, 'The Uneven Impact of Austerity on the Voluntary and Community Sector: A Tale of Two Cities, (2015) *Urban Studies*, 1-17; J. Clayton, C. Donovan and J. Merchant, 'Distancing and Limited Resourcefulness: Third Sector Service Provision Under Austerity Localism in the North East Of England', (2015) 53(4) *Urban Studies,* 723-740.

[15] For example, see A. Amin, 'Local Community on Trial', (2005) 34(4) *Economy and Society*, 612-633; L. Hancock, G. Mooney and S. Neal, 'Crisis Social Policy and the Resilience of the Concept of Community', (2012) 32(3) *Critical Social Policy*, 343-364.

above, coupled with a comprehensive review of programme guidance, evaluations, and academic research to emerge over this time help to inform the assessment of the extent to which these programmes represented new opportunities for community participation and empowerment. As well as exploring the potential of community participation in the regeneration process, due consideration will also be given to the challenges and limitations of this approach, and to quote Holman: '*question the efficacy of applying politically neutralised values of empowerment, community and participation in government policy to 'real world' communities*.'[16] This thesis adds to this discussion by calling into question the extent to which state-led citizen participation initiatives can empower individuals and groups to participate in their communities, and poses that a number of the programmes and participative tools used to engage and involve communities implemented between 1997 and 2015 have, at times, had the opposite effect to their stated aims of empowering communities, with insights depicting a top-down-bottom-up dichotomy whereby government promotes community-led regeneration but in reality controls the parameters within which the activity takes place. The impact of which can be disempowerment and disillusionment at the local and community level, ultimately hindering regeneration practice and the achievement of sustainable community development. The thesis, therefore, argues that to date, state-sponsored localism and community development initiatives have failed to live up to the rhetoric that introduced them and systematic failures in acknowledging and supporting the enabling conditions necessary for meaningful community participation have undermined the empowerment sought. The research methods outlined above help to test this hypothesis. In doing so, it demonstrates that the chosen policy instruments and programmes used by central and local government to facilitate or inspire participation in local regeneration activities have a demonstrable impact on empowerment results, for better or worse. In doing so, this thesis contributes to fields of inquiry in community development, law and geography, social policy, and in sustainable regeneration, and sits alongside other bodies of work that examine the role of communities within the regeneration process.[17]

1.2 The influence of American community practice on English social policy

This thesis also includes some comparative research conducted in the USA. An early review of the literature and policy documentation around English urban social policy revealed that on a number of occasions, approaches and policies originating in the US have been cited as exemplars for government policy and programmes in England, with high profile government figures often drawing on the language of American commentators and politicians when articulating a vision

[16] D. Holman, 'The Relational Bent of Community Participation: The Challenge Social Network Analysis and Simmel Offer to Top-Down Prescriptions of 'Community'', (2015) 50(3) *Community Development Journal,* 418.

[17] M. Humphreys, 'Leaseholder Charges and Urban Regeneration', (2006) *Journal of Planning and Environmental Law,* 1625-1642; A. Layard, 'The Localism Act 2011: What is 'Local' and How Do We (Legally) Construct It?', (2012) 14(2) *Environmental Law Review*, 134-144; D. O'Brien and P. Matthews (eds.), *After Urban Regeneration: Communities, Policy and Place,* (Policy Press, 2016); M. Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

for greater civic participation.[18] Notably, there is a wealth of scholarly articles comparing British and American social policy, and numerous examples of UK Prime Minister's citing or interpreting American practice, policy and theory in their own plans for rejuvenating urban areas perceived to be in decline.[19] As chapter two will demonstrate several commentators have linked the Third Way policies of New Labour to the communitarian movement popular in America at the turn of the century, while more recently David Cameron made the aforementioned link to the work of American community organiser Saul Alinsky when announcing his government's plans for the deployment of a '*5000 strong army of community organisers*'.[20] This represented an intriguing call to arms from a governing party given that Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation was a civic movement primarily born out of contempt for state and national government, and that Alinsky would at times employ a range of combative techniques to elicit a response from those in power (the '*haves*' as he would term them), in an attempt to improve conditions for the less fortunate he trained and supported (the '*have-not's*').[21] The Prime Minister was most likely commending Alinsky's ability to rally communities around a common cause rather than the radical methods he used to do so (discussed later), however, this contradiction raises interesting questions about the role communities can and do play in overcoming issues affecting them, and the role government should play in encouraging, fostering or orchestrating opportunities for them to do so, exploration of this runs throughout this thesis. Similarly, Mike Raco noted the '*strong Atlantic focus of the Blair government*' through the promotion of the Third Way '*…as a new form of Anglo-American capitalism*' and an increased focus on '*Action Zones, area-based initiatives, local business mobilisation, place marketing and community self-help … increasingly resembling those that took place in US cities during the 1980s and 1990s*'.[22]

That this research coincided with American President Barack Obama's time in office also adds further significance to this study given his roots as a community organiser in Chicago, which preceded his political career, and his stated commitment to tackling issues of deprivation in America's neighbourhoods through community efforts. In a speech to the US Conference of Mayors on June 21st 2008, in the weeks leading up to his election Obama articulated his vision for American society, stating '*…in this country, change comes not from the top-down, but from the bottom-up,*' and that '*…the change*

[18] For example: N. Rose, 'Community, Citizenship, and the Third Way' (2000) 43(9) *American Behavioral Scientist*, 1395-1411; A. Etzioni, *The Third Way to a Good Society*, (Demos, 2000); A. Daguerre, 'Importing Workfare: Policy Transfer of Social and Labour Market Policies from the USA to Britain Under New Labour', (2004) 38(1) *Social Policy & Administration*, 41-56; A. Jonas and K. Ward, 'A World Of Regionalisms? Towards a US-UK Urban and Regional Policy Framework Comparison', (2002) 24 (4) *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 337-401.

[19] See: A. Deacon, 'Learning from the US? The influence of American Ideas Upon 'New Labour' Thinking on Welfare Reform, (2000) 28 (1) *Policy & Politics*, 5-18; C. Annesley, 'Americanised and Europeanised: UK social policy since 1997', (2003) 5(2) *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 143-165; A. Daguerre, 'Importing Workfare: Policy Transfer of Social and Labour Market Policies from the USA to Britain under New Labour', (2004) 38(1) *Social Policy & Administration*, 41-56.

[20] David Cameron, (Speech) *Our Big Society Plan*. 31 March 2010 (Online) Available at: <http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2010/03/David_Cameron_Our_Big_Society_plan.aspx.> Accessed 19th May 2016.

[21] S. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*, (Vintage Books, 1971).

[22] M. Raco, 'New Labour, Community and the Future of Britain's Urban Renaissance', in R. Imrie and M. Raco (eds.), *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, Community and Urban Policy* (Policy Press, 2003), 243. Chapter seven explores this connection in greater detail.

we seek…will not come from the Government alone.'[23] Notably these were similar sentiments to those of key British political figures quoted in the previous section. It was also a message that had resonated with many voters during Obama's presidential campaign which was celebrated for its use of community organising techniques in recruiting volunteers and inspiring staff and voters.[24] This alignment of policy vision adds further justification to the comparative element of this thesis. However, the intention is not to provide an in-depth assessment of American approaches to participatory community practice, instead taking inspiration from previous transatlantic comparative studies, such as those conducted by Guillino, or Dolowitz and Marsh, the objective is to identify best practice and draw out key observations that could enhance the development and implementation of policy in England given the established American influence on English social policy.[25] It is also acknowledged that there are many differences in approaches between England and the USA, and due consideration will be given to this.

1.3 Scope of the research

It is also helpful at this juncture to make some further clarifications about the scope of this research. Regeneration is often a multifaceted approach, combining physical and economic policy interventions with a multitude of social programmes and policies at both the macro and micro levels. This thesis is primarily concerned with policies and programmes that are targeted at the micro-level, in particular the neighbourhood or community level, and focuses on those projects that sought to increase community participation in decision-making about development and service delivery within their locality, or that encouraged local people to do more for their neighbours and communities through various forms of social action.[26] Typically targeted at areas ranking highly on multiple indicators of deprivation, the stated intentions of these policies and programmes was to address deprivation and further decline by: improving local skills and aspirations; strengthening community cohesion and the affinity residents felt towards others and their neighbourhood; and to improve local development and service delivery by ensuring it was better aligned to the wants and needs of local people. As the literature review will explore, declining trust in national and local political institutions, cuts to local funding and an increasing focus on reciprocity were also significant factors in government's 'turn to community'; therefore programmes were often

[23] B. Obama, (Speech) *Remarks to the U.S Conference of Mayors in Miami Florida*, June 21 2008 (Online) Available at: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=77555 > Last accessed: 2nd August 2016.

[24] D. L. Cogburn and F. K. Espinoza-Vasquez, 'From Networked Nominee to Networked Nation: Examining the Impact of Web 2.0 and Social Media on Political Participation and Civic Engagement in the 2008 Obama Campaign', (2011) 10(1/2) *Journal of Political Marketing*, 189-213.

[25] See: S. Guillino, 'Mixed Communities as a Means of Achieving Sustainable Communities: A Comparison Between US Experiences and UK Policy Intentions', (2008) 23(3) *Local Economy*, 127-135; D. Dolowitz and D. Marsh, 'Learning from Abroad: The Role of Policy Transfer in Contemporary Policy-Making', (2000) 13(1) *Governance*, 2000, 5-23.

[26] Joseph Rowntree Foundation, *Community Participants' Perspectives on Involvement in Area Regeneration Programmes*, (JRF, 2000); N. Bailey, 'Understanding Community Empowerment in Urban Regeneration and Planning in England: Putting Policy and Practice in Context', (2010) 25(3) *Planning Practice and Research,* 317-332; P. Duncan and S. Thomas, *Neighbourhood Regeneration: Resourcing Community Involvement*, (Policy Press, 2000).

presented as an opportunity to reconfigure the relationship between citizens and local and national government.[27]

The criteria for selecting programmes to consider as part of this research were threefold: they needed to be central government-funded and initiated; explicitly cite community leadership, participation and/or empowerment (or words to that effect) as a primary aim or component of the policy or programme; and, to allow for exploration of both their intended aims and impact, been subject to official evaluation and wider academic scrutiny. Figure 1 below outlines the main programmes that will be referenced throughout this thesis. Interviews with residents, practitioners and officers involved in the design and delivery of several of these programmes added further insight into their delivery and impact.

Programme	Date	Objectives	Resources
Single Regeneration Budget (SRB)	1994 – 2005	- 'To enhance the quality of life of local people in areas of need by reducing the gap between deprived and other areas and between different groups.' - 'To harness the talent, resources and experience of local businesses, the voluntary sector and the local community.' - Seven 'strategic objectives': enhancing employment prospects and skills; encouraging sustainable economic growth; improving housing; benefiting ethnic minorities; tackling crime and safety; protecting and improving the environment; enhancing quality of life.	£5.5 billion committed to 900 schemes over 6 rounds of funding.[28]
New Deal for Communities (NDC)	2000 – 2011	- 'To support the regeneration of individual deprived neighbourhoods between 2000 and 4000 households, through thirty-nine community-based inclusive partnerships across England.' - Each of the thirty-nine areas was required to have a Neighbourhood Board to '*coordinate and manage action to address deprivation in the theme areas in the Partnership community*.' - Six priority 'themes': poor job prospects; high crime; educational underachievement; poor health; poor quality housing and physical environment.	Estimated £10 billion over 11 years.[29]

[27] K. Yang, 'Trust and Citizen Involvement Decisions: Trust in Citizens, Trust in Institutions, and Propensity to Trust', (2006) 38 *Administration & Society*, 573-595; P. Taylor-Gooby, 'Root and Branch Restructuring to Achieve Major Cuts: The Social Policy Programme of the 2010 UK Coalition Government', (2011) 46(1) *Social Policy and Administration*, 61-82; J. Smithies and G. Webster, *Community Involvement in Health: From Passive Recipients to Active Participants*, (Ashgate, 1998).

[28] J. Rhodes, P. Tyler and A. Brennan, *The Single Regeneration Budget: Final Evaluation*, (University of Cambridge Department of Land Economy, 2007).

[29] E. Batty, C. Beatty, M. Foden, P. Lawless, S. Pearson and I. Wilson, *The New Deal for Communities Experience: A Final Assessment the New Deal for Communities Evaluation: Final Report,* (Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research Sheffield Hallam University/DCLG, 2010).

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF)	2000 – 2003	- Allocated to multi-agency Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in the eighty-eight areas judged to be the most deprived based on the 2000 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, to enable them to improve services in their most deprived areas. - Spending to be directed on the 'social regeneration' of the areas to which it has been awarded, and on interventions designed to reduce deprivation such as: health inequalities; educational underachievement; and high crime rates.	£900 million[30]
Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders (NMP)	2001-2009	- Funded the development of thirty-five Pathfinder partnerships to 'develop and test neighbourhood management' as proposed by the Social Exclusion Unit. - The programme aimed to: 'enable deprived communities and local services to improve local outcomes, by improving and joining-up local services, and making them more responsive to local needs.' -Some local discretion on themes but typically around community safety, environmental services, economic development, community cohesion and 'social capital'.	£100 million[31]
Localism Act - New 'community rights' and Neighbourhood planning provisions	2011 -	- The passing of the Localism Act saw the introduction of new 'community rights' to 'bid', 'to challenge', 'to build' and 'to reclaim land', and new neighbourhood planning measures intended to give local people more say over local planning and development decisions.	NA[32]
Community Organisers programme	2011 - 2015	- A national scheme to 'recruit and train 5000 new community organisers to catalyse action at the community level.' - 500 of these would be Trainee Community Organisers (TCOs), employed full-time for 51 weeks of training, development and practical experience. - With a further 4,500 Volunteer Community Organisers (VCOs) recruited and trained by the TCOs. - In particular, the programme sought to support people in deprived communities by placing TCOs in those areas which are 'in need, in order to improve their neighbourhoods and tackle existing and emerging problems.'	£22.5 million[33]

Figure 1: Overview of government programmes and legislation informing this study

[30] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Final Report*, (Stationery Office, 2010).

[31] DCLG, *Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders: Final Evaluation Report, People, Places, Public Services: Making the Connections*, (DCLG, 2009).

[32] DCLG, *A Plain English Guide to the Localism Act*, (DCLG, 2011).

[33] D. Cameron, K. Rennick, R. Maguire and A. Freeman, *Evaluation of the Community Organisers Programme,* (Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute, 2015).

It should be noted, in some of the larger-scale regeneration programmes, such as the New Deal for Communities (NDC), Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) or the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder (NMP) programmes, efforts to increase civic participation were one strand of a more extensive programme of work and activities - with substantial investment also being made in the physical and economic rejuvenation of an area, alongside efforts to drive increased 'partnership working' between the public and private sector. This thesis does not attempt to appraise the impact of any physical regeneration activity that formed part of these programmes or explore in any detail interventions that sought to regenerate areas through economic development and job creation. It is, however, interested in the extent to which local people were involved in influencing decisions about them and the deliberative processes that accompanied the decision-making and allocation of resources. For further reference to the physical and economic impact of those programmes see the individual final evaluations for each programme, referenced in footnotes 33-38, above.

At the outset of this research, the decision was taken to focus on regeneration initiatives aimed at urban areas as opposed to initiatives targeted at rural or coastal communities. This decision was in part due to the author's own experience of working in the field of urban regeneration, therefore providing a deeper understanding of this particular operating environment. Also, it was felt it was necessary to focus the area of research, given the abundance of government-led programmes introduced since New Labour took office in 1997. Relatedly, this thesis does not attempt to evaluate policies or programmes carried out in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland given that the responsibilities for regeneration at the community or neighbourhood level sit with each country's parliament or assembly as part of devolution arrangements.

As previously noted, a comparative analysis, based on approaches to similar themes in American urban areas also informs the discussion. This fieldwork was funded by a Knowledge Transfer Partnership between Kingston University and Renaisi - a London-based urban regeneration consultancy and social enterprise - with the purpose of learning more about American approaches to community development and community-led regeneration. Senior political figures and scholars often cite American community development organisations as exemplars of community-led regeneration - praised for their ability to build grassroots movements and for the perception that this is typically done with limited resources - this was pertinent given the global economic outlook at the time. Visits to three US cities; Chicago, Washington D.C. and New York City were made, conducting interviews with academics, community organisers/activists, civil servants and representatives from state and philanthropic funded community development organisations.[34] These cities were chosen for their long histories as sites of community-led urban revitalisation, for their similarities with some of the UK's largest urban areas (both in scale and the social challenges they face), and for the important role each play as sites of US urban policy development and implementation.

[34] See Appendix Three for an overview of the organisations visited, and Appendix Two for a list of questions and themes explored.

This thesis does not seek to provide an in-depth account of community development in these US cities, for there are already many expert accounts, nor does it set out to dissect the American urban policymaking approach at national or state level.[35] Rather the knowledge gained is used to compare and contrast approaches to community-led regeneration in both countries, giving some consideration to the extent to which American practice could be replicated in England and to what extent it can contribute to theory and knowledge in the UK community development sector.

1.4 Rationale for this thesis and the significance of the study

The interest for this study was sparked while working for Renaisi as part of the aforementioned Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Kingston University. For ten years under New Labour, Renaisi had worked to manage and assist some of the large-scale government-funded area-based initiatives (ABIs) based in East London, including the City Challenge, New Deal for Communities and Single Regeneration Budget programmes.[36] As these programmes came to the end of their funding in 2009/10 the global recession, onset of government austerity, and changing political priorities had made it increasingly clear that the nature of regeneration funding and delivery was changing and those organisations helping to deliver regeneration would need to adapt as well. Through the Knowledge Transfer Partnership, I was tasked with helping the company to understand what a change in government would mean for the organisation and its activities, and to assist in developing a programme of services suited to this new operating environment. Relatively new to the field and working for an organisation that supported community-led regeneration, I relayed the localist promises set out in all three main political parties 2010 election manifestos and campaign speeches with some excitement. However, my enthusiasm was met with some indifference from my colleagues, stating that "they'd heard it all before" and that "it's all rhetoric." A similar view is highlighted in the work of Shaw and Robinson who critique new urban policy as being characterised by a form of '*policy amnesia'*.[37] These early exchanges spurred the questions that would underpin this thesis as I sought to

[35] For example see: A. von Hoffman, *House by House, Block by Block: The Rebirth of America's Urban Neighbourhoods*, (Oxford University Press, 2003); J. Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities,* (Random House, 1961); C.F. Steinbach, *Coming of Age: Trends and Achievements of Community-Based Development Organizations,* (NCCED, 1999); R. Johansen, Z. Neal and S. Gasteyer, 'The View from a Broken Window: How Residents Make Sense of Neighbourhood Disorder in Flint*',* (2015) 52(16) *Urban Studies,* 3054-3069; G. Potts, 'The New Barn-Raising: Sustaining Community and Civic Assets in Minneapolis–St. Paul, Detroit and Baltimore, (2015) 8(3) *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 233-244; B. Katz, *Neighbourhoods of Choice and Connection: The Evolution of American Neighbourhood Policy and What it Means for the United Kingdom*, (JRF, 2004); R. Fisher and J. DeFilippis, 'Community Organizing in the United States', 2015 (50) *Community Development Journal*, 363–379.

[36] Predominantly working in the London boroughs of Hackney, Islington, Tower Hamlets, Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest, delivering services on behalf of Local Authorities or providing them with advice and interim management support. Renaisi originated as an extension of Hackney council's regeneration department, set up to deliver initiatives under the City Challenge and SRB programmes. The Islington New Deal for Communities programme (one of the 39 NDC programmes) was delivered by EC1 New Deal an extension of Renaisi, set up to be the delivery vehicle for the programme.

[37] K. Shaw and F. Robinson, 'Learning from Experience? Reflections on Two Decades of British Urban Policy' (1998) 69(1) *Town Planning Review*, 49.

understand more about the motivations underpinning this latest 'turn to community' and why, allegedly, previous attempts had not had the empowering results for communities that were promoted.

In order to explore the extent to which this rhetoric transferred into reality, this thesis looked back on and followed a combined eighteen years of government policies and programmes that promoted community participation in regeneration — reviewing New Labour's time in government to understand how community involvement in regeneration was framed and delivered through what was commonly referred to as area-based initiatives and neighbourhood management during the period 1997-2010. Before going on to explore the extent to which community-led development was achieved under the Coalition's considerably different approach to urban renewal and proposals to build a 'Big Society'.

1.5 Research questions

Having established the rationale underpinning this study, the following section moves on to discuss the key questions that will be explored throughout this thesis. Essentially, this thesis looks to explore three key themes:

i) The extent to which urban regeneration policies and programmes launched in England between 1997 and 2015 sought to enhance deprived neighbourhoods through community participation and empowerment, and to examine the drivers and inspiration behind this.

ii) The extent to which these programmes delivered on their stated aims to involve local people, and the degree to which the processes and outcomes represent sustainable citizen empowerment, drawing on the 'place, space and power' model as a theoretical and analytical framework to do so.

iii) How effective can government be in inspiring grassroots community action through state-led and monitored programmes? Assessing the conditions needed to achieve sustainable community empowerment and the optimum role of government in facilitating and supporting these.

The following questions guided the exploration of these themes and underpinned the research and analysis put forward over the remainder of this thesis:

- What were the UK urban regeneration legislature, policies and programmes launched between 1997 and 2015 that were in introduced to enhance community participation and civic action?

- How did these community-focused policies transfer into practice? Furthermore, to what extent have they prevailed?

- Can a stronger community or enhanced social capital be prescribed and created by policymakers and state institutions, or is state-led community empowerment something of an oxymoron?

- What, if anything, can policymakers, practitioners and academics learn from American community development practice?

- And finally; what role should government play if they are to achieve their stated localist aims?

1.6 Structure and outline of the thesis

In order to address the above questions, this thesis is set out as follows:

Chapter one: has introduced the subject matter and its central thesis. Alongside this has been an explanation of the rationale for the study and an overview of the key areas of research that will be pursued throughout the subsequent chapters and sections.

Chapter two: presents a review of existing literature on urban regeneration and revitalisation with a particular focus on community involvement within this. This chapter looks to 'unpack' several topics that will form the basis of the analysis this thesis builds to. This will include an exploration of definitions of community, social sustainability, and regeneration itself. The chapter critically explores the relationship between government and 'the community', focusing on New Labour's 'Third Way' and 'active citizenship' agendas and the Coalition's localist approach. Arguments for and against community-led approaches and their suitability and transferability within the context of urban regeneration are considered. The contested nature of the term 'community' is also explored. This builds to an understanding that while community involvement is seen as intrinsically important in urban regeneration programmes and that many benefits can come from community involvement, many challenges can and indeed do appear to inhibit the process of citizen participation and empowerment.

This chapter also examines the research of two American theorists whose work on the importance of associational life and community cohesion were influential on the policies and programmes introduced in England between 1997 and 2015.

Consideration is given to the influence of Amitai Etzioni's work on 'communitarianism' in the early years of public policy under Tony Blair, and the influence 'social capital' theory, brought into popular consciousness through the work of Robert Putnam, had on the social policy of both Blair and his successor Gordon Brown.[38] Both Etzioni and Putnam were invited to meet with key political figures during New Labour's time in power, and an argument, supported by further evidence, is put forward that this American practice and ideology contributed to regeneration thinking and policymaking at this time. Similar conclusions are drawn with regard to social policy under the Coalition, which it is argued, also drew on both schools of thought. The links to "American-style" community organising discussed above is also explored further. In doing so consideration is given to why American approaches to tackle an apparent decline in community have continued to resonate with policymakers in the UK over the period this research covers.

Chapter three: having critically explored successive governments' repeated commitment to enhancing community 'engagement', 'participation' and ultimately 'empowerment', this chapter looks to unpack those terms, given that each is often used interchangeably but can hold very different meanings. Sherry Arnstein's 'Ladder of Citizen Participation'[39] is used as an illustrative tool to make some distinction between the concepts of 'engagement', 'participation', and 'empowerment', alongside several complimentary frameworks that have built upon Arnstein's work. Theories of 'power' are also explored, with consideration given to the contrasting theories of power put forward by Dahl, Bachrach and Baratz, Gramsci, Lukes, and Foucault and their relevancy to the study of participatory community development. These build to a more fluid conceptualisation of power and agency. Relatedly, and recognising that social policy is not made or implemented in a political or socio-economic vacuum, the chapter moves on to discuss John Gaventa's 'place, space and power' framework as a tool for analysing and demonstrating the dynamism of community development and the interplay of power relations between the community and the state.[40] The chapter concludes by presenting an adapted version of this framework that will be used to assess relationships between the community, the local level (made up of local government, regeneration intermediaries and public service providers) and national government throughout the remainder of the thesis.

Chapter four: this chapter sets out the mixed-method approach that has been utilised throughout the research in order to address the questions and hypothesis put forwards in chapters one and two. The chapter will demonstrate how this study entailed a significant degree of desk-based research and analysis of government legislation, policies, datasets and

[38] A. Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities and the Communitarian Agenda*, (Crown, 1993); R.D. Putnam, 'Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital', (1995) 6(1) *The Journal of Democracy*, 65-78; R.D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,* (Simon and Schuster, 2000). It should however be noted that Putnam did not coin the term 'social capital', in *Bowling Alone* Putnam cites the earliest use of the term as 1916 in a paper by Lyda Hanifan entitled 'The Rural School Community Centre' (published in: *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 67, pp:130-138) and his work is heavily influenced by earlier work by sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman, as well as the work of German economist Ekkehart Schlicht.

[39] S. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation', (1969) 35(4) *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 216-228.

[40] J. Gaventa, 'Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis', (2006) 37(6) *IDS Bulletin*, 22-33.

programme evaluations as well as substantial analysis of related academic literature. This was complemented by a number of interviews with a range of stakeholders including resident volunteers, practitioners, civil servants and intermediary agencies from both England and the USA, adding a comparative strand to the research. The ethical implications of conducting primary research are also discussed.

Chapter five: based on interviews with practitioners and volunteers involved in the delivery of New Labour's programmes for 'neighbourhood renewal' and a review of research, policy documents, evaluations and grey literature emerging from twenty-years of English urban policy, this chapter identifies and appraises policies and programmes implemented under the banner of urban regeneration under New Labour over the 1997-2010 period. Analysing the ways in which the role of the 'community' was framed within these. Beginning with an assessment of the vision and priorities set out in the *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal,* several new opportunities for community participation put forth are critically examined.[41] Flagship regeneration programmes are identified and consideration is given to the extent to which community participation was encouraged and achieved within these, with particular focus on the New Deal for Communities and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder programmes. Utilising the 'place, space and power' framework this chapter considers the extent to which the programmes delivered upon their stated aims to engage and empower communities, and what impact this had on the communities they targeted. The picture that emerges is the creation of several new spaces for community participation and influence, however, these spaces were somewhat undermined by the delivery mechanisms and programme management arrangements put in place, which served to limit community influence and at times overexpose resident volunteers.

Chapter six: similarly, this chapter analyses the policies and programmes implemented by the Coalition government between 2010 and 2015. As the chapter will show, the change in government brought with it a shift in the way in which urban regeneration was framed and funded, however, the message that communities could and should do more to improve and support their communities prevailed. Through analysis of the Coalition's Community Organisers programme and drawing on early insights into the take-up of new 'community rights' enacted through the introduction of the Localism Act 2011, consideration is given to the extent to which community participation and empowerment formed a key pillar of the Coalition's programme for government and the degree to which it was implemented in practice.[42] This section also considers the impact the Coalition's programme of austerity had on the local and national civic infrastructure cited as so crucial to building the capacity for community-led regeneration, and to community and voluntary sector perceptions of the Big Society vision.

41 SEU, *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, (The Stationary Office, 1998).

42 Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), *A Plain English Guide to the Localism Act,* (DCLG, 2011); Cabinet Office, *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government, (*Cabinet Office, 2010).

The central hypothesis of this thesis is that government over the last fifteen years has failed to learn the lessons of its predecessors, once again guilty of the aforementioned 'policy amnesia'. Therefore, it is important to move beyond looking at these policies and programmes in isolation. With this in mind, chapter six also compares and contrasts both New Labour's and the Coalition's approaches to devolving responsibilities to the neighbourhood level, evaluating the extent to which power has been shared with or 'handed down' to communities, and identifying examples of systematic failings which have prohibited wider take-up of opportunities for participation at the neighbourhood level.

Chapter seven: This final analytical chapter brings together findings from interviews conducted in the USA in 2011, shortly after the Coalition came to power. Visiting three US cities: Chicago, Washington D.C. and New York City, the purpose of the trip was to better understand neighbourhood approaches to regeneration in America and to gain first-hand insight into the extent approaches originating in the US were suited to the UK context. Interviews with US community development workers, academics, policymakers, public servants and researchers provided invaluable insight, highlighting several parallels with English approaches, as well as considerable differences. This research also highlights the challenges being faced by those involved in American community development work at that time. Insights into approaches to mobilising community members, sustaining community organisations, and the ways in which 'power' is discussed and used in US community organising are particularly resonant for UK practice and policy development. The role philanthropy plays in supporting neighbourhood regeneration or 'revitalisation' efforts in the US is also briefly considered in light of the Coalition's stated intention to mobilise large corporations to do more to contribute funding and volunteer time to social causes.

Chapter eight: This concluding chapter looks to draw together the various strands of research presented and considers the implications for regeneration policy and practice in England going forward. The central questions are revisited, and recommendations for policymakers, community workers and community groups are made. Conclusions are drawn about the extent to which governments can prescribe community participation as a panacea for troubled neighbourhoods, assessing the validity of the central hypothesis. The adapted 'place, space and power' framework is critically evaluated, and its potential use to the sector is considered. Opportunities for further research and the contributions to knowledge this study provides are also presented.

Chapter Two: Thematic Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins to explore the meaning and various conceptualisations of some of the key terms that will be examined throughout this thesis, namely: 'urban regeneration', 'social sustainability' and the many interpretations of 'community.' In doing so, this chapter seeks to provide the context for the rest of this thesis and synthesise insight from some of the key texts and theorists in this field.

Throughout this chapter 'community' is presented as a 'contested concept', open to multiple interpretations and the subject of long-running debates about what constitutes a community and how the dynamics of communities have changed over time. Ferdinand Tönnies' theories of 'G*emeinschaft'* and '*Gesellschaft*' help to guide this discussion, with the themes it raises about the difference between communal and associational society as resonant today as they were over a century ago. Links are made between Tönnies work and the comparatively recent theories of 'communitarianism' and 'social capital' both of which it is argued had considerable influence on the policies and programmes or New Labour and the Coalition government over the period studied. A thread that runs through these theories, and that is often repeated in government speeches, manifestos, and in wider academic literature is the notion that community has been 'lost', that society has become increasingly individualistic and that this, in turn, has led to a moral breakdown within communities and wider societies. The solution, proponents of these theories offer is a recalibrated relationship between central government and communities, promoting more 'rights' but also more 'responsibility' to citizens, calling for them to do more *in* and *for* their communities, with government playing an 'enabling role'. The appeal of these ideals for government is considered, as well as some of the limitations and critiques of these guiding philosophies.

Two counterarguments are also considered: some argue that the 'loss' of community has been overstated, and co-opted to serve other political agendas, '*a literary strategy that supplies dramatic structure for accounts of social and cultural change*' as Bender argues, and this will be explored.[43] The 'dark side' of 'community' is also considered, 'community' is inherently presented as a good thing, something to be strived for and protected, however, inclusion for some can often result in exclusion for others, narrow conceptualisations of what constitutes a community and the implications of

[43] T. Bender, *Community and Social Change in America*, (Rutgers University Press, 1978), 46-7 cited in I. Maitland., 'Community Lost?', (1998) 8(4) *Business Ethics Quarterly,* (Online) Available at: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/business-ethics-quarterly/article/community-lost/E982C4C25385075C4A8347200D8912CD> Last accessed: 26th September 2019.

prescribing community in a regeneration context are also considered.[44] The chapter concludes with a discussion of why the desire to 'build' or 'restore' community prevails along with consideration of the value of community as a site of policy, practice and research.

2.2 Defining urban regeneration

It is helpful to begin with some discussion of what constitutes 'urban regeneration', a term used frequently throughout the policy and academic discourse over the period studied to frame a wide range of social, economic and physical interventions. The various conceptualisations and definitions of the term have led some commentators to describe it as a 'contested concept' and one that is difficult to define.[45] The following sections explore some of these varied interpretations before setting out how the term has been interpreted within the scope of this study.

Taken in isolation there is little confusion about the meaning of the two terms when examining them in their separate parts; to 'regenerate' suggests a rebirth or a revival while 'urban' is taken to reflect towns and cities. Indeed, at its very essence, urban regeneration is about the reversal of decline in urban areas or the neighbourhoods that they comprise of, improving areas or returning them to perceived former glories. What soon becomes apparent from the literature, however, is that it is used as an umbrella term across levels and departments of government as an approach to addressing a wide a range of policy objectives.[46] Indeed, a review of the literature shows that the tools available to facilitate regeneration are as wide-ranging as the number of definitions offered.

Some definitions frame urban regeneration as a largely property-led approach to tackling urban decline through the physical redevelopment or renewal of an area. Jones and Evans put forward such a view of urban regeneration stating: '*the large-scale process of adapting the existing built environment, with varying degrees of direction from the state, is today generally referred to in the UK as urban regeneration*'.[47] Physical regeneration programmes might take the form of the development of new properties, the replacement or refurbishment of existing property, (re)development of public spaces,

[44] M. Mulligan, 'On Ambivalence and Hope in the Restless Search for Community: How to Work with the Idea of Community in the Global Age', (2015) 49(2) *Sociology,* 347.

[45] A. Cochrane, *Understanding Urban Policy: A Critical Approach*, (Blackwell, 2007); L. Dargan, 'Conceptualising Regeneration in the New Deal for Communities', (2007) 8(3) *Planning Theory & Practice*, 345-362; M. E. Leary and J. McCarthy (Eds), *The Routledge Companion to Urban Regeneration,* (Routledge, 2013).

[46] Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), *Bringing Britain Together – A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, Cmnd 4045, (The Stationary Office, 1998); DETR, *Towards an Urban Renaissance. Final Report of the Urban Task Force*, (The Stationary Office, 1999), DETR, *Involving Communities in Urban and Rural Regeneration*, (The Stationary Office, 1999); SEU, A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan, (The Stationary Office, 2001); DCLG, *Regeneration to Enable Growth: What the Government Is Doing in Support of Community-Led Regeneration*, (DCLG, 2010).

[47] P. Jones and J. Evans, *Urban Regeneration in the UK: Theory and Practice*, (Sage, 2008), 2.

infrastructure improvements, or the reclamation of land. Such improvements to the physical realm of an area can contribute to improved economic and social outcomes for communities: creating jobs, providing families with homes and improving the surrounding infrastructure. Yet it is submitted that this definition put forward by Jones and Evans offers something of a one-dimensional view of regeneration, failing to acknowledge the importance of investing in the communities residing within and around regenerated areas, and lacking recognition of the importance of preserving the cultural and environmental vibrancy of an area. Something acknowledged by Thomas and Duncan who cite cultural events, community policing, active labour market initiatives, and a host of initiatives that have sought to increase the participation and capacity of local people as examples of regeneration in practice - demonstrating that some interpretations of urban regeneration have taken a much broader view of its remit, a definition supported by several others.[48]

A universal government definition of regeneration proved challenging to find despite numerous references to urban regeneration across policy documents, White Papers and speeches as Parkinson et al. note in a report to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister:

> *The terms like `regeneration', `renewal' and `regional development' typically do not have simple definitions. The distinguishing characteristic of these interventions is that they have a strong spatial focus and often, as a result, distributional impacts. They tend to aim at, or contribute to, the overall goals for sustainable development of target areas and groups and have the specific objective of improving outcomes in social, economic and environmental terms.*[49]

While not providing a succinct definition Parkinson et al. do in the above encapsulate the overriding philosophy towards 'regeneration' under the New Labour government of the time (and subsequent governments), with regeneration being a policy goal that spanned many government departments. What this explanation does not, however offer is, beyond reference to sustainable development, any indication of the drivers for urban regeneration interventions or the form in which these interventions might take place. A sign of this was given by the House of Commons Trade and Industry Committee:

[48] S. Thomas, and P. Duncan, *Neighbourhood Regeneration: Resourcing Community Involvement,* (Policy Press: 2000); M.E Leary and J. McCarthy (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Urban Regeneration,* (Routledge, 2013); P. Roberts, 'The Evolution, Definition and Purpose of Urban Regeneration', in P. Roberts and H. Sykes (eds.), *Urban Regeneration: A Handbook*, (Sage, 2000); L. Dargan, 'Conceptualising Regeneration in the New Deal for Communities', (2007) 8(3) *Planning Theory & Practice*, 345-362.

[49] M. Parkinson, M. Hutchins, J. Simmie, G. Clark and H. Verdonk., *Competitive European Cities: Where do the Core Cities Stand?,* (ODPM, 2004), 6. (Online) Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/224892409_Competitive_European_Cities_Where_do_the_Core_Cities_Stand> Last accessed: September 19th 2019.

> *The Government's regeneration policy and programmes are part of the drive to tackle the combination of local needs and priorities associated with poverty and deprivation. They include long-term adult and youth unemployment, low skills levels, uncompetitive industry, poor health and education, bad housing, a rundown physical environment, benefit dependency, high proportion of lone parents. Loss of community values and social cohesion, ethnic minority disadvantage and high levels of crime and drug misuse.*[50]

This quote echoes the earlier distinction that urban regeneration goes beyond the physical transformation of an area and attempts to address social exclusion by improving the circumstances of the individuals, families, children, communities and businesses that reside within the area. Improving the physical structures of places was seen as playing a significant role in reducing social exclusion and connecting low-income areas to more prosperous districts, but the term 'regeneration' became increasingly used to define a strategy that sought to improve the economy of areas and improve community ties and services, aiming to enhance the capacity and social capital of those residing within poorer neighbourhoods.[51] A thread that runs through these approaches and that distinguishes regeneration strategy and funding from wider development activity is that typically in regeneration programmes public money is used to fund initiatives directly or as an incentive to "pump-prime" further private investment into an area.[52] Under New Labour, regeneration was also cited as a tool for addressing 'market failure' with a 2007 Treasury report highlighting the need for the state to intervene in deprived areas because the free market will not, defining regeneration as '*the broad process of reversing physical, economic and social decline in an area where market forces will not do this without intervention'*.[53]

While New Labour put forward several definitions of regeneration; the Coalition government appeared to consciously avoid doing so. Citing within their 2012 'regeneration toolkit' entitled *Regeneration to Enable Growth* (critically examined in chapter six) that '*it is for local people, not central government, to identify which areas need regeneration, define what it should look like, and what measures should be used to drive it*', going on to state that it will depend on '*local characteristics, challenges and opportunities*'. [54] The role of the state, the strategy goes on to say is a '*strategic and supportive*' one – through '*reforming and decentralising public services; providing powerful incentives and support for*

[50] House of Commons Trade and Industry Committee, *Trade and Industry – Third Report*, (House of Commons, 1998), Appendix One. (Online) Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199899/cmselect/cmtrdind/112/11201.htm>Last accessed: September 19th 2018.

[51] L. Dargan, 'Conceptualising Regeneration in the New Deal for Communities', (2007) 8(3) *Planning Theory & Practice*, 345-362; K. Shaw and F. Robinson, 'UK Urban Regeneration Policies in the Early Twenty-First Century', (2009) 81(3) *Town Planning Review,* 123–149; A. Tallon, *Urban Regeneration in the UK,* 2nd Edition, (Routledge, 2013).

[52] M. E. Leary and J. McCarthy, 'Introduction: Urban Regeneration, a Global Phenomenon', in M. E. Leary and J. McCarthy (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Urban Regeneration,* (Routledge, 2013), 9.

[53] HM Treasury, Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform and Department for Communities and Local Government, *Review of Sub National Economic Development and Regeneration July* 2007, para 1.13 (Online) Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmcomloc/1014/101404.htm. Last accessed: 30th July 2019.

[54] DCLG, *Regeneration to Enable Growth: A Toolkit Supporting Community-Led Regeneration*, (DCLG, 2012), 4.

growth; removing barriers that hinder local ambitions; and providing targeted investment and reform to strengthen the infrastructure for growth and regeneration to support the most vulnerable'.[55]

Across these definitions is a consensus that regeneration is, or should be, a comprehensive approach that seeks to address a combination of physical, economic and social issues in disadvantaged areas, a belief shared by a number of academics.[56] Roberts, for instance, defines urban regeneration as:

> *A comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental conditions of an area that has been subject to change.*[57]

Roberts expands on this definition to provide a concise overview of the key components of urban regeneration programmes, summarised as follows:

- An interventionist activity;
- An activity that straddles the public, private and voluntary and community sectors;
- An activity that is likely to experience considerable changes in its institutional structures over time in its response to changing economic, social, environmental and political circumstances;
- A means of mobilising collective effort and providing the basis for the negotiation of appropriate solutions;
- A means of determining policies and actions designed to improve the condition of urban areas and developing the institutions and structures necessary to support the preparation of specific proposals.[58]

Roberts' definition and deconstruction of regeneration's key components recognise the complexity and dynamism of urban areas and the challenges brought about by the confluence of actors and influencers involved in the regeneration process. The rhetoric surrounding the policies and programmes examined throughout this thesis very much align with this

[55] DCLG, *Regeneration to Enable Growth: A Toolkit Supporting Community-Led Regeneration*, (DCLG, 2012), 4.
[56] L. Dargan, 'Conceptualising Regeneration in the New Deal for Communities', (2007) 8(3) *Planning Theory & Practice*, 345-362; R. Crisp, T. Gore, S. Pearson and P. Tyler, *Regeneration and Poverty: Evidence and Policy*, (Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University, 2014). (Online) Available at: <https://www.shu.ac.uk/~/media/home/research/cresr/files/jrf-regeneration-poverty-finalreport.pdf?la=en> Last accessed: September 25th 2019; V.K. Gosling, 'Regenerating Communities: Women's Experiences of Urban Regeneration', (2008) 45 *Urban Studies*, 607–626; M. Humphreys, 'Leaseholder Charges and Urban Regeneration', (2006) *Journal of Planning and Environmental Law,* 1625; M.E. Leary and J. McCarthy (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Urban Regeneration,* (Routledge, 2013).
[57] P. Roberts, 'The Evolution, Definition and Purpose of Urban Regeneration', in P. Roberts and H. Sykes (eds.), *Urban Regeneration*, (Sage, 2000), 17.
[58] Ibid,17.

conceptualisation of urban regeneration. However, Roberts presents a somewhat aspirational view of urban regeneration depicting collective effort between communities, central government and local stakeholders; equitable negotiation and consensus-building between all parties; and an assumption that all parties share the same motivations and desired outcomes. The reality is often a far more political environment, fraught with power imbalances, competing interests and a lack of coordination. Leading some commentators to question the extent to which programmes and approaches can ever be comprehensive given the myriad challenges that urban areas face, the so-called 'wicked problems' so often entrenched in areas.[59]

The above definitions also lack direct reference to community involvement in the regeneration process, despite growing acknowledgement that without community engagement and participation, effective and long-lasting regeneration is very difficult to achieve.[60] This thesis supports the view that the 'lasting improvements' mentioned in the above definition are more likely to be achieved if interventions have been developed in partnership with local people.[61]

At the heart of this thesis is an examination of the extent to which certain government-funded and initiated urban regeneration programmes launched between 1997 and 2015 have demonstrated the above features: community participation and empowerment; responsiveness to local need; and partnership working - all of which take considerable time to develop.[62] In 2017 the Lankelly Chase Foundation commissioned an extensive review of findings from fifty years of 'place-based' funded programmes from across the world, the majority of which promoted similar models of partnership working, community involvement and top-down investment, targeted at defined geographic regions.[63] The sources and amount of funding differed by country and programme, as did the delivery mechanism and the particular aims sought, although alleviating deprivation was a common thread. The review, conducted by Professor Marilyn Taylor and colleagues at the Institute for Voluntary Research contains a wealth of insight and good practice for any agency looking to adopt or

[59] T. Harrison, 'Urban Policy: Addressing Wicked Problems', in H. T. O. Davies, S. M. Nutley and P. C. Smith (eds.), *What Works?: Evidence Based Policy and Practice in Public Services*, (Policy Press, 2000), 207-229. (Online) Available at: <http://www.bums.ac.ir/dorsapax/filemanager/userfiles/sub_41/22244.pdf> Last accessed: 14th September 2019.

[60] P. Burton, R. Goodlad, J. Croft, J. Abbott., A. Hastings, G. Macdonald and T. Slater, *What Works in Community Involvement in Area-based Initiatives? A Systematic Review of the Literature*, (Home Office, 2004); D. Adamson, The Impact of Devolution: Area-based Regeneration in the UK, (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2010); SQW Consulting, *Improving Delivery of Mainstream Services in Deprived Areas- The Role of Community Involvement*, (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005); P. Duncan and S. Thomas, *Neighbourhood Regeneration: Resourcing Community Involvement*, (Policy Press, 2000).

[61] M. E. Leary and J. McCarthy, 'Introduction: Urban Regeneration, a Global Phenomenon', in M. E. Leary and J. McCarthy (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Urban Regeneration,* (Routledge, 2013), 9; K. Yang, 'Trust and Citizen Involvement Decisions: Trust in Citizens, Trust in Institutions, and Propensity to Trust', (2006) 38 *Administration & Society*, 573-595; A.M. Melo and G. Baiocchi, 'Deliberative Democracy and Local Governance: Towards a New Agenda', (2006) 30 *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 587-600; H. Tam, 'Enabling Structures' in D. Atkinson, (ed.) *Cities of Pride: Rebuilding Community, Refocusing Governance,* (Cassell, 1995), 129-137.

[62] J.M. Ferris and E. Hopkins, 'Place-Based Initiatives: Lessons from Five Decades of Experimentation and Experience', (2015) 7(4) *The Foundation Review*, 97-109.

[63] M. Taylor, E. Buckly and C. Hennessey, *Historical Review of Place Based Approaches,* (Lankelly Chase, 2017) (Online) Available at: <https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf> Last accessed: 25th September 2019.

evaluate 'area-based' or 'place-based' approaches, as well as emphasising some of the challenges of entering and working with communities to deliver regeneration or 'place-based' change. A point that is emphasised throughout the review is that if funders are serious about deploying place-based strategies, then they must allow adequate time to develop and deliver place-based approaches, with Taylor et al. stating:

> *Research has often found that timescales for building resident confidence and involving marginalised community members are too short, with the result that engagement is superficial. Much of the literature on partnership emphasises the need to allow time for trusting relationships to develop and to build confidence, skills and capacity among all stakeholders. This is perhaps the most consistent message of all those in the literature.*[64]

Despite this being an accepted view across much of the literature, such an approach does not sit comfortably with the cyclical nature of central and local governance in the UK. The eighteen-year period covered by this thesis saw three different prime ministers, and with them, three distinct policy approaches to regeneration and civic participation. As chapters five and six will show, each change in government would bring with it changes to regeneration funding, priorities, and programmes. Each time, these changes would be accompanied by familiar calls for communities to participate, to come forward and deliver lasting and meaningful change in their communities. Yet, such fluctuations in policy approaches and priorities are at odds with the conditions necessary for sustainable development and the images of 'thriving communities' conjured in the rhetoric of politicians. Taylor et al. submit that along with building-in sufficient time for local people to participate, other important components of successful regeneration and place-based working include: adopting a long term vision for that place; an appreciation of local context and the need to enter places carefully; genuine involvement and empowerment of local people; and '*selecting partners with the capacity, interest and positioning to take on the work at hand*'.[65] Such a view aligns with much of the literature on 'social sustainability' which this chapter now moves on to explore.

2.3 Defining socially sustainable regeneration

It is submitted that there is much overlap between the principles of citizen empowerment and participation promoted in regeneration policy and programmes, and the enabling conditions needed to achieve a 'socially sustainable community':

[64] M. Taylor, E. Buckly and C. Hennessey, *Historical Review of Place Based Approaches,* (Lankelly Chase, 2017) (Online) Available at: <https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>. Last accessed: 25th September 2019, 52.

[65] Ibid, 42. See also: L. Pratchett, C. Durose, V. Lowndes, G. Stoker and C. Wales, *Empowering Communities to Influence Local Decision-Making: A Systematic Review of the Evidence*, (DCLG, 2009); S. Telfer, *What Makes Effective Place Based Working: Lessons from JRF's Bradford Programme*, (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2013).

an area of public policy Colantonio and Dixon believe has been '*under-studied and under-theorised for a long time'*.[66] Making the connection between regeneration and sustainable development Humphreys defines regeneration as the '*implementation of environmental, social and economic improvements to an area of deprivation while ensuring such improvements are sustainable'*.[67] 'Sustainable' was a word commonly associated with themes falling under the banner of regeneration over the 1997-2015 period this study covers, with the terms 'sustainability', 'sustainable communities' and 'sustainable urban regeneration' becoming much more common in the public policy lexicon.[68] This heightened awareness and commitment to the principles of sustainability can in some part be attributed to the UK's agreement to or passing of, several key policy documents and agreements that focus on sustainable development during that time, including the 1998 *Urban Sustainable Development in the EU: A Framework for Action*, the 2005 *Bristol Accord* and the 2007 *Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities*.[69]

This understanding of sustainable development is commonly reflected by reference to the three pillars of sustainable development: 'economic', 'environmental' and 'social', as illustrated by the Venn diagram in figure 2. Referring to these three pillars, the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration called for:

> *...a collective responsibility to advance and strengthen the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development – economic development, social development and environmental protection – at local, national, regional and global levels.* [70]

[66] A. Colantonio, T. Dixon, R. Ganser, J. Carpenter and A. Ngombe, *Measuring Socially Sustainable Urban Regeneration in Europe: Final Report,* (Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development, 2009). (Online) Available at: <http://oisd.brookes.ac.uk/sustainable_communities/resources/Social_Sustainability_and_Urban_Regeneration_report.pdf> Last accessed: 25th June 2019, 20.

[67] M. Humphreys, 'Leaseholder Charges and Urban Regeneration', (2006) *Journal of Planning and Environmental Law,* 1625.

[68] D. Warburton, 'A Passionate Dialogue: Community and Sustainable Development' in D. Warburton (ed.) *Community and Sustainable Development: Participation in the Future*, (Earthscan, 1998); Commission of European Communities (CEC), *Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: A Framework for Action, COM (98) 605 Final,* (European Commission, *1998);* DETR, *Sustainable Regeneration: Good Practice Guide*, (HMSO, 1998); OECD, *Analytic Report on Sustainable Development SG/SD 1-14,* (OECD, 2001); United Nations, *World Summit on Sustainable Development: Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development,* (United Nations, 2005).

[69] Amongst them: Commission of European Communities (CEC), *Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: A Framework for Action, COM (98) 605 final,* (European Commission, *1998);* ODPM, *UK Presidency: EU Ministerial Informal on Sustainable Communities Policy Papers*, (ODPM, 2006); European Commission, *Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Affairs - Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities*, (European Commission, 2007).

[70] United Nations, *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development:* Johann*esburg, South Africa, 26 August- 4 September 2002*, (United Nations, 2002) (Online) Available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/milesstones/wssd> Last accessed: 23rd April 2019.

Figure 2: The three pillars of sustainable development

This definition reflected a growing recognition of the importance of social considerations within sustainability theory and practice.[71] Historically, more attention has been paid to the physical and economic pillars of the trio, with much attention given to the need to conserve the environment while pursuing economic growth. While human concerns centred around employment, wealth creation and habitat rather than exploring theories of social sustainability and ways it can be implemented, protected or enhanced.[72] In an attempt to shed some clarity on the meaning and purpose of the social dimension, Colantonio offers the following definition:

> *Social sustainability concerns how individuals, communities and societies live with each other and set out to achieve the objectives of development models which they have chosen for themselves, also taking into account the physical boundaries of their places and planet earth as a whole.*[73]

Principles of social sustainability align with many of the stated aims of urban regeneration programmes and policies introduced in the previous chapter, which are typically launched with the rhetoric of 'building stronger communities',

[71] S. Vallance, H. Perkins and J. Dixon, 'What is Social Sustainability? A Clarification of Concepts', (2011) 42(3) *Geoforum*, 342-348.
[72] As recognised by, B. Littig, and E. Grießler, 'Social Sustainability: A Catchword Between Political Pragmatism and Social Theory, (2005) 8(1/2) *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 65-79; United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* (Brundtland Report), (Oxford University Press, 1987), OECD, *Analytic Report on Sustainable Development SG/SD 1-14,* (OECD, 2001).
[73] A. Colantino, *Measuring Social Sustainability: Best Practice from Urban Renewal in the EU' 2008/02: EIBURS Working Paper Series*, (Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development, 2008), 6, (Online) Available at: <http://oisd.brookes.ac.uk/sustainable_communities/resources/SocialSustainabilityProspectspaper.pdf> Last accessed: 25th June 2019.

promoting social interaction and organisation between residents, and creating an environment where people feel an inherent tie to the neighbourhoods in which they live.[74]

Employment opportunities, transport links and quality affordable housing all also contribute to the sustainability of a community.[75] For Dempsey et al. a sustainable community is a socially equitable one, where no barriers to economic, social or political participation exist and where all citizens have equal access to local services, amenities and community hubs and forums.[76] In another article the same authors argue that a lack of any of these components prohibits a community from becoming genuinely sustainable.[77] Making the link between social sustainability and good practice in urban regeneration, Darchen and Ladouceur highlight the importance of the following components of community social sustainability: interaction with other residents or social networks; participation in collective community activities; pride or sense of place; residential stability (as opposed to neighbourhood churn); and feelings of security (i.e. a lack of crime and disorder).[78] Urban regeneration programmes are typically built or initiated with a stated commitment to achieving similar aims, and over the past decade the integration of these components of social sustainability in urban regeneration policy and programme design has gained recognition as a critical factor in the success of urban regeneration delivery, with the social dynamics of a community found to be significantly affected by urban regeneration.[79] A regularly stated aim of the government-initiated programmes that are the focus of this thesis is to improve the provision of services and sense of place within areas, while preserving or building upon existing assets and any current identity of a place, through the regeneration process. An important element of this, and another thread that connects social sustainability and accepted good practice in urban regeneration - is the active engagement and involvement of the community in the regeneration process.[80] The benefits of community participation have been shown to be multiple. Research highlights links between

[74] See: R. Forrest and A. Kearns, 'Social Cohesion: Social Capital and the Neighbourhood', (2001) 38(12) *Urban Studies,* 2215-2143; N. Dempsey, G. Bramley, S. Power and C. Brown, 'The Social Dimension of Sustainable Development: Defining Urban Social Sustainability', (2009) 19(5) *Sustainable Development,* 289-300; S. Gullino, 'Mixed Communities as a Means of Achieving Sustainable Communities: A Comparison Between US Experiences and UK Policy Intentions', (2008) 23(3) *Local Economy*, 127-35; G. Bramley, N. Dempsey, S. Power, C. Brown and D. Watkins, 'Social Sustainability and Urban Form: Evidence from British Cities', (2009) 41(9) *Environment and Planning A,* 2125-2142.

[75] S. Woodcraft, 'Social Sustainability and New Communities: Moving from Concept to Practice in the UK,' (2012) 68 *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 29-42.

[76] N. Dempsey, G. Bramley, S. Power and C. Brown, 'The Social Dimension of Sustainable Development: Defining Urban Social Sustainability', (2009) 19(5) *Sustainable Development,* 289-300.

[77] G. Bramley, N. Dempsey, S. Power, C. Brown and D. Watkins, 'Social Sustainability and Urban Form: Evidence from British Cities', (2009) 41(9) *Environment and Planning A,* 2125-2142.

[78] S. Darchen and E. Ladouceur, 'Social Sustainability in Urban Regeneration Practice: A Case Study of the Fortitude Valley Renewal Plan in Brisbane,' (2013) Australian *Planner*, 3.

[79] S. Darchen., and E. Ladouceur, 'Social Sustainability in Urban Regeneration Practice: A Case Study of the Fortitude Valley Renewal Plan in Brisbane,' (2013) 50(4) *Australian Planner*, 1-11; A. Colantonio, 'Urban Social Sustainability Themes and Assessment Methods,' (2010) *Proceedings of the ICE Urban Design and Planning 163* (2), A. Colantonio, and T. Dixon, *Urban Regeneration and Social Sustainability. Best Practice from European Cities*, (Wiley and Blackwell, 2011).

[80] A. Colantonio, T. Dixon, R. Ganser, J. Carpenter and A. Ngombe, *Measuring Socially Sustainable Urban Regeneration in Europe: Final Report,* (Oxford Institute for Sustainable Development, 2009). (Online) Available at: http://oisd.brookes.ac.uk/sustainable_communities/resources/Social_Sustainability_and_Urban_Regeneration_report.pdf (Last accessed: 25th June 2019); R. Forrest and A. Kearns, 'Social Cohesion: Social Capital and the Neighbourhood', (2001) 38(12) *Urban Studies,* 2215-2143; S. Darchen and E. Ladouceur, 'Social Sustainability in Urban Regeneration Practice: a Case Study of the Fortitude Valley Renewal Plan', (2013) *Australian Planner*, 50(4), 340-350.

community involvement and the likelihood that projects or initiatives will be well received locally, and that those who have participated in the early stages of designing a solution are more likely to commit time and energy to see projects come to fruition.[81] As Yang and others have found participation can also improve trust and cooperation between citizens and local political and civic agencies.[82] Community involvement has also been shown to create more effective solutions, ensuring interventions draw on local knowledge and assets, as well as 'opening-up' channels for new ideas and perspectives.[83] Participation also provides opportunities for people from different backgrounds to integrate and widen their social networks, which in turn has been linked to increased feelings of empowerment and improvements in mental health, general wellbeing and sense of agency.[84] Arguments are also made that participation improves citizens' knowledge and ability to solve problems, giving them the confidence to raise and discuss issues, consider broader viewpoints and build consensus to find workable solutions to problems. [85] Lepofsky and Fraser also argue that the ability to influence and participate in local 'place-making' activities is a citizen's '*right to the city and the production of that space*' - citizens can, of course, choose whether or not they want to exercise those rights, but there should be opportunities and channels open to them should they wish to do so.[86]

It is not a given that investment and interventions in an area will achieve the desired balance of involvement. Indeed, regeneration done poorly or ineffectively can have the opposite effect, weakening community ties or creating or exasperating negative perceptions of a place. There are many examples in the literature of physical, cultural and economic regeneration schemes that have taken place and displaced communities, that have disempowered rather than empowered

[81] A. Bassler, K. Braiser, N. Fogle and R. Taverno, *Developing Effective Citizen Engagement: A How-to Guide for Community Leaders*, (The Center for Rural Pennsylvania , 2008); J.N. Reid, *Community Participation: How People Power Brings Sustainable Benefits to Communities*, (U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, Office of Community Development, 2000); World Health Organisation (WHO), *Community Participation in Local Health and Sustainable Development: Approaches and Techniques,* (WHO European Sustainable Development and Health Series 4, 2002).

[82] K. Yang, 'Trust and Citizen Involvement Decisions: Trust in Citizens, Trust in Institutions, and Propensity to Trust', (2006) 38 *Administration & Society*, 573-595; A.M. Melo and G. Baiocchi, 'Deliberative Democracy and Local Governance: Towards a New Agenda', (2006) 30 *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 587-600; H. Tam, 'Enabling Structures' in D. Atkinson (ed.) *Cities of Pride: Rebuilding Community, Refocusing Governance,* (Cassell, 1995), 129-137.

[83] F. Jewkes and A. Murcott,'Community Representatives: Representing the "Community"?', (1998) 46(7) *Social Science and Medicine*, 843-858; World Health Organisation (WHO), *Community Participation in Local Health and Sustainable Development: Approaches and techniques,* (WHO European Sustainable Development and Health Series 4, 2002).

[84] S. Skinner, *Building Community Strengths: A Resource Book on Capacity Building*, (Community Development Foundation, 1997); H.M. Kahssay and P. Oakley (eds.), *Community Involvement in Health Development: A Review of the Concept and Practice*, (World Health Organisation, 1999); J. Smithies and G. Webster, *Community Involvement in Health: From Passive Recipients to Active Participants*, (Ashgate, 1998); J. Abbott, *Sharing the City: Community Participation in Urban Management*, London, (Earthscan Publications, 1996); S. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969) 35(4), Journal of American Institute of Planners, 216-228; E. Batty, C. Beatty, M. Foden, P. Lawless, S. Pearson and I. Wilson, *Involving Local People in Regeneration: Evidence from the New Deal for Communities Programme Volume 2*, (Stationary Office, 2010).

[85] P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (Penguin, 1972/1996); E. Batty, C. Beatty, M. Foden, P. Lawless, S. Pearson and I. Wilson, *Involving Local People in Regeneration: Evidence from the New Deal for Communities Programme Volume 2*, (Stationary Office, 2010).

[86] J. Lepofsky and J.C. Fraser, 'Building Community Citizens: Claiming the Right to Place-making in the City, (2003) 40(1) *Urban Studies,* 127-142.

communities, and intensified feelings of distrust and displeasure with local conditions,[87] or that have exacerbated economic and social exclusion rather than reduced it.[88] Presumably, these were not the desired effects, but it demonstrates an inherent tension in the regeneration process, much like the ongoing tensions between the different pillars of sustainability. Aligning regeneration policy and delivery with the needs of 'the community' requires careful planning, negotiation, time, and resources, that in reality can be scarce. Social sustainability and equitable regeneration, therefore, is an aspiration, but not a given - it has to be worked for and requires careful design, reflection, and considerable effort. It is also necessary to think about *who* or *what* constitutes 'the community' and how best to align design and delivery to the needs of what is likely to be a diverse collection of people. The following section attempts to unpack the term 'community' (another term open to a multitude of interpretations) and consider its use within policy design and delivery, building to an understanding of community that will inform this thesis.

2.4 Defining community

Like 'urban regeneration', 'community' is a difficult word to define, it is something we intrinsically understand, yet as one begins to unpick the concept, it becomes something complex to explain when considering its constituent parts.[89] There is an abundance of literature debating what exactly constitutes a 'community',[90] so much so that sociologist George Hillary, in a review of the academic literature available in 1955, identified ninety-four different definitions of community alone![91]

How policymakers and implementers construct community is important, yet the challenge inherent in finding an agreed definition is that community is a highly personalised conceptualisation and individuals may consider themselves to be part of any number of communities at any given time. In an increasingly globalised and digitally connected world, the term and its interpretations have further widened. Indeed, as Diamond states, the concept of community is both '*elusive and problematic*', an elusiveness that often creates '*ambiguity and vagueness ... without further clarification*', despite the

[87] G. Evans, 'Measure for Measure: Evaluating Evidence of Culture's Contribution to Regeneration', (2005) 42 (5-6), *Urban Studies,* 959-983; R. Meegan and A. Mitchell, 'It's Not Community Round Here, It's Neighbourhood': Neighbourhood Change and Cohesion in Urban Regeneration Policies', (2001) 38(12) *Urban Studies,* 2167-2194.

[88] P.S. Jones, 'Urban Regeneration's Poisoned Chalice: Is There an Impasse in (Community) Participation-based Policy?', (2003) 40(3) *Urban Studies,* 581-601; Edwards, C., 'Regeneration Works? Disabled People and Area-Based Urban Renewal', (2009) 29(4) *Critical Social Policy,* 613-633.

[89] M. Jenks and N. Dempsey, 'Defining the Neighbourhood: Challenges for Empirical Research', (2007) 78(2) *Town Planning Review,* 153-177; G. Delanty, *Community*, (Routledge, 2003); L. Hancock, G. Mooney and S. Neal, 'Crisis Social Policy and the Resilience of the Concept of Community', (2012) 32(3) *Critical Social Policy*, 343-364.

[90] For further discussions on what constitutes 'community' see: F. Tonnies, *Community and Association*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955); G. Crow and G. Allan, 'Community Types, Community Typologies and Community Time', (1995) 4(2) *Time and Society* 4(2), 147-66; Z. Bauman, *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World*, (Policy Press, 2001).

[91] G. Hillary, 'Definitions of Community: Areas of Agreement' (1955) 20 *Rural Sociology*, 111–123.

considerable use of the term.[92] Bell and Newby's comprehensive exploration of the word highlights a number of wide-ranging and competing perspectives amongst academics.[93] Wrapped up in the debate are considerations of identity and belonging, locality and proximity, inclusiveness, commonalities and disparities, and debates over whether a change to an area and the people living within in represents progress or the deterioration of a bygone age.[94] Antonia Layard identifies similar elasticity with how the term 'local' is conceptualised.[95] Nevertheless, despite this elasticity and elusiveness, the concept of community continues to be popular with academics, authors and politicians keen to promote the potential of those residing within them, each framing community in slightly different ways.[96]

'Place' or 'geography' features heavily in the discussion; however, there is debate around whether those living in proximity to one another can be deemed a community based on shared geography alone. Those critiquing this assessment argue that there needs to be something more tying people together beyond proximity, such as common characteristics or interests; a shared cultural heritage; personal characteristics; social relationships; common economic interests (e.g. class); or through participation in activities or services used.[97] Often these meanings of community can overlap, Marilyn Taylor cites the example of a community which may have significance for its members because of its common traditions and history, the social relationships between members, a common religious heritage, and/or a collective experience of discrimination or powerlessness - highlighting that the term can have negative associations as well as positive.[98] Cohen, who is critical of the setting of boundaries around communities, shares similar concerns to Taylor, arguing that any attempt to delineate boundaries, whether they be physical or conceptual, can be divisive, excluding those sitting outside of the defined limits. Cohen argues boundaries also raise questions of difference, diversity, identity and belonging.[99] For Cohen, a more effective approach to forming communities is to find symbols of shared identity and build from these, the argument presented here is that there needs to be a feeling of belonging, of shared beliefs and norms that tie people together, a '*collective conscience*'

[92] M.R. Diamond, 'Community Economic Development: A Reflection on Community, Power and the Law', (2004) 8 *The Journal of Small and Emerging Business Law,* 153.

[93] C. Bell and H. Newby, *Community Studies: An Introduction to the Sociology of the Local Community*, (George Allen and Unwin, 1971).

[94] C. Bell and H. Newby, *Community Studies: An Introduction to the Sociology of the Local Community*, (George Allen and Unwin, 1971); G. Delanty, *Community*, (Routledge, 2003); R. Johnston, 'Community' in R. Johnston, D. Gregory, G. Pratt and M. Watts (eds.), *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, 4th Edition, (Blackwell, 2000), 101-102; M. Prandeep and K. Sathyamurthi, 'The 'Community' in Community Social Work', (2017) 22(9) *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 58-64.

[95] A. Layard, 'Law and Localism: The Case of Multiple Occupancy Housing, (2012) 32(4) *Legal Studies*, 551-576.

[96] For further discussion see: L. Hancock, G. Mooney and S. Neal, 'Crisis Social Policy and the Resilience of the Concept of Community', (2012) 32(3) *Critical Social Policy*, 343-364; M. Searle-Chatterjee, D. Boulton and M. Harnor, *Community: Description, Debate and Dilemma,* (Venture Press, 2000); J. Flint and D. Robinson (eds.), *Community Cohesion in Crisis?: New Dimensions of Diversity and Difference,* (The Policy Press, 2008); J. DeFilippis, R. Fisher and E. Shragge, *Contesting Community: The Limits and Potential of Local Organizing,* (Rutgers University Press, 2010).

[97] M. Taylor, A. Barr, and A. West, *Signposts to Community Development* (2nd Edition), (Community Development Foundation, 2000); D. Holman, 'The Relational Bent of Community Participation: The Challenge Social Network Analysis and Simmel Offer to Top-Down Prescriptions of 'Community*''* (2015) 50(3) *Community Development Journal,* 418-432.

[98] M. Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 46.

[99] A.P Cohen, The Symbolic Construction of Community, (Tavistock, 1985) cited in M. Mulligan, 'On Ambivalence and Hope in the Restless Search for Community: How to Work with the Idea of Community in the Global Age', *Sociology* (2015) 49(2), 341.

as Emile Durkheim terms it.[100] Under this reading, shared history, interaction and proximity are important, but alone they do not necessarily constitute a community, there needs to be a sense of 'buy-in' from those living and interacting alongside others as well.[101] Amitai Etzioni, whose work on community will be discussed in some detail later in this chapter, argues that there are two key characteristics needed to define a community: webs of 'affect-laden relationships' amongst individuals, and the presence of 'shared norms, values and meanings' shaped through a common history.[102] From these perspectives community is presented as a variable rather than a given, something that goes beyond 'place'.[103]

In their review of the literature Prandeep and Sathyamurthi synthesise the above discussion into three broad ways of approaching what they term '*the community question*': communities based upon close geographical proximity; communities as '*localised social systems binding social groups and institutions*'; or '*communities as forms of communion based on common identity of beliefs and practices*'.[104] Writing in 1989 Wilmott makes a similar distinction, noting that community is often talked about in terms of locality or territory; as *'communities of interest'*; or as a community sharing a common condition or problem, or combinations of this.[105] Gerard Delanty echoes these and adds '*communities of action*' to this list, describing groups that have mobilised around causes of social justice.[106]

The above serves to illustrate that the term community will mean different things to different people in different contexts. It is also useful to note Mulligan's distinction between '*grounded'* and '*projected'* communities - in grounded communities people have an enduring attachment to a place and others from that place, their affinity is so strong for that place that it forms part of their identity. In contrast projected or '*imagined communities*' are not inherently felt, at least not initially, rather they are verbally constructed/labelled as something to aspire to or work towards.[107] Mulligan's distinction is interesting in the scope of this research as successive governments - though policy announcements and interventions - are trying to build on or lay the foundations for 'grounded communities', but in many cases this is aspirational and therefore more aligned to the notion of projected communities. As Butcher notes '*commentators, policymakers and others are apt to assume that because a certain population segment live together they in the same place or have some other characteristic in common, they, therefore, can be referred to as a 'community'.*[108] As the following chapters will explore, many

[100] Relatedly, Durkheim held a belief that societies exist because individuals feel a kinship, or solidarity with one another, framing this as 'collective consciousness' see E. Durkhiem*, The Division of Labour in Society,* (Simon & Schuster, 1997).
[101] P. Willmott, *Community Initiatives. Patterns and Prospects,* (Policy Studies Institute, 1989).
[102] A. Etzioni, *The Essential Communitarian Reader*, (Roman & Littlefield, New York, 1998).
[103] A. Hunter, 'The Loss of Community: An Empirical Test Through Replication', (1974) 40(5) *American Sociological Review,* 537-552.
[104] M. Prandeep and K. Sathyamurthi, 'The 'Community' in 'Community Social Work', (2017) 22(9) *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 59.
[105] P. Willmott, *Community Initiatives. Patterns and Prospects,* (Policy Studies Institute, London, 1989).
[106] G. Delanty, *Community,* (Routledge, 2003).
[107] M. Mulligan, 'On Ambivalence and Hope in the Restless Search for Community: How to Work with the Idea of Community in the Global Age', *Sociology* (2015) 49(2) 340-355.
[108] H. Butcher, A. Glen, P. Henderson and J. Smith (eds.), *Community and Public Policy,* (Pluto Press, 1993), 13.

assumptions are made by the government about the willingness and propensity of people to do more in their communities *for* their communities. Politicians will present an argument that governments of the past have hindered community action, and that their new regime will unlock the latent potential that has been lying dormant in communities for too long. Funding, training, and new 'rights' are promoted and targeted at community and neighbourhood level, often on the basis of 'need', with little apparent regard for wider conceptualisations of who or what a community is. Inadvertently, the visions of community conjured through the rhetoric of 'Big Society' - of harmonious locales and self-sustaining neighbourhoods - are not wholly consistent with the day-to-day realities of most people.[109] How government and policymakers approach and define community is therefore important, to explore this further attention now moves to Ferdinand Tönnies work on the changing conceptions of 'community' over time.

2.5 From 'G*emeinschaft'* to '*Gesellschaft*' - the changing nature of community

Influential in the 'community debate' is the work of Ferdinand Tönnies and his theories of 'G*emeinschaft'* and '*Gesellschaft*', which he used as a basis for discussing the changing nature of community in an increasingly industrialised world.[110] Gemeinschaft, which roughly translates from German to mean 'community' was used to describe groups of people with shared traditions and beliefs, common bonds, and objectives which Tönnies associated with smaller, rural societies. While Gesellschaft - which is commonly translated as 'society' or 'association' - was used to characterise modern, industrial towns and cities that were emerging in the nineteenth century. For Tönnies, Gemeinschaft represented organic communities which were governed by inherent ties of kinship, friendship and traditional ways of doing things, typically brought about by locality, these ties and customs were defined by birth, were homogenous, and characterised by solidarity and attachment to that place or collective. Linked to this was a belief that people worked together on behalf of the community rather than for themselves, and that there was an accepted 'responsibility' to one another. Small, localised communities typified this view of community, with Tönnies likening them to families: characterised by strong social bonds, shared values, beliefs and collective will. Gesellschaft, in contrast, is characterised by more complex interrelationships, which are less personal and driven by individual needs and interests, or 'rational will' as Tönnies referred to it. In the context of Gesellschaft, relations are governed by deliberation and evaluation of means and ends, of the advantages people expect to gain from others, with education, work and secondary relationships are given greater

[109] K. Day, *Communities in Recession: The Reality in Four Neighbourhoods*, (JRF, 2009). (Online) Available at: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/communities-recession-reality-four-neighbourhoods> Last accessed: 25th September 2019; J. Davies and M. Pill, 'Empowerment or Abandonment? Prospects for Neighbourhood Revitalization Under the Big Society', (2012) 32(3) *Public Money & Management*, 193-200.

[110] F. Tonnies, *Community and Association*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955) cited in J. Harris (ed.) and M. Hollis (Translation*.), Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought,* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 267-273.

importance to help individuals progress - drawing parallels between the ways people interact and industrialised working practices.[111]

While the images of life in complex cities Tönnies conjures appears to be a stark contrast to the local idylls conjured through the descriptions of Gemeinschaft, Tönnies presents the two with some impartiality. For Tönnies, the shift to Gesellschaft was an inevitability of increasingly complex social structures. Through the two terms he attempts to chart the evolution of society from ancient to modern, concluding perhaps pessimistically, that modern cities or states could not be based on anything other than rational self-interest – resulting in a need for laws, contracts and institutions to mediate this. Tönnies also believed that another inevitability of this shift was that modern society would become increasingly impersonal. Emile Durkheim's writings during the same period expressed similar concerns, warning that increased individualism and personal liberty afforded by modern society brought with it the dangers of '*anomie'* (normlessness) and 'alienation'.[112]

It should be noted, as with other conceptualisations of 'community', the images evoked are unlikely to be accurate representations of most places. Tönnies himself acknowledged that Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft were not mutually exclusive and that characteristics of each would be present in the other. Indeed, community development literature highlights numerous examples of communities demonstrating strong ties and collective action in post-industrial societies: the Eldonian Group in Liverpool[113], the Incredible Edible movement originating from Todmorden in West Yorkshire, or the many Community Development Corporations developed in the US and beyond over the last sixty years are a few examples of many.[114]

[111] Ibid, 267-273.

[112] E. Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society*, (Simon & Schuster, 1997).

[113] The Eldonians were a group of residents from Eldon Road, Vauxhall, two miles from the centre of Liverpool - an area that had faced considerable blight in the 1970s and 1980s following the decline of the docks and the closure of tobacco factories and sugar refineries which had been the main employers in the area. Following their closures, residents were faced with the prospect of being rehoused and scattered across the city. However, a group of residents determined to keep the community together formed the 'Eldonians' and campaigned heavily to raise funding and permissions to build social housing and elderly care accommodation on the site of what had been the Tate & Lyle sugar refinery. Having finally obtained the necessary financial support the site was cleared, de-contaminated and landscaped with 145 new homes designed and allocated by the local community. A further 150 social rental houses were completed by 1994. Having recognised that social housing is only a starting point for the development of a sustainable community, the Eldonians decided to work at delivering wider economic and community led regeneration, building local community facilities and running training and employment programmes for local people. They would go on to form the Eldonian Group Development Trust which continues to operate today from the Eldonian Village. Source: World Habitat Awards Website, *The Eldonian Village, Liverpool,* (Online) Available at: <https://www.world-habitat.org/world-habitat-awards/winners-and-finalists/the-eldonian-village-liverpool/> Last accessed: 26th September 2019. Also see: https://www.eldonians.org.uk/.

[114] The Incredible Edible movement originated in Todmorden, West Yorkshire, and was started by a small group of local people planting vegetables in 'leftover', 'under-utilised', and 'poorly-managed spaces'. They did not seek permission to do so, operating under the principle '*it is easier to ask for forgiveness than permission'*. Volunteer led, the scheme soon began to transform the local public realm into herb gardens, vegetable patches and orchards, that anyone in the community was free to use, harvest, and eat. The programme has been credited with increasing pride in Todmorden as a place to live, and local schools and community groups have begun to support the initiative with their own growing and cooking programmes.

Similarly, communities demonstrating a high degree of Gemeinschaft may be celebrated for being nurturing, but as others have noted they can also be oppressive, too inward-looking, and perpetuate certain beliefs and attitudes that may not be palatable to a broader public, with Sunstein likening them to '*echo chambers*'.[115] Hampton and Wellman go on to note that this can create high degrees of conformity, and microcosms of power relations - governed by local political and religious institutions, creating situations where those failing to conform might quickly find themselves ostracised or punished - in comparison to this the anonymity offered by societies high in Gesellschaft may be welcome to some.[116]

It is interesting that a century later, concerns that traditional or organic forms of community are being replaced or diluted in increasingly urbanised and industrialised societies continue to propagate community development literature and the wider media.[117] Michael Sandel writes that the modern economy has '*disempowered communities and eroded the social fabric essential to democracy*', going on to say that from '*the family to neighbourhood to nation, the moral fabric of their lives, and our sense of belonging to a particular place with a shared civic life is unravelling around us*'.[118] Robert Putnam, also writing on the American perspective, raises similar concerns, writing in 2000 that '*the ebbing of community over the last several decades has been silent and deceptive. We notice its effects in the degradation of our public life'*.[119] Atkinson observes a similar decline in urban areas from a British perspective linking community decline with rising crime and antisocial behaviour 't*he extended family has shrunk ... The good neighbour is now a scarce commodity. Both street and park have become places where horrific crimes against children, women and the elderly spread fear'*.[120]

It should, however, be noted that while agreeing on the changing nature of society, Durkheim was critical of some of

Local food businesses have also been formed on the back of the success of the programme. Todmorden's example has been copied by others and there are now more than 300 'Incredible Edible' communities across the globe. A review of the programme by The Chartered Association of Building Engineers (CABE) said the project '*… represents a different way to address overarching global and local environmental concerns while also creating less tangible by-products such as social involvement, integration, civic pride and an investment in the built environment*.' Source: The Chartered Association of Building Engineers Website, *Case Study: Incredible Edible Todmorden,* (Online) Available at: <http://www.cabe.org.uk/case-studies/incredible-edible-todmorden> Last accessed: 17th August 2018. Also see: https://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk/home.

115 C. R., Sunstein, *Republic.com 2.0*, (Princeton University Press, 2009) cited in K.N. Hampton and B. Wellman, 'Lost and Saved . . . Again: The Moral Panic about the Loss of Community Takes Hold of Social Media', (2018) 47(6), *Contemporary Society: A Journal of Reviews,* (2018) 47(6), 643-651.

116 K.N. Hampton, and B. Wellman, 'Lost and Saved . . . Again: The Moral Panic about the Loss of Community Takes Hold of Social Media', (2018) 47(6), *Contemporary Society: A Journal of Reviews,* (2018) 47(6), 643-651.

117 For example: A. Gilchrist and M. Taylor, *The Short Guide to Community Development*, (Rawat Publications, 2012); R. Bellah, R. Madsen, W. M. Sullivan, A. Swidler and S.M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in the United States,* (University of California Press, 1985); A. Ehrenhalt, *The Lost City: The Forgotten Virtues of Community In America,* (Basic Books, 1995); R. D Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,* (Simon & Schuster, 2000).

118 M.J. Sandel, Democracy's *Discontent; America in Search of a Public Philosophy* (Harvard University Press, 1996) cited in I. Maitland, 'Community Lost?', (1998) 8(4) *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 655-670.

119 R. D Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, (Simon & Schuster, 2000), 403.

120 D. Atkinson (ed.), Cities of Pride: Rebuilding Community, Refocusing Government, (Cassell. 1995), 1, cited in R. Imrie and M. Raco (eds.), *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, Community and Urban Policy*, (Policy Press 2003), 8.

Tönnies' ideas, questioning whether the rosy portrayal of community presented as Gemeinschaft was relevant to a changing urban society. Indeed, for Durkheim, the term 'community' was itself unhelpful, seen as too broad a term to articulate the range of new forms of social integration that were, and would continue to be developed both organically and mechanically as society became more urbanised.[121] Durkheim instead articulated the value of 'social solidarity' and 'collective consciousness', bringing people together through common interest and moral understanding - a strand of thought that has influenced more recent work on the role of civil society.[122]

Durkheim's views on the role of the state in creating or nurturing the conditions for civil society is another interesting point of departure from Tönnies. Both saw a role for 'mediating institutions' such as churches, social clubs and voluntary organisations, providing a bridge between the instinctive relations of the family and the rational behaviour expected in more complex societal arrangements, but whereas Tönnies envisaged the need for the state exercising its power to achieve this, Durkheim saw civic society as operating outside of the state and rejected the proposition that the state should play some role in addressing the negative social impacts associated with the shift to Gesellschaft.[123] Mustafa Emirbayer, the editor of a collection of works on Durkheim's theories, describes Durkheim's conceptualisation of civil society as:

> *The sphere of social life outside the state and economy that is organised around the principle of solidarity and that encompasses such organisations, voluntary associations, and mediating bodies as occupational groups, the family, and educational institutions.*[124]

Just as the 'community lost' debate has prevailed over many years, so has the debate over what role the state should play in supporting or enabling the development or 'strengthening' of community ties.[125] Notions of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft have become synonymous with efforts to reclaim traditional interpretations of community in an industrialised and globalised world.[126] This association or reverie for communities past is a thread that ran through government policy and oratory over the two decades this thesis explores. This chapter now moves on to explore theories of community and associational life that were particularly influential on government thinking during this time – 'communitarianism' and

121 Durkheim, E., *The Division of Labour in Society*, (Simon & Schuster, 1997[1893]), 131.

122 J.C. Alexander, 'Theorizing the Good Society: Hermeneutic, Normative and Empirical Discourses', (2000) 25(3) *The Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 271-309; J.C. Alexander, *The Civil Sphere*. (Oxford University Press), 2006.

123 M. Mulligan, 'On Ambivalence and Hope in the Restless Search for Community: How to Work with the Idea of Community in the Global Age', *Sociology* (2015) 49(2) 340-355; A. Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber,* (Cambridge University Press, 1971), 71.

124 M. Emirbayer (ed.), *Emile Durkheim: Sociologist of Modernity*, (Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 217.

125 N. Bailey and M. Pill, 'The Continuing Popularity of the Neighbourhood and Neighbourhood Governance in the Transition from the 'Big State' to the 'Big Society' Paradigm', (2011) 29 (5) *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy,* 927-942.

126 A. Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities, and the Communitarian Agenda*, (Crown Publishers, 1993); D.J. Monti, 'Old Whines in New Bottles: Robert Putnam, Richard Florida, and the "Community" Problem in Contemporary America', in: J. Jennings (ed.) *Race, Neighborhoods, and the Misuse of Social Capital*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 21-39; T.K. Bradshaw, 'The Post-Place Community: Contributions to the Debate about the Definition of Community', (2008) 39(1) *Community Development*, 5-16.

'social capital'.

2.6 Responsive communitarianism and the search for 'social capital'

As Fyfe explains, during the 1990s UK urban areas became something of an '*institutional laboratory*'[127] for state-initiated policy experiments to tackle social exclusion and economic polarisation as New Labour embarked on a self-proclaimed 'Third Way' approach to government.[128] One school of thought that is said to have influenced much of New Labour's early policy around social exclusion and the alleviation of poverty was the 'communitarian' movement.[129] Perhaps most famously brought to political and public consciousness by American academic and ex-White House member of staff Amitai Etzioni and his book *The Spirit of Community* - 'responsive communitarianism' as Etzioni and contemporaries called it (the addition of 'responsive' being an attempt to differentiate their philosophy from authoritarian schools of thought), promotes the need for greater reciprocity in society, calling for members of the community to shun individualistic tendencies in favour of helping one another, for the benefit of the many.[130] The central thesis of the communitarian movement, which is defined by Etzioni as '*an environmental movement dedicated to the betterment of our moral, social, and political environment*',[131] is that a well-functioning society relies on a carefully crafted balance between liberty and social order and the balancing of citizens individual rights with personal responsibility toward their communities. Communitarians argue that over time, in western culture this commitment has been eroded, with citizens seen as becoming too individualistic, weakening the community ties which are viewed by communitarians as vital to maintaining a well-functioning society - concerns that echo those of Durkheim and Tönnies discussed in the previous section. This school of thought, much like the rhetoric surrounding 'social capital' considered below, is an assertion that increased individualism can be linked to a whole host of threats to society, with connections being made to rising crime levels; declining trust in public institutions; economic exploitation; growing feelings of loneliness; increased drug use; a reduction in social cohesion; and the breakdown of what might be perceived as 'traditional' family units and values -

127 N. R. Fyfe, 'Making Space for "Neo-communitarianism"? The Third Sector, State and Civil Society in the UK', (2005) *Antipode*, 536.

128 A. Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, (Polity Press, 1998); T. Blair, *The Third Way: New Politics for a New Century*, (Fabian Society, 1999).

129 See S. Driver and L. Martell, 'New Labour's Communitarianism', (1997) 17(3) *Critical Social Policy*, 27-46; R. Levitas, 'Community, Utopia and New Labour' (2000) 15(3) *Local Economy*, 188-197; G. Calder 'Communitarianism and New Labour' (2004) 2(1) *Social Issues (Online) Available at:*< http://www.whb.co.uk/socialissues/vol2gc.htm> Last accessed: 22nd July 2018; D. Sage, 'A Challenge to Liberalism? The Communitarianism of the Big Society and Blue Labour' (2012) 32(3) *Critical Social Policy*, 365-382; H. Tam, *Communitarianism*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 1998).

130 A. Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities, and the Communitarian Agenda,* (Crown Publishers, 1993) a book that was influenced by the work of earlier communitarian theorists such as C. Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1979) and A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Duckworth, 1981).

131 A. Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities, and the Communitarian Agenda*, (Crown Publishers, 1993), 2.

representing social decline and the erosion of individual freedoms.[132] Communitarians seek to restore this balance by protecting and promoting the family unit and communities as sites of moral norms and obligation, and advocating for institutions that mediate between the individual and the state.[133]

For Etzioni, community is seen as constituting '*webs of social relations that encompass shared meanings and above all shared values*',[134] a description echoed by Driver and Martell who present the communitarian approach to social policy as one that '*recognises the embeddedness and interdependence of human life, and promotes social and civic values above individual ones'*.[135] The communitarian thesis then is centred on building or strengthening these webs of relations and values. Under the communitarian school of thought, the community is considered vital to a person's moral and social development and is seen as something to be nurtured to ward off the perceived dangers of social isolation. With this in mind, the communitarian movement calls for more to be done to allow such meaningful relationships to flourish and be sustained, through the creation of more spaces for community members to convene and through the strengthening of family ties and local institutions like places of worship, local associations, workplaces, schools and social clubs.[136] Drawing parallels with Tönnies notion of Gemeinschaft communitarians place great importance on the community as a site of, and source of, lasting meaningful relationships and of support to one another. The communitarian position is that neither the state nor the market is best placed to deliver some forms of welfare and that not only are the local community better positioned to do so, but also have a moral responsibility to do so.[137] Community is seen as a vital part of society because, according to Etzioni, it provides a moral infrastructure, a set of social norms and understandings that guide individuals to act in a socially acceptable way.[138] Responsive communitarians stress the importance of society and its institutions above and beyond that of the state and the market, for them a well-functioning community is one where individuals are, to a large degree, democratically self-governing and self-policing, with every member, imbued with a sense of personal and civic responsibility and recognition of their obligations to society and one another, and to actively contribute to maintaining the community.

Many parallels can be drawn between the ideas underpinning responsive communitarianism and the theory of 'social capital' which also had a notable influence on politicians and policymakers during the period this thesis covers. A term

[132] P. Blond, *Red Tory: How Left and Right have Broken Britain and How we can Fix It*, (Faber and Faber, 2010); S. Hale, *Communitarian Influence? Amitai Etzioni and the Making of New Labour*, (George Washington University, 2005).
[133] M. Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 51.
[134] A. Etzioni (ed.), *New Communitarian Thinking,* (University Press Virginia, 1995), 25.
[135] S. Driver and L. Martell, 'New Labour's Communitarianisms', (1997) 17(3) *Critical Social Policy*, 29.
[136] M. Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan 2011), 51.
[137] S. Driver and L. Martell, 'New Labour's Communitarianisms', (1997) 17(3) *Critical Social Policy*, 29.
[138] A. Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities, and the Communitarian Agenda*, (Crown Publishers, 1993).

that can be traced back to the work of sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and James S. Coleman,[139] and which regained prominence in political science and practice through the work of Robert Putnam at the turn of the twenty-first century.[140] Putnam defines social capital as '*the collective value of all 'social networks' and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other*'.[141] In an earlier text he characterises social capital as:

> *…features of social life – networks, norms and trust – that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives… Social capital, in short, refers to social connections and the attendant norms and trust.*[142]

In Putnam's work, social capital is theorised to operate on three scales: 'bonding capital', 'bridging capital' and 'linking capital'.[143] 'Bonding capital' is evident when there are strong social ties between individuals, such as families or people of the same cultural background living nearby. This type of capital provides a support network for individuals, helping people navigate their day-to-day lives, enabling them to '*get b*y', as Kearns terms it.[144] 'Bridging capital' reflects more fragile ties between a range of groups such as friends and associates, which are seen as integral to a sense of social inclusion.[145] While 'linking capital' refers to vertical rather than horizontal connections, such as connections between social classes or the political elite and the public.[146] According to this theory, the stronger each strand of social capital is in a community, the more connected and resilient a community is. As is the case with communitarian thinking, 'reciprocity' also forms a big part of the social capital narrative, as Maloney et al. describe it, social capital is '*a resource that is drawn upon to facilitate collaborative activities*'.[147]

[139] For further discussion of the origins of social capital and the theoretical underpinnings of the concept see A. Hastings and P. Matthews, 'Bourdieu and the Big Society: Empowering the Powerful in Public Service Provision? ', (2015) *Policy and Politics, 545-560;* J.S. Coleman, 'Social Capital and the Creation of Human Capital', (1988) 94 *American Journal of Sociology*; S95-S120; A. Portes, 'Social Capital: It's Origins and Applications in Modern Society', (1998) 24 *Sociology,* 1-24.

[140] R.D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, (Princeton University Press, 1993); R.D, Putnam, 'The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life', (1993) 6 *Journal of Democracy*, 65-78; R.D. Putnam, 'The Strange Disappearance of Civic America', (1996) *American Prospect*, 34-48; R.D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, (Simon and Schuster, 2000).

[141] R.D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,* (Simon & Schuster, New York, 2000), 20, 135.

[142] R.D. Putnam, 'Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America', (1995) 28(4) *Political Science and Politics*, 664-665.

[143] Ibid, 664.

[144] A. Kearns, 'Social Capital, Regeneration and Urban Policy.' In R. Imrie and M. Raco (eds.) *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, Community and Urban Policy* (Policy Press, 2003), 37-60.

[145] T. Schuller, S. Baron and J. Field, 'Social Capital: A Review and Critique.' In S. Baron, J. Field and T. Schuller (eds.) *Social Capital*, (Oxford University Press, 2000), 1-38.

[146] A. Kearns, 'Social Capital, Regeneration and Urban Policy.' In R. Imrie and M. Raco (eds.) *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, Community and Urban Policy* (Policy Press, 2003), 37-60.

[147] W. Maloney, G. Smith and G. Stoker, 'Social Capital and Urban Governance: Adding a More Contextualised "Top-Down Perspective", (2000) 48 *Political Studies*, 823- 41.

Proponents of social capital have made connections between examples of strong social capital and improvements in a range of social and economic indicators, amongst them: reductions in crime;[148] improvements in indicators of health and wellbeing;[149] enhanced workplace productivity and improvements in economic performance;[150] increased educational attainment;[151] and upturns in the public perception of local political institutions.[152] It is also considered an essential component of a well-functioning liberal democracy[153] and has been said to have value as a tool for exploring power imbalances between citizens, governments and other institutions.[154] In an article published in the *Journal of Democracy* entitled '*Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital',* Putnam draws correlation between a reduction in social interactions - due to people leading increasingly individualistic and insular lifestyles - and declining political and civic engagement since the 1950s, citing examples of decreased voter turnout, a decline in public meeting attendance, declining membership in civic organisations, and growing distrust in government alongside other examples to emphasise this.[155] Putnam uses the pastime of ten-pin bowling as an example to illustrate this point; Putnam found that while there had been a considerable increase in the number of people taking up the pursuit individually in the USA, the number of people taking part in bowling leagues had declined. For Putnam this was symbolic of significant challenges for American society, presenting the argument that if people are not participating in activities or institutions that offer opportunities for social interaction and civic discussion, and instead pursuing solitary pastimes, it follows: that they are less likely to be politically engaged; they will lose valuable bonds and fellowship; and that stocks of social capital, which he argues are so important to social stability, will continue to decline. An argument very similar to that put forth by responsive communitarians and others cited above. Indeed, Putnam himself endorsed the work of communitarians for trying to invest communities with more of a '*moral purpose*'.[156] Putnam, therefore, makes links between the presence of social capital and the capacity for civic engagement, as norms of trust and democracy created through face-to-face association at home and in the community 'spill over' into society at large – creating, Putnam would argue, capacity and a desire for collective action and a government that is responsive to this.[157] The 'neighbourhood' is also cited as the scale at which to attempt to address

148 D. Halpern, 'Moral Values, Social Trust and Inequality: Can Values Explain Crime?' (2001) 41(2) *British Journal of Criminology,* 236-251; S. Aldridge, D. Halpern, and S. Fitzpatrick, *Social Capital: A Discussion Paper*, (Performance and Innovation Unit, 2002).

149 M. Coulthard, A. Walker, and A. Morgan, *Assessing People's Perceptions of their Neighbourhood and Community Involvement* (Part 1) (Health Development Agency, 2001); S. Subramanian, V. Kimberly, A. Lochner and I. Kawachi, 'Neighborhood Differences in Social Capital: A Compositional Artefact or a Contextual Construct?', (2003) 9 *Health & Place*, 33-44; I. Kawachi, B.P. Kennedy and R. Glass, 'Social Capital and Self-rated Health: A Contextual Analysis', (1999) 89 *American Journal of Public Health*, 1187-1193.

150 S. Aldridge, D. Halpern, and S. Fitzpatrick, *Social Capital: A Discussion Paper*, (Performance and Innovation Unit, 2002).

151 G. Israel, L. Beaulieu and G. Hartless, 'The Influence of Family and Community Social Capital on Educational Achievement', (2001) 66 *Rural Sociology*, 43-68.

152 S. Aldridge, D. Halpern, and S. Fitzpatrick, *Social Capital: A Discussion Paper*, (Performance and Innovation Unit, 2002); R.D. Putnam, 'The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life', (1993) 6 *Journal of Democracy*, 35-42.

153 F. Fukuyama, 'Social Capital, Civil Society and Development', (2001) 22 *Third World Quarterly*, 7-20.

154 L. Kenworthy, 'Civic Engagement, Social Capital, and Economic Cooperation.' (1997) 40 *American Behavioral Scientist*, 645-656.

155 R. D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, (Simon and Schuster, 2000).

156 R. D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,* (Simon and Schuster, 2000), 403.

157 M. Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 53; R. D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,* (Simon and Schuster, 2000).

declining social with Putnam and Feldstein stating '*social capital is necessarily a local phenomenon*' and is generally formed '*through local personal contact*.'[158]

Peter Hall's essay for the think tank Demos, cited by Marilyn Taylor, neatly encapsulates why the concept of social capital, and it is submitted communitarianism, are so likely to appeal to government:

> *Formal and informal networks constitute a kind of 'social capital', with members more likely to participate in politics and more able to use their social connections to improve their own lives and their community. An organised citizenry can alleviate many social problems and ease the implementation of various kinds of public policy, for instance, by using neighbourhood watch groups to minimise crime. As a result, nations as a whole lose a resource when the ties between individuals erode.* [159]

A further part of the communitarian doctrine is the balance to be struck in the relationships between the individual and the state and the community and the state.[160] Sitting somewhere between a neoliberalist view of society that has sought to promote the role of the market in providing social care, and a libertarian stance that calls for a complete transfer of power, communitarians see a thriving civic society as equally as important as a healthy economy and a strong constitution and laws, in achieving a fully functioning society.[161] Opposed to "big government", a bureaucratised and professionalised welfare system, and an over-centralised justice system, communitarians favour devolved services to communities themselves or to the layers of government closest to them.[162] Where possible a localised approach to promoting and maintaining social welfare is preferred, freeing the state to tackle issues of national and international importance that fall outside the capacity of the individual or the community, for unnecessary or excessive state intervention is seen to weaken the capacity of the community. The aspiration of communitarians, as Henry Tam sees it, is for '*inclusive communities*' to thrive that '*...are to be distinguished from other forms of community by their operative power relations, which enable all their members to participate in collective processes affecting their lives'*.[163]

158 R.D. Putnam, and L.M. Feldstein, *Better Together: Restoring the American Community,* (Simon and Schuster, 2003), 9.

159 P.A. Hall (1997) 'Social Capital: A Fragile Asset, *DEMOS Collection 12*, 35. cited in M. Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 51.

160 D. Sage, 'A Challenge to Liberalism? The Communitarianism of the Big Society and Blue Labour', (2012) 32(3) *Critical Social Policy*, 365-382; G. Calder, 'Communitarianism and New Labour', (2004) 2(1) *Social Issues* (Online) Available at: < http://www.whb.co.uk/socialissues/vol2gc.htm> Last accessed: 22nd July 2018; N.R. Fyfe, 'Making Space for "Neo-communitarianism"? The Third Sector, State and Civil Society in the UK', (2005) *Antipode*, 536-557.

161 A. Etzioni, The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities and the Communitarian Agenda, (Crown, 1993); A. Etzioni, (ed.), New Communitarian Thinking, (University Press Virginia, 1995); S. Hale, Communitarian Influence? Amitai Etzioni and the Making of New Labour, (George Washington University, 2005).

162 Ibid, also see P. Blond, *Red Tory: How Left and Right have Broken Britain and How we can Fix It*, (Faber and Faber, 2010).

163 H. Tam, *Communitarianism*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 8.

The Responsive Communitarian Platform established by Etzioni and contemporaries presents the communitarian position on the role of government within this school of thought:

> *Many social goals ... require a partnership between public and private groups. Though government should not seek to replace local communities, it may need to empower them by strategies of support, including revenue-sharing and technical assistance. There is a great need for study and experimentation with creative use of the structures of civil society, and public-private cooperation, especially where the delivery of health, educational and social services are concerned.*[164]

A communitarian government then is seen as one that favours strong democracy, is responsive to the needs of citizens' communities, and that actively encourages their participation. In such a model government is cast as an enabler, not to exercise over-excessive control, rather ensuring there is equal opportunity for all citizens to express their needs and putting in place arrangements and support structures to enable social services to be delivered by community or non-profit and charitable organisations. In line with this, a more significant role is given to faith-groups, local voluntary and community services and increased partnership between government and third sector organisations is actively pursued: [165] A stance that very much aligned to New Labour's view of Third Way politics that promoted civic engagement and the devolution of power from central government as central themes, and that espoused a message of rebalancing the relationship between the public and the state that was based on appreciation of 'rights and responsibilities' to one another.[166] The following section moves on to explore this influence further.

2.7 Rights, responsibilities, and the 'turn to community' under New Labour and the Coalition

It is submitted that the social capital and communitarian discourses discussed above made a significant contribution to government debate and thinking about a range of social issues and the role of civil society between the period 1997 and 2015.[167] There was a strong communitarian influence in the reshaping of the Labour Party to New Labour under Tony Blair's leadership, and there are similarities in communitarian principles and Third Way politics promoted in both the US

[164] The Responsive Communitarian Platform, *Civic Society,* Website (Online) Available at: <https://communitariannetwork.org/civil-society> Last accessed: 26th September 2019.
[165] Ibid.
[166] A. Giddens*, The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, (Polity Press, 1998); T. Blair, *The Third Way: New Politics for a New Century*, (Fabian Society, 1999).
[167] A. Frane and B. Roncevic, 'Social Capital: Recent Debates and Research Trends', (2003) 42 *Social Science Information*, 177.

and the UK over the period this thesis covers.[168] Similarly, the language and theory of social capital featured prominently in the policies and rhetoric of New Labour,[169] with Ade Kearns noting Tony Blair and Gordon Brown both took advice from Putnam and other social capital advocates during their time in office.[170] Comparisons have also been made with the 'compassionate conservatism' school of thought that influenced David Cameron's Big Society policies and that formed part of George W. Bush's 2000 election campaign.[171] All of which were accompanied by a range of policies that championed volunteerism, sought to promote and 'build' community, increase participation, and that placed greater emphasis on supporting and protecting families.

Between 1997 and 2015 a whole raft of strategies were launched by central government drawing heavily on this language and the theories discussed above, targeted at what were categorised as 'deprived neighbourhoods'.[172] Launched alongside these policies were a number of new initiatives that emphasised community participation and influence over local regeneration decisions which were introduced in the opening chapter. The common thread connecting these policies and the accompanying programmes was that communities could and should do more to influence local decision-making, and that government had a role to play in 'activating citizens' - creating the opportunities and conditions for them to take part. In doing so, these proposals draw parallels with the work of Etzioni, Putnam and others discussed above, both in the language used and the approaches to delivery they set out.[173] In a speech early into his premiership Tony Blair shared sentiments closely aligned to the communitarian school of thought, highlighting differences between his party and the preceding Conservative government which had seen Margaret Thatcher famously declare there is '*no such thing as society*', but also previous Labour governments which had heavily resourced 'the welfare state', by stating:

168 G. Calder, 'Communitarianism and New Labour', (2004) 2(1) *Social Issues* (Online) Available at: <http://www.whb.co.uk/socialissues/vol2gc.htm> Last accessed: 22nd July 2018; S. Driver and L. Martell, 'New Labour's Communitarianisms', (1997) 17(3) *Critical Social Policy*, 27-46; S. Hale, *Communitarian Influence? Amitai Etzioni and the Making of New Labour*, (George Washington University, 2005).

169 A. Kearns, 'Social Capital, Regeneration and Urban Policy', in R. Imrie and M. Raco (eds.), *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, Community and Urban Policy* (Policy Press, 2003), 37-60; L. Bryson and M. Mowbray, 'More Spray-on Solution: Community, Social Capital and Evidence Based Policy', (2005) 40(1) *Australian Journal of Social Issues,* 91-106.

170 A. Kearns, 'Social Capital, Regeneration and Urban Policy.' In R. Imrie and M. Raco (eds.) *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, Community and Urban Policy* (Policy Press, 2003). Pp.37-60.

171 P. Dorey, 'A New Direction or Another False Dawn? David Cameron and the Crisis of British Conservatism', (2007) 2(2) *British Politics,* 137-166; A. Wolfson, 'Conservatives and Neoconservatives', (2004) 154 *Public Interest,* 32-48.

172 These included: DETR, *Involving Communities in Urban and Rural Regeneration: A Guide for Practitioners*, (DETR, 1997); *Social Exclusion Unit, Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, Cmnd 4045, (The Stationery Office, 1998); ODPM, *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future*, (HMSO, 2003); HM Government, *Together We Can: People and Government Working Together to Create a Better Life*, (Home Office/Civil Renewal Unit, 2005); DCLG, *Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power, White Paper, (DCLG, 2008); DCLG, Transforming Places Changing Lives- Taking Forward the Regeneration Framework*, (DCLG, 2009); DCLG, *Regeneration to Enable Growth: What the Government Is Doing in Support of Community-Led Regeneration*, (DCLG, 2010); Cabinet Office, *Social Action: Harnessing the Potential*, (Cabinet Office, 2015).

173 See: A. Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community. Rights, Responsibilities and the Communitarian Agenda*, (Crown, 1993) and R.D Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,* (Simon and Schuster, 2000); D. Sage, 'A Challenge to Liberalism? The Communitarianism of the Big Society and Blue Labour', (2012) *32 Critical Social Policy,* 365.

> *In the 1950s and the 1960s, the big question in politics was: what can the state achieve? In the 1970s and 1980s, the big question was: what can the individual achieve? Neither of these questions is right for the new century. Today the question we must answer is: what can society achieve, not the state on its own, not individuals on their own, but all of us together in a community, where opportunity for all is matched by responsibility for all.*[174]

This quote reiterates a distinguishing point about communitarianism: the communitarian thesis is not one of charity, of those that can, supporting others. It is very much centred on collective responsibility - a 'responsibility for all' - with the state as an enabler rather than solely a provider. A year later Tony Blair reiterated this message, stating that:

> *We all depend on collective goods for our independence, and all our lives are enriched - or impoverished - by the communities to which we belong … a key challenge of progressive politics is to use the state as an enabling force, protecting effective communities and voluntary organisations and encouraging their growth to tackle new needs, in partnership as appropriate.*[175]

This was not only a message Tony Blair relayed in speeches but also one he had seen written into the Labour Party constitution in 1995, soon after becoming party leader, amending Clause IV of the constitution to read:

> *The Labour Party is a democratic socialist party. It believes that by the strength of our common endeavour we achieve more than we achieve alone, so as to create for each of us the means to realise our true potential and for all of us a community in which power, wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many, not the few, where the rights we enjoy reflect the duties we owe, and where we live together, freely, in a spirit of solidarity, tolerance and respect.*[176]

The language used here and in similar speeches and editorials around the time echo those of Etzioni who himself shared the sentiment that '*rights entail responsibilities*' and that individuals have a responsibility to look after each other as active, responsible citizens.[177] A similar vision underpinned David Cameron's approach to government. Using his inaugural speech as Conservative party leader to set out a similar relationship between citizens and the state:

[174] Speech given by Prime Minister, Tony Blair, Southampton 1997, cited in N. Cohen, 'The Birth of Blameron', 8th August (2005) *NewStatesman*. (Online) Available at: <http://www.newstatesman.com/node/195361> Last accessed: 24th April 2019.
[175] T. Blair, *The Third Way: New Politics for the New Century*, (The Fabian Society, 1998), 4.
[176] I. Adams, *Ideology and Politics in Britain Today*, (Manchester University Press, 1998), 144–145. (emphasis added).
[177] A. Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities, and the Communitarian Agenda*, (Crown Publishers, 1993), 144-145.

> *…we can mend our broken society. I want to develop my idea for a national school leaver programme, that says to young people, let's do something, that is about public service, about building self-esteem, self-respect, for the good of our country and the good of our communities. There is such a thing as society; it's just not the same thing as the state. I don't believe that Labour can meet these challenges, they are yesterday's men, with yesterday's measures. I want us to sweep away their command and control state, the quangos, the bureaucracy, the regional government, which is not bringing real change in our country. I want us to be the party that meet those big challenges, but we have to change in order for people to trust us.*[178]

As both Ellison[179] and Norman[180] note, the 'Big Society' ideology which formed such a big part of David Cameron's election campaign and the social policy rhetoric of the early years of the Coalition also took inspiration from the theoretical work of eighteenth-century parliamentarian Edmund Burke, who like the theorists discussed above, wrote of the importance of associational life in the flourishing of people:

> *To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love of our country and to mankind.*[181]

The little platoons Burke refers to in his text *Reflections on the Revolution in France* being family, church and the local community. Burke praises the role these local institutions play in shaping 'the individual' and embedding in them a way of living that embraces collectivism and respect of religion and hierarchy, an approach to life that, according to Burke, breeds stability and allows civilisation to thrive.[182] So influential was Burke's work that he was referenced by name in a speech by Cameron announcing plans for the Big Society.[183] Again there are obvious comparisons here between the importance placed on the 'small platoons' of Burke and Tönnies theory of Gemeinschaft, as well as Durkheim's views on civil society, and the communitarian views of Etzioni and Putnam who all placed similar importance on community anchors like the family and local institutions, messages very much at the heart of the Big Society rhetoric. Of course there could be some duplicity in this view, given that much of the talk around the 'Big Society' was accompanied by talk of

178 BBC News Website, *In Full: Cameron Victory Speech,* 6th December 2005, (Online) Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4504722.stm> Last accessed: 26th September 2019.

179 N. Ellison, 'The Conservative Party and the 'Big Society', in C. Holden, M. Kilkey, and G. Ramia (eds.), *Social Policy Review 23: Analysis and Debate in Social Policy*, (The Policy Press, 2011), 48.

180 J. Norman, *The Big Society: The Anatomy of the New Politics,* (The University of Buckingham Press, 2010).

181 E. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France,* (first published 1790) (Liberty Fund, 1999).

182 Ibid.

183 D. Cameron, (speech): *Speech on the Big Society,* 23 May 2011 (Online) Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/speech-on-the-big-society Last accessed: 13th April 2016. In this speech Cameron also cites the work of Hegel, Tocqueville, Hayet and Oakeshott and their recognition of the role tradition, community, family and faith play alongside the State.

empowerment of communities and government interfering less in people's lives, while Burke's philosophy was underpinned by a far more paternalistic view of government and a firm belief that the hierarchical society of eighteenth-century Britain was to be maintained and supported to avoid disrupting social order.

Others question the sincerity and practicalities of government's 'turn to community' over the last twenty or so years, questioning whether programmes to devolve more responsibilities to the community level represent a genuine attempt to empower and mobilise communities, or more cynically, to quote Bryon and Mowbray they represent a concerted attempt to '*operationalise community involvement*' – with levels of participation and numbers of participants becoming a metric by which to measure success.[184] With this in mind, this chapter now moves on to consider the limitations of communitarian and social capital theory and to explore some alternative perspectives on the motivations underpinning government's increasingly localist stance.

2.8 Can community deliver? – Limitations and contradictions

Despite the apparent appeal to the government, there are many that have urged caution or cast doubt over the validity of policies and programmes that have sought to generate social capital or instil communitarian practices. For some critics of social capital, it is a '*metaphor that misleads.*'[185] For example, following a review of literature available at the time Haynes concludes the term is problematic as it is neither 'capital' or particularly 'social'.[186] A view shared by Claridge, amongst others, who argue that social capital does not meet established definitions of capital (relating to the accumulation of money and assets) and that attempts to rebadge 'capital' as 'social' are '*both unnecessary and inappropriate'*.[187] Kenneth Arrow, writing in a World Bank publication dedicated to exploring the potential and complexities of social capital theory states that any form of capital should demonstrate three aspects: '(a) *extension in time*; (b) *deliberative sacrifice in the present for future benefit*; and (c) *alienability* (i.e. it can be transferred from one person to another).'[188] Arrow argues that while the building of 'trust' – important in social capital theory – can to some extent satisfy the first, the concept of social capital lacks the other elements and therefore cannot be considered a genuine example of capital, therefore finding no reason for

[184] L. Bryson and M. Mowbray, 'More Spray-on Solution: Community, Social Capital and Evidence Based Policy, (2005) 40(1) *Australian Journal of Social Issues,* 91-106.

[185] C. Fischer, 'Bowling Alone: What's the Score?' (2005) 27(2) *Social Networks*, 157.

[186] P. Haynes, 'Before Going any Further with Social Capital: Eight Key Criticisms to Address', 2009 *INGENIO (CSIC-UPV) Working Paper Series 2009/02*. (Online) Available at: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/36025661.pdf. Last accessed: 10th August 2019.

[187] T. Claridge, 'Criticisms of Social Capital Theory: And Lessons for Improving Practice', (2018) 20 *Social Capital Research* 20, 4. (Online) Available at: <https://d1fs2th61pidml.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Criticisms-of-social-capital-theory.pdf?x83909> Last accessed: 10th August 2019; M. Mayer., 'The Onward Sweep of Social Capital: Causes and Consequences for Understanding Cities, Communities and Urban Movements. (2003) 27(1) *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 110–132.

[188] K.L. Arrow, 'Observations on Social Capital', in P. Dasgupta and I. Serageldin, (eds.) *Social Capital: A Multifaceted Perspective,* (World Bank, 1999), 3.

'*adding something called 'social capital' to other forms of capital*'.[189] Arrow goes as far as urging the '*abandonment of the metaphor of capital and the term 'social capital.*'[190] James Coleman, one of the main proponents of social capital in its 1990s revival rejects this position, arguing it is the fourth and previously neglected form of capital in the production process, alongside financial, physical and human capital.[191]

Similar critiques are levelled at the 'social' aspect of the metaphor with Haynes noting that '*many conceptualisations of social capital simplify, reduce, and abstract the concept to the extent that it almost ceases to be social*.'[192] The concern here being that attempts to quantify how connected or supported an individual is - feelings which by their nature are typically abstract, and influenced by much wider complex systems - with economic terminology and theory which is by necessity precise, can be reductionist for sociologists and economists alike, leading to a focus on individual actions and beliefs at the expense of exploring wider social challenges and determinants.[193] Indeed, there is not a consistent theoretical approach to measuring social capital and it is not something that is easily quantifiable, for this reason, Aldridge et al. urge caution because of the '*misspecification or ambiguity of equations or models used to estimate its impact*'.[194] In a similar vein, Brent warns '*community is not a simple concept and is dangerous if it is simplified'*.[195] These assertions lead Claude Fischer to argue that the term 'social capital' is '*unnecessary'*, and that terms such as 'membership', 'trust' and 'sociability' or 'ties and associations' are sufficient.[196] In a similar vein, others have also argued that the term 'social capital' is not a new concept, and rather a rebranding of a number of pre-existing theories around the roles 'trust', 'community', 'reciprocity' and social connectedness play in society.[197]

Yet despite the above, the notion of 'social capital' continues to resonate with both policymakers and academics, the term is used frequently in the most recent government Civil Society Strategy published in 2018, and a search of any scholarly database will return thousands of articles published in the last five years that explore the concept, across a wide range of

189 K.L. Arrow, 'Observations on Social Capital', in P. Dasgupta and I. Serageldin, (eds.) *Social Capital: A Multifaceted Perspective,* (World Bank, 1999), 4.

190 Ibid, 4. Also cited in P. Haynes, 'Before Going Any Further with Social Capital: Eight Key Criticisms to Address', 2009 *INGENIO (CSIC-UPV) Working Paper Series 2009/02*. Available at: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/36025661.pdf. (Last accessed 10th August 2019).

191 J. Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory,* (Harvard University Press, 1990) cited in M. Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 53.

192 P. Haynes, 'Before Going Any Further with Social Capital: Eight Key Criticisms to Address', 2009 INGENIO (CSIC-UPV) Working Paper Series 2009/02. Available at: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/36025661.pdf. (Last accessed 10th August 2019).

193 T. Claridge, 'Criticisms of Social Capital Theory: And Lessons for Improving Practice', (2018) 20 *Social Capital Research* 20, 4. (Online) Available at: <https://d1fs2th61pidml.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Criticisms-of-social-capital-theory.pdf?x83909> (Last accessed 10th August 2019): M. Mayer, 'The Onward Sweep of Social Capital: Causes and Consequences for Understanding Cities, Communities and Urban Movements', (2003) 27(1) *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 110–132.

194 S. Aldridge, D. Halpern, and S. Fitzpatrick, *Social Capital: A Discussion Paper*, (Performance and Innovation Unit, 2002), 7.

195 J. Brent, *Searching for Community: Representation, Power and Action on an Urban Housing Estate*, (Polity Press, 2009), 261.

196 C.S. Fischer, 'Bowling Alone: What's the Score?', (2005) 27(2) *Social Networks*, 157.

197 A. Portes, 'Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Society', (1998) 24 *Annual Review of Sociology,* 1-24.

disciplines.[198] Indeed, there are multiple examples within the literature of studies that have attempted to capture the strength and flow of the various forms of social capital with varying results. Some have claimed to substantiate Putnam's findings, for example, Collins et al drew on participant data from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Making Connections Initiative*[199] to demonstrate positive correlation between citizen participation and increased '*collective efficacy'*,[200] with participants reporting higher levels of bonding capital being more likely to be engaged in civic activities and expressing stronger beliefs that their community can act together to achieve change.[201] Mary Ohmer's work in four Pittsburgh neighbourhoods demonstrated similar linkages,[202] while Grillo et al., drawing on survey data from twenty-two US cities found connections between an individual's satisfaction with their community and the likelihood that they will be civically engaged.[203]

Relatedly, Brehm and Rahn's empirical research drawing on national *US General Social Survey data* supported Putnam's argument that providing opportunities for civic engagement is not only conducive, '*but necessary*' to generate bonding capital.[204] However, others question the validity of such findings, Claibourn and Martin, for example, argue that Brehm and Rahn's results were '*overstated*.' Running their own research based on *Michigan Socialization Study* data gathered over an eighteen-year period, Claibourn and Martin were only able to demonstrate tenuous links between how engaged someone was civically and the extent to which they expressed feelings of trust towards their fellow citizens, leading them to conclude that:

[198] The 2018 Civil Society Strategy entitled '*Building a Future that Works for Everyone'*, states that: '*The burning injustices our country faces are complex, inter-related issues beyond the control of any one agency in the public, private or social sector. In response, we need more than a series of individual programmes to 'fix' individual challenges. The government believes that social value – enriched lives and social justice – flows from thriving communities. These are communities with a sufficient stock of financial, physical, natural, and social capital, in other words resources including public funding, private investment, buildings, and spaces for community use, as well as trust, connectedness, and goodwill.'* This strategy falls outside of the scope of this study, but it is interesting to see similar rhetoric of partnership, 'trust' and 'social capital' continue, as well as reference to the need for 'goodwill' (the strategy is less clear about when or by whom this goodwill is to be exercised). See: HM Government, *Civil Society Strategy: Building a Future that Works for Everyone,* (Cabinet Office, 2018), 19.

[199] Initiated in 1999, the *Making Connections Initiative* was a 10-year 'neighbourhood revitalization' programme funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in the US, which involved a network of sites across 22 US cities. In this program, the Foundation worked in coordination with local partners in an attempt to bring together residents, community leaders, businesses, government officials, community groups, and anchor institutions (such as schools and faith communities) to enhance the effectiveness of local 'neighbourhood revitalization' efforts. For more information see: The Annie E. Casey Foundation Website, *Making Connections,* (Online) Available at: <https://www.aecf.org/work/past-work/making-connections/> Last accessed: 26th September 2019.

[200] 'Collective efficacy' is defined by Browning et al. as '*mutual trust and solidarity, combined with expectations of pro-social action' see* C.R. Browning, R.D. Dietz and S.L. Feinberg, 'The Paradox of Social Organization: Networks, Collective Efficacy, and Violent Crime in Urban Neighbourhoods', (2004) 83(2) *Social Forces,* 503.

[201] C.R. Collins, J.W. Neal and Z.P. Neal, 'Transforming Individual Civic Engagement into Community Collective Efficacy: The Role of Bonding Social Capital', (2014) 54(3-4) *American Journal of Community Psychology,* 328–336.

[202] M.L. Ohmer, 'Citizen Participation in Neighborhood Organizations and its Relationship to Volunteers' Self and Collective Efficacy and Sense of Community', (2007) 31(2) *Social Work Research,* 109–120; P.W. Speer and J. Hughey, 'Community Organizing: An Ecological Route to Empowerment and Power', (1995) 23(5) *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 729–748.

[203] M.C. Grillo, M.A. Teixeiram and D.C. Wilson, 'Residential Satisfaction and Civic Engagement: Understanding the Causes of Community Participation', (2010) 97(3) *Social Indicators Research,* 451-466.

[204] J. Brehm and W. Rahn, 'Individual-level Evidence for the Causes and Consequences of Social Capital', (1997) 41(3) *American Journal of Political Science*, 999–1023.

> *…ultimately, for such an important theory, and one that is being promoted as public policy, we would expect the relationship between trusting and joining to be clear and robust and not unduly reliant on a particular data set or a particular model specification …the results of these analyses indicate the need to move beyond a generalised expectation of the relationship between voluntary associations and interpersonal trust*. [205]

Indeed, a key criticism of those who challenge Putnam's work linking social capital to local participation is around the robustness of the evidence Putnam draws upon to suggest causation. The sources Putnam drew on were vast, with an apparent team of fifty researchers contributing over several years to *Bowling Alone*[206] - leading some to question the robustness and controls put in place when bringing this data together.[207] While others have raised concerns about Putnam's use of what he himself refers to as '*stylised generalisations*' in his work, presenting figures such as '*each employed person in one's social network increases one's annual income by US$1,400'*.[208] That there are so many raising concerns is significant because of the degree to which Putnam's arguments have been drawn upon to inform 'evidence-based policy'.[209] Claude Fischer, for example, also attempted to replicate Putnam's work using the same indicators from the US General Social Survey (albeit on a smaller scale) and did not find the same correlations. Taking seven presumed indicators: 'trusting most people', 'voting', 'church attendance', 'belonging to organisations', 'socialising with neighbours', 'socialising with friends outside the neighbourhood', and 'giving money to charity' – Fischer looked for correlations between whether respondents who reported doing one tended to also report doing others, coming the conclusion that the answer was '*not really'*. The strongest association he identified was between church attendance and reported membership in organisations, but even this was not a strong correlation, leading him to observe that '*if one used such items to create a 'social capital' scale for individuals, it would be a very poor one by typical standard*.'[210] Relatedly, Haynes argues that social capital interpreted as the '*right kind of connectivity*' can be a form of '*hindsight bias or confirmation bias even when it seems to be a cogent explanation'*.[211]

[205] M.P. Claibourn and P.S. Martin, 'Trusting and Joining? An Empirical Test of the Reciprocal Nature of Social Capital', (2000) 22(4) *Political Behavior, 22*(4), 282.

[206] See L. Bryson and M. Mowbray, 'More Spray-on Solution: Community, Social Capital and Evidence Based Policy, (2005) 40(1) *Australian Journal of Social Issues,* 91-106.

[207] L. Bryson, and M. Mowbray, 'More Spray-on Solution: Community, Social Capital and Evidence Based Policy, (2005) 40(1) *Australian Journal of Social Issues,* 91-106; C. Muntaner and J. Lynch, 'Social Capital, Class Gender and Race conflict, and Population Health: An Essay Review of *Bowling Alone*'s Implications for Social Epidemiology, (2002) 31(1) *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 261–267; M. Margit, 'The Onward Sweep of Social Capital: Causes and Consequences for Understanding Cities, Communities and Urban Movements', (2003) 27(1) *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 110-32.

[208] R.D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, (Simon and Schuster, 2000), 322.

[209] G. Mulgan, 'Government, Knowledge and the Business of Policy Making: the Potential and Limits of Evidence-Based Policy', (2005) 1(2) *Evidence & Policy: A Journal of Research, Debate and Practice,* 215-226.

[210] C.S. Fischer, 'Bowling Alone: What's the Score?', (2005) 27(2) *Social Networks*, 165.

[211] L. Bryson and M. Mowbray, 'More Spray-on Solution: Community, Social Capital and Evidence Based Policy, (2005) 40(1) *Australian Journal of Social Issues,* 91-106.

Bryson and Mowbray argue that this lack of rigour may be part of the appeal for governments keen to deploy initiatives to boost social capital, arguing that:

> *For governments, 'evidence' that points to enhancing social capital as the way to go, suggests efficacious social outcomes can be achieved cheaply, by encouraging social interaction at the local level, and by relying on the proven communitarian themes.*[212]

Encouraging people to come together to do more for their communities is an easy message for a government to promote, and a low-cost one. Indeed, where it works, the hope is this leads to cost savings with local people taking on voluntary roles that the state may have otherwise had to provide for. With no established measurement framework, surveys of participants reporting that they had made new connections or accessed new spaces to meet can be held up as policy successes that have created 'vital' forms of social capital within areas, accompanied with case studies demonstrating the latest ideology in action. If it does not work, then the answer must be to 'build capacity' of those living and working in an area, disregarding broader factors that may influence or inhibit an initiative's success, and limiting the extent to which government can be held to account. For example, Kirkby-Geddes et al. conducted qualitative interviews and focus groups with users of a Healthy Living Centre (HLC) in the North of England to examine the utility of the concept of social capital in relation to public participation and health.[213] Through their work they found some linkages to support Putnam's theories: participants had been reporting declining bridging capital due to the closure of social spaces and the decline of the High Street in their area, and discussed the positive role the HLC had played in improving their lives through the opportunities it presented to join new groups and meet new people – examples of bonding capital. In many ways, the Healthy Living Centre typified the types of initiatives the Coalition hoped to see thrive under the Big Society, with local people running local services (although HLCs received considerable funding in their early years), tailored to the needs of the community, and local people responding positively. Nevertheless, the researcher's highlight that taken as a whole, the data showed '*subtle, complex, contradictory and often ambivalent attitudes to community participation and individual experiences of group participation*'.[214] Through interviews and focus groups, what the researchers also

[212] P. Haynes, 'Before Going Any Further with Social Capital: Eight Key Criticisms to Address', (2009) *INGENIO (CSIC-UPV) Working Paper Series 2009/02*. (Online) Available at: <*https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/36025661.pdf*> Last Accessed: 10th August 2019.

[213] Healthy Living Centres were seen as important part of the New Labour Government's health programme, increasing access to health advice and treatment in some of the most deprived parts of the country. 350 Centres were rolled out across the UK in response to the 1999 White Paper on public health 'Our Healthier Nation'. Typically initiated as a five-year project, HLCs sought to encourage improved physical and psychological health, alongside 'social functioning' amongst the local community. The function of HLCs was to respond to the health needs of the local community but would likely offer treatments and therapies that would complement NHS provision, Kirkby-Geddes et al. cite podiatry and physiotherapy, alongside healthy living classes such as exercise classes and healthy eating courses. Healthy Living Centres typically had an outreach remit as well, attempting to connect with 'hard to reach' groups who might not typically engage with mainstream health services. See: Department of Health, *Our Healthier Nation,* (Department of Health, 1999).

[214] E. Kirkby-Geddes, N. King and A. Bravington, 'Social Capital and Community Group Participation: Examining 'Bridging' and 'Bonding' in the Context of a Healthy Living Centre in the UK', (2013) 23(4) *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology,* 271–285.

found – and something that was discussed far more frequently - was the value participants placed on staff running the Centre and leading activities, and the value they placed on having a physical place to meet at a time when so many community assets were closing down. The researchers also highlighted the considerable work staff and facilitators had to do to build and maintain group dynamics within the Centre, encouraging participants to moderate their behaviours and providing a structure through which users of the Centre could access services.[215] Another reading would be that the increased ties between participants were a by-product, rather than a driver of the success of the programme. Relatedly, in another American study, Costa and Kahn explored trends and changes in indicators of social capital (e.g. volunteering numbers, membership rates, etc.) over a fifty-year period, attempting to place these alongside wider societal developments. They found that there had been small declines in the probability of individual volunteering over those fifty years, and corroborated Putnam's findings that group membership had declined since the 1970s. Yet, they also offered some context to this, while Putnam cited the effects of television, distrust in government following political scandals, and increased individualistic tendencies as some of the reasons 'stocks' of social capital were declining, Costa and Kahn also identified trends in income inequality, and more women entering the labour force as alternative explanations for reductions in the amount of time people had to socialise with their neighbours or volunteer.[216]

Context then is extremely important, not only in relation to social capital but in any initiative or ideology that seeks to work with and transform a place or neighbourhood. There is a raft of literature which argues that previous area-based initiatives have failed to deliver on their objectives because of a failure to acknowledge local context or address structural causes of poverty and social isolation, or often both.[217] Policy and programmes do not take place in a vacuum, and as subsequent chapters will explore changes to the economic and political context, both nationally and at the local level, will have a considerable impact on how people act and how they view their role within society. Often factors contributing to the disadvantage of a particular neighbourhood or group lie outside of their area.[218] As several contributors to Imrie and Raco's collection on regeneration, community, and urban policy under New Labour discuss: to succeed local action needs to connect with regional and national policy.[219] The extent to which this was achieved under New Labour and the Coalition is considered in chapters five and six.

[215] E. Kirkby-Geddes, N. King and A. Bravington, 'Social Capital and Community Group Participation: Examining 'Bridging' and 'Bonding' in the Context of a Healthy Living Centre in the UK', (2013) 23(4) *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology,* 271–285.

[216] D. Costa and M. Kahn, 'Understanding the Decline in American Social Capital, 1953–1998', (2003) 56(1) *Kyklos*, 17–46.

[217] P. Alcock, 'Maximum Feasible Understanding' – Lessons from Previous Wars on Poverty', (2005) 4(3) *Social Policy and Society*, 321-329; T. Burns and P. Brown, *Final Report: Lessons From a National Scan of Comprehensive Place Based Philanthropic Initiatives*, (Urban Ventures Group, 2012) (Online) Available at: <http://www.heinz.org/UserFiles/File/PlaceBased/UrbanVentures_final-report.pdf> Last accessed: 27th September 2019; M. Taylor, E. Buckly and C. Hennessey, *Historical Review of Place Based Approaches*, (Lankelly Chase, 2017), 52. (Online) Available at: <https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf> Last accessed: 25th September 2019.

[218] D. Baker, S. Barrow and C. Shiels, 'How Effective are Area-based Regeneration Initiatives in Targeting Socially Excluded Individuals?', (2009) 2(4) *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 351-363.

[219] R. Imrie and M. Raco (eds.), *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, Community and Urban Policy*, (Policy Press, 2003).

Communities are complex ecosystems, shaped by a wide variety of norms, practices and actors. Positive correlations between voter turnout, membership in clubs and associations, and trust in one's neighbours can be positive indicators of a healthy community and/or functioning local democracy, but they alone are not enough to paint a whole picture of a place. A wide range of factors will contribute to how included, connected or safe an individual or group may feel: race, age, gender, ethnicity, and class will all contribute to an individual's sense of self and place – the complexities of which are difficult to capture in a single unified theory, such as social capital.[220] Context shapes the way people view their neighbourhood and their role within it, as demonstrated by Campbell and Gillies' work on citizen perceptions of community life and health in a small town in the South East of England: Concerned that too much debate about social capital had been conducted in a 'top-down' manner by academics and politicians, they sought to explore whether Putnam's notion of cohesive communities characterised by common shared identities and generalised norms of trust and reciprocity, resonated with those living in the communities these ideas typically refer (or allude) to. Through interviews with thirty-seven residents from across two 'wards' they concluded that social capital theory '*fail*[s] *to capture the fluidity of local community norms and networks in a rapidly changing society*' and critiqued those deploying strategies to 'generate' social capital for not giving sufficient attention to the role '*social distinctions—such as age, gender, ethnicity and housing tenure—shape and constrain the way in which people create, sustain and access social capital'*.[221] Their findings suggested that for most participants feelings of trust and reciprocity were reserved for much smaller networks of personal acquaintances, '*located strictly within small face-to-face groups of people well known to one another*, [which] *did not extend to community members outside of peoples' personal acquaintance'*.[222]

This chapter has used extracts from government strategies and speeches to demonstrate the particular vision government had for deprived communities in England, one where community members look to one another for support and safety, as opposed to reliance on the state. Such a view, however, assumes equitable access to knowledge, resources and opportunities, the potential within communities just needed to be 'unlocked', 'enabled' or 'freed' from government control. However, a large body of work questions the efficacy of this viewpoint. Brehm and Rahn for example, argue that creating opportunities for people to participate, through neighbourhood boards, consultations, or voluntary activities etc., does not necessarily mean people will participate. They identified a whole host of factors that may contribute to a person's inability

[220] C. Hauser, G. Tappeiner and J. Walde, 'The Learning Region: The Impact of Social Capital and Weak Ties on Innovation', (2007) 41(1) *Regional Studies*, 75–88; G. Delanty, *Community*, (Routledge, 2003); J. DeFilippis, R. Fisher and E. Shragge, *Contesting Community: The Limits and Potential of Local Organizing,* (Rutgers University Press, 2010); J. D. Morenoff, R. J. Sampson and S. W. Raudenbush, 'Neighborhood Inequality, Collective Efficacy, and the Spatial Dynamics of Urban Violence', (2001) 39(3) *Criminology,* 517–558; R. Forrest and A. Kearns, 'Social Cohesion: Social Capital and the Neighbourhood', (2001) 38(12) *Urban Studies,* 2215-2143.

[221] C. Campbell and P. Gillies, 'Conceptualising 'Social Capital' for Health Promotion in Small Local Communities: A Micro-qualitative Study', (2001) 11 *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 329

[222] Ibid, 344.

or reluctance to take part; these included: cognitive abilities, language, economic resources, family responsibilities, and '*general life satisfaction*'.[223] A lack of confidence or an individual's belief that they do not have the skills or knowledge to make a contribution is cited as another barrier.[224] While in separate studies Alcock and Matthews both found evidence of local people rejecting opportunities to take part in area-based regeneration programmes because they were suspicious of the underlying motivation behind the programme, or they had become disillusioned due to previous interventions that had come and gone, with no discernible impact.[225] While others might reject the notion that their area needs support, or resent the label of 'social exclusion'.[226]

Programmes often neglect to acknowledge that neighbourhoods are also sites of conflict, struggle and emotion, as Taylor et al. note '*people bring their personal views, experience and emotions to place-based work. These cannot be ignored, particularly in approaches that focus on culture change and that challenge existing practice and identities*.'[227] This is of particular interest to this research for a number of reasons, firstly it echoes personal experience of working in the field of community development, but more relevant to this study, it challenges preconceptions that communities welcome government-led interventions into their area; are willing to take on the responsibilities that come with it; and that proposals brought forth by 'the community' through plans and consultations will be done so with a united voice. As well as being complex, communities are also 'messy'; such a statement is not a criticism; it is an inevitable part of working with diverse groups of people. However, a common failing of area-based approaches is a failure to account for this in programme design and timescales.[228] Social relationships take time, work, effort and negotiation,[229] a view which does not necessarily align with some of the social capital narratives.[230] Following their review of literature on place-based working Taylor et al. concluded that research into the human and emotional side of being involved in change programmes is a gap in the literature warranting further exploration. In light of this, reflections on the personal experiences of being involved in a

[223] J. Brehm and W. Rahn, 'Individual-level Evidence for the Causes and Consequences of Social Capital', (1997) 41(3) *American Journal of Political Science*, 999–1023.

[224] M. Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[225] P. Alcock, 'Maximum Feasible Understanding' – Lessons from Previous Wars on Poverty', (2005) 4(3) *Social Policy and Society,* 321-329; P. Matthews, 'From Area-based Initiatives to Strategic Partnerships: Have we Lost the Meaning of Regeneration?', (2012) 30(1) *Environment & Planning C: Government & Policy*, 147-161.

[226] J. Flaherty, *'"I Mean We're Not the Richest but We're Not Poor": Discourses of 'Poverty' and 'Social Exclusion'*', (2008) PhD Thesis Loughborough University, (Online) Available at: <https://repository.lboro.ac.uk/articles/_I_mean_we_re_not_the_richest_but_we_re_not_poor_discourses_of_poverty_and_social_exclusion_/9480041> Last Accessed: 5th September 2019.

[227] M. Taylor, E. Buckly, and C. Hennessey, *Historical Review of Place Based Approaches,* (Lankelly Chase, 2017), 48. (Online) Available at: < https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf> Last accessed: 25th September 2019.

[228] B. Dicks, 'Participatory Community Regeneration: A Discussion of Risks, Accountability and Crisis in Devolved Wales', (2014) 51(5) *Urban Studies, 959–977;* V.L. Pollock and J. Sharp, 'Real Participation or the Tyranny of Participatory Practice? Public Art and Community Involvement in the Regeneration of the Raploch, Scotland', (2012) 49(14) *Urban Studies,* 3063-3079.

[229] S. E. Wakefield and B. Poland, 'Family, Friend or Foe? Critical Reflections on the Relevance and Role of Social Capital in Health Promotion and Community Development', (2004) 60 *Social Science and Medicine*, 2819-2832.

[230] For example: R.D Putnam and L.M. Feldstein, *Better Together: Restoring the American Community,* (Simon and Schuster, 2003); P. Block, *Community: The Structure of Belonging,* (Berrett-Koehler, 2008).

neighbourhood change programme formed part of the interviews with participants involved in the New Deal for Communities programme - discussed in chapter five.

There is however a considerable bulk of literature that documents the challenges of devolving control to communities or neighbourhoods and the power dynamics this brings into play. In 2016 social enterprise Renaisi hosted a 'roundtable' of community development practitioners, researchers, housing professionals, and council officers to discuss the topic: '*Community-led regeneration: Can it really exist?*'.[231] Over the course of the discussion a number of barriers, or challenges, to community participation were discussed, these included: a '*disempowering property market*' (the roundtable took place in London and the general view from the room was that so many of the issues in the neighbourhoods they worked which stemmed from poor housing or a lack of affordable housing, which '*residents simply don't believe it is possible to have any influence over the use of land and property'*[232]*,* the limited role local authorities had in being able to influence this was also discussed, with much of the policy being decided at a regional or national level); A difficulty getting residents to '*think beyond the doorstep*', with a number of practitioners sharing frustrations that engagement or consultation with communities was too often dominated by discussion of small '*immediate problems*', like refuse collections and street lighting, rather than the '*big issues'* or opportunities available (neighbourhood planning was cited as an example). Although one could argue that a failure to address or engage with communities on the more '*immediate issues*' impacts on their willingness to take part or '*buy-in'* to the so-called '*bigger issues'*[233]; the '*impact of funding cuts*' and the closure of local services were also discussed (the implications of which will be considered in chapter six); along with the inability or unwillingness of those in positions of power to relinquish control to communities – a theme that will be explored further over subsequent chapters.

One further point to note from the roundtable discussion, which warrants mention and consideration within the scope of this research, was the recognition of the finite amount of time local people have to contribute to regeneration programmes. A number of studies lament the limited take-up of opportunities for participation, or that programmes have failed to involve the community beyond the much-maligned (but it is submitted much needed) 'usual suspects'.[234] Yet, the ask of volunteer residents is considerable, it takes time to bring regeneration projects to fruition, and in many cases the asks or expectations

[231] Renaisi Ltd, *Community-led Regeneration: Can it Really Exist?,* (Renaisi, 2016) (Online) Available at: <http://www.renaisi.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/RFN20160627-report-final.pdf> Last accessed: 15th August 2018, 3.

[232] Ibid, 3.

[233] See: G. Davidson, D. McGuiness, P. Greenhalgh, P. Braidford and F. Robinson, ''It'll get Worse Before it gets Better': Local Experiences of Living in a Regeneration Area', (2013) *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal,* 55-66; P. Foley and S. Martin, 'A New Deal for the Community? Public Participation in Regeneration and Local Service Delivery', (2000) 28(4) *Policy and Politics,* 479-492.

[234] M. Taylor, 'Maintaining Community Involvement in Regeneration: What are the Issues?', (2000) 15(3) *Local Economy*, 251-255; P. Burton, 'Power to the People? How to Judge Public Participation', (2004) 19(3) *Local Economy*, 193–198; L. O'Malley, 'Working in Partnership for Regeneration—The Effect of Organisational Norms on Community Groups', (2004) 36(5) *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space,* 841-857.

placed on volunteers is considerable, meaning there is often a significant learning curve for participant's to undertake in addition to the programme requirements – this was particularly the case in some of the major regeneration programmes under New Labour, as chapter five will show. Regeneration programmes often fail to account for the amount of time this can take, or for the burden it places on participants, as the evaluations of large area-based programmes in the UK have commonly found.[235]

2.9 Community lost?

Others have questioned the extent to which the 'community lost' debate stands up at all. In 1978 Thomas Bender published a wide-ranging study charting perception of community and social change in the USA over hundreds of years. Bender found examples of the 'community lost' discourse charting back as far as 1650, and repeating itself every 30-50 years up to the 1970s, leading him to deduce that outcries of community's decline were overstated and rather serve as '*a literary strategy that supplies dramatic structure for accounts of social and cultural change in America'*.[236] Ian Maitland reached similar conclusions in his own research of historical accounts of declining community, suggesting accounts of its loss were exaggerated, highlighting accounts of '*vibrant associational life*' flourishing alongside '*fierce individualism*', and community coexisting with '*extraordinarily high rates of geographic and social mobility in America at the time Tocqueville and others were writing of community's decline'*.[237] Maitland also used these findings to challenge communitarian beliefs that the free market undermines community values, citing examples over time of financial markets responding to changing cultural forces and communities and families withdrawing in to '*domestic sanctuaries, against the economic tide of the time*' as further evidence of a market that is '*much less formidable than that portrayed by communitarians*'.[238] The rise of social enterprises and the growth of the Community Business sector are arguably some testament to this, providing examples of communities coming together to form alternative economies in response to their own concerns about their localities.[239] For Maitland, this: '*revised picture of the market highlights its political and cultural*

[235] J. Rhodes, P. Tyler and A. Brennan, *The Single Regeneration Budget: Final Evaluation,* (University of Cambridge Department of Land Economy, 2007); E. Batty, C. Beatty, M. Foden, P. Lawless, S. Pearson and I. Wilson, *Involving Local People in Regeneration: Evidence from the New Deal for Communities Programme Volume 2*, (Stationary Office, 2010); DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Final Report*, (Stationery Office, 2010).

[236] T. Bender, *Community and Social Change in America*, (Rutgers University Press, 1978), 46-7 cited in I. Maitland., 'Community Lost?', (1998) 8(4) *Business Ethics Quarterly,* (Online) Available at: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/business-ethics-quarterly/article/community-lost/E982C4C25385075C4A8347200D8912CD> Last accessed: 26th September 2019.

[237] I. Maitland., 'Community Lost?', (1998) 8(4) *Business Ethics Quarterly,* I. Maitland., 'Community Lost?', (1998) 8(4) *Business Ethics Quarterly,* (Online) Available at: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/business-ethics-quarterly/article/community-lost/E982C4C25385075C4A8347200D8912CD> Last accessed: 26th September 2019.

[238] Ibid.

[239] Power to Change, a charitable trust set up by the National Lottery to grow and support community business in England describes community businesses as having four components, they are 'locally rooted': in a particular geographical place and respond to its needs; they 'trade for the benefit of the local community': they are 'accountable to the local community' (for example through a community shares offer or through a

weaknesses. Unlike 'community' or 'family values', the market does not inspire great loyalty or affection. Its appeal is cerebral rather than visceral'. Leading Maitland to conclude that 'we *should be on our guard against the facile equation of the spread of the market with a loss of community'.*[240]

Other academics have equated the assertion that community had been lost, or is in decline, with nostalgia for a bygone age or idyllic time that never really was.[241] Historian Eric Hobsbawn goes as far as to argue: '*never was the word 'community' been used more indiscriminately and emptily that in the decades when community in the sociological sense became hard to find'*.[242] Hampton and Wellman note that when politicians or commentators such as Putnam or Etzioni call for the preservation of particular communities, images are often evoked of communities based on '*densely connected relations, organised around the home and small-town life. They imagine a time when people gathered on their porches to bond, to live in-person and face-to-face*'.[243] Ian Maitland warns of the risks inherent with framing '*selective perceptions of the present and an idealisation of other forms of community*' in this way,[244] wary of this trend Hampton and Wellman ask:

> *Why does every generation believe that relationships were stronger and community better in the recent past? Lamenting about the loss of community, based on a selective perception of the present and an idealization of "traditional community". ... The bêtes noirs have varied according to the moral panic of the times: industrialization, bureaucratization, urbanization, capitalism, socialism, and technological developments have all been tabbed… Each time, observers look back nostalgically to what they supposed were the supportive, solidary communities of the previous generation.*[245]

Resident Board); and they should have 'broad community impact'. Whereas a social enterprise will operate for a social purpose but does not necessarily reinvest all or any of its profits into the community and is not necessarily rooted in a particular place. Community pubs, hubs, and cafes are cited as examples of community businesses. See Power to Change Website, *What is a Community Business,* (Online) Available at: <https://www.powertochange.org.uk/what-is-community-business/> Last accessed: 25th September 2019.

240 I. Maitland., 'Community Lost?', (1998) 8(4) *Business Ethics Quarterly,* I. Maitland., 'Community Lost?', (1998) 8(4) *Business Ethics Quarterly,* (Online) Available at: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/business-ethics-quarterly/article/community-lost/E982C4C25385075C4A8347200D8912CD> Last accessed: 26th September 2019.

241 K. Barnes, G. Waitt, N. Gill and C. Gibson, 'Community and Nostalgia in Urban Revitalisation: a Critique of Urban Village and Creative Class Strategies as Remedies for Social 'Problems'', (2006) (37(3) *Australian Geographer*, 335-354; B.B. Brown, J.R. Burton and A.L. Sweaney, 'Neighbors, Households, and Front Porches: New Urbanist Community Tool or Mere Nostalgia?', (1998) 30(5) *Environment and Behavior,* 579-600.

242 E.J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short History of the Twentieth Century, 1914– 1991,* (Michael Joseph, 1994), 428, cited in T. Blackshaw, *Key Concepts in Community Studies,* (SAGE, 2009), 10.

243 K.N. Hampton and B. Wellman, 'Lost and Saved . . . Again: The Moral Panic about the Loss of Community Takes Hold of Social Media', (2018) 47(6), *Contemporary Society: A Journal of Reviews,* (2018) 47(6), 644.

244 I. Maitland., 'Community Lost?', (1998) 8(4) *Business Ethics Quarterly,* I. Maitland., 'Community Lost?', (1998) 8(4) *Business Ethics Quarterly,* (Online) Available at: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/business-ethics-quarterly/article/community-lost/E982C4C25385075C4A8347200D8912CD> Last accessed: 26th September 2019.

245 K.N. Hampton and B. Wellman, 'Lost and Saved . . . Again: The Moral Panic about the Loss of Community Takes Hold of Social Media', (2018) 47(6), *Contemporary Society: A Journal of Reviews,* (2018) 47(6), 643.

It is telling that Barry Wellman, whose initial 1979 article on the 'community question' challenging those lamenting the decline of community at the time, is still writing to challenge similar concerns in 2018 – fears this time spurred by the omnipresence of the internet and the rise of social media.[246] The argument presented this time is that technology is changing family dynamics, diluting local networks and changing the ways people form and maintain relationships – all of which bears a resemblance to past concerns.[247] And, once again, as with past crises of community, others have responded with arguments that change is an inevitable, and potentially life-enhancing prospect, highlighting the new opportunities technology provide for communication and connection: allowing users to create and sustain friendships, and providing a platform to share ideas and beliefs outside of traditional local structures, institutions, and 'echo chambers'.[248] It also allows people to maintain ties that perhaps previously would have withered as people move or their circumstances change. [249] In this vein Larsen et al. argue that the reason why commentators like Putnam have found a death of communities is that they have looked for them in the wrong places.[250] Similarly, Clark argues virtual networks remain located in a type of space and that they create similar emotional commitments from members, as any physical space might.[251] There is however also a case to be made that social media channels, forums and the proliferation of 'fake news' have created similar echo chambers in the digital space as those synonymous with Gemeinschaft discussed earlier in this chapter. All of which points to an argument that the 'community question' will continue to prevail. As Hampton and Wellman lament '*dissatisfaction with community has always existed. We need to recognise that although the structure of community may change, it has never been lost and has always needed fixing'*.[252]

Some academics argue that ongoing search for community and accompanying rhetoric, means 'community' has become something of a '*spray-on solution*' for politicians looking to address social challenges.[253] Similar to Shaw and Robinson's critique of the cyclical nature of community-led initiatives and discourse quoted in the opening chapter, Rose also notes the frequency with which politicians, sociologists, alongside '*moralists and pamphleteers*', espouse the value of building

[246] B. Wellman, 'The Community Question'. (1979) 84 *American Journal of Sociology*, 1201–31, cited in K.N. Hampton and B. Wellman, 'Lost and Saved . . . Again: The Moral Panic about the Loss of Community Takes Hold of Social Media', (2018) 47(6), *Contemporary Society: A Journal of Reviews,* (2018) 47(6), 643-651.

[247] T. Dotson, *Technically Together: Reconsidering Community in a Networked World*, (MIT Press, 2017).

[248] E. Dubois and G. Blank, 'The Echo Chamber Is Overstated: The Moderating Effect of Political Interest and Diverse Media', (2018) 21 *Information, Communication & Society*, 729–745.

[249] H. Wang and B. Wellman, 'Social Connectivity in America', (2010) 53 *American Behavioral Scientist*, 1148–69.

[250] J. Larsen, J. Urry and K. Axhaussen, 'Social Networks and Future Mobilities: Report to the UK Department of Transport', (2005), (University of Lancaster/ETH Zurich), 23.

[251] A. Clark, 'Understanding Community: A review of Networks, Ties and Contacts', (2007) *ESRC National Centre for Research Methods NCRM Working Paper Series 9/07,* 1-39. (Online) Available at: < http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/469/1/0907_understanding_community.pdf> Last accessed: 19th August 2019.

[252] K. H. Hampton and B. Wellman, 'Lost and Saved . . . Again: The Moral Panic about the Loss of Community Takes Hold of Social Media', (2018) 47(6), *Contemporary Society: A Journal of Reviews,* (2018) 47(6), 649.

[253] Bryson, L. and Mowbray, M., 'Community: The Spray-on Solution', (1981) 16(4) *Australian Journal of Social Issues,* 255-267 cited in M. Mulligan, 'On Ambivalence and Hope in the Restless Search for Community: How to Work with the Idea of Community in the Global Age', *Sociology* (2015) 49(2) 340-355.

and maintaining community – albeit with approaches that are '*differently spacialised and differently temporised*'.[254] In this respect, 'community' is used as a way of praising the past in order to blame the present, not based on reflections of what it is, but what it could or should be.

2.10 The "dark side" of community

Others argue that this narrow focus on the community as both a cause and solution to social challenges takes attention away from important arguments about wider social inequalities and power imbalances.[255] There are two points to consider here; the first is the lack of appreciation afforded to what some have referred to as the '*dark side of community*'[256], the second is the extent to which the rhetoric of community is intentionally used by policymakers as a shield to deflect from acknowledging or addressing wider structural challenges.[257]

Mulligan highlights the '*emotional power*' of the term 'community'.[258] While the term is intended to elicit positive feelings it is important to acknowledge the so-called 'dark side' of the desire for community, for all of those that want to be included, a proportion of society will inevitably feel excluded, this can cause tensions and resentment.[259] For example, Barker et al. noted that much of the New Labour funding for urban regeneration was targeted at 'the worst' estates, often decided by indices of deprivation and targeted at particular neighbourhoods, this often created situations where neighbouring communities experiencing similar socio-economic challenges were repeatedly overlooked for funding – creating tensions between neighbouring areas and in some cases displacing social problems to other areas outside of the boundaries of the funded area.[260] Others have pointed out that the promotion of harmonious communities can be blind or insensitive to past racial inequalities, harking back to bygone decades which may have been bountiful for some, but represented periods of segregation or exclusion of others. Such divisions can create feelings of resentment, or superiority,

[254] K. Shaw and F. Robinson, 'Learning from Experience? Reflections on Two Decades of British Urban Policy' (1998) 69(1) *Town Planning Review*, 49-63; N. Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought,* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), p172, cited in M. Mulligan, 'On Ambivalence and Hope in the Restless Search for Community: How to Work with the Idea of Community in the Global Age', (2015) 49(2) *Sociology,* 343.

[255] D. Studdert, *Conceptualising Community: Theories of Sociality Beyond State and Society,* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); L. Bryson and M. Mowbray, 'More Spray-on Solution: Community, Social Capital and Evidence Based Policy', (2005) 40(1) *Australian Journal of Social Issues,* 91-106; L. Crowley, B. Balaram and N. Lee, *People or Place? Urban Policy in the Age of Austerity*, (The Work Foundation, 2012).

[256] P. Haynes, 'Before Going Any Further with Social Capital: Eight Key Criticisms to Address', 2009 INGENIO (CSIC-UPV) Working Paper Series 2009/02. Available at: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/36025661.pdf. (Last accessed 10th August 2019). However, a growing amount of research addresses this imbalance, for example see: P. Adler and S.W. Kwom, 'Social Capital: Prospects for a New Concept', (2002) 27(1) *Academy of Management Review*, 30-31; A. Portes, 'Social Capital its Origins and Application in Contemporary Sociology', (1998) 24 *Annual Review of Sociology*, 1-24; M.G. Quibria, 'The Puzzle of Social Capital. A Critical Review', (2003) 20(2) *Asian Development Review*, 19-39.

[257] L. Crowley, B. Balaram and N. Lee, *People or Place? Urban Policy in the Age of Austerity*, (The Work Foundation, 2012).

[258] M. Mulligan, 'On Ambivalence and Hope in the Restless Search for Community: How to Work with the Idea of Community in the Global Age', (2015) 49(2) *Sociology,* 347.

[259] Ibid*,* 347.

[260] D. Baker, S. Barrow and C. Shiels, 'How Effective are Area-based Regeneration Initiatives in Targeting Socially Excluded Individuals?', (2009) 2(4) *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 351-363.

which in turn can manifest themselves in negative and even violent ways.[261] It is therefore important to not overlook the risks inherent with attempts to 'create', 'foster' or 'engineer' community. Attempts to create the positives of "communities of old" risk reinstating or reigniting previous inequalities and injustices, or indeed creating new ones.[262] Relatedly, Portes notes Mafia families, street gangs, or gambling rings could all demonstrate similar components of civic societies, but act in socially undesirable ways[263] - extreme examples perhaps, but an important reminder that there can be an opportunity cost from social capital and attempts to foster community: one person's advantage may come at another's exclusion. [264]

Some liken the repeated turns to community under different guises to '*fashionable new clothes*' – as Bryson et al point out, each turn presents an opportunity to '*operationalise community*' involvement and present it as a solution to social challenges, detracting from a discussion of wider inequalities.[265] For Bryson and Mowbray this nostalgia for community renders it a '*perennially attractive*' focus for government, and also '*a conveniently conservative*' one, paving the way for '*low-cost communitarian solutions, now often called community strengthening or capacity building*.'[266] Others have highlighted the appeal this may have for politicians, providing examples of ideologically driven programmes, with the virtues of community-led services being promoted, yet the real driver was found to be the cost savings they represented.[267] The appeal to the government is they are seen to be doing something, but in the broader scheme of things, the emphasis is on others to conduct the social action. Similar criticisms would come to be levelled at the Big Society promoted by the Conservative party under David Cameron's leadership, with many commentators criticising it as a ruse for a programme of austerity or 'big cuts.[268]

2.11 The value of community

Several valid concerns have been raised about the enduring appeal of programmes professing to increase social capital and governments repeated 'turn to community', and given the arguments presented above critics are right to advise caution.

[261] D.J. Monti, 'Old Whines in New Bottles: Robert Putnam, Richard Florida, and the "Community" Problem in Contemporary America', In J. Jennings (ed.) *Race, Neighborhoods, and the Misuse of Social Capital*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); D. Dillon and B. Fanning, 'Tottenham After the Riots: The Chimera of Community and the Property-led Regeneration of 'Broken Britain', (2015) 35(2) *Critical Social Policy*, 188–206.

[262] D. Dillon and B. Fanning, 'Tottenham After the Riots: The Chimera of Community and the Property-led Regeneration of 'Broken Britain', (2015) 35(2) *Critical Social Policy*, 188–206.

[263] A. Portes, 'Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Society', (1998) 24 *Annual Review of Sociology,* 18.

[264] Haynes, P. 'Before Going Any Further with Social Capital: Eight Key Criticisms to Address', *2009 INGENIO (CSIC-UPV) Working Paper Series 2009/02*. Available at: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/36025661.pdf. (Last accessed 10th August 2019).

[265] L. Bryson and M. Mowbray, 'More Spray-on Solution: Community, Social Capital and Evidence Based Policy', (2005) 40(1) *Australian Journal of Social Issues,* 100-101.

[266] Ibid*,* 100-101.

[267] Ibid.

[268] A. Fitzgerald, R. Lupton and A.M. Brady, 'Hard Times, New Directions? The Impact of the Local Government Spending Cuts in Three Deprived Neighbourhoods of London', *Social Policy in a Cold Climate Working Paper 9*, (Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), 2014) (Online) Available at: < http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/spcc/wp09.pdf?> Last accessed: 25th August 2018; P. Taylor-Gooby, 'Root and Branch Restructuring to Achieve Major Cuts: The Social Policy Programme of the 2010 UK Coalition Government', (2011) 46(1*) Social Policy and Administration*, 61-82.

However, it is submitted that notions of social capital and programmes to increase public participation should not be discounted - to do so would negate the valuable discussion the work of Putnam and others has spawned around 'trust', 'reciprocity', and social connections and overlook valuable work that has emerged from community-led programmes. Elaine Applebee and David Wilkinson set out a number of reasons why programmes promoting community participation and attempts to bring local people together around a common cause are an important part of turning communities around: local people understand local context better than anyone, this is important both in identifying problems within the community and the people and agencies best positioned to address them; the involvement of local people can enhance accountability and reduce local agency 'silo working', and (with the right conditions) successful community involvement can 'kick-start' a 'positive cycle of renewal' with participants expressing interest in 'owning' and developing ideas.[269]

The debate notions of 'community' and 'social capital' stimulate are also important. Indeed, Joel Sobel argues that even though '*the strengths of the* [social capital] *analogy are not persuasive enough to justify the terminology*' the use of the term 'social capital' can be justified because existing literature builds on this strategy and provides convincing evidence that the topics under the social capital umbrella are worthy of study and practice.[270] As Narayan and Cassidy note optimism, satisfaction with life, perceptions of government institutions and political involvement all stem from the fundamental dimensions of social capital and continue to be important areas of study.[271] There are other benefits too; the concept encourages debate and research into the patterns of relations between agents, social units and institutions, rather than solely focusing on individuals, and encourages recognition of differences between social structures and cultures. Such a position was influential on the ABIs which emerged under New Labour between 1997-2010 and which sought to integrate national and local government decision-making and service delivery with the neighbourhood level – the extent to which this was delivered effectively will be discussed in later chapters.

As a tool to engage and inspire people 'community' has value too. 'Community' is something that has symbolic resonance, it is something that people respond to, and in its purest sense, something some are keen to be part of or aspire too. To return to earlier conversations about social sustainability - there is an important role for communities to play in being the architects of their own environments and support networks, and an important role for government in enabling this. Delanty argues that a sense of community will not exist unless is it '*wilfully constructed*' – the government can play an important role in this construction.[272] Subsequent chapters will explore this further.

[269] D. Wilkinson and E. Applebee, Implementing Holistic Government – Joined-up Action on the Ground, (Demos, 1999).

[270] J. Sobel, 'Can We Trust Social Capital?', (2002) 40 *Journal of Economic Literature*, 145. Cited in P. Haynes, P. *'Before Going Any Further with Social Capital: Eight Key Criticisms to Address', 2009 INGENIO (CSIC-UPV) Working Paper Series 2009/02*. (Online) Available at: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/36025661.pdf. Last accessed 10th August 2019.

[271] D. Narayan and M.F. Cassidy, 'A Dimensional Approach to Measuring Social Capital: Development and Validation of a Social Capital Inventory', 2001 49(2) *Current Sociology,* 59-102.

[272] G. Delanty, *Community*, (Routledge, 2003), 130.

To close, in an article reflecting on his 25 years of community development research and practice, Martin Mulligan concludes that: '*engaging with community is a practice full of ambivalence, but always one full of hope'.*[273] This 'hope' is important and why so many continue to explore and debate best practice today. Indeed, Boneham and Sixsmith encourage more qualitative work to explore the complexities of social capital and the ways in which trust, reciprocity, participation and community control interact at the community level, subsequent chapters of this thesis aim to contribute to this discussion.[274]

2.12 Conclusion

As Marilyn Taylor, who has written extensively on the topic of community and public policy states:

> *We can learn a great deal about society from the words that crop up again and again in government policy documents … During the 1990s a new vocabulary began to emerge of community, civil society, participation and empowerment along with a set of ideas that also included 'communitarianism', 'social capital', 'networks', the 'social economy', 'mutuality', 'partnership' and 'civic engagement'.*[275]

This chapter has sought to expand upon and critically analyse this 'new vocabulary' of New Labour and the Coalition. Introducing some of the key arguments and theories that underpin this research, and drawing on literature which spans over a century of political and social theory this chapter has sought to demonstrate that community is a contested concept, open to multiple interpretations, and a source of much debate between those that lament it's loss and those that argue community's apparent decline is nothing but a literary tool for discussing social change.[276]

Tönnies theories of G*emeinschaft'* and '*Gesellschaft*', was the starting point for this discussion. As a concept describing the changing nature of community in an increasingly industrialised world much of Tönnies work still resonates with more recent debates about the changing nature of community. The notion that communities of the past were characterised by close ties, neighbours and families supporting one another, and active associational life; while modern society has become

[273] M. Mulligan, 'On Ambivalence and Hope in the Restless Search for Community: How to Work with the Idea of Community in the Global Age', (2015) 49(2) *Sociology,* 340-355.

[274] M.A. Boneham and J.A. Sixsmith, 'The Voices of Older Women in a Disadvantaged Community: Issues of Health and Social Capital', (2005) 62 *Social Science & Medicine,* 269-279.

[275] M. Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 1.

[276] T. Bender, *Community and Social Change in America*, (Rutgers University Press, 1978), 46-7 cited in I. Maitland., 'Community Lost?', (1998) 8(4) *Business Ethics Quarterly,* (Online) Available at: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/business-ethics-quarterly/article/community-lost/E982C4C25385075C4A8347200D8912CD> Last accessed: 26th September 2019.

synonymous with increasingly individualistic lifestyles, a weakening of community ties and a perpetuation of '*anomie'* and 'alienation' endures to this day.[277] Such a view is prominent in the work of Durkheim, Burke, Etzioni and Putnam who all equate the perceived loss of community with moral and societal decline.[278] These theories were explored in some detail and their influence on the Third Way and Big Society ideologies of New Labour and the Conservative party discussed.

Exploration of the communitarian school of thought and Robert Putnam's work on social capital in particular, shed some light on the appeal these theories held for governments on both sides of the Atlantic - promoting a vision of society where central government is less involved in the day-to-day lives of citizens, as communities become self-governing, self-supporting and increasingly self-reliant. The message throughout the speeches of Prime Minister's Blair, Brown and Cameron was that the government was promoting new freedoms and 'rights' for citizens, in return for a new 'social contract' - one where citizens take on more 'responsibilities' and a more active role in civic life, with government framing themselves as 'enablers', and citizens reframed as 'active citizens.'[279] The extent to which central government policies and programmes 'enabled' this shift, and consideration of the role government can, and did play in promoting community-led civic action are key lines of inquiry running throughout this thesis. As this chapter began to explore, some question the sincerity of the government adopting this approach, viewing it not as a mechanism to empower communities, but rather further signs of the '*long march towards neoliberalism'* and a diversion tactic for government austerity measures and state retrenchment.[280] Again, this is a theme that subsequent chapters will return to.

As this chapter has also shown, there is a tendency for governments and theorists to conjure images of a particular form of community, which is place-based and characterised by shared values, interests and priorities; with visions of neighbours congregating in parks and front porches, and whole communities turning out for local events.[281] However, as the literature has shown such a view of community has been regarded as one dimensional, archaic, and some have argued imagined.[282] The reality is that an individual may consider themselves to be part of many communities at any given time, and these may extend beyond defined geographic boundaries.[283] As sections 2.9 and 2.10 discussed, there are downsides (and "dark sides") to the repeated 'turns to community', highlighting that community can exclude as well as include, they can be sites

[277] E. Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society*, (Simon & Schuster, 1997).

[278] E. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, (first published 1790) (Liberty Fund, 1999); A. Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities and the Communitarian Agenda*, (Crown, 1993); R. D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, (Simon and Schuster, 2000).

[279] Civil Exchange, *The Big Society Audit 2012*, (Civic Exchange, 2012).

[280] S. Hall, 'Thatcher, Blair, Cameron - The Long March of Neoliberalism Continues', (2011) 48 *Soundings,* 9-27.

[281] K. Barnes, G. Waitt, N. Gill and C. Gibson, 'Community and Nostalgia in Urban Revitalisation: A Critique of Urban Village and Creative Class Strategies as Remedies for Social 'problems'', (2006) (37(3) *Australian Geographer*, 335-354.

[282] K.N. Hampton and B. Wellman, 'Lost and Saved . . . Again: The Moral Panic About the Loss of Community Takes Hold of Social Media', (2018) 47(6), *Contemporary Society: A Journal of Reviews*, 643-651.

[283]M. Mulligan, 'On Ambivalence and Hope in the Restless Search for Community: How to Work with the Idea of Community in the Global Age', (2015) 49(2) *Sociology,* 340-355.

of conflict as well as sites of convergence, and community has the propensity to reinforce negative behaviours, just as communitarians argue they can instil a strong moral compass.[284] For this reason, communities need to be treated as complex entities, not uniform sites of targeted investment or action, highlighting the important role local context can play in the delivery, and reception to, government-initiated regeneration schemes. The following chapter moves on to consider these challenges more fully through an exploration of community participation and empowerment - integral components of socially sustainable regeneration.

[284] M. Mulligan, 'On Ambivalence and Hope in the Restless Search for Community: How to Work with the Idea of Community in the Global Age', (2015) 49(2) *Sociology,* 347.

Chapter Three: Exploring Theories of Participation and Empowerment: Towards a Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have demonstrated repeated claims by the government to 'hand down' power to communities giving them greater responsibility to shape policy and deliver local services, these announcements were often accompanied with claims that the approaches employed will 'empower' communities, with little further explanation of what empowerment means or what it will look like if achieved. The term 'empowerment' is also used by government interchangeably with 'engagement' and 'participation', which while all pertain to forms of involvement, can have very different interpretations with regard to the level of influence communities or individuals can have in the regeneration process. This chapter draws on a number of theories of power and empowerment frameworks as illustrative tools to distinguish between these terms and to consider their implications for participatory regeneration practice.

The starting point for this analysis is Sherry Arnstein's '*A Ladder of Citizen Participation',* an article that has stimulated much conversation about the power dynamics between decision-makers, practitioners and citizens in the domains of public planning and community development.[285] Published in 1969 and drawing on insights from her involvement in three US government-led social programmes that were launched in response to the 'urban crisis' of the 1960s (those being the 'Urban Renewal', 'Antipoverty', and 'Model Cities' programmes) and Arnstein's reflections on the rise of broad-based social movements, including large urban movements pressing for civil rights, campaigns for fair access to housing, and economic justice.[286] Arnstein was a policy adviser for the newly formed US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD - which was also introduced in response to the crisis and formed part of President Johnson's 'War on Poverty'). HUDs remit included ensuring citizen participation in federally funded programmes, Arnstein's role was to provide advice on how to achieve this in cities across the country. *A Ladder of Citizen Participation* was Arnstein's attempt to capture what she learnt over several years of working with senior city officials, community groups, and local officers as they navigated this change in planning policy. In doing so she identifies eight typologies of power and influence and presents them as a ladder, with each rung corresponding to the extent of citizens' power in shaping and/or delivering a programme or reaching a decision. While this work was published in the *Journal of the American Planning System,* Arnstein's observations were hugely relevant to a broader audience of community development practitioners, those involved in the civil rights movement, and anyone operating in any capacity to increase the voice or influence of individuals and groups that had been marginalised. Section 3.3 looks at this framework in some detail, considering its

[285] S. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation', (1969) 35(4) *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 216-228.
[286] Ibid.

relevancy today, fifty years after its initial publication. Several related empowerment frameworks which build on Arnstein's model are also discussed along with their relevancy to community involvement in the regeneration process. An examination of the eight rungs of Arnstein's model also aids broader discussion of common failings within participatory regeneration practice. Examples of broad-based community organising in both the US and the UK are also considered within the context of 'citizen control'.

The chapter then moves on to consider alternative views of power, with consideration given to the some of the theories of Robert Dahl, Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, Steven Lukes, and Michael Foucault, amongst others. Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony is also briefly discussed. All of which serve to illustrate varying perspectives on power and how it operates in public policy and social life. The chapter then moves on to examine John Gaventa's 'place, space and power' framework and its suitability as a tool for analysing the interplay of power relations between the community and other domains of power.[287] The chapter concludes by presenting an adapted version of Gaventa's framework that will be used to assess relationships between the community, the local level (made up of local government, regeneration intermediaries and public service providers) and national government throughout the remainder of this thesis.

3.2 Defining community participation

As the previous chapter began to explore, 'community participation' has become something of a buzzword within social and regeneration policy over the period 1997-2015 examined, with successive governments announcing programmes and legislation that promised to give local people more control of decisions and activities affecting their communities - 'empowering' them by giving them more rights and responsibilities to enact change in their localities.[288] Indeed, Lawson and Kearns note that regeneration was one of the earliest policy areas to record a shift in emphasis towards community engagement and it quickly became a dominant discourse.[289] A review of policy documents during this time echoes that assessment, with the terms 'involvement', 'empowerment' and 'participation' used somewhat interchangeably throughout

[287] J. Gaventa, 'Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis', (2006) 37(6) *IDS Bulletin*, 22-33. (Online) Available at: <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/8354/IDSB_37_6_10.1111j.17595436.2006.tb00320.x.pdf;jsessionid=9D31012DF6568994CF43BC6F0144B9A5?sequence=1> Last accessed: August 17th 2019.

[288] A. Cornwall, *Democratising Engagement: What the UK Can Learn from International Experience*, (Demos, 2008). (Online) Available at: <https://www.demos.co.uk/files/Democratising_Engagement-web.pdf> Last accessed: 16th July 2019. A Cornwall, 'Unpacking 'Participation': Models, Meanings and Practices', (2008) 43(3) *Community Development Journal*, 269-283; V. Jochum, B. Pratten and K. Wilding, *Civil Renewal and Active Citizenship: A Guide to the Debate*, (NCVO, 2005). (Online) Available at: https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/policy_and_research/participation/civil_renewal_active_citizenship.pdf Last accessed 16th July 2015.

[289] L. Lawson and A. Kearns, 'Community Empowerment' in the Context of the Glasgow Housing Stock Transfer, (2010) 47(7) *Urban Studies*, 1459-1478.

government programmes and policies, as Davies and Pill amongst others have also noted.[290] It is important then, at this juncture, to establish some distinction between these terms and how they will be conceptualised throughout the remainder of this thesis. An accepted definition of 'participation' within a community development context is offered by Cohen and Uphof, who define it as:

> *People's involvement in decision-making processes and implementation, sharing in the benefits of development programmes, and involvement in efforts to evaluate such programmes.*[291]

While a publication by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on the subject of community participation defines it more simply as:

> *Community participation concerns the engagement of individuals and communities in decisions about things that affect their lives. Sometimes people do not want to be involved in decision-making, but it is our view that everyone should have the opportunity to do so.*[292]

Participation or involvement, however, does not necessarily result in empowerment. Holcombe makes the following distinction between empowerment and participation while acknowledging the connection between the two terms:

> *Participation and empowerment are inseparably linked, they are different, but they depend on each other to give meaning and purpose. Participation represents action or being part of an action, such as a decision-making process. Empowerment represents sharing control, the entitlement and the ability to participate, to influence decisions, as on the allocation of resources.*[293]

Holcombe goes on to note that definitions or explanations of empowerment will often include mention to 'control', 'enabling', 'deciding', 'acting' as well as 'participation.' Participation and involvement then are essential stages on the way to empowerment, but the action of taking part alone does not necessarily result in empowerment. Whether or not a

[290] J. Davies and M. Pill, 'Empowerment or Abandonment? Prospects for Neighbourhood Revitalization Under the Big Society', (2012) 32(3) *Public Money & Management*, 193-200; J. Painter, L. Dominelli, G. MacLeod, A. Orton and R. Pande, *Connected Communities: Connecting Localism and Community Empowerment*, (Arts and Humanities Research Council, 2012) (Online) Available at: < https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/project-reports-and-reviews/connected-communities/connecting-localism-and-community-empowerment> Last accessed: 14th December 2015; D. Perrons and S. Skyers, 'Empowerment through Participation? Conceptual Explorations and a Case Study', (2003) 27(2), International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 268-285.

[291] J. Cohen, and N. Uphoff, *Rural Development Participation: Concepts and Measures for Project Design, Implementation and Evaluation*, (Cornel University, 1977) cited in: H.A, Nikkhah and M. Redzuan., 'Participation as a Medium of Empowerment in Community Development', (2009) 11 (1) *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 172.

[292] D. Burns, F. Heywood, M. Taylor, P. Wilde and M. Wilson, *Making Community Participation Meaningful: A Handbook for Development and Assessment,* (JRF, 2004), (Online) Available at: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/jr163-community-participationdevelopment.pdf > Last accessed 22nd October 2018.

[293] S. Holcombe, *Managing to Empower: The Grameen Bank's Experience of Poverty Alleviation*, (Zed Books Ltd, 1995), 17.

person or group feels empowered will depend on the levels of ownership and agency they have been given within a process, and the extent to which those in positions of power are willing to cede or share control with those that have less. Nikkah and Redzuan's distinction between 'participation as a means' and 'participation as an end' is helpful to explore this point further, and to frame participation and empowerment within the lens of government-funded programmes.[294] Where participation is seen as a 'means' the involvement of local people is typically viewed as a vehicle for achieving a predetermined objective. Those initiating the project are less interested in the experiences or the 'journey' of participants, and more interested in achieving their initial goal, examples of which might include getting planning permission passed, making cost savings, or securing the future of a local asset. People or areas may benefit alongside this, but it is not the primary incentive, *'participation as a means is essentially a static, passive and ultimately controllable form of participation*.'[295] Such an approach is usually associated with 'top-down' government-led approaches and are typically time-bound.[296] The tension inherent in this approach is that by controlling the parameters tightly, the government tries to develop the community to its own needs or ideals, irrespective of community need or capacity, thus limiting community involvement and 'buy-in', and in many ways operationalising community involvement. Such a process runs counterintuitively to the goals of sustainable development discussed in the previous chapter.[297]

'Participation as an end' on the other hand refers to programmes that seek to build participant confidence or group solidarity as an intentional and primary aim of the programme. Those involved are given the freedom to shape and influence the programme as it evolves, and the design and delivery is responsive to '*local needs and changing circumstance*'.[298] In this type of programme, direction and influence come from the 'bottom-up'[299] and '*participation becomes a process of achieving greater individual fulfilment, personal development, self-awareness and some immediate satisfaction*.'[300] Such a programme becomes empowering because the government (or the party that typically holds power) has relinquished control and communities are making decisions, have access to information previously unattainable, and experience feelings of self-efficacy and control.[301] To quote Nikkah and Redzuan again: '*if power can change, then*

[294] H.A. Nikkah and M. Redzuan, 'Participation as a Medium of Empowerment in Community Development', (2009) 11(1) *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 170-176.

[295] Ibid, 172.

[296] D. Conyers, 'Decentralization and Development: A Framework for Analysis', (1986) 21(2) *Community Development Journal*, 88-100.

[297] D. Warburton, 'A Passionate Dialogue: Community and Sustainable Development' in D. Warburton (ed.) *Community and Sustainable Development: Participation in the Future*, (Earthscan, 1998); Commission of European Communities (CEC), *Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: A Framework for Action, COM (98) 605 Final,* (European Commission, *1998);* DETR, *Sustainable Regeneration: Good Practice Guide*, (HMSO, 1998)

[298] H.A. Nikkah and M. Redzuan, 'Participation as a Medium of Empowerment in Community Development', (2009) 11(1) *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 172.

[299] D. Conyers, 'Decentralization and Development: A Framework for Analysis', (1986) 21(2) *Community Development Journal*, 88-100.

[300] H.A. Nikkah and M. Redzuan, 'Participation as a Medium of Empowerment in Community Development', (2009) 11(1) *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 173.

[301] J. Rappaport, 'Terms of Empowerment/Exemplars of Prevention: Toward a Theory for Community Psychology', (1987) 15(2) *American Journal of Community*, 121-148.

empowerment is possible'. 'Empowerment' then, implies some degree of control or power to make decisions or enact change, compared to merely being consulted or addressed in the decision-making process. Indeed Laverack, writing about the potential community empowerment can play in the field of health, describes empowerment as the '*process by which relatively powerless people work together to increase control over events that determine their lives and health*.'[302]

Empowerment is not a given though. As both Amin and Matthews have demonstrated participation without changes in power-sharing dynamics can quickly become an empty or frustrating process for those invited or encouraged to take part.[303] It follows that the provisions put forward in the policies and programmes mentioned above need to be accompanied by some shift in community agency and influence if they are to live up to the localist proclamations, however, as research has shown such arrangements can be fraught with power imbalances and challenges in implementation.[304] Indeed, as the following section will show, there are many ways in which communities and individuals can be invited to 'participate' but the opportunities afforded do not necessarily equate to 'empowerment'. To explore this further the following section discusses Sherry Arnstein's 'Ladder of Citizen Participation', alongside other conceptualisations of involvement and empowerment.[305]

3.3 Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation

Sherry Arnstein also subscribed to the view that citizen participation without any redistribution of power would only serve to maintain the status quo. For Arnstein, echoing the language of Saul Alinsky, citizen participation is:

> *The redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programmes are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parcelled out.*[306]

Tasked with promoting greater community involvement in the planning and delivery of urban renewal programmes in the United States in the 1960s and perturbed by the limited opportunities for meaningful involvement she observed,[307] Arnstein

[302] G. Laverack, 'Improving Health Outcomes through Community Empowerment: A Review of the Literature', (2006) 24 Journal *of Health, Population and Nutrition,* 114.

[303] A. Amin, 'Local Community on Trial', (2005) 34(4) *Economy and Society*, 612-633; P. Matthews, 'From Area-based Initiatives to Strategic Partnerships: Have we Lost the Meaning of Regeneration?', (2012) 30(1) *Environment & Planning C: Government & Policy*, 147-161.

[304] F. Robinson, K. Shaw, and G. Davidson, ''On the Side of the Angels': Community Involvement in the Governance of Neighbourhood Renewal, (2005) 20(1) *Local Economy*, 13-26; M. Taylor, 'Community Participation in the Real World: Opportunities and Pitfalls in New Governance Spaces', (2007) 44(2) *Urban Studies*, 297–317; M. Taylor, 'Neighbourhood Governance: Holy Grail or Poisoned Chalice?', (2003) 18(3) *Local Economy*, 190-95.

[305] S. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969) 35(4) *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 216-228.

[306] Ibid, 216-17.

[307] Particularly the 'Community Action' and 'Model Cities' programmes.

introduced a typology of eight levels of participation to illustrate '*the critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process*'.[308] Arnstein illustrates this framework through the use of a conceptual ladder (see figure 3 below) with the eight rungs corresponding to the extent to which citizens hold power to determine the end result.

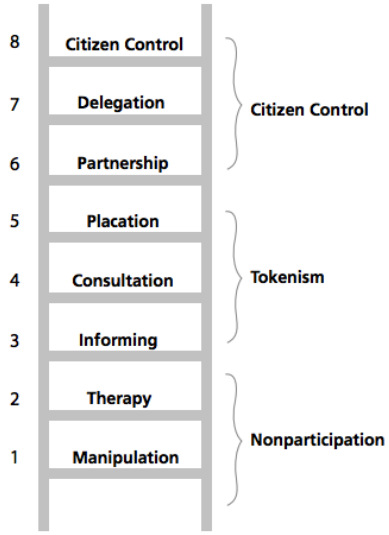

Figure 3: Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation[309]

The bottom two rungs of the ladder, 'manipulation' and 'therapy' represent a domain where citizens are invited to participate but in reality, provide little more than a 'rubber-stamping' function. Examples aligned to the manipulation phase might include briefings or presentations with little opportunity for recourse from the community, or opportunities to join advisory groups that, in reality, have no influence. For Arnstein, this stage is nothing more than a public relations vehicle, a platform used by those proposing services, development, or policies to engineer support for their cause and create the illusion of community buy-in. There is no consultation with local people as to their preferences or needs, and there is nothing about the process that is genuinely citizen-led despite the likelihood that officials will point to the 'involvement' of the community within the process. Using the example of Citizen Advisory Committees, Arnstein observes that '*it was the officials who educated, persuaded and advised the citizens not the reverse'*.[310]

Much like the first rung, the 'therapy' phase might offer the illusion of participation but in reality it is a mechanism of control, reinforcing established power dynamics, with policy and development officials cast in the role of 'experts' educating stakeholders to 'cure them' of their perceived ignorance and preconceived beliefs so that they come to see the

[308] S. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969) 35(4) *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 217.
[309] Illustration from: S. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969) 35(4) *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 217.
[310] Ibid, 219.

proposed plans as best. From an urban regeneration perspective, communities in the therapy stage are often seen as in some way responsible for the decline of their area or as lacking the skills or information to contribute to the revitalisation of the area.[311] Through presentations, leaflets, newsletters and glossy publications residents are coerced into support for schemes or programmes they have had little role in shaping, accepting their role of the layperson and ceding to the views of the experts which may not be in the community's best interest. Arnstein points to initiatives like community clean-up days and parenting classes that are state-led but promoted by tenant groups as an example - encouraging residents to '*adjust their values and attitudes to those of larger society*' while distracting them from the larger social issues and power imbalances that are playing out in their communities, a critique of the repeated 'turn to community' that was discussed in chapter two.[312]

For Arnstein, the third typology, 'informing' moves away from examples of 'nonparticipation' but along with the 'consultation' and 'placation' rungs, the opportunities for citizen participation tend to be 'tokenistic' rather than representing any real shift in power dynamics. As the theorist Paulo Friere goes at great lengths to emphasise, educating and informing citizens of their rights and responsibilities is an important step in the right direction towards citizen empowerment.[313] However, as Arnstein notes '*too frequently, the emphasis is placed on a one-way flow of information – from officials to citizens – with no channel provided for feedback and no power for communication'.*[314] Examples of this might be officials providing programme updates through the local press or written communications, or through public meetings which limit questions - all of which restrict the ability of an individual to voice their concerns or exert any influence on final decisions. A common criticism of planning processes in western countries, both at the time Arnstein was writing and more recently, is that the process has a tendency to be dominated by experts and elected representatives, and that public 'consultation' is often carried out at a late stage in the planning process, as a 'box-ticking' exercise or courtesy to local people, rather than an opportunity to shape or change programmes.[315] Blakney laments a similar cycle of '*decide, announce, defend*' in the Canadian planning system.[316] The language used by officials is also significant in this

311 V.L. Pollock and J. Sharp, 'Real Participation or the Tyranny of Participatory Practice? Public Art and Community Involvement in the Regeneration of the Raploch, Scotland', (2012) 49(14) *Urban Studies*, 3063-3079; G. Parker and C. Murray, 'Beyond Tokenism? Community-led Planning and Rational Choices: Findings from Participants in Local Agenda-Setting at the Neighbourhood Scale in England', (2012) 83(1) *Town Planning Review*, 1-28.

312 S. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969) 35(4) *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 220.

313 P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* (Penguin, 1972/1996).

314 S. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969) 35(4) *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 219.

315 J. Forester, *Planning in the Face of Power,* University of California Press, 1989); P. Healey, *Collaborative Planning,* (Macmillan, 1989); R. Imrie and H. Thomas, 'Law, Legal Struggles and Urban Regeneration: Rethinking the Relationships', (1997) 34 *Urban Studies,* 1404-1418; C. Hague, K. Kirk, M. Higgins, A. Prior, P. Jenkins, H. Smith, S. Elwood, A. Papadopoulos, E. Hague, W. Grimes and C. Platt, *Participatory Planning for Sustainable Communities: International Experiences in Medication, Negotiation and Engagement in Making Plans,* (Heriott-Watt University, Edinburgh/DePaul University, Chicago, 2003). (Online) Available at: <http://www.chs.ubc.ca/archives/files/Participatory%20planning%20for%20sustainable%20development.pdf> Last accessed 1st September 2019; B. Flyvbjerg, *Rationality and Power: Democracy in Practice,* (University of Chicago Press, 1998).

316 J. Blakney, 'Citizen's Bane', (1997) 37(3) *Plan Canada*, 12-17.

stage, as it is in the 'manipulation' and 'therapy' stages, as there is a tendency to use jargon and specialist terms to describe processes. Such an approach can serve to exclude citizens from the dialogue around proposals and reinforce the power dynamic as one of 'experts' and 'lay-citizens', leading communities to have little choice but lay faith in the information shared with them while limiting their confidence and ability to meaningfully participate in the decision-making the process.[317]

In conducting the literature review, it was notable that the word 'consultation' frequently appears across the policy literature. As part of their programme of 'democratic renewal,' New Labour introduced 'Best Value' provisions as a statutory requirement for every service provided by local authorities in England and Wales, a component of which was a legal obligation to consult the public about their views and experiences concerning that service.[318] Provisions for 'earlier community consultation' were also made in the Localism Act, to offer two of many examples.[319] In theory, consultation should provide a vehicle for increased community voice and influence; however, as several academics have noted, the realities often fail to meet the rhetoric, with consultations often characterised as selective and limited in their reach,[320] poorly resourced and badly planned,[321] and restrictive in the opportunities presented for meaningful dialogue.[322] Arnstein reported similar restrictions in the American planning system, likening exercises to a *'window dressing ritual'*, and stating that often the most citizens take away from the process is that they have '*participated in participation*' often leading to a sense of 'consultation fatigue' amongst residents and little trust that their contribution will make a difference.[323] Both the informing and consulting stages are described by Arnstein as 'tokenistic' - on the surface they appear to involve communities in the decision-making process, but the opportunity for communities to contribute or take ownership of decisions and delivery remains out of their grasp due to the processes put in place.

By the 'placation' phase there is *some* representation for communities in the discussions surrounding development or policy choice, typically through positions on steering groups or committees, however, the likelihood is that citizen representation at this phase will be limited, and there will be several others on the committee or in the decision-making chain who will rule on the viability of plans.[324] For Arnstein, the ambiguous, complicated structures typically put in place at this stage inhibit community empowerment as citizens have little power to challenge such rulings without considerable

[317] P. Burton, 'Power to the People? How to Judge Public Participation', (2004) 19(3) *Local Economy*, 193–198.

[318] C. Needham, 'Empowering Citizens, Consumers, Councillors or Cabinets? The Impact Of Consultation On Local Government In The United Kingdom', (2002) *Paper for presentation at the ECPR Joint Workshops Session, Turin, 23-27 March, 2002*, (Online) Available at: <https://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/55630c8d-940e-46ff-b3e9-e878ce5a1814.pdf> Last accessed: 5th September 2019.

[319] DCLG, A Plain English Guide to the Localism Act, (DCLG, 2011).

[320] B. Cooke and U. Kothari, *Participation: The New Tyranny,* (Zed Books, 2001).

[321] P. Alcock, 'Participation or Pathology: Contradictory Tensions in Area-Based Policy', (2004) 3(2) *Social Policy and Society,* 87-96.

[322] P. Burton, 'Power to the People? How to Judge Public Participation', (2004) 19(3) *Local Economy*, 193–198.

[323] S. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969) 35(4) *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 219.

[324] J. Gaventa, *Representation, Community Leadership and Participation: Citizen Involvement in Neighbourhood Renewal and Local Governance*, (ODPM, 2004).

organising or technical assistance.[325] Arnstein goes on to argue that if there is to be a shift from 'non-participatory' and 'tokenistic' citizen participation there needs to be a degree of 'partnership working', another term used frequently in New Labour and Coalition discourse.[326] Partnership working is the first 'rung' of the ladder that Arnstein equates with a level of 'citizen control' as there is visible redistribution in power relations between citizens and officials.[327] Through steering groups and committees, representatives of the community can work alongside official representatives and have some agency to affect outcomes. Such an approach aligns with the proposals for neighbourhood and Partnership Boards put forward by New Labour for the New Deal for Communities and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder programmes.[328] For Arnstein, however, such a model of partnership is most effective when community representatives are held accountable by an organised and financially well-resourced community power-base which can afford its own legal and technical advice to ensure genuine bargaining influence over the outcome of any plan.[329] Arnstein's recommendations suggest an element of friction, or distrust, may remain between citizens and official representatives in this arrangement despite the rhetoric of partnership, as subsequent chapters will so there was some legitimacy in these concerns. In Arnstein's experience, this is because:

> *...in most cases where power has come to be shared, it was taken by citizens, not given by the city. This is nothing new about that process. Since those who have power normally want to hang on to it, historically it has had to be wrestled by the powerless rather than proffered by the powerful.*[330]

A defining feature of literature around civic participation is that historically, change to participatory practice has often been enacted by citizens, unhappy with the previous rules of engagement, taking action to force the government or those in a position of power to change their approaches to policy and decision-making, rather than being encouraged or empowered by government or any other agency to take part. One famous example of this is the 'Back of the Yards Neighbourhood Council' (BYNC). Formed in Chicago in 1930s in response to rising unemployment, poor working conditions and substandard housing, residents of the Back of the Yards area, with the support of Saul Alinsky (regarded as the founder of modern community organising[331]), organised to provide their own welfare services and promote wider

[325] S. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969) 35(4) *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 222.
[326] C. Johnson, and S.P. Obsorne, 'Local Strategic Partnerships, Neighbourhood Renewal, and the Limits of Co-governance', (2010) 23(3) *Public Money and Management*, 147-154; A. Pike, et al., 'Local Institutions and Local Economic Development: the Local Enterprise Partnerships in England, 2010-', (2015) 8 *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 185-204.
[327] P. Bunyan, 'Partnership, the Big Society and Community Organizing: Between Romanticizing, Problematizing and Politicizing Community', (2013) 48 (1) *Community Development Journal,* 119-133; M. Geddes, 'Partnership and the Limits to Local Governance in England: Institutionalist Analysis and Neo-liberalism', (2006) 30(1) *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 76-97; C. Johnson and S.P. Obsorne, 'Local Strategic Partnerships, Neighbourhood Renewal, and the Limits of Co-governance', (2010) 23(3) *Public Money and Management,* 147-154.
[328] Social Exclusion Unit, *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, Cmnd 4045, (The Stationery Office, 1998); Social Exclusion Unit, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan*, (Cabinet Office, 2001).
[329] S. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969) 35(4) *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 223.
[330] Ibid, 224.
[331] D. Beck and R. Purcell, *International Community Organising: Taking Power, Making Change,* (The Policy Press, 2013), 2.

take-up of union membership to hold local employers (particularly the Stockyards) to account.[332] Through 'community listenings', considerable efforts to build support and strategic partnerships with local people and stakeholders, and a programme of 'winnable' and at times adversarial campaigns, they secured a number of improvements for their area (spanning free school lunches, holding absent landlords to account, and securing private and federal investment into disused sites within their area generating jobs and housing) that would not have been achieved without these actions.[333] Some sixty years later, London Citizens an affiliate of Citizens UK (a 'broad-based community organisation' founded on the community organising principles developed by Alinsky and the Industrial Areas Foundation he set up), successfully ran a campaign to get government to agree to a London Living Wage, drawing on similar methods to those used by BYNC to do so: forming strategic alliances with political and religious institutions, holding those in power to account through public debates, and publicly confronting politicians with the lived experiences of people living on the margins.[334] The tension between grassroots groups organising for change from the 'bottom-up' and central government promoting their own version of such an approach (from the top-down) will be explored over subsequent sections and chapters, considering the extent to which citizen-power can be bestowed on communities, or whether the process needs to be negotiated.[335]

Returning to Arnstein, she identified two further 'higher rungs': '*delegated power*' and '*citizen control'*. Delegated power sees citizens given authority to make decisions over a particular plan or programme, either through a majority presence on decision-making boards; as an entity running in parallel with agencies and afforded powers to veto proposals; or in instances where powers to steer the programme or policy have been fully devolved to communities. At this stage, community representatives assume accountability to the broader community, have powers to veto proposals, and importantly have a level of legitimacy that allows them to hold local officials to account.[336] Complete 'citizen control' is where communities assume absolute control for decisions and delivery of local services, the planning process, policymaking or programme management. They have no or very little accountability to any intermediary organisations controlling funding or requiring final approval. Arnstein's accepts that in some areas of policy and government complete citizen control may be aspirational rather than achievable. However, she does state:

> *Though no one in the nation has absolute control, it is very important that the rhetoric not be confused with intent. People are simply demanding that degree of power (or control) which guarantees that participants or*

[332] It should be noted that the formation of BYNC followed considerable earlier work by trade unionists and strong links to the catholic church, relationships that had taken many years to develop and maintain.

[333] D. Beck and R. Purcell, *International Community Organising: Taking Power, Making Change*, (The Policy Press, 2013), 45-48; S. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*, (Vintage Books, 1971).

[334] J. Holgate, 'Contested Terrain: London's Living Wage Campaign and the Tensions Between Community and Union Organising', in J. McBride and I. Greenwood (eds.), *Community Unionism: A Comparative Analysis of Concepts and Contexts*, (Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 49-74.

[335] S. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969) 35(4) *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 223.

[336] Ibid, 223.

residents can govern a program or an institution, be in full charge of policy and managerial aspects, and be able to negotiate the conditions under which "outsiders" may change them.[337]

An interesting model of citizen control in England is the Big Local programme launched in 2012. Funded from proceeds from the National Lottery (not government funding), the programme gave £1million to 150 areas across the country to be spent on community priorities by resident-led groups over a ten to fifteen-year period. Partnership working, citizen control and delegated power are key aspects of the programme design. There was little in the way of restrictions on what this money could be spent on, apart from it being spent on promoting political or religious causes or be used for illegal or illicit means. As with many of the regeneration programmes this thesis looks at, Big Local partnerships were encouraged to form Partnership Boards with resident members in the majority. Otherwise it was for partnerships to choose how to organise themselves and how and where to allocate funds. A central programme team oversees the administrative arrangements for the programme and coordinates learning and research events, while a network of 'Big Local Reps' based around the country provide some 'light touch' technical support to each of the Big Local areas. The emphasis, however, is on the programme remaining 'resident-led' '*build*[ing] *on the learning and experiences of area-based, community development models that preceded Big Local*'[338]. The programme is mentioned here as it provides a useful counterpoint for the government-funded programmes that are the focus of this study. Several of the practitioners interviewed had been or were involved in the Big Local programme at the time of interviews and would draw parallels between the experience of that programme and their past experiences of being involved in initiatives under the banner of 'neighbourhood renewal' and 'Big Society'. Therefore, references to Big Local will be included in later discussion as these help to frame participant perspectives of 'citizen control', 'delegated authority' and 'partnership working'.

Through a detailed exploration of Arnstein's framework and several illustrative examples, this section has sought to demonstrate the gulf that often exists between claims for community control and the realities of policy implementation 'on the ground'. It also serves to highlight that processes that claim to create or increase opportunities for communities to participate are fraught with power imbalances. The fact that Arnstein's work continues to resonate today is cause for concern. Others have used similar scales or tiers to further demonstrate the potential (or limitations) or citizen involvement and to characterise different forms of partnership. For example, Pretty et al. present participation along a spectrum with 'passive participation' at one end 'self-mobilisation' at the other[339], while Hall reflecting on the partnership structures that

[337] S. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969) 35(4) *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 226.

[338] Institute for Voluntary Research (IVAR), *Big Local: What's New and Different?*, (IVAR/Local Trust, 2013), 1. (Online) Available at: <https://www.ivar.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Big-Local-Whats-new-and-different-IVAR-LT-FINAL.pdf> Last accessed: 28th September 2019.

[339] J.N. Pretty, I. Guijt, J. Thompson and I. Scoones, *Participatory Learning and Action: A Trainer's Guide,* (IIED, 2005) (Online) Available at: <https://pubs.iied.org/6021IIED/> Last accessed: 28th September 2019.

were commonly adopted as part of the Single Regeneration Budget programme presented a four-stage model spanning: 'shell' (nominal and tokenistic arrangements); 'consultative' (with communities and partners at the margins); 'participatory' (aligned to Arnstein's view of participation above, with collaboration and equal access); and 'autonomous' (partnerships that had gone to sustain involvement).[340]

Guijt and Shah, however, identify four problems with Arnstein's and subsequent models, their challenge being that: they are static and do not consider how power relations change over time; they oversimplify the distinction between participants and those outside of the process (by choice or exclusion); they assume an ideal form of interaction in which everyone participates; and they treat communities as homogenous wholes, ignoring their diversity.[341] While Marilyn Taylor points out a further limitation is that they present:

> *…an assumption that the top of the ladder is the place to strive for. This assumes that is what participants want, that this is always appropriate, and indeed, that those participants that win control will then empower others*.'[342]

In an attempt to move away from critiques of the linear model adopted in some frameworks, Davidson reconceptualised Arnstein's mode as a 'wheel of participation'[343] (see figure 4 below) which attempted to demonstrate both the range of ways planning professionals could look to involve local people in the planning process (aligning practices to four quadrants headed: 'information'; 'consultation'; 'participation'; and 'empowerment'), and to articulate that differing levels of involvement may be appropriate at different times.

[340] S. Hall, 'The Way Forward for Regeneration? Lessons from the Single Regeneration Budget Challenge Fund', (2000) 26(1) *Local Government Studies,* 1-14.

[341] I. Guijt and M.K. Shah, 'Waking up to Power, Conflict and Process', (1998) in I. Guijt and M.K. Shah (Eds) *The Myth of Community: Gender Issues in Participatory Development,* (ITDG Publishing, 1998) Cited in M. Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 152.

[342] Taylor, M., *Public Policy in the Community*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 153.

[343] S. Davidson, 'Spinning the Wheel of Empowerment', (1998) 1262(3) *Planning*, 14-15.

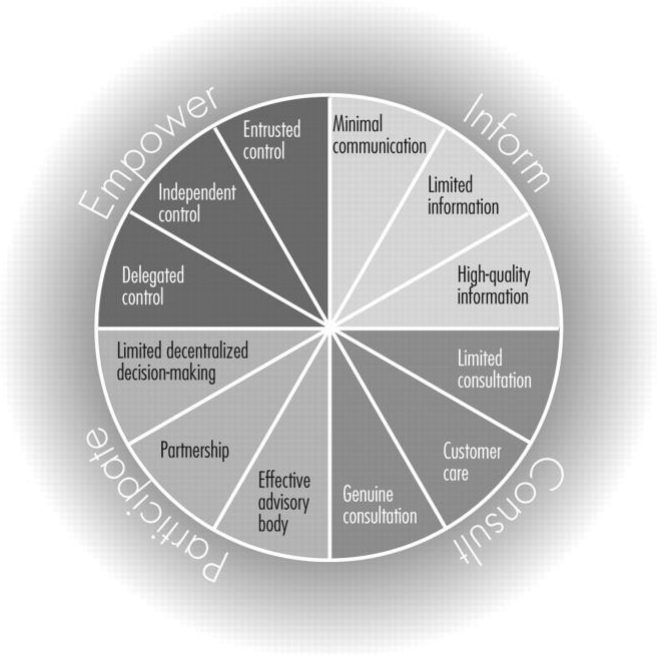

Figure 4: Davidson's wheel of participation[344]

Developed in partnership with South Lanarkshire County Council, this tool was created to assist planners in understanding the difference between participation and engagement by highlighting the steps that need to be navigated to move from no community input, (i.e. the council making all decisions) to a complete transfer of power (i.e. the community now have complete control of local decision-making). Again, the language used in Davidson's model echoes that used in speeches and quoted from government strategies in chapters one and two. In introducing his variation on the framework, Davidson acknowledges both the importance of Arnstein's model and the systematic failings she sought to expose and to address, so much so that the language of 'the wheel' borrows heavily from Arnstein's work, giving little reason to expand on the terms used here. The critical distinction Davidson makes, however, is to recognise that participation is not always a hierarchical or linear process and that different stages in the planning process warrant different levels of engagement and participation, which can be deployed without necessarily being disempowering. In Davidson's words '*the wheel promotes the appropriate level of community involvement to achieve clear objectives, without suggesting that the aim is always to climb to the top of the ladder*'[345] - although it should be noted Arnstein did not make this suggestion either. The intention is that planners and stakeholders can use the wheel to identify the most appropriate approach for their needs and the interests of the community. It is, of course, left open to interpretation and those commonly deploying the 'involving' and 'consulting' methods could use the wheel to legitimise their decisions. Neither model is however offered up as a manual - instead, they are intended to provide frameworks to guide discussion and to stimulate thought, and importantly serve as a

[344] Illustration from: S. Davidson, 'Spinning the Wheel of Empowerment', (1998) 1262(3) *Planning*, 14.
[345] Ibid, 14.

tool for bringing underlying tensions to the fore in a more constructive and theoretical way. This thesis deploys and modifies John Gaventa's 'space, place, and power' framework[346] (introduced in section 3.5 below) for precisely those means - to stimulate thought and discussion about the empowering and disempowering potential that state-led regeneration can have. Before doing so it is necessary to introduce and discuss some further reflections on power which inform the 'place, space and power' framework and serve to demonstrate the 'fluid' nature of power.

3.4 Towards a more "fluid" conceptualisation of power and empowerment

Through a review of the literature and subsequent interviews, it became clear that you cannot separate the debate about participation and empowerment from discussions and acknowledgement of the role 'power' plays in the process of participation, guiding the forums in which people are able to participate, and the extent to which they are able to exert influence.

Power is often conceptualised as a 'zero-sum' construct, in that for a group or individual to gain power; another must cede power, or have it taken away. This is commonly referred to as a pluralist view of power or as Steven Lukes terms it a '*one-dimensional view*' of power.[347] According to Robert Dahl under this reading of power '*A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do*.[348] In other words, those with power are cast as holding power 'over' those without, controlling or limiting their ability to act. Pluralists challenge elite theories of power that claim power only resides with a select few, most commonly associated with what Marx would term the 'ruling elite' - politicians, business leaders, clergy, or the military, etc. who can exert influence and make decisions outside of democratic structures.[349] Pluralists reject this view, arguing that there is no predetermined dominant group holding *all* of the power in every situation; instead it is a finite resource that needs to be negotiated or competitively challenged for around different issues in a particular time and place. In the pluralist reading power does not necessarily come from 'who you are'; rather

[346] J. Gaventa, 'Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis', (2006) 37(6) *IDS Bulletin*, 22-33. (Online) Available at: <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/8354/IDSB_37_6_10.1111j.17595436.2006.tb00320.x.pdf;jsessionid=9D31012DF6568994CF43BC6F0144B9A5?sequence=1> Last accessed: August 17th 2019.

[347] R.A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in New Haven,* (Yale University Press, 1961); S. Lukes., *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave McMillan, 2005) (First published in 1974), 16.

[348] R. Dahl, 'The Concept of Power', (1957) 2 *Behavioral Science*, 201-215 cited in S. Lukes., *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave McMillan, 2005) (First published in 1974), 16.

[349] For example, see: C. Wright-Mills, *The Power Elite,* (Oxford University Press, 1956); or F. Hunter, *Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision-makers,* (University of North Caroline Press, 1953). In his study of power relations in New Haven, Connecticut, which Hunter referred to as 'Regional City' in his text, described the situation as so: '*The individual in the bulk of the population of Regional City has no voice in policy determination. These individuals are the silent group. The voice of the professional under-structure may have something to say about policy, but it usually goes unheeded. The flow of information is downward in larger volume than it is upward*'. The role that wealth or capital, privilege, class and gender plays in creating, reinforcing and perpetuating these structures are key themes of discussion in the debate around elite theory.

power is the outcome of actions and who prevailed in decision-making situations.[350] Lukes describes the pluralistic view as:

> *Those* [decision-making*] situations are situations of conflict between interests, where interests are conceived as overt preferences, revealed in a political arena by political actors taking political stands or by lobbying groups, and the exercise of power consists of overcoming opposition, that is, defeating contrary preferences.*[351]

The 'pluralist' label comes from the argument put forward by Dahl and others, that because different actors can win on different issues in the 'political arena', power is distributed pluralistically. A pluralist analysis then, according to Popple, presents a scenario where '*it is possible to achieve change through rational discourse, the fostering of collective values and moral persuasion*'.[352] Yet despite Popple's use of 'rational discourse', a common conception is that 'conflict' has a role in deciding the outcome of a scenario. For example, Alinsky could be described as adopting a pluralist approach to community organising, drawing on a range of tactics, some of which were confrontational, as a means of persuasion.[353] As Dahl acknowledges, it is '*a necessary though possibly not a sufficient condition that the key issue should involve actual disagreement in preferences among two or more groups*.'[354] In such instances there will likely be reluctance from those perceived to be in the position of power to cede ground or give some away, resulting in a power struggle between the 'haves' and 'have-not's' to paraphrase Alinsky.[355] This reading of power presents it as something of a finite resource with only a limited amount available at any time, therefore making any attempt to gain power a contested concept, with those actors deemed to be lacking power taking action to gain it. Typically, in the field of community development, it is often governments, organisations and experts that are seen to hold power, and communities, local groups and individuals that lack it - with those often on the margins holding the least. From this reading:

> *…power is understood as a product of conflicts between actors to determine who wins and who loses on key, clearly recognised issues, in a relatively open system in which there are established decision-making arenas. If certain voices are absent in the debate, their nonparticipation is interpreted as their own apathy or inefficacy, rather than as a process of exclusion from the political process.*[356]

[350] Taylor, M., *Public Policy in the Community*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).
[351] S. Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave McMillan, 2005) (First published in 1974), 5.
[352] K. Popple, *Analysing Community Work: Its Theory and Practice*, (Open University Press, 1995) 40-41 cited in M. Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011),112.
[353] D. Beck and R. Purcell, International Community Organising: Taking Power, Making Change, (The Policy Press, 2013), 17.
[354] R.A Dahl, 'A Critique of the Ruling Elite Model', (1958) 52, 467 *American Political Science Review,* 463-9, cited in S. Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave McMillan, 2005) (First published in 1974), 18.
[355] S. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*, (Vintage Books, 1971).
[356] J. Gaventa and A. Cornwall, 'Power and Knowledge', in H. Bradbury-Huang (Ed), *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research*, Concise Paperback Edition, (SAGE Publications, 2002), 72.

The above quote links to one of the main critiques of the pluralist view of power; that everyone has equal means to compete or influence the debate. As Marilyn Taylor, writing on the work of pluralists and their detractors summarises the critique as so: '*Pluralism, they argue, fails to recognise the unequal distribution of power in society or the role that powerful interests within society have in the creation and substance of ideas'* - in other words *'The dice are loaded*.'[357] Under this view of power, decisions and agendas are set behind 'closed doors' or in the 'corridors of power', hidden by complex political or decision-making structures, with only the results or selective information from these activities being made available for wider consumption or deliberation. Bachrach and Baratz argue in their rejection of pluralist views of power:

> *Of course power is exercised when A participates in the making of decisions that affect B. Power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A. To the extent that A succeeds in doing this, B is prevented, for all practical purposes, from bringing to the fore any issues that might in their resolution be seriously detrimental to A's set of preferences.*[358]

Gramsci's concept of 'hegemony' is relevant here, described by Strinati as a situation where:

> *Dominant groups in society, including fundamentally, but not exclusively the ruling class, maintain their dominance by securing the 'spontaneous consent' of subordinate groups, including the working-class, through the negotiated construction of a political and ideological consensus which incorporates both dominant and dominated groups.*[359]

In other words, the 'rules of the game' are defined and maintained by more powerful actors (the church, the school, media, the state, the family, politicians etc.), and reinforced over time. Those with power 'set the agenda' and control the context within which decisions are made, leading to the '*spontaneous consent of the masses to the general direction of the dominant group*.'[360] Explaining hegemony Beck and Purcell note that this arrangement very rarely gets challenged in settled societies because:

[357] M. Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community, 2nd Edition*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011),112.
[358] P. Bachrach and M.S. Baratz, *Power and Poverty: Theory and Practice,* (Oxford University Press, 1970), 7. Cited in S. Lukes, *Power: A Radical View, 2nd Edition*, (Palgrave McMillan, 2005), 20.
[359] D. Strinati, An Introduction to the Theories of Popular Culture, (Routledge, 1995), 165 cited in D. Beck and R. Purcell, *International Community Organising: Taking Power, Making Change*, (The Policy Press, 2013), 178.
[360] A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks,* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), 12 cited in D. Beck and R. Purcell, *International Community Organising: Taking Power, Making Change*, (The Policy Press, 2013), 178.

> *First, both the dominant and dominated groups within society benefit in some way from the established social order – while the privilege of the dominant group is obvious, the dominated group also gain a variety of benefits such as wages, social security and a sense of acceptance. Second, the status quo is internalised by people and becomes deeply embedded in their consciousness and their sense of themselves.*[361]

An example relevant to this study is DeFilippis et al.'s description of the neoliberal hegemony that has led to a general acceptance that communities and the voluntary sector should be taking on responsibilities previously held by the state, assumed through a gradual programme of: state retrenchment; the devolution of state functions and the shrinking scale of state intervention; policies that redirect and restructure activities to community-based non-profits; and the proliferation of community-based practices that respond to '*state policies and market imperatives*'.[362] Relatedly, Garrett highlights the important role language and rhetoric plays in reinforcing these messages, looking at what proposals for the 'Big Society' might mean for the fields of social work and children's services, Garrett expressed concerns that it was to be '*the next in a long line of neoliberal slogans*' spanning terms like 'every child matters', 'sure start', along with '*co-opted concepts*' such as 'partnership' and 'empowerment' contributing to what Garrett described as '*the solidifying of neoliberal hegemonic order.*'[363] A view also held by Ledwith who argues state-led practices and messaging have restricted the reach of community development organisations, limiting them to neighbourhood actions and 'piecemeal' reforms, rather than the broad-based activities that were at the roots of the movement. Chapter six will explore what reach community development organisations and community organisers have had under the banner of England's Community Organiser programme.[364]

Luke's brings much of this debate together to provide what he terms a '*three-dimensional view of power*': the 'three faces' being 'decision-making', 'non-decision-making', and 'ideological power'.[365] The first face (decision-making) is akin to earlier discussions of visible demonstrations of power, for example, governments have power, they set policies, elected members are given the mandate to make decisions or lobby on behalf of constituents. 'Non-decision-making' relates to those with power setting what is and what is not 'on the agenda' or open to debate. To use DeFilippis et al.'s concerns noted on the previous page as an example, government may promote communitarian solutions to local issues at the expense of a debate or policies that explore other or wider structural forces that are impacting on communities.[366] Those making an

[361] D. Beck and R. Purcell, *International Community Organising: Taking Power, Making Change*, (The Policy Press, 2013), 178-179

[362] J. DeFilippis, R. Fisher and E. Shragge, *Contesting Community: The Limits and Potential of Local Organizing*, (Rutgers University Press, 2010), 84.

[363] P.M. Garrett, Transforming Children's Services? Social Work, Neo-liberalism and the 'Modern' World, (Open University Press/McGraw Hill Education, 2009), 28.

[364] M. Ledwith, *Community Development: A Critical Approach*, (Policy Press, 2011).

[365] S. Lukes, *Power: A Radical View, 2nd Edition*, (Palgrave McMillan, 2005), 25-29.

[366] J. DeFilippis, R. Fisher and E. Shragge, *Contesting Community: The Limits and Potential of Local Organizing*, (Rutgers University Press, 2010), 84.

alternative case may have to exert considerable pressure or power to influence that agenda. The third face (ideological power) is less visible, but arguably more powerful, as a particular position becomes a dominant and accepted view, to a point where it goes unchallenged. The 'third face' can be seen as the 'manipulative' side of power, by influencing what people think and believe, it is possible to regulate what they *do*. Placed in a government example this might be through speeches and messaging as Garrett suggests, through gradual processes of change (for example Stuart Hall talked of the '*long march of the neoliberal revolution'*[367]) or more overtly through social conditioning over considerable lengths of time (for example engrained prejudices or patriarchal views or processes), or a combination of them all.[368]

Moving away from viewing power as a framework, something that is finite, and something that can be wielded by people or groups, Michael Foucault argued that '*power is everywhere*' and '*comes from everywhere'*, present in all social relationships and running through every interaction between people and institutions.[369] Instead, Foucault frames power as '*a kind of 'metapower' or 'regime of truth' that pervades society and which is in constant flux and negotiation … constituted through forms of knowledge, scientific understanding and 'truth'*.'[370] For Foucault this 'truth' is established through 'discourse' or language and continuously reinforced through the education system, media, and political ideologies the individual is exposed to daily, this shapes their sense of place in the world and how they act and interact. As a result, Foucault does not just see power as a negative, or something used to coerce, it can also play a positive and necessary role in society,[371] with Foucault stating:

> *We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: It includes, it represses, it censors, it abstracts, it masks, it conceals. In fact, power produces: it produces reality, it produces domains and objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production*.[372]

Two elements of his thesis are particularly relevant to this study. The role power plays in producing social discipline and conformity, and relatedly, the role language or 'discourse' plays in creating and reinforcing these behaviours. Drawing

[367] S. Hall, 'Thatcher, Blair, Cameron - The Long March of Neoliberalism Continues', (2011) 48 *Soundings,* 9-27.
[368] P.M. Garrett, *Transforming Children's Services? Social Work, Neo-liberalism and the 'Modern' World*, (Open University Press/McGraw Hill Education, 2009), 28.
[369] M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge*, (Penguin, 1998), 63. Cited online: Institute of Development Studies, *Powercube.net: Foucault: Power is Everywhere,* (Online) Available at: <https://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power/foucault-power-is-everywhere/> Last accessed: 23rd October 2019.
[370] Institute of Development Studies, *Powercube.net: Foucault: Power is Everywhere,* (Online) Available at: < https://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power/foucault-power-is-everywhere/> Last accessed: 23rd October 2019.
[371] J. Gaventa, *Power after Lukes: A review of the literature*, (Institute of Development Studies), 2, Cited online: Institute of Development Studies, *Powercube.net: Foucault: Power is Everywhere,* (Online) Available at: < https://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power/foucault-power-is-everywhere/> Last accessed: 23rd October 2019.
[372] M. Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, (Penguin, 1979), 194. Cited in D. Beck and R. Purcell, *International Community Organising: Taking Power, Making Change*, (Policy Press, 2013), 180.

inspiration from 'panoptic' health and justice systems created in the eighteenth-century that adopted approaches to surveillance and assessment (as opposed to forms of violence) that led to people self-governing and modifying their behaviours willingly in line with accepted norms. Foucault observed that this not only plays out in state-citizen relations, or institutional arrangements but in everyday facets of life, defining what is normal, acceptable, deviant, etc.

> *There is a sort of schematism that needs to be avoided here ... that consists of locating power in the state apparatus, making this into the major, privileged, capital and almost unique instrument of the power of one class over another. In reality, power in its exercise goes much further, passes through much finer channels, and is more ambiguous, since each individual has at his disposal a certain power, and for that very reason can also act as the very reason for transmitting a wider power.*[373]

Over time these norms become so embedded that they are accepted without question – '*causing us to discipline ourselves without any wilful coercion from others*.'[374] Foucault emphasised the important role 'discourse' (defined by Gee as the language used in a social context *to 'enact activities, perspectives and identities*'[375]) played in creating and reinforcing these norms, defining the reality of the social world, and the people, ideas and things that inhabit it. For Foucault the possibilities for action and resistance against manifestations of power in this way comes from an ability to '*recognise and question socialised norms and constraints*.'[376]

In discussing the role of language and discourse in the context of community and social policy, Marilyn Taylor makes the connection between Foucault's work and that of Bourdieu's who stated:

> *The social world is the locus of struggles over words which owe their seriousness – and sometimes their violence – to the fact that words to a great extent make things and that changing words, and more generally representations ... is already a way of changing things.*[377]

[373] M. Foucault, Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977, (Harvester Press, 1980), 72. Cited in: J. Crampton and S. Elden (eds.), *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography*, (Ashgate, 2007), 179.

[374] Institute of Development Studies, *Powercube.net: Foucault: Power is Everywhere,* (Online) Available at: < https://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power/foucault-power-is-everywhere/> Last accessed: 23rd October 2019.

[375] J.P. Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method,* (Routledge, 1999), 4. (Online) Available at: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.466.3008&rep=rep1&type=pdf> Last accessed: 23rd October 2019.

[376] Institute of Development Studies, *Powercube.net: Foucault: Power is Everywhere,* (Online) Available at: < https://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power/foucault-power-is-everywhere/> Last accessed: 23rd October 2019.

[377] P. Bordieu, *In Other Words: Essays towards a Reflexive Society,* (Stanford University Press, 1990), 54-55. Cited in M. Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community,* 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 117.

In the opening chapter, I discussed how colleagues had dismissed new government localist proclamations as "*just* rhetoric"; however, as Bourdieu argues naming things, brings them into being. The proliferation of academic articles and the media attention afforded new government visions like 'Big Society' or 'Urban Renaissance' are testament to this, with charities and voluntary groups attempting to change their own language about what they do to meet new government paradigms.[378] Relatedly, some academics have noted that the language of community development has shifted in recent decades, becoming increasingly depoliticised.[379] Beck and Purcell note that '*within the UK ... notions of power have increasingly been replaced by the rhetoric of stakeholders and fairness'*, similarly Rose writing in 1999 describes how discourses of 'community' have '*hijacked a language of resistance and transformed it into an expert discourse and professional vocation* …[made up of] *zones to be investigated, mapped, classified and documented and interpreted*.'[380] Both of these themes will be explored further in chapter six.

This chapter began with a discussion of what it means to 'empower' and framed this within the setting of community involvement through the lens of Arnstein's ladder and associated frameworks. It then moved on to consider alternative theories of power considering the negative connotations so often associated with the word. The section then moved towards an understanding of power as a far more fluid construct, that is neither good nor bad, but rather a 'given' in the decision-making process. Viewed in this way the focus shifts to ensuring all actors have an understanding of power relations and their ability and need to create and exert power to achieve their objectives.[381] To influence change or actively participate, actors need some power to act. This power may be afforded through legal rights or legitimacy gained through voting, or through being recognised as an accountable agent or body. It might also be brought about through collaboration or partnership working with individuals or groups coming together to increase their voice and influence. Alternatively, it can come from individuals or groups developing a greater understanding of power or the processes they need to influence to achieve their objectives. Through increased confidence and awareness, they feel better positioned to act. A focus for community development workers then is placed on developing the political empowerment of marginalised groups so that they have the knowledge and confidence to participate, and understandings of power that can help them to build the relationships and coalitions that will allow them to participate more equitably.

[378] Civil Exchange, *Whose Society? The Final Big Society Audit*, (Civil Exchange, 2015). (Online) Available at: <http://www.civilexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Whose-Society_The-Final-Big-Society-Audit_final.pdf> Last accessed: 12th April 2019.

[379] P. Bunyan, 'Broad-based Organizing in the UK: Reasserting the Centrality of Political Activity in Community Development', (2010) 45(1) *Community Development Journal,* 111-127.

[380] N. Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought,* (Cambridge University Press, 1999). Cited in M. Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 117.

[381] S. Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave McMillan, 2005); P. Bourdieu, 'Social Space and Symbolic Power', (1989) 7 *Sociological Theory,* 14-25; A. Hastings and P. Matthews, 'Bourdieu and the Big Society: Empowering the Powerful in Public Service Provision? *',* (2015) *Policy and Politics,*545-560.

With this in mind, this chapter now moves on to explore John Gaventa's 'place, space and power' framework as a model that brings together much of the theory discussed, and consider its applicability to accessing the extent to which government-led programmes to encourage community participation can open up new, and empowering, opportunities for local residents to participate in the regeneration process.[382]

3.5 The 'place, space and power' framework as a tool for assessing power dynamics

In a paper introducing the 'place, space and power' framework, Gaventa notes that:

> *Around the world, new spaces and opportunities are emerging for citizen engagement in policy processes, from local to global levels. Policy instruments, legal frameworks and support programmes for promoting them abound. Yet, despite the widespread rhetorical acceptance, it is also becoming clear that simply creating new institutional arrangements will not necessarily result in greater inclusion or pro-poor policy change. Rather, much depends on the nature of the power relations which surround and imbue these new, potentially more democratic, spaces."*[383]

Relatedly, this thesis asks, do new arrangements for community participation in regeneration lead to meaningful empowerment opportunities for local people? It looks to ascertain whether participants can ask questions and have an influence on development that affects them or to quote Gaventa again '*will increased engagement within them risk simply re-legitimating the status quo, or will it contribute to transforming patterns of exclusion and social injustice and to challenging power relationships*?"[384] The 'place, space and power' framework, or 'powercube' as it is also known, provides a theoretical model with which to do this.

The place, space and power framework was developed by Gaventa alongside colleagues within the Participation Group at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in response to participatory programmes becoming an increasing part of the international development discourse, and stemming from a concern that approaches were not giving due consideration to power relations within programme implementation. The model is intended to encourage researchers in the field to pay attention to the importance of context when considering concepts and practices for participation and to place recognition

[382] Also referred to as the 'Powercube' model see J. Gaventa, 'Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis', (2006) 37(6) *IDS Bulletin*, 23-33. (Online) Available at: <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/8354/IDSB_37_6_10.1111j.17595436.2006.tb00320.x.pdf;jsessionid=9D31012DF6568994CF43BC6F0144B9A5?sequence=1> Last accessed: August 17th 2019.

[383] Ibid.

[384] Ibid.

of power dynamics at the heart of this. The theory underpinning the powercube draws on the work of Lukes and his theory of the 'three dimensions of power', introduced in the previous section.[385] Gaventa sought to expand upon this reading of power to also consider how 'spaces' for engagement are created and to consider the levels (from local to global) in which they occur.[386] By presenting a cube with three dimensions: 'Place' (made up of 'global', 'national' and 'local' considerations); Political 'Space' ('closed', 'invited', 'claimed/created'); and 'Power' dynamics (classed as 'invisible', 'hidden' and 'visible') the model (see figure 5 below) seeks to recognise that power is a complex notion involving actors with varying degrees of power, resources, beliefs, motivations and understandings, and that there are a whole host of structures and factors that can govern the ways and places in which people can or try to interact.

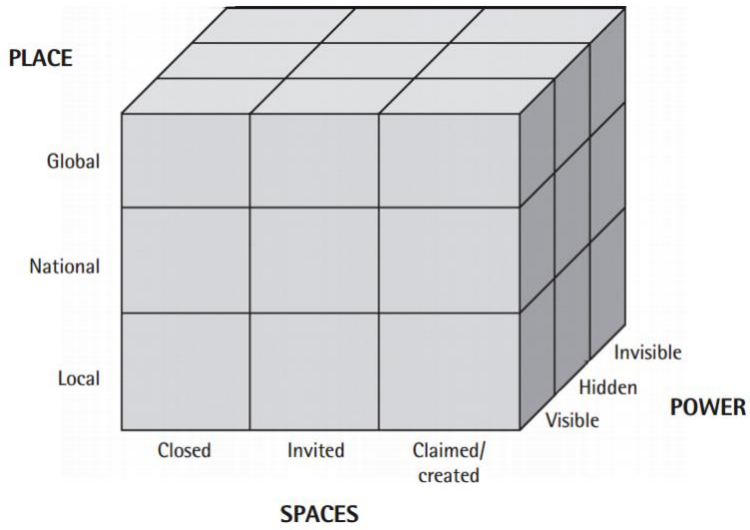

Figure 5: The 'place, space and power' framework[387]

Gaventa presents the model as akin to a 'Rubik's cube' with each section separate but interrelated and made up of a number of components, stating:

> *Though visually presented as a cube, it is important to think about each side of the cube as a dimension or set of relationships, not as a fixed or static set of categories. Like a Rubik's cube, the blocks within the cube can be rotated – any of the blocks or sides may be used as the first point of analysis, but each dimension is linked to the other*." [388]

[385] S. Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
[386] J. Gaventa, 'Finding Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis', (2006) 37(6) *IDS Bulletin*, 23-33.
[387] Illustration from: J. Gaventa, 'Finding Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis', (2006) 37(6) *IDS Bulletin,* 27.
[388] Ibid, 27.

By comparing the design and delivery of government-funded regeneration programmes across these three dimensions, the intention is that the tool can be used to assess whether new approaches or spaces for involvement and engagement can lead to transformative community participation. Before moving on to a discussion about how the framework will be utilised in this study, a brief summary of each dimension and its constituent parts is presented. This is deemed important for establishing the conceptual framework that will be used throughout.

3.5.1 Spaces of power

This dimension refers to the forums, arenas or channels by which actors engage with each other to discuss issues, share information, make decisions and ultimately act. 'Closed' spaces are official or unofficial spaces to which only certain people or interest groups have access, and where decisions are made 'behind closed doors', drawing parallels with Bachrach and Baratz's theory of power discussed in the previous section. Examples might include decisions made in cabinet meetings, board meetings, or made inside offices which the public do not have access to.[389] It can also represent situations where decisions have been made autonomously or by a limited number of actors without engaging other stakeholders in the decision-making process. For example, they could be arenas in which decisions are made about government policy, or programme design and resources.[390] Alternatively they could be sites of community action or organisation, where local people come together, independent of outside agencies, to discuss issues of importance and make plans to address them.

'Invited' spaces can be formal or informal spaces in which authorities or those holding power invite people or organisations to be consulted or to contribute to decision-making. This could be through a selective process, identifying specific individuals or groups to take part, through extending an open invitation to volunteers to 'get involved' or join a neighbourhood management partnership, or may take the form of votes or elections. The extent to which this invitation translates to influence upon the final decision or meaningfully represents the views of the community or those invited, (as opposed to the views of those who extended the invite) will be determined by the way actors interact within this space and the mechanisms used to reach a decision. The stages of Arnstein's model discussed earlier are relevant to this.[391] 'Claimed' spaces are formal or informal spaces created by those who seek greater power and influence. In this instance it is usually the "have-not's", those without power, who have collectively acted to create a new space or taken one (back) to exert greater influence on the decision-making process. Examples of this might include protests and demonstrations, local, national and/or online campaigns, community organising, or taking direct action.

389 P. Bachrach and M.S. Baratz, *Power and Poverty: Theory and Practice,* (Oxford University Press, 1970), 7. Cited in S. Lukes, *Power: A Radical View, 2nd Edition*, (Palgrave McMillan, 2005), 20.

390 M. Hill, *The Policy Process in the Modern State,* Third Edition, (Prentice Hall, 1997).

391 S. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969) 35(4), *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 216-228.

As previous chapters have demonstrated, the announcement of new programmes to promote community involvement or empowerment are often accompanied with language that reflects the 'opening-up' of previously closed spaces of activity, for example making it easier for local people to get involved in neighbourhood planning, or through a Duty to Involve, as cast in legislation.[392] The extent to which communities need to 'claim' or 'create' spaces for participation is a debate this thesis will return to later as there are polarising views. On the one hand, it can be argued that communities or individuals should not have to 'create' or 'claim' their own spaces to effectively participate; their participation should be a given in matters that relate to their lives.[393] On the other hand 'claimed' spaces can be important for communities to build a shared sense of identity and purpose, feel ownership and develop unity, something that government-led programmes might not afford them if the arrangements for participation are too prescribed.[394]

3.5.2 Forms of power

The power dimension of the cube encourages consideration of the various ways in which power dynamics might unfold within each space and the extent to which empowerment is facilitated. This dimension recognises that while at first it may appear that decisions are being made on the basis of the political clout, resources, and acumen of participants, there are often hidden or invisible mechanisms of power that can limit or completely inhibit participation and render any attempt to influence policymaking fruitless.[395] These forms of power accord with Lukes' '*three faces of power*'[396]:

To recap, 'visible' power reflects the power that is openly held and used by individuals or groups. They are the formal rules, authorities, institutions and procedures of decision-making, governing the way society should act. They take the form of laws, policies, regulations and processes often enacted by the government, key political figures, corporations or local leaders in accordance with the rules and procedures that permit their authority. Empowerment here would be reflected by communities visibly having a voice or chance to influence the decisions being made.[397]

[392] For example, The Health and Social Care Act 2012 made it compulsory that Clinical Commissioning Groups involve patients and their carers in decisions in relation to their health treatment.

[393] A. Cornwall and V.S.P. Coelho, *Spaces for Change? The Politics of Participation in New Democratic Arenas*, (Zed Books, 2007); J. Gaventa, *Representation, Community Leadership and Participation: Citizen Involvement in Neighbourhood Renewal and Local Governance*, (ODPM, 2004).

[394] M.L. Ohmer, 'Citizen Participation in Neighborhood Organizations and its Relationship to Volunteers' Self and Collective Efficacy and Sense of Community', (2007) 31(2) *Social Work Research,* 109–120; V.L. Pollock and J. Sharp, 'Real Participation or the Tyranny of Participatory Practice? Public Art and Community Involvement in the Regeneration of the Raploch, Scotland', (2012) 49(14) *Urban Studies,* 3063-3079.

[395] L. VeneKlasen and V. Miller, 'Power and Empowerment', (2002) 43 *IIED Participatory Learning and Action Notes,* 39-51. (Online) Available at: <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G01985.pdf> Last accessed: 23rd September 2019.

[396] S. Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

[397] J. Gaventa, 'Finding Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis', (2006) 37(6) *IDS Bulletin*, 29.

This moves to the identification of 'hidden' power which reflects instances where those with power decide who is involved in decision-making and get to set the agenda for the decisions to be made and the extent to which other stakeholders will be able to influence. This can lead to exclusion, bias or misunderstanding as certain actors may be purposefully or unintentionally excluded from the conversation. Used manipulatively this power can be used to intimidate, misinform or co-opt communities or stakeholders and severely limits the extent to which meaningful participation can be achieved should communities be excluded from the process.[398]

While 'hidden' power reflects a conscious decision to include and exclude certain stakeholders, 'invisible' power reflects a deeper social conditioning that prevents stakeholders from participating either through a belief that they cannot influence or enact change, or through a lack of understanding that they are, or could, be in a position to do so. Through traditional practices, culturally embedded norms or lived experience, stakeholders assume the position of powerlessness, and whether it be for reasons of apathy, anger or low self-belief stakeholders do not enter the decision-making process, instead assuming the role of passive recipient. By withholding information or attempting to educate people to challenge these assumptions, those with power can be accused of being complicit in this process as it is not necessarily in their interest to promote wider participation.[399]

If a move to increase community participation in urban regeneration and social welfare programmes is to be achieved, it is important for government, communities and intermediary bodies to encourage and develop strategies that create and open up spaces where power is visible, and that invitations are extended to all stakeholders to participate, introducing measures that can help them to overcome any barriers, hidden or invisible, to participation.[400] This may include awareness-raising or education campaigns delivered through a range of mediums, capacity building groups and individuals so that they are better positioned to participate, increasing collaborative working towards shared goals and being prepared to lobby or negotiate for power when power-holders continue to hide power or limit public involvement in shaping visible demonstrations of power. The powercube framework considers the capacity of groups at the international, national and local level to facilitate such shifts.[401]

3.3.3 Levels of power (place)

[398] Ibid, 29.

[399] Ibid.

[400] A. Cornwall, *Making Spaces, Changing Places: Situating Participation in Development*, (IDS Working Paper, 2002), A. Cornwall, *Democratising Engagement: What the UK Can Learn from International Experience*, (Demos, 2008); H.A. Nikkhah and M. Redzuan, 'Participation as a Medium of Empowerment in Community Development', (2009) 11 (1) European Journal of Social Sciences, 170-176.

[401] M.A. Macleod, *Exploring the Power Cube as a Tool for use in Evaluation: Identifying Shifts in Power with Women's Movements in Central America*, (Online) Available at: <http://mornamacleod.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Exploring-the-Power-Cube-as-a-Tool-for-Use-in-Evaluation-Final.pdf> Last accessed: 15th August 2019.

The third dimension of the 'place, space and power' framework acknowledges the increasingly dispersed nature of power in a globalised world. While there is much debate about the most appropriate levels to address power inequalities and encourage participation, the powercube encourages consideration of all three levels and their interrelatedness, both to each level and to the other dimensions of power. To briefly summarise each level:

'Local' level: In the work of Gaventa and other scholars within the IDS such as Andrea Cornwall and Karen Brock, the local level has commonly been used to represent sub-national decision-making arenas such as local government or state-level governments, NGOs or agencies appointed by the government to deliver interventions on their behalf.[402] These actors are presented with a remit from government and with varying degrees of autonomy to carry out their work: allocating and monitoring projects, planning and delivering programmes and services and engaging with citizens as recipients or service users. The powercube is then used to consider the areas and forms of power these organisations can participate in and influence.

The national level is still regarded by many as the key enabler for change and consists of national governments and the parliaments, senates, political parties, courts and bodies they are made up of. The consideration here is given to national and international policies employed by government and the way citizens are represented, and the extent to which they are involved in these, from voting rights to referendums and citizen panels. When considering national social policy, the relationships with local government and providers of key services, for example, the National Health Service, is of keen interest, as the government will to a degree, define the boundaries within which civic participation can contribute to their activities.

Consideration will be given to how these levels of power interact with each other (vertical interaction), as well as how actors typically situated at each level interact with one another inside that level - in line with recommendations that the powercube be seen as'*…a flexible, adaptable continuum, in which each layer interacts with the other, sometimes opening and other times closing opportunities for action*."[403] Given the interplay between state, local government/agencies and communities in the regeneration process, it is submitted that the powercube presents a useful analytical tool that can assist communities, academics, policymakers and those working in the field to understand the various power relations that can and do play out, and how they interact with each other. It allows users to map their position within the cube and compare

[402] K. Brock, A. Cornwall and J. Gaventa, 'Power, Knowledge and Political Spaces in the Framing of Poverty Policy*', (2001)* 143 *IDS Working Paper*, 1-47. (Online) Available at: <http://www.ids.ac.uk/publication/power-knowledge-and-political-spaces-in-the-framing-of-poverty-policy> Last accessed: 22nd March 2019.

[403] J. Gaventa, 'Section 2: Understanding the Power Cube and Related Concepts', *Power Pack: Understanding Power for Social Change (Web Version),* (Institute of Development Studies, 2010), 23*,* (Online) Available at: <http://www.powercube.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/PowerPack_web_version.pdf> Last accessed: 22nd August, 2019.

it to other actors, processes and forces and to strategically consider how to move to a desired level of participation. It can shine a light on actors that are controlling the regeneration agenda and allow communities wishing to participate in building awareness of the dynamics of power relations and consideration of how they can be reframed. With that in mind, attention turns to how the Powercube has been used within the scope of this research.

3.6 Adapting the powercube to assess space, place and power in English regeneration

While Gaventa developed the framework with a view to assessing the interplay between supranational, national and sub-national levels of government and the field of international development, he has, over the course of a number of publications, reiterated its applicability for studying power in a wide range of settings and cited its adaptability as one of its key advantages for those studying power.[404] Gaventa suggests users can adapt the model as they see fit, adding levels to reflect additional complexities or stakeholders in processes, or reframing levels to reflect the scope of a study. It is also promoted as a reflective device for assessing internal capacity and power relations as well as a strategic or observational tool. In light of this, this study uses an adapted model with the forms and spaces of power remaining the same but with a reframing of the levels to national, local/intermediary level and community level, thus allowing for the consideration of power dynamics between various actors in state-led or promoted regeneration initiatives. Having set out the various components in some detail in the previous section it does not warrant doing so again, but for clarity the regeneration stakeholders that will be referred to for the remainder of the thesis align to the following dimensions:

National level: Central government; government departments (e.g. Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, DCLG), and by direct association with central government, the Government Offices, etc.

The local or intermediary level: this refers to local government, Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), etc.

[404] J. Gaventa, 'Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis', (2006) 37.6 *IDS Bulletin*; J. Gaventa, 'Levels, Spaces and Forms of Power: Analysing Opportunities for Change' in Berenskoetter F. and Williams M. (eds.) *Power in World Politics*, (Routledge, 2007); I.I. Guijt, I. '*Synthesis Report of Dutch CFA Programme Evaluation', Assessing Civil Society Participation as Supported In-Country by Cordaid, Hivos, Novib and Plan Netherlands 1999–2004, The Netherlands*, (MFP Breed Netwerk, 2005) (Online) Available at: < http://www.bibalex.org/search4dev/files/355303/187244.pdf> Last accessed: August 24th 2019; M. Macleod, *Exploring the Power Cube as a Tool for use in Evaluation: Identifying Shifts in Power with Women's Movements in Central America*, (online) available at: <http://mornamacleod.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Exploring-the-Power-Cube-as-a-Tool-for-Use-in-Evaluation-Final.pdf > (Last accessed 15th August 2019).

Community level: New Deal for Communities Partnership Boards, Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders, community organisations, resident volunteers, community organisers, Neighbourhood Planning Forums, Parish Councils, and others living or working within neighbourhoods and communities targeted by government-led regeneration programmes.

As subsequent chapters will highlight these distinctions can at times become blurred, with actors typically aligned to one having a considerable presence and influence in others. The powercube serves as a useful conceptual framework for exploring this dynamic further.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter served a dual purpose. It contributed to furthering the understanding of some of the key concepts underpinning this study, namely definitions and interpretations of community 'engagement', 'participation' and most importantly, the consensus around what pertains to genuine 'empowerment'. These terms are used as a measure of the extent to which the programmes and policies enacted by the government during this period can claim to be 'community-led'.

The chapter also introduced a number of theoretical frameworks of empowerment that have influenced the conceptual framework to be used throughout this thesis. Considerable weight was given to explaining and deconstructing Arnstein's 'Ladder of Citizen Participation', and Gaventa's 'place, space and power' framework given the important contribution to the field of study both have made. Both were also used as a tool to consider power dynamics within local development that can so often act to disempower communities despite the government's empowering proclamations. The continued relevance of Arnstein's model almost fifty years later is striking, and reflective of the 'policy amnesia' discussed in the previous chapter.[405] A number of theories of power were also explored to highlight some of the prevailing debates around power which have spanned the last century. These served to highlight that power is another 'contested concept' and to demonstrate the 'fluid' nature of power. Gaventa's model was used to further discuss the fluidity of policy development and implementation and the empowering and disempowering impact this can have on all involved in the process.

The final sections moved on to introducing an adapted version of the 'place, space and power' framework which will be used as a conceptual framework throughout the remainder of this thesis, aiding the analysis conducted in subsequent chapters. A sound argument is presented for the model's suitability as an illustrative tool to consider the complex power dynamics brought into play through government enacted programmes to support community participation. As well as a

[405] K. Shaw and F. Robinson, 'UK Urban Regeneration Policies in the Early Twenty-First Century, (2010) 81(2) *Town Planning Review,* 123–149.

conceptual framework for considering the extent to which government-led programmes over the past eighteen years have created the new participatory 'spaces' they claimed they would.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The main objective of this thesis is to identify and evaluate the opportunities for community participation and empowerment offered by the regeneration programmes of New Labour and the Coalition governments. It looks to understand how these programmes were implemented, what structures, resources and support were put in place to aid their delivery, and to understand how certain programmes and policies were received by those expected to deliver them at the neighbourhood level. This chapter introduces the research methods that were deployed over the course of this study, discusses the practicalities of conducting each approach, and sets out the ethical considerations of the chosen approaches.

A mixed-method or 'pragmatic' approach to the research was adopted, utilising a combination of desk-based policy research, analysis of government data sets and evaluations, and primary interviews with resident volunteers, community development practitioners, programme officers and academics from the fields of community development and regeneration in both the UK and the US.[406] This combination of approaches helped to develop a detailed picture of both the aims underpinning the selected government policies and programmes and the extent to which they delivered on their stated aspirations for community participation. Providing an opportunity to "go beyond" publicly available data and examine whether the proposals to increase public involvement and empower local people reflected the lived experience of community members and local stakeholders involved in the delivery of programmes. The ethical implications of conducting primary research are also considered.

4.2 Conducting policy analysis

The starting point of this research was to develop a better understanding of how prevalent discourses of community participation had been in the speeches and strategies of successive New Labour and Coalition governments. Research began with a comprehensive search and review of government policy documents; legislature; 'White' and 'Green' papers (i.e. policy provocations); political speeches; and publications from political party-affiliated think-tanks, in order to assess the extent to which notions of community participation and empowerment had prevailed over the period 1997-2015. Thankfully, much of this literature can now be found online, and what was not available – typically policy documents

[406] R.B Johnson, A.J. Onwuegbuzie and L.A. Turner, 'Toward a Definition of Mixed Methods Research', (2007) 1, *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 112-133; M. Hawtin, G. Hughes and J. Percy-Smith, *Community Profiling: Auditing Social Needs,* (Open University Press, 1994); J. Ritchie, J. Lewis, C. McNaughton Nicholls and R. Ormston (eds.), *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers,* (SAGESage, 2013); D. Yanow, *Conducting Interpretive Policy Analysis,* Qualitative Research Methods Series 47, (Sage, 2000).

relating to early New Labour programmes - was held in the British Library. Meaning a significant proportion of the research underpinning this thesis was library and internet-based research.

A number of key search terms were identified and coupled with the names of the main political parties and key political figures of the time, amongst them: 'community empowerment', 'citizenship', 'social inclusion', 'urban regeneration,' 'community organising', and 'urban renaissance'. As the areas of interest broadened search terms were extended to include American terminology including 'urban renewal', 'revitalization' and 'urban development'. It was also important to be mindful that a new government often brings with it a new political lexicon and a tendency to rebrand policies or to announce their own initiatives, for example, the 'new localism', 'civil renewal' and 'active citizen' agendas of the Labour government under Tony Blair was replaced with a new approach to 'localism' under the guise of the 'Big Society' when David Cameron took office, these would be added as search terms as they emerged.

These searches proved fruitful, to a point where this posed a challenge in identifying the policies and documents that warranted a more in-depth analysis. Concepts of 'community empowerment', 'localism', 'citizenship' and 'devolution' had all by this time been accepted as a policy framework across many levels of government. So much so that a glut of 'neighbourhood renewal', 'Big Society' and 'localism' strategies and related documents had been published over across the period of focus.[407] As guiding frameworks for regeneration activity and community participation three key government strategies: *Bringing Britain Together – A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* (1998), *Transforming Places Changing Lives- Taking Forward the Regeneration Framework*, (2009); and, *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government* (2010)[408] were of particular value in understanding successive governments' stance on regeneration and the role envisioned for communities within this. The identification of further documents and regeneration programmes 'snowballed' from these. As a criterion for determining relevancy, each policy or programme needed to demonstrate:

- A clear statement of intent and a plan for delivery from the government. Setting out the ambitions for particular policies and programmes, the resources that would be deployed to pursue these policy goals, and the scope of the activities to be undertaken;

[407] For example, key policy documents included DETR, *Modernising Government: Local Democracy and Community Leadership*, (The Stationary Office, 1998); Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal,* Cmnd 4045, (The Stationary Office, 1998), DETR, *Involving Communities in Urban and Rural Regeneration*, (The Stationary Office, 1999); SEU, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan*, (The Stationary Office, 2001); Cabinet Office, *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government, (*Cabinet Office, 2010); Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), *Regeneration to Enable Growth: What the Government is Doing in Support of Community-Led Regeneration*, (DCLG, 2010).

[408] Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), *Bringing Britain Together – A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal,* Cmnd 4045, (The Stationary Office, 1998); DCLG, *Transforming Places Changing Lives- Taking Forward the Regeneration Framework*, (DCLG, 2009); Cabinet Office, *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government, (*Cabinet Office, 2010).

- A clear reference *to* and ambition *for* community participation and/or empowerment (or words to that effect) as a primary aim or component of the policy or programme;
- That the programme or policy would be spatially targeted in some way, with a particular interest in programmes and policies targeted at the neighbourhood level;
- And that (where possible) there was an official evaluation of the programme or policy and a wider body of work relating to that intervention to draw upon.

These components were necessary not only to address the question of which policies were introduced with the stated aim of enhancing community participation and civic action but also to go some way to examine the extent to which this rhetoric transferred into reality. Figure 1 in chapter one provides an overview of the programmes chosen based on the above criteria.[409] Having identified the key legislation, policies and resultant programmes this search was then widened to identify any key academic texts and grey literature related to the formation, delivery and evaluation of the selected programmes. These sources would prove valuable in developing a richer understanding of both the motivations behind the policies and programmes and in assessing the extent to which they delivered on their stated aims.

Having identified the key policies and programmes and sourced supporting information, attention turned to conducting the policy analysis. A five-staged approach was adopted in order to build a clear understanding of the rationale behind each policy; to understand the inputs and activities that were utilised to implement policy activities; and to deliver an assessment of the extent to which it has achieved its objectives relating to community involvement; as well as consideration of the long term viability of an intervention to assess its sustainability. Figure 6 below demonstrates this process:

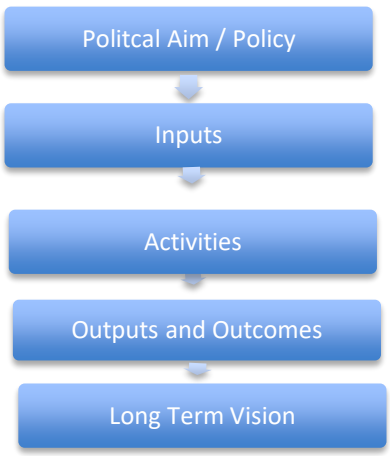

Figure 6 The five stages of policy analysis undertaken

[409] Figure 1 can be found on page 9.

To further elaborate the five stages of policy analysis undertaken can be broken down as follows:

Political Aims / Policy – The analysis of each policy began by attempting to understand the rationale behind its implementation, identifying events that led up to policy or legislation being implemented and to gain some understanding of the political objectives behind it. Doing so also helped to provide some context before examining the inputs, activities and outputs of a particular policy. Here associated speeches from party leaders and their members were examined, along with policy legislation, party manifestos, Green and White Papers, and any press releases - all of which served to provide a well-rounded understanding of the stated intentions underpinning policy or programme. Interviews (discussed below) also helped to build this understanding, with participants asked about their perspectives or insights into the underlying intentions behind the initiatives they were involved in. One participant had been directly involved in a government department responsible for establishing and implementing some of the programmes of interest. Others had some experience of informing or developing social policy in other professional capacities, for example through working for a Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder (NMP) that had been selected as a Centre of Excellence for Community Engagement tasked with sharing good practice with policymakers and other NMP areas across the country - insights that shed further light into the complexities of policy development and implementation.

Inputs – In this second stage of the analysis, the resources required to achieve the policy objectives were considered. Inputs included financial resources, staff time, physical space, but also focused on understanding what structures had been put in place to implement and oversee each programme; what controls, targets or reporting structures were introduced, and whether or not there was any investment in staff or facilities to support the activities. In some cases, the inputs came from a variety of sources alongside central government itself, for example, from local authorities, voluntary sector providers, the private sector, and communities themselves.

Activities – This phase was concerned with identifying what was delivered *to* or carried out *in* the communities as part of the particular policy or programme. Examples of this included the provision of new rights and responsibilities under the Localism Act - giving communities more power to influence local decisions, or the designation of community-led Partnership Boards to steer the delivery of programmes - which were a component of both the New Deal for Communities and NMP programmes. Other examples included new services or facilities and the provision of training and developmental opportunities for local people. It was at the 'activity' stage that the 'place, space and power' framework was utilised, helping to consider whether any new opportunities or 'spaces' for community participation had been created and the extent to which these new provisions genuinely delivered opportunities for community participation.

Outputs and Outcomes – Having considered the policy aims, the resources invested, and the activities carried out, the penultimate stage of the process was to consider what had been achieved as a result of these efforts. Of the two, outputs were the easiest to quantify being tangible services, facilities, participation numbers, or programme results. Examples of indicative outputs include the number of residents involved in training schemes, any increases in volunteering within the community, or the number of community-led plans submitted. Outputs would commonly be found in the evaluation reports for the various strands of activity, as well as in some related literature. The form these outputs took differed depending on the nature of the policy and activities carried out. In line with discussions in the previous chapters, consideration was also given to the contextual factors that may have shaped some of these findings.

Outcomes are the changes, benefits, learning or other effects that are a result of policies and activities carried out. As other literature reviews on the impact of place-based working have highlighted, these prove much harder to quantify, particularly when trying to evidence place outcomes or effects of an initiative on a whole area, as opposed to measuring the impact on an individual.[410] A review of the evidence base for area-based initiatives by the Lankelly Chase Foundation identified several common challenges in assessing the impact of any programme that has sought to transform neighbourhoods on a significant scale.[411] 'Attribution' was one such challenge, place-based social action often takes places within and alongside different scales of operation and political and socio-economic factors, as discussed in chapter two of this thesis. This complexity makes it very difficult to attribute any change to a single intervention, particularly so when an intervention is rolled out over a large boundary and/or several years.[412] Other factors separate to the intervention may also help or hinder the outcomes a programme is trying to achieve. Changes brought about through political change; neighbourhood churn; employment rates; welfare reform; etcetera, may influence the reach of an intervention, or have consequences that far outweigh the changes a place-based initiative might hope to bring about at an individual or geographic scale.[413] There may also be tensions between local government and national government priorities or changes in key stakeholders that can affect the delivery or priorities of a programme.[414] Again, an appreciation of context becomes

410 M. Taylor, E. Buckly and C. Hennessey, *Historical Review of Place Based Approaches,* (Lankelly Chase, 2017) (Online) Available at: <https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf> Last accessed: 25th September 2019; J. Griggs, A. Whitworth, R. Walker, D. McLennan, and M. Noble, *Person - or Place-Based Policies to Tackle Disadvantage: Not Knowing what Works*, (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2008); J. Rhodes, P. Tyler and A. Brennan, *The Single Regeneration Budget: Final Evaluation,* (University of Cambridge Department of Land Economy, 2007); P. Lawless, 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 313-328; P. Lawless and S. Pearson, 'Outcomes from Community Engagement in Urban Regeneration: Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme,' (2012) 13(4) *Planning Theory & Practice*, 509-527.

411 M. Taylor, E. Buckly and C. Hennessey, *Historical Review of Place Based Approaches,* (Lankelly Chase, 2017), (Online), 52-58, Available at: <https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf> Last accessed: 25th September 2019.

412 Ibid, 55.

413 J. Griggs, A. Whitworth, R. Walker, D. McLennan, and M. Noble, *Person - or Place-Based Policies to Tackle Disadvantage: Not Knowing what Works*, (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2008).

414 ECOTEC, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010).

very important, and attempts are made to explore this. For this reason, this thesis does not attempt to comment on the overall success of any of the initiatives considered. Headline figures from evaluations are included at times to emphasise the reach and impact of programmes, but the primary focus of this thesis is to understand the structures and messaging introduced by the government as part of the delivery of these programmes, rather than what they achieved beyond resident involvement. Interviews with residents and officers involved in the delivery of the chosen programmes help to provide some context to how programmes were experienced 'on the ground' and what was achieved at a local level, but it is recognised that these voices represent a limited sample in comparison to the number of initiatives that took place. Encouragingly, however, the experiences of those interviewed largely married with findings of others researching this field.

Another criticism raised in Lankelly Chace's work was that there was a tendency for programme evaluations to be largely summative rather than developmental and that the vast majority failed to take a longitudinal approach to evaluation that extended beyond the lifetime of a programme - this again presents challenges for capturing or demonstrating impact. Whereas impacts on individuals can be captured, and infrastructure and physical realm improvements can be seen, 'systems change' and 'soft' or 'whole place' outcomes are difficult to prove, particularly when evaluations typically take place in a short time just before or after the end of the programme, yet some of these changes may take years, or even decades to become apparent.[415] This is particularly the case in programmes targeting deprived communities.[416] For example, short or medium-term outcomes might include improved confidence in local government, reduced feelings of isolation within the community, or increased belief that the community can work together to enact change. Yet only a long-term view will tell us if these improvements have been sustained, that relations between the community and local government have remained in place, positive feelings of being part of a community have continued, or those who took part in training have experienced enhanced career prospects which they attribute to their involvement. For this reason, a fifth component, focusing on the sustainability of initiatives, was also included.

Long-Term Vision – Given that a further consideration of this research was to explore how sustainable a policy or programme has been, the final stage of the analysis examined the extent to which plans had been made for a programme or policy to continue beyond its funding and designated lifespan. Many government programmes are funded and designed to run for a certain number of years; with this in mind consideration was given to whether there were any opportunities or

[415] M. Taylor, E. Buckly and C. Hennessey, *Historical Review of Place Based Approaches,* (Lankelly Chase, 2017) (Online), 55. Available at: <https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf> Last accessed: 25th September 2019.

[416] N. Gilbert (ed.), *Researching Social Life*, (Sage Publications, 1993); C. Seale (ed.), *Researching Society and Culture,* (Sage, 2008).

provisions made to continue the work of a programme beyond these parameters.[417] Consideration was also given to the extent to which communities were invited or could have been invited to participate in the sustainment of these activities and whether or not good practice and lessons learnt throughout the duration of these programmes had been documented, preserved and shared with other communities within England, or given the comparative element of this thesis, internationally.

What followed was a continued study of the literature, accompanied by attendance at a number of workshops, seminars and conferences around such subjects as 'localism', new 'Community Rights', 'regeneration in the age of austerity' and 'community empowerment'.[418] This led to a growing awareness of community-based initiatives, regeneration practice and community policy both in the UK and overseas. Many of these sessions also discussed examples of community-led initiatives or community-focused regeneration schemes that are referenced in later chapters.

4.3 Conducting primary research in England and America

Given the importance placed on 'context' in the literature, it was also important to capture the perspectives of some of those involved in the delivery of these programmes and policies within the neighbourhoods they targeted. An approach supported by Fielding who argues that interviews are an essential research method to unearth insights into '*...actions, attitudes, feelings and beliefs [underpinning policies] rather than just rehearsed rhetoric*'.[419] Therefore, the secondary research discussed above was complemented by interviews conducted in both England and America.

[417] J. Anastacio, B. Gidley, L. Hart, M. Keith, M. Mayo and U. Kowarzik, *Reflecting Realities: Participants' Perspectives on Integrated Communities and Sustainable Development*, (Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) /The Policy Press; 2000). (Online) Available at: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/reflecting-realities-participants-perspectives-integrated communities-and-sustainable> (Online) Last accessed: October 25th 2016; A. Colantonio, 'Urban Social Sustainability: Themes and Assessment Methods,' (2010) *Proceedings of the ICE Urban Design and Planning* 163 (2). (Online) Available at: <https://www.icevirtuallibrary.com/doi/abs/ 10.1680/udap.2010.163.2.79> Last accessed: 3rd September 2019; A. Colantonio and T. Dixon, *Urban Regeneration & Social Sustainability: Best Practice from European Cities*, (Wiley and Blackwell, 2011).

[418] These included a series of 'Regeneration Masterclasses' delivered by the British Urban Regeneration Association between 2010 and 2012, Participation in *the Tenth International Conference on Environmental, Cultural, Economic & Social Sustainability at Split University*, Croatia in 2014 at which I presented elements of this work, and attendance at the following conferences/workshops: Respublica – *The Hidden Wealth of Communities: Tackling the Civic Deficit through Social Clubs and Leisure Clubs*, (London, 27th June 2012); OPM Public Interest Seminar – *Coping with Tough Times* (London, 4th December 2012); CLES/New Start Magazine – *East London – 10 Years of Change*, (London, 4th March 2013); LSE - *CASE Social exclusion seminars: Bruce Katz – The Metropolitan Review; How Cities and Metros are Fixing Broken Politics and Fragile Economies*, (London, 30th Oct 2013); City of London/City Story – *Philanthropists as Change Makers – Past and Present*, (London, 4th November 2013); London South Bank University – *Routledge Companion to Urban Regeneration Book Launch and Conference*, (London, 6th February 2014); UCL Bartlett - *Omega Centre Programme: Appraising the Social Dimensions of Large Scale Urban Regeneration Projects*, (London, 1st March 2017); LSE Cities – *Prof. Richard Florida – The New Urban Crisis*, (London, 9th October 2017).

[419] N. Fielding, 'Ethnography' in N. Gilbert, (ed.) *Researching Social Life*, (Sage Publications, 1993), 137-8.

Experiences of those involved in the interviews spanned involvement in the deployment of Single Regeneration Budget programmes, the New Deal for Communities programme in two areas of England, and the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder programme, as well as a a number of non-government-funded community development programmes, like the National Lottery Funded Big Local programme, providing a broad range of perspectives.

Additionally, through policy research, the influence of American community policy and the work of American sociologists and community organisers on English social policy and programme design became increasingly apparent.[420] This led to the decision to employ a comparative element to the thesis – looking to American community development delivery in an attempt to identify best practice that could inform the English model, and to attempt to understand whether the American community development sector, so often heralded as an exemplar was as comprehensive as some of the government rhetoric suggested. Thanks to involvement in a Knowledge Transfer Partnership and the support of Kingston University and Renaisi, funding was awarded for a research trip to the United States with the purpose of learning more about American approaches to community development and community-led regeneration, the results of which provide interesting parallels with the English approach to increasing community participation. The following sections set out the preparation and approaches adopted in conducting this primary research.

4.3.1 Identification of participants

The selection of the participants followed a somewhat similar path to the selection of appropriate research materials set out in section 4.2. Early exploration of the literature identified a number of examples of communities selected as sites for programme delivery in England, or in the case of America, communities and cities with a long history of implementing community-focused and community-led initiatives. Three US cities to visit were selected: New York, Chicago and Washington D.C. While English participants were able to draw on experiences of involvement in programmes in London, Nottingham, Birmingham and across the Midlands.

New York was chosen for its similarities with London as a world city – given that a base for this research was London, it made sense to make New York an American comparator. Chicago was chosen for its long history of community organising – indeed many have referred to it as the birthplace of modern community organising given that it was home to Saul Alinsky,

[420] A. Deacon, 'Learning from the US? The influence of American Ideas Upon 'New Labour' Thinking on Welfare Reform, (2000) 28 (1) *Policy & Politics*, 5-18; C. Annesley, 'Americanised and Europeanised: UK social policy since 1997', (2003) 5(2) *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 143-165; A. Daguerre, 'Importing Workfare: Policy Transfer of Social and Labour Market Policies from the USA to Britain under New Labour', (2004) 38(1) *Social Policy & Administration*, 41-56.

the Industrial Areas Foundation and the 'Chicago School' of social academics.[421] While Washington D.C was decided upon given its important place in driving US national policy and that it was home to the head offices of many national think-tanks and organisations with a community focus.

Having identified the areas of interest, the next step was to build a list of participants to interview. The purpose of the interviews was to learn from others who had been involved in the design or delivery of community-led initiatives, and that had experience of engaging with government-funded regeneration programmes; therefore potential participants were identified on the basis of this exposure.[422] Some were identified through professional networks, while others were identified through examining published local authority and voluntary sector documents, such as 'Community Action Plans', and through extensive online searches of community groups and community organisers in the USA. Colleagues at Renaisi and Kingston University also reached out to their networks for links and introductions to relevant individuals and organisations. This was complemented by 'snowball sampling' which entailed asking those that had initially agreed to take part to recommend others with relevant experience, drawing on their own social and professional networks. Such a sampling method is considered especially effective in gaining access to isolated social groups or 'hidden populations', that otherwise may be impossible to contact, this was particularly helpful in identifying resident participants in both the UK and USA, as this information was not always publicly available.[423] Another benefit of the snowballing approach is that it can help to build trust and legitimacy with new participants, with the referring participant providing some form of validation about the interviewer.[424] Such an approach, however, does have implications for the diversity of the pool of participants as this is limited to the networks of the person making the referral.[425] As Griffiths et al. highlight this can create bias, and therefore reduces any opportunity for establishing generalities.[426] Generalisations were not something that was sought to be made through this study, given the recognition that communities are diverse and the sample of interviewees would always be small within the scope of a nationally delivered programme; however, it was important to capture a range of voices from across programmes and communities. Therefore, the snowball approach was complemented

[421] W.G. Lutters and M.S. Ackerman, 'An Introduction to the Chicago School of Sociology', (1996*) UMBC Interval Research Proprietary*, 1-25, (online), Available at: <https://www.academia.edu/7042690/An_Introduction_to_the_Chicago_School_of_Sociology._Lutters_Ackerman> Last accessed: 31st October 2018); S. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*, (Vintage Books, 1971); A. Von Hoffman, *Fuel Lines for the Urban Revival Engine: Neighborhoods, Community Development Corporations, and Financial Intermediaries*, (Fannie Mae Foundation, 2001), A. Von Hoffman, *House by House, Block by Block: The Rebirth of America's Urban Neighbourhoods*, (Oxford University Press, 2003).

[422] A. Kuzel, 'Sampling in Qualitative Inquiry', in B. Crabtree and W. Miller (eds), *Doing Qualitative Research*, Second Edition, (Sage, 1999), 33– 45.

[423] R. Atkinson and J. Flint, 'Accessing Hidden and Hard-to-Reach Populations: Snowball Research Strategies', (2001) 33 *Social Research Update*, University of Surrey, 1.

[424] Ibid, 2.

[425] K. Van Meter, 'Methodological and Design Issues: Techniques for Assessing the Representatives of Snowball Samples', (1990) *NIDA Research Monograph*, 31-43.

[426] P. Griffiths, M. Gossop, B. Powis and J. Strang, 'Reaching Hidden Populations of Drug Users by Privileged Access Interviewers: Methodological and Practical Issues', (1993) 88 *Addiction,* 1617-1626 cited in R. Atkinson and J. Flint, 'Accessing Hidden and Hard-to-Reach Populations: Snowball Research Strategies', (2001) 33 *Social Research Update*, University of Surrey, 3.

with direct identification and contact of participants operating outside of participant networks, to ensure a more balanced spread.

In all cases, preliminary email contact was made with potential participants to establish their willingness to participate in the research. Where possible, appropriate documentation or online content was read prior to this contact in order to develop basic background knowledge of each organisation and the programmes or initiatives they have been involved in to ensure their experiences aligned with the research focus.[427] During these initial exchanges, interviewees were given an outline of the areas of interest and the purpose of the study, this served the dual function of treating participants courteously and giving them considerable time to prepare for the interview.

4.3.2 Conducting empirical research

The decision to adopt a qualitative component to this research seemed like a logical one, as Duke argues taking a qualitative route in relation to researching social policy is essential when trying to *'delve into parts of the policy process which quantitative methods cannot reach. They have the potential to explore innovation, originality, complexity, interactions, conflicts and contradictions'.*[428]

Nine interviews in America took place over three weeks in January 2011. The purpose of these were to interview participants who had been key actors in the development and implementation of policies and initiatives within the locality either as community activists; public servants; or in their capacity as a professional intermediary. These interviews were often complemented with tours of the projects or neighbourhoods in which they operated, adding further context to the discussions. A list of the organisations and institutions each participant represented is included as Appendix One, but amongst them were a range of community groups and Community Development Corporations, a senior official from Chicago's City Hall and representatives from LISC – the largest urban regeneration intermediary in the USA.

Interviews in England were undertaken over the course of 2018 and 2019 - towards the latter stages of this thesis, allowing for reflections on programme delivery, implementation and outcomes spanning the full 1997-2015 timeframe that is the focus of this research. Again, participants were selected because of their involvement in relevant regeneration programmes. As Appendix Three shows, these include residents involved in the delivery for the duration of a London-based New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme and a senior officer employed on the same programme. Other participants had been

[427] B.L. Berg, Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences, (Allyn and Bacon, 2001).

[428] K. Duke, 'Getting Beyond the 'Official Line': Reflections on Dilemmas of Access, Knowledge and Power in Researching Policy Networks', (2002) 31(1) *Journal of Social Policy*, 42.

involved in the design and delivery of neighbourhood regeneration programmes in Birmingham, Nottingham and other parts of Yorkshire and the Midlands – providing perspectives from different parts of England.

The purpose of the interviews was to understand the different ways in which these programmes had been experienced by those delivering and participating in them, and to provide additional insight into the extent to which the localist rhetoric of government at the time resonated with those involved at the 'ground level'. In the American interviews, the focus was on getting a deeper understanding of community-led regeneration activities in the US and their views on state-funded citizen participation activities, given the frequent mentions of moving towards "American-style" community development practices in English policy. In both cases a range of views and roles were sought and found, and while the sample size may not allow for generalisable findings, it did provide a deeper understanding of how central government-led programmes had been interpreted and implemented at the local level, as well as providing a better understanding of the American context being championed. Interviews provided a wealth of insight into 'bottom-up' community-led activity and allowed for deeper exploration of the juxtaposition between central government programmes promoting grassroots social action. Further to this, as well as being informed *by* the literature and policy documents, the interviews also helped to further the understanding *of* related literature, providing opportunities to gain clarity on aspects of programme delivery and decision-making and to help build an understanding of programme timelines and changes that were not apparent in the policy literature.

Interviews were conducted using an informal, semi-structured interview technique; these were based around a set of predetermined semi-structured questions, with additional questions emerging through the interview – a list of the questions asked can be found in Appendix Two. The benefit of this approach is that while it offers a standard structure that was in the most part followed, it also provides opportunities to adapt the sequencing of questions and probe points raised further, recognising that when responding to a question people often provide answers to questions that were going to be asked later – a regular occurrence in this research. [429] As Anne Galetta notes '*the semi-structured interview provides a repertoire of possibilities. It is sufficiently structured to address specific topics related to the phenomenon of study, while leaving space for participants to offer new meanings to the study focus*.[430] Galetta's advice married with the experience of conducting this research, with interviews providing valuable insight into individual experiences, allowing for exploration of participants' narratives of experience and views of the role of the community in regeneration programmes and local decision-making.

[429] N. Fielding and H. Thomas, 'Qualitative Interviewing' in N. Gilbert (ed.), *Researching Social Life,* p124

[430] A. Galletta, *Mastering the Semi Structured Interview and Beyond: From Research Design to Analysis and Publication*, (New York University Press, 2013), 23.

Interviews typically lasted between one hour and ninety minutes. Ahead of the interviews, interviewees had been supplied with an overview of the area of interest, and this aided the semi-structured nature of the interviews. Typically questioning commenced with broad, open questions, allowing participants to share their insights and experiences, followed by a series of closed questions towards the end of the interview to ensure that all the desired points had been covered and to seek clarification where needed. On two occasions there were several representatives of a community organisation present, this at times led to diversions for the listed questions, but again this was to the benefit of the research as exchanges *between* participants as well as with myself provided further valuable insights. Following the interviews, the last stage of this phase was to transcribe the interviews. Transcription was a time-consuming process but presented the opportunity for reflection on each individual interview and provided insight into several key strands to emerge from the interviews, extracts of which are included in chapters five, six and seven.

4.4 Ethical considerations

While all research has ethical implications, researching sensitive issues such as those around community and the race, class, power, etc. relations that exist within them can have particular implications.[431] Therefore, attention was paid to the potentially sensitive nature of the research and the issues raised when researching (across) ethnicity, gender, class etc. Primarily, the research was framed by standard ethical guidelines as outlined by the British Sociological Association[432] and the Social Research Association[433] as well as Kingston University's own research and ethics guidelines. Diener and Crandall state that there are essentially four main ethical concerns which need to be considered in social research, these are: whether there is harm to the participants of the research, whether there is a lack of informed consent, whether there is an invasion of privacy, and whether there is deception involved.[434] Care was taken throughout this research to ensure these concerns were addressed.

In line with recommended practice, all participants were informed about the purpose of the research, how the research would be used and disseminated, and how the research was being funded.[435] This was initially set out in the invitations to

[431] J. Ritchie, J. Lewis, C. McNaughton-Nicholls and R. Ormston (eds.), Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers, (SAGE, 2013); H. Rubin and I. Rubin, Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data, (Sage, 2005).

[432] British Sociological Association, *Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association*, (British Sociological Association 2002).

[433] Social Research Association, *Ethical Guidelines,* (Social Research Association, 2003).

[434] E. Diener and R. Crandall, *Ethics in Social and Behavioural Research*, (University of Chicago Press, 1978), cited in A. Bryman, *Social Research Methods,* (Oxford University Press, 2001), 479.

[435] British Sociological Association, *Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association*, (British Sociological Association 2002); G. Crow, R. Wiles, S. Heath and V. Charles, 'Research Ethics and Data Quality: The Implications of Informed Consent, (2006) 9(2) *International Journal of Social Research Methodology,* 83–95; S. Webster, J. Lewis and A. Brown, 'Ethical Considerations in Qualitative Research in: J. Ritchie, J. Lewis, C. McNaughton-Nicholls and R. Ormston (eds.), *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers,* (SAGE, 2013).

participate and reiterated at the beginning of each interview to ensure participants fully understood what they were consenting to take part in. Before interviews were started participants were also asked if the interviews could be audio recorded to aid analysis and transcription at a later point, all participants agreed to this request. It was however made clear that the voice recorder could be turned off, or the interview terminated, at any point should they wish not to continue or have their responses recorded. In line with good practice, efforts were also made to reaffirm consent as interviews progressed, asking participants if they were willing to discuss certain points raised in more detail.[436]

Given that many of the participants who took part in this research continue to live, work, and volunteer in the communities they were asked to discuss, the decision was taken to anonymise names and affiliations, and if needed leave out parts of accounts that may lead to an individual being identified or compromised.[437] Relatedly, there were also instances when participants would say things and then reflect that they would rather not be 'quoted on that' or that something was 'off the record', in those few cases their wishes have of course been respected. The benefit of adopting this approach is that participants can feel more comfortable discussing potentially sensitive or contentious topics.

Relatedly, it was also important to be mindful that some of the interview questions were potentially asking participants to reflect on experiences that may not have always been positive. Something that became increasingly apparent through the interviews, and that had not been picked up in official evaluations, were the levels of stress and concerns for personal safety some of the participants and staff experienced during their involvement in past programmes. Participants talked of the 'weight of expectation' they felt at the time and recounted instances where they had felt unsafe due to disputes and misunderstandings. This was somewhat unexpected and became a particularly careful line to tread given that a focus of the research was to understand the challenges inherent in the programmes of focus, as well as the successes. With this in mind, questions were worded carefully, and efforts were made to reaffirm to participants that they were not obliged to share anything they were not comfortable sharing. As interviews progressed and a better understanding of the context and complexities was gained, some adjustments to the phrasing and ordering of questions were applied, this helped the flow of interviews and served to ease participants into the interviews, before moving onto a discussion of the challenges. Some prior research into the histories of places, programmes and the groups participants were affiliated with also helped to identify potential sensitivities.[438] Again as interviews progressed, so did awareness of what to look for here and how to plan and adapt accordingly.

436 M. Byrne, 'The Concept of Informed Consent in Qualitative Research', (2001) 74(3) *AORN Journal*, 401-3; C. Sinding and J. Aronson, 'Exposing Failures, Unsettling Accommodations: Tensions in Interview Practice', (2003) 3(1) *Qualitative Research*, 95-117.

437 I.F. Shaw, 'Ethics in Qualitative Research and Evaluation', (2003) 3(1) *Journal of Social Work*, 9-29; M. Sandelowski, 'The Use of Quotes in Qualitative Research', (1994) 17(6) *Research in Nursing & Health*, 479-82.

438 J. Ensign, 'Ethical Issues in Qualitative Health Research with Homeless Youths', (2003) 43(1) *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 43-50.

There were instances when participants approached participation with weariness, in some cases this was because they were unsure that they could provide the level of insight required (an unjustified assumption given the roles they had played in the programmes this thesis looks at), in others, there were initial queries about the motivations behind the research. This suspicion was justified; participants spoke of having been involved in similar enquiries in the past with little clarity on the purpose or outputs of the research. It was here that the dual aspects of my Knowledge Transfer Partnership position became helpful with my affiliations to both Kingston University and Renaisi - a social enterprise working in the field of community development - providing credibility and proving of some interest to participants who were keen to discuss parallels between their work and experiences and my own. Building a level of rapport with participants was also crucial in obtaining their confidence and "buy-in" to the research. Generally, the dynamic between myself and participants followed the stages of rapport set out by Spradley: starting with apprehension and followed by exploration, cooperation, and participation.[439] Initial apprehension is understandable in any research situation, particularly when the interviewer and interviewee are new to each other - as was the case in the majority of interviews undertaken in this study. Efforts were made to put the interviewee at ease and to begin by asking questions that would get them talking, asking them about their role and/or about the organisation or group they were affiliated with and demonstrating active listening skills to encourage them to continue.[440] As interviewees became more comfortable and gained confidence the interviews moved into the exploration phase, characterised by more in-depth questioning and description. Interviewees would visibly relax at this stage and become more candid in their responses. From this point, interviews typically moved quickly to what Spradley defined as stages of 'cooperation' and 'participation', at this point trust and a good level of rapport has been established, interviewees were open to more challenging questions and probes, and on their part were willing to ask their own questions or offer up further tangential reflections that they felt were relevant to the research project. As Spradley notes, '*when this happens there is a heightened sense of cooperation and full participation in the research. Informants begin to take a more assertive role. They bring new information to the attention of the researcher and help in discovering patterns in their culture*.'[441] This was a particularly rewarding stage of the research process. At the culmination of interviews participants were thanked for their participation and reminded of the next steps for the research, these thanks were reiterated more formally via email in the days after interviews took place.[442]

[439] J. Spradley, *Asking Descriptive Questions. The Ethnographic Interview*, (Rinehart & Winston 1979), 44–61 (Online) Available at: < http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~pms/cj355/readings/spradley.pdf > Last Accessed 3rd September 2019.

[440] H.J. Rubin, and I.S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, (Sage, 2005), 1-18.

[441] J. Spradley, *Asking Descriptive Questions. The Ethnographic Interview*, (Rinehart & Winston 1979), 48. (Online) Available at: < http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~pms/cj355/readings/spradley.pdf > Last Accessed 3rd September 2019.

[442] J. Finch, 'It's Great to Have Someone to Talk to' in M. Hammersley (ed), *Social Research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice*, (Open University/Sage, 1993), 166-80; C. Sinding and J. Aronson, 'Exposing Failures, Unsettling Accommodations: Tensions in Interview Practice', (2003) 3(1) *Qualitative Research*, 95-117.

Maintaining independence and avoiding bias were further ethical considerations when undertaking this research. While my background in regeneration and community development helped to build rapport with participants (and in some cases had been the link to their participation in this research), it was important to be aware of my own biases and to maintain a level of impartiality throughout the research. Just as multiple factors will shape the way participants view and act in situations, these things invariably shape the researcher as well.[443] This should not inhibit research taking place, but the literature served an important reminder of the need to be aware of my own background, politics and experiences and how these shape the way one presents themselves and how they may interpret any source material.[444]

Where possible quotes from participants are used to demonstrate and support the findings, allowing participants to share their own stories and views, and in order to provide an accurate account of their responses and experiences. A range of voices were heard and bar references to names of people and specific agencies, quotes have been reproduced verbatim, so as not to lose any of the subtleties of the accounts participants provided. Throughout the remaining chapters care has been taken to set these quotes within the context in which they were shared, however, inevitably it is not possible to provide a full account of each participant's experience given the number of interviews and need to provide a coherent narrative.

Finally, when conducting interviews, it is important to be aware that interviewees may not be free of bias. Understandably they may feel compelled to demonstrate themselves, their work or their group in the best light. Similarly, personal accounts of involvement may not always serve as a reliable account of an event or experience, particularly when some time has passed – which was the case in some of the interviews undertaken as part of this research. That does not dilute the value of interviews; they still provide a wealth of insight into how programmes have been experienced or why there is positivity or resistance to a particular idea or approach and may provide a more realistic account of experiences 'on the ground' than any 'official' evaluation might. Nevertheless, it does require a need to treat responses we a degree of care, recognising that each participants' experience will have been in some way unique, and this, in turn, will shape their responses and ways of viewing particular scenarios.[445] Therefore the responses documented over the next three chapters are not presented as universal truths, rather the accounts of a number of people involved in the delivery and facilitation of neighbourhood regeneration. Where possible attempts are made to draw parallels with findings with other related studies and evaluations, as well as providing some narrative on the reporting structures, staffing arrangements and local dynamics in each place or programme to set the quotes within some context.

443 D. Carpenter, 'The Quest for Generic Ethics Principles in Social Research, in: R. Iphofen (ed.), *Finding Common Ground: Consensus in Research Ethics Across the Social Sciences: Advances in Research Ethics and Integrity Volume 1*, (Emerald Publishing Limited, 2017), 3–17.
444 H.J. Rubin and I.S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, (Sage, 2005), 1-18; C. Sinding and J. Aronson, 'Exposing Failures, Unsettling Accommodations: Tensions in Interview Practice', (2003) 3(1) *Qualitative Research*, 95-117.
445 M. Hawtin, G. Hughes and J. Percy-Smith, *Community Profiling: Auditing Social Needs,* (Open University Press, 1994).

4.5 Triangulation and the 'place, space and power' framework

As discussed earlier in this chapter, to understand fully the impact of government policies regarding community and regeneration it was important that the various data sets collated through this study were not analysed in isolation but brought together to provide a cohesive thesis. One of the biggest challenges this study posed was identifying a conceptual framework that would allow for a robust comparison and evaluation of a variety of programmes and policies that while all sharing community centred objectives, spanned different decades, were resourced very differently and operated in different socio-economic conditions. A number of approaches were considered, and a review of the literature identified several potential avenues, yet these were ultimately limited in their impact when attempts were made to use them retrospectively.[446] After considerable research, the 'place, space and power' framework was identified as a tool that once adapted for the levels of enquiry of this study could be utilised for such a purpose.[447]

Over the remaining chapters, the findings from the policy analysis, data comparisons and the insights gained from interviews are brought together through the lens of the 'place, space and power framework' discussed in the previous chapter as a method of 'triangulation'. Triangulation allows for the comparison of data from a range of sources to investigate the same question, with the aim of improving the consistency of the findings, meaning that:

> "*Data relating to the same phenomenon are compared but derive from different phases of fieldwork, different points in time, accounts of different participants, or using different methods of data collection*."[448]

[446] For example, for some time I explored the possibility of applying the 'Balanced Scorecard' approach, a model more commonly used in the private sector to establish products/programmes and to create and articulate strategies but has garnered growing attention in the public sector. The emphasis is on reminding stakeholders that the important things needed to achieve a strategy: finance, processes, staff and customers are all connected to each other, and to not lose sight of that. The intention was to compare and contrast regeneration programmes along four similar criteria: funding, delivery model, community involvement, intermediary/capacity building. Whilst this would have proved a useful model for articulating and debating strategy and reminding stakeholders of their responsibility to each other, it proved a difficult tool to use retrospectively, with some of the necessary information not available on each programme, thus limiting its usefulness as a comparative framework. There is scope however to use this method in future strategy forming and performance monitoring that goes beyond typical financial and output measures. See: P. Niven, *Balanced Scorecard Step-by-Step for Government and Non-profit Agencies,* Second Edition, (Wiley, 2008). Some experimentation with 'Social Return on Investment' and 'Social Wellbeing Indicators' followed, however, again these were tools that were ultimately more suited to the design and testing of future programmes rather than as interpretive tools for policy analysis. *See:* N. Rotheroe and A. Richards, 'Social Return on Investment and Social Enterprise: Transparent Accountability for Sustainable Development', (2007) 3(1) *Social Enterprise Journal*, 31 – 48; D. Fujiwara, L. Kudnra and P. Dolan, *Quantifying and Valuing the Wellbeing Impacts of Culture and Sport,* (Department for Media, Culture and Sport, 2014) (Online) Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/304899/Quantifying_and_valuing_the_wellbeing_impacts_of_sport_and_culture.pdf> Last accessed: 28th October 2018.

[447] Institute of Development Studies, *Power Pack: Understanding Power for Social Change*, (IDS Online: www.powercube.net), 23. (Online) Available at: <http://www.powercube.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/PowerPack_web_version.pdf> Last accessed: 22nd August, 2019; Gaventa, J., 'Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis', (2006) 37(6) *IDS Bulletin*, 22-33. (Online) Available at:<https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/8354/IDSB_37_6_10.1111j.17595436.2006.tb00320.x.pdf;jsessionid=9D31012 DF6568994CF43BC6F0144B9A5?sequence=1> Last accessed: August 17th 2019.

[448] D. Walsh, 'Doing Ethnography' in C. Seale, (ed.), *Researching Society and Culture,* (Sage, 2008), 217-232.

Having established the methodologies used and acknowledged the ethical considerations, the remainder of this thesis is dedicated to discussing the findings that emerged having adopted this approach.

Chapter Five: New Labour and Community-led Regeneration (1997-2010)

5.1 Introduction

Focusing on the 1997-2010 period in which New Labour was in government, this chapter examines how policy discourses of 'community participation' and 'community empowerment' formulated in policy documents and the speeches of key political figures, became a central focus of government-led regeneration provision and policymaking during this time. In doing so this chapter seeks to understand the actors, the context, the desired outcomes and the linked events and processes that have increased or inhibited community participation in regeneration programmes under the governments of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. Both of whom had championed increased community participation and devolved decision-making as central to their vision for government and for tackling entrenched poverty in some of the country's poorest areas.[449]

To explore the extent to which these policies translated into increased opportunities for community participation this chapter draws on interviews with participants and officers involved in the delivery of urban regeneration initiatives under New Labour. These interviews are complemented by insights from a range of policy documents, speeches and programme evaluations which help to establish government priorities for community participation during this time, and the methods deployed to achieve these aims. The chapter begins with an overview of the urban regeneration proposals put forth by New Labour over two regeneration strategies: the *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* published in 1998 and *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal* published in 2001.[450] These strategies introduced several area-based programmes which will be discussed throughout this chapter, namely the 'Neighbourhood Renewal Fund', 'Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders', and the 'New Deal for Communities' programmes – all of which promoted approaches to neighbourhood management and community-led regeneration. Through interviews with practitioners and volunteers involved in their delivery, these programmes are explored in some detail in order to understand both the underlying assumptions each programme was based on, and how communities were able to, or excluded in, participating in their delivery. As introduced in the previous chapter the 'place, space and power framework' offers a way of integrating concerns with place and spaces of engagement, with power. The framework also serves to illustrate that power can be found at a multitude of levels within a place, and that power is fluid, interconnected, and can be held by multiple actors at

[449] SEU, *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal,* (The Stationary Office, 1998); Home Office, *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team* (The Cantle Report), (Home Office, 2001); SEU, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal - National Strategy Action Plan, (Cabinet Office, 2001);* Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (PMSU), *Improving the Prospects of People Living in Areas of Multiple Deprivation in England,* (Cabinet Office, 2005); Urban Task Force, Towards a Strong Urban Renaissance, (Urban Task Force, 2005); DCLG, *Communities and Local Government Economics Paper 1: A Framework for Intervention,* (DCLG, 2007).

[450] SEU, *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, (The Stationary Office, 1998); Social Exclusion Unit, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan*, (Cabinet Office, 2001).

any given time.[451] Drawing on the terminology of the 'powercube', this chapter serves to explore the 'invited' spaces the introduction of these programmes brought about, presenting local people and partners with an opportunity to direct and deliver regeneration activities within their localities; decision-making that had typically happened behind or within 'closed' spaces previously.[452] It considers the arrangements that were put in place and how they were received by those that took up the 'invitation' to participate in this way. Gaventa encourages examination of both the 'vertical' and 'horizontal' flows of power and attempts are made to do this throughout, exploring the interactions between actors, the rules and regulations which governed these new spaces, and importantly what the 'terms of engagement' were in each space.[453] 'Vertical' in the context of this study being the interplay between the community and central government, as well as the layers of regional and local government that sat between. While 'horizontal' refers to the interplay between various actors at the community level, including the dynamics between residents, the relationship with the local authority and local politicians, and other local agencies involved in these programmes. Running throughout is a consideration of Luke's three faces of power and the extent to which participants' 'visible' power to participate was affected by more 'hidden' or 'invisible' factors.[454]

In line with the importance the powercube model places on context, the 'enabling environment' of the time is also considered; looking at both the arrangements government put in place to increase community participation, and giving due consideration to the wider social, economic, legal and political contexts these arrangements and policies existed within, recognising that policy development and delivery does not happen in a vacuum. The importance that community capacity and 'buy-in' play in the devolving of powers and responsibilities to the community level is also considered; this is essentially an examination of the 'places' at which participation was encouraged, or limited, by the structures put in place by government. This leads to an assessment of the 'spaces' for community engagement within the regeneration process these provisions brought forth, both structurally (e.g. through the creation of Partnership Boards, the introduction of neighbourhood management structures, or through legislation), and metaphorically (e.g. through a new language of 'partnership', 'devolution' and 'active citizenship').

The chapter is then brought to a close with a discussion of the extent to which those involved in the delivery and appraisal of the aforementioned programmes felt the initiatives had achieved their objectives of community-led regeneration. As this section will show, the response is a somewhat mixed picture, with new opportunities for involvement created but often

[451] See: J. Gaventa, 'Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis', (2006) 37(6) *IDS Bulletin*, 22-33. (Online) Available at: <https://www.powercube.net/wpcontent/uploads/2009/12/finding_spaces_for_change.pdf> Last accessed: August 17th 2019. The 'place, space, and power' framework and its constituent parts are considered in some detail in chapter three.

[452] Ibid.

[453] Ibid, 26.

[454] S. Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd Edition, (Palgrave McMillan, 2005).

hindered by structural arrangements, competing government priorities and engrained working practices across all 'spaces' for participation. Accounts of resident participants suggest that those involved felt empowered, and to an extent 'hyper-empowered' as one participant termed it, yet levels of resident involvement at the stages to which Arnstein would attribute genuine participation and empowerment were low across each of the programmes examined. These findings suggest a disjuncture between the levels of community involvement government programmes hope to generate and the reality of a community's capacity or inclination to get involved. Themes of community identify (i.e. *who* or *what* defines a community), power, and participation as 'means' or as an 'end' introduced in chapters two and three are also considered throughout.

5.2 The regeneration and community empowerment discourse of New Labour 1997-2010

The election of New Labour in 1997 brought about a significant shift in the way urban regeneration was funded, targeted and spoken about. Whereas the previous Conservative government's approach to tackling urban deprivation has been characterised as one that favoured property-led and public-private partnership approaches, encouraging private sector reinvestment in areas and operating under the premise that the benefits of such an approach would 'trickle down' to those at the margins of society.[455] New Labour promoted a more 'bottom-up' approach, promoting community-led regeneration and placing a renewed focus on local partnership working as part of a programme of 'modernising government' and efforts to tackle 'social exclusion'.[456] Area-based initiatives, with an emphasis on community participation in their delivery, were seen as an important component of the party's 'Third Way' approach to politics and tackling this social exclusion, presenting the government as an '*enabling state*' that would promote and facilitate '*active citizens'*, particularly in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and communities.[457] As chapter two discussed, the message that accompanied these

[455] S. Tisdell and P. Allmendinger, 'Regeneration and New Labour's Third Way', (2001) 19 *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 903-26; S. Hall and B. Nevin, 'Continuity and Change: A Review Of English Regeneration Policy in the 1990s,' (1999) 33(5) *Regional Studies*, 477-482.A. Tallon, *Urban Regeneration in the UK,* 2nd Edition, (Routledge, 2013), 152.; R. Lupton, ''Neighbourhood Effects': Can We Measure Them and Does it Matter?', (2003) Nov *CASE paper 73*. (Online) Available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/6327/1/Neighbourhood_Effects_Can_we_measure_them_and_does_it_matter.pdf> Last accessed: March 12th 2019.

[456] Notably the term 'social exclusion' was not part of political discourses on poverty before Labour under Tony Blair, and indeed as Ruth Levitas observes 'played almost no part in Labour's pre-election lexicon', yet it became a central concept for the government 'within months' of the 1997 election taking place. Source: R. Levitas, 'Defining and Measuring Social Exclusion', (1999) 71 *Radical Statistics,* 10. According to Ade Kearns, 'social exclusion' could be characterised as individuals experiencing or demonstrating: disconnections from the mainstream; low expectations of life and a lack of opportunities; individual and institutional processes of exclusion; limited awareness and utilisation of rights and responsibilities; lack of contact with others; skills shortages; and experiencing barriers to advancement as a result of power, status or self-esteem issues. See: A. Kearns, 'Social Capital, Regeneration and Urban Policy', in R. Imrie and M. Raco (Eds.), *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, Community and Urban Policy*, (Policy Press, 2003), 36.; Also see: A. Tallon, *Urban Regeneration in the UK,* 2nd Edition, (Routledge, 2013); DETR, *Modernising Government. Local Democracy and Community Leadership*, (The Stationary Office, 1998); DETR, *Our Towns and Cities - The Future: Delivering an Urban Renaissance,* (The Stationery Office, 2000).

[457] This vision was set-out and reiterated across a number of government strategies, White Papers and policy documents between 1997 and 2010, amongst them: Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal,* (Cabinet Office, 1998);

programmes was that not only would more power be given to communities, but also more responsibilities too - an approach that was seen as something of a shift away from the more authoritarian and centralised state, and the belief in the aforementioned 'trickle down' economics that characterised the Conservative administration under Margaret Thatcher and to some degree John Major. [458]

This vision was set out in the newly formed Social Exclusion Unit's (SEU) first strategy on neighbourhood renewal, entitled *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, published in September 1998.[459] This strategy announced a raft of new policies and programmes that claimed to increase community involvement in the regeneration process and identified a series of mistakes and problems that SEU claimed had characterised urban regeneration policy of the past. In the foreword, then Prime Minister Tony Blair states that the report:

> *...pulls no punches. It shows that for too long governments have simply ignored the needs of many communities. When they have acted, the policies haven't worked. Too much has been spent on picking up the pieces, rather than building successful communities or preventing problems from arising in the first place. Often huge sums have been spent on repairing buildings and giving estates a new coat of paint, but without matching investment in skills, education and opportunities for the people who live there. Too much has been imposed from above, when experience shows that success depends on communities themselves having the power and taking the responsibility to make things better. And although there are good examples of rundown neighbourhoods turning themselves around, the lessons haven't been learned properly.* [460]

Along with a failure to properly consult or involve communities, other failings cited in the report included a '*lack of mainstreaming*', '*excessive managerialism*', and a profusion of '*too many initiatives*'.[461] This was coupled with criticisms of a lack of coordination between policies and programmes and the departments, authorities and stakeholders involved in their delivery.[462] To counter these "mistakes of the past" the report puts forward plans to improve '*the worst estates*'

SEU, *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: A Framework for Consultation*, (Cabinet Office, 2000); SEU, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan,* (Cabinet Office, 2001); DETR, *Regeneration Programmes: The Way Forward - Discussion Document*, (DETR, 1997); ODPM, *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future*, (ODPM, 2003); DCLG, *Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power,* White Paper, (DCLG, 2008); DCLG, *Transforming Places Changing Lives - Taking Forward the Regeneration Framework*, (DCLG, 2009); HM Government, *Together We Can: People and Government Working Together to Create a Better Life*, (Home Office/Civil Renewal Unit, 2005).

[458] A. Tallon, *Urban Regeneration in the UK,* 2nd Edition, (Routledge, 2013), 152; J. Alden and H. Thomas, 'Social Exclusion in Europe: Context and Policy', (1998) 3(1) *International Planning Studies*, 7-14.

[459] SEU, *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal,* (Cabinet Office, 1998). It should be noted that the report was not a conventional strategy despite the title, it coupled early insights into social exclusion by the SEU, alongside announcements of some key programmes, including New Deal for Communities. However, it was seen as the 'first -step' towards a national strategy, and the need for a more comprehensive strategy was a key recommendation of the 1998 report and would follow in 2001.

[460] SEU, *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal,* (Cabinet Office, 1998), 1.

[461] Ibid, 32-34.

[462] Ibid.

through the provision of '*joined-up*' solutions involving numerous Whitehall departments alongside residents, community organisations, businesses and '*outside experts*'.[463] '*The neighbourhood*' was cited as a key area to target these solutions, being described as the '*foundation principle*' of urban regeneration,[464] with the report going on to state that community involvement should be both sought and enhanced through what the report termed *'capacity building*.'[465] The neighbourhood as a 'site of action' was a pivotal theme running through the work and reports of the SEU with a report released in 2000 stating that: '*Over the past 20 years, poverty has become more concentrated in individual neighbourhoods and estates than before, and the social exclusion of these neighbourhoods has become more marked*.'[466] The report did not attempt to quantify the exact number of '*very poor neighbourhoods'*, but drawing on research undertaken at the time predicted several thousand in England alone, with the research estimating 1,600 to 4,000 postcodes being areas of '*severe and multiple disadvantage*'.[467] It did, however, identify forty-four local authority districts that had the '*highest concentrations of deprivation in England*'[468] and a range of national '*new area programmes*' to support regeneration efforts in those areas, amongst them 'Sure Start', 'Health, Education and Employment Zones', the continuation of the 'Single Regeneration Budget' programme, and the 'New Deal for Communities' programme (NDC).[469]

The New Deal for Communities programme was introduced as a flagship regeneration programme - a ten-year, £2 billion

[463] New Labour were reluctant to define what they meant by the 'worst estates' or 'poor neighbourhoods', stating: '*There is no single definition of a poor neighbourhood, and never will be. Poor neighbourhoods have poverty, unemployment and poor health in common, and crime usually comes high on any list of residents' concerns. But … the balance of other problems varies greatly from place to place, including everything from litter and vandalism to the lack of shops. … They are not all the same kind of design, they don't all consist of rented or council housing, and they are not all in towns and cities. They aren't all 'estates', or 'worst', nor do the people who live there want them described that way.'* SEU, *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, (Cabinet Office, 1998), 8.

[464] SEU, *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: A Framework for Consultation*, (Cabinet Office, 2000), 7.

[465] SEU, *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, (Cabinet Office, 1998), 57.

[466] SEU, *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: A Framework for Consultation*, (Cabinet Office, 2000), 7.

[467] See page 8 of SEU, *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, (Cabinet Office, 1998) for a discussion of this. The assumption made by Government draws on a range of sources including: DETR, *Mapping Local Authority Estates Using the 1991 Index of Local Conditions* (DETR, 1997); DETR, *English House Condition Survey 1996,* and 1991 census and ACORN classification data relating to the following categories: council estate residents, better-off homes; council estate residents, high unemployment; council estate residents; greatest hardship; and, multi-ethnic, low-income areas.

[468] SEU, *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, (Cabinet Office, 1998), 10. To quote the report, compared to the rest of England, these 44 districts had: 'nearly two thirds more unemployment; almost one and a half times the proportion of lone parent households; one and a half times the underage pregnancy rate; almost a third of children growing up in families on Income Support (against less than a quarter in the rest of England); 37 per cent of 16 year olds without a single GCSE at grades A-C (against 30 per cent in the rest of England); more than twice as many nursery/primary and more than five times as many secondary schools on special measures; roughly a quarter more adults with poor literacy or numeracy; mortality ratios 30 per cent higher (adjusting for age and sex); levels of vacant housing one and a half times more than elsewhere; two to three times the levels of poor housing, vandalism and dereliction; more young people, with child densities a fifth higher; and, nearly four times the proportion of ethnic minorities.

[469] The NDC and SRB programmes are discussed in more detail in the body of the text. Sure Start (a programme to support young people, particularly those aged 0 to 3, in deprived neighbourhoods through the bringing together of services that support the developmental and emotional needs of young people and families.) and Health, Education and Employment Zones (described as a 'series of zones' to encourage new ways of working in education, health and employment in 'areas of particularly intense social exclusion') do not fall within the scope of this study as they predominantly focused on partnerships between local authorities and local services and agencies, rather than promoting citizen participation and empowerment. Their work did however, cross over into some of the areas where programmes within the scope of this study took place and would have had requirements to consult with the public as part of 'best value' provisions introduced under New Labour. They therefore warrant mention as further demonstration of the raft of initiatives being targeted and implemented at the so-called 'most deprived estates.'

programme, aimed at thirty-nine of the most deprived communities within England. With an average of 9,800 residents living within each area, it was one of the largest and most concentrated experiments in government-led area-based regeneration in England and remains so to date.[470] The programme sought to:

> *Bring together local people, community and voluntary organisations, public agencies, local authorities and business in an intensive local focus to tackle problems such as: poor job prospects; high levels of crime; a rundown environment; and, no one in charge of managing the neighbourhood and coordinating the public services that affect it.*[471]

Four guiding principles set out the government's vision for the programme, those being: (1) The community was to be at the heart of the programme. NDC partnerships were expected to maximise their efforts to involve and engage all residents living within the designated area, with some playing a direct role as Resident Board Members on NDC Partnership Boards, whose main function was to oversee the ten-year programme. Delivery teams were also to be employed in each area to carry out the vision of the Partnership Boards; (2) NDC partnerships were to implement their strategies in a partnership with existing agencies, including local authorities, the police, schools and Primary Care Trusts; (3) NDCs were also required to work with central government in delivering the programme (in line with delivery structures that will be discussed below); and finally, (4) the programme was not to be judged in terms of increased outputs (e.g. more police or teachers), but rather positive outcome changes (e.g. less crime or better educational attainment rates). To assist them in delivering their plans, each NDC received £50m to drive the process. These activities were to be focused on six predetermined outcomes, which were: crime; the local community and housing; the environment; education; health; and worklessness.[472] Citing lessons learnt from past government-led regeneration schemes the announcement also stated that the programme would be '*flexible and very local*' and that NDC areas would '*be closely supported by government and brought together to compare notes*', and that the programme would be *'a showcase for state-of-the-art intensive regeneration.'*[473]

New Labour's focus on the neighbourhood as a site for improvement and policy deployment was further emphasised when a revised *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* (NSNR) followed in 2001, building on further research and

[470] Ten NDC areas were selected in London, with at least two in each of the nine other regions in England.

[471] SEU, *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal,* (Cabinet Office, 1998), 48.

[472] P. Lawless, 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 314-315.

[473] SEU, *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal,* (Cabinet Office, 1998), 49; L. Dargan, 'Conceptualising Regeneration in the New Deal for Communities', (2007) 8(3) *Planning Theory & Practice*, 349; P. Lawless, 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 315.

recommendations from the Social Exclusion Unit.[474] With a central aim that within twenty years: '*no one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live*',[475] the strategy promoted further 'joining-up' of local service delivery and public spending and set out plans and funding announcements for additional programmes and policies that would seek to address the numerous challenges faced by deprived communities. Most relevant for this study were the announcement of a Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF), the expansion of the aforementioned New Deal for Communities programme, and a number of Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders (NMP) - all of which sought to narrow the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest of the country by targeting funding at the neighbourhood level and promoting neighbourhood management.[476] According to the revised strategy this represented a '*comprehensive'*, rather than '*piecemeal'* approach, claiming 'joined-up' problems had never been addressed in joined-up ways, and to counter this, plans would invest in 'people' as well as infrastructure and services, with government taking a long term approach avoiding '*parachuting in'* solutions in favour of integrated approaches.[477]

Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders ran on a similar premise to NDCs, promoting concerted effort at a relatively small geographic scale in what were deemed to be deprived neighbourhoods (the average population in Pathfinder areas was 10,200[478]), with a dedicated Neighbourhood Management Team working alongside residents and agencies *'adopting a systematic, planned approach to improve the quality of life in that neighbourhood*', viewing the neighbourhood '*in its totality as a 'place' rather than simply being concerned with specific services*.'[479] The approach was intended to influence 'mainstream public services providers', with partnerships making decisions about the allocation of resources, and in some instances developing and delivering neighbourhood services.

As with the NDC, Neighbourhood Managers would be accountable to a Partnership Board which was made up of residents, community representatives (including local councillors), and staff from local agencies.[480] Again, the programme was rolled out over a series of 'rounds' with areas receiving between £2.45m and £3.5 million in funding - a relatively modest sum

[474] Social Exclusion Unit, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan*, (Cabinet Office, 2001), 5. This strategy was largely informed by research and consultation conducted by eighteen Policy Action Teams made up of departments from across government, set-up to better understand the scale of the challenges of addressing social exclusion and to ensure a range of stakeholders were involved in developing the revised National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal.

[475] SEU, *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, (Cabinet Office, 1998)

[476] J. Griggs, A. Whitworth, R. Walker, D. McLennan and M. Noble, *Person or Place-Based Policies to Tackle Disadvantage: Not Knowing what Works*, (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2008).

[477] S. Tisdell and P. Allmendinger, 'Regeneration and New Labour's Third Way', (2001) 19 *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 903-26.

[478] The size of Pathfinder areas ranged from 2,770 in Pan Village (Isle of Wight) to 20,570 in Gospel Oak (Camden), but most were in the range of 5,000 – 15,000 people, with the average size being 10,200 people see: DCLG, *Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders: Final Evaluation Report, People, Places, Public Services: Making the Connections*, (DCLG, 2009), 22

[479] DCLG, *Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders: Final Evaluation Report, People, Places, Public Services: Making the Connections*, (DCLG, 2009), 19.

[480] NRU, Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme: Guidance on Building Partnerships, Developing a Strategy and Producing a Delivery Plan, (NRU, 2001).

in comparison to the sums received by NDC areas - to deliver a programme of activities over seven years.[481] Like the New Deal for Communities programme, a small professional team (led by a Neighbourhood Manager and typically including community outreach, policy and administrative officers) based in an office within the neighbourhood, were tasked with delivering on plans and facilitating collaboration. These teams were typically employed by an 'accountable body' which was in most cases the local authority, which would typically manage employment, financial and legal matters and provide oversite and accountability for resources on behalf of the partnership, with NDC guidance describing this relationship as a partnership's '*most important.'* [482] Partnerships were required to produce plans setting out their aims and priorities and the range of activities they intended to pursue, which would typically be a mix of community development activities, work to influence local service providers and some direct project delivery. This plan would be signed off by the Partnership Board and required government approval. The influence of Putnam and other advocates of social capital were particularly evident in these two programmes, as there was an assumption that the multiple levels of deprivation experienced by those living in ABI areas would be further engrained through social exclusion, low levels of social capital, and a lack of community cohesion if government did not intervene.[483] These programmes sought enhance social capital by putting in place structures that would necessitate the involvement of local people, facilitate skills development, and encourage residents to take more of an interest in their area, with the stated aim of making communities more resilient and better placed to sustain the benefits of regeneration through better connections between local people and agencies.[484]

Along with the announcement of new funding streams, the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal also introduced several new structures and agencies to oversee and support regeneration efforts and the implementation of the strategy. Particularly relevant were the introduction of Local Strategic Partnerships and the formation of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. In introducing Local Strategic Partnerships (commonly referred to as LSPs), the government stated that:

> *National programmes are part of the answer, but not the whole of it. Action needs to be joined-up locally, in a way that is accountable to communities and encourages them to take the lead*.[485]

[481] Each Pathfinder was asked to develop a seven-year programme. Round One Pathfinders were awarded funding of £3.5m each, over seven years from 2002–03 to 2008–09, which was an average of £500,000 per year, to cover core management and running costs and also a project/leverage fund. Round Two Pathfinders were awarded a smaller amount of £2.45m over seven years, which is £350,000 per year from 2005–06 to 2011–12, reflecting 'a desire to test neighbourhood management with a smaller available 'project' fund.' Source: DCLG, *Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders: Final Evaluation Report, People, Places, Public Services: Making the Connections*, (DCLG, 2009), 20.

[482] G. Fordham, *The New Deal for Communities Programme: Achieving a Neighbourhood Focus for Regeneration: The New Deal for Communities National Evaluation: Final report – Volume 1*, (DCLG, 2010), 7.

[483] P. Lawless, 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 318.

[484] NRU, *Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme: Guidance on Building Partnerships, Developing a Strategy and Producing a Delivery Plan*, (NRU, 2001).

[485] SEU, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan*, (Cabinet Office, 2001), 28.

LSPs were created to be a single body that were intended to bring together at a local level, parts of the public sector as well as private, voluntary, and community interests so that different initiatives and services for regeneration and renewal aligned rather than contradicted each other. Their responsibilities included allocating funding and identifying priority neighbourhoods; supporting efforts to understand the root causes of neighbourhood decline; and working with local stakeholders to develop and implement Local Plans, including setting targets to turn them around.[486] LSPs were also tasked with supporting 'neighbourhood management' and ensuring that any strategic action taking place was aligned to the neighbourhood level. Where Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders existed, these were to be the vehicle for neighbourhood management.[487]

The role of the newly formed Neighbourhood Renewal Unit was to '*provide leadership and oversight of the National Strategy within and outside Whitehall*'.[488] Taking over responsibilities for neighbourhood renewal from the Social Exclusion Unit, the NRU was tasked with overseeing and supporting central government contributions to the NSNR.[489] To place it within wider governance structures the NRU reported to the Minister for Local Government, Regeneration and the Regions, and a Cabinet-level committee chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister.[490] At a regional level, the NRU was expected to work closely with Government Offices for the Regions (GOs) reflecting a strengthened role for GOs in line with recommendations from an earlier Performance and Innovation Unit report entitled *Reaching Out: Reaching Out: The Role of Central Government and Regional and Local Level.*[491] Under new provisions Government Offices were given responsibilities for '*joining-up policy and acting as a voice for the regions in central government*' and for encouraging neighbourhood renewal activities in those regions, helping the NRU oversee local renewal strategies and administering Neighbourhood Renewal funding. Government Offices would also act as a liaison point for Local Strategic Partnerships, Regional Development Agencies and 'other regional players' around neighbourhood renewal and local development, this also included NDC partnerships.[492] This rather complex arrangement of delivery agencies and trusted intermediaries is perhaps best demonstrated by the diagram in figure 7 below:

[486] SEU, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan*, (Cabinet Office, 2001), 28.
[487] Ibid, 28.
[488] Ibid, 55.
[489] Ibid, 50.
[490] Ibid, 11.
[491] Performance and Innovation Unit, *Reaching Out: The Role of Central Government and Regional and Local Level*, (Stationary Office, 2000); SEU, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan*, (Cabinet Office, 2001), 29.
[492] SEU, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan*, (Cabinet Office, 2001), 29, 68.

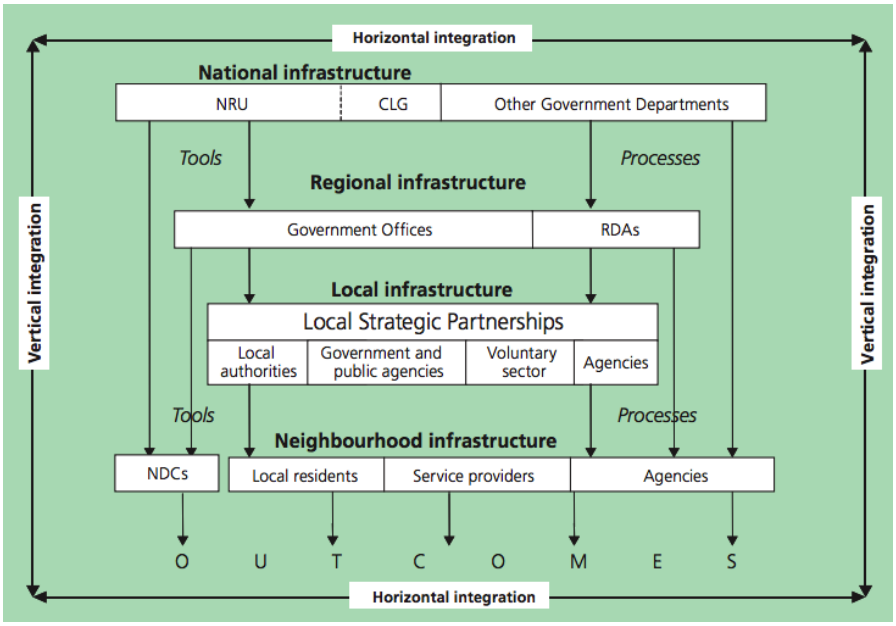

Figure 7: The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Delivery Framework[493]

It is somewhat surprising that the government, having both admonished previous administrations for the complexity and inaccessibility of previous regeneration delivery, and having vowed to reduce excessive bureaucracy going forwards, adopted such a hierarchical framework for delivery. The government, however, argued this approach would bring them closer to communities, enhancing the flow of information to the neighbourhood level and improving responsiveness to the needs of communities. Yet as the literature has shown, such structures typically serve to exclude those at the bottom of the hierarchy given their perceived distance from the higher tiers, where typically, decisions and negotiations take place.[494] Nevertheless, it is this four-tier model that would persist for the duration of New Labour's time in power, albeit with some changes in the names of departments and in the constitutions and remit of local delivery.

These opening sections have taken on the somewhat arduous task of trying to condense thirteen years of social policy, related legislation and government organisation into an overview of the policy landscape of the time. It has done so to provide the reader with sufficient understanding of the evolution (and at times reproduction) of regeneration policy and funding over New Labour's time in government and to offer some context as this chapter moves on to discuss the extent to which the proposals above translated into new opportunities for community participation and empowerment, and to demonstrate the applicability of the 'place, space and power' framework as a tool for appraising community-led regeneration efforts.

[493] As presented in DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Final Report*, (Stationary Office, 2010), 8.

[494] S. Hall, 'The Way Forward for Regeneration? Lessons from the Single Regeneration Budget Challenge Fund', (2000) 26(1) *Local Government Studies,* 1-14; J.N. Pretty, I. Guijt, J. Thompson and I. Scoones, *Participatory Learning and Action: A Trainer's Guide,* (IIED, 2005) (Online) Available at: <https://pubs.iied.org/6021IIED/> Last accessed: 28th September 2019; Arnstein, S., 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969) 35(4), *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 216-228.

5.3 Invited spaces and the top-down, bottom-up dichotomy

Having established the 'who' and 'why,' this section moves on to consider 'how' the government implemented its approach to community participation and the extent to which communities were able to more meaningfully participate as a result of this — drawing on a combination of primary and desk-based research to do so. Extracts from interviews with residents, volunteers and practitioners who were involved in neighbourhood management efforts under New Labour provide first-hand accounts of how these programmes were experienced in three neighbourhood renewal areas (Birmingham, Nottingham and London), and these findings are complemented by insights gained through national evaluations and wider academic research into the programmes. Both the New Deal for Communities (NDC) and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder (NMP) programmes were subject to several government-funded evaluations and findings from these are drawn upon. New Labour also undertook an overarching evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal comprising of a 'national study' primarily looking at the impact of the programme [495] and a 'local study' which examined the experiences of residents in areas that had received some neighbourhood renewal funding, insights from these reports help to provide further comparison across the various programmes.[496] In bringing these insights together a number of successes and limitations are identified and discussed, with reference to the spaces of influence and participation created (and prohibited) through these programmes as a result of the structures put in place, their deployment 'on the ground', and through consideration of the role local context plays in contributing to the success of neighbourhood regeneration programmes.

In the previous section figure 7 presented a visualisation of the governance structures the government had put in place to deliver its strategy for neighbourhood renewal, the tiers of governance, or 'vertical integration' as the diagram labels it, aligns with the three levels ('national', 'local/intermediary' and 'neighbourhood') of the adapted 'place, space and power' framework introduced in chapter three,[497] figure 8 below illustrates these parallels:

[495] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Final Report*, (Stationery Office, 2010). This study was described as a 'strategic longitudinal evaluation' which draws extensively upon secondary data sets (outcome measurements and indicator data, data from evaluations of particular aspects of the NSNR, performance management data on inputs, outputs, and outcomes) and case studies, as well as qualitative insights gained from various studies that have been conducted into the different delivery components of the NSNR, the Local Research Project is one such example.

[496] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010). This study took a more qualitative approach, conducting over 700 interviews and focus groups across twelve local authority districts, combining findings from interviews with quantitative insights from statistical indicators relating to the case study areas.

[497] As discussed in chapter three, regional and local levels of infrastructure are grouped together in the framework for illustrative purposes, a decision that was justified by this thesis' primary focus on neighbourhood-led approaches and central government policymaking. Efforts will be made to ensure any important distinctions between the local and regional levels are highlighted.

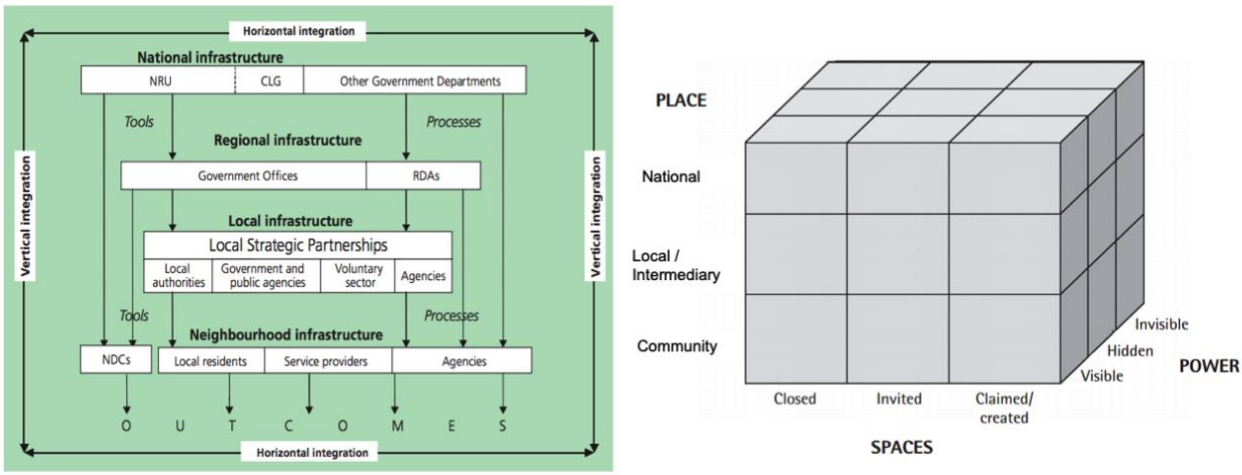

Figure 8: Illustration of the parallels between the organisation of regeneration delivery and the adapted place, space and power framework.[498]

This chapter and subsequent chapters will refer back to these three tiers of political infrastructure, or 'places' to use the terminology of the powercube framework (those being 'community', 'local/intermediary' and 'national), to consider where the opportunities for community influence and participation existed, and the ways in which power dynamics shaped these forums.

According to Gaventa, civil society engagement is most likely to take place in 'invited' or 'claimed' spaces and the succession of regeneration strategies under New Labour certainly made provisions for a number of new governance arrangements which are consistent with the 'invited' tier of the powercube.[499] Numerous policy papers and the NSNR itself stated a belief that central government had been too removed from those working at the neighbourhood and local level.[500] The introduction of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) with responsibilities for monitoring the strength and engagement of communities and the establishment of local and neighbourhood intermediaries through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders (NMPs) suggested an 'opening-up' of previously 'closed spaces' of decision-making and service delivery.[501] By putting in place conditions for community and local

[498] Illustrations from: DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Final Report*, (Stationary Office, 2010), 8; J. Gaventa, 'Finding Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis', (2006) 37(6) *IDS Bulletin,* 27.

[499] J. Gaventa, '*Reflections on the Uses of the 'Power Cube' Approach for Analysing the Spaces, Places and Dynamics of Civil Society Participation and Engagement*,' CFP Evaluation Series 2003-2006: no. 4, (Mfp Breed Netwerk Learning by Design, 2005). (Online) Available at: < https://www.participatorymethods.org/sites/participatorymethods.org/files/reflections_on_uses_powercube.pdf> Last accessed: 15th September 2019.

[500] Social Exclusion Unit, *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal,* (The Stationery Office, 1998); Social Exclusion Unit, *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: A Framework for Consultation*, (Cabinet Office, 2000).

[501] Several articles written around the time of the LSPs introduction discussed the potential this model presented for new ways of working and joining up local activities with national priorities, see: N. Bailey, 'Local Strategic Partnerships in England: The Continuing Search for Collaborative Advantage, Leadership and Strategy in Urban Governance, (2003) 4(4) *Planning Theory & Practice,* 443-457; C. Apostolakis, 'Citywide and Local Strategic Partnerships: Can Collaboration Take Things Forward?'. (2004) 24(2) *Politics,* 103-112; S. Hall, 'The 'Third Way' Revisited: 'New' Labour, Spatial Policy and the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal', (2003) 18(4) *Planning, Practice and Research,* 265-277. – the extent to which this was achieved is discussed over the course of this chapter.

representation on Partnership Boards and making neighbourhood strategies a precondition of funding, this appears on the surface to be a very 'visible' shift in power relations, creating accountability and transparency as well as new spaces for local and community stakeholders to engage.[502] The proposals also reflected a willingness to share power over decisions about spending and service delivery with local and neighbourhood partners, presenting a shift from what might be perceived as 'hidden' or even 'invisible' forms of power to a more 'visible' form that can be held up to local and neighbourhood scrutiny.[503] As Clarke and Stewart note such an approach was significant at a time when public opinion both in England and in countries across the world were showing a growing distrust in government and diminishing belief that ordinary citizens can influence government decisions.[504]

The proposed arrangements detailed above suggested a move towards policymaking and delivery that aligns, on paper, with much of the literature on good participatory practice discussed in the earlier chapters.[505] Government evaluations highlight the positive impact these programmes had and the new opportunities for public participation and local partnership working they brought about over the period 1997-2010. The official evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal states that: '*Over the strategy period there have been a greater number of opportunities for residents to get involved in the process of neighbourhood regeneration than ever before*', noting the important groundwork previous government-led programmes, including the early rounds of the Single Regeneration Budget, had played in laying the foundations for this.[506] Alongside acknowledgement of the contributions made by the NDC and NMP programmes, the national evaluation also credited the contribution the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) had made to improving areas - with the majority of 'stakeholders' interviewed (amongst them residents) reporting that their neighbourhood had improved as a place to live and work over the duration these programmes were delivered. Claims are also made that programmes launched between 1997-2010 had improved community spirit and community activity across areas in receipt

[502] Social Exclusion Unit, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: A National Strategy Action Plan*, (Cabinet Office, 2001), 29; M. Wallace, 'A New Approach to Neighbourhood Renewal in England', (2001) 38(12) *Urban Studies,* 2163-2166.

[503] J. Bucek and B. Smith, 'New Approaches to Local Democracy: Direct Democracy, Participation and the 'Third Sector', (2000) 18 *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy,* 3-16; P. Burton, *Community Involvement in Neighbourhood Regeneration: Stairway to Heaven or Road to Nowhere?*, (ESRC Centre for Neighbourhood Research, 2003); A. Cornwall and J. Gaventa, 'From Users and Choosers to Makers and Shapers: Repositioning Participation in Social Policy', (2000) 31(4) *IDS Bulletin,* 50-62.

[504] M. Clarke and J. Stewart, *Community Governance, Community Leadership, and the New Local Government,* (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1998); R. Clarke, *New Democratic Processes: Better Decisions, Stronger Democracy,* (IPPR, 2002); Narayan, R. Chambers, M.K. Shah and P. Petesch, *Voices of the Poor: Crying Out For Change*, (World Bank, 2000); Skopcol, T., *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life,* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2003); J. Gaventa, *Representation, Community Leadership and Participation: Citizen Involvement in Neighbourhood Renewal and Local Governance,* (ODPM, 2004).

[505] For example: J. Bucek and B. Smith, 'New Approaches to Local Democracy: Direct Democracy, Participation and the 'Third Sector', (2000) 18 *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy,* 3-16; M. Smith and M. Beazley, 'Progressive Regimes, Partnerships and the Involvement of Local Communities: A Framework for Evaluation', (2000) 78(4) *Public Administration,* 855-878; M. Taylor, 'Community Participation in the Real World: Opportunities and Pitfalls in New Governance Spaces', (2007) 44(2) *Urban Studies*, 297–317; A. Cornwall, '*Making Spaces, Changing Places: Situating Participation in Development'*, *(*IDS Working Paper, 2002*)*. See Chapters one and two for a wider discussion of this.

[506] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 54

of investment when compared to unfunded comparator areas.[507] The national evaluation also found evidence that suggested some sustainable regeneration had been achieved, with the majority of new services funded eventually becoming 'mainstreamed' on account of their perceived success[508], while non-NRF areas reported financial constraints limiting their ability to enhance existing services or deliver new ones.[509] The researchers responsible for the 'local evaluation' also found evidence of '*increasing self-confidence, self-esteem, enhanced community capacity and infrastructures for individuals, organisations and communities within target areas*' they examined.[510] Service providers who were involved in Local Strategic Partnerships and other neighbourhood regeneration partnerships reported several benefits too, including the development of better services which was credited with allowing them to deliver '*more relevant and responsive programmes'* to the communities they served.[511] Increased community participation as a result of LSPs was also reported, alongside increases in resident '*buy-in*' to projects and services which had resulted in an increased understanding of how services are planned and financed amongst local people. [512] Relatedly, the national evaluation of the New Deal for Communities programme reported similar positive outcomes: reporting increased social capital within NDC communities; greater feelings of trust and reciprocity with local service providers; and increased belief in the potential to influence local decision-making on account of having the aforementioned neighbourhood structures in place.[513] Service providers reported the positive impact of citizen engagement by allowing them to build a better understanding of the needs and views of local people; and more opportunities to engage with traditionally 'hard to reach' groups.[514]

Wider accounts, however, do not always present such a rosy portrayal. As has been discussed, community participation is not achieved through new policies or initiatives alone but requires multiple strategies of institutional change, capacity building, and behavioural change.[515] Competing government priorities (both locally and from the centre)[516], access to

[507] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 32-34.
[508] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Final Report*, (Stationary Office, 2010), 108.
[509] ECOTEC, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 4.
[510] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Final Report*, (Stationary Office, 2010), 105.
[511] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 98-99.
[512] Ibid, 98-99.
[513] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Final Report*, (Stationary Office, 2010), 98-99.
[514] Ibid, 98-99.
[515] J. Gaventa, *Representation, Community Leadership and Participation: Citizen Involvement in Neighbourhood Renewal and Local Governance,* (ODPM, 2004), 8.
[516] Civil Exchange, *Whose Society? The Final Big Society Audit*, (Civil Exchange, 2015); K. Shaw and F. Robinson, 'Learning from Experience? Reflections on Two Decades of British Urban Policy', (1998) 69(1) *Town Planning Review*, 49-63; K. Shaw and F. Robinson, 'UK Urban Regeneration Policies in the Early Twenty-First Century', (2009) 81(3) *Town Planning Review,* 123–149.

resources[517], local dynamics and relationships (between communities, local government, and service providers)[518], and political will[519] can all influence the extent to which policies are successfully translated and implemented. Indeed, all these factors played out in the delivery and administration of the New Deal for Communities and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder programmes as the following discussion will show, beginning with a discussion of the 'vertical' arrangements and power dynamics they brought about.

Before expanding upon some of the barriers to successful implementation listed above, it is useful to outline the reality 'on the ground' in many communities at the outset of the government's programme for neighbourhood renewal. This is best illustrated with an extract from the description provided by one of the practitioners interviewed (working for a Nottingham-based Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder) who vividly brings to life both the arrangements and the feelings of residents and professionals in that area at the outset of the NMP programme:

> *So, there was the District Council who was the accountable body, that was the District Council in ... Nottingham - they led the Local Strategic Partnership. The County Council provided a base in the neighbourhood as a partner to this SRB / EDF* (European Development Fund) *programme. And the Regeneration Unit of the District Council, was overseeing it. Then in essence there was a small group of residents who were used for everything. I would say the 'usual suspects' whose role was largely tokenistic. A group of about eight people who spoke for a community of over 7,000. And if any agency wanted to consult with them* (the community)*, they spoke to those eight people, and one particularly vocal individual tended to be the one who told the rest of them what to say. And we resided in a newly built community centre that was a bit of a 'white elephant' in the area.*[520]
>
> *They were in the lowest five per cent nationally of multiple deprivation and spiralling downwards, and the majority of service providers had written-off the community. The people were the problem to be fixed rather than seen to be part of any solution. And that was something we wanted to shift, the mindset of local people was "We*

[517] Centre for Social Justice, S*ocial Solutions, Enabling Grass-Roots Charities to Tackle Poverty*, (Centre for Social Justice, 2014); J. Clayton, C. Donovan and J. Merchant, 'Distancing and Limited Resourcefulness: Third Sector Service Provision Under Austerity Localism in the North East of England', (2015) 53(4) *Urban Studies,* 723-740.

[518] N. Bailey, 'Understanding Community Empowerment in Urban Regeneration and Planning in England: Putting Policy and Practice in Context', (2010) 25(3) *Planning Practice and Research,* 317-332; E. Batty, I. Cole and S. Green, *Low-Income Neighbourhoods in Britain - The Gap Between Policy Ideas and Residents' Realities*, (JRF, 2011); J. Fisher, R. Lawthom, and C. Kagan, 'Delivering on the Big Society? Tensions in Hosting Community Organisers', (2016) 31(4) *Local Economy*, 502-517; K. Yang, 'Trust and Citizen Involvement Decisions: Trust in Citizens, Trust in Institutions, and Propensity to Trust', (2006) 38 *Administration & Society*, 573-595.

[519] M. Taylor, 'A Sea-Change or a Swamp?: Changing Spaces for Voluntary Sector Engagement in Governance in the UK', (2004) 35(2) *IDS Bulletin,* 67-75; M. Taylor, 'Community Participation in the Real World: Opportunities and Pitfalls in New Governance Spaces', (2007) 44(2) *Urban Studies*, 297–317.

[520] Patrick later expanded on the 'white elephant' comment, the building was ageing and expensive to maintain. The District Council had responsibility for its upkeep, but his perception was that they would have liked to have disposed of the 'asset', however, due to the occupancy of the neighbourhood management team and other voluntary and community services this was not possible at the time. It was however a point of tension between the council, the occupants and parts of the community throughout his time working in the area.

can't do anything, we can't influence anything". And the mindset of all the service providers was "This area's the problem, the people living there are a problem, and they're our problem and we have to fix that problem, and it's a very expensive problem to fix." But not everyone thought that way, clearly it was the point of some people to keep the neighbourhoods deprived because with deprivation came funding. For example, the cricket club, full of people from the neighbouring wealthy ward, got funding on the back of the deprivation of this neighbourhood because one child from that area was playing cricket with them and they could get a few thousand pounds because they're serving a deprived area. So that was when people were really cashing in on deprivation in that way. And consultants were cashing in on deprivation, and it wasn't helpful to deprived communities.[521]

While the claims for funding by the local sports club related specifically to that area, the descriptions here had much in common with those from others interviewed. Interviewees based in London and Birmingham reported similar governance structures and deprivation levels, as well as a general sense of residents feeling 'done to' rather than 'done with' over many years of regeneration activity. They also described a regeneration landscape that was characterised by significant sums of money and programmes, but with a lack of understanding of the coherence between this investment. Community-led activity was, in the main, said to be coordinated by a select few at LSP or Neighbourhood Board level, with the common perception being that community representatives exerted limited influence in these forums, and in many cases failed to represent wider community interests. Scenarios corroborated by several case studies conducted over that time.[522] All of the practitioners and volunteers spoken to in the UK talked of their initial excitement about the opportunities put forward by the NDC and NMP programmes, and the roles they would play within them, seeing them as vehicles for positive change within the communities they were living and working in. The word 'naïve' however came up often, with participants reflecting that their initial optimism was tempered by some of the arrangements placed around these programmes, as well as the challenges ingrained ways of working and long-held community tensions brought to their work. For example, while the message underpinning so many of these programmes was that communities would be in control of decisions about spending and service delivery, there was a prescribed government framework in which this activity had to take place. An element of programme design in both the NDC programme and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders that typifies the 'top-down bottom-up dichotomy' presented by so many Labour's neighbourhood renewal programmes, was the requirement that partnerships would pursue projects under specific headings which aligned with central government

[521] Patrick, Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder (NMP) Neighbourhood Manager

[522] A. Power, 'Neighbourhood Management and the Future of Urban Areas', *LSE STICERD Research Paper No. CASE077,* 1-39. (Online) Available at: <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1158968> Last accessed 20th October 2019; A. McCullouch, 'Localism and its Neoliberal Application: A case study of West Gate New Deal for Communities in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK', (2004) 28(2) *Capital and Class,* 133-165; L. Dargan, 'Conceptualising Regeneration in the New Deal for Communities', (2007) 8(3) *Planning Theory & Practice*, 345-362; A. Wallace, ''We have had Nothing for so Long that we don't know what to Ask for': New Deal for Communities and the Regeneration of Socially Excluded Terrain', (2007) 6(1) *Social Policy and Society,* 1-12.

targets, typically: crime, health and wellbeing, community safety, the environment, young people and employment.[523] For the practitioners interviewed this element of programme design was somewhat at odds with the rhetoric which presents communities as authors of their own futures. One of the interviewees, Grant, who had been a Neighbourhood Engagement Officer in a Birmingham based NDC, reflected on the challenges the centrally proposed themes presented for himself and colleagues in the early years of the NDC programme:

> *Each day we were going out into the community saying "You want to get a job. You want to improve your health. You want to get a qualification. You want to reduce crime." Because those were the targets. And they're saying "No I want to get rid of the rats at the bottom of my garden. Fix that lamppost outside my front door." And then we're saying "No you're wrong. What you want is a job. What you want is to give up smoking." "No, we want you to get rid of the rats, fix the lamp posts!" So, we were off on the wrong foot to start with, and it just took too long for the penny to drop. Actually, what we were hearing was: "Actually, if you want me to engage in this, you have to address this first." What we were hearing was: "If you don't address this why should I ever trust you… this is the day-to-day reality of my life."*[524]

Several commentators also reflected on the limiting nature of these arrangements, amongst them Batty el al. and Lawless and Pearson who heard similar accounts through the national evaluations they and colleagues undertook.[525] Viewed through the lens of the 'powercube' framework it presents a picture of government inviting community participation but unwilling to relinquish power over the direction of delivery. By setting the themes partnerships should prioritise communities are not encouraged to explore or identify other causes of deprivation within their areas, limiting their ownership of the community's problems and potential solutions. In this way, some spaces for community participation are effectively closed off or remain hidden to the community. For Lawless '*this orthodoxy dampened down innovation.*'[526] A view shared by Jim, an interviewee who had been the Chief Executive of one of the London-based NDCs, who lamented how the predetermined themes had made the work of the 39 NDC areas across the country too similar:

[523] E. Batty, C. Beatty, M. Foden, P. Lawless, S. Pearson and I. Wilson, *The New Deal for Communities Experience: A Final Assessment the New Deal for Communities Evaluation: Final Report,* (Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research Sheffield Hallam University/DCLG, 2010); Lawless, P., 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 313-328; DCLG, *Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders: Final Evaluation Report, People, Places, Public Services: Making the Connections*, (DCLG, 2009).

[524] Grant, NDC Engagement Officer and community development practitioner.

[525] Batty, E., Beatty, C., Foden, M., Lawless, P., Pearson, S. and Wilson, I., *Involving Local People in Regeneration: Evidence from the New Deal for Communities Programme Volume 2*, (Stationary Office, 2010); Lawless, P. and S. Pearson, S., 'Outcomes from Community Engagement in Urban Regeneration: Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme,' (2012) 13(4) *Planning Theory & Practice*, 509-527; G. Davidson, D. McGuiness, P. Greenhalgh, P. Braidford and F. Robinson, '''It'll get Worse Before it gets Better': Local Experiences of Living in a Regeneration Area', (2013) *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal,* 55-66.

[526] P. Lawless, 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 320.

> *I think a big failing of the NDC programme was that all the strategies were the same, each one had to do a bit of everything. It all became quite generic. Partnerships should have had more freedom to concentrate on the themes they chose. The focus should have been on strengthening communities in their own right. Involve them more positively, begin there, on their terms and their interests, then approach them about new opportunities to link up services or help shape the physical infrastructure.*[527]

For Jim, not only was the prescribed approach '*counterintuitive*' to the government's message of '*local solutions to local problems*', and a '*missed opportunity*' to have captured valuable learning about what substantial and sustained investment could do to tackle single or more locally defined issues within an area. Yet, interestingly, while practitioners and academics have questioned the wisdom of the decision to prescribe the areas of activity partnerships should look to address, the NDC partnership members interviewed were more reflective. From their perspective the themes resonated with a cross-section of the community, although 'housing' and 'public safety' were talked about the most frequently, a finding that correlated with Lawless' national evaluation which noted a tendency for Resident Board Members (RBM) to prioritise crime and public safety projects over other themes such as health or education.[528] There was also a sense that the government was entitled to set the priorities of the programme given the sums of money invested. Asked whether the themes set by the government, aligned with those of residents, Karen, who had been a Resident Board Member for the London-based NDC responded:

> *Broadly yeah, they were the things people cared about. There was a lot of people, council tenants, who wanted the security to be improved. They didn't feel safe walking through the estates. So yeah that was one… And they didn't feel safe in their own homes because there was many a time, I mean going back years ago, where I came out of my flat and there was a homeless person on the floor and I just walked over them, shut the door, went to work and left them to it. You know that was the norm, that would happen all the time. You know, there'd always be a homeless person somewhere in someone's block, you know. I think it's split between you know OK fine, what harm will they do. But some people panic and that's why, and there was a spate of burglaries and things before* [the] *New Deal. So, safety and security were priorities for everyone.*[529]

Robin, another Resident Board Member, also agreed the themes set were issues residents cared about but stated housing was '*the main one*'. He also made distinctions between the priorities of those that owned the leasehold to their property and those that were living in council-owned accommodation:

[527] Jim, NDC Chief Executive and civil servant.
[528] P. Lawless, 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 313-328.
[529] Karen, NDC Resident Board Member

Depends who you asked. If you're asking council residents it was pretty much housing things like repairs, ASB (antisocial behaviour)*, the supply of housing. Those kinds of current issues. If you're talking about the private tenants, it was sort of security, all those issues. Probably things like local government services too, like waste collection, street management. There was a lot of youth crime, one person was killed. Stabbings, a lot of people wanted to talk about that…Overall, I would say they were in line with how things were. Because it was high-level, they were government priorities and they were paying the bill, so why shouldn't they set some of the priorities?* [530]

Notably, the priorities expressed here aligned with the findings of the evaluations of the NSNR and other programme evaluations, with the themes of crime, environment, and health attracting the most resident participation.[531] As chapter two discussed, 'freedom' and 'choice' are essential components of sustainable development and empowerment, both of which the NDC programme claimed to promote.[532] The decision to predetermine themes is at odds with the messaging that the NDC programme would be '*flexible and very local*' with '*complete flexibility*' on what programmes could cover, instead presenting participants with and invited space with prescribed rules of engagement.[533] In their model of community empowerment, Lawson and Kearns set out three key elements required to achieve community empowerment: '*capability', 'deciding'* and '*achievin*g'.[534] Capability relates to the extent to which residents are aware of opportunities to participate, the extent to which they understand the 'language' used and 'parameters' for engagement, and the degree to which they are able to 'critically engage' in the conversation.[535] When defining the 'deciding' element, Lawson and Kearns cite work by Somerville, who states by whatever means empowerment takes place the key question should be '*…whether it helps to place residents in a position where they can choose their own way forward.'*[536] Concerning the third element, 'achieving', Lawson and Kearns state:

Community empowerment can only be attained if there is an ability to institute actions directly or engender

[530] Robin, NDC Resident Board Member

[531] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 54

[532] DETR, *Sustainable Regeneration: Good Practice Guide*, (HMSO, 1998); A. Wallace, 'New Neighbourhoods, New Citizens? Challenging 'Community' as a Framework for Social and Moral Regeneration under New Labour in the UK', (2010) 34(4) *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 805-819.

[533] DETR, *New Deal for Communities: Guidance for Pathfinder Applicants*, (HMSO, 1998); S. Tiesdell and P. Allmendinger, 'Regeneration and New Labour's Third Way', (2001) 19 *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 914.

[534] L. Lawson and A. Kearns, 'Rethinking the Purpose of Community Empowerment in Neighbourhood Regeneration: The Need for Policy Clarity', (2014) 29(1-2) *Local Economy: The Journal of the Local Economy Policy Unit,* 65-81.

[535] L. Lawson and A. Kearns, 'Rethinking the Purpose of Community Empowerment in Neighbourhood Regeneration: The Need for Policy Clarity', (2014) 29(1-2) *Local Economy: The Journal of the Local Economy Policy Unit,* 68; Wallace, A., *Remaking Community? New Labour and the Governance of Poor Neighbourhoods*, (Ashgate, 2010); P. Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy and Civic Courage*, (Rowman and Littlefield, 1998).

[536] P. Sommerville, 'Empowerment through Residence', (1998) 13 *Housing Studies,* 253 cited in L. Lawson and A. Kearns, 'Rethinking the Purpose of Community Empowerment in Neighbourhood Regeneration: The Need for Policy Clarity', (2014) 29(1-2) *Local Economy: The Journal of the Local Economy Policy Unit,* 69.

appropriate actions by others, based on the decisions made. In this way communities may achieve their aims, and the process is not simply one of making abstract choices that do not lead to change.'[537]

Yet, part of the challenge for residents in the London based NDC, and one of the reasons they were broadly accepting of the government-set themes, was that they found that residents in their area struggled to articulate the change they would like to see. With residents struggling to see '*beyond their own front door'* as Karen termed it:

We've got an awful lot of people in the community that don't know how to articulate what it is that they actually want, and to get them to say one way or the other what they wanted was very difficult, because they wasn't sure what it was that they wanted. They knew what they wanted in the end but, but early on they were like, "Maybe I want this, maybe I want that." And it was very difficult to pin people down. It's because they had a blinkered vision, they wasn't looking beyond their own front door, they couldn't see what was there, what was the potential. They were looking at what would make their life easier, and that would probably be a new lock on the door! I don't know, eventually I suppose we did get there. I mean some of the huge projects were really very good.[538]

Whereas others were more concerned about change, than improvements, as Robin noted:

Well I think what I honestly found was that a lot of people came out to consultation, and there were lots of people would moan about it [the area]*, and go on about the history of the place and be reminiscing about all sorts that had happened. And basically, when it came down to it, they didn't really want too much to change.*[539]

Relatedly, Andrew Wallace reported similar findings during his own fieldwork in an NDC area, where one resident, having been asked what she would like to see happen in the area responded, '*We have had nothing for so long that we don't know what to ask for'*.[540] This response was symbolic of a key failing of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal and associated programmes, in that they do not give sufficient consideration to the lived experience of residents when designing and deploying area-based programmes. As Wallace asks: '*How realistic or appropriate is it to expect people who have been consistently disadvantaged to 'trust' government agencies and play a transformative role in the process of social change*?' Firstly, as Robin's quote above alluded to, it is assumed that residents want change, but that may not be the case. Particularly as decisions about which areas to designate as NDC areas was largely made by government and local government representatives, with some pre-existing partnerships feeding-in; the result of which was the delineating of

[537] L. Lawson and A. Kearns, 'Rethinking the Purpose of Community Empowerment in Neighbourhood Regeneration: The Need for Policy Clarity', (2014) 29(1-2) *Local Economy: The Journal of the Local Economy Policy Unit,* 69.

[538] Karen, NDC Resident Board Member

[539] Robin, NDC Resident Board Member

[540] A. Wallace, ''We have had Nothing for so Long that we don't know what to Ask for': New Deal for Communities and the Regeneration of Socially Excluded Terrain', (2007) 6(1) *Social Policy and Society,* 10.

neighbourhood boundaries that were not always meaningful to people. As was the case in Karen and Robin's area, as well as others as Fordham et al. and Batty et al. found in their evaluations of the NDC programme.[541] Meegan and Mitchell for example found considerable local resistance to a Merseyside specific intervention called, 'Pathways to Integration' despite the 'people-based' rhetoric the programme was launched upon, with local people inherently suspicious of government investment in the area following many years of decline and perceived abandonment from previous governments.[542]

Second, in relation to the earlier quote from Karen, it assumes that communities will be both willing and able to participate now that the government has created a vehicle through which they can do so. As the earlier literature has shown, an 'invitation' is not sufficient to exert meaningful influence without providing new entrants with an understanding of the operating environment and their role within it.[543] As John Gaventa states:

> *Without prior awareness building so that citizens possess a sense of their own right to claim rights or express voice, and without strong capacities for exercising countervailing power against the 'rules of the game' that favour entrenched interests, new mechanisms for participation may be captured by prevailing interests.* [544]

Much was written and spoken about the need to 'build capacity' of residents in the documents and strategies that preceded and announced the NDC and NMP programmes, with a report from the Social Exclusion Unit stating: '*The Government is committed to ensuring that communities' needs and priorities are to the fore in neighbourhood renewal and that residents of poor neighbourhoods have the tools to get involved in whatever way they want.'*[545] Interviews and a review of the literature suggest there were indeed numerous attempts to do this through a programme of training, conferences, consultancy, and funding over the course of New Labour's time in government. The local evaluation of the NSNR cites a number of examples of capacity building undertaken in NDC and NMP case study areas, these included Youth Involvement Teams; ethnic peer adviser schemes; community researcher training; and training residents in participatory

[541] E. Batty, C. Beatty, M. Foden, P. Lawless, S. Pearson and I. Wilson, *The New Deal for Communities Experience: A Final Assessment of the New Deal for Communities Evaluation, Final report – Volume 7*, (DCLG, 2010); G. Fordham, P. Lawless, S. Pearson and P. Tyler, *What Works in Neighbourhood-level Regeneration? The Views of Key Stakeholders in the New Deal for Communities Programme,* (DCLG, 2010).

[542] R. Meegan and A. Mitchell, 'It's Not Community Round Here, It's Neighbourhood': Neighbourhood Change and Cohesion in Urban Regeneration Policies', (2001) 38(12) *Urban Studies,* 2167-2194.

[543] M.A. Macleod, *Exploring the Power Cube as a Tool for use in Evaluation: Identifying Shifts in Power with Women's Movements in Central America*, (Online) Available at: <http://mornamacleod.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Exploring-the-Power-Cube-as-a-Tool-for-Use-in-Evaluation-Final.pdf> Last accessed: 15th August 2019. S. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969) 35(4), *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 216-228.

[544] J. Gaventa, *Reflections on the Uses of the 'Power Cube"Power Cube' Approach for Analyzing the Spaces, Places and Dynamics of Civil Society Participation and Engagement*, CFP Evaluation Series 2003-2006: no. 4, (IDS Learning by Design, 2005), 15). (Online) Available at: < https://www.participatorymethods.org/sites/participatorymethods.org/files/reflections_on_uses_powercube.pdf> Last accessed: 15th September 2018.

[545] SEU, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan*, (Cabinet Office, 2001), 51.

appraisal.[546] However, according to interviewees much of this training was centred on the Resident Board Members (RBM), rather than the wider community. Robin, who had been involved in the programme in his area from the beginning, said:

> *You'd have to go to all this training; the training was amazing. I'd go to all sorts of places with people from NDCs all over the country. They would talk about doing this and doing that, and I'd think actually - we're doing a lot.*[547]

Whereas Karen, who joined as a resident volunteer at a later point reflected:

> *Generally, I think [the] New Deal worked really well. If we was to do it again, I think it would be better to have some sort of training, proper training, in the beginning. And some sort of training that included learning from others, with mentors who have done it somewhere else.*[548]

The consensus in the literature was that this training was needed, Robinson *et al* wrote of the '*steep learning curve'* residents participating in NSNR programmes often experienced:

> *Beyond getting to know about jargon and processes, delivery plans and so on, it can be difficult for them to find out about what works in other, similar places. That can set limits on innovation and creativity, resulting in a programme of projects 'invented here' but often 'reinventing the wheel' and not linked to wider best practice.*[549]

Practitioners reflected that the investment made in training and networking in both the NDC and Neighbourhood Management programmes was laudable but lamented that training would typically be attended by "the same people" within their partnerships, with work, family and other commitments deterring others. They also questioned the extent to which residents returned with new skills for community leadership or techniques for widening resident involvement, and instead saw learning events as being used as a vehicle to promote the government's view of programme and NDC area success. Grant, who was the most critical of the design and delivery of the NDC programme stated:

> *They were constantly bringing together resident leaders from different communities. So yeah there definitely was an attempt. But with the benefit of hindsight it was… generously you can call it capacity building to what end.*

[546] ECOTEC, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010).
[547] Robin, NDC Resident Board Member
[548] Karen, NDC Resident Board Member
[549] F. Robinson, K. Shaw and G. Davidson, ''On the Side of the Angels': Community Involvement in the Governance of Neighbourhood Renewal, (2005) 20(1) *Local Economy,* 18.

But to be very negative you could almost look at it as brainwashing, "this is the way it's done". If you want to be very sinister about it. I do still think it was just the curse of good intentions though.[550]

'*The curse of good intentions'* was a phrase Grant would use often to describe what he saw as the limitations of the NDC programme design and subsequent government funded programmes he had been part of. When asked to elaborate on why he felt the training was akin to 'brainwashing' he talked of the pressures partnerships we placed under to achieve centrally imposed targets, and that central government were vocal in their frustrations that some areas were performing better than others against these. Again, this was a point raised several times throughout the interviews and was a finding consistent with the wider literature. The following section moves on to explore this further.

5.4 Performance management and the 'weight of the money'

Along with criticism of the predetermined themes and prescribed 'capacity building', another common critique of programmes that fell under the banner of neighbourhood renewal, and that also characterised wider New Labour policy over the period 1997-2010, was the government's predisposition for target driven activities which failed to join-up with other areas of government activity and policy.[551] For example, Lawless reported that central government produced more than forty Programme Notes to guide, and at times impose, procedures over NDC delivery and that partnerships were required to regularly report to Government Offices on their activities and the number of beneficiaries they had served.[552] Partnerships were also required to produce annual delivery plans that would require central government sign-off. Indeed, funding across all the programmes came with a number of conditions and requirements that local and neighbourhood stakeholders were expected to adhere to in order to access this financial support.[553] Relatedly, the national evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NSNR) also found that the early years of the Neighbourhood Renewal Funder (RNF) were characterised by a lack of direction from government on spending priorities, yet recipients were placed

[550] Grant, NDC Engagement Officer and community development practitioner.

[551] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 42; S. Tiesdell and P. Allmendinger, 'Regeneration and New Labour's Third Way', (2001) 19 *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 903-26; A. Wallace, Remaking Community? New Labour and the Governance of Poor Neighbourhoods, (Ashgate, 2010); R. Lupton, A. Fenton and A. Fitzgerald, 'Labour's Record on Neighbourhood Renewal in England: Policy, Spending and Outcomes 1997-2010', *Social Policy in a Cold Climate Working Paper 6 July 2013*, (Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), 2013), (Online) Available at: <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/spcc/wp06.pdf> Last accessed: 27th September 2018.

[552] P. Lawless, 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 313-328; N. Bailey and M. Pill, 'The Continuing Popularity of the Neighbourhood and Neighbourhood Governance in the Transition from the `Big State' to the `Big Society' Paradigm', (2011) 29(5) *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 927-942; C. Beatty, M. Foden, P. Lawless and I. Wilson, 'Area-based Regeneration Partnerships and the Role of Central Government: the New Deal for Communities Programme in England', (2010) 38(2) *Policy and Politics*, 235-251.

[553] M. Taylor, 'Community Participation in the Real World: Opportunities and Pitfalls in New Governance Spaces', (2007) 44(2) *Urban Studies*, 297–317.

under considerable pressure to spend quickly so as to demonstrate impact. The result being that many Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) and NDC Partnership Boards were fast to spend money without having a well thought out strategy in place during their formative years, leading to large numbers of programmes being funded with little coordination.[554]

Across NSNR programmes there appeared to be an inherent tension between allowing communities time to organise before they begin to deliver and the government's need to ensure designated funding was spent within agreed timeframes. Writing in 2005, Robinson et al. discussed the '*constant and increasing pressure*' on regeneration partnerships to deliver on central targets, noting that '*After just three years of the NDC programme there were criticisms that partnerships weren't moving fast enough, and not doing enough, to achieve 'quick wins*.'[555] Similarly, a Neighbourhood Renewal Unit midway review of the programme acknowledged '*there is a tension between community engagement and involvement and the pace of delivery*.'[556] As the literature review discussed, community development takes time and the natural timetable of community-led regeneration may be very different from the timetables of politicians and the Treasury.[557] Resident Board Members interviewed talked of the considerable pressure this placed on them and spoke of being very aware of the frustrations the Government Office for London (GOL) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had about the slow pace at which their NDC partnership were spending money early on, as well as the challenges the partnership were having locally to resolve governance arrangements - bringing added pressure to voluntary roles that were already proving to be highly demanding.

> *Early on they* (DCLG) *thought we was a disaster. I heard all this later. And then finally we got ourselves sorted out, we were actually one of the stars of the show in the end, a bit late in the day - but we got there*! *Lots of other ones I heard on the grapevine weren't as good as we kept getting told they were. Like Shoreditch* (NDC) *was seen as the 'golden child', you know, could do no wrong, and all this kind of stuff. Then actually, when you heard later on from some of the community living over there, they were saying: "we don't know who they are, and we're not really involved in the decisions. But it's spend, spend, spend." But GOL loved them, and the Government loved them because they were spending all the money. So, we were being criticised and pointed at by government at first. … I think we went through the initial inertia period. I think we were all struggling on kind of governance, to be honest. If I boil it down to you Rob, we were kind of doing very shaky delivery. I mean*

[554] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Final Report*, (Stationary Office, 2010), 104.
[555] F. Robinson, K. Shaw and G. Davidson, ''On the Side of the Angels': Community Involvement in the Governance of Neighbourhood Renewal', (2005) 20(1) *Local Economy,* 20.
[556] Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, *Transformation and Sustainability: Future Support, Management and Monitoring of the New Deal for Communities Programme, Programme Note 25*, (ODPM, 2004).
[557] M. Taylor, E. Buckley and C. Hennessey, *Historical Review of Place-Based Approaches,* (Lankelly Chase, 2017) (Online) Available at: < https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf> Last accessed: 25th September 2019; G. Craig, K. Popple and M. Shaw (eds.), *Community Development in Theory and Practice: An International Reader,* (Spokesman, 2008)

> *we were a bit crap actually! ... But it was a question of trying to spend the money because we had Yvette Cooper* (the then Housing and Planning Minister within DCLG) *down saying like "You've got to spend the money!"*

Again, this concurs with Lawless' findings, who having highlighted similar findings through fieldwork cited a 2004 report from the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit which stated NDC '*partnerships were to prioritise the spending of annual fiscal allocations*.'[558] Hull noted similar messaging in other official documents in his 2006 review of neighbourhood regeneration programmes.[559] It was not only residents feeling the pressure spend either, Patrick recalled performance management frameworks and annual audit requirements Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder areas were required to complete, as well as regularly attending neighbourhood renewal conferences which would promote high spending programmes and volumes of projects as best practice:

> *I think one of the fundamental differences was, you know you'd go to national Labour neighbourhood management conferences and it was almost a beauty show, of big delivery plans of how many people had the most projects under each of the six themes and you know, we were like: "This is how it's all been done before". The programme was supposed to be about changing the relationship between service providers and service users, but that wasn't the message at those things.* [560]

The above then provides findings that suggest proclamations of community control and choice were somewhat overstated within the NDC and NMP programmes with government promoting bottom-up action but prescribing the desired and most appropriate ways this should be conducted. Again, communities were invited to participate but expected to carry out their activities within existing structures of urban governance and aligned to government practices and performance management protocols.[561] Programme guidance, training and messaging from prominent government ministers further emphasised this point.[562] In doing so this only served to reinforce vertical hierarchies of power, rather than rebalance them.

Practitioners involved in the delivery of both NDC and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders reflected on the implications the substantial sums of money invested in the programme had on bringing partners and communities together, and the extent to which they felt the programme was empowering for residents. A common view was that while the money had allowed for considerable physical improvements in areas, particularly so in the case of NDC, it had not been

[558] NRU, *Transformation and Sustainability: Future Support, Management and Monitoring of the NDC Programme*, (ODPM, 2004); P. Lawless, 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 321.

[559] A. Hull, 'Facilitating Structures for Neighbourhood Regeneration in the UK: The Contribution of the Housing Action Trusts', (2006) 43 *Urban Studies,* 2317-2350.

[560] Patrick, NMP Neighbourhood Manager.

[561] J.S.F. Wright, J. Parry, J. Mathers, S. Jones and J. Orford, 'Assessing the Participatory Potential of Britain's *New Deal for Communities: Opportunities for and Constraints to 'Bottom-up Community Participation'*, (2006) 27(4) *Policy Studies,* 347-361.

[562] C. Fuller and M. Geddes, 'Urban Governance Under Neoliberalism: New Labour and the Restructuring of State-Space', (2008) 40(2) *Antipode*, 252–282.

particularly conducive to creating community cohesion and leadership within the areas they worked.[563] The partnership in Birmingham, whom Grant worked for, had been awarded NDC funding following previous successful partnership working in the area – which he noted had been done on a limited budget – and had seen the council successfully transfer local buildings and services into community ownership. Following this success, they were encouraged to apply for New Deal for Communities funding when the programme was announced. However, for Grant, the size and nature of NDC shifted that original ethos and mission of the partnership considerably:

> *We got the New Deal for Community bid because we were able to demonstrate we had an infrastructure on the ground. And then, of course, the money came in and just killed it, you know stamped on it, just slaughtered it, and that was a shame. My role was Neighbourhood Coordinator largely acting as the linkage between the program and the frontline services. That was what I did, and really, looking with the benefit of hindsight it* (the NDC programme) *was a classic example of good intentions just going spectacularly wrong. With hindsight almost every aspect of a community-led community-engaged programme - it was wrong. Everything from the fact that it was £50 million made it almost immediately, from the off, made it impossible. Just the primacy of the money, spending the money, monitoring the money, being accountable for the money, due diligence on the money. Just erased any kind of influence the community was going to have.*[564]

Along with prescriptive targets and the '*weight of the money'* as Grant termed it, he also identified what he felt was a third failing of the programme - the lack of investment and time to build the necessary local infrastructure in places, ending his discussion of the limitations of the NDC programme by saying:

> *Things weren't thought through enough. Those three elements: the weight of the money; the fact it came with prescribed targets; and the fact that local infrastructure wasn't put in place to be able to engage with community leadership effectively. Because one of the things was, one of the things we couldn't do was put money into public sector organisations. So, if you want to improve the local schools, the local police service, that sort of thing, it has to be through something codesigned or redesigned - but the mechanism wasn't there to do so from the outset. And then you fall behind. And then it just becomes about spending the money. And the other fault with the mechanism was it was just totally risk-averse, so old school. With the accountable body releasing the money to guaranteed outputs and outcomes. The idea of taking a chance on something, giving it a go and see what happens - if it doesn't work, we stop it. If it does, we put more money into it. There was nothing like that. It was very well-*

[563] J. Coaffee and I. Deas, 'The Search for Policy Innovation in Urban Governance: Lessons from Community-led Regeneration Partnerships', (2008) 23(2) *Public Policy and Administration,* 167-187.
[564] Grant, NDC Neighbourhood Coordinator

intentioned; I do genuinely believe that. I don't think it was lip service. I just don't think enough thought went into the coordination and set-up.[565]

For Grant, the 'local infrastructure' he was talking about related to established forums and partnerships; pre-existing working relationships (between residents, delivery partners, and the various tiers of government), and a shared understanding and alignment of priorities. Which he recognised, as others did, that this was something the NDC programme sought to build, however, the expectation that new or developing partnerships would be able to demonstrate such practices within months of receiving funding, and the predisposition with results were at odds with the community development rhetoric of the programmes. Across the literature, case studies and evaluations of the NDC, NMP and other government-led area-based programmes reported similar challenges and tensions in the early years of programmes.[566] The delivery structures partnerships adopted, and the challenges of establishing new participatory processes are returned to in section 5.6 when discussing 'horizontal' power dynamics, however, before doing so discussion first moves on to explore government intervention in response to concerns that partnerships were failing to deliver against the objectives of the NSNR.

5.5 Partnership 'failure' and government intervention

Through interviews with Resident Board Members (RBMs) and staff from one London-based NDC it became clear that their early years of their NDC partnership were characterised by local conflict regarding who represented the community on partnership boards, as well as differences of opinion between the local authority and RBMs about the projects to fund and approaches to adopt. This infighting delayed the start of any project delivery in their area and as alluded to above meant their partnership was amongst a group of NDCs that came under increased scrutiny from their respective Government Offices and DCLG, who intervened in several ways.

[565] Grant, NDC Neighbourhood Coordinator.

[566] P. Lawless, 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 313-328; N. Bailey and M. Pill, 'The Continuing Popularity of the Neighbourhood and Neighbourhood Governance in the Transition from the `Big State' to the `Big Society' Paradigm', (2011) 29(5) *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 927-942; C. Beatty, M. Foden, P. Lawless and I. Wilson, 'Area-based Regeneration Partnerships and the Role of Central Government: the New Deal for Communities Programme in England', (2010) 38(2) *Policy and Politics*, 235-251; DCLG, *Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders: Final Evaluation Report, People, Places, Public Services: Making the Connections*, (DCLG, 2009); DCLG, *What Works in Neighbourhood-level Regeneration? The Views of Key Stakeholders in the New Deal for Communities Programme*, (DCLG, 2010); R. Meegan and A. Mitchell, 'It's Not Community Round Here, It's Neighbourhood': Neighbourhood Change and Cohesion in Urban Regeneration Policies', (2001) 38(12) *Urban Studies,* 2167-2194; J. Houghton, 'A Job Half Done and Half Abandoned: New Labour's National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal 1999 – 2009', (2010) 2(2) *The International Journal of Neighbourhood Renewal,* 1-13.

While it would be common for a resident to assume the role of chair on the NDC partnership board, through interviews it came to light that due the aforementioned infighting a decision was taken by DCLG and by the Government Office for London (GOL) (who had oversight of all London-based NDCs), to introduce an 'independent chair' to chair their board. To quote one of the residents interviewed: '*We weren't allowed to have our own elected chair. We were too badly behaved*.'[567] Robin went on to liken the experience to being put into '*…special measures*, *like a failing school or health service ... They gave us an interim package, brought in to make it work again.*' Not surprisingly, this divided opinion amongst the partnership. Karen reflected that the independent chair had brought a lot to the partnership, helping to '*smooth things over'* between partnership members and local agencies, while Robin described the feelings of some members of the group who challenged the decision and felt '*it had been imposed on us.'* Both did, however, reflect on the government's reasoning for doing so:

> *I think in terms of the decision, they looked at it; they had their reasons. There were things in the press as well. There were individual board members contacting government ministers and trying to heckle them when they came to Islington to open a school, thrusting copies of newspaper articles at them. It was bonkers and clearly, they thought we couldn't function as a board together.*[568]

Residents expressed mixed feelings about their relationship with GOL and government ministers as a result of these early encounters. Robin talked of '*government hovering in the background*' in the early years of the partnership and spoke of one encounter with the Minister of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government at the time: '*She was vile! She was just like "you need to spend more money!" - not interested in any of the issues*.' While Karen spoke of '*lots of meetings down at Whitehall ... we'd get called in to do reviews with GOL and DCLG when they were down at Bressenden Place* (Victoria, London), *so we were up and down there.*' On reflection, this appears to be a big ask of resident volunteers within a programme. On the one hand, it reflects a level of parity, with government addressing partnership members directly to discuss developments and routes forward, on another it was a demonstration of central power, calling partnership members to account for voluntary work they were undertaking. Either way, it does reflect an opening-up of spaces that would not typically be available to community members, although not in the way empowerment models typically envision. Continuing discussions about the role GOL played, Robin reflected:

> Robin: *They were quite heavy with us, and they used to send people to monitor our meetings and stuff like that.*
>
> RS: *Really? Was this frequent?*

[567] Robin, NDC Resident Board Member.
[568] Robin, NDC Resident Board Member.

Robin: *Yeah. Board meetings, and I think some of the strategic away days. … Some of our subgroup meetings.*

RS: *Was that part of the design of New Deal for Communities programme or was that because….*

Robin*: I think they were always there.*

RS*: How did you feel about that?*

Robin*: I think we were seen as a failing NDC and I think they were the middleman between the government and what's actually going on, on the ground. I think we had a very skilled person managing us, in the form of Laura though.*[569]

It was interesting to hear that central government, through the Government Office for London, had such a presence on community-led partnerships, and interesting to hear resident participants talk of being '*managed*'. Some authors, amongst them Foley and Martin, were sceptical of New Labour's stated commitment to community-led regeneration from the outset, questioning the extent to which the government's centralising instincts would allow it to place sufficient trust in communities and delivery partners to manage substantial resources and to design and debate policy. The findings above suggest they were right to be sceptical.[570] Similar accounts of new spaces for community voice, but limited scope for shaping the programme have been shared by Perrons and Skyers, Marinetto, and Wright et al., amongst others.[571] Indeed, following a review of all NDC guidance in 2006 Wright et al. were led to conclude that:

…the NDC is a tightly controlled policy space. NDC partnerships lack autonomy and central government may intervene at any time. Partnerships were controlled in what they can legitimately do, and even how they can think about the causes of deprivation in their area. If the NDC is a 'bottom-up community-led programme', it is community-led in a sense that government decides how the community will be involved, why they will be involved, what they will do and how they will do it.[572]

[569] Dialogue between the interviewer (myself - RS) and Robin, NDC Resident Board Member.

[570] P. Foley and S. Martin, 'A New Deal for the Community? Public Participation in Regeneration and Local Service Delivery', (2000) 28(4) *Policy and Politics,* 479-492.

[571] D. Perrons and S. Skyers, 'Empowerment through Participation? Conceptual Explorations and a Case Study', (2003) 27(2), *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 268-285; M. Marinetto, 'Who wants to be an Active Citizen? The Politics and Practice of Community Involvement', (2003) 37 *Sociology,* 103-120; J.S.F. Wright, J. Parry, J. Mathers, S. Jones and J. Orford, 'Assessing the Participatory Potential of Britain's New Deal for Communities: Opportunities for and Constraints to 'Bottom-up Community Participation', (2006) 27(4) *Policy Studies,* 347-361.

[572] J.S.F. Wright, J. Parry, J. Mathers, S. Jones and J. Orford, 'Assessing the Participatory Potential of Britain's New Deal for Communities: Opportunities for and Constraints to 'Bottom-up Community Participation', (2006) 27(4) *Policy Studies,* 358.

Government Offices (GOs) certainly held a lot of power over all neighbourhood renewal funding, not just NDC programmes, and residents were acutely aware of this. GOs were tasked with ensuring that a representative proportion of local residents had been '*encouraged and enabled to play a role in shaping the strategy*', and they were given the power to withdraw neighbourhood renewal funding in the event of poor leadership or failing partnerships.[573] Within the NDC programme GOs were required to ensure partnerships acted within government-set 'codes of conduct', met reporting requirements, and to assess how areas were performing, taking action should areas be deemed to be performing poorly. Taking 'action' ranged from introducing additional training or expert support from government-funded neighbourhood renewal advisers; the introduction of performance improvement plans and increased scrutiny from central government; the power to 'expel' members of delivery partners not adhering to policies; and again, holding the power to withhold funding or disband poor-performing partnerships if they were not satisfied by a partnership's response to these measures.[574] Again this all serves to demonstrate the significant amount of power that continued to reside with the government during the "neighbourhood renewal years" and arrangements that very much reinforced an 'us' and 'them' mentality.

It should, however, be noted that despite the above, the residents interviewed were, in the main, apathetic about GOL's involvement in their activities, accepting there would be a level of scrutiny over the work they undertook, and also going on to talk of the value GOL's officers brought to their delivery, at times advocating on the partnership's behalf in the face of criticism from other government departments. Such accounts of GOL and other government departments using their position to advocate for partnerships are less prominent in the literature and warrant mention as a demonstration of government officers using their power to encourage and support community-led efforts:

> *They became part of the furniture really, it was one of those things you accepted, that you know, that you had to put up with. To keep us in line, well not necessarily in line, to keep us focused. They were generally just keeping an eye on us, they wanted to know what we were doing, so that these people would know we are actually all singing from the same sheet, and we are all trying to achieve the same thing - which is the best for the community.*[575]

> *I know they* (GOL) *were given a hard time about us, government were like "What's going on? We want to close them down!" And they* (GOL) *were the ones saying "No, give them some time. There is some really good stuff going on there, you just haven't seen the fruit yet." But this is the kind of effort that was going in, and we were aware of that, so they had that role where they are kind of monitoring you and it's their decision whether they*

[573] SEU, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan*, (Cabinet Office, 2001), 50.
[574] J.S.F. Wright, J. Parry, J. Mathers, S. Jones and J. Orford, 'Assessing the Participatory Potential of Britain's New Deal for Communities: Opportunities for and Constraints to 'Bottom-up Community Participation', (2006) 27(4) *Policy Studies,* 355-358.
[575] Karen, NDC Resident Board Member.

cut the funding and closed the programme down. But also, at the end of the day, they were trying to sort things out. So, we were just lucky really.[576]

Before moving on to consider some of the local or 'horizontal' power dynamics brought in to focus through neighbourhood management, the role Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) played in supporting neighbourhood renewal initiatives should also be considered - given LSPs' remit for neighbourhood regeneration established in the previous section. Formally, LSPs had responsibility for ensuring resident participation in neighbourhood renewal initiatives, as part of a 'citywide' view of regeneration.[577] They also had considerable involvement in NDCs. By 2006 thirty-four of the thirty-nine NDCs were involved in their LSP, with at least twenty involved '*in a significant way*.'[578] Section 5.28 of *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal* reads: '*effective engagement with the community is one of the most important aspects of LSPs' work and they will have failed if they do not deliver this*.'[579] The expectations on LSPs then were high, as Kythreotis noted '*LSPs were required to be spatially tuned, multi-tasking, highly responsive governance spaces that met the economic, social and environmental priorities of the locality they served'*[580] - a significant undertaking when considered alongside the other core responsibilities respective partners also had to fulfil as public, private, or charitable entities.

Both the national and local evaluations of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal credit LSPs with adding significant value to the areas they supported.[581] In particular they were credited with providing leadership, supporting and facilitating partnership working, and raising the profile of the neighbourhood renewal agenda, encouraging a range partners to think strategically about the role they could play in alleviating neighbourhood deprivation, and for '*focusing minds'* on this by formalising partner obligations to meet government targets and creating incentives to pool resources between local providers.[582] In the national review of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NSNR), LSPs were praised for their efforts in developing '*a collective vision and agreed strategy*' locally, '*widening the range of interests involved in local decision-making*' and '*creating a stronger local voice*.'[583]

However, while the view of public service providers and agencies involved in LSPs was, in the most part, one of overall success, perceptions of the benefits LSPs provided for local people appeared limited - with the 'local research project'

576 Robin, NDC Resident Board Member.
577 NRU, *Making it Happen in Neighbourhoods: The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal – Four Years On*, (ODPM, 2005).
578 CRESR, *The 2006 Partnership Questionnaire: A Briefing Note*, (CRESR, 2007).
579 Social Exclusion Unit, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan*, (Cabinet Office, 2001), 51.
580 A. Kythreotis, 'Local Strategic Partnerships: A Panacea for Voluntary Interest Groups to promote Environmental Sustainability? The UK Context', (2010) 18 *Sustainable Development,* 187-193.
581 DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Final Report*, (Stationery Office, 2010); ECOTEC, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project,* (DCLG, 2010).
582 DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 37-43.
583 DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Final Report*, (Stationary Office, 2010), 89.

finding that many stakeholders from the community and voluntary sector struggled to name the benefits of engagement for themselves or for the resident participants.[584] Indeed the local evaluation of the NSNR paints a somewhat different picture to the outcomes reported above, identifying a number of practical and structural arrangements that hindered LSPs from functioning effectively and that inhibited the influence of local people, despite the aforementioned responsibilities on LSPs to engage with residents. [585] Resident representation on LSPs was reported to be low, with residents reporting little awareness of opportunities to participate in or engage with LSPs.[586] Where residents did take places on the board, they had commonly been recruited through the pre-existing networks of local voluntary and community sector (VCS) partners rather than through any drive to engage the wider community.[587] In other instances, the VCS would provide the community representation themselves, rather than recruiting more widely. This points towards a liberal interpretation of words such as 'resident', 'member of the community' or 'local person', all of which are used interchangeably throughout policy literature.[588] For example, the 2009 regeneration framework defines 'local persons' as not only meaning residents but also to apply to third sector groups; businesses; parish councils; service users; or anyone who lives; works; studies; or perhaps most surprisingly, visits the area.[589] Undoubtedly each of these may have a connection or affinity with an area, but under the definitions discussed in the opening chapters this reflects the dilution of what community means in its truest sense.

LSPs were viewed by many to be too complex an arrangement, especially when framed in the context of the wider strategy and delivery channels of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. The local evaluation and wider studies found some local stakeholders reporting them inaccessible and lacking clarity of purpose.[590] Whilst Matthews, and also Munro et al. noted that LSPs were typically dominated by managers and limited in their community engagement.[591] Reflecting on the LSP operating within his area, NDC practitioner Grant questioned why they had been given oversight of the New Deal for Communities programme:

> *One element, which just seemed counter to any community leadership, was that they were managed by Local Strategic Partnerships, which had been introduced around that time. Which I loved, I thought they were a*

[584] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 42, 104.
[585] Ibid, 39-40.
[586] Ibid, 54-55.
[587] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 7.
[588] F. Robinson and K. Shaw, 'Urban Regeneration and Community Involvement', (1991) 6(1) *Local Economy,* 61-73; N. Rose, 'Community, Citizenship, and the Third Way' (2000) 43(9) *American Behavioural Scientist*, 1395-1411; M. Searle-Chatterjee, D. Boulton and M. Harnor, *Community: Description, Debate and Dilemma*, (Venture Press, 2000); M. Shaw, 'Community Development and the Politics of Community', (2007) 43(1) *Community Development Journal,* 24-36.
[589] DCLG, *Transforming Places; Changing Lives – a Framework for Regeneration Summary of Consultation Responses*, (DCLG, 2009).
[590] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 37.
[591] H.A.D. Munro, M. Roberts and C. Skelcher, 'Partnership Governance and Democratic Effectiveness: Community Leaders and Public Managers as Dual Intermediaries', (2008) 23(1) *Public Policy and Administration*, 61–79; P. Matthews, 'Being Strategic in Partnership – Interpreting Local Knowledge of Modern Local Government', (2004) 40(3) *Local Government Studies*, 451-472.

> *brilliant idea, and the Birmingham one was functioning quite effectively. But they* [NDCs] *came in and government said brilliant, we've now got pilot areas to target our ideas and action. But then just said "This will happen." There was no real guidance on role descriptions, no sense of delegated authority, just suddenly all the frontline police sergeants, frontline housing managers, frontline headteachers* (who made up the LSPs)*, got given New Deal as well. Oh Thanks! With no sense of what other authority they needed, what resource they needed, what other support they needed. It just got dumped on them like a lead weight as another responsibility.*[592]

A review of policy guidance of the time suggests there was guidance and direction provided to LSPs, alongside performance targets as the previous section has discussed.[593] However, the local evaluation reported finding little evidence of LSPs joining-up programmes funded under the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal with non-NSNR programmes as was part of their remit.[594] Where residents did engage, they reported finding LSP forums to be far from an opportunity to influence or debate local decision-making, instead only serving to be information sessions or to find themselves subjected to numerous surveys with little or no communication of the results and little faith their contribution had influenced change.[595] Indeed, findings from the local evaluation reported concerns from resident and community stakeholders that the hierarchies of power remained similar to other decision-making forums, with LSP executives 'seen as the focus of power and decision-making' on account of the status they were given on the board, but also the positions they held within their respective organisations – giving them agency to make commitments and decisions.[596] Resident respondents also claimed certain people dominated discussions, pushing their own agendas over collective efforts[597] and expressed a belief the balance of power within the LSP favoured the public sector partners given that local authorities predominantly led the partnerships.[598] Thus suggesting resident involvement in LSP decision-making was more aligned to the 'nonparticipation' and 'tokenism' rungs of Arnstein's ladder introduced in some detail in chapter three,[599] and not the 'participation' or 'citizen control' dimensions the name 'partnership', and the surrounding rhetoric implies, suggesting LSPs failed to provide an enabling space for local people to exert influence. Where there were opportunities for community input Gaventa found evidence of a number of competing voices vying to speak on behalf of the community, including elected members, local authority officials, and individuals and organisations all claiming to represent the community, with

[592] Grant, NDC Neighbourhood Coordinator and community development practitioner.
[593] ODPM, *Evaluation of Local Strategic Partnerships: Interim Report*, (ODPM, 2005).
[594] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 37
[595] Ibid, 65-66.
[596] Ibid, 39.
[597] Ibid, 39.
[598] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Final Report*, (Stationary Office, 2010), 104.
[599] See chapter three, section 3.3 for a thorough explanation of Arnstein's "ladder of empowerment" – S. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969) 35(4), *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 216-228.

councillors wielding their electoral mandate as evidence of their legitimacy within the space – highlighting the contested nature of 'community' and the inherent challenge of finding a unified community voice and vision.[600]

The official evaluations of the NSNR noted that the operational responsiveness to LSP decision-making varied significantly between partners, with some reporting their ability to carry out LSP or locally agreed activities being heavily constrained by higher-level or national organisational priorities, targets, and regulations, this was said to have '*significantly impacted the extent to which LSPs were able to influence mainstream provision in practice*.'[601] LSPs were also subjected to significant power 'from above' in their role as an intermediary to central government, a concern also noted by Fuller and Geddes in their review of the contribution made by LSPs.[602] Subsequently, LSPs were introduced with a remit to set their own targets and plans for the areas they supported, yet the preconditions, targets and performance reporting measures put in place by central government limited the extent to which they were able to do this without compromising their ability to meet predetermined centrally imposed targets, drawing parallels with the experiences of those involved in the New Deal for Communities (NDC) and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder (NMP) programmes. While the message from central government was one of downward responsibility, the fact that LSPs were introduced alongside a further tier, or extension of government in the form of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, diluted that message somewhat and supports the central thesis that the structures and arrangements put in place by government often limits the extent to which opportunities genuinely equate to redistribution of power and can offer potential for genuine, meaningful community empowerment. In theory, LSPs should have provided a vehicle for community groups to advance their causes on matters of importance to their area, however, as a 2010 study conducted by Kythreotis looking into the influence environmental sustainability groups have been able to exert on LSPs found, much of the work of LSPs was driven by centrally imposed direction, which according to Kythreotis, prioritised 'socio-economic discourses' (meaning employment, health, education and public safety) through local service provision, rather than environmental discourses. As a result the inclusion of environmental groups and interests within such spaces was reliant on their ability to conform to the socio-economic public service delivery ethos of LSPs.[603] A view corroborated by the work of Taylor *et al* who found evidence of LSPs and other forums of community boards favouring voluntary sector organisations that could play a strategic role related to centrally driven priorities, e.g. the delivery and coordination of services, rather than the voluntary and community sector driving the priorities of LSPs.[604] Concerns were raised about the impact this had on the impartiality of community organisations,

[600] J. Gaventa, *Representation, Community Leadership and Participation: Citizen Involvement in Neighbourhood Renewal and Local Governance*, (ODPM), 2004).

[601] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 39.

[602] C. Fuller and M. Geddes, 'Urban Governance Under Neoliberalism: New Labour and the Restructuring of State-Space', (2008) 40(2) *Antipode*, 252–282.

[603] A. Kythreotis, 'Local Strategic Partnerships: A Panacea for Voluntary Interest Groups to Promote Environmental Sustainability? The UK Context', (2010) 18 *Sustainable Development,* 189-191.

[604] M. Taylor, G. Craig, S. Monro, S. Parkes, D. Warburton and M. Wilkinson, 'A Sea-Change or a Swamp?: Changing Spaces for Voluntary Sector Engagement in Governance in the UK', (2004) 35(2) *IDS Bulletin,* 67-75.

putting them in something of a quandary between a need for resources to support their activities and in many cases the need to modify their activities in accordance with funding priorities and timescales, blurring the line between 'claimed' and 'invited spaces'.[605] Viewing this through the 'space, place and power' framework, this could be construed as central government maintaining strong control of the "rules of the game" - they provide the funding along with caveats on how it should be spent and where it should be directed, setting targets and timeframes to which recipients have to adhere to, retaining power whilst projected a message that they are committed to giving it away.

An inherent tension running throughout the work of LSPs, neighbourhood partnerships, and indeed the work of local government and the tiers between them and the centre, is that, as Counsell and Haughton, and Coaffee and Hedlam amongst others note, local policies are highly contingent upon national policy priorities.[606] This is particularly the case in England, where so much power for decision-making and resource allocation remains with central government.[607] The reality in many areas was that LSPs were primarily concerned with strategic decision-making at the district level, agreeing on strategies and setting targets, and monitoring progress towards these. Much of the coordination below this, including the identification of community groups and locations at which to direct funding, was negotiated at local government and agency level. As a result, local silo working continued in many places, with a focus on addressing the results of deprivation, rather than exploring and tackling the root causes, or making links to wider economic activity,[608] leading the local evaluation to conclude that LSPs were good at developing strategies, but less effective in bringing them into practice.[609]

5.6 Horizontal challenges – power, identity and conflict at the community level

So far, this chapter has considered the vertical power dimensions that characterised neighbourhood renewal initiatives under New Labour. It is this interaction that much of the literature has focused on.[610] The value of the powercube model is that it not only looks at power as a top-down or bottom-up phenomenon, but also helps to understand that communities

[605] A. Kythreotis, 'Local Strategic Partnerships: A Panacea for Voluntary Interest Groups to Promote Environmental Sustainability? The UK Context', (2010) 18 *Sustainable Development,* 189-191.

[606] D. Counsell and G. Haughton, 'Sustainable Development in Regional Planning: The Search for New Tools and Renewed Legitimacy', (2006) 37(6) *Geoforum,* 921-931; J. Coaffee and N. Hedlam, 'Pragmatic Localism Uncovered: The Search for Locally Contingent Solutions to National Reform Agendas', (2008) 39(4) *Geoforum*, 1585-1599.

[607] J. Stanton, 'The Big Society and Community Development: Neighbourhood Planning Under the Localism Act', (2014) 16(164) *Environmental Law Review*, 262-276.

[608] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 37-42.

[609] D. North and S. Syett, 'Making the Links: Economic Deprivation, Neighbourhood Renewal and Scales of Governance', (2008) 42 *Regional Studies,* 133-148; DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 39.

[610] R.J. Chaskin and M.L Joseph, 'Building 'Community' in Mixed-income developments: Assumptions, Approaches and Early Experiences', (2009) 45 *Urban Affairs Review*, 299-335; P. Lawless, 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 319; D. North and S. Syett, 'Making the Links: Economic Deprivation, Neighbourhood Renewal and Scales of Governance', (2008) 42 *Regional Studies,* 133-148.

are enmeshed in wider networks of power all the time, that what actors do locally is impacted by their relationships and engagements with each other continually, and that any actor planning to enter a place should give due consideration to local context.[611] This section explores local power dynamics brought about by regeneration initiatives at the neighbourhood scale.

Earlier chapters talked of the challenge of defining a community and the reality that communities are typically made up of diverse interests, needs and capacity, despite a tendency for programme designs or communitarian ideologies to view community as something homogenous and malleable. Interviews with residents and practitioners involved in the delivery of neighbourhood renewal initiatives further emphasised the challenge of prescribing ways in which community-led programmes should operate. Writing in 2006 Sullivan et al noted that all ABIs operate '*within the contours of their local context'*, meaning that pre-existing local tensions, ingrained working practices, and the skills, confidence and the life experience of individuals and communities will all have a bearing on how programmes are received and implemented – all of which came to light in this research.[612]

As alluded to in the previous section, Resident Board Members who took part in this research spoke of the considerable challenges they faced in the early years of the NDC programme as pre-existing tensions between tenants living in council-owned property and leaseholders came to the fore over representation on the NDC Partnership Board and the priorities for delivery. There was much inter-community debate about who should represent 'the community' on the NDC board, and several accusations that some people were looking for involvement to further '*their own political agendas*':

> *…And you know, some of the residents coming in, had a wider agenda. I didn't, I was a bit naïve. So, some came in with a political agenda and they used that, fair enough. They wanted to use that, the New Deal as a vehicle to get elected and* [promote their cause].[613]

> *I think, there was a perception amongst a small number of residents in the community that the original group weren't particularly representative of residents living here … And they felt that nobody should be there representing the community without some form of election. So, we had an election. Several elections! We were*

[611] K. Brock, A. Cornwall and J. Gaventa, 'Power, Knowledge and Political Spaces in the Framing of Poverty Policy*', (2001)* 143 *IDS Working Paper*, 1-47. (Online) Available at: <http://www.ids.ac.uk/publication/power-knowledge-and-political-spaces-in-the-framing-of-poverty-policy> Last accessed: 22nd March 2019; M. Taylor, E. Buckly and C. Hennessey, *Historical Review of Place-Based Approaches,* (Lankelly Chase, 2017) (Online) Available at: <https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf> Last accessed: 25th September 2019.

[612] H. Sullivan, M. Barnes and E. Matka, 'Collaborative Capacity and Strategies in Area-Based Initiatives', (2006) 84(2) *Public Administration*, 289–310.

[613] Karen, NDC Resident Board Member

very much election rather than selection. So sorry Labour government, we have to sort this out first, before we can start spending any money![614]

Conflict between residents is not uncommon in neighbourhood renewal programmes, Bailey and Pill document several accounts of tensions between sections of the community in their work, while further accounts of conflicts raised through neighbourhood renewal programmes can be found across the literature.[615] This is not surprising given the 'contested' nature of community discussed in the previous chapter. As Harvey notes, space is also contested and a reason for serious conflicts.[616] Through involvement in the NDC programme the residents interviewed came to realise that their community was in fact made up of many communities.[617] Over the course of the interviews they talked of tensions between '*the originals'* and the '*new people'* (referring to those that had lived in the area for a long time and those that had more recently moved to the area); '*council'* tenants and '*leaseholders'* (reflecting that some residents owned their properties, while others were in socially rented accommodation). People were also referred to by their political affiliations, the term '*looney lefties'* was used to refer to some people's views on the priorities the partnership should be prioritising, while another tension participants spoke of was that the local council was Liberal Democrat run at the time of the programme, while a significant number of residents and councillors involved were Labour supporters, as a result conflicting views and tensions about the council having to delivery and support a New Labour initiative came to the fore. There was also debate about who spoke for whom as representatives of the community. As discussed in earlier chapters, boundaries drawn around area-based programmes (i.e. who or where is eligible funding and what is not) often reflect administrative or political boundaries rather than functional communities, and tensions occurred around this in all of the areas interviewed.[618] As Mayo notes, this is not a bad thing, '*communities are diverse and local interests may conflict with each other's. If community is seen*

[614] Robin, NDC Resident Board Member

[615] N. Bailey and M. Pill, 'The Continuing Popularity of the Neighbourhood and Neighbourhood Governance in the Transition from the 'Big State' to the 'Big Society' Paradigm', (2011) 29 (5) *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy,* 927-942*;* N. Bailey and M. Pill, 'Can the State Empower Communities Through Localism?', (2015) 33 (2) *Environment and Planning 'C': Government and Policy*, 289-304; P. Lawless, 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 313-328; C. Beatty, M. Foden, P. Lawless and I. Wilson, 'Area-based Regeneration Partnerships and the Role of Central Government: the New Deal for Communities Programme in England', (2010) 38(2) *Policy and Politics*, 235-251; DCLG, *Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders: Final Evaluation Report, People, Places, Public Services: Making the Connections*, (DCLG, 2009); DCLG, *What Works in Neighbourhood-level Regeneration? The Views of Key Stakeholders in the New Deal for Communities Programme*, (DCLG, 2010); R. Meegan and A. Mitchell, 'It's Not Community Round Here, It's Neighbourhood': Neighbourhood Change and Cohesion in Urban Regeneration Policies', (2001) 38(12) *Urban Studies,* 2167-2194.

[616] D. Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, (University of California Press, 2000).

[617] Robinson, F., Shaw, K., and Davidson, G., ''On the Side of the Angels': Community Involvement in the Governance of Neighbourhood Renewal, (2005) 20(1) *Local Economy,* 16.

[618] F. Robinson, K. Shaw and G. Davidson, ''On the Side of the Angels': Community Involvement in the Governance of Neighbourhood Renewal, (2005) 20(1) *Local Economy,* 17; M. Raco, 'New Labour, Community and the Future of Britain's Urban Renaissance', in R. Imrie and M. Raco (eds.), *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, Community and Urban Policy* (Policy Press, 2003), 241; J. Anastacio, B. Gidley, L. Hart, M. Keith, M. Mayo and U. Kowarzik, *Reflecting Realities: Participants' Perspectives on Integrated Communities and Sustainable Development*, (Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF /The Policy Press; 2000).

as homogeneous then only the most powerful voices will tend to be heard."[619] It did however mean that the partnership got off to a difficult start and required concerted effort to resolve at a time when the government felt the partnership should be focusing on delivery of the programme. The breakthrough for the London-based NDC was to develop a local representative system, splitting the NDC area into a series of 'zones', each zone would elect a representative, and that representative would attend the NDC partnership board on behalf of their zone. Elements of class, identity, and a debate over who truly reflected the community led to this decision, as Robin explained:

> *I think it was a feeling, by the more lead residents that were politically active, that they felt that a middle-class agenda was being imposed on the local community. They thought the literal community could only be poor working-class people, it couldn't be anyone else. "Leaseholders, they were able to look after themselves, we don't care about them". And, I think they actually had a point. So, our response, instead of like sifting through everything thinking "oh God can we do any of this, at all", was to have 'Local Reps'.*

Such an approach was not unique to the London-based NDC, a similar approach was developed in the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder area Patrick was working with in Nottingham and the NDC Grant worked for in Birmingham, with them all following broadly similar approaches to governance as the one Grant describes in the following quote:

> *There was the main Partnership Board which was a majority of residents. But that became such a classic local authority, bureaucratic post-process it almost self-selected the residents who would be on it. There were then working groups for each of the theme areas and they were tasked with developing strategies and projects around themes, health, education, etc. But they always really struggled to get active participation. And then parallel to this there was, which was actually one of the few exciting things we did, was a parallel sort of consultation/communication Community Network where the residents themselves split the neighbourhood into 'micro-neighbourhoods' by their own local knowledge, and then in each area a representative was identified. It was just the natural local organiser, but it gave us all a mechanism of disseminating and collecting insights. But then again, that got completely ruined when we decided to put a load of money into community development and employ a full-time community development team. They then came in and did it instead.*[620]

In some respects, this reflected a 'claiming' of space within the programmes, with residents creating new structures of governance within the predefined ones, to better serve their interests and enhance the 'voice' of distinct parts of the community. However, it is interesting that they chose to replicate traditional democratic and decision-making structures

[619] M. Mayo, J. Anastacio, B. Gidley, L. Hart, M. Keith and U. Kowarzik, *Community Participants' Perspectives on Involvement in Area Regeneration Programmes,* (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2000).
[620] Grant, NDC Neighbourhood Coordinator.

within these 'claimed' spaces. In essence these structures reflected a microcosm of representative democracy in the UK, with elected residents advocating for and accountable to a proportion of the community, and decision-making taking place over various tiers of governance. It was interesting to hear and read repeated accounts of partnerships adopting such local authority style governance arrangements when so many had lamented the inefficiencies of local governance structures. Both the New Deal for Communities and the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders prescribed resident-led boards as part of the programme design, another demonstration of an invited space for participation, opening up previously closed spaces of decision-making given that much of the decision-making responsibility for regeneration had been held at local regional government levels previously.[621] Beyond this it was for residents, alongside their accountable body (the organisation responsible for coordinating and overseeing the spending of funding and the delivery of projects, typically the local authority), to decide on the best approaches to canvas local opinion and ensure a cross-section of resident voices were captured. Yet residents routinely adopted similar governance arrangements to those these programmes sought to move away from, replicating wider structural arrangements, and giving a select few agency to act on behalf of their communities. This appeared to be a natural decision and process for those interviewed, either because the NDC and Neighbourhood Pathfinder boards were extensions of pre-existing neighbourhood partnerships, or in the case of the partnership in London, born out of necessity in an attempt to resolve local tensions. As one interviewee noted, "*It's just how things were done*," they could not recall much deliberation about adopting alternative approaches to organisation.[622] This points to a hegemonic view of representation, decision-making and accountability structures and approaches to running meetings, with some of the practitioners reflecting that these structures had served to deter or exclude some groups from participating, particularly younger members of the community. A similar pattern emerged across the NDC and NMP programmes, as Jim noted:

> *...most of the partnerships had similar profiles, you know older, more educated. But you need to accept that's what you'll get if you replicate local authority models in the way you run your programmes and your meetings. But I don't think partnerships should beat themselves up about representation – its more about how well they've networked with other groups and sought insight from wider interest groups. You know, the extent to which they're connected to other groups and views*.[623]

[621] R. Atkinson, 'Discourses of Partnership and Empowerment in Contemporary British Urban Regeneration', (1999) 36 *Urban Studies,* 59-72; A. Tallon, *Urban Regeneration in the UK,* 2nd Edition, (Routledge, 2013); S. Thomas and P. Duncan, *Neighbourhood Regeneration: Resourcing Community Involvement (Area Regeneration),* (Policy Press: 2000).

[622] Karen, NDC Resident Board Member.

[623] Jim, NDC Chief Executive and civil servant.

Chapter three briefly discussed the work of Foucault and Bordieu, and the important role power and discourse plays in shaping the social world, creating and reinforcing behaviours and producing self-governing citizens.[624] Over time these norms become so embedded that they are accepted without question – '*causing us to discipline ourselves without any wilful coercion from others*.'[625] The general acceptance, that '*It's just how things* [are] *done*,' is an example of how dominant forms of power are perpetuated and become accepted as the de facto approach to group organisation and governance.[626] As Barnes, Newman and Sullivan observed in their review of participatory democracy processes: '*Confronted with a new situation, actors draw on their existing resources to interpret and respond to it, based on pre-existing rules and pre-existing logics of appropriate behaviour*.'[627] DiMaggio and Powell refer to this pattern of organisational practices becoming entrenched as '*institutional isomorphism*', which can take three forms: '*coercive isomorphism*' (when organisations are forced to behave in a certain way); '*mimetic isomorphism*' (when organisations copy what they see as successful ways of working; and '*normative isomorphism*' (when organisations assume that certain ways of organising are 'the norm'.[628] There was evidence of all three of these forms in the interviews and accounts of neighbourhood participation reviewed as part of this research.

The establishment of neighbourhood management boards, with control over substantial funding released by central government also created tensions between resident partnerships and their respective local authorities. By giving partnerships agency to plan and spend on their own priorities this invariably took away some power and responsibility that the local authority had held within the area and demanded new ways of working between councils and their communities. Relatedly, while these programmes opened new opportunities for community influence, much of their work still had to be signed-off by the local authority in some way, through planning permissions, changes to local services, or gaining the necessary permissions to run events. As Jim noted, '*to do anything on the physical realm you need local permission*, *you need the council onside.*'[629] Therefore, the community – local government dynamic was as important and more immediate than the interactions with central government. A further tension was that in most NDC and NMP areas the local authority was tasked with being the 'accountable body' for the partnership, responsible for administering funding, employing staff,

[624] M. Foucault, 'Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977', (Harvester Press, 1980) in J. Crampton and S. Elden (eds.), *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography*, (Ashgate, 2007); P. Bordieu, *In Other Words: Essays towards a Reflexive Society,* (Stanford University Press, 1990) in M. Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community,* 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 117.

[625] Institute of Development Studies, *Powercube.net: Foucault: Power is Everywhere,* (Online) Available at: < https://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power/foucault-power-is-everywhere/> Last accessed: 23rd October 2019.

[626] M. Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community,* 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 110-134.

[627] M. Barnes, J. Newman and H. Sullivan, *Power, Participation and Political Renewal: Case Studies in Public Participation*, (Policy Press, 2007), 61. Cited in M. Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community,* 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 117.

[628] P. DiMaggio and W.W. Powell, 'The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collected Rationality in Organizational Fields', (1983) 48 *American Sociological Review,* 459-462. Cited in M. Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community,* 2nd Edition, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 117-118.

[629] Jim, NDC Chief Executive.

and creating opportunities for partnerships to link with the wider voluntary and social sector.[630] This relationship was often fractious. In their study of local governance arrangements in and around New Deal for Communities areas in 2005 Robinson et al. heard several accounts of NDC partnerships regarding the local council as '*the problem*' - a view they argue was also shared by parts of central government at the time.[631] A 2004 Public Accounts Committee into the early progress of the NDC programme reported that '*a mistrust between some local authorities and New Deal for Communities boards has prevented progress through the partnership approach*.'[632] Historically, there was some justification to these concerns: evaluations of the Single Regeneration Budget reported that activities to promote community involvement in neighbourhood regeneration had been 'hijacked' by local government, while generally tensions between local government and deprived communities had persisted for some time in some areas.[633] Two accounts from the interviewees provide further examples of how local politics threatened the deployment and sustainment of a community based and national government funded programme:

> *One of the biggest issues we faced and what ultimately the death knell of the NMP in [the area] was politicians and elected members didn't like the shift in power. You had ordinary unelected people making a positive difference in the community without a mandate. Nobody had voted for them. Nobody had given them a "right" to do it, and representative democracy felt threatened by participatory democracy. We had sought multiple times to bring them under the umbrella of a collaborative approach, but they wouldn't. Yet, when we started nobody knew who the neighbourhood board members* (which predated the NMP programme) *were, nobody knew who their local councillor was. The councillors used to meet for a surgery, and they had a deck of cards they played with each other because no one came! By the end of the Pathfinder people were actively involved. People were actively engaging with their councillors; they attended the Community Safety Forums and monthly surgeries. And that's a huge benefit to them* (elected members)*, and huge kudos to them from neighbourhood renewal for the neighbourhood management approach. But they resented it, unfortunately rather than embracing it, like some wise elected members embraced it across the country, where we were we had the local MP, a Labour MP,*

630 C. Fuller and M. Geddes, 'Urban Governance Under Neoliberalism: New Labour and the Restructuring of State-Space', (2008) 40(2) *Antipode*, 252–282.

631 F. Robinson, K. Shaw and G. Davidson, ''On the Side of the Angels': Community Involvement in the Governance of Neighbourhood Renewal, (2005) 20(1) *Local Economy,* 19.

632 Public Accounts Committee, *An Early Progress Report on the New Deal for Communities Programme,* Thirty Eighth report of Session 2003-02 (HC 492), (HMSO, 2004).

633 J. Coaffee and I. Deas, 'The Search for Policy Innovation in Urban Governance: Lessons from Community-led Regeneration Partnerships', (2008) 23(2) *Public Policy and Administration,* 167-187; J.S.F. Wright, J. Parry, J. Mathers, S. Jones and J. Orford, 'Assessing the Participatory Potential of Britain's New Deal for Communities: Opportunities for and Constraints to 'Bottom-up' Community Participation', (2006) 27(4) *Policy Studies,* 347-361.

> *challenge what we were doing in the Houses of Parliament. … Asking "what on earth are we (*the Government), *doing wasting so much money on salaries in his ward on neighbourhood management?"*[634]

A point that this thesis keeps coming back to is that regeneration and community programmes do not take place in a vacuum. Like communities, local authorities tasked with supporting and enabling local regeneration were subject to wider and competing forces shaping their future direction and making demands on their (increasingly) limited resources. As Patrick recounted, the NMP and NDC programmes coincided with a time of considerable change for local authorities, as central government went about recalibrating their relationship with local government:

> *And then you had the local Labour Party members who felt the power base was being eroded. And this was happening across the country, local elected members felt increasingly void of purpose. Local authority officers tended to make the decisions and they got rubber-stamped by elected members or whatever. So, they were already feeling their power base was going. You had Arm's Length Management Organisations for the housing associations coming into place. Counsellors used to walk into housing offices and say, "I want this business done!" Then they found there was a pin code on the door, and they had to make an appointment! So, there was all this stuff going on, and unfortunately that sort of backfired. And as much as we left the door open, elected members were very adamant this wasn't going to continue so they decided that* [the NMP alliance] *would not continue* [beyond its funding cycle]. *There was a kind of "Over our dead bodies - when that money finishes it's gone." And I liken it to an old cassette: when it got messed up and mangled you could roll it back in with a pencil. But the bit that was a mess, sort of either side of the mess, you'd make a cut and then tape it back in place and you put it together. And it's like they cut from 2003, to 2011 when the money ran out, and they took the sustainability money from us, and the tape plays like it never happened -we'll we just pretend the money and the community alliance never happened.*[635]

Reflecting on her own findings of local participation in neighbourhood renewal and the tension between 'representative' and 'participative' democracy, Marilyn Taylor concluded that:

> *Not enough thought has gone into the relationship between the two with the result that many politicians are no longer sure of their role and feel threatened by the power that they feel is being given to community representatives. It is this that creates "wounded lions" at all levels that frustrate the rhetoric from the centre."*[636]

[634] Patrick, NMP Neighbourhood Manager

[635] Patrick, NMP Neighbourhood Manager

[636] M. Taylor, 'A Sea-Change or a Swamp?: Changing Spaces for Voluntary Sector Engagement in Governance in the UK', (2004) 35(2) *IDS Bulletin,* 70.

Jim shared similar thoughts when reflected on the power the New Deal for Communities took away from '*the middlemen*' in local authorities and questioned whether more could have been done to connect the two. Going on to say that it '*feels odd now, for central government to have a direct relationship with neighbourhoods*.'[637] However, he did go on to note that the local authority still 'maintained control' over a lot of things, often to the frustration of residents. For Jim, more should have been done (both from central government, and with '*the benefit of hindsight'* his team) to support resident-led partnerships' negotiations with the council, support them to create a stronger partnership, rather than something that was '*more transactional, a lot of money was spent on local authority services, rather than doing things together*.'[638] Robinson et al. drew similar conclusions in their review of resident involvement opportunities within the SRB and NDC programme:

> *Community governance cannot be an alternative to local government - a regeneration partnership does not have the same power, range of responsibilities, or resources that local government has. Moreover, local government has a wider geographical remit, concerned not just with the interests of one small area but a whole town or city.*[639]

Interviewees also spoke of the significant barriers individual officers could pose to delivery and resident leadership, including in some instances with staff directly employed by the Neighbourhood Boards. Interviews with residents and practitioners revealed tensions and some differences of opinion between how delivery staff and partners saw their roles, and the role residents felt partners should play. As discussed above, each NDC and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder was overseen by a resident board, but there were teams of paid staff in place to coordinate activities and spending alongside residents. Several extracts from interviews revealed that this was not always the empowering process it was set up to be:

> *Some of the public space stuff we did wasn't great. We missed out a bit with that, and that was mainly because of Beth's bizarre ideas about what she wanted, and the residents of the community didn't agree. I think that got a bit in the way. ... She was the Public Space Lead for the NDC. She was tasked with all public realm stuff, and it was pretty much her way or no way. ... And I think the residents found it a bit much to take in. Somebody telling them, when we should be consulting. And then, even when you did say what you wanted, nothing ever*

[637] Jim, NDC Chief Executive.
[638] Jim, NDC Chief Executive.
[639] F. Robinson, K. Shaw and G. Davidson, ''On the Side of the Angels': Community Involvement in the Governance of Neighbourhood Renewal, (2005) 20(1) *Local Economy,* 19.

happened. So that's how people felt. Unless she agreed with you, if she agreed with you, then it was all systems go.[640]

Empowerment frameworks typically explore the tension between communities or individuals and larger institutions, use of the 'powercube' model also helps to think about how power can manifest at the micro-level. In the example above, one person, through their actions and position within the programme team was able to exert a level of control over resident participants, or at the least frustrate their plans. Patrick had similar reflections on some of the staff from agencies that were part of the partnership board in the NMP area he was working with:

I think middle management was a big issue, and it often is, because you have the strategic people leading organisations who get it and want to change. And you have the people on the ground hungry for the change and doing things well. And then you've got this permafrost in the middle, of the middle management who find it very hard to adapt to new ways of working. That's always a hard one to crack.[641]

Just as neighbourhood management was new for some of the resident partners, some of the approaches promoted through NDC, NMP and associated programmes represented significantly new ways of working for agencies and staff. Karen recounted the level of suspicion she was subjected to in early meetings with staff from an established community centre within the NDC area:

I remember the first few times I was invited along to their meetings. I was very apprehensive you know, and they didn't want to say anything to me. They just kept stipulating everything they talked about or told me was confidential, because they thought I was going to go out and start telling everyone about their business. Even though the stuff they talked about was out there anyway.[642]

Correspondingly, Robin described challenges that arose because agency staff were reluctant to work with the resident-led partnership in the wake of the governance challenges discussed above.

I think what happened in terms of the agencies that were actually spending the money, because we weren't literally writing cheques. I think what happened was, it'd been such a fight to make it community-led at the beginning, getting rid of this inherited board and having it all elected, so everybody was like (makes breathing-in noise) – *"Residents have got to have the final say <u>on everything</u>!" That put some partners and agencies off.*

640 Karen, NDC Resident Board Member

641 Patrick, NMP Neighbourhood Manager.

642 Karen, NDC Resident Board Member.

Some people really got into it and got engaged with the money, and other people just didn't give a shit and didn't bother to engage. And some soon went, so it was a bit personality led.[643]

Such a view was in part corroborated by the national evaluation of the NSNR which found evidence of scepticism from local providers regarding the extent to which resident engagement improved programme design and delivery, and around the appropriate timing of community involvement and deliberation.[644] Others were reticent to work with residents, given that attempts in the past had not gone well, or had failed to prioritise or focus on 'single issues', instead turning into forums whereby various concerns are aired.[645] Others were concerned that they might not be able to deliver on the requests or recommendations of residents which would perpetuate local disillusionment with the council or agencies, rather than ease it.[646] More practically officers pointed to the expense and labour intensiveness of running good engagement as a barrier.[647] More subtle behaviours also served to reinforce established power relationships, with residents interviewed in the local evaluation citing the inconsistent attendance of agency partners as a reason they lost interest, as this both hindered progress and was seen as a message of how important the forum was held to be by paid staff, whilst they were giving up their time to attend.[648] Such perceptions, on both the side of communities and on local partners, are influenced by many decades of policy and practice, so much so they become 'invisible power' dynamics, ingrained in the psyche of all involved and contributing to the 'closing' of spaces of engagement at both the local and community level, changing such behaviours is not easy and can take many years to resolve.[649] The wider literature both reinforces these findings and adds some further context. Lawless notes that, like residents and local authorities, other agencies that made up NDC Partnership Boards (most typically representatives from housing and environment, health authorities, the police) also found their roles and contributions governed by wider structural forces.[650] The final evaluation of the programme notes that they were useful allies to partnerships and in some cases provided crucial assistance, but in general failed to provide the financial and 'capacity building' support anticipated.[651] As Lawless notes, across neighbourhood renewal partnerships there was a pattern of partners being happy to provide direction on how to spend their funding, but not 'bend' any of their own resources towards this.[652] The inherent challenge in this, as several academics have found, was that while partners could dedicate staff time to partnership working, contribute local knowledge and promote the work of neighbourhood

643 Robin, NDC Resident Board Member.
644 DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 54.
645 Ibid, 66.
646 Ibid, 66.
647 Ibid, 61.
648 DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 61
649 H. Sullivan, 'New Forms of Local Accountability: Coming to Terms with Many Hands?', (2003) 31(3) *Policy & Politics*, 353–369.
650 P. Lawless, 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 321.
651 DCLG, What Works in Neighbourhood-level Regeneration? The Views of Key Stakeholders in the New Deal for Communities Programme, (DCLG, 2010).
652 P. Lawless, 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 313-328.

partnerships, they often did not have control of their own budgets, and were subject to their own centrally set targets that did not always align with those of neighbourhood partnerships.[653] In a sense partnership was 'forced' on local agencies, who were themselves judged on performance management frameworks set elsewhere, with little coordination with neighbourhood renewal policy.[654] One of the residents interviewed reflected that one of the best things about the NDC programme was that '*it had teeth'* with the money and provisions bringing partners together that had not had a particularly strong record of working collaboratively.[655] However, by bringing in to force neighbourhood partnerships it is assumed that those involved will have shared priorities and commitments, conversely, the reality was a policy context where the priorities of residents were not necessarily those of the agents 'invited' to work with them. As Marilyn Taylor notes, '*creating a coherent constituency out of a highly diverse sector*' can take a long time to achieve and is a process often fraught with long-standing tensions and suspicion.[656] The findings above add credence to this assessment.

5.7 'Super-empowered' and 'heavily exposed' – the demanding nature of community representation

One further point of consideration to emerge from the interviews was the weight of expectation placed on resident volunteers. Much of the literature depicts participation as a good thing, and a primary goal of community development practice is to enhance community involvement, influence and participation, and through that empower people. However, some of the accounts to emerge from participants' experiences of being involved in neighbourhood renewal activities present a picture of local people being put under extreme pressure and scrutiny - both within their communities and from the government - for undertaking what was a voluntary role. Reviewing opportunities for resident influence in neighbourhood renewal in 2005 Robinson et al. noted that:

> *When it is working well, governance by the community can be uplifting and inspiriting, bringing positive change and generating a sense of achievement and excitement. But in some places, it is proving a real struggle. It can be very fragile and dependent on the dedication of a handful of individuals. Community representatives are*

[653] J. Coaffee, 'Re-scaling Regeneration: Experiences of Merging Area-Based and City-Wide Partnerships in Urban Policy', (2004) 17 *The International Journal of Public Sector Management,* 443-461; L. Dargan, 'Conceptualising Regeneration in the New Deal for Communities', (2007) 8(3) *Planning Theory & Practice*, 345-362; P. Lawless, 'Area-based Urban Interventions: Rationale and Outcomes: The New Deal for Communities Programme in England, (2006) 29 *Environment and Planning C,* 520-532.

[654] J. Rhodes, P. Tyler, and A. Brennan, *The Single Regeneration Budget: Final Evaluation,* (University of Cambridge Department of Land Economy, 2007).

[655] Robin, NDC Resident Board Member.

[656] M. Taylor, 'Communities in Partnership: Developing a Strategic Voice', (2006) 5(2) *Social Policy and Society,* 274.

finding themselves having to cope with considerable pressures and, consequently, some NDC partnerships are facing problems developing and delivering regeneration programmes. [657]

This was true of the experiences of residents involved in this study, the following quotes are included to emphasise the weight of responsibility felt by some residents and the vulnerability they felt in the face of considerable pressure from others living in the area.

Certainly, in terms of power I felt like, I felt like, I had too much power in some ways. ... Because I was a Resident Rep, I used to get them knocking on my door. When we were doing consultations, I used to go and knock on the doors of my estate. I used to go to them Resident Association Meetings. I was the representative of my estate.[658]

...for some of us, that're sort of like working-class people, you know, we've got this great deal of money, we've got this big responsibility, and all these people are depending on us and we've got to get this right.[659]

Karen recalled how one disgruntled resident had threatened to sue the NDC partnership about a decision that had been taken regarding the installation of new security systems that would potentially raise local service charges over time. Herself and others on the partnership had to seek legal advice over this, and that for a time she '*was worried about losing* [her] *flat*.'[660] Another instance both Robin and Karen recalled was a particularly fractious meeting with '*the leaseholds'* on some of the estates, concerned they would have to bear some of the costs of planned works to improve security:

There was the one meeting down here, to do with the leaseholders, and we were inundated with all these people. They were just sitting across the table, glaring at us! I would sit in there and my back was to these people and I'm thinking "My God anyone could just hit me now and I wouldn't even know it was coming!" ... I'd never been in that situation before where you get all these hostile people walk in. They just walked in. There was no security, there was nothing. And it was just them and us.[661]

I was saying "Shut the door!" It wasn't safe, for us or them. I found out later that a certain someone on the board, who was in on it, had wedged the main door and disabled the lock, so you couldn't keep people out. But I was saying "It's not safe, because it was a hostile crowd, and also obviously we've got to go out and meet these people, but not in this environment. I said: "You've got 200 people in here, and it's not safe." We were just all

[657] F. Robinson, K. Shaw, and G. Davidson, ''On the Side of the Angels': Community Involvement in the Governance of Neighbourhood Renewal, (2005) 20(1) *Local Economy,* 16. Citing: Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, *New Deal for Communities: The National Evaluation Annual Report 2002/03*, (ODPM, 2003); National Audit Office, *An Early Progress Report on the New Deal for Communities Programme,* (NAO, 2004).
[658] Robin, NDC Resident Board Member.
[659] Karen, NDC Resident Board Member.
[660] Karen, NDC Resident Board Member.
[661] Karen, NDC Resident Board Member.

sitting there round the table, looking at each other and thinking, "What's going to happen. Are we getting out alive!"[662]

Both reflected on the situation with some amusement several years later but recognised that it was a position they did not expect to find themselves in, through voluntary roles. As Robin reflected:

It was a bit unexpected as a resident involved in this kind of community stuff. But I expect anything to do within a community, particularly around public space will be controversial. But I don't, I didn't, expect something quite so sharp-ended.[663]

Both Resident Board Members felt they had significant agency to make decisions through their roles on the Partnership Board and subgroups, but with that agency came a level of scrutiny and '*exposure'* to the community that they had not envisioned.[664] Both spoke of feeling particularly exposed as they and other Resident Board Members would be the ones who came into daily contact with fellow residents, or that would be the first point of contact for those who were unhappy about decisions made or changes taking place as a result of the programme:

I think with things like that, as residents we were quite heavily exposed to a lot of stuff. I don't think we felt that we were distant from the decision-making and that the agencies who put the bids in would just make those. Because if anything went wrong, I had them straight round my flat! Which to be honest I didn't mind, but just wondering how appropriate that was really.[665]

Robinson et al. also noted the amount of 'informal representation' residents involved in neighbourhood renewal were undertaking through other strands of activity being undertaken as part of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal:

Because community representatives live 'on-site' they find they can be on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. On top of that, they may have to face some hostility from other residents suspicious of the motives of community representatives, believing them to have 'changed sides' or become involves in order to pursue their own interests and agendas.[666]

662 Robin, NDC Resident Board Member.
663 Robin, NDC Resident Board Member
664 Robin, NDC Resident Board Member
665 Robin, NDC Resident Board Member
666 F. Robinson, K. Shaw and G. Davidson, ''On the Side of the Angels': Community Involvement in the Governance of Neighbourhood Renewal, (2005) 20(1) *Local Economy,* 18.

Marilyn Taylor reported strikingly similar observations about the '*enormous demands'* on residents involved in Local Strategic Partnerships, describing them as:

> *Caught in a no-man's land where they are expected to represent the views of their constituencies to partnerships on the one hand, but at the same time to embody the partnership back in the community on the other, even when its decisions fly in the face of community wishes. Where money is at stake, representatives also run the risk of being suspected of feathering their own nests by the community, while being accused of being unrepresentative by their partnership colleagues is an occupational hazard, especially if they challenge the drive to consensus*.[667]

Discussing this level of commitment, Robin reflected that while he was proud of what the partnership had achieved, the experience had left him reluctant to continue serving the community in a voluntary capacity. While Karen, who had continued to be active in a number of resident groups and gone on to chair her local Tenants and Residents Association reflected that she was beginning to feel she'd '*done* [her] *time*'.

> *I think that was the legacy that they wanted, people like us, and [other names] to be more involved long-term. But to be honest. I'd had a lot, I'd had a character battering, I needed time away from it by the end really. I'd done my time*.[668]

Such levels of involvement invariably take their toll on participants as a report on the NDC programme by the National Audit Office was noting as early as 2004:

> *Residents were experiencing 'burn-out' as a result of attending regular board meetings, working group discussions, project appraisal boards and a host of other activities ... The burden is significant and each NDC partnership has had to actively manage its engagement process so as not to overload existing volunteers or deter potential participants.*[669]

The above raises questions of fairness, and what level of responsibility is equitable to pass on to communities, a discussion the following chapter will return to. Relatedly, both residents also reflected on the sheer range of 'themes' they were expected to make decisions about, with resident volunteers (and other partnership members) put in positions of power over services and spending priorities of which they only had limited knowledge of:

667 M. Taylor, 'Neighbourhood Governance: Holy Grail or Poisoned Chalice?', (2003) 18(3) *Local Economy,* 193.
668 Robin, NDC Resident Board Member.
669 National Audit Office, *An Early Progress Report on the New Deal for Communities Programme,* (NAO, 2004), 28.

> *I think to some extent, I think that we were probably thrown in. It was expected that, because you lived here, when you went in you knew exactly what you were doing. And you know there was no, no sort of training as such on the themes. There was nothing that sort of said "This is what this group have learnt through experience and you know so share in others experience." There was none of that. And at times I used to think "I don't know if we're doing the right thing or not".*[670]

> *Sometimes when I was doing 'health', I didn't feel really well qualified to do that to be honest. We were kind of, maybe a bit hyper or super-empowered, possibly. I mean I fronted it out because that's who I am, but I'd say that for most residents around here, you know, it wasn't comfortable.*[671]

This juxtaposition, of residents being cast as experts due to where they live, was also identified by Lawless and colleagues in the evaluation of the NDC programme, and discussed in a subsequent article discussing the findings, which highlighted there were occasions where resident assumptions of the best course of action were poorly judged.[672] Lawless would go as far as to argue that:

> *Deprived areas do not contain the experience, expertise and capacity accurately to reflect on local needs and to sensibly define solutions on local issues … devising governance arrangements based on local residents playing a critical role in strategic planning while a laudable aim, came with its own costs.*[673]

The above has sought to illustrate the top-down, bottom-up dichotomy that came to characterise New Labour regeneration policy and delivery throughout their time in government. Through the lens of a number of government-funded regeneration programmes and accounts of those involved in delivering and evaluating them, a picture emerges of new opportunities for participation limited by the same structural and cultural barriers that had restricted the impact of previous regeneration initiatives. Suggesting the '*policy amnesia*' Shaw and Robinson lamented at the start of New Labour's time in government persisted - despite government rhetoric that claimed a radical departure from past ways of working.[674] The final section of

[670] Karen, Resident Board Member, New Deal for Communities

[671] Robin, Resident Board Member, New Deal for Communities. A view that was also recorded in the wider literature, see: A. Dinham, 'Empowered or Over-Empowered? The Real Experiences of Local Participation in the UK's New Deal for Communities', (2005) 40(3) *Community Development Journal,* 301-312.

[672] P. Lawless, 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 319; E. Batty, C. Beatty, M. Foden, P. Lawless, S. Pearson, and I. Wilson, *The New Deal for Communities Experience: A Final Assessment the New Deal for Communities Evaluation: Final Report,* (Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research Sheffield Hallam University/DCLG, 2010); E. Lawrence, R. Stoker and H. Wolman, 'Crafting Urban Policy: The Conditions of Public Support for Urban Policy Initiatives', (2010) 45 *Urban Affairs Review,* 412-430.

[673] P. Lawless, 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 320.

[674] K. Shaw and F. Robinson, 'UK Urban Regeneration Policies in the Early Twenty-First Century', (2009) 81(3) *Town Planning Review,* 123–149.

this chapter moves on to consider what impact the programme did have with regards to community participation in regeneration and captures participant reflections on where they feel improvements could have been made to programme design and delivery.

5.8 Looking back – benefits and missed opportunities

Despite the aforementioned challenges, the official evaluations report some notable successes with regard to neighbourhood management provisions. The local evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal described Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders (NMP) as the '*single most effective vehicle for neighbourhood renewal*' within the case study areas examined, having '*established a high profile within their communities and gained the trust of residents by galvanising service providers to tackle local problems quickly.*'[675] The report goes on to state:

> *They represented the major exception to the general conclusions from this research in terms of meaningfully involving residents in formal decision-making processes and the commissioning of activity.*[676]

Relatedly the programme evaluation for the NMP programme reported positive impacts in areas where it was deployed, with residents' satisfaction rising faster than in comparator areas.[677] The national evaluation also attributed NMPs to improved working cultures with the service providers involved and for building all forms of 'social capital'.[678] Leading the evaluators do describe NMPs as '*a key catalyst for the involvement of residents in advocating for and tailoring the design of services to better meet their needs'*, and thus highlighting the value of locally based advocacy organisations funded roles acting as a link between residents and specific service providers,[679] with resident support teams being credited with '*enabling residents to engage in increasingly informed and sophisticated debate with providers, thereby improving accountability*.'[680] These findings correlate with responses from interviewees in both England and the US, where practitioners and residents alike talked of the value 'neighbourhood centres' and 'community anchors' played in creating links with the community and catalysing local action. Findings also suggested that areas with neighbourhood management structures in place as a result of NMP were better at targeting funding streams like the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund at areas most in need, leading the evaluators to conclude:

> *This suggests that a degree of autonomy for neighbourhood structures, backed by some financial resource and*

[675] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 48.
[676] Ibid, 57.
[677] DCLG, *Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders: Final Evaluation Report, People, Places, Public Services: Making the Connectio*ns, (DCLG, 2009).
[678] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 31.
[679] Ibid, 58.
[680] Ibid, 48.

responsibility for commissioning, leads to greater targeting of deprivation issues at the neighbourhood level.[681]

Reflecting on the impact the NDC Jim had been Chief Executive of, he felt there was much those involved in the programme could be proud of, despite some of the flaws discussed:

> *It did give some local people a stake, and some power they didn't have before. Service design was better for having the community involved. As were some of the capital projects we delivered. And there was some lasting impact on local capacity, some individuals really developed – although I'm not sure how easy it is to evidence that! ... we took positive actions to try and increase community voice. We set up a Youth Forum, that was a different route – then we used those groups to spread the message of what we're doing. Lots of training too. And there was some truth in the rhetoric, it was good for* [council] *officers to get to know the community and recognise how much they needed to get them onside to make things happen locally.*

Concerning the point about individual development, this was a view also shared by residents interviewed, citing one board member who had gone on to become Deputy Mayor in the area, and others that have secured national recognition and senior positions within the private and voluntary sectors as examples of the career development some participants have experienced since their involvement. While a 2010 report from DCLG presented survey data that suggested local agencies felt local decision-making had improved as a result of Resident Board Member (RBM) involvement.[682] The same report also cites a survey of 300 RBMs reporting that they were 'enthusiastic' about their involvement in the programme.[683]

As part of the interviews the practitioners were asked to reflect on what their roles had been within the neighbourhood process and what types of support, they gave to the community groups they worked with. Interestingly, without any discussion of the 'place, place and power' framework, Patrick described his role as *'creating spaces for the community and making previously closed spaces ones that could be open*', going on to elaborate that a lot of his work was about '*changing attitudes'*: changing negative perceptions about the community with local partners, and changing the communities attitudes about their own propensity to act, as well as '*changing the relationship*' between the two. [684] He talked of a particularly effective programme they ran called 'Count Me In' which brought agencies and local people together in facilitated conversation to talk about future plans for the area in a neutral environment, this programme proved

681 DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 45.
682 DCLG, *What Works in Neighbourhood-level Regeneration? The Views of Key Stakeholders in the New Deal for Communities Programme*, (DCLG, 2010)
683 DCLG, *Running a Regeneration Programme: The Experiences of Resident Representatives on the Boards of New Deal for Communities Partnerships*, (DCLG, 2010).
684 Patrick, NMP Neighbourhood Manager.

to be particularly effective and led to the partnership being named a 'National Centre of Excellence in Community Engagement'.

> *Agencies were used to people coming to forums and shouting up at them. Telling them what they were doing wrong. While the residents were frustrated they weren't being listened to, or felt they were getting the blame. Instead of the blame-shifting and finger-pointing it was facilitating the coming together and facilitating the collaboration. That wasn't natural, not in the cultures of these organisations and communities, where the silo mentality was the norm. So, we had to bring down the silos and show the benefit of collaboration. But that took a lot of time, it took the whole seven years to demonstrate it. We had the time to build the relationships. I think that's the key if you are genuinely, authentically, looking to change the relationship between service providers and the people who receive the services.*[685]

This recognition of the need for sufficient time to build participation and partnerships echoes earlier discussion in chapter two regarding social sustainability and best practice in regeneration. Something that emerged from all of the interviews was a recognition and appreciation of the 'time' to build community partnerships both the NDC and NMP programmes afforded. Participants talked of 'time pressures', particularly in the early days, but felt that 'over time' and 'with support' they grew as a partnership and were able to successfully deliver a number of programmes. However, this did not happen organically, the process was heavily facilitated, with substantial sums invested in staff to manage the process and conduct delivery. This raises questions of sustainability and community participation beyond the lifetime of the programme, something both practitioners and Resident Board Members reflected on:

> *So many big programme's get like this. They become all about running and managing the programme. They get too focused on plans, and legacy, and spending. Rather they should be encouraging partnerships to understand which Parent and Teachers Associations, which Tenant and Resident Associations etc. are good and work with them. Or have the community got the resource to set up and sustain clubs or groups – they're the kind of things that bring people together. We didn't do enough of that through NDC.*[686]

> *So, I felt like we were making all the decisions. But actually, what we should have been doing is probably better networking, better getting out in the community and trying to make the relationships work with agencies and using the money to 'oil' it. So, I think we were a bit naïve.*[687]

685 Patrick, NMP Neighbourhood Manager.
686 Jim, NDC Chief Executive.
687 Robin, NDC Resident Board Member.

Another characteristic of the period that ran counter to the principles of social sustainable regeneration was the shifting priorities of government over this time. Practitioners interviewed talked of a noticeable shift in government's approach to regeneration midway through Tony Blair's tenure, with government moving away from area-based policy and increasingly focusing on regional agendas and a renewed emphasis on economic development as a vehicle for regeneration – a view supported by Catherine Durose and others writing on government social policy at this time.[688] It is also reflected in the local evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal which documents a 'noticeable shift' around 2006 in the teams and agents given responsibilities for neighbourhood renewal, citing the increased role and freedom allowed to housing associations as an example.[689] In the interviews Jim talked of '*momentum slowing*' and the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit 'losing some of its influence'.[690] Grant expressed similar feelings that the government was '*losing faith*' in the NDC programme.

> *Every two years MORI were doing a survey of every NDC neighbourhood. I think the proper empirical evidence-based indices. … Like they do with the opinion polls. So real evidence that you could pin some faith on. And then they just wound it up. After just a few years. … To be honest with you I think government was already losing faith in the program at that point.*[691]

A review of policy documents suggests there was a notable shift in the focus of regeneration policy towards the latter years of Tony Blair's premiership, a period which Lupton et al. describe as '*the transition years'*.[692] This period of social policy was characterised by a gradual return to a greater focus on economic development, and reducing 'worklessness', as opposed to the 'whole neighbourhood' approach that had been advocated by the previous administration. Such shifting priorities can run counter to sustainable regeneration, with new government's bringing with them a new manifesto and a new discourse to accompany their programmes for government, often leading to the disbandment of existing partnerships, the loss of good practice, and shifts in funding priorities which local agencies must adapt to.[693] The final years of New Labour's time in government and the programmes of the proceeding coalition government saw a move away from area-

[688] C. Durose and J. Rees, 'The Rise and Fall of Neighbourhood in the New Labour Era', (2012) 40(1) *Policy and Politics*, 38-54; C. Colligne and J. Gibney, 'Connecting Place, Policy and Leadership', (2010) 31(4) *Policy Studies*, 379-391; G. Stoker, 'Was Local Governance Such a Good Idea? A Global Comparative Perspective', (2011) 89(1) *Public Administration*, 15-31; M. Evans, D. Marsh and G. Stoker, 'Understanding Localism', (2013) 34(4) *Policy Studies*, 401-407.

[689] DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 54

[690] Jim, NDC Chief Executive.

[691] Patrick, NMP Neighbourhood Manager.

[692] R. Lupton, A. Fenton and A. Fitzgerald, 'Labour's Record on Neighbourhood Renewal in England: Policy, Spending and Outcomes 1997-2010', *Social Policy in a Cold Climate Working Paper 6 July 2013*, (Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE, 2013), 8.

[693] Shaw, K. and Robinson, F., 'UK Urban Regeneration Policies in the Early Twenty-First Century', (2009) 81(3) *Town Planning Review,* 123–149; T. Burns and P. Brown, *Final Report: Lessons from a National Scan of Comprehensive Place-Based Philanthropic Initiatives*, (Urban Ventures Group, 2012). (Online) Available at: <http://www.heinz.org/UserFiles/File/PlaceBased/UrbanVentures_final-report.pdf> Last accessed: 27th September 2019; M. Taylor, E. Buckly and C. Hennessey, *Historical Review of Place-Based Approaches,* (Lankelly Chase, 2017) (Online) Available at: <https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf> Last accessed: 25th September 2019;

based programmes to a less targeted approach and a greater promotion of community 'self-help' over government investment into deprived neighbourhoods.[694] The following chapter moves on to consider what this change meant for community-led regeneration in the UK during this time.

5.9 Conclusion

The period 1997 – 2015 under New Labour saw considerable investment in area-based initiatives and programmes that sought to promote community participation in neighbourhood renewal activities. In some respects these programmes reflected lessons learnt from previous regeneration initiatives: the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder and New Deal for Communities programmes spanned 7-10 years, put in place conditions to ensure community representation at decision-making levels, and invested in a programme of training and support to places - building on recommendations that sustainable regeneration should be seen as a long-term, coordinated approach. These programmes also reflected an acknowledgement from the government that a multitude of factors contribute to life in deprived communities and that a concerted and joined-up approach is needed to address the structural challenges that can lead to entrenched poverty. The neighbourhood renewal programmes this chapter focused on were also presented as examples of a new relationship between communities and central government, with the State casting themselves as 'enablers' supporting 'active citizens' to take up the mantle of running services and making decisions locally.

However, as this chapter has shown, the extent to which these programmes matched up to their empowering rhetoric is something of a mixed picture. Evidence suggests those most involved in the programme at board level found the programme to be an enjoyable and empowering process in as much as they learnt new skills, became better connected in their communities and reported growing confidence.[695] A view substantiated by the residents interviewed as part of this research. However, participants also talked of being 'hyper-empowered', 'overexposed', and placed in positions of power and decision-making they did not feel adequately prepared or equipped for, accounts that were echoed elsewhere in the literature.[696] Resident Board Members talked of the difficult position they found themselves in, having to be accountable to other partnership members and government stakeholders from above. While also being accountable to their fellow

[694] R. Lupton, A. Fenton and A. Fitzgerald, 'Labour's Record on Neighbourhood Renewal in England: Policy, Spending and Outcomes 1997-2010', *Social Policy in a Cold Climate Working Paper 6 July 2013*, (Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE, 2013); Fitzgerald, A., Lupton R., and Brady, A.M., *Hard Times, New Directions? The Impact of the Local Government Spending Cuts in Three Deprived Neighbourhoods of London*, Social Policy in a Cold Climate Working Paper 9, (Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), 2014) (Online) Available at: < http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/spcc/wp09.pdf?> Last accessed: 25th August 2016; Lupton R. and Fitzgerald, A., *The Coalition's Record on Area Regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal 2010-2015*, *Social Policy in a Cold Climate Working Paper 19 January 2015,* (Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), 2015). (Online) Available at: <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/spcc/WP19_SUMMARY.pdf> Last accessed: 28th October 2018.

[695] DCLG, *What Works in Neighbourhood-level Regeneration? The Views of Key Stakeholders in the New Deal for Communities Programme*, (DCLG, 2010).

[696] A. Dinham, 'Empowered or Over-Empowered? The Real Experiences of Local Participation in the UK's New Deal for Communities', (2005) 40(3) *Community Development Journal,* 301-312.

residents, acting both as their voice on the partnership and the local messenger regarding decisions made at partnership level – a role that brought with it considerable pressure.[697]

Practitioners reflected that several elements of the design, administration and performance management underpinning the programmes introduced through the National Strategy for Neighbourhood renewal limited the transformative potential of the strategy. Early pressures to spend and demonstrate project delivery, excessive reporting requirements, and the government's decision to centrally prescribe the themes NDC and NMP areas should focus on presented a picture of an invited space, but one where government maintained significant power. A view that is supported by a wealth of literature and was further evidenced in the accounts of resident participants.[698] Local Strategic Partnerships were a further example of this, introduced as a vehicle for bringing communities, local stakeholders and regional partners closer together, they were intended to be more responsive to local needs, yet much of their work was focused on meeting central targets and direction with community involvement seen to be piecemeal and of secondary importance.[699]

While the message from the government was that communities would be at the heart of the New Deal for Communities programme, accounts from participants and the wider literature suggests central government was never very far away.[700] Indeed, Resident Board Members' reflections on frontbench ministers putting them under pressure to spent more, central government keeping '*an eye on them'*, and representatives of the Government Offices for London (GOL) becoming '*part of the furniture*' at the partnership meetings and away days, suggests that government were not yet ready to cede the levels of power they claimed they would do.[701] Interviewees talked of the considerable pressure they felt from central government, led to believe they were a '*failing partnership*' and '*a basket case'* as one resident described.[702] Both Resident Board Members spoke of the decision taken by GOL and central government departments, to introduce an 'independent chair' to lead their NDC partnership as further evidence that the government did not think they were fit to govern themselves. All of which calls into question the extent to which these programmes were genuinely resident-led.

[697] M. Taylor, 'Neighbourhood Governance: Holy Grail or Poisoned Chalice?', (2003) 18(3) *Local Economy,* 190-95.

[698] E. Batty, C. Beatty, M. Foden, P. Lawless, S. Pearson and I. Wilson, *The New Deal for Communities Experience: A Final Assessment the New Deal for Communities Evaluation: Final Report,* (Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research Sheffield Hallam University/DCLG, 2010); P. Lawless, 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 313-328; A. Wallace, *Remaking Community? New Labour and the Governance of Poor Neighbourhoods*, (Ashgate, 2010); J.S.F., Wright, J. Parry, J. Mathers, S. Jones and J. Orford, 'Assessing the Participatory Potential of Britain's New Deal for Communities: Opportunities for and Constraints to 'Bottom-up' Community Participation', (2006) 27(4) *Policy Studies,* 347-361; R. Meegan and A. Mitchell, 'It's Not Community Round Here, It's Neighbourhood': Neighbourhood Change and Cohesion in Urban Regeneration Policies', (2001) 38(12) *Urban Studies,* 2167-2194.

[699] C. Johnson and S.P. Obsorne, 'Local Strategic Partnerships, Neighbourhood Renewal, and the Limits of Co-governance', (2010) 23(3) *Public Money and Management,* 147-154.

[700] Lawless, P., 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 314-315.

[701] Extracts from interview with Karen, NDC Resident Board Member

[702] Extracts from interview with Robin, NDC Resident Board Member

This chapter has also served to corroborate literature cited in chapters two and three, which highlighted the diverse nature of communities and that communities are sites of conflict, negotiation, and at times segregation — presenting a very different picture of 'community' to the idylls evoked in government rhetoric of cohesive communities high in all forms of social capital and working towards a shared vision for their communities. Gevanta's powercube served as a helpful model to explore these 'horizontal' or community level dynamics, which proved just as influential in enabling and restricting community-led regeneration as the dynamic between the community level and higher tiers of regional and national government.[703] Debates about who represented which parts of the community, who the 'true' community were, and local party politics all had considerable bearing on the shaping of local partnership dynamics and working practices, and in the case of the London based NDC dominated their activities in the early years of the programme. All of which served to further evidence the fluid and contested nature of power discussed in chapter three - with multiple interests vying for control and influence and considerable differences of opinion on the best course forward to take.

As Foucault notes, '*power is everywhere'*, and there was evidence of this throughout the accounts of residents and practitioners tasked with delivering neighbourhood renewal priorities on the 'ground'.[704] Along with inter-community dynamics, the investment and involvement of government, and the agency these programmes brought to resident board members served to stir and reignite local tensions between citizens, local government, local agencies, and elected members. Highlighting the significant role local context will play in shaping, enabling or at times hindering neighbourhood regeneration initiatives.[705] Just as central government had envisaged a new role for citizens, the roles of councils, elected members and local agencies were also shifting in line with government priorities over this period studied. Accordingly, local councils and local agencies were often beholden to their own performance management arrangements from central government, which did not necessarily accord with the vision and priorities of local residents - leading to further tensions, competition and resentment. All of which served to highlight place-based working is a somewhat messier affair than the vision of community-led regeneration the government typically promotes.[706] Indeed, a failing of the NDC programme, in particular, was the prescribed approach to community regeneration it promoted. Despite the language of local people and partners being in control, the reality was that partnerships were expected to operate within a framework that presumed parity between the 39 NDC areas. The areas were seen as sites of targeted investment and activity, and that with enough money and central guidance communities would be able to organise to deliver against a set of centrally defined and agreed targets. Yet, the findings here and in the wider literature suggest that policymakers did not do enough to account for the

[703] J. Gaventa, 'Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis', (2006) 37(6) *IDS Bulletin*, 22-33.

[704] M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge*, (Penguin, 1998), 63. Cited online: Institute of Development Studies, *Powercube.net: Foucault: Power is Everywhere,* (Online) Available at: <https://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power/foucault-power-is-everywhere/> Last accessed: 23rd October 2019.

[705] M. Taylor, E. Buckly and C. Hennessey, *Historical Review of Place-Based Approaches,* (Lankelly Chase, 2017) (Online) Available at: < https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf> Last accessed: 25th September 2019

[706] Ibid.

differences in local capacity, or the long-standing divisions and ingrained attitudes and working practices that characterise a place. As chapter two highlighted, trust, time and equitable decision making are essential elements of good and sustained community participation – accounts suggest the government were quick to promote high spending and delivery, and didn't reason for the time and support some partnerships might need to develop the mechanisms for neighbourhood management, instead comparing those that were delivering with those that were not and promoting a message that high spending areas were the model of delivery to aspire to.

Foucault discusses how language is important and can shape how a group or individual sees themselves in the world.[707] This is important in light of the accounts practitioners and residents shared throughout this research. What central government said and did mattered a lot to interviewees, it was internalised, taken back to communities and is reproduced years later when they reflected on their experiences. As a result, programmes that sought to empower had at times disempowering effects on residents, so much so one participant reflected that they had '*done [their] time'* with relation to civic action.[708] This is not the vision of 'active citizenship' the government sought to promote, yet the structures, arrangements and language of the programme served to reinforce this view. Over the course of the interviews there were also accounts of government losing interest in neighbourhood renewal mid-way through the NDC and NMP programmes, again such a view permeated to the local levels and as more than one practitioner recounted led to declining enthusiasm for the project at local government level – all of which runs counter to the principles of sustainable regeneration and sustained community leadership established in earlier chapters.

Having explored opportunities for community-led regeneration and the successes and limitations of New Labour's area-based approach to this, the following chapter moves on to consider the policies and practices of the Coalition government, who would adopt a different attempt to mobilising community action through the passing of legislation and investment in community organisers.

[707] Institute of Development Studies, *Powercube.net: Foucault: Power is Everywhere,* (Online) Available at: < https://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power/foucault-power-is-everywhere/> Last accessed: 23rd October 2019; Garrett, P.M. *Transforming Children's Services? Social Work, Neo-liberalism and the 'Modern' World*, (Open University Press/McGraw Hill Education, 2009).
[708] Robin, NDC Resident Board Member.

Chapter Six: The Coalition and Community-led Regeneration (2010-2015)

6.1 Introduction

Having examined the extent to which the policies of successive New Labour governments encouraged and facilitated community-led regeneration, this chapter looks to adopt a similar approach to assess the extent to which this was a policy aim and outcome for the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition in England during the period 2010-2015.[709] As with the previous government, policy discourses of community participation and community empowerment featured heavily in the election campaigns of both David Cameron and Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg, with the former regularly advocating for a 'Big Society' in which communities would be empowered with new rights and responsibilities to do more in their communities. It should be noted that the term Big Society gradually faded from the lexicon of the Coalition government as their time in office wore on, having been met with some derision from the media and political commentators.[710] It was, however, the ideology that commonly accompanied the Coalition's localist proposals and the term is used in this chapter to encapsulate the wider civic proclamations of the government at the time, rather than as an acceptance of it as an enduring political movement.

As with the previous chapter the aim is to identify and critically analyse the policies, the context, the desired outcomes, and the linked events and processes that increased or inhibited community participation in regeneration programmes during the Coalition's five-year term in power. The following section begins with a brief consideration of the Coalition's manifesto *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government*[711], published in 2010, which set out a programme of reforms and activities the new government proposed to take forward. Particular focus is given to the government's proposals for the Big Society and the introduction of the Localism Act 2011 which would enact a number of the provisions put forward in the manifesto; in particular a range of new 'community rights' and revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework which it was claimed would create more opportunities for local people to influence local development and take part in planning decisions about their local area.[712] The outlined approach would be a marked departure from the large area-based

[709] Henceforth referred to as 'the Coalition'.

[710] M. Dejevsky, 'The Big Society in Crisis: Are the Wheels Coming Off the PM's Big Idea?', *The Independent 15th May 2011*, (Online) Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/the-big-society-in-crisis-are-the-wheels-coming-off-the-pms-big-idea-2284251.html> Last accessed: 24th October 2019; P. Hetherington, 'Is this the End of Cameron's Big Society?', *The Guardian 5th March 2014* (Online) Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/mar/05/end-david-camerons-big-society> Last accessed: 24th October 2019; The BBC, 'Cuts 'Destroying Big Society' Concept Says CVS Head', *BBC 7th February 2011* (Online) Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12378974> Last accessed: 24th October 2019; R. Prince, 'David Cameron: Big Society is not a 'cover for cuts'', *The Telegraph 19th July 2010* (Online) Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/david-cameron/7898881/David-Cameron-Big-Society-is-not-a-cover-for-cuts.html> Last accessed: 26th October 2019.

[711] Cabinet Office, *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government*, (Cabinet Office, 2010).

[712] DCLG, A Plain English Guide to the Localism Act, (DCLG, 2011); DCLG, The National Planning Policy Framework, (DCLG, 2012).

programmes and sizeable investment in 'neighbourhood renewal' under New Labour. Indeed, specific mention to 'regeneration' was light in the manifesto and initial policy papers of the Coalition. It would be almost two years until an official government publication on regeneration, *Regeneration to Enable Growth* was published, and throughout the Coalition's tenure, 'neighbourhood' as a site of regeneration activity was largely absent from the political conversation. The parallels of this approach with the policy and practice of New Labour will be considered throughout.

There were also some continuities between the two administrations which will also be explored, namely, proposals to devolve more powers and responsibilities to the local level, the reconfiguration of public services, and continued promotion of the role citizens could and should play in this.[713] There is also a significant body of academic work arguing that neoliberal ideology was a significant thread running through the policies and language of both governments and consideration is also given to this over the following sections.[714]

These developments cannot be analysed without giving due consideration to the implications of the financial crisis and subsequent recession which heavily influenced the political approach of the Coalition, who embarked on a whole scale retrenchment of the state with the stated intention of reducing the UK's financial deficit.[715] Consideration of the impact austerity had on the deployment of policies and the citizens government sought to mobilise provides further opportunity to demonstrate the applicability of the 'place, space and power' framework in assessing national regeneration policy and practice, with consideration given to the complexity of promoting greater community participation in austere times. Attention is also given to how wider social, economic, legal and political contexts impacted on the ability and appetite of community and local government actors to take advantage of the new powers and responsibilities bestowed by the Localism Act and neighbourhood planning provisions.[716] Examining the extent to which this legislation and the 'new powers' succeeded in 'opening-up' previously 'closed' spaces for engagement, by creating 'invited' spaces whereby communities can have greater influence in local decision-making and service delivery.[717]

[713] A. McCabe, 'Below the Radar in a Big Society? Reflections on Community Engagement, Empowerment and Social Action in a Changing Policy Context', (2010) *Third Sector Research Centre Working Paper* 51, 2.

[714] M. Geddes, 'Partnership and the Limits to Local Governance in England: Institutionalist Analysis and Neo-liberalism', (2006) 30(1) *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 76-97; P. Bunyan, 'Partnership, the Big Society and Community Organizing: Between Romanticizing, Problematizing and Politicizing Community', (2013) 48 (1) *Community Development Journal,* 119-133; S. Davoudi and A. Madanipour, 'Localism and Neo-liberal Governmentality',(2013) 84 (5) *Town Planning Review*, 551-562.

[715] P. Taylor-Gooby, 'Root and Branch Restructuring to Achieve Major Cuts: The Social Policy Programme of the 2010 UK Coalition Government', (2011) 46(1) *Social Policy and Administration*, 61-82; J. Clayton, C. Donovan and J. Merchant, 'Distancing and Limited Resourcefulness: Third Sector Service Provision Under Austerity Localism in the North East of England', (2015) 53(4) *Urban Studies,* 723-740; G. Jones, R. Meegan, P. Kennett and J. Croft, 'The Uneven Impact of Austerity on the Voluntary and Community Sector: A Tale of Two Cities', (2015) 53(10) *Urban Studies*, 2064-2080.

[716] Localism Act 2011.

[717] J. Gaventa, 'Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis', (2006) 37(6) *IDS Bulletin*, 22-33.

Building on the above, section three explores the rationale behind, and early impact of, the government-funded Community Organisers programme launched in 2011 with the aim to recruit and train 5,000 community organisers by 2015. The section goes on to discuss the appropriateness of government funding a community organising approach, given that community organising has traditionally been a 'bottom-up' movement - often in *response to* government rather than *because of* government.

6.2 The 'Big Society' and community-led regeneration under the Coalition 2010 - 2015

The 2010-2015 period in which the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition were in power demonstrated striking similarities in rhetoric, but significant departures in approach to the delivery of neighbourhood regeneration and community participation undertaken by their New Labour predecessors. Calls for the creation of a 'Big Society' echoed much of the rhetoric of the 'third way' and 'active citizenship' promoted under Labour, with the government again calling for greater responsibilities and opportunities for community-led responses to solve local issues.[718] First introduced as part of David Cameron's election campaign and frequently referred to in the first year of the Coalition's time in office, the Big Society was a political ideology that proclaimed government would be taking power away from politicians and putting it into the hands of local people, giving citizens the means to look after their communities themselves, with the government announcing:

> *We want to give citizens, communities and local government the power and information they need to come together, solve the problems they face and build the Britain they want. We want society – the families, networks, neighbourhoods and communities that form the fabric of so much of our everyday lives – to be bigger and stronger than ever before. Only when people and communities are given more power and take more responsibility can we achieve fairness and opportunity for all.*[719]

To achieve this vision five strands of activity were promoted as part of the Coalition's programme for government, those being: giving communities more powers (through reform of the planning system, new 'community rights and powers', and through a programme of training for community organisers); encouraging people to take an active role within their

[718] D. Cameron, (speech) '*The Big Society: The Hugo Young Lecture' 10 November 2009, London* (Online) Available at: D. Cameron, (speech) *The Big Society: The Hugo Young Lecture* 10 *November 2009',* (2009) (Online) Available at: <https://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601246> Last accessed: 25th September 2019; D. Cameron, (speech) *The Big Society: Transcript of a speech by the Prime Minister on the Big Society*, 19 July 2010' (2010) (Online) <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/big-society-speech/> Last accessed: 19th October 219.; D. Cameron, (Speech) *Our Big Society Plan*. 31 March 2010: (Online) Available at: <https://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601492 > Last accessed: 19th October 2019; *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government, (*Cabinet Office, 2010).

[719] Cabinet Office, *Building the Big Society,* (Cabinet Office, 2010), 1.

communities (through a youth volunteering programme called National Citizens Service, measures to encourage charitable giving and philanthropy, and proposals for a national day of volunteering to be called 'Big Society Day'); transferring power from central government to local government (through devolution of decision-making and greater financial autonomy to local government); supporting co-operatives, mutual, charities and social enterprises (through establishment of a 'Big Society Bank' funded from dormant bank accounts, and giving public sector workers new rights to form employee-owned co-operatives); and, creating a new 'right to data' (so that government-held datasets could be requested and used by the public).[720]

Big Society as a policy proposition made two assertions about British society, firstly that society is 'broken' and traditions of civic participation and volunteering are declining, a view that draws parallels with the communitarian school of thought around 'rights' and 'responsibilities' as well as the concept of 'social capital' discussed in earlier chapters.[721] And secondly, that this decline is in part because central government has become too big, too overbearing, particularly with regard to the welfare state, all of '*…which has robbed British citizenry of its capacity for reasonable independence.'*[722] Parallels are also made with traditions of '*mutualism, co-operatives and the social economy*'[723] and the '*search for a viable private, non-political alternative to the welfare state.'*[724] Angus McCabe also notes the influence of the Free Schools movement originating from Sweden and community organising practices originating from the US, the latter of which will be discussed in more detail in section 6.4.[725]

Relating to regeneration, the economic development-driven approach that had come to characterise the latter years of New Labour regeneration strategy was continued, albeit with a significant decrease in government spending and changes in the mechanisms for delivering this.[726] Correspondingly, the Coalition's regeneration strategy, published in 2011 and entitled: '*Regeneration to Enable Growth: A Toolkit Supporting Community-Led Regeneration'*,[727] signified a shift away from the

[720] Cabinet Office, *Building the Big Society,* (Cabinet Office, 2010), 2-3; Cabinet Office, The *Coalition: Our Programme for Government*, (Cabinet Office, 2010).

[721] A. Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities and the Communitarian Agenda*, (Crown, 1993); R.D. Putnam, Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community, (Simon and Schuster, 2000). See chapter 2, section 2.7 for further discussion.

[722] S. Szreter and A. Ishkanian, 'Introduction: What is Big Society? Contemporary Social Policy in a Historical and Comparative Perspective', in A. Ishkanian and S. Szreter (eds.), *The Big Society Debate: A New Agenda for Social Welfare?'* (Edward Elgar, 2012), 16.

[723] C. Oppenheim, E. Cox and R. Platt, *Regeneration through Co-operation: Creating a Framework for Communities to Act Together*, (Co-operatives UK, 2010), 2. Cited in A. McCabe, 'Below the Radar in a Big Society? Reflections on Community Engagement, Empowerment and Social Action in a Changing Policy Context', (2010) *Third Sector Research Centre Working Paper* 51, 3.

[724] A. McCabe, 'Below the Radar in a Big Society? Reflections on Community Engagement, Empowerment and Social Action in a Changing Policy Context', (2010) *Third Sector Research Centre Working Paper* 51, 4.

[725] Ibid, 4.

[726] P. Taylor-Gooby, 'Root and Branch Restructuring to Achieve Major Cuts: The Social Policy Programme of the 2010 UK Coalition Government', (2011) 46(1) *Social Policy and Administration*, 61-82; R. Lupton and A. Fitzgerald, *The Coalition's Record on Area Regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal 2010-2015*, *Social Policy in a Cold Climate Working Paper 19 January 2015,* (Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), 2015). (Online) Available at: <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/spcc/WP19_SUMMARY.pdf> Last accessed: 28th October 2018.

[727] DCLG, *Regeneration to Enable Growth: A Toolkit Supporting Community-Led Regeneration,* (DCLG, 2011).

neighbourhood as a site of programme delivery, and the Coalition agreement made no explicit commitment to addressing neighbourhood inequalities.[728] Neighbourhood renewal programmes such as the New Deal for Communities programme and Neighbourhood Renewal Funds introduced under New Labour were not continued, bringing the era of central government-funded area-based initiatives to a close.[729] In their place came an intensified focus on local economic growth as a driver for urban renewal and a stated expectation that local authorities and local partnerships would decide how the benefits of this approach would be passed on to the poorest communities.[730] As Pike et al. note economic development policy during this time was characterised by a focus on '*recovery*' and a '*local growth*' agenda, '*shaped by aspirations of sectoral and spatial rebalancing, decentralisation and localism*.'[731] All of which fed into a government strategy of '*realising every place's potential*,'[732] with the Government stating that:

> *The Government believes it is for local partners – local councils, communities, civil society organisations and the private sector – to work together to develop local solutions to local challenges. If local regeneration, development and growth are deemed local priorities, then it is for local partners to determine the appropriate plans and strategies to deliver this.*[733]

The Regional Development Agencies (RDA) put in place by Labour to drive regeneration and development in their areas were abolished, as were the Government Offices for the Regions (GO), with the government arguing that neither represented meaningful economic geographies.[734] RDAs and GOs were also criticised for being too bureaucratic, overly centralised, over-resourced, lacking regional and local accountability, and for having been given aims and objectives that were too broad, all of which was said to have limited their effectiveness.[735] In their place were newly established 'Local Enterprise Partnerships' (LEPs), 'Regional Growth Funds' and 'Local Growth Teams,' further emphasising the importance

[728] Cabinet Office, *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government*, (Cabinet Office, 2010).

[729] There were some moderate programmes for coalfield and coastal area regeneration, but these fell out of the scope of this study and predominantly adopted an economic and physical regeneration approach. The sums and scale of this investment was much less than the levels of investment under New Labour - in line with the Government's approach to austerity. See: DCLG, *Policy Paper: 2010 to 2015 Government Policy: Economic Development in Coastal and Seaside Areas*, (DCLG/HCA, 2015).

[730] L. Pugalis, P. Greenhalgh, D. McGuiness, H. Furness and B. Errington, 'Chalk and Cheese: A Comparison of England and Scotland's Emerging Approaches to Regeneration', (2012) 81(2) *Town & Country Planning*, 84-88.

[731] A. Pike, D. Marlow, A. McCarthy, P. O'Brien and J. Tomaney, 'Local Institutions and Local Economic Development: The Local Enterprise Partnerships in England, 2010-', (2015) 8 *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society,* 190.

[732] BIS, *Local Growth: Realising Every Place's Potential*, (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2010).

[733] DCLG, *Government Response to the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee Report of Session 2010-12: Regeneration*, Cm 8264, (DCLG, 2012), 1.

[734] Part 6, Chapter 1 of The Localism Act abolishes Regional Development Agencies and Regional Strategies and removed associated reporting obligations on the part of councils as part of the centralisation package set out in the Localism Act.

[735] BIS, *Local Growth: Realising Every Place's Potential*, (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2010); A. Pike, D. Marlow, A. McCarthy, P. O'Brien and J. Tomaney, 'Local Institutions and Local Economic Development: the Local Enterprise Partnerships in England, 2010-', (2015) 8 *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society,* 190; A. Pike, M. Coombes, P. O'Brien and J. Tomaney, 'Austerity States, Institutional Dismantling and the Governance of Sub-national Economic Development: the Demise of the Regional Development Agencies in England', (2018) 6(1) *Territory, Politics, Governance,* 118-144.

government placed on economic development.[736] Local Enterprise Partnerships were tasked with three key priorities: 'Increasing confidence to invest'*;* ensuring 'focused investment*' ('by tackling barriers to growth that the market will not address');* and 'shifting power to local communities and businesses*'* which was to be done by:

> *Establishing dynamic local enterprise partnerships of local business and civic leaders, operating within an area that makes economic sense, which can provide the vision, knowledge and strategic leadership to set local priorities and empower communities to fulfil their potential.*[737]

Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) discussed in the previous chapter remained in place, but their remit was reduced as part of the Coalition's commitment to reducing bureaucracy, with LSPs no longer being required to produce Local Plans[738] - all of which was part of the Coalition's pledge to:

> *Promote decentralisation and democratic engagement* [and] *… end the era of top-down government by giving new powers to local councils, communities, neighbourhoods and individuals.*[739]

These changes to the delivery structures for regeneration were part of a wider government strategy to reduce costs and bureaucracy in the wake of global financial crisis and subsequent economic downturn, a strategy which embodied what Schäfer and Streeck termed the '*austerity or consolidation state'* – with central government prioritising deficit reduction, largely through a programme of public expenditure cuts and institutional rationalisation.[740] Notably, the government's definition of sustainable development was also revised, to give greater prominence to the economic pillar and linked to the need to reduce the financial deficit, defining sustainable development as '*stimulating economic growth and tackling the deficit, maximising wellbeing and protecting our environment, without negatively impacting on the ability of future generations to do the same*.'[741]

[736] 39 LEPs were set up representing 'functional economic areas, connected to same economy and labour market.' Local authorities would play a key part on LEPs, but half of the Board were to be from "business" with a businessperson Chairing. See: BIS, *Local Growth: Realising Every Place's Potential*, (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2010), 13-14.

[737] BIS, *Local Growth: Realising Every Place's Potential*, (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2010); M. Ward, 'Local Enterprise Partnerships', (2019) *House of Commons Briefing Paper Number 5651, 28 March 2019,* 4.

[738] J. Rees, D. Mullins and T. Bovaird, *Partnership Working,* TSRC Research Report 88, (Universities of Birmingham and Southampton, 2012).

[739] Cabinet Office, *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government*, (Cabinet Office, 2010), 11.

[740] A. Schäfer and W. Streeck, 'Introduction: Politics in the Age of Austerity', in A. Schäfer and W. Streeck (eds.), *Politics in an Age of Austerity,* (Polity, 2013), 9; also N. Clarke and A. Cochrane, 'Geographies and Politics of Localism: The Localism of the United Kingdom's Coalition Government', (2013) 34 (1) *Political Geography*, 10-23.

[741] Cabinet Office, *Mainstreaming Sustainable Development: The Government's Vision and what this Means in Practice*, (Cabinet Office, 2011), 2.

Under this new approach, LEPs were given the freedom to decide on local economic development and the extent to which this would be directed at particular neighbourhoods via opportunities for employment, training or inward-investment, while the government would assume a '*strategic and supporting role*'.[742] Elsewhere the White Paper states that '*localities should lead their own development to release their economic potential*',[743] framing business and local authorities as the architects of local regeneration, while any mention of the neighbourhood level was once again devoid from the conversation. Lupton and Fitzgerald, in a comprehensive examination of the regeneration priorities and spending of the Coalition report that regeneration was not an explicit part of the proposals of any of the thirty-nine LEPs, although twenty-two did give a mention to some efforts to reduce inequalities within their boundaries, linking these to their responsibility for job creation.[744] This was foreseeable given the central remit of LEPs was to stimulate economic growth over a significant area rather than particular neighbourhoods, and with limited resources to do so. As Stuart Hall noted the above all represented a marked shift from policies and programmes directed at deprived communities some ten years earlier.[745]

Nonetheless, as well as policy departures Angus McCabe notes that there were also some policy continuities between the plans put forward by the Coalition and New Labour policy towards communities, their roles and responsibilities, and their relationship with the government. For example, community asset transfers (discussed below) had been proposed in the 2007 Quirk Review as a means to increase community ownership; plans for a Big Society Bank supporting social enterprise were similar to New Labour's 2007 proposals for a Social Investment Bank; and as previous chapters have highlighted, calls for the 'double devolution' of central government responsibilities to the local and community level had featured heavily in the rhetoric of Prime Minister's Blair and Brown and their ministers.[746] A number of academics have also claimed the party's approaches shared neoliberal principles as Paul Bunyan argues:

> *...in ideological terms the same neoliberal thread can be seen to connect the New Labour era and its mantra of partnership to the [Coalition] government's take on the Big Society.*[747]

Yet, while the rhetoric of the Big Society was notably similar to that of Labour's vision for 'active citizenship', the mechanisms for promoting and delivering on these visions represented further points of departure. The shift in discourse

[742] R. Lupton and A. Fitzgerald, *The Coalition's record on Area Regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal 2010-2015*, Social Policy in a Cold Climate Working Paper 19 January 2015, (Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), 2015)

[743] The Stationary Office, *Local Growth: Realising Every Places Potential,* Cm 7961, (The Stationary Office, October 2010), 8.

[744] R. Lupton and A. Fitzgerald, *The Coalition's record on Area Regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal 2010-2015*, Social Policy in a Cold Climate Working Paper 19 January 2015, (Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), 2015), (Online) Available at: < http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/spcc/WP19_SUMMARY.pdf> Last accessed: 28th October 2018, 13.

[745] S. Hall, 'The Rise and Fall of Urban Regeneration Policy in England, 1965-2015', (2015) *Fraktale Metropolen,* 313-330.

[746] A. McCabe, 'Below the Radar in a Big Society? Reflections on Community Engagement, Empowerment and Social Action in a Changing Policy Context', (2010) *Third Sector Research Centre Working Paper* 51, 1-28.

[747] P. Bunyan, 'Partnership, the Big Society and Community Organizing: Between Romanticizing, Problematizing and Politicizing Community', (2013) 48 (1) *Community Development Journal,* 120.

was also noticeable. By framing the government's regeneration strategy as a 'toolkit' this terminology served as a reminder that the government was positioning itself as supporting, but not driving, community-led regeneration. Indeed, the toolkit explicitly states that the Government's approach is to ensure:

> *That local economies prosper, parts of the country previously over-reliant on public funding see a resurgence in private sector enterprise and employment, and that everyone gets to share in the resulting growth.*[748]

The terminology used here draws parallels with New Labour's 'third way'. In referring to an 'overreliance' on the state, it could be inferred that the same communities facing the aforementioned '*challenges*' and '*problems*' are the very same that have '*over-relied on public funding*' for too long. This was certainly a position some authors took, amongst them Bone, Corbett and Walker, and Taylor-Gooby.[749] This hints at the complexity of the 'Big Society' vision, which positions itself alongside romanticised notions of neighbourliness and the community coming together to help one another, attempting to mobilise citizens, along with promises to give local people their 'rights' back. Yet, it also comes with the message that communities can no longer be passive recipients of government services and funding, and that every citizen has a responsibility to act regardless of circumstance, effectively you should only "take out what you put in." The following section moves on to explore this tension by exploring local responses to provisions put forth by the Localism Act, namely the new 'community rights' and provisions for increased community involvement in neighbourhood planning decisions.

6.3 Community rights and community responsibilities

The Localism Act 2011 was seen as a key piece of legislation for promoting increased community participation, '*handing'* a number of new '*powers'* to local people and organisations.[750] Amongst them, a '*Community Right to Bid'*, which gave communities the opportunity to nominate local '*Assets of Community Value'*, such as local facilities, pubs or libraries, which they would then be given the opportunity to bid for and run should the asset become available for sale.[751] Alongside this was a '*Right to Challenge'*, allowing community groups, charities, parish councils and relevant local authority staff to put forward proposals to enhance the delivery of local public services and, in the right operating conditions, to implement

[748] DCLG, *Regeneration to Enable Growth a Toolkit Supporting Community-led Regeneration*, (DCLG, 2012), 1.

[749] J.D. Bone, 'The Neoliberal Phoenix: The Big Society or Business as Usual', (2011) 17(2) *Sociological Research Online*, 17 (2). (Online) Available at http://www.socresonline.org.uk/17/2/16.html Last Accessed: 27th October 2019; S. Corbett and A. Walker, 'The Big Society: Rediscovery of 'the Social' or Rhetorical Fig-Leaf for Neo-liberalism?', (2013) 33(3) *Critical Social Policy,* 451-472; P. Taylor-Gooby, 'Root and Branch Restructuring to Achieve Major Cuts: The Social Policy Programme of the 2010 UK Coalition Government', (2011) 46(1) *Social Policy and Administration*, 61-82; M. Evans, D. Marsh and G. Stoker, 'Understanding Localism', (2013) 34(4) *Policy Studies*, 401-407.

[750] See: DCLG, *A Plain English Guide to the Localism Act*, (DCLG, 2011).

[751] Localism Act 2011, sections 85-98

these ideas if they can demonstrate how this would offer the best value.[752] A '*Community Right to Build'* was introduced to allow communities to bring forward small-scale development proposals for new homes, community facilities or businesses in their neighbourhood which, on the provision of meeting local criteria and garnering sufficient community support, could then be implemented as part of local development.[753] As well as a '*Community Right to Reclaim Land'* which gave communities the legal right to challenge public sector landowners to sell unused or underused land. The Act also made provisions for a reconfiguration of neighbourhood planning, proclaiming to give community groups more influence over the location and level of homes and businesses being built in their locality, '*making it easier for local people to shape the development they want*.'[754] A revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) accompanied the Localism Act and stated that the planning departments of local authorities '*should aim to involve all sections of the community in the development of Local Plans and in planning decisions and should facilitate neighbourhood planning*,'[755] so as to '*give communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need*.'[756] Additionally, The Localism Act also devolves a number of powers and 'competencies' from central government to local authorities, most notably, a '*general power of competence'*[757] for local authorities, allowing councils to make improvements, develop new services and form partnerships without the '*burden of inspections*' and '*red tape'* that characterised previous initiatives.[758] Albeit with the caveat that proposals should accord with provisions set out in the areas Local Plan, a tension that will be considered in more detail later.[759]

Under the theoretical models of both Arnstein and Davidson the provisions put forth, in rhetoric at least, represent moves towards 'partnership' between communities and local and national government. Relatedly, viewing the proposals through the lens of the 'place, space, and power' framework they suggest, in theory, a shift away from a 'hidden' dynamic, where decisions about services and development had remained the preserve of national or local government. It does so by 'inviting' community groups to enter the previously 'closed' space and offers increased legitimacy to be there through the community 'rights'. It also offers the community the opportunity to 'create' or 'claim' new spaces in response to failing local authority services (for example running a service that helped young offenders to reform, or providing local training

[752] Localism Act 2011, s. 81-85.
[753] Ibid, s. 116.
[754] Localism Act 2011, s.109-122.
[755] DCLG, *The National Planning Policy Framework, (*CLG, 2012), paras. 69-79.
[756] Ibid, paras. 183-185.
[757] Ibid, s.1.1.
[758] DCLG, *A Plain English Guide to the Localism Act, (*DCLG, 2011); LGA, *The General Power of Competence: Empowering Councils to Make a Difference,* (LGA, 2013). (Online) Available at: http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=83fe251c-d96e-44e0-ab41-224bb0cdcf0e Last accessed: 22nd May 2016.
[759] Layard, A. 'The Localism Act 2011: What is 'Local' and How Do We (Legally) Construct It?', (2012) 14(2) *Environmental Law Review* 134-144.

provision[760]), risk of losing valued assets (e.g. a local library, leisure facility, or community centre), or through provisions that require a demonstration of community support (typically through surveys, community consultations, and local referenda) – all of which are potentially empowering with the right support and enabling environment in place. The 'general power of competence' should also, in theory, present a number of opportunities for dialogue between communities and local authorities, alongside other suitable partnerships, that did not previously exist. The premise of the 'power' is that it 'frees' local government to make decisions for their area that they deem to be appropriate, whereas under the previous administration the level of central government involvement had been seen to be prohibitive, limiting local government innovation and authority.[761] To offer an example, Newark and Sherwood District Council have used the general power of competence to help smaller businesses in their area grow. Using income generated by the New Homes Bonus they are providing loan finance to local businesses with growth potential that cannot afford, or have not been able to access, funding from mainstream banks. In doing so they have safeguarded local jobs and are creating new ones. In the past similar income streams had been restricted, the freedom to redistribute housing income to business support has allowed them to make investments they had not been in a position to make before.[762]

At the time of writing the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) does not collect formal statistics on the number of times rights have been exercised, lists of Assets of Community Value, or records of the number of assets that have been successfully acquired by community groups.[763] Nor is there an official national register. However, in written evidence to the House of Commons in December 2014, DCLG reported over 2,000 uses of the new rights.[764] While Locality - the social enterprise chosen by the government to support its community assets work - reported in 2015 that 2,5000 'Assets of Community Value' had been registered through the 'Right to Bid' examples of which have included daycare centres, pubs, open spaces, theatres, civic halls and buildings, heritage sites, and football grounds amongst others.[765] The report to the House of Commons went on to state that thirty of these applications had led to community

[760] It is important to note that organisations could only challenge the provision of services, not functions that the local authority carries out. To use the example of the young offenders service, a community body could make a challenge to run a service to help young offenders to reform, but not challenge the local authorities' decisions about which services are provided, where they are located, or how they are funded. Those functions would remain the responsibility of the local authority. Additionally, some services were excluded from the Right to Challenge, those being Sure Start Children's Centres, services run with by or with an NHS trust or foundation, and others where it would be deemed inappropriate for them to be run by actors other than the local authority. For further guidance see: DCLG, *Community Right to Challenge: Statutory Guidance,* (DCLG, 2012).

[761] J. Stanton and A. Bowes, 'The Localism Act 2011 and the General Power of Competence', (2014) *Public Law*, 2014, 392-402.

[762] Local Government Association, *The General Power of Competence: Empowering Communities to Make a Difference*, (Local Government Association, 2013).

[763] M. Sandford, 'Assets of Community Value', (2018) *House of Commons Library: Briefing Paper 06366*, 19th December 2018, 7.

[764] Three quarters of these were to list assets of community value; a further 100 exercised the Right to Bid and there was relatively low take up of the Right to Build (80) and the Right to Challenge (37). Whilst the number of neighbourhood plans submitted stood at 33. See: Written evidence submitted by DCLG to the House of Commons. See: House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, *Community Rights: Sixth Report of Session 2014–15*, (Stationary Office, 2015). (Online) Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmcomloc/262/262.pdf> Last accessed: 22nd January 2019, 8.

[765] Ibid.

purchase.[766] Work by MySociety and the Plunkett Foundation estimates the number of assets of community value registered was 4,006 as of summer 2019. [767] These are interesting headline figures suggesting that in some areas the new rights have proved effective.

This programme of work was still in its infancy in the period up to 2015 this thesis is concerned with, and there was not an official evaluation of this programme activity within that time period, nor has there been since. Yet the Localism Act and the provisions within it have created a great deal of scholarly interest, the findings of which provide some valuable insight into the extent to which the rhetoric of the Localism Act and associated rights and policies have transferred to the community level.[768] As was the case with the New Labour initiatives discussed in the previous chapter, the promise these programmes provide are often found lacking when it comes to implementation at the community level and alongside the successes listed above, with a pattern of spatial inequalities and inequitable access to support suggesting deprived communities are less likely to benefit from the new provisions, reinforcing existing disparities rather than rebalancing community relations.[769]

Writing in 2011, Rob Macmillan expressed concerns about the growing '*shift away from public services based on entitlement*' and a '*…continuing emphasis on goods related to active participation, co-production and voluntary and community action*' under Third Way and subsequently Big Society ideologies.[770] Macmillan's concern was that in such a model an individual's wellbeing becomes increasingly tied to their personal connections and affiliations to groups or 'clubs'. Indeed, this is the vision of society conjured in the rhetoric discussed earlier, however, such a view assumes equity of access to such support and associations. Accordingly, Macmillan argues '*we may need to add a new form of failure – 'participation failure' – to the familiar array of market, state, and governance failures*.'[771] Macmillan goes on to list a

[766] It should be noted that the 'Right to Bid', did not guarantee a purchase for the community, there were certain criteria to be met. It meant that they would be given time to put forward a viable proposal rather than a guaranteed 'right' to the property.

[767] Whilst there is not an "official" government register of assets of community value, social enterprise MySociety have been collaborating with funders The Plunkett Foundation and Sheffield Hallam University to bring together an 'unofficial' register based on local authority reporting and requests for users to supply information on registered assets within their area. This is now available at: <http://keepitinthecommunity.org> initial findings were published in June 2019 with the hope that this remains an open source platform that contributors will keep up to date over time. As of the 19th October 2019 4016 assets of community value are listed.

[768] See: N. Clarke and A. Cochrane, 'Geographies and Politics of Localism: the Localism of the United Kingdom's Coalition Government'(2013) 34 (1) *Political Geography*, 10-23; A. Layard, 'Law and Localism: The Case of Multiple Occupancy Housing, (2012) 34(4) *Legal Studies*, 551-576; J. Painter, L. Dominelli, G. MacLeod, A. Orton and R. Pande, *Connected Communities: Connecting Localism and Community Empowerment*, (Arts and Humanities Research Council, 2012) (Online) Available at: < https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/project-reports-and-reviews/connected-communities/connecting-localism-and-community-empowerment/> Last accessed: 14th December 2018; J. Stanton, 'The Big Society and Community Development: Neighbourhood Planning Under the Localism Act', (2014) 16(164) *Environmental Law Review*, 262-276.

[769] Parker, G., 'The Take-up of Neighbourhood Planning in England 2011-2015: Working Paper in Real Estate and Planning', (2015) Real *Estate and Planning*, University of Reading (Online) Available at: <http://centaur.reading.ac.uk/43545/> Last accessed: 28th August 2016; G. Parker and K. Salter, 'Five years of Neighbourhood Planning. A Review of Take-up and Distribution', (2016) 85(5) *Town and Country Planning*, 181-188; P. Healey, 'Civic Capacity, Place Governance and Progressive Localism', in S. Davoudi and A. Madanipour (eds.), *Reconsidering Localism*, (Routledge, 2015), 105-125.

[770] R. Macmillan, 'The Big Society and Participation Failure', (2011) 5(2) *People, Place and Policy*, 111

[771] Ibid, 111.

number of 'dimensions' of participation failure: 'insufficient overall participation' (for example, due to time pressure, work commitments, family life and leisure pursuits); a 'social gradient of participation' (for example, where some groups are better resourced and therefore more likely to participate than others); an 'uneven geography of participation' (where participation is stronger in some places than others, some areas have a history of participation and social action); an 'unstable temporality of participation' (where provision, and thus participation, comes and goes according to changing funding regimes and trends in charitable giving) and where participation may concentrate on particular interests and enthusiasms as opposed to adopting a wider community lens.[772] Uptake of the community rights, and in particular responses to neighbourhood planning provisions have highlighted examples of all of the above forms of participation failure, as the following sections will show.

The introduction of the Localism Act 2011 saw amendments to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, which updated neighbourhood planning procedures to allow parish councils or 'neighbourhood forums' to '*initiate a process for the purpose of requiring a local planning authority … to take a neighbourhood development order … [that] grants planning permission in relation to a particular neighbourhood area'.*[773] The government notes that this will enable local communities to '*choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like* [and] *grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead*.'[774] Taken in isolation this presents a considerable opening-up of new spaces for community participation, influence and collaboration. However, as John Stanton notes, this early '*promise'* became more '*problematic'* when viewed alongside the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was released by central government shortly after the Localism Act was passed into law.[775] The tension being that the NPPF sets out that any proposals produced by the community through neighbourhood planning must align with provisions set out in the national planning framework, as well as the local authority's Local Plan, and in some cases, any further national guidance related to the area before it would be considered for approval by the local planning committee. The NPPF goes on to state that:

> *Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. To facilitate this, local planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area and ensure that an up to date Local Plan is in place as quickly as possible. Neighbourhood Plans should reflect these policies and*

[772] R. Macmillan, 'The Big Society and Participation Failure', (2011) 5(2) *People, Place and Policy*, 112.

[773] Section 61E Town and Country Planning Act 1990, amended by Schedule 9, Localism Act 2011. Cited in DCLG, *The National Planning Policy Framework,* (DCLG, 2012), Paragraph 2.

[774] DCLG, *Giving People More Power Over What Happens in their Neighbourhood Website,* (Online) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-localism/2010-to-2015-government-policy-localism> Last accessed: 19th October 2019.

[775] J. Stanton, 'The Big Society and Community Development: Neighbourhood Planning Under the Localism Act', (2004) 16(4) *Environmental Law Review,* 266-67.

neighbourhoods should plan positively to support them. Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies.[776]

Provisions through the NPPF also gave the Secretary of State considerable powers to veto proposals put forth for neighbourhood planning, leading Stanton to conclude that:

…on closer inspection ... the Localism Act's neighbourhood planning provisions seem to paint a picture of community-led initiative being encouraged, subject constantly to higher approval and supervision. That is dependent upon the ever-watchful eye of the Secretary of State and central government.'[777]

Similar provisions are set out in the guidance for the Localism Act and provisions for expressions of interest under the rights to 'bid' and 'deliver' with the Secretary of State again retaining powers to stipulate what local expressions of interest should contain and which services it can or cannot apply to.[778] This is another example of government promoting the opening of new spaces for local participation and power-sharing, yet real control over decisions and the allocation of resources remain with central government, shaped in closed spaces and controlling the confines within which communities can participate. This was a particular frustration for one of the interviewees, Grant, who had been involved in some work supporting a group that were exploring neighbourhood planning. Discussion had moved on to the extent to which 'power' was something he openly addressed or discussed through his role as a community development practitioner:

...I am always a little bit. I'm always wary of conversations about power. Because I think sometimes. Err... I don't think it acknowledges the responsibilities the professions and the big institutions carry. I think sometimes people play rather undermining games by wielding the word and getting residents hopes up. So, for example, a few years back there was Neighbourhood Planning Pathfinders - they were appalling. I was a witness to one, going into this community and leading them down the road. They were thinking they were planning the future, and they were sitting down, and saying "we're going to have a supermarket here, and we're going to have a skate park there." No, you're not! The developers and the council are going to decide what goes where! They were getting led down this route thinking they had the power to decide what was going into these bits of blighted land. No! Completely wrong.[779]

776 DCLG, *The National Planning Policy Framework*, (DCLG, 2012), Paragraph 184.

777 J. Stanton, 'The Big Society and Community Development: Neighbourhood Planning Under the Localism Act', (2004) 16(4) *Environmental Law Review,* 269.

778 Localism Act 2011, Pt 5, Chapter 2, Paragraph 219; J. Stanton, 'The Big Society and Community Development: Neighbourhood Planning Under the Localism Act', (2004) 16(4) *Environmental Law Review,* 270.

779 Interview with Grant, Community Development Practitioner and NDC Neighbourhood Coordinator.

Grant's concern was that involvement in neighbourhood planning quickly became a disempowering experience when participants began to understand the confines within which they were operating. The government's response to such challenges around the provisions for Local Plan alignment and central government scrutiny was that: '*such a system would be unworkable - in that such plans would be likely to undermine important strategic policy objectives such as provision for infrastructure*'.[780] While it is recognised there are many decisions of national importance that should remain the preserve of central government, this statement is somewhat at odds with the localist stance, and David Cameron's own claims that '*changing the basic assumption at the heart of government that the way to improve things in society was to micromanage from the centre, from Westminster*' was a central tenement of his government's vision for the Big Society.[781]

Neighbourhood plans and community 'rights' then are not a simple process to execute. Early findings suggest that communities with access to technical expertise and an understanding of the planning system will find themselves considerably better placed to take advantage of opportunities presented by the provisions, and even then they have to be pragmatic in their vision for their community.[782] Unless a community has an abundance of planners and civil servants at their disposal, the likelihood is that any community wanting to utilise the new provisions will have to source outside assistance, usually at considerable cost. Parker, writing in 2014 had found that 70% of areas involved in neighbourhood planning had spent money on private consultants to assist them with producing their proposals and policies.[783] It is not surprising then that early research into the take-up of neighbourhood planning activities found little evidence to suggest the new powers for planning or acquiring community assets were reaching the poorest communities. [784] In a 2015 article Parker again, found that the large majority of neighbourhood planning applications in the first three years of provision had come from rural and wealthier areas, and often through existing community groups or areas with a history of community organisation and an established interest in local development.[785] Subsequently, in a 2017 article Parker (who has produced a considerable volume of work on neighbourhood planning and localism since 2010) and Salter attempted to map all known neighbourhood planning groups against 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation classifications. Reducing classifications to five tiers (Q1 being the least deprived and Q5 being most deprived) they found that a combined 52.5% of groups formed by October 2016 had come from Q1 and Q2, whilst IMD Q4 and Q5 accounted for just 15.1% and 7.5%

[780] DCLG, *Neighbourhood Planning Impact Assessment*, (The Stationary Office, 2012), 4. Cited in G. Parker, 'The Take-up of Neighbourhood Planning in England 2011-2015: Working Paper in Real Estate and Planning', (2015) Real *Estate and Planning*, University of Reading (Online) Available at: < http://centaur.reading.ac.uk/43545/> Last accessed: 28th August 2019.

[781] D. Cameron, (speech) *The Big Society: Transcript of a speech by the Prime Minister on the Big Society*, 19 July 2010' (2010) (Online) <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/big-society-speech/> Last accessed: 19th October 219.

[782] S. Davoudi and P. Cowie, 'Are English Neighbourhood Forums Democratically Legitimate?', (2013) 14(4) *Planning Theory & Practice*, 562-566.

[783] G. Parker, 'Engaging Neighbourhoods: Experiences of Transactive Planning with Communities in England' in N. Gallent and D. Ciaffi, (eds.) *Community Action and Planning, (*Policy Press, 2014).

[784] G. Parker and C. Murray, 'Beyond Tokenism? Community-led Planning and Rational Choices: Findings from Participants in Local Agenda-Setting at the Neighbourhood Scale in England', (2012) 83(1) *Town Planning Review,* 1-28.

[785] G. Parker, 'The Take-up of Neighbourhood Planning in England 2011-2015: Working Paper in Real Estate and Planning', (2015) Real *Estate and Planning*, University of Reading (Online) Available at: < http://centaur.reading.ac.uk/43545/> Last accessed: 28th August 2019.

accordingly.[786] They then explored these classifications further to see what the IMD breakdown of neighbourhood planning areas who had passed the local referendum was, they found that out of the 245 neighbourhoods that had passed the neighbourhood planning referendum, only 6 of the neighbourhood areas to have passed were from the 20% most deprived areas in England (Q5) and only 18 (7.3%) were situated in the 40% most deprived areas (Q4 & Q5). The least deprived areas in the country (Q1 and Q2) accounted for 60.8% of the plans that had been approved by October 2016.[787] Parker's findings then substantiate concerns raised in earlier articles by Stanton, Macmillan, and Lowndes and Pratchett who questioned the extent to which take-up of the rights can be replicated in poorer urban communities, with many areas and groups lacking the skills, financial resources, and importantly the local infrastructure needed to bid for and manage a community asset or service.[788]

In recognition of some of the challenges local groups would face the government did put in place some provisions to aid communities in understanding the new 'community rights.' This included the introduction of a dedicated website[789], some funding to support applications that was to be administered by the Homes and Communities Agency, and the government made arrangements with a number of industry experts to provide some pro-bono or low-cost planning support, training and advice to local partnerships in the early days of the programme.[790] Similarly, the first areas to adopt neighbourhood planning approaches in 2010 were awarded £20,000 each in 'Frontrunner' funding to test the revised process. At the time of writing, social enterprise Locality have been commissioned by the government to provide some 'technical support' to areas beginning to develop neighbourhood plans or considering neighbourhood development orders, with a £9,000 grant available to areas to support the start of the process.[791] Yet suggestions are that to date this support has been limited in scope and has proved to be somewhat problematic, with a lack of consistency and coordinated advice between and across the selected partners.[792] Further to this, the limited timescales put in place to activate the community rights has also proved prohibitive and once again runs counter to principles of sustainable community development. The 'Right to Buy' for example gives community groups a six-month window to complete their proposals and to raise the capital needed to acquire the asset, which is very little time for community groups forming with the intention of activating the 'right', nor

[786] G. Parker and K. Salter, 'Taking Stock of Neighbourhood Planning in England 2011–2016', (2017) 32(4) *Planning Practice & Research,* 484.
[787] Ibid*,* 485.
[788] V. Lowndes and L. Pratchett, 'Local Governance Under the Coalition Government: Austerity, Localism and the 'Big Society', (2012) 38(1) *Local Government Studies*, 21-40; J. Stanton, 'The Big Society and Community Development: Neighbourhood Planning Under the Localism Act', (2014) 16(164) *Environmental Law Review*, 262-276; R. Macmillan, 'The Big Society and Participation Failure', (2011) 5(2) *People, Place and Policy*, 107-114; S. Davoudi and P. Cowie, 'Are English Neighbourhood Forums Democratically Legitimate?', (2013) 14(4) *Planning Theory & Practice*, 562-566.
[789] Locality, *My Community' Website*, (Online) Available at: http://mycommunity.org.uk/ (Last accessed 30th October 2018).
[790] Amongst them the Prince's Foundation, RTPI and Locality.
[791] See Locality, *Neighbourhood Planning Support Website*, (Online) Available at: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/> Last accessed: 25th October 2019.
[792] G. Parker, 'The Take-up of Neighbourhood Planning in England 2011-2015: Working Paper in Real Estate and Planning', (2015) Real *Estate and Planning*, University of Reading (Online) Available at: < http://centaur.reading.ac.uk/43545/> Last accessed: 28th August 2019.

are residents in poorer communities likely to have access to the considerable finance or lending needed to obtain an asset.[793] Indeed, despite the government's claims that the localist approach strips away obtrusive bureaucracy, the processes and costs involved in registering interest, bidding for, and financing a community asset are complex, not to mention daunting to any individual or group without asset management experience.[794] This presents a dual challenge to areas with low levels of social capital. Not only are they excluded from participating by their limited capacity, but they also risk 'losing out' in the long run to more organised or professionalised groups. This might result in the loss of an asset the community had deemed as valuable and creates the possibility where the community inadvertently find themselves exposed to further unwanted development, either because their area becomes a site of interest for developers who see it as a development site likely to be met with little resistance, or driven there because more organised groups had successfully enacted the community rights to ward off development in their area in an act of nimbyism, thus demonstrating the possibility that the new community rights can disempower as well as empower. Having critically explored provisions in the Localism Act attention now turns to the Community Organisers programme, the other strand of Coalition activity which promoted community-led regeneration.

6.4 The Community Organisers programme

Introduced in 2011, the Community Organisers programme was presented as a radical new approach to community development in the UK.[795] Inspired in part by the successful election campaign of Barack Obama (who had been a community organiser himself and used community organising methods to considerable effect in his campaign[796]), and citing the infamous Chicago organiser Saul Alinsky and American community organising approaches as a touchstone, the programme sought to train 4,500 community organisers to work in deprived communities in England.[797] This programme is worthy of exploration for a number of reasons: at the cost of £20 million, it represents one of the Coalition's biggest investments in a programme that aligns with the principles of community-led regeneration outlined in chapter two. It also reflects the Coalition's most concerted attempt to promote civic participation at the neighbourhood level and in the most

[793] House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, *Regeneration: Sixth Report of Session 2010-2012*, HC 1014, (The Stationary Office, 2011); Written evidence submitted by NAVCA, Community Rights, Communities and Local Government Committee House of Commons, 18 November 2014; N. Bailey, 'The Role, Organisation and Contribution of Community Enterprise to Urban Regeneration Policy in the UK', (2012) 77 *Progress in Planning*, 1–35.

[794] G. Parker and C. Murray, 'Beyond tokenism? Community-led Planning and Rational Choices: Findings from Participants in Local Agenda-Setting at the Neighbourhood Scale in England', (2012) 83(1) *Town Planning Review,* 1-28.

[795] Cabinet Office, *Government Announces New Partner to Deliver Community Organisers*, (2011) 19th February (Online) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-names-new-partner-to-deliver-community-organisers> Last accessed: 19th October 2019.

[796] M. Taylor and M. Wilson, 'Community Organising for Social Change: The Scope for Class Politics', in M. Shaw and M. Mayo (Eds.) *Class, Inequality and Community Development,* (Policy Press, 2016), 219-234.

[797] Cameron, D. and Rennick, K., *Community Organisers Programme Evaluation Summary Report*, (Ipsos MORI, 2015) (Online) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-organisers-programme-evaluation> Last Accessed: 24th September 2019, 13.

deprived communities, a level of targeting found lacking in other programmes.[798] Further to this, as Fisher and Dimberg note: '*no other nation has ever officially and explicitly trained and hired so many community organisers*.'[799] The programme's similarities with the American model of community organising also made this an obvious choice for some comparative analysis – which will be continued in chapter seven.

Introduced by the government as a: '*programme* [that] *seeks to support people in deprived communities, placing Trainee Community Organisers in those areas which are in need, in order to improve their neighbourhoods and tackle existing and emerging problems*".[800] The premise was that the programme would begin by training 100 paid organisers, known as Trainee Community Organisers (TCOs), who would over the course of a year recruit and train unpaid volunteers across the country to expand the organiser network.[801] TCOs were allocated to small geographical areas or 'patches' in poorest parts of the county,[802]employed by 'hosting organisations' (typically a locally VCS organisation who applied for funding to host TCOs), and given the brief to '*…work closely with communities to identify local leaders, projects and opportunities, and empower the local community to improve their local area*.'[803] Some successes were noted, the IPSOS MORI evaluation of the programme commissioned by the government reported some Trainee Community Organisers (TCOs) had '*begun to work towards more fundamental change, challenging power and building a network that attempts to have a broader influence in their area*.'[804] Yet the extent to which the programme could be described as empowering, or sustainable, is called into question by a number of the conditions put in place by the government.

TCOs were set four targets within their first year: to conduct 'listening's' with 500 local people on their doorsteps, to understand matters of importance to local people; secondly, they were expected to initiate three to five community projects based on the concerns local people had shared; third, recruit at least nine Volunteer Community Organisers from the community; and finally, they were also expected to establish 'community holding teams' made up of representatives from

[798] A. Layard, 'The Localism Act 2011: What is 'Local' and How Do We (Legally) Construct It?,' (2012) Vol. 14(2) *Environmental Law Review* 134-144; Lupton R. and Fitzgerald, A., *The Coalition's Record on Area Regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal 2010-2015*, *Social Policy in a Cold Climate Working Paper 19 January 2015,* (Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), 2015). (Online) Available at: <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/spcc/WP19_SUMMARY.pdf> Last accessed: 28th October 2018.

[799] R. Fisher and K. Dimberg, 'The Community Organisers Programme in England', (2016) 21(4) *Journal of Community Practice*, 96.

[800] D. Cameron and K. Rennick, *Community Organisers Programme Evaluation Summary Report*, (Ipsos MORI, 2015) (Online) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-organisers-programme-evaluation> Last Accessed: 24th September 2019, 4.

[801] By the end of the their first fifty-one weeks in the role Trainee Community Organisers were expected to deliver the following outputs; "Listened to at least 500 people in their 'patch' or local area; Recruited at least 9 VCOs; Identify 3-5 fledgling projects that could be supported by the wider network(s) they had started to build up; and Form a network of VCOs and other engaged local people to listen in the community, research, plan and take collective action that attempts to have a broader influence in their area." See Cameron & Rennick cited above, 6.

[802] D. Cameron, K. Rennick, R. Maguire and A. Freeman, *Evaluation of the Community Organisers Programme,* (Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute, 2015).

[803] Cabinet Office, *Government Announces New Partner to Deliver Community Organisers*, (2011) 19th February (Online) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-names-new-partner-to-deliver-community-organisers> Last accessed: 19th October 2019.

[804] D. Cameron, K. Rennick, R, Maguire, and A. Freeman, *Evaluation of the Community Organisers Programme,* (Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute, 2015), 7.

local VCS organisations and institutions who would support ongoing research, delivery and project oversight.[805] This was a considerable task, especially given that funding for the TCO's post was only guaranteed for a year[806] and made more challenging by the programme's design that required TCOs to work independently of the existing voluntary sector and build local relationships anew.[807] The rationale behind this was that government wanted priorities to emerge *from* the community through the listening exercises, free from the agendas of local agencies, and that partnerships should then be developed in line with the priorities of local people. While the emphasis on ensuring communities are heard and are influential aligns with principles of good participatory practice, and relatedly, was seen as helpful in some one-to-one encounters with residents as it allowed TCO's to be seen as independent.[808] To not build on existing networks and coalitions within the community seems counterintuitive to sustainable community development.[809] It also suggests a dismissal of some of the founding principles the programme was said to be built upon, with the 'Alinsky' model firmly rooted in building broad-based alliances of community institutions and leaders.[810] The door-to-door 'listenings' Trainee Community Organisers undertook were valued by organisers and the organisations that hosted them. TCOs reported learning a lot about the areas and people they were working with, while some hosting organisations spoke of the valuable insight TCO's work had provided them with, reflecting an approach to engagement they had not undertaken for some time due to resources and changes in working practices.[811] However, by having to work outside of existing neighbourhood structures and partnerships limited TCO's ability to mobilise projects and putting them in a difficult position when it came to signposting residents to other local service providers.[812] It also put a strain on the TCO's relationship with their host organisation as they were expected to act independently of their host, despite being employed by them and often based in

[805] Ibid.

[806] Government would only provide funding for a second year if another company or agency was willing to part fund the TCO's role: '*Progression funding in the form of an employment start up grant of up to £15,000 towards the cost of a second year of organising is available to the Community Organisers… They must have an employer and have secured local matched resources of which £7,500 must be in cash*', cited in: D. Cameron and K. Rennick, *Community Organisers Programme Evaluation Summary Report*, (Ipsos MORI, 2015) (Online) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-organisers-programme-evaluation> Last Accessed: 24th September 2019, 4.

[807] L. Grimshaw, L. Mates, and A. Reynolds, 'The Challenges and Contradictions of State-Funded Community Organizing', (2018) *Community Development Journal,* 9.

[808] L. Grimshaw, L. Mates, and A. Reynolds, 'The Challenges and Contradictions of State-Funded Community Organizing', (2018) *Community Development Journal,* 9.

[809] A. Reynolds and L. Grimshaw, 'Sustainability in community organizing: lessons from the Community Organisers Programme in England (2011 – 2015)', (2019) *Sustainable Communities Review,* (Online) Available at: <http://scrjournal.org/SCR%20Spring%202019/Reynolds_Grimshaw.pdf> Last accessed: 25th October 2019.

[810] L. Grimshaw, L. Mates and A. Reynolds, 'The Challenges and Contradictions of State-Funded Community Organizing', (2018) *Community Development Journal,* 1-18.

[811] A. Reynolds and L. Grimshaw, 'Sustainability in community organizing: lessons from the Community Organisers Programme in England (2011 – 2015)', (2019) *Sustainable Communities Review,* (Online), 13. Available at: <http://scrjournal.org/SCR%20Spring%202019/Reynolds_Grimshaw.pdf> Last accessed: 25th October 2019.

[812] L. Grimshaw, L. Mates, and A. Reynolds, 'The Challenges and Contradictions of State-Funded Community Organizing', (2018) *Community Development Journal,* 9.

the host's offices.[813] As a result some host organisations questioned the value of the programme, unsure of their role within it and having expected TCO's to do more to connect and strengthen local community organisations. [814]

In some cases, TCOs work ran contrary to strengthening local partnership working, with hosting organisations in some areas reporting tensions with local authorities as a result of their affiliation with the programme. TCOs were also placed within a difficult position with regards to local authorities, essentially bypassing them to have a direct relationship with local residents. Accounts in the literature suggest that some local authorities expressed animosity towards the Community Organisers Programme, and by association their host organisations, expressing a reluctance to work with TCOs on account of the limited time they may be in post, and questioning why government had invested in the programme whilst local authorities were having to make cuts to core local services.[815] Relatedly, Grimshaw et al. heard accounts of one Labour council refusing to engage with the programme on account of its Conservative party links. As Grimshaw et al. note, these refusals to engage:

> ...[turns] *Alinsky's approach on its head, the local council seems to resist Trainee Community Organisers and subvert the perceived government-led Community Organisers Programme, reasserting itself in the context of funding cuts.*[816]

There is some irony in this, but it also reflects flaws in the programme design. Community Organisers should maintain a level of independence from local authorities, and inevitably there will be points of tension between both parties, indeed as Bunyan notes '*community organising understands that social change and social justice are as much about struggle, tension and conflict as they are about consensus and cooperation.*'[817] Yet, to prescribe that TCO's do not engage, regardless of the issue, raises the question of how committed were the government to embedding and sustaining the work of TCO's. Particularly in light of the time-bound nature of the role. Organisers in some areas had begun to build influence in the area and affect change, only to find their progress hindered by a lack of clarity about the long-term prospects of their

[813] A. Reynolds and L. Grimshaw, 'Sustainability in community organizing: lessons from the Community Organisers Programme in England (2011 – 2015)', (2019) *Sustainable Communities Review,* (Online), 13. Available at: <http://scrjournal.org/SCR%20Spring%202019/Reynolds_Grimshaw.pdf> Last accessed: 25th October 2019.

[814] J. Fisher, R. Lawthom and C. Kagan, 'Delivering on the Big Society? Tensions in Hosting Community Organisers', (2016) 31(4) *Local Economy*, 510; L. Grimshaw, L. Mates, and A. Reynolds, 'The Challenges and Contradictions of State-Funded Community Organizing', (2018) *Community Development Journal,* 10

[815] A. Reynolds and L. Grimshaw, 'Sustainability in community organizing: lessons from the Community Organisers Programme in England (2011 – 2015)', (2019) *Sustainable Communities Review,* (Online), 13. Available at: <http://scrjournal.org/SCR%20Spring%202019/Reynolds_Grimshaw.pdf> Last accessed: 25th October 2019.

[816] L. Grimshaw, L. Mates, and A. Reynolds, 'The Challenges and Contradictions of State-Funded Community Organizing', (2018) *Community Development Journal,* 12.

[817] P. Bunyan, 'Partnership, the Big Society and Community Organizing: Between Romanticizing, Problematizing and Politicizing Community', (2013) 48 (1) *Community Development Journal,* 130.

role.[818] This impacted how willing some potential partners were to engage with the role and put host organisations in a quandary over how much time and resource they committed to supporting and building on the work of TCOs, for fear that they might not be able to sustain the work or post beyond the initial year.[819] Indeed, a significant number of host organisations stated that given the austere times they were operating in they felt it unlikely to secure the funds they required to.[820] This placed TCOs in a difficult position too, expected to be neutral and to build partnerships aligned to the wishes of local people, but also mindful of the need secure additional funding to sustain their role creates something of a Catch-22, placing an expectation on Organisers to work with organisations and residents most affected by government cuts and at the same time be trying to convince them that some of their remaining funding should contribute to their role. Once again, this is evidence of systematic failings by government, implementing a top-down-bottom-up programme without due consideration to the processes, time requirements or to the need for sustained support.

The decision to commission Locality to manage the Community Organisers programme is also of interest, following a competitive bidding process they were chosen over the more established 'Citizens UK' – who have a long history of organising in the UK and whose approach to organising is strongly influenced by the work of Saul Alinsky, the organiser cited by David Cameron during his Big Society speech announcing proposals for the Community Organisers Programme. Rather than committing wholly to the approach advocated by Alinsky, who set out to resist and challenge state authority power, Locality and the training partner RE:generate adopted an approach that combined the educational theory of Paulo Freire, the organiser model of Alinsky and elements of Alinsky affiliate, Edward Chamber's approach to training community organisers, alongside the language of the Big Society – an approach Fisher and Dimberg would label the 'moderate middle'.[821] For Fisher and Dimberg this suggested an aversion from the government towards power-based models of community development,[822] citing Lord Glasman's response to a House of Commons Select Committee as illustrative of some politician's views towards the programme: '*what the hell [are we] doing funding and training people who are going to campaign on issues that defy the market!*" - suggesting that Locality's listening based approach may have been more palatable for the party.[823] Reflecting on the announcement of the Community Organisers programme in early proposals for the Big Society, Angus McCabe questioned whether a state-led community organisers programme

[818] L. Grimshaw, L. Mates, and A. Reynolds, 'The Challenges and Contradictions of State-Funded Community Organizing', (2018) *Community Development Journal,* 13.

[819] J. Fisher, R. Lawthom and C. Kagan, 'Delivering on the Big Society? Tensions in Hosting Community Organisers', (2016) 31(4) *Local Economy*, 510.

[820] D. Cameron and K. Rennick, *Community Organisers Programme Evaluation Summary Report*, (Ipsos MORI, 2015) (Online) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-organisers-programme-evaluation> Last Accessed: 24th September 2019, 13.

[821] R. Fisher and K. Dimberg, The Community Organisers Programme in England, (2016) 21(4) *Journal of Community Practice*, 100.

[822] Ibid, 94-108.

[823] Lord Glasman quoted in House of Commons, 2011, (EV11) cited in R. Fisher and K. Dimberg, The Community Organisers Programme in England, (2016) 21(4) *Journal of Community Practice*, 99.

could retain its radicalism, or whether it would be '*co-opted by the state.*'[824] The limited research generated to date suggests a mixed picture, Fisher et al. reported two instances when Locality used contacts within the Office of Civil Society to intervene in local disputes with between TCOs and local authorities and agencies.[825] While understandable that Locality may want to support their staff, this highlights the difficult dynamic created by state-run or state-funded community development initiatives and in some ways undermines the principles of bottom-up working one might expect from a community organising programme, drawing on top-down power to resolve local-level conflict. Also notable was the decision taken in some communities to not recruit organisers from *within* the community, instead preferring to recruit TCOs with educational and/or practical backgrounds in community development.[826] This approach is again at odds with much of the literature on community development and an element of the programme that was met with much surprise by American participants in this research as chapter seven will discuss. The decisions of host organisations to recruit from outside of the community was in part inspired by the time-limited nature of the programme, with hosts wanting to choose an organiser who could demonstrate their worth quickly and achieve targets set by the delivery partners.[827] Yet it is concerning that hosts may be having to choose between recruiting those with a grounding in community development practice, or local people with first-hand experience and understanding of the community needs and shared history and culture. Were the programme not time-limited, a local member of staff would likely be favoured, particularly as *over time* the necessary skills can be taught, while a personal connection to the area cannot.

Drawing their conclusions, Grimshaw et al. view the Community Organisers programme as taking a '*moderate, pragmatic approach*' to community organising rather than '*action that could reasonably be labelled 'radical' or 'revolutionary*.'[828] An assessment that is borne out in wider reviews of the programme.[829] On the positive side they reflected that the programme had '*opened up space for state funded TCOs to act autonomously, to adapt the methods to their local context, to initiate community activities and train volunteers.'*[830] However, they lament the issues raised throughout this section and argue that the government has '*ignored lessons of previous community programmes, particularly the need for longer timescales to achieve sustainable community engagement and social change*.[831] In addition as Grimshaw et al. and Fisher and Lawthom note, the work of TCOs and the wider programme of activities introduced under the guise of the Big Society

824 A. McCabe, 'Below the Radar in a Big Society? Reflections on Community Engagement, Empowerment and Social Action in a Changing Policy Context', (2010) *Third Sector Research Centre Working Paper* 51, 1-28.

825 J. Fisher and R.Lawthom and C. Kagan, 'Delivering on the Big Society? Tensions in Hosting Community Organisers', (2016) 31(4) *Local Economy*, 510

826 Ibid.

827 A. Reynolds and L. Grimshaw, 'Sustainability in Community Organizing: Lessons from the Community Organisers Programme in England (2011 – 2015)', (2019) *Sustainable Communities Review,* (Online), 11. Available at: <http://scrjournal.org/SCR%20Spring%202019/Reynolds_Grimshaw.pdf> Last accessed: 25th October 2019.

828 L. Grimshaw, L. Mates, and A. Reynolds, 'The Challenges and Contradictions of State-Funded Community Organizing', (2018) *Community Development Journal,* 13.

829 Ibid, 13.

830 Ibid.

831 Ibid.

were significantly undermined and restricted by the impact of the recession and the government's programme of austerity measures, which impacted considerably on the community and voluntary sector, and disproportionately affected the communities most in need of support.[832] Attention now turns to consideration of the impact of the Coalition's programme of austerity.

6.5 Big Society alongside big cuts – the spectre of austerity

In introducing the 'place, space and power' framework Gaventa stresses the importance of deploying the framework alongside an understanding and appreciation of the social, economic, and environmental factors that will be impacting on stakeholders and the operational environment of each level of the cube. Certainly, it would be erroneous to evaluate social policy under the Coalition through this framework without giving due consideration to the impact of the global recession on the country and the implications of the Coalition's austerity programme on the poorest communities. The outlook is not positive, for all the government's proclamations for a united and bigger society, poorer neighbourhoods across the United Kingdom have disproportionally felt the impact of the government's austerity response.[833]

In *Regeneration to Enable Growth,* the government made it clear there will be '*less money available for investment in regeneration*.'[834] Something that had been very clear to academics and commentators from the outset of the Coalition's programme for government.[835] Yet many did not foresee the extent to which the public sector, and by default, the poorest communities, would be affected by the Coalition's actions to reduce the fiscal deficit. Under austerity £81 billion in spending cuts was proposed over a five-year period, with £53 billion of this passed on to government departments and local government.[836] This resulted in the closure of two hundred and eighty-five public bodies, including the Community

[832] L. Grimshaw, L. Mates, and A. Reynolds, 'The Challenges and Contradictions of State-Funded Community Organizing', (2018) *Community Development Journal,* 10; J. Fisher and R.Lawthom and C. Kagan, 'Delivering on the Big Society? Tensions in Hosting Community Organisers', (2016) 31(4) *Local Economy*, 502-517; A. Reynolds and L. Grimshaw, 'Sustainability in Community Organizing: Lessons from the Community Organisers Programme in England (2011 – 2015)', (2019) *Sustainable Communities Review,* (Online), 11. Available at: <http://scrjournal.org/SCR%20Spring%202019/Reynolds_Grimshaw.pdf> Last accessed: 25th October 2019.

[833] D. Clifford, 'Charitable Organisations, the Great Recession and the Age of Austerity: Longitudinal Evidence for England and Wales', (2017) 46 *Journal of Social Policy,* 25; K. Day, *Communities in Recession: The Reality in Four Neighbourhoods*, (JRF, 2009). (Online) Available at: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/communities-recession-reality-four-neighbourhoods> Last accessed: 25th September 2019. R. Tunstall, *Communities in Recession: The Impact on Deprived Neighbourhoods*, (JRF, 2009) (Online) Available at: https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/communities-recession-impact-deprived-neighbourhoods> Last accessed: 22nd August 2019; B. Gardiner, R. Martin, and P. Tyler*., Spatially Unbalanced Growth in the British Economy, Working Paper CGER No. 1*, (Centre for Geographical Economic Research, 2012). (Online) Available at: < https://www.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/cger/conference/2tyler.pdf> Last accessed: 22nd August 2019.

[834] DCLG, *Regeneration to Enable Growth: What the Government Is Doing in Support of Community-Led Regeneration*, (DCLG, 2010).

[835] V. Lowndes and L. Pratchett., 'Local Governance Under the Coalition Government: Austerity, Localism and the 'Big Society',(2012) Vol.38(1) *Local Government Studies*, 21-40; P. Taylor-Gooby, 'Root and Branch Restructuring to Achieve Major Cuts: The Social Policy Programme of the 2010 UK Coalition Government', (2011) 46(1) *Social Policy and Administration*, 61-82; A. Fitzgerald, R. Lupton and A. M. Brady, *Hard Times, New Directions? The Impact of the Local Government Spending Cuts in Three Deprived Neighbourhoods of London*, Social Policy in a Cold Climate Working Paper 9*,* (Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), 2014) (Online) Available at: < http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/spcc/wp09.pdf?> Last accessed: 25th August 2019.

[836] J. Clayton, C. Donovan and J. Merchant, 'Distancing and Limited Resourcefulness: Third Sector Service Provision Under Austerity Localism in the North East of England'*,* (2015) 53(4) *Urban Studies,* 724.

Development Foundation and the Sustainable Development Commission and large scale redundancies across the public sector.[837] While the Department of Communities and Local Government, typically responsible for neighbourhood regeneration, was the hardest-hit department with its budget slashed by 51% for the period 2010-2015.[838] The difference in spending for regeneration and social action between the Coalition and their New Labour predecessors was substantial. According to research from the London School of Economics' Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), spending on neighbourhood renewal in England under the Coalition equated to £32 million a year, this is in stark contrast to New Labour spending. Spending on one neighbourhood programme alone dwarfed these figures, at the height of regeneration funding the government was spending £500 million on NRF yearly and an additional £200 million a year on the NDC programme.[839] To further emphasise this point spending per head on residents in deprived areas under the Coalition was estimated to have been between £10 and £20 per resident, while under New Labour it was estimated to be £66-£120 per head for residents living within areas in receipt of NRF and as much as £500 per head for those living in NDC areas.[840] The focus of this thesis is not to compare the spending and broader regeneration outcomes under the two governments[841], but it is pertinent given the importance this thesis places on capacity building and the creation of enabling space for community participation. Resources are needed to help communities build the skills needed to effectively participate and to utilise new powers and channels for civic engagement. Without this the likelihood is the maintenance of the status quo, or worse, widening inequality.

The extent to which the Coalition can claim to have helped to enable the poorest communities to do this is questionable. Rather than empowering communities, austerity disempowers poorer communities, denying them vital local services they may have previously relied on while also imposing changes to the welfare system that reduce benefits and have led to many being displaced through policies such as the Bedroom Tax and Universal Credit.[842] This reflects either a deep misunderstanding of the hardships faced by many individuals or communities or calls into question the extent to which the Coalition was ever committed to their vision of a Big Society for the whole of the country. What is more troubling is that charitable and voluntary responses to austerity can be labelled as examples of the Big Society working. Kayleigh

[837] A. Reynolds and L. Grimshaw, 'Sustainability in Community Organizing: Lessons from the Community Organisers Programme in England (2011 – 2015)', (2019) *Sustainable Communities Review,* (Online), 2. Available at: <http://scrjournal.org/SCR%20Spring%202019/Reynolds_Grimshaw.pdf> Last accessed: 25th October 2019

[838] Ibid.

[839] R. Lupton, A. Fenton and A. Fitzgerald, *Labour's Record on Neighbourhood Renewal in England, Spending and Outcomes 1997-2010*, Social Policy in a Cold Climate Working Paper 6, (Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), 2013). (Online) Available at: < http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/spcc/wp06.pdf> Last accessed 25th August 2019, 15.

[840] Ibid, 15.

[841] CASE's *Social Policy in a Cold Climate* series does a very good job of this. Available at: <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/_new/research/Social_Policy_in_a_Cold_Climate/Programme_Reports_and_event_information.asp> Last accessed: 28th October 2018.

[842] K. Gibb, 'The Multiple Policy Failures of the UK Bedroom Tax', (2015) 15(2) *International Journal of Housing Policy,* 148-166; S. Moffatt, S. Lawson, R. Patterson, E. Holding, A Dennison, S. Sowden and J. Brown, 'A Qualitative Study of the UK 'Bedroom Tax'', (2015) 38(2) *Journal of Public Health,* 197-205.

Garthwaite demonstrates this with the example of foodbanks in the UK. Published in 2017 Garthwaite notes that foodbank usage in 2015-16 was at a record high, with 1.1 million three-day emergency food supplies given to people in crisis – an appalling statistic for the world's seventh biggest economy.[843] Yet, as Garthwaite notes, when confronted with accounts of growing usage prominent politicians including the Prime Minister David Cameron cited them as an example of Big Society in action:

> *[Foodbanks]…were described by the Conservative government as an 'excellent example' of active citizenship' with David Cameron suggesting foodbanks were 'part of what I can the Big Society.' In 2015, Robert Key, former Conservative MP for Salisbury, and trustee of the Trussell Trust, described foodbanks as 'national volunteering that makes sense' … they were 'popular community action … It is, for goodness' sake, the Big Society.*[844]

An example of how the lack of definition around terms such as Big Society and 'active citizenship' leave them open for interpretation, co-opting social responses to government invoked social problems and holding them up as examples of policy success.

Chapter one opened with calls for a radical redistribution of power but it is difficult to see how in the five years under the Coalition, or indeed the preceding thirteen of New Labour, how power has extended beyond the preserve of the more affluent few, rather than a wider redistribution to communities. The least affluent communities continue to report lesser feelings of empowerment, the lowest levels of civic engagement and participation, and disproportionately suffer from failures in public services, while the most affluent report better outcomes from public services and have been proven to be more socially active. [845] Richer neighbourhoods also have 2.5 times as many neighbourhood organisations[846] and are therefore more likely to be in receipt of public funding. [847] This is important as those living in more affluent areas are more likely to report trust in their neighbours and have greater belief in their ability to influence local decision-making, an enabling environment that is incredibly important for transitioning from lower levels of power dynamics, to participate in

[843] Trussell Trust, *Latest Stats,* (Trussell Trust, 2016). Cited in K. Garthwaite, ''I Feel I'm Giving Something Back to Society': Constructing the 'Active Citizen' and Responsibilising Foodbank Use', (2017) 16(2) *Social Policy and Society,* 283.

[844] K. Garthwaite, ''I Feel I'm Giving Something Back to Society': Constructing the 'Active Citizen' and Responsibilising Foodbank Use', (2017) 16(2) *Social Policy and Society,* 283, quoting R. Key, *Six Ways the Government Can Tackle Poverty and Work with Foodbanks,* (Conservative Home, 2015)

[845] Civil Exchange, *Whose Society? The Final Big Society Audit*, (Civil Exchange, 2015), 8, 54; R. Fox, J. Blackwell, L. Boga Mitchell and T. Snare, *Audit of Political Engagement 13: The 2016 Report*, (Hansard Society, 2016). (Online) Available at: <https://assets.contentful.com/u1rlvvbs33ri/24aY1mkabGU0uEsoUOekGW/06380afa29a63008e97fb41cdb8dcad0/Publication__Audit-of-Political-Engagement-13.pdf> Last accessed: 27th September 2018, 40.

[846] J. Mohan, 'Geographical Foundations of the Big Society', (2012) 44(5) *Environment and Planning A,* 1121-29.

[847] D. Clifford, 'Voluntary Sector Organisations Working at the Neighbourhood Level in England: Patterns by Local Deprivation', (2012) 44(5) *Environment and Planning A,* 1148-64.

'invited' spaces or to challenge 'closed spaces'. The flip side of this, of course, is that more affluent areas also report greater satisfaction with the current political system, serving to maintain the status quo.

Local authorities found themselves in a rather paradoxical position under the Coalition, cast in the role of enablers by localist legislation and rhetoric which promoted new freedoms for local authorities. While, on the other hand, central government introduced austerity has seen local authority budgets sizeably reduced, leading to wholescale spending cuts at the local level and the cessation of some services.[848] While many national and local intermediaries for which community empowerment formed a key part of their purpose, were forced to close as a result of cuts and the impact of these on the wider third sector. This included organisations such as the British Urban Regeneration Association (BURA), Urban Forum, and the Community Development Foundation, three organisations that might have expected to be at the heart of any plans for realising a Big Society in which community participation was a central element.

It is during times of economic hardship poorer neighbourhoods need more assistance and support from the government, not less.[849] The message that communities 'must do more with less' does not work for the millions already living below the breadline. Welfare reform, the proliferation of zero-hour contracts and wholescale cuts to local services have had a considerable impact on many of the most vulnerable in the country.[850] While the government's message has been that collective effort, hard-work and reciprocity will build a bigger, better society; this does not marry with the experiences of communities where record numbers of working households are now living in poverty.[851] The expectation that communities should be doing more at the same time many are suffering more than ever is at great odds with the community idyll conjured by the Big Society rhetoric.

6.6 Conclusion

As this chapter has demonstrated the period 2010-2015 under the Coalition government saw similarities in rhetoric to New Labour around the role of citizens and participatory practices at the community level, but distinct differences in the

[848] Fitzgerald, A., Lupton R., and Brady, A. M., *Hard Times, New Directions? The Impact of the Local Government Spending Cuts in Three Deprived Neighbourhoods of London*, Social Policy in a Cold Climate Working Paper 9, (Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), 2014) (Online) Available at: < http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/spcc/wp09.pdf?> Last accessed: 25th August 2016;
Hastings, A., Bailey, N., Besemer, K., Bramley, G., Gannon M. and Watkins, D., *Coping with the Cuts? Local Government and Poorer Communities*, (JRF, 2013). (Online) Available at: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/local-government-communities-full.pdf > Last accessed: 25th August 2019.

[849] R. Tunstall, *Communities in Recession: The Impact on Deprived Neighbourhoods*, (JRF, 2009) (Online) Available at: https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/communities-recession-impact-deprived-neighbourhoods> Last accessed: 22nd August 2019.

[850] Beatty, C. and Fothergill, S., *Hitting the Poorest Places Hardest: The Local and Regional Impact of Welfare Reform,* (Centre for Regional and Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University, 2013). (Online) Available at: <http://www4.shu.ac.uk/research/cresr/sites/shu.ac.uk/files/hitting-poorest-places-hardest_0.pdf> Last accessed: 23rd March 2016.

[851] T. MacInnes, A. Tinson, C. Hughes, T. Barry-Born and H. Aldridge, *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2015,* (JRF, 2015) (Online) Available at: < https://www.jrf.org.uk/mpse-2015> Last accessed: 23rd March 2018, 28-30.

mechanisms the government employed for promoting this. Plans for the 'Big Society' were full of the language of participatory and empowering community involvement, but once again the reality and rhetoric did not always marry.

Speeches and policy documents accompanying the announcement of the Localism Act 2011 reflected an 'invitation' to join previously 'closed spaces' of governance: for communities this was promoted through new 'rights' to engage with local authorities and to take the lead in shaping development and service delivery, and for local authorities the 'general power of competency' offered a promise to allow councils to make decisions and conduct activities that had potentially been out of reach.[852] The new community rights and accompanying neighbourhood planning provisions have proved popular in some areas, but complex to implement.[853] Despite the message that communities will be able to decide what goes where within their communities, the reality is a far more nuanced role for citizens, with a number of administrative and consultative requirements to navigate at the local level, coupled with requirements that any proposals put forward accord with pre-agreed local authority plans, as well as national planning commitments and priorities. Furthermore, the Secretary of State retains significant power to approve proposals put forward under neighbourhood planning and requests to exercise the rights to 'bid', 'buy' and 'challenge'.[854]

As this chapter has shown, the Coalition's stance was not to prescribe what or if regeneration takes place, nor where it is targeted.[855] Accordingly, take-up of the new rights and planning opportunities has been lower in the most deprived parts of the country, with research by Parker and Salter demonstrating that the most deprived areas in the country have fewer forums available to take forward neighbourhood plans, and where plans have been submitted poorer areas have a significantly lower success rate than the more affluent parts of the country.[856] Substantiating concerns raised by Stanton that opportunities presented by the Localism Act would pass the poorest areas of the country by, reinforcing the status quo or worse widening the socioeconomic divide between England's more affluent areas and the poorest communities.[857]

Relatedly, Localism and programmes introduced under the banner of the 'Big Society' cannot be considered in isolation from the public sector cuts imposed as part of central government's efforts to rebalance the economy. The impact of

[852] D. Cameron, (speech) *The Big Society: The Hugo Young Lecture,* 10 November 2009, (2009) (Online) Available at: <https://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601246> Last accessed: 25th September 2019; DCLG, *A Plain English Guide to the Localism Act,* (DCLG, 2011).

[853] G. Parker and K. Salter, 'Five years of Neighbourhood Planning. A Review of Take-up and Distribution', (2016) 85(5) *Town and Country Planning*, 181-188.

[854] J. Stanton, 'The Big Society and Community Development: Neighbourhood Planning Under the Localism Act', (2014) 16(164) *Environmental Law Review*, 262-276.

[855] DCLG, *Regeneration to Enable Growth: What the Government Is Doing in Support of Community-Led Regeneration*, (DCLG, 2010).

[856] G. Parker and K. Salter, 'Taking Stock of Neighbourhood Planning in England 2011–2016', (2017) 32(4) *Planning Practice & Research,* 478-490.

[857] J. Stanton, 'The Big Society and Community Development: Neighbourhood Planning Under the Localism Act', (2014) 16(164) *Environmental Law Review*, 262-276.

austerity has been disproportionately felt in deprived parts of the country, impacting employment prospects, placing increased strain on local authorities, and in many cases stripping away the community and voluntary organisations that provide the social safety net in poorer neighbourhoods.[858] This in turn limits the resources that communities and local stakeholders have to pursue, support and lead community-level change. Expecting people to do more at a time when they have less, with working households living under the poverty line, points to failings of the Big Society vision and adds weight to arguments that the Big Society was a mask for significant cuts and advancing a neoliberal agenda. Equitable access to resources, support and guidance are required if deprived neighbourhoods are to be genuinely enabled to take advantage of opportunities presented by the Localism Act and the government's 'toolkit' for community-led regeneration.[859] Communities also need to be afforded sufficient time to organise and assemble their plans. The reality is that most communities will require some form of assistance from experts in planning and project management if they are to meet the necessary planning provisions. Such expertise will not always reside within the community, meaning groups will have to incur considerable costs to ensure their visions are realised and that the plans meet with central and local requirements. Early indications are that the support needed and the support available have not aligned to date: funding available is insufficient for the scale of the task at hand and particularly given the limited window within which communities have to act; and while local authorities have a duty to support neighbourhood forums, this does not extend to a fiscal responsibility.[860] Under a continued programme of austerity, it is difficult to see where this support will come from.

This chapter also looked at the early findings of the Community Organisers programme - the coalition's most concerted attempt to catalyse community participation in deprived urban areas. As chapter seven will show, American interviewees displayed surprise and some contempt at the idea of a government-led effort to promote and grow and movement of community organisers – with one participant describing the idea as an '*oxymoron'*.[861] Research into the programme so far suggests this was a fair assessment, with Trainee Community Organisers (TCOs) significantly improving community engagement within their areas but finding their roles hampered once again by the design and deployment of the programme.[862] In theory the Community Organisers programme represents a progressive approach to diagnosing local problems and building local movements for social action, drawing on methods and ideas from some of the most prominent

[858] D. Clifford, 'Charitable Organisations, the Great Recession and the Age of Austerity: Longitudinal Evidence for England and Wales', (2017) 46 *Journal of Social Policy,* 1-30.

[859] K. Garthwaite, ''I Feel I'm Giving Something Back to Society': Constructing the 'Active Citizen' and Responsibilising Foodbank Use', (2017) 16(2) *Social Policy and Society,* 283-292.

[860] G. Parker, 'The Take-up of Neighbourhood Planning in England 2011-2015: Working Paper in Real Estate and Planning', (2015) Real *Estate and Planning*, University of Reading (Online) Available at: <http://centaur.reading.ac.uk/43545/> Last accessed: 28th August 2019.

[861] Clarence, Director Near West Side Community Development Corporation.

[862] L. Grimshaw, L. Mates and A. Reynolds, 'The Challenges and Contradictions of State-Funded Community Organizing', (2018) *Community Development Journal,* 1-18.

theorists and activities in the fields of community development and participatory theory.[863] However, early accounts suggest the delivery is somewhat muddled. Rather than replicating the radical roots, a more 'moderate model' of organising has been adopted, with a number of targets linked to community engagement, projects generated, and new partnerships formed influencing the role of TCO's.[864] In a decision that seems somewhat at odds with community organising principles and the principles of socially sustainable regeneration - particularly given the TCO role is only secured for one year - is the requirement that TCO's operate outside of existing local partnerships and power structures. Unsurprisingly this has stirred tensions in host areas and created further suspicion about the motivations underpinning the programme.[865] It is still early days and government continues to review and revise the Community Organisers Programme[866], but early findings suggest scepticism of government's attempt to facilitate and replicate bottom-up movements, both through this programme and promotion of the Big Society are somewhat justified.

It is submitted that a key failing of the policy process across both governments is the level of engagement with communities during the early stages of policy or programme design and consultation. Of all the programmes, legal rights and funding streams considered throughout this thesis - there is little evidence that the programmes have been devised with communities or based around needs and wants identified by the community themselves. Interventions may be presented as being *for* the community, but they have not been devised *by* them. Which begs the question, are the new opportunities and powers communities are being 'invited' to draw on those that the community want or have shown willing to take on? Therefore, representing a government response to the desires of the electorate and to a genuine commitment to open previously 'closed' spaces of governance, or alternatively are these responsibilities the government is keen to relinquish control of as part of the government's plans to reduce reliance on the state. The latter would suggest that the localist programme is less about community empowerment and more about utilising the power of the state to engineer new forms of governance that are presented as progressive for the community but further serve to maintain their control of the sector – Garthwaite's work on foodbanks and several minister's assertions that they represent the Big Society in action suggests evidence of this.[867]

[863] The programme was said to be based on the organising principles of American community organisers Saul Alinsky and Ed Chambers, and the advocate of critical pedagogy Brazilian educational theorist Paulo Freire; L. Grimshaw, L. Mates and A. Reynolds, 'The Challenges and Contradictions of State-Funded Community Organizing', (2018) *Community Development Journal,* 1-18. S. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*, (Vintage Books, 1971); P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* (Penguin, 1972/1996)

[864] R. Fisher and K. Dimberg, 'The Community Organisers Programme in England', (2016) 21(4) *Journal of Community Practice*, 94-108.

[865] J. Fisher, R. Lawthom and C. Kagan, 'Delivering on the Big Society? Tensions in Hosting Community Organisers', (2016) 31(4) *Local Economy*, 502-517.

[866] A. Reynolds and L. Grimshaw, 'Sustainability in community organizing: lessons from the Community Organisers Programme in England (2011 – 2015)', (2019) *Sustainable Communities Review,* (Online) Available at: <http://scrjournal.org/SCR%20Spring%202019/Reynolds_Grimshaw.pdf> Last accessed: 25th October 2019.

[867] K. Garthwaite, ''I Feel I'm Giving Something Back to Society': Constructing the 'Active Citizen' and Responsibilising Foodbank Use', (2017) 16(2) *Social Policy and Society,* 283.

Having examined, compared and contrasted eighteen years of English regeneration practice the following chapter moves on to examine this in comparison to American approaches to community development, given the link between English and American social policy established in earlier chapters.

Chapter Seven: Learning from American Approaches to Community-led Regeneration

7.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters brought together findings from eighteen years of government-led community regeneration practice in England, arguing that while there have been some successes in instilling the principles of community participation in regeneration policy and delivery during this time, there is still much to be done if regeneration practice is to match the localist rhetoric of government. These chapters also identified a number of systematic failures that have inhibited the success of programmes yet continue to be replicated in the design and implementation of policies that seek to enhance sustainable community development. This highlights a need to modify approaches to enabling and financing community-led regeneration in England. As chapter two demonstrated, American approaches to tackling social problems are often cited in speeches, government research, and programmes in England as a marker of best practice to aspire to.[868] With this in mind, this chapter pulls together findings from interviews with community organisers, local officials and academics conducted in the USA.[869]

The chapter begins by drawing together the participants' experiences and perceptions of government-led community regeneration in the United States, a concept that appeared to be alien to some, and thought of as a hindrance by others. It then goes on to discuss participant perceptions of the conditions, support and action needed to enable successful community organisation and the conditions that need to be in place for it to thrive, and to achieve sustainable community development. As with previous chapters, excerpts from interviews with participants will be used throughout to evidence findings and supporting evidence from wider literature will also be drawn upon to emphasise points. The chapter then concludes with a discussion of the implications of these findings and their relevance to English policy design and development. To maintain the comparative narrative, the insights and experiences shared will, at times, be cross-referenced with the English experience set out in previous chapters.

What this chapter, and overall thesis, do not attempt to do is provide a detailed historical account of American regeneration practice or policy.[870] Nor does it claim that the insights gleaned and shared here are fully representative of community development policy and practice across the United States. The findings shared here are drawn from nine interviews

[868] N. Rose, 'Community, Citizenship, and the Third Way' (2000) 43(9) *American Behavioral Scientist*, 1395-1411; A. Etzioni, *The Third Way to a Good Society*, (Demos, 2000); A. Daguerre, 'Importing Workfare: Policy Transfer of Social and Labour Market Policies from the USA to Britain Under New Labour', (2004) 38(1) *Social Policy & Administration*, 41-56; A. Jonas and K. Ward, 'A World Of Regionalisms? Towards a US-UK Urban and Regional Policy Framework Comparison', (2002) 24 (4) *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 337-401.

[869] A profile of each of the organisations visited is included in Appendix Three.

[870] More commonly referred to as 'revitalization', 'community development' or 'community organizing' in the US.

conducted with representatives from a range of public, third sector and community organisations from three US cities (Chicago, Washington DC and New York City), who were each chosen on account of their many years of experience in the sector and the variety of insights they could offer. It is submitted that there is valuable learning to be taken from these interviews and from the related literature, but this is accompanied with the caveat and awareness that any attempt to replicate policy and approaches from communities, sectors or countries should be made with some caution and due consideration of the local social, economic, political and environmental conditions of the country, city or community providing the inspiration.[871]

Figure 9 below provides an overview of the individuals and organisations that participated in this study, grouping them into three categories: 'community organisations', 'local intermediaries' and 'public sector'. The process of selecting and contacting participants has been discussed in chapter four, while an overview of the history, remit and activities of each is provided in Appendix One. As with the interviews conducted in England, names have been changed as an ethical precaution.

Grouping	**Interviewee(s) and Organisations**	**Common characteristics**
Community Organisations	Daniel (Resource Organizer), Organizing Neighbourhood Equity DC (ONE DC), Washington DC. William (CEO), Mount Hope Housing Company Inc, New York Clarence (Executive Director) and Mariana (New Communities Program Director), Near West Side Community Development Corporation (NWS), Chicago.	Purpose: Developed by and for the community. Grassroots community organisations, responsible for the building and upkeep of social housing and a range of associated community investment programmes. Not-for-profit, any profits to be reinvested in the community. Funding: Combination of grant and foundation funding; membership dues; self-generated income and some state and federal funding.

[871] C. Twelvetrees, *Organizing for Neighbourhood Development: A Comparative Study of Community Based Development Organizations,* Second Edition, (Ashgate, 1996), xi.

Local Intermediaries	Jane, (Director of the Community and Economic Development Law Clinic (CEDLC)), American University Washington College of Law, Washington DC. Laverne (Senior Program Officer), Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), Chicago. Anita (Senior Associate), Manpower Demonstration Research Centre (MDRC); New York. Benjamin (Co-Director), Nathalie P. Voorhees Centre for Neighbourhood and Community Improvement, The University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago.	Purpose: A variety of purposes but all sought to provide guidance and support to community organisations, acting as something of a locally trusted organisation. Resource support included strategic guidance, funding, volunteer/pro-bono support; research and evaluation; and local capacity building. Funding: a combination of grant and foundation funding; student fees; donations, self-generated income and some state and federal funding.
Public Sector	Carin (Chief Service Officer), One Good Deed Chicago, Chicago. Matt (Director of Planning and Development), Harlem Community Development Corporation, New York.	Purpose: Organisations that are owned and operated by the state government with the purpose of the upkeep of their locality and to provide services for the citizens living within it. Not-for-profit. Funding: a combination of a range of taxes, funding from state and federal government.

Figure 9 Overview of US research participants

7.2 The top-down, bottom-up debate in the USA

At the time of the research trip to the United States the concept of community organising was also having something of a resurgence following Barack Obama's 2008 presidential election. Obama's successful 2008 'Obama for America' presidential campaign drew heavily on his past experience as a community organiser in Chicago and was heralded for the way in which it combined online engagement and community organising techniques to galvanise first-time voters.[872] Following Obama's inauguration an offshoot organisation 'Organizing for America' was formed which sought to address political apathy, promote grassroots activism and motivate followers to support the legislative goals of the Obama administration.[873] In addition Obama advocated for and signed into law the 'Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act 2009' – legislation that sought to increase levels of volunteering and civic service in the United States, particularly among younger people, older people and ethnic minorities, who were all statistically less likely to volunteer.[874] The Act, an amendment to the National Service Act 1990, would provide funding for training and 'service-learning programmes' alongside proposals to fund paid organisers and retirees to deliver the programme, and was:

> *...enacted to encourage citizens of the United States, regardless of age, income, geographic location, or disability, to engage in full-time or part-time national service, to expand and strengthen service-learning programs through year-round opportunities, including opportunities during the summer months, to improve the education of children and youth and to maximise the benefits of national community service, in order to renew the ethic of civic responsibility and the spirit of community for children and youth throughout the United States, and to increase service opportunities for the Nation's retiring professionals*.

All of which bears a striking resemblance to initiatives announced under the banner of the 'Big Society' and that were announced alongside the passing of the Localism Act 2011, discussed in the previous chapter. The influence of Obama's

[872] R. Stoecker, 'Community Organizing and Social Change', (2009) 8(1) *Contexts*, 20–25; S.B Hyatt, 'The Obama Victory, Asset-Based Development and the Re-Politicization of Community Organizing', (2008) 11(2) *North American Dialogue,* 17-26; M. Ganz, 'Organizing Obama: Campaign, Organization, Movement', *In the Proceedings of the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting San Francisco, CA, August 8-11, 2009*, (Online) Available at: https://dash.harvard.edu/handle/1/27306258 Last accessed: 14th October 2019; Tattersall, A., 'The Global Spread of Community Organizing: How 'Alinsky-Style' Community Organizing Travelled to Australia and what we Learnt?', (2015) 50(3) *Community Development Journal,* 380-396.

[873] S.M. Milkis and J. York, 'Managing Alone: Barack Obama, Organizing for Action, and Policy Advocacy in the Digital Era', *APSA 2014 Annual Meeting Paper* (Online) Available at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2485297 Last accessed: 14th October 2019; M. Ganz, 'Organizing Obama: Campaign, Organization, Movement', *In the Proceedings of the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting San Francisco, CA, August 8-11, 2009*, (Online) Available at: https://dash.harvard.edu/handle/1/27306258 Last accessed: 14th October 2019; C. Shannahan, *A Theology of Community Organising: Power to the People,* (Routledge, 2014), 23.

[874] R. Nesbit and J.L. Brudney, 'Projections and Policies for Volunteer Programs: The Implications ofthe Serve America Act for Volunteer Diversity and Management', (2013) 24(1) *Nonprofit Management & Leadership,* 3-21; R. Nesbit and J.L. Brudney, 'At Your Service? Volunteering and National Service in 2020', (2010) 70(1) *Public Administration Review',* S107-S113.

campaign style and policy ideas, on the campaign and subsequent manifesto of the Conservatives under David Cameron did not go unnoticed by the press and scholarly community,[875] lending further support to the evidence of transatlantic flow of policy and programme ideas.[876] The visit was therefore a timely one, with a primary aim to learn from those involved in delivering or supporting grassroots community action in the US, an approach which political commentators and scholars, amongst them Bruce Katz and Mandeep Hothi, have argued the UK should aspire to.[877]

Interviews with organisers and practitioners in the USA revealed a similar scepticism about government-funded community organising, as had been the response from several of the UK-based interviewees, a view that was perhaps not surprising given what American academic Akwugo Emejulu refers to as '*most Americans' hostility to 'the government' and its role in individual and public life'*.[878] The Directors of all three of the Community Development Corporations (CDCs) involved in the research questioned the sincerity of this government rhetoric and reported seeing little change or impact in their own operating environment (i.e. the neighbourhoods and communities they served) despite these aforementioned plans from the Obama administration being proposed two years earlier. Interviews revealed an air of suspicion over the notion of government-led community development programmes with one participant describing any government-led scheme to encourage community organising as an '*oxymoron*', corroborating the hypothesis set out in the opening chapter.[879] Indeed the general consensus amongst CDC participants was that while moves towards greater community participation at the local level should be encouraged, the involvement of government in the selection, training and deployment of organisers would only result in suspicion amongst residents in their communities and the likely

[875] Bunyan, P., 'Partnership, the Big Society and Community Organizing: Between Romanticizing, Problematizing and Politicizing Community', (2013) 48 (1) *Community Development Journal,* 119-133; A. Mycock and J. Tonge, 'A Big Idea for the Big Society? The Advent of National Citizen Service', (2011) 82(1) *The Political Quaterly,* 56-66; D. Wring and S. Ward, 'The Media and the 2010 Campaign: the Television Election?', (2010) 63(4) *Parliamentary Affairs*, 802–817; G. Rayner, 'General Election 2010: Is David Cameron trying to be the British Barack Obama?', *The Telegraph Online* 8th April 2010 (Online) Available at: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/election-2010/7564021/General-Election-2010-Is-David-Cameron-trying-to-be-the-BritishBarack-Obama.html Last accessed: 14th October 2019; J. Buggani, 'David Cameron's American Dream', *The Guardian Online* 7th April 2010 (Online) Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/apr/07/david-cameron-political-speeches Last accessed: 14th October 2019.

[876] For example, see: T. Clark, R.D. Putnam and E. Fieldhouse, *The Age of Obama: The Changing Place of Minorities in British and American Society,* (Manchester University Press, 2010); A. Deacon, 'Learning from the US? The Influence of American Ideas Upon 'New Labour' Thinking on Welfare Reform', (2000) 28(1) *Policy & Politics*, 5-18; C. Annesley, 'Americanised and Europeanised: UK Social Policy Since 1997', (2003) 5(2) *British Journal of Politics and International Relations,* 143-165; A. Daguerre and P. Taylor-Gooby, 'Neglecting Europe: Explaining the Predominance of American Ideas in New Labour's Welfare Policies Since 1997', (2004) 14(1) *Journal of European Social Policy,* 25-39; S. Gullino, 'Mixed Communities as a Means of Achieving Sustainable Communities: A Comparison Between US Experiences and UK Policy Intentions', (2008) 23(3) *Local Economy*, 127-35.

[877] B. Katz, *Neighbourhoods of Choice and Connection: The Evolution of American Neighbourhood Policy and what it Means for the United Kingdom*, (JRF, 2004); B. Katz and J. Novak, *The New Localism: How Cities Can Thrive in the Age of Populism,* (Brookings Institute Press, 2018); M. Hothi, *Growing Community Organising,* (The Young Foundation, 2013); D. Cameron, 'Speech on the Big Society: Transcript of a speech by the Prime Minister on the Big Society', 19 July 2010' (2010) <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/big-society-speech/> accessed 11th April 2019; E. King, L. Roberts, and M. Toynbee, *The New 'Neighbourhood Army': the Role of Community Organising in the Big Society,* (OPM, 2010). Also see: P. Bunyan, 'Broad-based Organizing in the UK: Reasserting the Centrality of Political Activity in Community Development', (2010) 45(1) *Community Development Journal,* 111-127.

[878] A. Emejulu, 'Searching for the State and the Market in American Community Development: Reflections on Editing Community Development in the Steel City', (2013) 48(1) *Community Development Journal*, 158–162.

[879] Interview with Clarence, Director of Near West Side Community Development Corporation (CDC).

continuation of government ideals being forced upon communities - ultimately resulting in a lack of take-up by residents, particularly if the appointed community organisers came from outside of the community, as was the case in some Community Organisers Programme areas. According to Clarence, founder and director of Near West Side CDC (NWS), organisers from outside the community:

> *They don't stand a chance. You can't just waltz into a community and expect people to follow you, instantly people will suspect you.*[880]

This echoes findings of the evaluations of England's Community Organisers programme and the evaluations of neighbourhood renewal activities under New Labour discussed in the previous chapters which cited the unwillingness of some local people to engage with the programme, linking this to issues of 'consultation fatigue' and suspicion of the government's intentions.[881] Interestingly, Clarence went on to liken the English Community Organiser programme to a historical ploy in the USA where Peace Corps volunteers were actually recruits for the CIA, reporting back to the government on community activities at home and abroad - a statement he would go on to claim was a '*fact'*. There is no reliable evidence to substantiate this claim, but the claim in itself is of interest as it points to a level of deep-seated distrust in government and their representatives at the grassroots level in North West Side. A similar picture of distrust emerged in all of the interviews with grassroots organisations. Such a view is an example of the 'hidden' levels of power or hegemony that can permeate communities, and that communities might find very difficult to move on from - presenting challenges for any intermediary or government representative hoping to engage. Ultimately, such hostility will limit the potential for meaningful engagement or at the least, require considerable time and effort on the part of the organiser to convince the community that they do not have an ulterior motive for assisting them. Despite receiving a '*small proportion'* of government funding to support the development of social housing in their area, Clarence was dubious of any programme that intended to stimulate community organising, contending that groups '*need to grow and emerge from within the community ... as do community organisers*'.[882] This was an assessment shared by Benjamin, co-Director of the Nathalie P. Voorhees Centre for Neighbourhood and Community Improvement, part of the University of Illinois at Chicago, who stated:

> *The start of community organising cannot be top-down; the moral authority, the moral strength for communities, comes from trying to do things for themselves; only then will they work for it.*[883]

880 Interview with Clarence, Director of Near West Side Community Development Corporation (CDC).
881 D. Cameron and K. Rennick, *Community Organisers Programme Evaluation Summary Report*, (Ipsos MORI, 2015); DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Local Research Project*, (DCLG, 2010), 39.
882 Interview with Clarence, Director of Near West Side Community Development Corporation (CDC), Chicago.
883 Interview with Benjamin, co-Director of the Nathalie P. Voorhees Centre for Neighbourhood and Community Improvement, Illinois.

Indeed, the histories of all of the community organisations the interviewees represented were characterised by 'bottom-up' organising in response to issues that their neighbourhoods had faced, often in response to 'top-down' actions that were negatively impacting on the community. For ONE DC and Mount Hope Housing, their movements were born out of frustrations with declining conditions in housing-stock and government disinvestment in their areas, linked to 'white-flight' and a proliferation of antisocial behaviour blighting the community.[884] In a similar vein, the catalyst for the formation of Near West Side was the approval of proposals to build a new sports stadium for the state's biggest American football team, the Chicago Bears, which would have obliterated the community.

Relatedly, William CEO of Mount Hope told the compelling story of the formation of the community organisation he now leads. Located in the North West area of the Bronx district of New York, Mount Hope, like several inner-city areas within the USA in the late 1970s-early 1980s,[885] had fallen on hard times: plagued by high crime rates, drugs, gangs and a '*lack of participation in mainstream economics*' as William would term it. All of which had contributed to '*white-flight*' from the area and the departure of '*middle-income families*' that had been an important part of the community. According to William, at Mount Hope's lowest point landlords had taken to setting fire to their buildings in the neighbourhood because the insurance compensation would be substantially more than any rental or resale earnings landlords could leverage from the building. This resulted in a '*vicious cycle'* of decline with antisocial problems and worklessness rising as more people left the area, meaning the value of properties dropped even further. Many buildings fell into disrepair, leading to local government foreclosure as the municipal government was '*unable, or unwilling*,' to invest in the area.[886] According to William, the area had essentially become a '*ghetto … impacting on the self-worth of those that had remained.'*[887] However, a small number of committed residents were unprepared to accept the decline of their community and self-organised to address the problem. After some false starts, they identified a once public park that had in recent years become the territory of local gangs and drug dealers. They began to renovate the park, planting flowers and taking efforts to make it appear again. '*Stand-offs*' with local gangs followed, but the local activists remained committed to their cause and over time the park was reclaimed by those that had remained in the community. This '*small victory'* as William termed it, was the catalyst for what would become Mount Hope Housing Company Inc. According to William, having successfully brought the park back into communal use, the group then turned their attention to the desolate housing that had come to characterise

[884] Interview with William, CEO, Mount Hope Housing, Bronx, New York - "White flight" refers to the large-scale exodus of middle-income individuals and families, often white, from a community, causing further decline to the area through the impact this has on the local economy and housing prices.

[885] Problems that continues to blight many American urban areas today. See: S. Musterd and W. Ostendorf (eds.), *Urban Segregation and the Welfare State: Inequality and Exclusion in Western Cities*, (Routledge, 2013); J. Peck, 'Austerity Urbanism: American Cities Under Extreme Economy', (2012) 16(6) *City*, 626-655.

[886] Interview with William, CEO, Mount Hope Housing.

[887] Interview with William, CEO, Mount Hope Housing.

blocks of their neighbourhood. Some thirty years later the organisation manages thirty-two buildings containing more than 1,200 affordable homes and in addition they run a diverse range of employment, financial literacy, and health and wellbeing programmes for local people, demonstrating a continued commitment to the regeneration of the area and to building the capacity of local people.[888] This account is pertinent for a number of reasons, it supports the 'broken windows theory' of Wilson and Kellin, who argued that visible signs of decline or crime within a neighbourhood create an environment in which further crime or disorder takes place, becoming increasingly serious. Broken windows are seen as being symbolic of a communities lack of care for their environment, and therefore the perception is those living there will be less likely to be resistant to disorder.[889] The theory has also helped to stimulate debate about what communities can do to counter this decline, with a number of other accounts across the literature demonstrating and commending the achievements of bottom-up community organising and communities, often in the face of such adversity.[890]

The actions of the Mount Hope community are a prime example of a community that has 'created', or 'claimed' space and demonstrates the power of communities coming together to act without government intervention, and often in response to it, or because of a lack of it. In many ways, it epitomises Big Society or 'active citizenship' in practice. Similar stories were recounted by other community organisations visited over the course of the research trip, with all shared stories of their history being rooted in response to social welfare issues that were not being addressed by the state. Relatedly, all were in some degree vocal of their disdain or frustrations with local government, with varying degrees of diplomacy, and by the accounts given it would seem like these are long-running tensions. The representatives of Near West Side talked of having tried to work with local government in the past but were presented with obstacles and grown tired of attempting to work with the government. Clarence, who would use a number of analogies, talked of how the community took it upon themselves to organise housing and community services because the municipal government was not investing in their area:

> *We were hungry, so we went out to serve ourselves, but it shouldn't have got to that point. A community shouldn't be left to starve then go and have to find its own food.*[891]

Earlier chapters talked of consultation and programme 'fatigue' being a regular and understandable occurrence in deprived communities, and a similar wariness was demonstrated by participants at the community level in the US who talked of

888 See Mount Hope Housing, 'Website' *(Mount Hope Housing)* (Online) Available at: <http://www.mounthopehousing.org> Last accessed: 22nd October 2019.

889 J.Q. Wilson and G.L. Kelling, 'Broken Windows', (1982) March *The Atlantic,* available at: <http://www.manhattan-institute.org/pdf/_atlantic_monthly-broken_windows.pdf> Last accessed 30th October 2016.

890 R.D. Putnam and L.M. Feldstein, *Better Together: Restoring the American Community,* (Simon and Schuster, 2003); J. Diers , *Neighbor Power: Building Community the Seattle Way,* (University of Washington Post, 2003).

891 Clarence, Director of Near West Side Community Development Corporation (CDC), Chicago.

finding local authorities largely unresponsive to their community's needs, yet at the same time, all recognised the need to remain on good terms with government officials, given their operating model: all three community organisations were involved in the management and building of affordable homes, and therefore recognised the importance of maintaining cordial relationships with local government and by extension staff of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), however, this relationship did not extend beyond planning and housing, with all three resourcing their social programmes through other means. One participant spoke of actively avoiding political alliances at the local level in order to maintain independence, seeing his organisation's role as positioned opposite government, not within it - again reflecting an inherent suspicion of government, but one that is understandable given some of the challenges groups had to overcome in decades past.

Having adopted a semi-structured approach to interviews, the recession and austerity inevitably came up in conversation. Like those working in the community and regeneration sectors in England, the groups were in the process of considering what public sector retrenchment was going to mean for their organisations and communities. Aware that the research trip was to better understand best practice in community development in response to changes in the political landscape in England, all participants demonstrated some prior awareness of the relatively recent change in government in England and the austerity measures that were beginning to be deployed. This was something that participants could relate to as they felt the impact of the global recession on their own country, city and neighbourhoods. Participants in Chicago, in particular, had much to say on the subject of austerity as their city had fallen into considerable debt and there was much discussion that this could ultimately lead to the city declaring bankruptcy, as Detroit was on the verge of doing at the time, and did so in 2013.[892] Thankfully, at the time of writing these concerns have been allayed.

Notably it was representatives from the community organisations and university-led intermediaries that expressed the greatest misgivings over government in both countries setting our proposals to increase civic action while at the same time embarking on a considerable scaling back of the state. As a result, they showed little optimism for some of the proposals put forward by the Coalition, such as the Community Organisers programme and the mooted 'Big Society Day', as they did for initiatives in their own cities promoting greater volunteering. While there was some conformity in suspicions about both governments' intentions (the general consensus being this was a cost-saving measure), there was a divergence in opinion over the impact austerity would have on realising the stated proposals. Mariana, a Programme Director for Near West Side, was adamant that communities did not need a lot of money to organise, and that large funded programmes, like the area-based programmes of New Labour or the New Communities programme her area in Chicago was involved in, can

[892] M. Davy and M.W. Walsh, 'Billions in Debt, Detroit Tumbles Into Insolvency', July 18, 2013 *New York Times,* available at: <http://www.visam.ch/uploads/allegati/Files/Billions%20in%20Debt,%20Detroit%20Tumbles%20Into%20Insolvency%20-%20NYTimes_com.pdf> Last accessed: 30th October 2016.

hinder the organic process of grassroots action. While Benjamin felt a programme to encourage civic activism would only work '*if communities are given the resources and knowledge to facilitate any change ... and truly believe that what they are working for is to their own benefit*.'[893] Consistent with the view of practitioners interviewed in the UK and findings discussed in previous chapters, Benjamin stressed the need for '*the right enabling space for community development'*, which for Benjamin includes sufficient time for groups to organise and agree on a way forward, training or support to help them navigate local institutions and processes, and a genuine opportunity to influence decision-making. Calls for similar 'conditions' were voiced by a number of the participants both in the UK and the US, as discussed in the previous chapters. But others would also corroborate Mariana's view that a lot can be done on limited budgets, citing their own organisations as examples of what can be achieved with limited government support.

Staff at both Local Initiative Support Corporation ('LISC' – a national organisation delivering community development programmes in over thirty-five US Cities who describe themselves as '*America's largest community development support organisation'*[894]) and Manpower Demonstration Research Centre ('MDRC' - '*a non-profit, nonpartisan education and social policy research organisation'*[895]) had different views of government funding and support for community development having been in receipt of federal funding to deliver neighbourhood targeted programmes across the US for over thirty years. Interviews with senior members of LISC and MDRC (who at the time were carrying out a large-scale evaluation of one of LISC's flagship programmes 'The New Communities Program'[896]) spoke of the important role government funding had played in supporting the activities of intermediary organisations like LISC. A significant proportion of LISC's funding had come from HUD and federal programmes such as Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and New Market Tax Credits along with investment from philanthropic foundations, banks and private companies. LISC in turn used this investment to fund an array of programmes spanning housing, employment, education, safety, and health – similar priorities to those set by the government in the English area-based initiatives. Laverne, a Senior Programme Officer at LISC, emphasised the important role government plays in '*partnership'* with funders and investors, and echoing comments from UK practitioner Jim, highlighted the significant role government could play in '*setting the agenda'* and '*incentivising community development*' - these incentives were often financial.[897] Laverne saw LISC's role as helping '*bridge'* the divide between communities and government and funders; agreeing that communities and local agencies are best positioned to understand local need, but sometimes lacking the networks or technical expertise to attract the levels of

[893] Interview with Benjamin, co-Director of the Nathalie P. Voorhees Centre for Neighbourhood and Community Improvement, Illinois

[894] LISC, 'Who we are', (Online) Available at <http://programs.lisc.org/san_diego/who_we_are/index.php> Last accessed: 16th October 2019.

[895] D. Greenberg, N. Verma, K.N. Dilman and R. Chaskin, *Creating a Platform for Sustained Neighbourhood Improvement: Interim Findings from Chicago's New Communities Program*, (MDRC, 2010), 166.

[896] Discussed later in section 7.4

[897] Laverne, Senior Program Officer, LISC.

funding required to carry out their plans, LISC would act as the conduit for this. An approach that echoes Grant's view of the value of organisations and individuals '*working between the gaps*' discussed in chapter five.

7.3 Power and American community development

One of the most striking differences between the interviews with American participants and those with volunteers and practitioners in England was the frequency within which 'power' was raised within the conversation. As this thesis has demonstrated, community development and the regeneration process are awash with power dynamics, and this will be the case in communities around the world. However, there were noticeable discursive differences between the two sets of interviews in the ways that volunteers, practitioners and officers talked about their roles and organisations. In the English interviews participants rarely raised the concept of power themselves, and as discussed in chapter five, some expressed discomfort with the term. In comparison, American participants openly discussed 'power' and the power imbalances that exist between themselves at the community level and government at the municipal, state and national level with little prompt. Community activists like Daniel, Clarence, and Mariana openly talked about their (at times heated) encounters with public and private sector organisations, citing acts of oppression and their own acts of resistance in response in an attempt to readdress power imbalances. While Matt, a Director at the Harlem Community Development Corporation, which he described as an '*intermediary organisation*', spoke of the role his organisation played in helping to address power imbalances by involving local people and businesses in decisions about planning and development, but also recognised the inherent tension in his role as an employee of a city government subsidiary and the power dynamics this creates. Similarly, Carin, Chicago's first 'Chief Service Officer' responsible for coordinating One Good Deed Chicago - a new citywide programme to support volunteering - talked of the '*power of City Hall*' in promoting civic action to citizens and companies, as well as the challenges she was encountering having to repair strained relationships between government and some sections of the community sector, because the '*balance of power*' locally had been '*wrong for some time'*.[898] As discussed in chapter six, this contrasts with the English experience, where despite much talk of 'empowerment' from successive governments, there has been some reluctance to embrace models of community organising and neighbourhood management that so openly debate and challenge 'power' dynamics.

As discussed throughout this thesis, community development at any level is subject to numerous dimensions of powers, not just 'top-down' from government but from across and within the political and social spectrum. All stakeholders spoke of having vested interests, and at times, competing demands on their resources and what they do with them, challenges for any organisation. Even when groups saw their role as being separate to government, they still required funds to support

[898] Interview with Carin, Chief Service Officer, One Good Deed Chicago.

their activities. Philanthropic funding would be a common source of this, and those funders would have their own reporting requirements and performance expectations just as government would. Therefore, still casting communities as agents in an 'invited' space, expected to fulfil the requirements of more powerful funders to maintain their access to that space.

Linked to the discussion of the new 'Community Rights' discussed in the previous chapter; power dynamics came up in the interview with Benjamin as our interview moved on to discuss community-led neighbourhood planning in Chicago. Citing a lack of appetite from state and municipal government to engage the public in planning decisions, but bound by federal requirements, consultations with Chicago's communities, according to Benjamin, were still *'symbolic, rather than substantive*', drawing parallels with the English experience. Continuing this line of inquiry, he went on to discuss how difficult it is for '*communities to come together, or* [for] *the community to engage the bureaucracy and powers ... to be really heard'*, and should they manage to, it was even more difficult to sustain their efforts against what are perceived to be more powerful actors:

> *I mean, there are times when communities we have worked with have wanted to* [challenge planning decisions], *so they try to organise and challenge it. It's not really a lasting kind of thing. As you know, bureaucracies have staying power. They look like they are giving in, but then if the challenge is too much, they are not really giving in, they are just waiting for the right time. Everybody wants to give lip service, that comes into working in planning, but it's very, very, difficult to compete with them; the developers, the bureaucrats, unless you have strong organisations that can mobilise communities. And also, what are the issues to really drive them to do that? So, it's sort of piecemeal. Communities strive to, but I don't know how much one can say that communities are really 'involved' in planning.*[899]

This makes an awareness of power dynamics all the more important and the illustrative example used by Benjamin, depicting an 'invited' space with limited opportunity for community empowerment given the resources and 'visible' power held by the officials over community participants, is a common experience for many communities and community organisations, as has been discussed. A number of similar examples emerged across the interviews, given the semi-structured approach adopted this would usually lead to follow up questions about how do they address these power imbalances and the skills they felt were necessary for community organisers to have if they were to be dealing with power on a regular basis. The need for effective community leadership; an ability to negotiate, and the importance of having a well thought out strategy for action were three themes that consistently emerged from these conversations. The need to understand and be able to address 'power' permeates through all of these considerations. The following sections move on

[899] Interview with Benjamin, co-Director of the Nathalie P. Voorhees Centre for Neighbourhood and Community Improvement, Illinois.

to consider each of these and the important role they play in American community development practice and in doing so addresses the question – what can English policymakers and community development practitioners learn from the American approach? Beginning with a consideration of how participants and their organisations mobilised and sought to empower communities within their cities.

This discussion was set within the context of an issue dominating regeneration debate at the time - the move from the large-scale ABIs of New Labour to the delivery of regeneration activities on a smaller and less centralised scale as envisioned under the Big Society. With this in mind, participants were asked how their organisations, or the community organisations they support, approached the mobilisation of local people for community action. The results were interesting with the majority of participants positioning themselves under one of two schools of thought: i) appealing to the self-interest of an individual, or ii) encouraging individuals to participate by reminding them of their civic duty and responsibility to others.

7.4 Finding "the boogeyman" - self-interest, channeling anger and the importance of "little wins"

Whereas there tended to be some consensus between participants on the majority of questions, there was considerable divergence between participant organisations and their approaches to involving and mobilising communities to support or take part in their activities. For example, Clarence and his team at NWS were steadfast in their belief that the only way to guarantee community action was to appeal to the self-interest of local people, aligning themselves with the school of thought that communities organise in response to a common enemy or threat. As Clarence put it, if communities are to be mobilised in England; '*You need to find a 'boogeyman' – something, or someone, that threatens the community and their way of life*.' In the case of Clarence and his fellow NWS founders, their boogeyman came in the form of the local American football team the 'Chicago Bears' who planned to develop a new stadium in the area that would have displaced 1,500 homes and changed the makeup of the community considerably. In response to this '*attempted land grab*' as Clarence described it, the community rallied together.[900] Through word-of-mouth, they set up meetings and committees and begun a campaign against the proposals. This protest culminated in '*hundreds of residents and a TV crew'* being transported to the then owner of "The Bears" home, where the community proceeded to play out a game of American football on the owner's lawn, while others circulated flyers to the community outlining their own proposals to make this a weekly event, highlighting the weekly disruption proposals for the new stadium would have on their communities. The influence of Alinsky is clear to see here, with the controversial tactics bearing all the hallmarks of the approaches of the Industrial Areas Foundation and other groups Alinsky helped to organise. A number of texts, including Alinsky's own work *Rules*

[900] Interview with Clarence Gates, Director of Near West Side Community Development Corporation (CDC), Chicago.

for Radicals and his friend and colleague journalist Nicholas von Hoffman's biography of Alinsky, detail a wide range of tactics deployed by Alinsky and the groups he supported to attract attention and confront those holding power with their own hypocrisy.[901] Recounting how a black community Alinsky was working with the 1960s could not get adequate refuse collection due to what the city said was 'financial constraints', the community rallied to collect up all the refuse and 'cooperate' with the city by dumping it on the lawn of the area's alderman. Their regular service resumed within forty-eight hours! In other instances the threat of taking such action was enough to elicit change, when Chicago's mayor was slow to respond to issues of building and health and safety violations in public housing within the Woodlawn area the group threatened to unload live rats on the steps of the city hall, this time city hall acted before any action took place.[902] Alinsky would go on to say:

> *Woodlawn is the one black area of Chicago that has never exploded into racial violence, even during the widespread uprisings following Martin Luther King's assassination. The reason isn't that their lives are idyllic, but simply that the people finally have a sense of power and achievement, a feeling that this community is theirs and they're going somewhere with it, however slow and arduous the progress. People burn down their prisons, not their homes.*[903]

North West Side residents achieved similar success: within a week of their action taking place it was announced that the Chicago Bears would be seeking an alternative site, collective community action had altered the local power dynamics, and in Clarence's words '*the boogeyman had gone.*'[904] The efforts of NWS residents, and those of Woodlawn residents and other IAF affiliated groups that came before them, present another example of a community organisation 'claiming' or 'creating space' in response to decisions being enforced on the community from higher levels of power and realms of decision-making that had previously remained 'closed' or 'hidden' to the community.

The notion of appealing to self-interest as a starting point for building collective action arose regularly over the course of the interviews. Community organisers spoke of it as a popular tool for motivating action, or for initial engagement with local people. While the representatives of both One Good Deed Chicago and Harlem CDC cited the need to understand and appeal to the wants and needs of local people, or to offer them causes and opportunities they felt comfortable supporting. Laverne (LISC) and Nandita (MDRC) also spoke of this in the context of the New Communities programme

[901] S. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*, (Vintage Books, 1971); A. Von Hoffman, *Radical: A Portrait of Saul Alinsky*, (Nation Books, 2011).
[902] A. Von Hoffman, *Radical: A Portrait of Saul Alinsky,* (Nation Books, 2011).
[903] Interview by E. Norden, 'Interview with Saul Alinsky: A Candid Conversation with the Feisty Radical Organizer', (1972) *Playboy March 1972* (Online) Available at: http://longmarch.sid-hill.us/alinsky/part11.htm Last accessed: 15th October 2019.
[904] Clarence, Director NWS CDC.

they were both involved in at the time. Through that programme there had been considerable uptake of volunteering and community leadership opportunities around the themes of education, housing and '*social services'*, as well as '*public spaces and arts',* the '*things people really care about*' reflected Laverne. But there had been considerably less interest in projects that had sought to influence public policy or involve residents on neighbourhood boards – as a midpoint review of the programme bore out.[905] Interestingly, in David Cameron's keynote speech at the 2010 Conservative Conference, his first as Prime Minister, he promoted his 'Big Society' vision and called on his party to '*blast through the old system of selfish individualism…*' and in its place *'…create a citizenship that is not simply a transaction in which you put your taxes in and get your services out*', therefore positioning himself and his party against initiatives that appeal to self-interest.[906] This is interesting in light of the decision to commission Locality to deliver the Community Organisers programme as opposed to Citizens UK, whose approach was heavily influenced by the organising principles of Alinsky and the IAF.[907] This also draws parallels with the previous chapter's discussion about the extent to which the types of roles typically offered by area-based and neighbourhood management initiatives actually align with the skills, interests and capacity of many citizens. In the New Deal for Communities and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders take-up of community leadership roles was also low.[908] It is submitted that if the opportunities for participation provided by government do not align in some way to the self-interest of citizens, either through the personal benefits of participation (which can be personal development, or more materialistic) or fail to engage them through a cause, low turnout is always going to be likely.

In interviews with practitioners, and through reviews of the literature, accounts lament the challenge of getting residents '*to think beyond their front door*.'[909] But talking to practitioners in Near West Side, the doorstep is the best place to begin this engagement, understanding what frustrated people about their neighbourhood and using that as the starting point for participation. Door to door 'listening's' were a component of the Community Organisers programme, yet Trainee Community Organisers shared similar concerns that despite considerable engagement, residents weren't thinking big enough, particularly in light of their target to initiate 3-5 local projects.[910] It is submitted these targets created a conflict of interest for TCO's, and replicated accounts provided by Grant and Patrick in chapter five, whereby practitioners were trying to coerce residents into a programme of activity that wasn't necessarily aligned to their self-interest or the things

[905] D. Greenberg, N. Verma, K.N. Dilman and R. Chaskin, *Creating a Platform for Sustained Neighbourhood Improvement: Interim Findings from Chicago's New Communities Program*, (MDRC, 2010), ES-6-8.

[906] D. Cameron, (speech) *David Cameron Speech to the Tory Conference: In Full*, 6th October 2010 (The Guardian, 2010) (Online) Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2010/oct/06/david-cameron-speech-tory conference> Last accessed: 27th October 2016.

[907] R. Fisher and K. Dimberg, 'The Community Organisers Programme in England', (2016) 21(4) *Journal of Community Practice*, 94-108.

[908] DCLG, *Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders: Final Evaluation Report, People, Places, Public Services: Making the Connections*, (DCLG, 2009); DCLG, *Running a Regeneration Programme: The Experiences of Resident Representatives on the Boards of New Deal for Communities Partnerships*, (DCLG, 2010).

[909] Karen, NDC Resident Board Member

[910] L. Grimshaw, L. Mates and A. Reynolds, 'The Challenges and Contradictions of State-Funded Community Organizing', (2018) *Community Development Journal,* 1-18.

they cared about most. Future participatory practice needs to be brave enough to build in time to address the 'street level' problems residents encounter on a daily basis, before asking them to take a role in solving structural challenges affecting their community.

Alongside power imbalances, representatives of the American CDCs were also very comfortable talking about 'anger' and how they use this to mobilise people, channelling the anger for the benefit of the community. Representatives from both Near West Side and ONE DC talked of the important role such anger had played in the formation of their organisations. Linking this to self-interest, they saw their roles as community organisers to confront local people with injustices playing out within their communities, raising awareness, confronting residents with the implications this injustice holds for them and their community, and then encouraging local people to channel this anger in action. On the subject of mobilising communities in the UK, both Daniel and Clarence felt that austerity, which was causing so much concern for those working in the community and social sector, could also serve as the catalyst for poorer communities to mobilise, before going on to acknowledge that this was why state-led community development was an "oxymoron."[911]

> *Now is the time to start community organising, now more than ever. You have got your catalyst, now is the time*. (Daniel) [912]

> *Sounds to me like you guys have found your boogeyman*. (Clarence) [913]

There was more consensus on how to engage people and how to unearth the anger residing within the communities. '*Word-of-mouth*' was unanimously cited as the most effective tool they have to do so:

> *You've got to talk to people. In Chicago you'll be lucky if 5% of people reply to a flyer, you need to go out there and talk to people, tell them how it is, make them see that something needs to be done and they can be the ones to do it.*[914]

Similarly, face-to-face communication was the primary tool of engagement for ONE DC and Mount Hope Housing, who used a combination of door-to-door conversations and hosting and attending community events to attract members and connect with local causes, both also had offices within the areas they service, providing a physical place to engage the community. All maintained an online presence and would use mail and telephone communication, but face-to-face

911 Clarence, Near West Side Community Development Corporation
912 Daniel, ONE DC
913 Clarence, Near West Side Community Development Corporation
914 Clarence, Near West Side Community Development Corporation

communication was consistently cited as the primary and best resource for meeting, listening to, and enthusing people to take action. Again, this marries with the approach employed in the English Community Organisers programme which placed a great deal of importance on talking to community members and conducting 'listenings' to see what issues emerge, however, the time-limited nature of the English model is at odds with the long-term approach adopted by the CDCs involved in this study.

Directors of the two university-affiliated centres also spoke openly of the role both 'anger' and 'injustice' played in inspiring communities to contact them for assistance, with groups often coming to them with cases that reflected an abuse of power that the community felt unable to address on its own. They did not see their role as mobilising communities per se; for Benjamin, they played the role of '*catalyst'*:

> *It is really the communities that can make this happen. What we can do is be a catalyst, be a resource to provide information and to assist in any way that we can to help them do it. That's very important. It probably only takes something, some additional inputs, for that to really get the community mobilised, so we try to play that role as much as we can.*[915]

The inputs being 'informing' groups, educating them about their rights and helping them to understand where they have or have not been wronged in the eyes of the law. Much of the work they did was around helping groups to overcome 'visible' and 'invisible' power dynamics, helping them to '*interpret'* complex contracts or legislation that was presented in such a way to reinforce perceptions of powerholders as experts and the community as lay subjects. Helping groups or individuals to understand rights and responsibilities they did not know they had is another form of empowerment.[916] The use of the word 'interpret' was notable, as this is also how Grant, one of the English community development practitioners described his role in England. Similarly, Patrick another community development practitioner talked of '*working between the cracks'* in communities and '*helping groups to understand they can act.*'[917] Jane, Director of American University's CEDLC spoke of helping communities to understand who the decision-makers and power-holders in a dispute were, and assisting users of their service in developing strategies or courses of action they could employ to navigate imbalances of power. This type of support appeared somewhat missing from the design and support available within the English government-led programmes discussed over the last two chapters. Whilst Locality were tasked with providing 'technical support' to neighbourhood planning groups, this was centred on helping them to understand the processes, legal framework and compliance elements of neighbourhood planning, rather than helping them to think about how they might influence

[915] Benjamin, Nathalie P. Voorhees Centre for Neighbourhood and Community Improvement, Illinois.
[916] P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* (Penguin, 1972/1996)
[917] Patrick, NMP Neighbourhood Manager

powerholders, better involve the community, or use their experience of being involved neighbourhood planning to undertake further community related activity once a plan had been approved. Significant cuts to legal aid budgets and funding to Citizen Advice Bureau services, as well as the closure of organisations like the UK Community Development Foundation has reduced the availability of similar support in England.[918] Equipping communities with information, an understanding of their rights, and providing them with data that supports their stance can be transformative, empowering groups by building their sense of legitimacy and expanding the 'spaces' of power. This in turn increases their agency to exert influence and address stakeholders in a more equalised space. In doing so, they help communities understand where their anger is justified and give them some support to channel this.

Clarence also saw Near West Side's role as a CDC as offering something similar, helping communities to understand that they should be angry about injustices, building up local residents' '*confidence and capacity*' to act, and helping them to see the value of doing so collectively. Offering another analogy, Clarence referred to his love of animal documentaries and likened the struggle towards community organisation as to that of a herd of migrating animals stalling at the bank of a river;

> *Instinctively they know they need to get across the water, but there are always those scenes when they stop and hesitate because of all the things in the water, even though they know getting across means they will survive for generations to come - that's where I see people* [in the community]. *We can do the groundwork, can lead them to a river, but the challenge is getting them to cross. So, we try to get their toes in and test the water so they can see it might be safe to cross.*[919]

As earlier chapters showed, much of the New Labour and Coalition rhetoric was about activating communities who had limited or no history of formal civic organisation, communities that could relate to a scenario such as the one Clarence refers to above. As the previous chapter discussed, the language used often reflects a community as choosing not to act or to participate, giving little consideration to what might be inhibiting their participation. Residents in Near West Side have an organisation they can turn to if they want to challenge something or to pursue a cause and can draw on their experience to help them. English policymakers should not underestimate the importance of local intermediaries that are situated within the community, that have a primary purpose for neighbourhood management and advocating for neighbourhood issues.

[918] A. Reynolds and L. Grimshaw, 'Sustainability in community organizing: lessons from the Community Organisers Programme in England (2011 – 2015)', (2019) *Sustainable Communities Review,* (Online) Available at: <http://scrjournal.org/SCR%20Spring%202019/Reynolds_Grimshaw.pdf> Last accessed: 25th October 2019.

[919] Clarence, Near West Side CDC

Linked to both an appeal to self-interest and to sustaining interest was the importance the community groups placed on building 'little wins' into the community development process:

> *We try to make people understand that it might take five, ten, years to get there, but you need to get to the little wins in order to get to the real systematic wins.*[920]

The concept of 'little wins' is often cited as good practice in the community development literature and almost all of the participants cited the need for 'quick', 'little', 'small' or 'early' -wins in order to raise awareness of their efforts and to enthuse participants about particular causes. In his article *Small Wins: Redefining the Scale of Social Problems,* phycologist Karl Weick lamented how problems of rising crime rates, increasing unemployment or environmental concerns are typically described on a '*massive scale'*:

> *When social problems are described this way, efforts to convey their gravity disable the very resources of thought and action necessary to change them. When the magnitude of problems is scaled upward in the interest of mobilizing action, the quality of thought and action declines, because processes such as frustration, arousal, and helplessness are activated. To recast larger problems into smaller, less arousing problems, people can identify a series of controllable opportunities of modest size that produce visible results and that can be gathered into synoptic solutions.*[921]

Interviewees talked of planning for small wins in all of their actions, these were typically resident-driven, short projects, that encouraged collaborative working and that had some visible outputs. These included clearing up derelict land, a community mural, running a community grants programme and community street parties. None of which were ground-breaking approaches, and all have been put into practice in the UK, it was however interesting to hear how groups built this into all of their actions and struck an interesting parallel to some of the neighbourhood renewal programmes that put considerable pressure on residents to spend and deliver against projects that sought to tackle the '*massive scale'* problems from the outset.[922] As Cytron notes, the value of small wins should not be overlooked, they help to build trust and 'small wins upfront can set the stage for long-lasting and broader change'.[923]. Having considered some of personal 'motivators'

[920] Daniel, One DC CDC

[921] K. Weick, 'Small Wins: Redefining the Scale of Social Problems', (1984) 39(1) *American Psychologist,* 40.

[922] Ibid.

[923] N. Cytron, 'Improving the Outcomes of Place Based Initiatives', (2010) 22 Community Investments, 1, cited in Taylor, M, Buckly, E. and Hennessey, C., *Historical Review of Place-Based Approaches,* (Lankelly Chase, 2017) (Online) Available at: < https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf> Last accessed: 25th September 2019, 51.

American practitioners discussed, attention now turns to an alternate view of organising, which was broad-based and focused on awareness-raising.

7.5 The role of civic education

Daniel, Resource Organiser for ONE DC, the smallest of the organisations that participated in the research said his organisation did not '*believe'* in the more direct, action-based '*Alinsky model*' as Daniel termed it, or the assumption that people *only* participate through self-interest, for Daniel:

> *Things don't ever change in the 'Alinsky model', you deal with what is more immediate, the surplus, but you never get the change that is needed ... what is even more important is bringing people together, systemic conditions, systemic inequities that bring people together.*[924]

The argument here then, is that the 'Alinsky model' to continue the phrase, which was cited by David Cameron and is considered by many to be the foundations of modern community organising, would not be considered sustainable community regeneration, for it is reactive and short-term, rather than addressing systematic problems that serve to oppress communities. Framed within the 'place, space and power' framework, direct action encouraged through the 'Alinsky model' can be effective in 'claiming' or 'creating' a new space for participation, or by forcing an invitation into a previously 'closed' one, but it does not necessarily position the community to stay in that space. It is not a model that promotes sustainability. The effectiveness of the 'Alinsky model' lies in its directness; it is easy for communities and individuals to engage with a single issue and take action as a group if they are inspired to do so. In this instance community organisers present individuals and communities with a problem and they build an action around this problem. Granted it make take some time to plan, and a great deal of time, organisation, and manpower may go into it depending on its scale. But where there is a clear definable target and a clear identifiable outcome, Daniel argues it is much easier to inspire communities around that 'visible' issue than it is to address systemic change. For Daniel, mobilisation around these bigger challenges should come through the use of popular education, and inspiring future community action through linking it to the history of the civil rights movement and what was achieved. Such a view aligns with the Freirean school of thought and raises an interesting proposition about the role of education in inspiring and ingraining civic activity.[925]

924 Daniel, Resource Organizer, ONE DC.
925 P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* (Herder and Herder, 1972).

Paulo Freire argued that social change does not come from organising alone. For Freire if the 'oppressed' were to be freed, education would be the vehicle to do so. Freire argued that all education was political, in so much that '*it either domesticates people, thereby supporting the status quo, or it liberates them to challenge and change the social order*.'[926] For Freire, doing things *for* or *to* marginalised groups rather than *with* deprives those groups of valuable learning opportunities and only serves to reinforce a 'culture of silence'. Power is held by those doing *to* and *for,* with the lay recipient passively accepting their views, actions or instructions as truth. In this way hegemonic views are embedded. However, when individuals gain knowledge it gives them the opportunity '*name and rename their world.*'[927] The promotion of critical thinking, self-awareness and broadening of an individual's worldview are all seen as key to them becoming free from oppression and important to the citizen's development. Whilst Freire's views originated from discussion of the student teacher dynamic, his theories are highly relevant to community development and regeneration practice, encouraging practitioners to think about the way they work and engage with communities, and the extent to which they do *to* or *for* rather than *with* communities. As Freire writes: '*those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly'*.[928]

One Good Deed Chicago also sought to mobilise social action through education and awareness raising. The programme sought to use City Hall's influence to inspire greater civic action, using its communication channels and significant presence to promote greater volunteering across the city (and in doing so ease some of the burdens on the city's public purse given the financial difficulties it was facing). The programme aimed to build on Chicago's long history of civic engagement by '*match-making'* non-profit organisations with willing volunteers and provide capacity building training and tools to ensure that both parties get the most out of the volunteering experience. The programme was built on the premise that there were large parts of the Chicago community who would like to do more in their community, but were deterred because they either felt they lacked skills and time or felt their skills would not be best utilised as it was difficult to find '*meaningful opportunities for participation*' as Carin termed it. The programme aimed to achieve this in two ways; firstly 'matching' willing volunteers to organisations needing their assistance via an online portal and a point of contact for those not comfortable with using their website, in doing so, appealing to the self-interest of volunteers by broadening the range of opportunities available to them, while at the same time connecting them to civic opportunities. Organisations needing assistance and volunteers looking for opportunities list themselves and hope to be matched. The city hosts the website and promotes the scheme across the city but can then take a "light touch" in the matching process. However, Carin stated that connecting volunteers and not-for-profits was '*only a very small piece of the puzzle'*:

926 D. Beck and R. Purcell, *International Community Organising: Taking Power, Making Change*, (The Policy Press, 2013), 186.
927 Ibid, 189.
928 P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* (Herder and Herder, 1972), 60.

The biggest challenge is utilising volunteers properly and keeping them engaged, so they keep coming back. [929]

This is what Carin saw as the most important part of her role having '*Lost count of the number of people who've talked to [*her*] about bad volunteering experiences as their reason for no longer getting involved.'* To counter this Carin and her colleagues set about carrying out '*dig-deep-work*' in non-profits to make sure they know how to use volunteers in the right way', doing so by helping them to establish the skills gaps they have; training them on how to work better with volunteers; supporting and developing them so that they can effectively manage the whole process of working with volunteers and reaping the maximum reward from these partnerships. By working with the not-for-profits receiving volunteers, they are reminded that volunteers '*need to be nurtured*', with Jenné going on to say that *'volunteers need to feel appreciated and cared for… and when they are they really thrive, and that's when the innovative stuff starts to happen*.' Given the pressures felt by the NDC Resident Board Members discussed in chapter five and the 'burn out' discussed by residents, the need to care for volunteers in the designs of regeneration programmes is an important consideration.

Messaging was another element Carin placed great importance on, stating:

> *People need to understand what's in it for them … if you're trying to mobilise them, they need to know what for… they need to know that their time and contributions will make a difference and that there are benefits for them as well - that's the message we are trying to spread through One Good Deed.*[930]

One Good Deed is an example where the city has used its presence, and its 'visible' power to mobilise and create new spaces for interaction between citizens and the not-for-profit sector. In the most part, volunteers and their host organisations interact directly, while City Hall acts as an enabler by capacity building hosts, and recognising the important role investing in support early on, for both volunteers and hosts, will play in achieving sustained volunteer opportunities. For Carin only City Hall, or a level of government can play that role:

> *Something like that is not just going to happen organically. It has to be properly thought through and approached strategically - it's also going to need management and resources if they are really going to make it happen*.[931]

[929] Carin, Chief Service Officer, One Good Deed Chicago.
[930] Carin, Chief Service Officer, One Good Deed Chicago.
[931] Carin, Chief Service Officer, One Good Deed Chicago.

This is at odds with the approach taken under the Coalition, with austerity severely impacting many third sector organisations, whom one might expect to be at the heart of a truly "Big Society". The appeal of this model is it is relatively low-cost, its replicability and its appreciation of where government can best intervene; using power few others have in the city to promote the scheme widely through its wide-reaching communication channels and providing a trusted, consistent source of capacity building, but having little interference in the operational level of the programme. The capacity building helps not-for-profits to sustain themselves and helps by providing citizens with rewarding experiences that cater to their self-interest, increasing the likelihood of them finding opportunities for empowerment. As chapters five and six discussed austerity and an over-centralisation of regeneration programmes in England have limited this capacity. The example of One Good Deed Chicago provides an illustration of the important role that state, local or national government can play in promoting and finding innovative solutions to resourcing urban renewal and promoting civic action.

Having examined some of the techniques and philosophies underpinning community development in the USA, attention now moves on to understand who leads community development at the local level in the American context, and to better understand where community leaders may emerge from, given the limited uptake of community leadership opportunities reported in the NDC and NMP programmes.

7.6 Community leaders and where to find them

As mentioned in the opening paragraphs of this chapter, a topic that garnered much discussion with all of the participants was the Coalition's proposals to train 5,000 new community organisers under the Community Organisers programme. While pleased to hear that England was embracing community organising, there were concerns amongst American interviewees about where the community organisers would emerge from and what ties they would have with the communities they were supporting. As part of the interviews, participants were asked what qualities they felt a community organiser should demonstrate, in order to better understand how they identify, recruit and train organisers in their own communities. The responses suggested community organisations, intermediaries and even public sector participants expected a lot of community organisers, amongst the common traits cited, were local knowledge and ties; an appreciation of power; leadership; negotiation and managing expectations.

Of primary importance to Daniel was that community organisers and leaders were from the community they represented, stressing the importance of community organisers having an understanding of the socio-economic situation they are working within and a *'deep connection'* with the culture of the community:

Heritage is important; it's not enough to select organisers on race, faith or a looser geographic connection; they should be from the community.[932]

Clarence agreed with Damien's sentiment that you did not need to look outside of the community, stating that:

Your community organisers are already there, they are the folks with a track record of doing small things for neighbours, attending meetings, maybe organising one or two others, and they might not get much recognition but trust me they are there. They are the people with a stake in the community and can galvanise folks.[933]

In Clarence's experience, this has included sports coaches, local business owners, church council members and those that attend community meetings amongst many others.

These people have the raw materials to be leaders. They were born with it. It's just what they do, these are the folks that you should be training up, that have the will to learn and with the right guidance, they can develop the skills to make a difference."

In addition to a local connection, Damian expected that organisers should be good at '*building relationships'*, '*empathetic'*, with '*good emotional intelligence'* and show an ability to '*get things done*.' [934] Laverne shared similar sentiment stating that successful community development workers need "*very good interpersonal communication skills, need to really understand grassroots support, be respectful, have self-determination, and to have the strength to rein it in where necessary*."[935]

7.7 Funding, philanthropy and the role of intermediary organisations

This section briefly considers the roles of the intermediary agencies visited in this study, highlighting some key learning from interviews with representatives of LISC, MRDC, and two university-led intermediary services. In doing so, this section also outlines the major role philanthropic institutions play in supporting and funding regeneration in the USA. Although it should be noted intermediaries were facing challenges themselves to sustain themselves and their activities, at

[932] Daniel, One DC.
[933] Clarence, Near West Side CDC.
[934] Clarence, Near West Side CDC.
[935] Laverne, Senior Programme Officer, LISC.

the time of interview many were anticipating reductions in funding as long-term projects came to an end, pointing to the challenge the sector faced globally at the time and continuing today.

Interviews clearly showed the important part that charitable and philanthropic giving played in the initiation, development and delivery of urban regeneration work in the US. This is a key distinguishing factor between the US and the UK, where it is less common for philanthropic organisations to become involved in financing mainstream community or public service activities in the latter, particularly initiatives that were as all-encompassing as many of the organisations and projects visited. There has, however, as outlined in chapter five, been a growing expectation in England that the private sector, charitable foundations and grant funders, such as National Lottery Funding, will have greater involvement in such activities following the retrenchment of government and public sector funding. [936]

It was, for this reason, an interview with Laverne Williams, Senior Program Officer at LISC was arranged. LISC was delivering the 'New Communities Program' (NCP) in Chicago, an area-based programme supported by a ten-year $47m endowment from the MacArthur Foundation. The programme runs across a number of Chicago neighbourhoods to: '*develop partnerships to address challenges involving employment, education, housing, and safety in a comprehensive, coordinated fashion*.'[937] LISC as the delivery lead for the programme were tasked with overseeing the programme, working alongside and building the capacity of a local intermediary in the fourteen communities the programme ran in. The programme emphasises a *'relational approach by building collaborations as a 'platform' for broad and sustained improvement, even as local conditions change.'*[938] The programme is notable as this was an example of an American city embracing and trialling area-based initiatives at a time when England was moving away from this model. A detailed evaluation is provided by Greenberg et al. so this chapter does not seek to explore all of the programme outcomes in any great detail, but rather to briefly capture some brief learning from the interviews and the supporting literature.

Building community capacity was seen as a central feature of the programme, with the programme adopting a partnership approach, much like the neighbourhood renewal arrangements discussed in chapter five. Laverne talked of how in most of Chicago communities local community groups worked in 'silos', NCP sought to address this by bringing groups together through the draw of funding, but then encouraging them to work together and to build the capacity of one another, so that they

936 S. Donaldson, 'Contested Governance and Definitions of Need in the Distribution of Funding: Investigating the Regeneration-Funding Paradox and the Role of UK National Lottery Funding in Regeneration', (2007) 25(2), *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space,* 212-232: R. Macmillan, 'Demand-led Capacity Building, the Big Lottery Fund and market-making in third sector support services', (2013) *Voluntary Sector Review,* 385-394.

937 Greenberg, D., Verma, N., Dilman, K.N. and Chaskin, R., *Creating a Platform for Sustained Neighbourhood Improvement: Interim Findings from Chicago's New Communities Program,* (MDRC, 2010), iii.

938 Ibid.

were '*working together to build an and deliver a neighbourhood agenda*'.[939] Laverne explained how the programme was much needed, as many of Chicago's inner-city areas were falling into further decline and according to Laverne housing renewal programmes were not having the desired effect:

> *Bricks and Mortar were not working, it wasn't enough to do one project at a time, communities were in decline, and they needed some other way to set up momentum around the cause.*[940]

Building networks of '*strong'* partners was seen as a way to combat this. The evaluation, conducted by MDRC found '*substantial evidence of existing relationships being deepened*' and of new relationships being formed.[941] In doing so, some 750 community projects were developed. The majority of which were around education and social services (300 projects), economic development and workforce development (180), housing and commercial (130) and 130 in the arts and public spaces, showing the range of interests.[942] There was much less appetite for '*public policy and organising*' opportunities - this is significant given that most of the opportunities for participation presented by the government in England have fallen under this category.

LISC's role was to oversee the programme, and act as an intermediary for funded areas. By appointing LISC as manager of the grants and as a main point of contact for the areas the funders had hoped to avoid mistakes of past policy which had lacked accountability or a supporting function, leaving communities to largely administer the funds themselves once in receipt and to report back over agreed periods, to which some recipients were better able to respond than others. This model was commended in MDRC's evaluation, which highlighted that LISC, in its capacity of '*managing intermediary*', was able to resolve disputes between communities and partners as a trusted intermediary; use its considerable knowledge of the funding environment and its significant reach nationally and within local politics[943] to draw in additional funding into areas that communities would otherwise have not achieved, and to be able to identify groups who needed some assistance with capacity building. All of which served to improve communities' experiences of the programme, aiding them in delivering the range of projects above. However, echoing findings that have been repeated throughout this thesis, Anita of MRDC talked of role local context and relationships of trust had played in shaping how successful the programme was in each neighbourhood, with areas with less 'trust' and 'more disadvantage' not progressing at the same rate as some of the 'less disadvantaged areas'. A finding that shared

939 Laverne, LISC.
940 Laverne Williams, Senior Program Officer, LISC Chicago.
941 D. Greenberg, N. Verma, K.N. Dilman and R. Chaskin, *Creating a Platform for Sustained Neighbourhood Improvement: Interim Findings from Chicago's New Communities Program*, (MDRC, 2010), ES-5.
942 Ibid.
943 Ibid.

some similarities with the findings of the NDC and neighbourhood planning evaluations discussed in chapters five and six. As Anita of MRDC noted:

> *Context is important because the variation across space and capacity influence what gets done in a community, and when you look through the report you'll see in the real disadvantaged areas; trust was a huge issue. Just getting the different players to talk about accommodation was a challenge. The planning stage was fairly successful, but when it came to the implementation, that's when it broke down the most in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The less disadvantaged neighbourhoods were able to broker relationships and were able to delegate projects to get more done.*[944]

LISC's standing in Chicago had helped some of the 'disadvantaged areas' to progress regardless of these challenges, in an interview with staff at MDRC one member of the team revealed how the Chief Executive had used her power and social capital in the city to accelerate the progress of the New Communities Programme in some areas:

> *Chicago is a bit of a different context because, just given how powerful LISC is, the chief executive was the Mayor's assistant before she moved to the Foundation, you're talking about real heavy details here ... once the neighbourhoods got done with their quality of life plans, the mayor eventually embraced these quality of life plans and adopted them as his agenda for these communities.*[945]

In a midway evaluation of the NCP, MDRC commended the programme for the relationships that had been developed, the partnerships in the community it had created, and for the role LISC had played as an intermediary for neighbourhood revitalization activities.[946] The importance of intermediary and 'anchor' organisations was another theme that emerged through interviews, with the cities universities cited as another key source of intermediary support for communities. For example, LISC was running a programme with the University of Illinois where they provided technical assistance and learning classes, for community groups interested in developing community-led social housing, helping them to understand any funding and legislative opportunities available for this, as well as the potential costs, risks and pitfalls, so that they could make an informed decision on whether to pursue such a project.

944 Anita, Manpower Demonstration Research Centre.

945 Anita, Manpower Demonstration Research Centre

946 D. Greenberg, N. Verma, K.N. Dilman and R. Chaskin, *Creating a Platform for Sustained Neighbourhood Improvement: Interim Findings from Chicago's New Communities Program,* (MDRC, 2010), 166.

Another example was the Legal Advice for Community Development Clinic run by Washington University, which paired students and academics with community causes, supporting them to understand their legal position and providing pro-bono legal support where this was required. In doing so, the university was providing community groups with valuable, no-cost support while also creating learning opportunities for students. The Clinic was also seen as a valuable tool to improve links between the university and the wider Washington community. This shows that it does not always have to cost the government or the community money; it is about building links with neighbouring institutions, sharing skills, networks and opportunities. Similarly, Benjamin talked of how the Voheers Centre in Chicago ran a similar model, acting as: *'a bridge between the university and the community'* with students and staff providing communities and local government with vital support:

> *We are a trusted resource for community organisations, even local government initiatives, in terms of providing research assistance, providing data, providing information, doing needs assessments, gap analysis, green market analysis.*[947]

This level of trust had '*taken a long time to build',* and Benjamin attributed this to the Centre's '*continued presence in the community*', enabled through ongoing funding by the university and donors as opposed to time-bound funding streams. Benjamin saw a lot of their work as trying to readdress power imbalances in the city by empowering community organisations to have a greater say in property development in their neighbourhoods. By giving communities information on their rights, the potential impacts of planned developments and data relating to the housing makeup of their community in a format they could easily understand, communities were gaining confidence to speak up about their concerns and becoming a lot harder to ignore by local government and big business. For this reason, Benjamin talked of the Freirean approach the Centre adopted. There is arguably a role to play for similar dedicated community development support in the UK university sector in light of the closure of other sources of support, such as the Community Development Foundation and the British Urban Regeneration Foundation.

The value of the university playing this role Benjamin reflected, was that it is rooted in the community and around for the long term, whereas other services or sources of support may not be. Indeed, during the research visit, both LISC and MDRC were giving some thought to how they would continue the work of the New Communities Programme going forward given that the MacArthur Foundation were planning to reduce their philanthropic in light of the recession. LISC were very aware of the need to demonstrate that the outcomes of the programme had brought positive changes and to ensure that value for money was being achieved through spending. Laverne talked of having to remind groups of their duty to engage, and that '*their payment was not their money*, *it's the communit*ies', going on to state *'At a personal level and a policy level, we try to encourage groups to*

947 Benjamin, Vorhees Centre for Neighbourhood and Community Improvement.

look at other local partners to provide project funding, levering in the money from other funds.' She did, however, express some doubts about whether communities can sustain themselves in the economic climate of the time without some form of philanthropic or federal funding – a challenge that has also borne out in the UK. Laverne saw it as her and colleagues at LISC's job to help the communities to implement their goals and plans and to think more sustainably, beyond the ten-year lifespan of the programme. This was made more difficult by '*high turnover of staff at the community level*'[948], representing a regular loss of valuable expertise that she described as '*devastating*'. Laverne would go on to describe her role as '*a balancing act'*, providing support while also having to ensure partnership's maintained progress and aligned their activities to the central aims of the programme, a role many of the England-based practitioners could relate to.

Aware of the challenges being brought about as a result of the recession and with their 10-year programme drawing to a close LISC was planning to use the skills they had developed to create a 'Great Neighbourhoods' programme. This was to be based on peer learning from the NCP and by bringing all the of the NCP groups together to collectively plan. In addition, they had started two '*peer learning networks'*, one of which focused on commercial development and one on low-income communities. Both met regularly, and they would bring in volunteers and speakers to talk about their projects, network and explore opportunities for collective working. This again shows a commitment to long term community development work that is lacking in the UK, yet the sector is limited by its reliance on government funding and a dearth of intermediary organisations who could convene these groups and act as a repository for this valuable learning. Practitioners in the UK interviews talked of their despair that so many resources and examples of good practice from the NDC and NMP programmes had seemingly been lost following the end of programme funding, changes in government, and through the closure of the aforementioned regeneration and community development bodies. Further contributing to the collective 'policy amnesia'[949] discussed at the beginning of this thesis.

7.8 Conclusion

Overall, these findings from interviews and visits to three American cities do not present radical departures from community practice, thinking, and theory in England, suggesting the influence of American practice may be somewhat overstated. This chapter has however provided a number of insights and examples of good practice that serve as interesting counterpoints to UK policy approaches this thesis has explored.

Like community organisations in the UK, the community-based organisations visited in the US talked of being under-

[948] Laverne, LISC

[949] Shaw, K. and Robinson, F., 'Learning from Experience? Reflections on Two Decades of British Urban Policy', (1998) 69(1) *Town Planning Review*, 49-63.

resourced and oversubscribed, and facing their own financial pressures in light of the global recession they too were trying to understand how to do more with less. Government subsidies for some of their housing related work was decreasing, and a number of interviewees had begun to see a reduction in philanthropic sources of funding for their community focused work. Yet, while recognising the challenges this brought to their operating model, leaders of the Community Development Corporations were reflective, noting how leaner periods can mobilise communities to act. They were however dubious such mobilisation could be achieved through a state-run programme like the Community Organisers programme being launched in England at the time of the research visit. Their fear being a government-led grassroots movement could be trusted to serve the true needs of the community, particularly when government enacted austerity might be the source of the neighbourhood's biggest challenges. Such a view was influenced by interviewees own experiences as community organisers, and their organisations' histories of grassroots action that was typically carried out in spite of government and those in power, rather than because of them – a demonstration of claimed space rather than invited space. Their concerns echoed those of authors and activists in the UK, who expressed concerns that such programmes would serve as a mechanism for civic control rather than empowerment.[950] Findings in previous chapters have added some weight to that assessment.

What followed were conversations about how their organisations build community leadership and have managed to sustain their activities over a number of decades. The overriding message was that 'it isn't easy' and there are no quick fixes, particularly when working in deprived areas. However, there were some consistent messages running through participants' responses. Several interviewees emphasised a need to start small and to start local, talking to people face to face, going to their doors and meeting them in the places and spaces they convene in. Appealing to their 'self-interest' was another common point of advice, developing an understanding of what it is that frustrates a particular individual and building their confidence and awareness that they can take action to address this. This was an interesting perspective, particularly in light of the Big Society message that it was time to do away with 'selfish individualism'.[951] Linked to this was the need to engage people in 'small wins' quick projects, that had early visible results, allowing volunteers to see the value of their contribution and using this as a starting point to engage them in more concerted efforts.[952] Such an approach has been a central part of community organising efforts from the outset.[953] However, practitioners and volunteers in England reflected that there had been limited scope for this in the programmes they'd been part of, with the onus quickly moving to establishing board governance arrangements and prioritising delivery towards government-set targets. The resounding

950 N. Bailey and M. Pill, 'Can the State Empower Communities Through Localism?', (2015) 33 (2) *Environment and Planning 'C': Government and Policy*, 289-304.

951 D. Cameron, (speech) *David Cameron Speech to the Tory Conference: In Full*, 6th October 2010 (The Guardian, 2010) (Online) Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2010/oct/06/david-cameron-speech-tory conference> Last accessed: 27th October 2016.

952 K. Weick, 'Small Wins: Redefining the Scale of Social Problems', (1984) 39(1) *American Psychologist,* 40-49.

953 See: S. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*, (Vintage Books, 1971); D. Beck, and R. Purcell, International *Community Organising: Taking Power, Making Change*, (The Policy Press, 2013).

message was the early stages of mobilising citizens takes time, and considerable effort and support, but is key to sustained activity. A point this thesis has returned to over several chapters. It is however a message that bears repeating.

Conversations about 'power' proved to be some of the most interesting and had considerable influence on the direction of this thesis. Power imbalances exist in every society, and as this thesis has sought to demonstrate are an inherent part of community development and regeneration activities. It was however interesting to hear and observe how frequently the term was used by American interviewees when describing their work and how they draw on the concept with residents when devising and delivering their actions. The importance of civic education was also raised in several interviews, with the community-based organisations describing one of their core functions as helping local people understand their civic rights. Their training centred on negotiation skills, understanding how to manage conflict, and advice on movement building. All of which coincidentally were skills the resident volunteers in England reflected they'd wished they had known more about at the early stages of the programme. Jim, Grant and Patrick all expressed similar views, reflecting that more should have been done in the programmes they supported to build community leadership skills and help residents to understand the importance of building local alliances. It is submitted that if community-led regeneration is deemed to be a priority in the future, such an approach to training would be more beneficial to participants than sessions on project management and '*beauty pageants'* of the '*most expensive projects'* Patrick referred to in chapter five.[954]

Finally, the value of civic organisations and intermediaries at neighbourhood, city and national level was clear to see. Community Development Corporation's played a vital role in the social fabric of the communities visited as part of this research. Connecting residents to vital services, advocating on the behalf of residents and acting as a space for people to come together, connect and mobilise. Such resources should play a central, coordinating role in any big society, however, recent research suggests that it is exactly these types of organisations that are most at risks as a result of a decade of austerity. David Clifford estimates that the real income of charities has declined 13% on average over the period 2008-2014, with 'small- and medium-sized charities in deprived local authorities' at particular risk.[955] This is a worrying trend, particularly coupled with the closure of national organisations like the Community Development Foundation and British Urban Regeneration Association. If government are serious about mobilising citizens to do more in their communities this worrying trend cannot continue.

[954] Patrick, Neighbourhood Manager, NMP programme.

[955] D. Clifford, 'Charitable Organisations, the Great Recession and the Age of Austerity: Longitudinal Evidence for England and Wales', (2017) 46 *Journal of Social Policy,* 25.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

8.1 Rhetoric vs reality

This thesis set out to examine the extent to which the community empowerment rhetoric of successive governments translated into increased opportunities for community-led regeneration and reflected genuine shifts in power from central government to the neighbourhood level. The debate over power and influence between citizens, local and central government is not a new one, and plays out in many spheres of public life and public policy.[956] Indeed as I type this, protesters are calling for 'citizen assemblies' and other forms of participatory deliberation to debate local and national responses to the climate crisis,[957] there are calls for a second referendum or 'people's vote' on government proposals for Britain's intended exit from the European Union[958], and across the country there are daily stories of local groups campaigning against local government decisions that they feel will have an adverse impact on local communities.[959] Nationally, there continues to be a significant gulf between citizens' desire to influence local and national policymaking and the extent to which they feel they can do so.[960] As this thesis has demonstrated, neighbourhood regeneration policy and practice over the last twenty years provides a rich source of material to explore this debate. The preceding chapters have shown how area-based initiatives and the promotion of community-led solutions featured heavily in the speeches and programmes of successive governments over the period 1997-2015, with the stated intention of addressing the growing 'democratic deficit', as a way of reframing the relationship between the state and citizens, and as a means of contributing to goals of sustainable development.[961]

However, as this thesis has also shown, all too often there is a disconnect between this rhetoric and the reality for the deprived areas which are so often the site of these programmes. Over the period 1997-2015 New spaces and opportunities for community participation were created through the introduction of neighbourhood boards, community organising channels and legislation, however all too often the structures put in place to monitor, manage and facilitate these

[956] D. Beck and R. Purcell, *International Community Organising: Taking Power, Making Change,* (The Policy Press, 2013); F. Berenskoetter and M. Williams, (eds.), *Power in World Politics*, (Routledge, 2007); B. Flyvbjerg, *Rationality and Power: Democracy in Practice,* (University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[957] BBC, 'What is Extinction Rebellion and What does it Want?', *BBC News Website 7th October 2019*, (Online) Available at: < https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-48607989> Last accessed: 20th October 2019.

[958] BBC, 'People's Vote March: Hundreds of Thousands Attend London Protest', *BBC News Online 20th October 2019*, (Online) Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-45925542> Last accessed: 20th October 2019.

[959] R. Sudan, 'Closing Tottenham's 'Latin Village' Market is Essentially Social Cleansing - It Must be Stopped', *The Independent Online 12th October 2019,* (Online) Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/london-gentrification-latin-village-market-seven-sisters-closure-social-cleansing-tottenham-a9153641.html> Last accessed: 20th October 2019.

[960] Cabinet Office, *Community Life Survey 2015 to 2016: Data,* (Cabinet Office, 2016) (Online) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-life-survey-2015-to-2016-data> Last accessed: 1st October 2016.

[961] SEU, *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, (The Stationary Office, 1998); SEU, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal - National Strategy Action Plan*, (Cabinet Office, 2001); Cabinet Office, *Building the Big Society*, (Cabinet Office, 2010).

programmes or policies hindered the extent to which they presented meaningful spaces for community influence, control and empowerment. This was coupled with a failure to account for the complexities and diversity of life within urban communities.

Discussion of the New Deal for Communities and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder programmes in chapter five highlighted the inherent tension between the working practices of the New Labour government and their stated commitment to neighbourhood renewal and community-led regeneration. Considerable resource was invested in creating new forums for communities and local agencies to come together to develop and implement plans for their community. However, the persistence of hierarchical and managerialist structures, an abundance of reporting targets and mechanisms, and the government's decision to stipulate the areas of work partnerships should prioritise - limited the impact these programmes had. Throughout chapter five a picture emerged of government promoting opportunities for participation but retaining considerable control over how partnerships and volunteers operate. Suggesting that central government was not yet willing to cede the amount of power their 'Third Way' rhetoric promoted.[962] The structural arrangements that accompanied these programmes also put local authorities in a difficult position, on the one hand charged with holding money and responsibility for successful implementation of projects, but with agency for decision-making passed to local residents. Yet on the other, so much of the change local people sought to implement remained in the hands of local authority officers and agency delivery staff – creating a process fraught with power dynamics, political manoeuvring and negotiation – to which some partnerships, agencies and individuals were better adapted to than others.[963]

Similar findings presented themselves in the localist provisions put forward by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government. As chapter six showed, the design of the Community Organisers programme placed Trainee Community Organisers (TCOs) in a challenging position, expected to achieve considerable impact in less than a year, with programme guidelines stating they had to work outside of existing community and voluntary sector arrangements.[964] Thus limiting the extent to which local authorities and agencies were willing or able to engage with the work of community organisers, and further fuelling suspicions of a government-led community organising programme in some areas.[965] Relatedly, an examination of the Community Rights introduced with the passing of the Localism Act 2011 provided further evidence of government promoting community-led action but setting and monitoring the confines in which this takes

[962] P. Lawless, 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 313-328.

[963] J.S.F. Wright, J. Parry, J. Mathers, S. Jones and J. Orford, 'Assessing the Participatory Potential of Britain's New Deal for Communities: Opportunities for and Constraints to 'Bottom-up' Community Participation', (2006) 27(4) *Policy Studies,* 347-361.

[964] L. Grimshaw, L. Mates and A. Reynolds, 'The Challenges and Contradictions of State-Funded Community Organizing', (2018) *Community Development Journal,* 1-18.

[965] J. Fisher, R. Lawthom and C. Kagan, 'Delivering on the Big Society? Tensions in Hosting Community Organisers', (2016) 31(4) *Local Economy*, 502-517.

place.[966] Neighbourhood plans presented as '*making it easier for local people to shape the development they want*' will only be considered when they accord with predetermined national and local government plans.[967] While others highlighted the considerable power the Secretary of State retained to both veto proposals submitted under the new Community Rights and shape what assets and services are eligible for expressions of interest from the community.[968] Such an approach runs counter to the principles of socially sustainable urban regeneration established in chapter two, limiting the '*citizens right to their city and the production of that space'*.[969]

8.2 A one-dimensional view of communities

Part of the challenge appears to be that for all of the rhetoric of diverse communities, the programmes explored here all appeared to adopt a one-dimensional view of 'the community.' In the speeches, guidance and announcements accompanying programmes communities are presented as neutral sites, homogenous and malleable. The assertion that accompanies so many of the programmes is that communities should and want to take more civic action, it is the lack of resources, training, support, or government bureaucracy that prohibits them. As interviews and the literature show, this is not the case, communities are made up of diverse and competing interests, shaped by cultural norms and subjected to a wide range of social, economic and cultural forces that will govern the extent to which they are able and willing to participate, the priorities they wish to pursue and the ways in which they choose to participate.[970] For the vast majority of people that is not through neighbourhood boards and committees or taking on the development, delivery or management of local services, many of which they view to be the role of local or central government.[971] To fail to acknowledge this not only inhibits the implementation of successful community-led regeneration initiatives, it also limits their transformational and empowering potential by prescribing a central view of 'best practice.'

Those that did come forward to participate in the ways government envisioned - through involvement in neighbourhood boards and by taking responsibility for running and overseeing services - talked of the considerable pressure they felt. NDC Resident Board Members interviewed found themselves in difficult positions, tasked with speaking and advocating

[966] G. Parker and C. Murray, 'Beyond Tokenism? Community-led Planning and Rational Choices: Findings from Participants in Local Agenda-Setting at the Neighbourhood Scale in England', (2012) 83(1) *Town Planning Review,* 1-28.
[967] The Localism Act, s.109-122.
[968] J. Stanton, 'The Big Society and Community Development: Neighbourhood Planning Under the Localism Act', (2014) 16(164) *Environmental Law Review*, 262-276.
[969] J. Lepofsky and J.C. Fraser, 'Building Community Citizens: Claiming the Right to Place-making in the City, (2003) 40(1) *Urban Studies,* 127-142.
[970] G. Crow and G. Allan, 'Community Types, Community Typologies and Community Time', (1995) 4(2) *Time and Society*, 147-66.
[971] Cabinet Office, *Giving of Time and Money: Findings from the 2012-13 Community Life Survey*, (Cabinet Office, 2013); Cabinet Office, *Community Life Survey, England 2015 to 2016: Statistical bulletin 20 July 2016,* (Cabinet Office, 2016) (Online) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-life-survey-2015-to-2016-statistical-analysis> Last accessed 1st October 2019; DCLG, *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Final Report,* (Stationery Office, 2010).

on behalf of their communities (or their particular geographic portions of it) and with having accountability to that same community, conveying to them decisions made at Partnership Board level. These priorities and decisions did not always align, and it would be the Resident Board Members, who were volunteers, who would be confronted with community responses to this as they went about their daily lives.[972] This was not helped with the considerable pressure placed on residents by frontbench government ministers and coverage in the national and local press. Residents interviewed talked of feeling 'super-empowered', a view that was also captured elsewhere in the literature, placed in positions of responsibility they had not foreseen, and as a result found themselves in some difficult encounters with their peers.[973] Relatedly, a number of empowerment frameworks present complete citizen control as an ultimate aim, but as interviews with participants revealed such opportunities can bring immense pressure to volunteers and committees.[974] These findings led to a discussion of what is fair to expect of resident volunteers, particularly in the political and socio-economic climate of the 1997-2015 period this study covered.

The opening chapter referenced Shaw and Robinson's review of twenty years of neighbourhood renewal policy leading up to New Labour's election. They reflected that the regeneration landscape of the mid-seventies to mid-nineties was characterised by a pattern of short-term, poorly aligned and over centralised interventions, leading them to lament the '*policy amnesia'* demonstrated by successive governments.[975] Fifteen more years of government practice suggests that in some cases there is yet to be a cure. The transformative potential of the Community Organisers programme was shown to be limited in part by its short-termism. While other programmes explored over chapters five and six highlighted central government's continued predisposition for overbearing targets, failure to join-up initiatives with wider programmes of national and local government.[976] Relatedly, the cyclical nature and shifting priorities of British politics calls into question the extent to which any of the programmes could be considered sustainable. A consistent theme running through all of the programmes was that they were not particularly clear on what their long-term vision for community leadership was. This has led some to conclude that community-led regeneration initiatives were viewed as a means to furthering other policy goals, rather than the desired end result.[977]

[972] M. Taylor, 'Neighbourhood Governance: Holy Grail or Poisoned Chalice?', (2003) 18(3) *Local Economy,* 190-95.

[973] See Resident Board Member accounts in section 5.7. Also: D. Dinham, 'Empowered or Over-Empowered? The Real Experiences of Local Participation in the UK's New Deal for Communities', (2005) 40(3) *Community Development Journal,* 301-312.

[974] S. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969) 35(4), *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 216-228; J.N Pretty, I. Guijt, J. Thompson and I. Scoones, *Participatory Learning and Action: A Trainer's Guide,* (IIED, 2005) (Online) Available at: <https://pubs.iied.org/6021IIED/> Last accessed: 28th September 2019; S. Hall, 'The Way Forward for Regeneration? Lessons from the Single Regeneration Budget Challenge Fund', (2000) 26(1), *Local Government Studies,* 1-14.

[975] K. Shaw and F. Robinson, 'Learning from Experience? Reflections on Two Decades of British Urban Policy', (1998) 69(1) *Town Planning Review*, 49-63.

[976] E. Batty, C. Beatty, M. Foden, P. Lawless, S. Pearson and I. Wilson, *The New Deal for Communities Experience: A Final Assessment the New Deal for Communities Evaluation: Final Report,* (Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research Sheffield Hallam University/DCLG, 2010).

[977] B. Cooke and U. Kothari, *Participation: The New Tyranny,* (Zed Books, 2001).

8.3 The impact of austerity

A dominant position in the literature is that the repeated 'turn to community' by both New Labour and the Coalition was part of a neoliberal agenda to shrink the role of the state which government claimed had become too big, too bureaucratic and too interventionist, and that individuals and communities were complicit in this through their overreliance on state provision.[978] Relatedly, some saw the recasting of communities as 'active citizens' and 'big societies' as masks for the gradual retrenchment from the state, making room for private interests to prevail.[979] It is difficult to argue with such a position when viewed against almost a decade of government-led austerity. It is during times of economic hardship poorer neighbourhoods need more assistance and support from the government, not less.[980] The message that communities 'must do more with less' does not work for the millions already living below the breadline. Welfare reform, the proliferation of zero-hour contracts and wholescale cuts to local services have had a considerable impact on the most vulnerable in the country.[981] While the government's message has been that collective effort, hard-work and reciprocity will build a bigger, better society; this does not marry with the experiences of communities where record numbers of working households are now living in poverty.[982] The expectation that communities should be doing more at the same time many are suffering more than ever is at great odds with the community idyll conjured by the communitarian rhetoric repeated throughout the period studied.

Linked to the above is the paradoxical position successive governments put people living in poorer communities in, on one had demonising them, placing responsibility for overreliance, and passivity, on deprived communities, while also promoting the message that those same people are now to be the architects of their communities revival.[983] How much change can partnerships and volunteers be able to, or expect to be able to, influence change in the wake of wider structural forces.[984] Neighbourhood regeneration does not take part in a vacuum, communities are shaped by political forces and decisions far removed from the neighbourhood level. They are also a product of local context whereby neighbourhood

978 C. Fuller and M. Geddes, '*Urban Governance Under Neoliberalism: New Labour and the Restructuring of State-Space*', (2008) 40(2) Antipode, 252–282; A. Williams, M. Goodwin and P.Cloke, 'Neoliberalism, Big Society, and Progressive Localism', (2014) 46(12), *Environment and Planning A*, 2798-2815;

979 M. Marinetto, 'Who wants to be an Active Citizen? The Politics and Practice of Community Involvement', (2003) 37 *Sociology,* 103-120; K. Garthwaite, ''I Feel I'm Giving Something Back to Society': Constructing the 'Active Citizen' and Responsibilising Foodbank Use', (2017) 16(2) *Social Policy and Society,* 283;

980 R. Tunstall, *Communities in Recession: The Impact on Deprived Neighbourhoods*, (JRF, 2009) (Online) Available at: https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/communities-recession-impact-deprived-neighbourhoods> Last accessed: 22nd August 2019.

981 Beatty, C. and Fothergill, S., *Hitting the Poorest Places Hardest: The Local and Regional Impact of Welfare Reform,* (Centre for Regional and Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University, 2013). (Online) Available at: <http://www4.shu.ac.uk/research/cresr/sites/shu.ac.uk/files/hitting-poorest-places-hardest_0.pdf> Last accessed: 23rd March 2019.

982 T. MacInnes, A. Tinson, C. Hughes, T. Barry-Born and H. Aldridge, *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2015,* (JRF, 2015) (Online) Available at: < https://www.jrf.org.uk/mpse-2015> Last accessed: 23rd March 2019, 28-30.

983 K. Garthwaite, ''I Feel I'm Giving Something Back to Society': Constructing the 'Active Citizen' and Responsibilising Foodbank Use', (2017) 16(2) *Social Policy and Society,* 283.

984 J. DeFilippis, R. Fisher and E. Shragge, *Contesting Community: The Limits and Potential of Local Organizing,* (Rutgers University Press, 2010).

activity is shaped by generations of communal relations, local working practices, and views of the role of the citizen, local government and the state. These hidden power dynamics, or hegemony as Gramsci referred to it, have considerable bearing on the implementation of area-based programmes.[985] Programmes that view community as a unified entity, removed from local context, do so at their peril.

8.4 Lessons from the US

The influence of American social policy and community development practice on English policy was also established, and chapter seven documented the findings from empirical research conducted with community development practitioners in the USA. Interviews highlighted some similarities with England's position and some noticeable differences in the ways in which community-led regeneration is promoted, funded, and implemented. The American model proved to be less centralised and less reliant on government funding, allowing community organisations a degree of freedom to pursue local service delivery and development of their own choosing, although in many cases groups reported reliance on philanthropic funding which came with its own challenges and reporting requirements. Participants in the USA were noticeably more comfortable with discussing notions of 'power' than their UK counterparts, this was attributed to the fact that many of the community organisations interviewees represented were formed through broad-based movements and power struggles born out of necessity because of perceived failings of government to provide for poorer neighbourhoods. However, it was also discussed openly in interviews with staff from city government and by university representatives. The importance of process; the need to adopt a long-term approach; and a willingness to use contentious local issues and actions to mobilise residents were three of the overriding messages to emerge from this research. With regard to 'process', interviewees were dubious about central government's ability to initiate community-led action, and were inherently suspicious of government-led attempts to promote community organising and local service delivery - seeing this as the antithesis to the community development movement they were part of. This led to a discussion of the importance of intermediary agencies in supporting community-led activities, providing a source of expertise, support and acting as a conduit to promote best practice. The need for this intermediary support also came up often in interviews with UK-based community development practitioners, with practitioners and professionals advocating for the role of individuals and institutions working between community groups, local agencies and the various layers of government, acting as a '*translator'* and '*facilitator'* as one interviewee described it.[986] However, government cuts have had an inverse effect on such arrangements in Britain, organisations like the Community Development Forum, Urban Forum and British Urban Regeneration Association who provided training and support to community groups and practitioners, facilitated networks for learning and peer support,

[985] A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks,* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), 12 cited in D. Beck and R. Purcell, *International Community Organising: Taking Power, Making Change*, (The Policy Press, 2013), 178.
[986] Grant, NDC Neighbourhood Coordinator and community development practitioner.

and acted as national champions of best practice were forced to close due to funding cuts both to their organisations, and the organisations that would buy or subscribe to their services. This leaves community organisations in England somewhat deprived of similar support, with local authorities limited in their capacity to assist given their own need to rebalance their finances. Relatedly, practitioners interviewed spoke of their sadness that the wealth of insights, resources, and case studies produced through the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder, New Deal for Communities and other programmes for neighbourhood renewal have not been preserved. Lost from government, local authority, or programme websites over time, with one participant likening it to a cassette that had been erased. These conversations further highlighted how valuable scholarly work in this field is. While government source material often proved challenging and time-consuming to locate, particularly following the change in government, the breadth of scholarly research in this field provided a wealth of source material that has been drawn on throughout. By capturing the experiences of those involved in delivering and supporting community-led regeneration this thesis has sought to add to that body of work.

8.5 Adopting a three-dimensional approach to understanding power and communities

The 'place, space and power' model, or 'powercube' as it is also referred to, was used as a conceptual framework throughout this thesis to explore the extent to which the programmes and policies introduced by the government created opportunities for community participation and empowerment in the ways they proclaimed to do so.[987] It was used to highlight not only the 'top-down, bottom-up' dichotomy government-led regeneration programmes bring to the fore, but also that that power permeates at all levels throughout the regeneration process – with interactions and power imbalances between residents, agencies and local government also influencing how, why and where people are able to participate. The model helped to highlight some very visible examples of power being maintained despite the opening of new and previously closed spaces of deliberation and decision-making. On the face of it, NDC and Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder boards, new community 'rights', and the introduction of community organisers reflected new and created spaces for community influence and participation, giving a select number of residents opportunities to influence and make decisions in forums that had previously been closed to the community. However, as interviews and insights from the literature showed, these open spaces for participation were commonly shaped and governed by decisions made in closed spaces, through programme guidance, conflicting policies, or through decision-making and reporting structures that limited the community's or organiser's propensity to act on their own accord.[988] Programme design also created visible tensions

[987] J. Gaventa, 'Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis', (2006) 37(6) *IDS Bulletin*, 22-33. (Online) Available at: <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/8354/IDSB_37_6_10.1111-j.17595436.2006.tb00320.x.pdf;jsessionid=9D31012 DF6568994CF43BC6F0144B9A5?sequence=1> Last accessed: August 17th 2019.

[988] P. Lawless, 'Can Area-based Regeneration Programmes Ever Work? Evidence from England's New Deal for Communities Programme', (2012) 33 *Policy Studies,* 313-328; A. Reynolds and L. Grimshaw, 'Sustainability in Community Organizing: Lessons from the Community Organisers Programme in England (2011 – 2015)', (2019) *Sustainable Communities Review,* (Online) Available at: <http://scrjournal.org/SCR%20Spring%202019/Reynolds_Grimshaw.pdf> Last accessed: 25th October 2019.

and power dynamics between community members and between communities and local agencies and government, all vying to remain relevant and protect their interests in a climate of scarce resources and changing government practices. As chapter five demonstrated, empowerment creates challenges and tensions too, with residents reflecting on the pressures and responsibility that came with the volunteer role. Something that is rarely discussed in empowerment models like Arnstein's ladder where citizen control is promoted as the model of involvement to aspire to, and assumptions are made that citizens will work cohesively within this desired space. The powercube has also served as a tool to illustrate participation's ability to disempower, through overselling the level of influence citizens and communities may have, or to '*super-empower'*[989] putting residents in positions of influence and decision-making they were not entirely comfortable with, or felt they lacked sufficient expertise or training to act.

Finally, the adapted powercube served as a device to consider hidden and invisible power dynamics that government-led initiatives to promote community involvement create. Decades of decline, intergenerational poverty, and policies set at national government have shaped the ways in which people feel about their communities and their level of responsibility and/or capacity to act and influence matters within them. Some of this will be displayed visibly: responding to calls to participate, rejecting or protesting initiatives, or remaining apathetic having 'heard it all before.'[990] Invisible forces, by their very nature are harder to identify, but it is argued such forces influence an individuals internalised view of whether they can or should participate, and are a factor in the distrust and suspicion of and between government, residents and local agencies that emerged through interviews and that are documented within the literature.

One of the research questions guiding this research was whether state-led community empowerment was something of an oxymoron. As discussed above, some have viewed the government's repeated 'turn to community' as a ruse for neoliberalist ideals and cuts to funding - shifting responsibility for social problems from the state to the community.[991] While others have viewed it as a mechanism of control, limiting the extent to which communities and VCS organisations are able to demonstrate or promote more radical agendas.[992] Findings in this thesis have provided some evidence to suggest the rhetoric and reality of government regeneration policy have not always married. Yet, aligned with Newman who warns against viewing neoliberalism as homogenous, this research has also demonstrated the role government can play in promoting and creating agency for communities to act, as well as being a focal point of resistance that elicits community-

[989] Robin, NDC Resident Board Member.

[990] R. Meegan and A. Mitchell, 'It's Not Community Round Here, It's Neighbourhood': Neighbourhood Change and Cohesion in Urban Regeneration Policies', (2001) 38(12) *Urban Studies,* 2167-2194.

[991] M.A. Macleod and A. Emejulu, 'Neoliberalism with a Community Face? A Critical Analysis of Asset-Based Community Development', (2014) 22(4), *Journal of Community Practice*, 437.

[992] R. Levitas, 'Community, Utopia and New Labour', (2000) 15(3) *Local Economy*, 188-197; Beck, D. and Purcell, R., *International Community Organising: Taking Power, Making Change,* (The Policy Press, 2013).

led responses, whether it intends to or not.[993] Central government's influence is not restricted to funding, policy and legislation, governments are uniquely placed to shape attitudes, shape culture and increase awareness. Even interviewees in America, where central government has typically been more removed from the neighbourhood level, spoke of the value of government advocating for investment in communities and the involvement of local people. At the time of the research visit there was genuine excitement about having a President in the White House (Barack Obama) who understood community organising principles and had been an organiser themselves, and this was raising the profile of the work they did. While participants in England talked about the important role the 'levers' of government can and had played in creating opportunities for community-led regeneration despite some of the flaws discussed. The following section moves on to consider what is needed to translate rhetoric into such an enabling environment for community participation and leadership.

8.5 Looking ahead and recommendations

As this thesis and the literature it has drawn upon have sought to demonstrate - regeneration and community engagement cannot be short-term interventions. A concerted, long-term, and where possible, cross-party approach to regeneration is needed if sustainable regeneration is to be achieved. Short-term interventions have been shown to have limited impact, while the long term 'hidden' effects on communities consistently 'done to' through regeneration limit the chances of community support for interventions and the likely success of the intervention.[994] Increased community engagement and participation, when done properly, can bring positive outcomes for communities, but if initiatives are to be successful there must be an understanding of the needs of different communities, and there must be investments in building the capacity of local people if they are to take the lead in delivering local regeneration.[995] Along with a recognition that it takes time to build capacity and trust with and between local institutions and that the process of communities coming together, experimenting, succeeding and at times failing together is vital for building social capital and ensuring sustained involvement in community programmes.[996]

It should be stressed the UK does not need to reinvent the wheel, indeed as has been demonstrated; there has been too

[993] J. Newman, 'Landscapes of Antagonism: Local Governance, Neoliberalism and Austerity', (2014) 51(15) *Urban Studies,* 3290-3305;
[994] M. Taylor, E. Buckly and C. Hennessey, *Historical Review of Place-Based Approaches,* (Lankelly Chase, 2017) (Online) Available at: <https://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf> Last accessed: 25th September 2019.
[995] Reid, J. N., *Community Participation: How People Power Brings Sustainable Benefits to Communities*, (U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, Office of Community Development, 2000).
[996] K. Yang, 'Trust and Citizen Involvement Decisions: Trust in Citizens, Trust in Institutions, and Propensity to Trust', (2006) 38 *Administration & Society*, 573-595.

many examples of similar programmes being revised under new guiding philosophies and replicating past mistakes. This thesis has explored how large scale area based initiatives, investments in neighbourhood management, changes to legislation and attempts to mobilise grassroots action, all offer potentially empowering opportunities, however, these have been diluted by the government's failure to change structures or adapt working and monitoring processes to the realities of working at the neighbourhood level.

As discussed above, and across chapters five, six, and seven is the need to do more to build and sustain community leadership. A thread running through all of the programmes that this thesis has looked at is the value placed on intermediary support, of having organisations and individuals who understand work at the community level, and that can help groups and individuals navigate the often messy and politically charged process of community-led regeneration. If community organisations are expected to be more independent and to weather further years of austerity and spending cuts they must be equipped with the skills to negotiate, to strategise and to better understand how to use 'power', as well as to understand how their own actions impact on delicate power balances at the community and local level. The 'place, space and power' framework put forward can prove a useful vehicle for this.

The important role local institutions in America played in supporting and guiding community efforts was also notable. The two universities visited, demonstrated effective models of connecting with local communities and sharing the universities considerable access to expertise, resources and insight to make a positive contribution to the local community, while also providing a valuable learning environment for their students. The burgeoning Clinical Legal Studies movement in the UK should further look to the US to see how they can expand their support to communities by linking with other relevant departments such as Schools of Urban Planning and faculties of social science. The important role LISC played across the US also highlighted the important role a nationally recognised organisation with locally placed satellite offices can play in operating on behalf of communities, experimenting with best practice and sharing valuable lessons learnt, it is submitted this is still something missing from current community provision in the UK following the closure of representative bodies like the Community Development Foundation, BURA and to some extent Urban Forum. Indeed, there is too much passion, innovation, and existing good work being done at the community level for this to go unrecognised, un-nurtured and unsupported.

While the scope of this study is the period 1997-2015 it is worth noting that at the time of writing central government continues to promote the role of communities and community-based organisations in building a 'stronger society'. In 2018 DCMS and the Office for Civil Society released a new civil society strategy. Entitled '*Civil Society Strategy: Building a Future that Works for Everyone'* the strategy sets out a vision and approach that is markedly similar to regeneration and civic strategies that have been discussed throughout this thesis: partnership between communities and the public and

private sector remains a primary aim; while 'social capital' has been replaced by a drive to achieve '*social value*'; ideas of '*fairness*' and '*independence from the state'* prevail.[997] While civil society is said to refer to:

> *…individuals and organisations when they act with the primary purpose of creating social value, independent of state control. By social value we mean enriched lives and a fairer society for all*. [It goes on to state that] *…to help communities thrive, the government believes we need to look at five foundations of social value: people, places, the social sector, the private sector, and the public sector*. *In the past we have too often thought of these foundations as separate from each other. But when they work together, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Government can help to bring together the resources, policies and people who, between them, can do so* .[998]

To deliver this a number of 'place-based' programmes have been announced by the government, most significantly the seven-year £4.5 Place Based Social Action programme (co-funded with the National Lottery Community Fund – a sign in itself of the reduction in state funding for regeneration and the blurring of lines between the state and the voluntary and public sector) and a continuation of the Community Organisers programme. Programmes to promote community leadership, build capacity and increase channels for community influence and participation all feature. It will be interesting to see whether these programmes manage to learn from any of the lessons from past 'place' or 'neighbourhood' based programmes, or whether it appears to be more rhetoric to which the machinery of government struggles to match.

8.6 Contribution to Knowledge

It is submitted that an examination of the themes above offers a valuable contribution to knowledge on issues of regeneration policy, community development, social sustainability and policy transfer. Providing practical insight for academics, policymakers and community stakeholders and presenting recommendations that could assist in future regeneration and social policy development. In doing so this thesis has contributed to the scholarly fields of sustainable regeneration, and community development, as well as adding to the work in the fields of law and geography and law and space. It is submitted that this thesis makes a contribution to knowledge in the following ways:

From a comprehensive literature review, it became apparent that few studies look to compare and contrast findings from a range of government-led regeneration programmes or policies, rather the focus is often on one particular strand of policy or programme. By looking at a range of policies and programmes, across successive governments, and complementing

[997] DCMS, *Civil Society Strategy: Building a Future that Works for Everyone*, (Cabinet Office, 2018), 12.
[998] DCMS, *Civil Society Strategy: Building a Future that Works for Everyone*, (Cabinet Office, 2018), 12.

this analysis with interviews with participants involved in the design and delivery of these regeneration programmes this thesis has sought to reflect findings that go some way to addressing the 'policy amnesia' cited by Shaw and Robinson.[999]

While Gaventa's 'place, space and power' framework has been used considerably in international development research and practice there has been limited use of it to explore English social and regeneration policy. This research has sought to demonstrate the practicality of the model for exploring the many faces of power at the neighbourhood level, assessing its strengths and limitations for informing urban regeneration policy and programmes in the UK and other developed countries. It is submitted that the adapted model is a useful tool for policymakers, community members and facilitators to consider power dynamics, challenges, and opportunities within their locality,

Finally, a number of findings from primary research conducted in England and the United States are presented, and their implications for English community policy and practice discussed. Insights are presented which could inform policy and programme design going forwards as the incumbent Conservative government progress their latest civic society strategy. In comparing and contrasting English and American approaches to community organising and participation, a contribution is also made to the body of English-American policy literature cited in the opening chapter.

[999] K. Shaw and F. Robinson, 'Learning From Experience? Reflections on Two Decades of British Urban Policy' (1998) 69(1) *Town Planning Review*, 49.

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Appendix One – Interviews

Thank you to the following for their participation in this study:

Yittayih Zelalem, Chicago 24th January 2011.

Nik Theodore, Chicago 24th January 2011.

Earnest Gates, Chicago 25th January 2011.

LaShunda Gonzalez, Chicago 25th January 2011.

Jenné Myers, Chicago 27th January 2011.

Marva Williams, Chicago, 28th January 2011.

Susan Bennett, Washington DC 31st January 2011.

Dominic Malden, Washington DC 1st February 2011.

Fitz Jean, New York 3rd February 2011.

Nandita Verma, New York 4th February 2011.

Conrad Parke, Birmingham (UK), 10th December 2018.

Alister Shaw, Telephone interview 13th February 2019.

Kirby Swales, London 15th March 2019.

Ian Merryman, London 1st May 2019.

Penny Seale, London 1st May 2019.

Appendix Two – Interview Questions

England interviews

1. **Interviewee background**

- Please tell me about your involvement / role within NDC/NMP/wider regeneration activity.
- What were your responsibilities?
- How long were you involved in the programme?
- Were you involved in any other programmes under the banner of neigbourhood renewal?

2. **Community participation**

- What were the aspirations for community involvement in the programmes you were involved in?
- To what extent were 'the community' involved in the design/delivery/ongoing evaluation/direction of the programme(s) you were involved in?
- What were the mechanisms for their involvement?
- To what extent do you feel residents were making the decisions?
- How did you personally support this process? How did your team/organisation?
- How did you find the process of ceding more control to residents? How did colleagues?
- Were any mechanisms more effective than others for supporting community participation?
- How did residents come to be involved in the programme? Were they recruited/selected? Or Self-selecting? How?
- To what extent do you think residents felt empowered?

3. **Community perceptions**

- What were community perceptions of the progamme like? Was there good awareness of the programme and the opportunities to get involved?
- How did you decide which issues to pursue?

- Was there consensus amongst residents and stakeholders over the issues?
- What was the relationships like between the programme team and residents?

4. **Community capacity**

- What were the barriers and enablers to community participation?
- Was there capacity to participate? Were there skills gaps? Or knowledge gaps? How were these addressed?
- Was there any capacity building needed? Who provided this?
- If so, do you have any thoughts or examples of what can be done to bridge some of these gaps?
- In your experience, what is right to level of involvement for resident/communities?
- How do you develop community/neighbourhood strategies if the community are apathetic?
- How involved were local agencies? What was their appetite for community involvement/leadership like?

5. **Local Authority Relationship**

- What was the partnership's relationship like with the local authority?
- To what extent did the local authority embrace the programme?
- Were there any tensions between the partnership and local authority? Were there any tensions between the neighbourhood management team and the local authority?
- Were working relationships maintained beyond the lifetime of the programme? How?
- As an NDC delivery org did colleagues embrace community led elements? Any insights from wider programme around this?

6. **Regional governance**

- Did you or the partnership have much interaction with RDAs/LSPs/GOs?
- What (if any) was your interaction like with them?
- What is your view on these delivery arrangements?
- Was there a role for 'anchor institutions'/community catalysts (e.g. universities, hospitals?

- Did you have any interaction with central government? If so, what?

7. **Power / State led vs bottom up**

- How much freedom was there from central/local government targets/intervention/reporting in the programmes you were involved in?
- To what extent was power acknowledged/discussed in this programme/partnership? How was it managed? Accounted for? Equalised?
- I am interested in how much you think about power in your role?
- What role do you think government should take in promoting and or supporting community-led regeneration?
- Under the different governments have you noticed much in the way of differences in your work? The Sector?
- More recently, do provisions in the Localism Act/Social Value Act cross over into your work? How so?
- What are your views on the Community Organisers Programme/Neighbourhood planning?
- What would you like to see change, or to see better reflected in future policy / practice?

8. **Wider stakeholders**

- Do you see a bigger role for philanthropy in the UK?
- How does the Big Local approach fair differently to NDC/NMP, or any other programmes you've been involved in?
- Has American community development practice or theory, or any particular projects had an influence on your work or thinking?
- Do you know of any other international examples relevant to the thesis?
- NR - LSPs – Do you think there was a mismatch between overall/partner stakeholder evaluation and local surveys?
- What impact has austerity had on your work/the communities you're working with.
- Is there anything else you'd like to discuss that you think is relevant to this work?

America interviews

1. **Interviewee background**

- Please tell me about your role and organisation.
- How long have you been working in the area?
- What are your responsibilities?

iv) Community participation

- How do you involve and engage with the local community in your work?
- To what extent were 'the community' involved in the design/delivery/ongoing evaluation/direction of the programme(s) you were involved in?
- What are the mechanisms for their involvement?
- To what extent do you feel residents are making decisions about the work you do?
- How do you personally support this process? How do your team/organisation?
- Are there any mechanisms more effective than others for supporting community participation?
- How do residents come to be involved in the programme? How are they recruited/selected? Or Self-selecting?
- To what extent do you think residents feel empowered as a result of your work?

v) Community perceptions

- Is there a good awareness of your work locally?
- How do you decide which issues/projects to pursue? Do local people agree?
- How do you build consensus?
- What are the main challenges in your area?

vi) Community capacity

- What are the barriers and enablers to community participation in your area?
- How do you build capacity for participation?

- In your experience, what is right to level of involvement for resident/communities?
- How do you develop community/neighbourhood strategies or projects if the community are apathetic?
- How involved are local agencies in your work? What is their appetite for community involvement/leadership like?

vii) Local Authority Relationship

- How is your work funded?
- What is your relationship like with local/municipal/state/city government?
- To what extent do they embrace your work?
- What are the enablers and barriers to effective working with local government?

viii) State led vs bottom up

- How much freedom is there from central/local government targets/intervention/reporting in your work?
- What are your views on Community Organisers Programme/Area based initiatives/Neighbourhood planning?
- What role do you think government should take in promoting and or supporting community-led regeneration?
- What advice would you have for government/organisations wanting to support grassroots organisations?
- Have you noticed a shift since Obama was elected?
- Do you have any views on the difference between UK and US approaches?
- Can you tell me about Tax Increment Funding/New Communities Programme/City Mayors?

ix) Further questions

- How has the recession impacted on your work and your community?
- How do you sustain community organisations without government subsidy?
- Is there anything else you'd like to discuss that you think is relevant to this work?

Appendix Three - Overview of US organisations visited

The following appendix provides an overview of the organisations visited as part of the research trip to the USA.

Washington

One DC
Aim / Mission - "To exercise political strength to create and preserve racial and economic equity in Shaw and the District". - "We seek to create a community in DC that is equitable for all".
History - "Formerly Manna CDC, founded in 1997 in the midst of neighbourhood change." - Formed to address structural causes of poverty and injustice - Community-led
Scale - Shaw and the District, Washington
Delivery Mechanism / Model / Projects - Community-led organisation - Projects around housing, employability skills and youth services - " ONE DC's organizing work centres on popular education, community organising and alternative economic development projects."

Figure A - One DC[1000]

[1000] OneDC, 'website' *(OneDC)* <http://www.onedconline.org> accessed 22 October 2019.

Community & Economic Development Law Clinic, Washington University
Aim / Mission - "We see the law as a mechanism that can build or destroy communities and enable or stifle economic development. We teach students to understand the context of their legal work within a community and its economy, with the goal of creating engaged, highly competent, client-centred lawyers." - "We aim to produce graduates who are ready to start practising law from the time they finish law school." - To represent low-income and under-represented clients
History - Founded by Professor Jane Bennett, Professor of Law, Director of the Community & Economic Development Law Clinic at American University Washington College of Law
Scale - They support and represent non-profits, small business owners, tenants' associations - District of Columbia and Maryland
Delivery Mechanism / Model / Projects - A Community and Economic Development Law Clinic run from the university - Students represent low-income and under-represented clients or groups in litigation, administrative, and transactional matters - Promoting economic development "We see community development – the capacity of neighbourhood-based organisations to keep the benefits of development in communities – as fundamental to economic development".

Figure B - Washington University Community & Economic Development Law Clinic

Chicago

Near West Side Community Development Corporation
Aim / Mission - "Our mission is to create a viable, mixed-income community in West Haven without the displacement of low and moderate-income residents."
History - A not-for-profit organisation serving West Haven community since 1988 - A number of staff from the organisation that have been community organising in Chicago for over 50 years
Scale - West Haven - Chicago
Delivery Mechanism / Model / Projects "Promotes civic engagement among community members and works with residents to develop, design, and execute sustainable strategies for the comprehensive development of the community." - "provides programming in the areas of job preparation, life skills training, and financial literacy; offers social services to residents in public housing; maintains and develops the area's commercial corridor; offers permanent housing to residents who would otherwise be homeless; implements youth programming focused on athletic, artistic, and academic activities."

Figure C - Near West Side Community Development Corporation[1001]

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Chicago
Aim / Mission "LISC equips struggling communities with the capital, strategy and know-how to become places where people can thrive."
History More than 35 years of expertise. Developed in 1979, through the Ford Foundation.

[1001] Near West Side Community Development Corporation, 'website' *(Near West Side Community Development Corporation*) <http://www.nearwestsidecdc.org> accessed 22 October 2019.

Scale
A national organisation with thirty-one local offices reaching 1,400 counties and working with a substantial network of community partners
Delivery Mechanism / Model / Projects - A not-for-profit 'intermediary' bringing together a variety of resources and funding streams with disadvantaged communities. - Investing in a number of issues at the same time in an area from housing, health, education, public safety and employment - Using local leaders, residents and local institutions who understand the need

Figure D - Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) [1002]

Voorhees Centre for Neighbourhood and Community Improvement, University of Illinois
Aim / Mission - "Improve the quality of life for all the residents of the City of Chicago and the metropolitan area through research and technical assistance to organisations and local government agencies in their efforts to improve neighbourhoods and community."
History - Established in 1978 by Alan Voorhees, in honour of his wife, Nathalie. "It has completed more than 300 projects with more than 100 partners during its 35-year history".
Scale - "While rooted in Chicago, the Centre's community-driven and interdisciplinary approach has connected it with communities across the region, nation and abroad."
Delivery Mechanism / Model / Projects - VC is a unit of the College of Urban Policy and Public Affairs at the University of Ilinois at Chicago - Assisting residents, community organisations, local government agencies and others with community development problems - Producing community surveys, technical assistance, impact studies, needs assessment, gap analysis, market studies, feasibility analysis, affordable housing plans and financial analysis

[1002] Local Initiatives Support Corporation. 'Website' *(Local Initiatives Support Corporation)* <http://www.lisc.org> accessed 22 October 2019.

Figure E - Voorhees Centre for Neighbourhood and Community Improvement[1003]

One Good Deed Chicago
Aim / Mission - "to support organisations to engage more volunteers and to use them more effectively to achieve impact for at-risk youth and enhance economic recovery for Chicagoans."
History - Initiative at Chicago City Hall (Publically funded) - Backed by Mayors
Scale - Citywide – Chicago
Delivery Mechanism / Model / Projects - seeks to promote one day a year in Chicago where everyone volunteered, plus regular volunteering in communities. - Linking volunteers to non-profits organisations - Encourages volunteering in college campuses - Online resources and networking

Figure F - One Good Deed Chicago[1004]

New York

Manpower Demonstration Research Centre (MDRC)
Aim / Mission - "Building Knowledge to Improve Social Policy"

[1003] Voorhees Centre for Neighbourhood and Community Improvement, 'Website' (Voorhees Centre for Neighbourhood and Community Improvement) <http://www.voorheescenter.com≥ accessed 22 October 2016.

[1004] One Good Deed Chicago, 'Website' *(One Good Deed Chicago)* <http://www.onegooddeedchicago.org> accessed 22 October 2019.

- "Committed to finding solutions… from reducing poverty and bolstering economic self-sufficiency to improving public education and college graduation rates." - Working to "improve the lives of low-income individuals, families and children."
History - 40 years of experience in research methods in evaluation and sharing those insights
Scale - National insight - Their aim is to find solutions to national problems - Conducting evaluations of a number of programmes across the country
Delivery Mechanism / Model / Projects - Research and consultancy service looking at the performance of social programmes - Evaluations of programmes around community-led activities Design of new interventions and improvements to existing interventions - Intermediary – connecting funding to test policy ideas - Communication of insight to policymakers and practitioners

Figure G – Manpower Demonstration Research Centre[1005]

Mount Hope Housing
Aim / Mission - "Mount Hope aims to develop, educate, and empower community residents while invigorating and investing in the neighbourhood infrastructure and physical space".
History - "Created, led, and driven by community interests." - provided housing and services that have created independence and opportunities for Bronx families for over 29 years.
Scale - Residents of the Mount Hope community in the North West Bronx.
Delivery Mechanism / Model / Projects - Mount Hope Housing Company is a community development corporation - "Providing affordable housing, youth services, employment, job training, real estate development, and asset building programs".

[1005] MDRC, 'website' *(MCRC)* <http://www.mdrc.org> accessed 22 October 2019.

Figure H - Mount Hope Housing[1006]

Harlem Community Economic Development Corporation
Aim / Mission - "Through the creation of partnerships, Harlem CDC plans and facilitates a wide range of community revitalization initiatives, strengthening upper Manhattan and its economically and culturally vibrant communities".
History - Created in 1995, supersedes the Harlem Urban Development Corporation (HUDC) that existed from 1971 to 1995.
Scale - Greater Harlem community
Delivery Mechanism / Model / Projects - "By targeting vacant or underutilized commercial, residential and publicly-owned property, Harlem CDC and its partners are able to attract new businesses, retain and grow existing businesses, provide access to homeownership opportunities for area residents, create employment opportunities and improve the quality of life and the environment within upper Manhattan." - "Harlem CDC, through its partnerships, also provides information, technical and financial assistance and skills training to community-based organisations and individuals seeking to create independent projects and initiatives which support further investment in upper Manhattan neighbourhoods".

Figure I - Harlem Community Economic Development Corporation[1007]

[1006] Mount Hope Housing, 'Website' *(Mount Hope Housing)* <http://www.mounthopehousing.org> accessed 22 October 2016.

[1007] Harlem Community Economic Development Corporation**,** 'Website' ***(****Harlem Community Economic Development Corporation***)** <www.harlemcdc.org> accessed 22 October 2019.