Community

Partnership-Making

in

South Wales:

Mediations and Manipulations

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Με αγάπη για τη μητέρα μου,

Αννα

σας ευχαριστώ

Abstract

This ethnographic research within the community of *Hendinas* in South Wales is set at the intersection of debates about governance and the place of 'community' within public policy. Taking the Welsh Governments' Community First Programme as its starting point, it explores how community based practices that have 'something to do' (Law 2003) with partnership, come to constitute institutionalised 'community-led partnerships'. Grounded in empirical ethnographic and interview data, the core research question of 'how is partnership made in and through everyday lives?' is addressed through the development and exploration of the 'institutional life of a community'. Distinguishing between community as a place of affective ties and one in which action is directed at the collective projects of 'making things better'. Drawing from over a year of fieldwork the thesis develops an empirically grounded critical interpretive policy analysis which engages directly with local people, staff and practices to explore how they use their agency and that ascribed to them by the Communities First policy as productive agents (NAfW 2001a; WAG2007a). Developed from the work of Foucault (1991a [1978]) much policy literature has highlighted the self-responsibilisation risks of government programmes. This research finds that while these risks exist, there is also a counter trend grounded in the broader 'institutional life of communities', in which *critical self-responsibilisation* also develops.

The research explores the parameters of local understandings of 'successful' policy implementation by considering an instance of its 'failure' which brings into view two different models of partnership. The first, 'partnership *for* action' requires formal participation in a 'partnership' as a *pre*condition of action, in contrast to 'partnership *as* action', in which partnership emerges *from* action between two or more agencies. Exploring policy implications and extrapolating from research findings, the thesis highlights tensions between the local advancement of communities which indicate that despite seeking to enhance social justice, the Communities First policy may perversely exasperate tensions and schisms between disadvantaged communities.

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Ethical Approvals

This research project has received ethical approval from and met the requirements of the following bodies:

i.   Cardiff School of Social Science: School Ethnics Committee
     Approval Ref: SREC/651

ii. Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care
     and/or the Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations
     2004
     Approval Ref: SPON 854-10,

Abbreviations

AiC	Action in Communities (Pseudonym)
BS	Boundary Spanner
CF	Communities First
CFLAG	Children and Families Local Action Groups (Pseudonym)
LA	Local Authority
PAR	Participatory Action Research
Renew	Hendinas Renew Limited (Pseudonym)
NAfW*	National Assembly for Wales
SLB	Street Level Bureaucrat
TSS	Third Sector Scheme
VSS	Voluntary Sector Scheme
WAG*	Welsh Assembly Government
WIMD	Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation
WG*	Welsh Government
WCVA	Wales Council for Voluntary Action
YPLAG	Young Peoples Local Action Groups (Pseudonym)

*The devolved Welsh Government has been historically known by all three titles, and each is used in the thesis as it applied to the period referred to. At the time of writing NAfW refers to the whole elected body and WG, the specific elected administration.

Chapter 1   Introduction

This thesis reports on an ethnographic study of partnership-making within a community in South Wales. The principal policy framework that interacts with local practice is the Communities First programme (WAG 2002a, WAG 2002b), which establishes interagency partnerships, led by the community as the driver for change. The study sits at the intersection between a numbers of debates. From political science it is informed by the dilemmas of governance, in particular, by so called 'new-governance.' Here the claims are that the state has become increasingly fragmented (Stoker 1998; Pierre and Stoker 2000), heterarchic in the locations of its decision-making (Jessop 2000, 2003) and inclusive in its involvement of a diverse range of agents from beyond the state (Cabinet Office 1999; Sullivan and Skelcher 2002; Blunkett 2003). From social policy, these conditions of governance can be seen in partnerships: that is multi agency constructions with the synergistic power to transform coordination, service planning and delivery, holistically attending to the most 'wicked' of social challenges (6 *et al.* 2002; Powell and Glendinning 2002; Huxham and Vangen 2005). From social theory, community is evoked as the location of the moral individual, aware of her place in a prescribed social order, transforming conceptions of citizenship and civic duty within community boundaries (Etzioni 1996; Blair 2002; Prideaux 2005). In addition the location of the research in Wales, with its self-professed 'left-of-centre' social values in policy-making (Morgan 2002; Drakeford 2007a, Drakeford 2007b) infuse these issues with a particular Welsh flavour. This is a field of claim and counterclaim, but crucially one in which tangible social programmes interact with the lives of real people.

With such a rich and fertile area of inquiry in an already crowded field of academic study, this thesis could take many different starting points. It chooses to begin in a local community, to be known as Hendinas, in which partnership-making is shaped by the Communities First (CF) programme.

From here, it asks 'how is partnership made in, and through everyday lives?' Further elaboration on the research question and sub-questions will follow below, the critical issue to grasp here is the location of the research within the community and its exploration of what the community does that comes to be known as 'partnership'. It thus addresses a gap in scholarly understanding about the experience of partnership-making within communities. In this way it is distinguished from traditional research that explores the implementation of a policy in a community setting. This latter framing of the issue establishes the field of research as that *defined by* the policy. In contrast, the approach adopted within the current study asks in what ways do community members understand their actions, and how do *they* construct them as contributing to partnership.

In this way, the community of Hendinas has been instrumental in establishing the parameters of the study within an ethnographic fieldwork design, and the analytical task beyond. This has involved a process of following the paths of interaction and engagement that begin within the community and extend out to external agencies through its interactions to the wider CF and public policy context. The interest here is how the concept of partnership is utilised *laterally* within the community, rather than *lineally* within the policy framework. This approach marks the research apart from most mainstream studies in this field and makes an important contribution to an area of scholarship dominated by policy-framed appraisals of implementation (Hodgson 2004; Davies 2007). It takes seriously the insight that those enlisted as policy agents rarely act in rational ways, as defined by the policy (Bevir 2005:31). Thus, if within the local community there are a range of situated rationalities that account for action that falls broadly within the scope, defined by the policy and have 'something to do' (Law 2003) with its principal ideas, then it is possible to explore the ways in which these coalesce (or not) with that policy. From here, analytical interest can address how these local rationalities and practices operate and interact with the policy and with what effects. These are challenging issues and their elaboration is subject to many qualifications and contextual considerations. No definitive conclusions are

offered but the dilemmas encapsulated within this approach are explored in this thesis.

This introductory chapter addresses five tasks. It opens with a broad discussion of the scope of the debates that bring research dilemmas into being, and more specifically establishes the necessary parameters around the current study. Second, it outlines the methodological approach that is intrinsic to the construction of the research questions which are then explored in the third section. The fourth section makes explicit two notable exclusions from the study. Finally, section five presents an outline of the chapters that follow.

1.1   *Scoping Debates*

This research is located in the discursive arena of partnerships within a broader governance narrative (Rhodes 2000; Newman 2001). Community development with its own historical antecedents (Craig 1989; Craig *et al.*, 2011a; Ledwith 2011) is harnessed in the debate through policy engagement with the idea of 'community.' While the development of partnerships may not be a new phenomenon, they have been ascribed high political and policy salience during the last 30 years (Powell 1999b; Newman 2001; Jupp 2000; Glendinning *et al.*, 2002; Powell and Glendinning 2002; Sullivan and Skelcher 2002). Their context specificity but conceptual flexibility, makes partnership a valuable resource in public policy, enabling it to be coupled with a great many diverse theoretical concepts and political visions (Mackintosh 1992; Giddens 1998). The range of agents involved in partnerships ensures that while governments may seek to structure the purpose to which partnerships are put, this remains an open and dynamic project, in which the field is marked by a complex array of shifting alignments (Bell and Hindmoor 2009; Newman and Clarke 2009). Thus, dynamics of development cannot be understood in straightforward terms, change is often uneven or partial, temporary and subject to alteration. 'Other' agents interpret and act with, and upon the dynamics at play, bringing in new resources and amending existing ones,

changing further the field, its priorities and interactions (Newman and Clarke 2009).

Partnerships embody the new relationships of governance. Across different territorial levels *within* the state, relationships are recast by political arrangements such as the devolved national institutions in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. *Between* the state, in both its old and new manifestations, partnerships emerge with a diverse array of agents *beyond* it. New kinds of relationships are forged with the voluntary / third sector, communities, lay people, the market, different tiers of elected government and non-elected public bodies. These are purposeful enactments targeted ostensibly at service coordination and improved outcomes, but they operate across different time frames, at different levels and for a variety of purposes. The business of the state is thus fragmented and dispersed.

The development of partnerships also involves a strange and perplexing twist intangibly enmeshed within positive rhetoric and visionary aspirations. The 'old' unified governance operating through the apparent simplicity of the Westminster model is demonstrably *political* as seen in its accountability through the electoral system (Rhodes 1997). In contrast, 'new' governance with its diverse locations, multiple delivery agents and broad targets, pitched rhetorically as more democratic and inclusive, perversely *de-politicises* the business of governing. Partnerships have been presented as managerial projects (Newman 2001), amenable to evidence-based planning and technocratic intervention (Nutley and Webb 2000; Solesbury 2001; 6 2002). It is however, one of the paradoxes of governance, that the inclusion of 'others' provides a 'legitimate' platform for dissent. Thus, these de-politicising dynamics are countered by challenging political ones.

Within the thesis, the politics of governance is brought to the fore in the location of partnerships within communities. However, community is another elusive concept in an unstable field. From a social science perspective, the place of community in partnerships is challenged by the need to account for its demise as a sociological concept and its rise as a

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political resource. Sociology's abandonment of community as an object of sociological study, most prominently within the Community Studies sub-section of the discipline (Bell and Newby 1971; Frankenberg 1971 [1966]; Crow 2002), left in its wake a concept amenable to appropriation. Rose (1996,1999) informed by Foucault (1977,1991a [1978]) and followed by many (Atkinson 1999; Cruikshank 1999; Ilcan and Basok 2004; Carmel and Harlock 2008; Dean (2010 [1999]; Sørensen and Triantafillou 2009a), has explored how 'community' has replaced the 'social' as the terrain of government. In this analysis community is intrinsic to the operation of governmentality, or 'the art of governing' (Foucault 1991a [1978], see Chapter 5). Simultaneous in more proselytising mode, populist formulations of communitarianism have ascribed community a redemptive status. In public policy it is the rhetoric of moral communitarianism that dominates, securing a route into policy programmes that evoke community as both the object and subject of policy interventions. Simultaneously deprived and broken places in need of renewal are paradoxically idealised places full of transformative capacities. While it is possible to dispute the value ascribed to this appropriation of community, its centrality in political projects appears beyond dispute.

In this context 'community-led partnership', as required in the Communities First programme is a loaded term. Two issues need highlighting here. First, the claiming of community in public policy should not be confused with the acquiescence of community to that same claim, or certainly not in any kind of simplistic way. Second Communities First is a Welsh programme, designed in the early years of Welsh devolution, in which the desire to mark out the new institution as more socialist and left-of-centre were arguably at its strongest (Morgan 2002). Accordingly, Welsh policy-making and Welsh history give this research study its own particular character. While Wales can be seen as largely subject to the same forces as the rest of the UK and more widely the global north, there are some points of divergence that we need to remain cognisant of, and some variation in the way broader issues are played out locally.

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The parameters of the research are drawn from this tangle of issues. From governance, the research accepts that governing happens in places beyond the state and includes non-traditional agents. Within the Communities First programme, community is understood as both the location of governance and its agent. Indeed, rhetorically community is the programme's *principal* agent. Partnerships are recognised as governmental and institutional formations that formalise, legitimate and serve as a resource for the community. Understood in this way these issues form the foundation of the research.

Before moving on to consider the methodological approach employed it is necessary to consider the role of the *everyday* within the research. The *everyday* is understood as the context in which community-led partnership-making is explored. As such, this thesis attends to developing empirical and theoretical contributions to the understanding of community practice and its relationship with social policy, rather than the sociology of the everyday. This position acknowledges the extensive and ongoing debates within the philosophy and sociology of the everyday (de Certeau 1984; Lefevbre Adler et al. 1987; Highmoor 2002; Sheringham 2006; Pink 2012; Lefebvre 2014) but takes at face value the everyday as the place in which the *ordinariness* of lives lived prevails. It accepts that everyday life both embodies and constitutes actions that produce patterns of interaction and dynamic rhythms that are themselves subject to academic consideration. However, while these insights inform the methodological approach, their role within the research is to drive forward the analysis for policy insight.

1.2   Methodological Approach

Both the research field and the methodological approach adopted to 'know' it are understood as dynamic and interconnected. A position that accepts that the questions asked of a field inevitably shapes what comes to be 'known'. This is an insight located in the dissonance between (i) academic scholarship discussing the implementation of policy in communities and (ii) experience of both personal community activism and

professional practice in and with communities. To take Bevir's (2005) insight further, not only does policy assume that those it identifies as 'policy agents' will behave in rational ways as defined by the policy, it addresses these agents in uni-dimensional ways, i.e., as policy agents orientated towards the delivery of policy objectives. In community settings (and arguably in many professional ones) the role of 'policy agent' is secondary to other identities and roles; people living in communities are first and foremost, mothers, fathers, young people, children, organisers and activists. Their relationship to any given policy is inevitably different to that of an individual who in effect is commissioned (directly or indirectly) by that policy. In this sense, the 'purchase' of the policy is more limited on individuals within communities. The dissonance arises therefore in the mismatch between the prescriptive evocations called for by policy, aimed at shaping action towards rational ends and the messy lives lived by real people. The former is inadequate in both directing and accounting for the latter, or in the words of Maffesoli (1989:4) 'unidimensionality in thought is unsuitable for understanding the polydimensionality of lived experience.'

Methodologically, the imperative to recognise that the inherent limitations and positionality inscribed in policy formulations requires that this same insight be applied equally to all positions within the policy-making and delivery context. Thus, a simple move to explore policy-making from the perspective of users does not in itself offer much of an innovation. The approach of interpretive policy analysis (Fischer 2003; Bevir 2010; Yanow 2000, 2007; Rhodes 2011; Wagenaar 2011), with which this research aligns itself, asks different kinds of questions. Accepting that the path of policy implementation does not run smoothly amounts to a recognition of contestation; but accepting the 'polydimensionality of lived experience' (Maffesoli 1989:4) means this cannot be understood in binary terms. This position presents challenges for the research. By rejecting the 'simplicity' of analysing policy implementation from either the 'top' or 'bottom' and accepting that life within communities presents the analyst with a 'surfeit of reality' (Wagenaar 2011:199) the challenge is to be clear about what can be said and its value.

Methodologically, positionality and incompleteness are accepted as conditions of the analytical endeavour and epistemological claims must be appropriately curtailed. However, as suggested above, the field is riven with competing descriptions and proscriptions about how community governance is or should be, yet life in communities continues. In the context of the research, community-led partnerships 'do their work' both within and despite conceptual debates. Accepting the impossibility of complete knowledge frees the analyst to shift the research endeavour to a consideration of what is involved in securing this 'work.' It is possible to explore the relationships between everyday acts that constitute the work of partnership-making, and claims about it. This directs attention onto the relationships within the field of study. That is relationships between people vested with various characteristics, attributes and resources, but also relationships between enactments and accounts of them, between different narratives, policies, imperatives and dynamics. In short, to the relationships and enactment of community based partnership-making.

The task is to establish what is of research interest here. Many different questions can be applied but the critical issue is the recognition that whatever choices are made, they are inherently political. Wagennar (2011:5) expresses this in his assertion that '[p]olicy analysis is a moral activity' and that the interpretive policy approach is grounded in the imperative to 'critique of the hidden ideological quality of traditional analysis' (*ibid.*:7). Implicit within Wagennar's statement (also Fischer 2003, Yanow 2000, 2007) is the idea of 'unmasking' power relations. Analysis informed by post-Foucauldian governmentality has been particularly useful in analysing the complex relations and multiple locations of power that emerge in conditions of governance (McKee 2009, 2011). It also provides a way of recognising the productivity of different governance agents (Newman 2012a, 2012b). Thus, even in a policy context in which community is appropriated by varied political projects, the approach brings into view the spaces created by both design and default within governance arrangements, in which communities find space and often resources to act. If we add to this, the insights about the plurality of life beyond the

policy programme implicit in the idea of 'the polydimensionality of life' (Maffesoli 1989:4), it is possible to begin to forge questions about the community's role in public policy. This is expressed not in terms of the 'articulation of their voice' but as productive agents, that shape both partnership and governance. The research questions emerge from here.

1.3   Research questions

The principle research question is 'How is partnership made in, and through everyday lives?' A brief consideration of the research context supports an exploration of the nuances contained within this question. The community of Hendinas in South Wales, the chosen fieldwork site, shares much in common with many other communities across the region. Falling within the remit of the Communities First programme it is marked as among the 'most disadvantaged' in Wales (NAfW 2000; WAG 2002a; WIMD). The CF programme was heralded as offering 'a new approach to community regeneration' (NAfW 2000:2) in which community development priorities would be agreed by an interagency, but community-led partnership, and delivered through joint work. Thus, we have the bringing together of a number of distinctive elements; the community as leaders in a partnership, on which statutory agents and other external agencies are cast as essential, but secondary. A centrally mandated requirement for 'community regeneration' that is to be locally determined and delivered, and a conflation of ideas in which the community is marked out as deprived and in need of regeneration but also as powerful and resourceful agents. Among many, the hierarchical directive for local organic development stands out as the central paradox around which the uneasy relationships of programmatic governance emerge.

While organising in communities has a long tradition in community development (Alinsky 1972; Ledwith 2011), this is markedly different to the kinds of organisational and leadership relationships required by the CF policy. Moreover, organising *within* communities differs greatly from the quasi-organisational status ascribed (with considerable conceptual

confusions) to '*the* community.' Within this study, the effectiveness or otherwise of these arrangements as required by the policy are not of interest *per se* (WAG 2006c; AMION and Old Bell 3 2011), but the agency ascribed to 'the community' is highly relevant. This is for two perplexing reasons. First, like much public policy the CF programme constructs communities in particular kinds of ways and in the present discussion most notably as institutional agents within 'partnerships' (Royles 2006; Bristow *et al.,* 2008). The partnership as an institutional form thus becomes the legitimate body of local CF projects. And actions undertaken in the name of partnership, are transformed from the acts of private individuals, or community groups to state legitimated actions.

The second reason the agency ascribed to the community is critical, lies in the non-state status of that action. Community within Communities First is valorised for its very non-official status. In other words, its 'ordinariness' (Newman and Clark 2009; Clarke 2010). The programme seeks to engage with and effect change in personal lives. The paradox here is apparent; local people are called upon by the policy to enact the status of both ordinary community members and specialist institutional agents and it is in this tension that the research questions sits.

While the study is located with a local community and the research question is focused at this level, the issues to which it relates are much broader. Earlier it was suggested that the formulation of the research question focuses on community constructions of partnership-making and this supported an investigative approach that follows action through the paths of interaction and engagement made by the community. This approach enables the research to connect to the broader issues that couple the research site and the policy. This is the final dimension of the research question. It opens up an opportunity to read the national policy through the insights of the local.

Pulling these issues together it is possible to reiterate the research question and the sub-questions. Inevitably these interact and to some extent overlap, but for ease these are set out together below.

The research question is:

How is partnership made in, and through everyday lives?

Subsidiary questions are:

- In what ways do community members understand their actions?
- How do *they* construct their actions as contributing to partnership?
- How do local people enact their institutional agency?
- What does the CF policy enable them to do?
- What insights does the local enactment of partnership make to understanding the national policy?

1.4   *Ethnographic research in Hendinas*

The research is located in the community of Hendinas in the South Wales valleys. It shares much in common with many other communities in the area, being built on the upper reaches of the valley a few miles from the nearest town. It is a small community of about 3000 people, and was one of the original 100 Communities First areas and as such, is characterised in public policy discourse as a community marked by multiple deprivations. Like many Community First projects, it saw a notable turn-over of staff in the early years of the programme, but by the time of the year long field work started in September 2010, the project had a relatively stable core staff group. The project coordinator, Elin and Development Officer, Joanna (who also served as Acting Coordinator for a time), led a staff team that engaged with a considerable number of local residents. Hendinas was known in Community First circles (among for example local government officers, civil servants and national voluntary sector infrastructure organisations) as an 'active' community with 'lots going on'.

The use of ethnographic research methods drew me as a researcher into the daily rhythms of community life and opened pathways of participation in many and varied community groups. Chapters 6 – 9 provide greater detail about the some of this engagement. Much community activity within Hendinas focused around the Community Centre (see Chapter 6), in which various classes took place (Basic Skills, I.T.), also social and leisure activities, from Bingo to children's Birthday parties, meetings and young people's activities (Youth Clubs, Tae Kwando). The second hub of activity was the 'office'; the base of both the Communities First Project Staff and Action in Communities (see below and Chapter 5 -9). In addition to serving as the usual administrative purposes 'the office' was also used for meetings and group sessions, and most critically was a place local people frequently 'called in' to. As an ethnographic researcher engaged in varying degrees of participant observation (see Chapter 5 for further discussion) as the backbone of the research project, I spent most of my time in these two venues and walking between the two. Sometimes I sat in on groups or meetings, at others I joined in classes or discussions; frequently I made tea and washed the dishes. This latter role was a significant vantage point that allowed access to the many and varied groups that used these venues.

The people in Hendinas were interested in and curious about the research, they were generally happy to talk to me and accepting of my presence. I tried to share with them both what I was doing and my analytical thoughts as they developed (see Chapter 5). Inevitably, the translation of experience into text inevitably falls short of the research experience, and there is much data that has not been included in this thesis. However, the ethnographic experience built up over time, ensures that engagements develop deeper more nuanced understandings of the community life of Hendinas, and that while not always directly visible in the presentation of data, this depth underpins it.

1.5   Exclusions

As in any project, boundaries must be drawn around the field of study. Details about the development of the research are explored in Chapter 5 and elaborated through Chapters 6 to 9. However, there are two key omissions that it is appropriate to highlight at the outset. The first relates to the boundary of 'the community.' This study accepts that many, if not most, people in a locality do not engage with a public policy initiative like Communities First. However, the research is concerned with the *making* of partnership and therefore relates to those individuals involved in 'partnership-making acts.' As such, community members that chose not to be involved do not fall within the remit of this research and no attempt was made to engage with the group.

The second notable omission is the issue of race. The population of Hendinas was overwhelmingly, but not exclusively white. I encountered only a few Black or Asian residents. The issue of race was remarkably absent in the life of the community that I observed. Issues of race were neither discussed nor publically addressed, they never featured in conversations in my presence and I never witnessed any 'casual' racism. The untested assumption is that race was a suppressed issue, hidden from me as an ethnographer and researcher. This conclusion is reached on two grounds. First, was the unacceptability of racism within the CF project. This was in effect communicated to local people in two instances that had occurred before the start of the fieldwork. The coordinator reported that race had previously been a major issue on the estate. Some Asian shopkeepers in particular had been subjected to racist abuse, including racist graffiti sprayed on their shops. The CF project working with the Community Safety Partnership, had addressed this directly through an intensive sports based programme that linked the local project with a more racially diverse CF project in an urban area of Wales. This targeted the young people suspected of being the main perpetrators of the active racism. The shopkeepers supported by the CF staff were brought into the project as partners and part funders of the initiative. This had the effect of changing local interpersonal dynamics by opening up new dialogue and

more positive relationships emerged. Racist graffiti was removed from a shop-side wall and in its place a mural was painted by young people. The second incident had caused tensions within the management of community projects. The coordinator reported how she had directly challenged deeply offensive racist comments made by a leading volunteer during a CF event. After a difficult process of open conflict, resignations and heated debate the issue was resolved when the individual agreed to undertake race awareness training. While both these instances could be interpreted as producing positive outcomes, they also established that racism would not be tolerated within the work promoted by CF. It would be naive to assume racism had been eliminated, but it certainly was not overt. In this context, the second reason I believe that added to this suppression of racism in my presence might be due to my own 'foreigner' status. This is signalled by my name, which in the fieldwork as in many other contexts provoked questions about my heritage and also my physical appearance which is often assumed to be Asian. Together these two issues are likely to have led to comments about race being suppressed in day-to-day encounters in which I was present. Thus, issues of race do not feature in the research.

In discussing partnership-making, the CF policy calls for the involvement of the private and third sector. Guidance instructs that this group make up one third of the partnerships. This area of work was not extensively developed within the programme, and private sector organisations (other than community based shop keepers) were not involved in the local CF project. The research focused therefore on the relationship between the community and public sector agencies.

1.6   Outline of thesis

The first three chapters of the thesis explore the fields of scholarship that ground it and to which it contributes. Chapter 2 locates the study in Wales and within Welsh policymaking. It outlines the process of Welsh devolution and introduces the concept of 'inclusivity', which was central in both devolution debates and as a value for policy-making alongside notions of

equality and social justice. Assertions that policy-making is more socialist are considered in the context of both the UK as a whole, and in broader debates about the influence and effects of neo-liberalism. The chapter considers both pressures for conformity and points of policy divergence. It proceeds to consider the role of civil society in the creation of devolution and role of the voluntary or third sector and Welsh governance. The inclusion of community groups within the conceptual category 'voluntary/third' sector makes this debate highly relevant to the Communities First programme. The chapter concludes with an outline of the principle features of the CF policy, followed by the presentation of an analytical model of the structure and operation of the programme. This model is used throughout the thesis, particularly in Chapters 6 to 9 as a means of exploring fieldwork findings.

The issue of new-governance is the subject of Chapter 3. It traces the shifting focus of scholarship seeking to account for changing manifestations of the state over the last 30-40 years. The chapter demonstrates that the terms on which these debates are constructed have themselves changed. Initial concerns were dominated by claims and counterclaims about the extent to which the state had been 'hollowed out' (Rhodes 1996, 1997). These were predominantly traditional realist and positivist concerns. The chapter charts how this understanding has been superceded by a more fragmented field in which government can be seen to operate in both direct and diffuse ways. It explores how scholars have directed attention to the consequences that arise from the inclusion of a diverse range of agents within governance, that bring with them alternative agendas and sometimes resistive motivations. Empirically, scholarship has turned to the study of the interplay between these different pressures and their effects. In this light, the final section of the chapter considering the rise of partnerships as a form of devolved governance, takes on a more pertinent role. The notion of partnerships as an institutional panacea, blending 'the state' and 'the people' for harmonious and synergistic policy and service gain is explored. The chapter concludes by identifying

significant lacunae in empirical work to date in which the current study is located.

In Chapter 4, the focus moves to consider what is involved in the construction of governance within community settings. This is a critical debate given that communities are conceptually essential in the construction of 'community-led partnerships'. It explores the transition of community as a sociological concept to one harnessed as a public policy resource. The chapter investigates what is involved in this harnessing, in terms of how community is re-conceptualised in political discourse enabling it to serve as both an object and subject of intervention. Intimately connected with these debates are evocations of particular kinds of people behaving in politically approved ways. The discussion identifies different categorical groups targeted by community focused policy and asks why 'they are of interest to the state and what are they being called upon to do?' It proceeds to consider how communities respond to being drawn into the business of governing, and the uses they make of the opportunities created by governance to develop counter projects that sometimes coalesce, and at others times jar with policy directives.

Chapter 5 considers research methodology and marks the transition from theoretical consideration of the literature to the presentation and analysis of data in the chapters that follow. It opens with a discussion of the ontological position adopted within the research, outlining a willingness to accept 'mess' and the absence of any single 'order' (Law 2003). Accepting the world as one of multiple orderings, the empirical task becomes a consideration of why and how a particular ordering prevails at any given time, and what is involved in the diminution of other potential orderings. In this way partnership is understood as subject to multiple competing constructions. The chapter considers the way the research can be conceived of as an exploration of the competing conceptions of partnership within Hendinas and a consideration of what is at stake in their settlement. From this position the chapter moves to an elaboration of the chosen research methods and dilemmas encountered in their enactment,

including processes of analysis. The challenging issues of research validity and reliability in interpretive research are then addressed. The chapter concludes with a brief presentation of the research site.

Chapter 6 opens consideration of the research findings by exploring what is involved in the idea of the 'institutional life of a community'. This concept is offered as a means of distinguishing between different aspects of the ubiquitously used, but conceptually confusing term 'community.' Key aspects of this concept are explored through the remainder of this and subsequent chapters. Focusing on the institutional life of Hendinas consideration is given to the community centre, as a major institutional agent and moves to explore how local narratives of the past are intimately related to understandings of the collective projects of the present, and the future. The chapter considers what is involved in the creation of a unified community as required in the CF policy and evoked in the idea of a 'community-led partnership.' An analytical comparison of two organisations is undertaken to meet this task and focuses on both the differences between them and the mediations undertaken to bridge them. Finally, the chapter explores notions of 'public' and 'private' which cut across the institutional life of the community, as private individuals engage in public acts and public policy implicitly rests on this conflation.

Chapter 7 turns attention to the role of staff in the making of local partnership. Recognised as playing a critical but under researched role, the chapter explores how their work can be interpreted in a number of ways, but that they chose to understand themselves as value-driven community development workers. Located in the model of the CF programme outlined in Chapter 2, discussion is organised around the two drivers of the programme, local community work and direct work to support external agencies in their task of delivering appropriate resources within Hendinas. On the one hand, community development work is understood, in addition to its intrinsic benefits, as facilitating of the conditions for the development of partnership. While on the other hand, staff are presented as active and productive agents seeking to shape when, how and on what

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terms agencies become involved in Hendinas. The chapter develops the idea of 'herding' to encapsulate these processes.

Chapter 8 picks up the idea of 'herding' and examines an instance of 'herding failure' on the part of local staff. This brings into relief two different models of the partnership held by local staff and the community on the one hand and some sections of the local authority on the other. It also highlights how staff working the CF model of development pay particular attention to the mediations required at the point at which the local community and external agencies meet. Drawing on the model presented in Chapter 2, this is discussed in terms of local staff productively trying to 'work the axis' to advance local priorities. Drawing from instances of both 'successful' and 'failed' attempts at herding, the parameters of local practice are explored. The final section of the chapter considers local practice and issues raised in the context of the national policy. It reflects on what local 'success' means in the context of Welsh policy-making that espoused an aspiration to effect a greater equality of outcomes as the basis for enhanced social justice.

These themes are brought together in Chapter 9, which returns to the opening research questions presented above. These are reconsidered in the light of preceding chapters. The idea of 'community-led' is discussed alongside a consideration of staff roles. Additionally, the chapter reflects on the productive opportunities created by the CF policy. The strengths and limitations of the single research site offered by this study are discussed. The chapter draws together the insights the research makes to scholarship, and acknowledges that it predictably raises many more questions in the process. Future analytical priorities are suggested. The thesis concludes with a consideration of the insights it offers to policy makers. We return to those policy makers now with a consideration of Welsh policy-making in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2   Back and Forth Across the Severn Bridge

The aim of this chapter is to locate the research within its devolved Welsh context. This will facilitate reflection on the extent to which, the research case study is particular to Wales or represents an instance of much wider patterns of policy development across the UK, and beyond. The chapter asserts that while there is much in Wales that marks the case study as specific, these are in the main particular instances of wider political and policy trends and international dynamics. Together this interplay creates both familiar and contradictory practices, which will be explored in the later chapters of the thesis.

This chapter provides a necessarily selective review of policies that bear upon the enquiry and addresses the following tasks. First, it outlines the devolved policy context of Wales, briefly traces its historical development and highlights how the balancing of interests in the devolution project has impacted on the policy-making process. It considers the extent to which claims of a more socialist orientated social policy within Wales stand up against dominant national and international neo-liberal trends. Second, it introduces debates about the role of civil society in Welsh policy-making and its relationship with government (discussed further in Chapter 4). Finally, it outlines the Welsh Government's Communities First Programme, and considers the extent to which this exemplifies post-devolution policy-making. It presents a working model of how the CF programme operates.

2.1   Welsh Devolution and its Effects on Policy-making

2.1.1   Devolution

The initiation of Welsh devolution, created considerable interest among policy academics and analysts. It was seen as providing a 'natural experiment', (Chaney and Fevre 2001:36) in deliberative democracy, and

the literature conveys both the political expediency of its agents and the optimism of its promoters. It is not the aim here to rehearse the history of devolution to any great depth, (see Day *et al.,* 2000; Laffin *et al.,* 2000; Morgan and Mungham 2000) however, a brief exposition of some limited issues will inform later discussion about the scope of policy, and its approach to regeneration issues within this nascent Welsh institution. It is possible to hone key themes down to the following issues. A consideration of the devolved administration as a policy-making institution; the significance of the concept of inclusiveness both for the development of devolution and as a tool to shape relationships between those within and beyond the institutions of Welsh Government; and a consideration of the extent to which the underpinning values of the Welsh Government might be considered a critical and unique variable in the devolution process.

Historically, from the 16th century, Wales was part of the Westminster political system and policy-making was undertaken in Whitehall for England and Wales. In respect to government, there was neither substantial conception of Wales as a separate entity, nor any recognition of distinctive Welsh policy needs in political, social, or economic terms. The creation of the Welsh Office in 1964 could be seen as offering some limited political recognition of Welshness. However, in social policy terms this amounted to little more than an often poorly disguised tag-on to Whitehall developed English focused policies, in which references to the relevant UK Department were replaced with the words 'Welsh Office.' The establishment of a National Assembly for Wales (NAfW) in 1999, is particularly significant therefore, given its primary role as a social policy-making institution (Chaney and Drakeford 2004; Mooney *et al*., 2006).

The assertion that the NAfW, is a policy-making body is evidenced in the scope of the powers devolved to it, which covers seventeen largely internal domestic fields of policy, including education, heath, housing, social services and local government. The new institution received no tax raising powers, nor gained any control over the welfare benefit system, defence, foreign affairs, or Home Office responsibilities, including criminal

justice. Further to this restricted role the NAfW emerged as an institution on rather wobbly foundations: it had received only the narrowest of support from the Welsh electorate in the 1997 referendum[1]. During the run up to its inauguration and early months of its existence, the dominant Welsh Labour Party was beset by both intrigue and political machinations in its leadership[2]; and the first Assembly elections resulted with a no overall majority for the Welsh Labour Party. Together these combined to create a less than auspicious start to the new governance arrangements for Wales. Never-the-less the new institution was tasked by its many supporters to make a real difference, and perhaps precisely because of these uncertain beginnings, it needed to *be seen* doing so.

Chaney and Fevre (2001) have demonstrated how the concept of *inclusiveness* developed as a piece of multi functional rhetoric for the purposes of political expediency during the Referendum campaign. This nebulous concept was used as the rallying call around which the new NAfW took constitutional shape and served as its mantra for action in its early years. It is helpful to consider its use at two interconnected but never-the-less distinct levels. First, at the level of institutional design, both at constitutional and systems design levels and second, in terms of the operational process and outcomes of the institution's work. The building of cross party political agreement to the idea of Welsh nationhood and Welsh politics, was secured in part through the development of *inclusion* in the voting system to the new institution. While 40 of the new representatives were to be elected through a constituency based first-pass-the post system, the remaining 20 Assembly Members, were subject to an Additional Member system of proportional representation. Inclusion here meant that all the four parties of Wales would be guaranteed some level of representation. Evidence of inclusiveness was also trumpeted in respect to issues of gender (Chaney *et al.,* 2007; Mackay and McAllister 2012) and commentators have shown how the campaigning role of women in the

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[1] The Referendum was won with a 50.3% Yes vote (NAfW 2012:3)
[2] Ron Davies resigned as Welsh Secretary in the months preceding the establishment of the NAfW triggering a battle of wills between the central New Labour Party in London and the Welsh party.

referendum process contributed to the establishment of the first Assembly as a gender balanced institution.

Additionally, *inclusion* emerged as a principle underpinning the idealised development of a less adversarial style of politics. Constitutionally the NAfW was established as a corporate body, in which the idea of consensus was privileged by ensuring policy responsibility lay with the whole institution not just the majority administration. Although there was a subsequent 'in practice' and then legal separation of, legislative (NAfW) and executive functions[3], (Welsh Assembly Government/Welsh Government) and thus a more traditional parliamentary system, the principle of *inclusion* remained key. The ethos of inclusion was further embedded in the NAfW under the banner of *partnership*, which has shaped formal working relationships between the Assembly and outside agencies and networks, including the business and voluntary sectors. This will be returned to in 2.2 below.

Intimately intertwined with the idea of *inclusionary* politics was the issue of *equality*. This is understood at a number of levels including for example, in terms of representation, institutional structures, operating practices in policy-making and policy outcomes where it is coupled to issues of social justice. This foregrounding of equality was formally expressed in the 'equality duty' which underpins both the operational practice of the NAfW and the executive decision making of the Welsh Government (WG). Chaney (2004:66) points out its uniqueness among UK legislatures, and '... is singular in its non-prescriptive phrasing and all-embracing scope and ... applies to all people and all functions of government.' Expressed simply this equality principle is an *absolute duty* '... not aimed solely at marginalised groups but 'all people' (*ibid.*). Furthermore, although yet untested, commentators have suggested that this clause '... may have 'distributive' as well as rights-based implications', signalling a 'shift from an exclusive focus on equality of opportunity to a focus on equality of outcomes' (Chaney and Fevre 2004:138).

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[3] Government of Wales Act 2006

Reviewing the impact of the equality duty on the development of policy and during the first ten years of devolved Welsh Governance, Chaney (2009) finds that in contrast to pre-devolutionary practice, the promotion of equalities has been extensively taken up by all Welsh administrations, across a wide range of devolved functions. Welsh Governments have been prepared to take innovative steps to promote equalities, for example the creation of a Children's Commissioner promoting and protecting children's rights, and the development of all-Wales policies on equalities issues, with if necessary the '...increasing use of legal instruments ... to promote equalities' (*ibid.*:86). However, Chaney also finds that developments have been uneven across the devolved responsibilities and while understandings have become more sophisticated over time, there remain significant implementation gaps. The critical point to grasp is the significance of the principles of inclusiveness and equality, both for the development of devolution and as a tool to shape relationships and practice between those within and beyond the institutions of Welsh Government. Two issues need further discussion; one explores how the equality duty underpins the governance institutions promoted by Welsh Government towards civil society and the voluntary sector, and this will be addressed in Section 2.2 below. First, consideration will be given to the claim that these new institutional formations generate significantly different policy-making orientations, marking these out as distinctly social democratic.

2.1.2 Between social democracy and neo-liberalism

Both advocates and analysts alike have claimed that the NAfW and the Welsh Government in particular, are built on an ideological value base which distinguishes it from other UK institutions of governance (Drakeford 2005, 2007a, 2007b; Chaney and Drakeford 2004). However, it is no surprise that given the policy remit of the WG, and the inevitable ideological basis of policy (Esping-Anderson 1990), that the Welsh government *is* ideological. What makes this comment noteworthy is its promotion as a virtue, particularly in the purportedly *third-way-*

ideologically-neutral-what-matters-is-what-works, environment of New Labour. It is possible to identify two interrelated threads through which the claim that Welsh politics are social democratic, are woven. The first relates to the nature of the Welsh nation and peoples, and the second draws from this to argue for a Welsh politics and policy-making that reflects these national political and cultural characteristics.

Without digressing into a discussion about the development of nations, it is possible to focus on a couple of necessary points. In considering the idea of 'Wales and Welshness' it is useful to follow Clarke (2008a) in his challenge of the 'container' model of nations, states, and nation-states. Here the idea of a bounded receptacle, within which the nation-state is defined and operates through fixed institutional edifices, is rejected in favour of an understanding of the nation-state as a *project of assemblage*. Social policy from this perspective can be seen as one key constitutive elements of nation building. Drawing from Latour, Clarke (2008a) highlights the significance of both *process* and *temporality* in this project. This is a significant insight in the case of Welsh devolution, famously described as 'a process not an event' (Davies 1999), it invites questions about the character of *Welshness*, and in this instance the significance of ideologically based social policy. Additionally, it opens up exploration of the multiple dimensions within and through which, key discourses operate, as they seek to create a hegemonic narrative of Welshness.

Rhodri Morgan, former First Minister of Wales, frequently asserted the distinctiveness of 'Welsh values' and sought to claim these as synonymous with those of his own party. Here the link is made explicit,

> The dominant values of people in Wales,...assert that public services should be designed to improve the quality of life for all and promote success, rather than a safety net for market failure – comprehensive rather than residual, proactive rather that reactive (Morgan 2004:4).

The claim is that the Welsh populace is intrinsically more collectivist in sentiment and politically left-of-centre and thus more socialist and overtly

committed to social justice (Drakeford 2007a) than other parts of the UK. The correlation made by Morgan is that the Welsh Labour Party is best placed to develop policies that accord with this *national* value base. This claimed symbiotic assertion coupling political ideology and national cultural values, can be seen as both constitutive of nation building and political expediency. It was reinforced in the multiple agendas and messages it signalled; it sought to locate Wales and *the Welsh* as different to the rest of the UK, and England in particular; it distanced the Welsh Labour Party from its London cousins and the Welsh Government from Blair's New Labour Third Wayism; and asserted the relevance of devolved governance to the Welsh electorate. More recently, 'difference' is pitted against the UK Coalition government and Cameron's (variable) evocations of the 'big society' (Lister 2014).

Thus, it could be argued that those asserting the historically grounded social democratic values of policy-making in Wales, are mounting a strategic bid to claim the history of Wales in an image of their own projection. This narrative located in the history and politics of the dominant Welsh Labour Party has its roots in the industrial heartlands of south Wales. Its advocates are re-telling a familiar story and simultaneously seeking to assert *their* story as *the* story of Welsh values, politics, and policy-making. Inevitably, this is a contested project. Mooney and Williams (2006:623), remind us that:

> This visioning may have little resonance for some. By contrast, organizations such as Cymuned and other Welsh language activist groups offer a narrative that speaks from rural Wales and suggests a heartland of authentic Welshness where language and culture must be protected.

This of course is not simply an academic debate about historical accuracy or cultural essentialism, but within the new devolved Wales, with its initial less-than-emphatic public support, it addresses possible futures, bolstered by the momentum of idealised but contested pasts.

However, whilst recognising the political posturing inherent in promoting 'socialis(m) of the Welsh stripe' (Morgan 2002:unpaginated), it is the case

that the majority of Welsh AM's voted to the NAfW, and MPs returned to Westminster, are indeed consistently from left-of-centre parties. In this sense the idea of Wales being more 'socialist' may have some ground, although it should be remembered that not returning Tory politicians does not necessarily equate with 'socialism'. Putting politics to one side, Pfau-Effinger (2005) has argued that the relationship between culture and welfare policies is worthy of analytical investigation. She contends that '(t)he cultural values and ideals which predominate in the welfare culture restrict the spectrum of possible policies of a welfare state' (2005:4). Alerting us to the significance of culture, she goes on to demonstrate that the relationship is neither lineal nor direct, but complex and multilayered, resulting in unpredictable and contradictory welfare policies and outcomes. Thus while the contentions of Drakeford and colleagues direct us to give due weight to cultural issues, Pfau-Effinger ensures that we remain cautious and analytically curious about the policy outcomes of the institutions of Welsh governance.

Furthermore, claims of Welsh distinctiveness, mask ubiquitous national and global forces impacting on Wales, other parts of the UK and internationally. Indeed devolution was part of the modernising agenda of New Labour. Critically, Wales is not exempt, nor protected from the global forces of neo-liberalism, or international capitalism. No amount of *clear red water* can protect the Welsh work force from the dramatically changed employment patterns in the global north, even if the process was much accelerated by the Conservative governments of the 1980s. Furthermore some (Mooney and Williams 2006; Williams and Mooney 2008) contend that the forces of neo-liberalism do not just knock at Offa's Dyke, but that Welsh Governments, alongside UK administrations, have been actively developing a 'nation-alized and indigenous versions of neo-liberalism' (2006:264), which embrace the New Labour neo-liberal mantras of modernisation and renewal within a discourse promoting 'Welshness' and the 'Welsh-way', redefining the 'modern' values of entrepreneurialism and competition as essentially Welsh (*ibid.*:625).

Meanings, mechanisms and material effects of neo-liberalism are highly contested and it is only possible therefore to highlight those key issues that impact on later discussions about policy and its enactment. Scholars engaging with the concept of neo-liberalism do so from a variety of theoretical positions (Larner 2000; Leitner *et al.*, 2007; Brenner *et al.*, 2010) however there is some critical common ground, principally that political systems do not exist as binary *either/or's - either* social democracy *or* neo-liberalism. This is useful in tempering the claims of devolved Welsh governance as distinctly social democratic, however it is still necessary to consider at a minimum the scope of conceptions of neo-liberalism. Neo-liberalism has been categorised in many ways, and Larner (2000), usefully summarises these in terms of *policy*, *ideology*, and *governmentality* and links these to the driving logics of these analyses as economic/market policy; political ideology and an ethic of responsibilization (see also Chapter 3). Larner (2000), seeks to challenge conceptions of neoliberalism presented as 'pure form', disputing any idea of 'programmatic coherence', she focuses instead on the 'contradictions, complexities and inconsistencies' (*ibid*.:16) within neo-liberalism. Peck, following Larner, argues that neo-liberalism, 'only manifests itself in hybrid formations' (Peck 2004:403), elaborating his position thus:

> Neoliberalism-in-general is a loose and contradiction laden ideological framework that is evolving not only through conflict with the 'external' social worlds that it encounters but also through vacillating tensions between its own authoritarian and libertarian moments and constituencies. It is in the context of these shifting currents, and out of the daily interactions and mutualities ... that what we understand as the generic or generalized form of neoliberalism, its much-less than-ideal type if you like, is being conjointly and socially reproduced on a continuing basis.

The work of critical human geographers, like Peck and Larner, is valuable because it traces the pervasive reach, range, and ramifications of neo-liberalism across the globe, whilst highlighting its fissions and failures, directing us to investigate the interplay of neo-liberalism alongside other competing forces. Debates about neo-liberalism within the UK have

primarily focused on the national UK level. Much has been written about the neo-liberalism of the Thatcher era, both in terms of economic monetarism and the overt ideological project to 'roll back the state.' Tony Blair's 'third way' has been the focus of extensive academic investigation (Newman 2001; Driver and Martel 2002; Hale *et al.*, 2004; Bevir 2005; Jordon 2010). Less attention has been directed to the impacts of neo-liberalism within devolved Wales, possibly because Wales has been seen simply as part of the UK. Additionally, scholarly investigation of Welsh policy has been predominantly shaped by the agendas and claims of Welsh politicians (e.g. inclusiveness, equality, and distinctiveness). Mooney and Williams (2006) offer an exception, they discuss Welsh and Scottish policy-making in conjunction with neo-liberalism, concluding that a 'new welfare consensus or settlement, albeit a contested settlement, is in the making around market-oriented ideologies of enterprise, competition and globalization.' Going on to argue that '(t)he 'holy trinity' of social justice, social cohesion and social inclusion come to be understood primarily as they relate to the market (*ibid.*:626). Whilst this analysis directly challenges the claims to distinctive social democratic policy-making in Wales, it does so only through a narrow 'policy' based definition of neo-liberalism as a market/economic phenomena. If we are to take on board the arguments of Larner and Peck highlighted above, recognising the more complex layering of neoliberalism, then Mooney and Williams' analysis does not go far enough (Chaney 2013).

These debates are relevant to the current research project in so far as they help to contextualise the very specific location of the case study within Wales and as an instance of a defining Welsh policy, whilst flagging up Wales' location (metaphorically and physically) in the wider world. Further, the issues discussed above, inclusiveness, equality, social democracy, and neo-liberalism, provide conceptual handles with which to consider the policy of Communities First and the practices that constitute it. Before moving onto an exploration of that policy, there is a need to consider the way in which devolved Welsh governance is positioned and constructed in relation to ideas of civil society.

2.2 Civil Society, the Voluntary Sector and Welsh Governance

2.2.1 A Welsh civil society?

Both academic literature, and debates among policy analysts rarely discuss the idea of devolved Welsh governance without recourse to assessments, laments, and evocations of *civil society*. Acknowledging the lack of agreement about the definition of civil society, Day *et al*., (2006:1) suggest that

> the power of the concept lies in how variously it is employed to understand the form and consequences of the relationship between the state and citizens in *actual societies* (emphasis original).

Similarly, the task here is to develop an understanding of the *particular constructions* of civil society made necessary through the process of Welsh devolution, and its significance therefore in the research. This is not to ascribe agency to 'devolution' and the status of moulded *plasticine* to 'civil society', on the contrary, as commentators (see for example McAllister *et al*., 2003; Chaney *et al.,* 2007) have demonstrated civil society groups, (for example those representing women's interests), were intimately involved in and instrumental to, the development of devolution from its earliest days. What is being suggested is that the construction of devolved governance in Wales in the particular form that it took, made possible, and indeed in some cases required, a *certain kind* of civil society. This was based in part on that which was there but also as an evocation and provocation of what it might become. Further, as some have noted (Drakeford 2006), a number of key individuals active in the devolution process had extensive experience in, and affinity with civil society organisations. Thus whilst it may be possible *post hoc* to distinguish the interest of the National Assembly and Welsh Governments on the one hand from those of 'civil society' on the other, within the devolution process itself these interests were to some extent intertwined. At least two imperatives can be identified driving interest in civil society within Wales, the first addresses the 'devolution project', and the second picks up on the

equality and inclusion priorities discussed above. Each will be considered in turn before looking at the strategies deployed to develop and embed civil society organisations within the institutions and relationships of Welsh governance.

The debate about devolution and civil society is full of contradictions, whilst on the one hand civil society groups were perceived as being key to the referendum campaign, politicians, academics and policy analysts have lamented its poor state. Royles (2007**:**3) argues prior to the referendum campaign, 'civil society' was 'an unfamiliar term in the Welsh political lexicon', and there is general agreement that civil society as it existed was 'weak' and insufficiently 'Welsh' (Day *et al.,* 2000; Day 2006; Williams and Mooney 2008). However, there was also optimism, for example Rhodri Morgan accepting this assessment, suggested that a strengthened civil society may become devolutions 'successor in Wales' (cited in Day *et al.,* 2000). For supporters of devolution the significance of civil society is made explicit by Osmond, who argued as early as 1998 that, 'the new Welsh politics is about creating a new democracy, *and a new civil society to make that democracy work*' (cited in Day *et al.*, 2000:25 emphasis added). Here we see explicitly that the interest in civil society arises from the imperative to establish devolution, the clear implication being that without a strong civil society focused around the institutions of Welsh governance then devolution itself would likely fail.

A second imperative driving interest in civil society emanates from the prominence accorded to the ideas of inclusiveness and equality discussed above. This seeks to move devolution beyond Cardiff and in the words of the then First Minister away from,

> a self-replicating elite to a new engagement with a far wider and more representative group of people, women and men, people from north and south Wales, Welsh speakers and not, black people as well as white, and so on' (Morgan 2006:ix).

The development of civil society is identified as one of the principal vehicles through which this vision of devolution with its aspiration for a *new*

kind of inclusionary politics might be achieved. Once again, this engagement with civil society is valued not just on its own terms but for the effects that it might achieve. As Royles explains (2007:3)

> By forging greater participation and democracy, civil society was seen as a means of promoting a different kinds of politics, thus changing political culture and post-devolution Wales.

2.2.2 Civil society and the voluntary sector

Thus far, the term *civil society* has been used without question or critical investigation. Nebulous as this concept is, there is a certain disingenuousness in the use of civil society, often used alongside a range of equally imprecise descriptors; the *community*, *community groups*, the *people, voluntary groups,* the *voluntary or third sector.* Moreover, it is packed with a reified status, potential, and contrary intent, creating a phenomenon that is *Welsh*, or *not Welsh*, that might be weak, *active*, *participatory, inclusive,* or *exclusive*. It is capable of being acted upon but also the saviour of devolution and Welsh governance. Despite its definitional murkiness, in practice a handle has been moulded in the discourse of Welsh governance with which the idea of civil society is grasped. It can be found in numerous strands of policy in which the multifaceted ideals of inclusion and equality are directed towards civil society via *partnership* with the *voluntary sector*. Partnership in this context is understood as a mechanism through which these ideals might be achieved (see Chapter 4). Here the focus is an exploration of the extent to which the *voluntary sector* is understood as *civil society* within the policies of Welsh Governments, and the implications of this practice. Undoubtedly, the discourse of Welsh governance is challenged by its own rhetoric; if power is to be devolved beyond the Assembly as an act of inclusion, civil society must be embodied in some form. Thus the theoretical ideal of engagement with civil society, mutates in practice to become *partnership with the voluntary sector,* and in this form is embedded in Welsh governance through both statute and policy. This does not suggest a simplistic equation in which the voluntary sector equals civil society; civil

society is generally understood to be greater and more diverse than this, however, the voluntary sector does represent a field of activity that is capable of broad definition, quantification and remains overall, amenable to engaging in formalised relationships. As such, it creates an arena of possibility, in which strategic engagement with civil society is made tangible.

Both Government of Wales Acts (1998 and 2006) require that, initially the Assembly and latterly Welsh Governments, develop a Voluntary Sector Scheme (VSS; later know as Third Sector Scheme, TSS), setting out how the interests of the voluntary sector would be promoted in Wales, proposals for funding, and arrangements for co-working. The *Third* (formerly *Voluntary*) *Sector Partnership Council* formalises relationships between the Welsh Government and representatives of the voluntary/third sector, and is responsible for annually reviewing the scheme. Within this arrangement, the voluntary/ third sector is *led* by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA), the umbrella body of the sector in Wales, which in turn facilitates 21 issue based networks (for example *Ethnic minorities, Community, Housing*). Under the terms of the Scheme, Welsh Ministers are required to meet with representatives of the networks involved in their areas of responsibility at least twice a year.

The sophistication of the VSS has developed over the lifetime of devolved governance and has become more deeply embedded in the work of the Welsh Government. Within the voluntary sector strategic action plan, (WAG 2008a), there is an explicit linking of the activities of the third sector with strategic priorities of the Welsh Government. The plan is celebrated for:

> affirming the importance that the Assembly Government attaches to its collaboration with the sector, and to the vital contribution which it makes to our quality of life. Whilst acknowledging the independence of the sector, we hope that it will join with us to help transform Wales into a self-confident, prosperous, healthy society, which is fair to all (WAG 2008a:9).

The document is peppered with references to key Welsh Assembly Government policies (e.g. *One Wales, Making the Connections*), and the contribution that the third sector can make to achieving strategic objectives. Likewise key strategies outlining the priorities of the Welsh Government, like *Making the Connections* (WAG 2006a), abound with references to the voluntary sector. There are three points worthy of note here; first, reference to *civil society* is notably absent, but the *voluntary* or more latterly *third sector* is clearly viewed as evidence of more inclusive engagement. Simplistically Welsh governance involves more people/groups, i.e., in the words of the former First Minister, moves beyond the 'self-replicating elite' to 'a new engagement with a far wider and more representative group of people' (Morgan 2006:ix). Second, the voluntary sector, and its segmentation into 21 issue based networks offer government an interface with the wider 'Welsh people' both by representing them as a kind of 'proxy public' (Drakeford 2006), and by serving as a conduit through which communication can flow. Third, the focus on the voluntary sector and formalisation of relationships subtly shifts the debate away from academic and conceptual concerns about the role and value of civil society towards considerations of the instrumental mechanisms to achieve institutional ends.

The locking in of the voluntary sector into these institutional priorities can be seen in the Welsh Government strategy for the third sector (WAG 2008a). This strategy makes explicit the role of the sector as a player within the wider institutions of Welsh governance, identifying three interrelated ways in which the sector can make its contribution to Welsh public life. The first and most important is the independence of the sector and the contribution made by volunteers to 'the vibrancy and regeneration of their communities'. This is followed by the potential for 'better policy-making' arising from the 'knowledge and expertise...through its front-line experience to help shape policies, procedures and services'; and third the scope for 'better public services' through the sector's 'innovative and transforming role ... making public services reach more people and become more sensitive to their needs' (*ibid.17).* This creates an iterative

process that builds institutional mechanisms (VSS) and strategic intent, and in turn sets out the reach and remit of the sector. The dominant discourse is thus one in which the voluntary sector comes to be understood as a 'strategic partner' within Welsh Governance. For organisations like WCVA, this represents the pinnacle of achievement, in which the sector is legitimated and brought into the heart of governance. Here the organisation's CEO, echoing the devolutionists (like Osmond cited above), celebrates their aspirations as achievement:

> During this decade the sector has become a major third force alongside the state and business in Wales in shaping the policies and delivering the services which have made devolution a success (Benfield 2010:3).

Inevitably, such claims attract opposing views. Critiques come from a variety of perspectives and focus on issues of legitimacy, strengthening democracy, and hyper mainstreaming as a process of governmentality, for example.

Legitimacy for WCVA comes through strategic partnership with WG, brings recognition of the value of the sector both in terms of its unique contribution and its financial worth. However implicit within this strategic relationship is also the legitimacy bestowed by the voluntary sector on Welsh Government. For many scholars of civil society this is an unsatisfactory situation, Day *et al.*, (2000:36) defending the independence of the sector argue that 'civil society institutions should not be acting as cheerleaders for the National Assembly', and warns to do so compromises civil society's critical capacity, which should instead be used to hold government to account. There are two points to be made here, first there is within the literature an assumption that an active, strong, independent civil society is necessary for democracy to work effectively. This argument as played out through the conflation of the voluntary sector with civil society seems to miss the point that whilst legitimacy offered by the sector may contribute to, it cannot of itself guarantee, democracy. Nor even for example minimum participation in the ritualised actions of democracy, as borne out in the persistently modest to low turnout in elections for the

NAfW. Indeed too close a relationship may actually threaten democracy through the creation of elites and excluded groups, potentially decreasing democratic involvement (Taylor 2001). Second, these warnings against incorporation of the voluntary sector are well rehearsed, but in reality are based on a false dichotomy, in which heroic narratives of the sector as the spearhead of oppositional independent challenge are pitted against accusations of 'sold out' incorporation. As will be discussed in later chapters these arguments do not reflect the complexity and pace of change over the last 10 -15 years.

Kendall (2009) has described development of the sector in the UK since 1997, as a period of 'hyperactive mainstreaming', in which the voluntary sector was targeted by New Labour as central to its policy-making and service delivery, augmenting and legitimating 'third wayism', and becoming an unprecedented object of policy intervention in its own right. Although the proceeding discussion has focused on Wales, Alcock's (2012) work highlights how this mainstreaming is common across *all* devolved administrations within the UK (as seen in the Welsh VSS/TSS) enabling us to draw on research from all devolved settings. Exploring voluntary sector mainstreaming, Carmel and Harlock (2008) focus their attention on the shift from the use of *voluntary* to *third* sector, arguing that it signifies the sector's discursive construction as an object for strategic development in which constituting organisations are viewed as 'technocratic and generic service providers', operating in a marketised contract culture. This in turn brings them '...into the orbit of regulation, management and coordination by state actors' (*ibid.*:157) creating the sector as 'governable terrain'.

This governmentality based analysis, offers considerable insights into the constraining influences on the 'third sector', but Kendal (2010) duly critical, highlights its overly deterministic shortcomings. He points out that 'third sector policy actors,' (are not) necessarily passive transmitters of narrowly construed business values, helpless in the face of neo-liberal pressures' (2010:248). Thus whilst it is possible to acknowledge the constraining impact on the third sector it is also the case that voluntary organisations and the people that inhabit them provide a frequent source of challenge

and contestation. Additionally while the construction of 'governable terrain' may be evidenced in part within the formal sector and formal relationships, there exist many organisations outside of this 'charmed circle' (Royles 2007:165), operating 'below the radar', and beyond the formal systems of voluntary sector representation. Further, whilst these states of insider/outsider, contractee/independent organisation etc, might offer some analytical purchase, they fail to take account of the dynamic nature of the field and the ways in which organisations may be engaged simultaneously in numerous types of relationships and how these change over time.

This doctoral research project provides an example of this complex situation. It is located simultaneously within a voluntary organisation and a government programme. The fieldwork site is made up of both independent voluntary organisations and agencies that could be understood as 'manufactured civil society' (Hodgson 2004). Undoubtedly, there are pressures for conformity that flow through all manner of isomorphic mechanisms (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) including funding, monitoring, partnership guidelines and 'celebrations of good practice'. Moreover, the 'partnership' discourse shapes actions beyond those contained within the contractual relationships between government and local organisations. However, it is also the case that within these arrangements there is much contestation, while one aspect of work on the ground may be shaped by policy directives and government funding, other aspects and other local projects are not. This gives rise to messy and unpredictable conditions in which the pressures for conformity interact with the challenge of contestation. It is the contention of this thesis that the relationship between policy and practice is a complex one, closing down options whilst simultaneously creating others. While the details of the fieldwork research will be discussed in latter chapters, it is appropriate to consider next the Welsh Government's Communities First programme, providing as it does the primary policy framework for this study.

2.3   Communities First: A Welsh Policy?

This section will provide a brief description of the Communities First Programme (NAfW 2000) and introduce some of the issues and challenges it has faced. Perhaps inevitably when a programme is prominently trumpeted as *flagship* it might more colloquially be called a *sitting duck*. The Communities First Programme (CFP) has been beset by challenge and controversy, at various levels. For example, the aims of the programme have changed, delivery mechanisms have become tighter and more prescriptive, and criticisms of financial accountability in the light of one high profile case of fraud have led to more stringent accounting systems and a sharper focus on programme governance (WAG 2007a, 2010; NAfW 2010). Government policies targeted at neighbourhood regeneration have grown rapidly since the 1980s and while economic focused projects and physical regeneration initially dominated debates, the importance of people and communities grew throughout the John Major governments of the 1990s (Tiesdell and Allmendinger 2001), and formed the focus of major policy initiatives for New Labour (Imrie and Raco 2003; Wallace 2010). There were major continuities of prioritisation and approach between the then Welsh Assembly Government and the policies of New Labour (see Taylor 2008; Adamson 2010). It is not necessary to consider these in detail here, but where appropriate these, alongside notable points of divergence will be highlighted as the CFP is explored. A brief outline of the Welsh policy will be presented and discussed alongside some of the challenges that it has faced.

The Communities First Programme has suffered from a persistent identity problem. Consistently described as a 'flagship programme' its aims have been continually reworked. Always focused on the 'most disadvantaged', the programme initially highlighted its aims as '...tackling poverty and social disadvantage' (WAG 2000b:5), while a couple of years later it was more vaguely described as 'a long term strategy for improving opportunities and ... quality of life' (WAG 2002a:9). By 2007, the programme was about 'provid(ing) local people with opportunities to play

an active role in shaping the future of their community' (WAG 2007a:1). Although in some respects subtle differences, they encapsulate significant distinctions when translated into practice, focusing variously on economic issues, employment, the state of public services and civic engagement. The Interim Evaluation of the programme (WAG 2006c) reported that despite extensive consultation and much background documentation, there was no explicit written rationale for the programme in its early years. While initially considering CF as a 'regeneration' programme, the report asserts that it had developed into the 'capacity building programme ... not a regeneration programme' (WAG 2006c:53). Confusion about its aims at the outset have led to a debate between practitioners which appears to pit capacity building work with an emphasis on process issues, *against* outcomes focused action. Recognised as a false dichotomy by government and local groups the tensions have never-the-less persisted.

Despite these many shifting presentations, the programme has remained focused on the promotion of social justice (Miller 1991). This is evident from its earliest days when the programme was explicitly conceived of as tacking social exclusion (NAfW 2000, NAfW 2001a; WAG 2002a). In policy terms this was understood explicitly as 'deprivation' arising from poverty and low income, compounded by a complex interplay of factors including 'inferior quality of service provision... lack of employment prospects ... poor health ... lack of access to services' (NAfW 2000 unpaginated: section 2.1). By 2007, revised CF Guidance listed '[p]romoting social justice, (and) creating an equitable environment ...' as a 'key principle' underpinning the programme vision (WAG 2007a:1) but it makes minimal further direct reference to social justice. However, the Guidance sets out a 'Vision Framework' (WAG 2007a:123-127) that can be interpreted as promoting social justice and within the wider policy field, the Welsh Government was promoting social justice in other areas of work for example in anti-poverty work (e.g. WAG 2005; Drakeford 2007a).

The Communities First Programme (CFP), like policies in England, is an area based initiative, but in contrast to English policy, selection of targeted communities was on the basis of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

(WIMD), *automatically* including, in the first instance, the 100 most deprived electoral divisions. Additionally 32 sub-wards known as 'pockets of deprivation' were identified and, 10 'imaginative proposals', primarily identity communities, (for example victims of domestic abuse and ethnic minority communities) made up 142 Communities First projects in 2001. A number of additional communities were identified in 2005 following the revision of the WIMD, bringing the number of CF partnerships to over 150, covering about 20% of the population of Wales (AMION and Old Bell 3 2011).

There are a few points worth drawing out from this background material: up until April 2013, Communities First areas were small and populations of 3000 - 4000 were common, (WAG 2006b); this is in sharp contrast to New Labour's approach in England. For example the *New Deal for Communities* programme targeted only 39 communities with an average population of just under 10,000 (Batty *et al.*, 2010:5), with *each* partnership receiving about £50m of funding. This contrasts with CF funding which amounted to a *total* programme spend of £300m up to and including 2011/12. This includes the Outcomes Fund and is 'equivalent to an average of some £200,000 per community or around £55 per resident per annum' (AMION and Old Bell 3 2011:12). The difference is significant and while this thesis is qualitative in focus, it highlights the structural limitations placed on CF projects drawing tight parameters around what is possible within the programme. Funding directly shapes how the CFP is delivered on the ground, and gives weight to understandings of *partnership* as leverage rather than an intervention that can lead directly to regeneration or other resource intensive changes. This is critical to the argument put forward in this thesis that the programme needs to be understood as relational; this is discussed below.

The CFP required that each CF area establish a partnership to act as the principal vehicle for local developments and regeneration. Each partnership was to be formed on the basis of what has become known as the 'thirds principle', in which a third of its membership was to be made up of individuals drawn from the local community, a third from statutory

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bodies and the final third from voluntary and business sectors working in the area. Thus, local community-led partnerships are ascribed the status of institutional instrument (Bristow *et al.,* 2008) and vested with the authority and responsibility 'to lead in taking forward the programme in their areas' (WAG 2002a:23). The partnership is constituted within guidance, as the substantive driver of programme development and implementation. Built into the structure of the programme, is an essential non-negotiable institutionalised principle of collaboration and partnership working, in which progress can only emerge through deliberation and consensus. Furthermore the CFP conferred institutional recognition to the 'community' as a key partner actively driving development, and theoretically eliminating any possible exclusion of the 'community' from decision making or casting them as passive recipients of other agents' plans. The community is thus given the status of governmental and institutional agent. This was particularly significant given the non-prescriptive WAG guidance about the work of the partnerships (Adamson and Bromiley 2008). Instead, the programme established six themes around which work was to be developed and while plans were subject to approval by WAG/WG civil servants, partnerships were at liberty to establish their own local priorities and the means to address them.

Reinforcing this emphasis on the leading role of the community as governance agents was the requirement on partnerships to produce (alongside an audit of needs, and an action plan) a community capacity building plan. Plans were to focus on 'building the confidence and developing the skills and knowledge of all those ... involved in the process and provid[e] the necessary support' (WAG 2002a:35). This element of the programme sought to recognise that (i) requiring involvement is not the same as securing it, (ii) that communities in Wales have different starting points in terms of the extent and depth of existing community activities, and (iii) variable capacity to participate in formal developmental programmes. Interestingly, the original guidance for the capacity building plans makes explicit reference to the capacity needs of 'partner organisations' to enable them to 'engage effectively with communities'

(*ibid.*:38). This is an important early recognition of the changes in practice that public sector agencies would need to make if partnerships were to achieve their aims, but in reality, this critical element of what came to be known as *programme bending*, was never adequately prioritised (AMION and Old Bell 3, 2011) (discussed in Chapter 7). It also alerts us to the distinction between capacity-to-participate in CF partnership working, and capacity-to-plan strategically at local authority and regional levels drawing on articulated community level needs. Despite the programme rhetorically acknowledging the need to attend to building capacity among both groups, the CFP focused attention extensively on of the former group, creating an 'in practice' working model somewhat different to that espoused in the policy; this is briefly explored below, and underpins discussion in Chapters 6 to 9.

2.3.1 CFP model for action

As policy, the Communities First programme models a circuitous route towards securing outcomes. As summarised above, in real terms funding to CF partnerships was modest, and consisted primarily in funding each partnership to recruit a coordinator, development officer, and administrative support. The key issue to be appreciated here is that the programme was built on an expectation that additional resources would come from beyond the budgets allocated to individual projects by the state. This leads to considerations of how the programme intended this to be achieved. The partnerships given institutionalised status, theoretically provide the arena through which community and public sector partners, aided by the third sector (business involvement was always minimal) can negotiate and establish priorities. The partnership also serves as leverage to bring in additional resources (e.g. through matched funding arrangements) and crucially facilitates the conditions (e.g. understanding of needs) from which public sector agencies can re-prioritise their resources and 'bend' their services to meet local needs. The relationships developed within the partnership can be understood as a critical axis of interaction on which the success of the whole programme is dependent. It

is presented diagrammatically in Figure 1 below. It is possible to conceptualise this axis of interaction as the point through which two core elements of the programme are interconnected. On the one side local CF development staff, supported by a range of independent community agencies, address issues of community empowerment through capacity building activities. On the other CF asks why deprived communities are so poorly served by mainstream agencies and challenges those agencies, supported by a plethora of legislative resources to serve them better strategically and practically.

Figuratively the CF partnership is the location at which these two elements of programme work should be brought together. It is the conceptual point at which local needs can be articulated by empowered community members, and simultaneously, the evidence base, (and potentially the
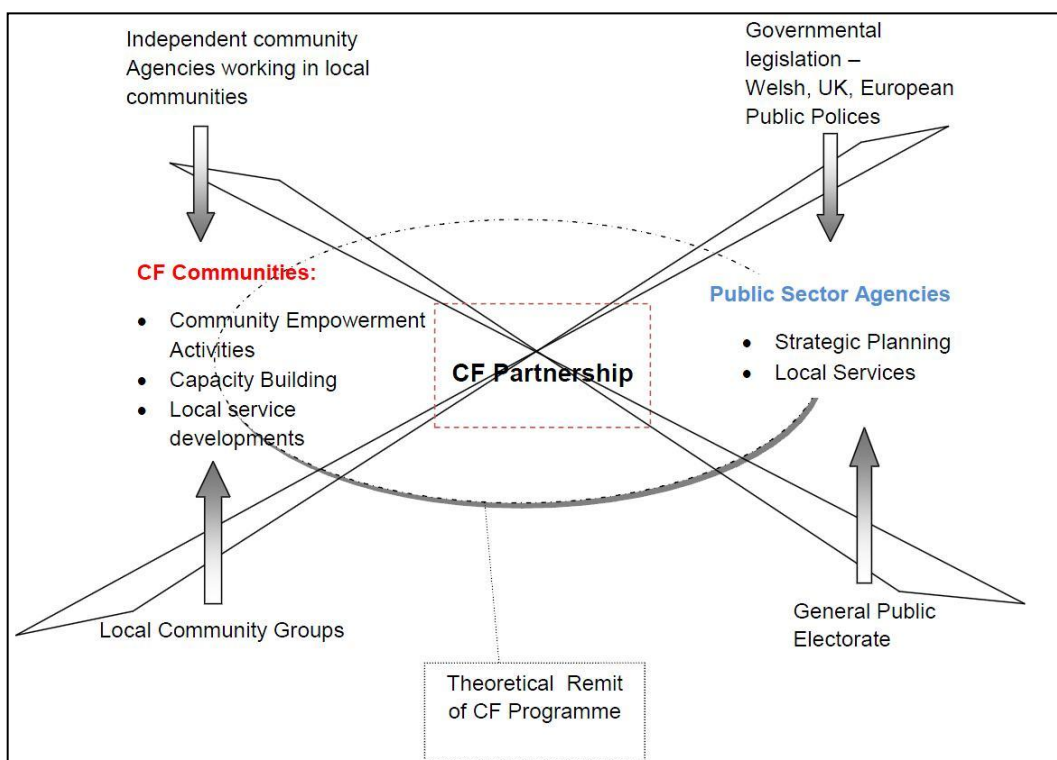
Figure 1 Axis of Interaction and scope of CF programme in guidance

mechanism) through which programme-bending by public service providers is developed. Thus, we can conceptualise the Communities First Programme comprising two core interconnected and interdependent elements mediated through a critical axis of interaction, within a partnership. Theoretically, both the community and public sector agents equally contribute, and are committed to the partnership; and this is represented in Figure 1 by the location of the partnership over the centre of the axis. This will be referred to in this thesis as the Communities First Development model.

This model has notional coherence, however there is dissonance between on the one hand, its extensive and encompassing theoretical remit and on the other its applied policy reaches. In practice, CF policy guidance is skewed in its directives, focusing primarily, through for example guidance, funding, and monitoring arrangements, on the community empowerment/capacity building elements located within communities. By contrast, as highlighted in both evaluative and academic appraisals (WAG 2006c; Adamson and Bromiley 2008; NAfW 2010; AMION and Old Bell 3 2011), the programme has limited power to direct public bodies to 'bend' their work in favour of CF areas. Indeed this has been consistently flagged up as a fundamental weakness of the programme in these studies (WAG 2006c; AMION and Old Bell 3 2011). WAG's principal response to these challenges was the introduction of the Outcomes Fund, which makes provision for additional funding for individual or clusters of partnerships, subject to WAG approval and matched funding, to support 'bending' service developments. Clearly designed to incentivise local authorities, health sector and other public service providers, the most recent programme evaluation (AMION and Old Bell 3 2011) reports that, while the idea was perceived as 'sound', the Outcomes Fund has had limited success in driving programme bending forward, due to over bureaucratic and logistical difficulties in its administration. Thus, as a policy tool we must concede that with some exceptions, the effective aspect of the CFP is more likely located at the community side of the CF model. This is represented diagrammatically in Figure 2, which illustrates how the

balance of the partnership is placed on the community side of the axis of interaction, more accurately reflecting practice on the ground and demonstrating where the programme has greater influence and control. The ways these issues are played out in practice are explored in Chapters 6 to 9.
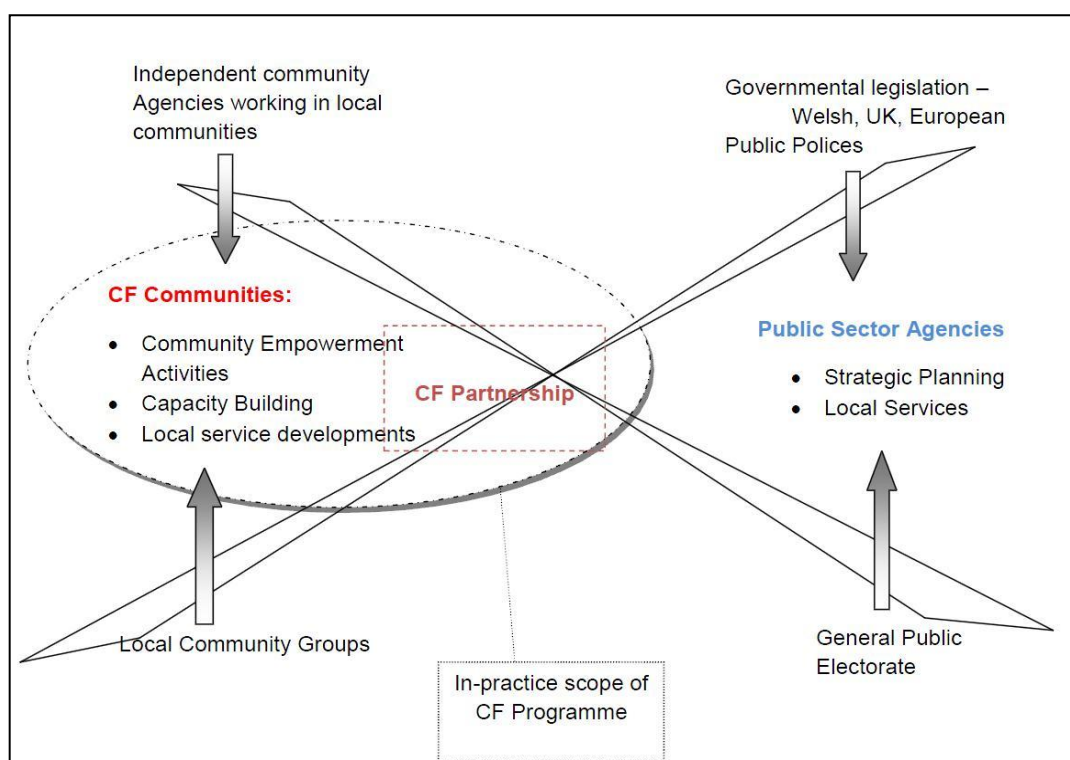
Figure 2 Axis of interaction and in-practice reach of CF programme

It was noted above that the limited resources allocated to individual CF projects are primarily invested in the employment of key developmental staff. Both evaluative and academic reviews of CFP have reported on the critically important role of coordinators and other development staff, for the effectiveness of local work (WAG 2006c; Adamson and Bromiley 2008; AMION and Old Bell 3 2011), and Chapter 7 explores the role of staff in some depth. Here therefore, it is only necessary to note that their role, is not concerned with the direct delivery of 'regeneration' but to support and develop the local community, facilitating in the process the partnership. In effect, to ensure the development and maintenance of favourable conditions in which inter-relational co-working can flourish through the CF axis. Taken together this focus on the interrelationship between the

community and public sector agencies and the investment in staff contribute to an understanding of the CFP as a *relational* model of development. The programme is reliant on the interrelationships between different groups (e.g. the community, public agencies) and the need to deliberate, reach consensus and act on agreed shared objectives. The role of key individuals within the CFP and more specifically the staff, to negotiate, influence and cajole others to prioritise *their* community needs is central to the success of the programme. This stands in some contrast to models of regeneration underpinned by greater investment of economic resources.

2.3.2   The community in the CFP

While the Communities First programme is not alone in promoting the role of the communities in regeneration initiatives within the UK, the formal institutionalisation of local people, as a definable group, 'the community', in driving the programme forward is noteworthy. Communities First as a policy field, is consistent with the equalities and inclusiveness aspirations that framed the intent of the early NAfW. It is possible to trace these ideals through a number of rhetorical formations by successive Welsh Governments including 'participative policy environments' (NAfW 2001b) and the 'citizen centred model' (WAG, 2006a; Guarneros-Meza *et al.,* 2010), of service delivery. Communities First sits firmly within that framework. It is undoubtedly inclusive in its intention with a focus on social justice, and seeks to utilise policy interventions as a means of achieving equality of outcome not just equality of opportunity. The programme is also distinct-by-design and arguably by necessity, given the modest levels of funding available to individual projects.

However, there remains at the heart of the Communities First Programme a significant tension. The programme encompasses two strong driving logics that at a fundamental level are seemingly contradictory. The development of Communities First programme sought to be an exemplar of the inclusive approach to policy-making adopted by the NAfW and early

WAGs. It did so by drawing extensively on the expertise of community development practitioners and prominent academics in the field, and in the operational systems it created. It was informed by community development values which sought 'bottom up' organic progress, an approach which resonated with the pre-Assembly experience of key AMs and their empathy towards the community and voluntary sector. Additionally, it can be seen as a tangible manifestation of the enthusiasm and commitment to make the institutions, policies, and delivery approach of Welsh governance 'different' to those elsewhere in the UK.

However, recent practices within the management of the CFP appear to be undermining this approach. The pressures for more mainstream and formal accountability systems have increased over the life span of the programme (Hogget 1996; Hood *et al.*, 2000; WAO 2009; NAfW 2010). This has directly impacted on the ways it directs local projects to plan, implement, and evaluate their work programmes, creating direct tensions with the idea of community-led partnerships. The ten years of the Communities First Programme, could be seen as an encounter between these two rationales. It is possible to argue that through the development and early implementation phases the encounter was predominantly informed by community development values. Over time, this has gradually been eroded, particularly at critical moments of reassessment and revaluation, leading to a growing dominance of more managerialist approaches (Newman 2001) to both the delivery and 'measurement' of the Communities First Programme. What started as a permissive and inclusive programme formula has become ever more subject to administrative and technocratic pressures. These tensions will be illustrated and analysed in later chapters addressing research findings.

2.4   Conclusion

This chapter has explored selectively some of the main fissions and continuities between UK and Welsh Policy-making in the context of community regeneration policies. It is undoubtedly the case that Welsh devolution has had a significant impact on the framing of Welsh policy priorities as part of a discourse of equality and inclusion. However, the wider dynamics of neoliberalism have also played a part in the development of Welsh policy, particularly in terms of the continuities displayed in the development of voluntary/third sector and state relationships. Also, while the strategic role of the sector in Wales mirrors closely that in other parts of the UK, it has become more distinctly Welsh in terms of its identity, its interaction, and the forums in which it engages. A move supported and reinforced by the development of more sophisticated Welsh institutional mechanisms. Within this context, the Communities First Programme shares with other UK programmes a broad field of interest, which could be described as 'regeneration' and a focus on issues of 'social exclusion'. However, the large number of projects supported by relatively low levels of funding and small staff teams has meant that in Wales, a different approach to practice became necessary. Referred to in the policy documentation as 'community-led', it has been proposed in this chapter that the programme developed a relational model of development via partnerships in which the capacity of key individuals to promote action through the development of relationships with significant others in critical agencies has been crucial to success. Over time, the programme has been subject to growing managerialist pressures and these have curtailed the more innovative aspects of the programme. These issues will be returned to in later chapters that address fieldwork findings.

Chapter 3   Governance and Partnerships

The central focus of the research is *partnership*, and the role of local communities in its construction. In this context it is a concept that draws on two broader debates, the first is addressed in this chapter and relates to issues of *governance* and the second focuses on the non-governmental agents, in this instance *the community*, called upon to serve as governors (Chapter 4). Partnerships in public policy are often described in evocative terms, conjuring positive images of public policy harmony and consensus, and are promoted by governments as resource-efficient and outcome-synergistic instruments, made even more positive for their capacity to involve policy beneficiaries within policy-making and service delivery processes. Partnerships are subject to many readings, but are frequently understood as instances of new-governance, and the chapter addresses recent thinking on both partnerships and new-governance (hence forth 'governance'). It considers the transformations that have challenged traditional conceptions of government as one located in a single unified state, carried out by institutionalised bureaucrats, and professional groups in organisational or inter-organisational settings to be transformed into governance, (Rhodes 1997) formations that incorporate lay citizens acting on issues of personal and neighbourhood relevance, both as individuals and as members of a community. This messy meandering journey has seen a number of shifts in focus in terms of both the unit of study and the analytical models employed.

Accordingly, this review identifies an interconnected field of governance, networks, and partnerships, and highlights theoretical approaches that help to make sense of the many contradictions and paradoxes contained within it (Rhodes 1997; Newman 2001; Sullivan and Skelcher 2002; Newman and Clarke 2009). It finds that research to date has been

primarily from a macro and top-down perspective. As Sørensen and Torfing (2009:46) observe, governance theorists:

> are first and foremost occupied with debating the manifest as well as the potential impact of governance networks on the provision of effective governance.

Partnerships represent the practical enactment of these issues in public policy. They recast the relationship both within the state across different territorial levels and between the state and agents beyond the state, including the voluntary / third sector, communities, lay people, and the market. These are purposeful enactments targeted ostensibly at service coordination and improved outcomes. Tracing these developments the chapter concludes that while policy perspectives have been extensively considered, lay understandings of governance have been significantly under researched, concurring with Lowndes and Sullivan (2008.:72), that:

> Further research on neighbourhood governance will benefit from a full consideration of ... 'bottom-up' institutions and their interaction (or not) with government sponsored instruments.

Scholarship focusing specifically on partnerships has primarily taken up the concerns of policy makers, focusing on for example, questions of their significance as governance mechanisms, (Lowndes and Skelcher 1998), their policy effectiveness (Hudson and Hardy 2002; Huxham and Vangen 2005) and their capacity to improve service delivery (6 *et al.,* 2002). Research into partnership-making and practice from the perspective of 'beneficiaries,' is underexplored, and where it does exist takes an aggregate approach (Adamson and Bromiley 2008), or addresses the impact of the policy *on* local people (Hodgson 2004; Davies 2007). The current research asks if local people or communities are institutional agents within partnerships, what do they 'do' with the policy? i.e. in what ways do they enact their agency and with what effects? Adopting this approach brings into relief and invites exploration of the role, agency, and concerns of '*other*' partners, i.e. those who are not policy makers. And while there has been some research into the extent of joint or shared

'visions' across sectors (Sullivan and Williams 2009), there has been limited research exploring the constructions, rationalities and sense making of the actions of programme 'beneficiaries' in their pursuit of public purpose, or indeed whether they perceive their actions in these terms at all. The current research is located in these lacunae. Its starting point is those 'others' that, in policy terms, represent the objects of intervention, whilst simultaneously being required to act as 'partners' or co-governors.

This chapter, along with the next one provides the grounding for this work. It addresses five debates contained within broader discussions of governance; it begins with an exploration of the concept of governance, and the ways in which it differs from government. It considers the extent to which the concept and practices of governance have fundamentally altered the British polity. The second debate relates to the issue of networks, and their role in the development of governance. Two traditions of network analysis are considered, the first located in the British interest mediation approach which consigns a more limited role to networks and a second which proposes that networks are integral to the governance process itself. The role of governments within discourses of governance is the subject of the third section; it considers the extent to which governance should be read as a governing strategy of governments and explores the potential role governments can fulfill within governance. Here the idea of governmentality is explored followed by a consideration of meta-governance. Emerging from all these debates is a complex 'messy' picture in which governance can be seen to create conditions that both extend and contract central power and influence. These paradoxical processes and their implications are discussed in the fourth section. Finally, the chapter considers the extent to which partnerships can be viewed as instances of governance. The coordinatory role ascribed by policy programmes to partnerships is considered before moving on to explore the way partnerships have been put to use in political projects. This understanding demonstrates that governance as manifest in partnerships cannot be seen simply as networks but heavily mandated policy instruments. The section moves to a consideration of the institutional role

of partnerships and neo-institutional theory. In concluding the chapter, attention is paid to the key issues and topics raised for this doctoral study.

3.1   From Government to Governance

The rise of 'new-governance' is credited with increasing the numbers of groups involved in the process of governing, and fundamentally altering assumptions and expectations about the development and delivery of public policy, welfare provision, and the structure of the state. This is a debate about the location of power and the capacity to control both systems and outcomes. Although a relatively new field, debates in and about governance have developed rapidly. This section outlines the ways in which governance is understood to differ from government. It draws primarily from some of the earlier deliberations about governance, highlighting initial concerns to both account for emerging changes and assess the extent to which they represented a fundamental modification to the task of governing.

3.1.1 From Westminster to ... everywhere
Rhodes (1996, 1997) provides a much cited account of the transformation of the British polity from a unified system of government to one fragmented and 'hollowed out'. The unified state as exemplified by the Westminster model, describes a hierarchical system, based on clear lines of accountability within and across tiers of government. Legitimacy is grounded in a formal system of electoral representation in which the eligible electorate, individually and with equal weight, cast their vote once every four or five years. The business of government remains within its formal institutions, structures and systems, and while non-governmental organisations and interests may seek to influence government (for example Trade Unions, voluntary organisations, or social movements) organisational boundaries are considered distinct and public decision making largely the preserve of government. It is this political science

understanding of government as enlarged in the second half of the 20th century through nationalisation, the welfare state and local government reorganisation into *monolithic big government*, that in turn became the target of the neoliberal project to 'roll back the state'. Without detailing these processes, it is possible to recognise how this 'rolling back', involved far reaching programmes of privatisation, agentification, and service marketisation, (from coal mining, to the provision of welfare benefits, the NHS and local government services). It brought into the public domain, businesses, civil society groups and community organisations (from self help 'user groups' to voluntary organisations bidding for services contracts), conferring on these the status of legitimate actors and decision makers in matters of public policy and service delivery. It is in this sense that the state can be understood to have become fragmented and, with UK devolution in the 1990s and ongoing developments at European and global levels, 'hollowed out'.

Debating these changes has brought insight into significant intended and unintended consequences (Burns *et al.,* 1994; Rhodes, 1997; Stoker 1999), problematising the relationship between the state and civil society, which has become blurred and complex. Moreover, it challenges understandings of the underpinning concepts of government, including representation, legitimacy, responsibility, and accountability. Whilst, there are differences in theoretical approaches, within this *governance narrative* (Newman 2001), the principal purpose remains, like that of government, the creation of '... the conditions for ordered rule and collective action' (Pierre and Stoker 2000:32). Thus, governance differs from government not in respect of this overarching objective, but in the *processes* by which it is achieved (Rhodes 1997, 2007; Börzel 1997, 1998; Peters 1998a; Pierre 2000; Sullivan and Skelcher 2002). Contained within this narrative is a characterisation of the distinctiveness of coordinating mechanisms, shaping markets, bureaucracy, and networks (Frances *et al.*, 1991), and a belief that, in contrast to the bureaucratic nature of government, governance coordination is achieved via networks and trust based relationships. Further consideration will be given to the role networks in 3.2

below, however the point to stress here, is that the very issue of coordination, while a challenge in all governing situations is made more pronounced and complex in contemporary governance due to the involvement of a wider range of agents that are not and cannot be subject to the authority of government.

Sharing much in common with other leading governance scholars, (e.g. Pierre 2000; Newman 2001; Sullivan and Skelcher 2002), Stoker (1998) seeks to identify the critical factors contributing to the complexity of fragmented governance. Building on the 'hollowed out' thesis he offers five propositions about governance, highlighting how each is linked to five dilemmas or critical issues, which shape the debate and research space of the changing world of 'governing'. The notion of *dilemma* alerts us to the complex and deliberative nature of governance and is suggestive of both dynamism and contestation. Each proposition, introduces numerous variables and potential inter-relationships both within and between propositions; creating a highly complex level of dynamism beyond lineal representation or static encapsulation. Stoker's (1998) characterisation outlines how any given instance of governance might include (i) actors and institutions beyond formal government, (ii) problematise notions of public purpose, (iii) question normative understandings of decision making, accountability, and responsibility, arising from the (iv) blurring of agency boundaries, and (v) create power dependencies between agents with differential levels of power, in a networked field of necessary cooperation. Within this context, *good governing,* and *effective coordination* remain the priority of governance, yet the role of government is fundamentally altered from one in which direct *control* is significantly diminished and a new one of *steering* emerges.

Although offered as a set of propositions, seeking to encapsulate many complex factors there is a flattened two-dimensionality within Stoker's 'organizing framework' (1998:18), which reflects much of this early governance work. It is possible to read this as tautology; Stoker does not wish to define 'what governance is', but debate 'how governance is

achieved'. However, his descriptive account of the various elements of '*how*' becomes in effect, constitutive of 'what'. Ultimately, this self-referential and circular argument is unsatisfactory primarily because it fails to reflect the empirical world; it does however, makes a significant contribution by highlighting tensions and dilemmas that require attention (Rhodes 2007).

3.2. Networks and Governance

The notion that governance brings to the fore issues of process best addressed by networks of agents, requires further consideration. Rhodes (1997:15) describes governance as, 'self-organizing interorganizational network(s)'. It is appropriate therefore to consider understandings of networks in relation to governance. While there has been a close association between these ideas, the role of networks is not new in policy studies, as Hanf (1978: 11) asserts, 'the network as a whole must be the unit of analysis'. Within governance discussions, the key challenge is highlighted by Peters (1998a:25):

> ...if networks are to explain policy outcomes, or intergovernmental relations, ... then the characteristics of the networks themselves rather than the behaviour of the individual organizations should be the primary explanatory element.

Two conceptual formations of networks are particularly relevant in discussions of governance (Marsh and Rhodes 1992; Börzel 1998; Sullivan and Skelcher 2002). One located in a British tradition, grounded in debates about interest mediation, and the extent to which networks have the capacity to *affect* policy decisions; and the second rooted in a continental approach which understands governance as *inherently* networked.

3.2.1 Networks for Governance

The case for networks as mechanisms for interest mediation is made by Marsh and Rhodes (1992), and Marsh (1998). They analyse networks of intergovernmental relations, focusing on the number of resource holding agents and the frequency and quality of interaction as correlative factors. They propose that the continuity and thus effectiveness of the network is dependent on the numbers of resource holding agents, and the continuity of their participation. The smaller the former: the greater the latter. However, this structural model has been criticised for its failure to consider agency (Marsh and Smith 2000; Bevir and Rhodes 2003, 2008).

Dowding (1995) takes up the issue of agency from a rational choice perspective and focuses on the characteristics of network actors. He suggests that network analysis is useful only metaphorically, as a means of reflecting on the interactions and negotiations that secure personal (individual and organisational) objectives. Pollitt (2003) like Dowding concurs that the focus on networks highlights the importance of agency and informal relations. However, Pollitt is challenging of much network scholarship for its failure to offer alternative and radical perspectives. He is critical of the claims made for the newness and innovative nature of networks, questioning their extent and democratic properties. He concludes that debates about networks operate within the same positivist rational choice arguments of traditional public administration, while actors themselves are more often 'irrational' in action.

Whilst there have been some attempts to overcome the structure / agency divide within the interest mediation perspective (Marsh and Smith 2000), its contribution to the governance debate is restricted by its conception of the network and the location of decision making governance as largely separate. It conceives the policy network as located to the side of, or parallel to governance, seeking to influence rather than embrace the governance role. Thus, policy networks, while exercising variable levels of influence, cannot be viewed as instruments or bodies *of* governance. Never-the-less there are two key points worthy of note arising from this

interest mediation perspective. The first suggests that some British work on networks has become more 'continental' in its underlying assumptions and approach, adopting a 'network governance' understanding as seen in the language used in later debates (Skelcher *et al.*, 2005; Bevir and Rhodes 2008; Osborne 2010; and below). Second, that the concerns and deliberations of the interest mediation approach have been taken up, re-worked and developed through the (i) 'joined-up government' narrative (Jupp 2000; 6 1997; 6 *et al.*, 2002) and (ii) the development of partnerships, and the associated 'how-to-do' literature (Hudson and Hardy 2002; Sullivan and Skelcher 2002; Huxham and Vangen 2005; McQuaid 2010; Vangen and Huxham 2010), with its concerns about the mediation of relationships and the negotiation of power imbalances.

3.2.2 Networks as Governance

The network governance approach understands governance as inherently networked, and scholarship has focused on exploring the workings of the whole *governance system* (Kooiman 2010). Within these 'co-arrangements', Kooiman argues '[i]nterests are not 'given' but are moulded - as are the structures of interest - in the process of governance itself' (Kooiman 1993d:250). Concurring, Börzel (1997, 1998), in discussing what she describes as the German tradition, argues that networks should be understood as mechanisms for mobilizing political resources held by different agents within and beyond the state. This approach shifts the unit of analysis away from individual agents towards the set of interorganisational relationships, focusing on both the structure and processes. In this context, the relationship between the state and society can no longer be strictly separated, instead:

> governance and governing are not primarily looked upon as acts of governments, but as more or less a continuous process of interaction between social actors, groups and forces and public or semi public organizations, institutions or authorities (Kooiman 1993b:3).

A formative strand in much of this network governance literature, particularly earlier exploratory work, (Mayntz 1993; Kooiman1993a, 1993c; Kickert 1993) draws explicitly on complexity theory (Shaw 1997; Stacey 1995, 2000). Kooiman writing from this approach (1993c) identifies *dynamics, complexity, and diversity* as 'basic system qualities', stressing their intrinsic nature in systems to be governed, systems of governance and the relations between them, or as he describes these 'governing, governance and governability'. Embedded in this understanding of complex adaptive systems, his position offers a contrast to positivistic concerns that seek classification, prediction, and control, based on a unified and authoritative account of the phenomena. However, *governance* understood as networks of dynamic interrelated systems, retains the same all-encompassing explanatory imperative. Whilst, complexity theory *per se* is less prominent in later work, and its evolutionary theoretical base problematic for its failure to attend to issues of power, the approach does highlight the unpredictability inherent in the interactions of multiple agents, and does therefore open up more multifaceted research concerns (Rhodes 2000; Sørensen and Torfig 2008a; Sørensen and Triantafillou 2009a).

Distinctions between interest mediation and network governance approaches arise from the formulation of the problems they seek to address, and the construction of the research questions they investigate. Arguably, the network governance approach has grown in influence and appears to be having a greater influence in British scholarship. Indeed, Marsh (1998) has pointed out the links with Rhodes' (1996, 1997) work on governance, and there are clear overlaps with Stoker's 'five propositions' (1998). However, as Bevir and Rhodes (2006) have argued, these 'first generation' theorists sought to develop an 'essentialist' narrative through which understandings of governance were reduced to a number of 'defining' and categorical features (be that the number of agents involved, stability of interaction, or organic evolution). This approach has been challenged by a growing body of empirically grounded scholarship, drawing from a number of theoretical frameworks, and delivering more plural and challenging understandings of governing and governance.

3.3 Governance as a Governing Strategy

It is of course possible to contest the proposition that government has been fundamentally changed and instead cast governance as an instrumental strategy of the state. From this perspective, governance is viewed as the purposeful development of a range of mechanism to achieve political projects. Empirically it is possible to point to a large number of policy contexts including health, social care, children's services, crime prevention, housing, and regeneration (Mackintosh 1992; Hastings1996; Powell 1999b; Glendenning *et al.,* 2002), in which government has set out the terms and controlled the mechanisms of governance. The central thesis being advanced here, is one of continuity as well as contestation. Specifically, that governments remain powerful and even where new agents have been brought into the decision making process, this is done on the terms set and administered by governments.

Morgan *et al.,* (1999) take up this position, arguing that Rhodes's 'governing without government' thesis represents a 'fatal conceit.' Davies (2002) concurs and argues that empirical manifestations of governance represent increased hierarchical control with deeper penetration of the state into civil society, leading to a 'hollowing out' not of the state, but local democracy. Following these arguments, Bell and Hindmoor (2009) develop a thorough critique of the governance discourse. They argue that far from being *weakened* through fragmentation, de-centring, and the involvement of non-governmental agents, the state remains powerful and in control. Where new forms of governance have developed and non-state agents included in governing processes, these are they assert, at the behest and control of governments and are thereby rational strategies of government. As such, government retains the right and capacity to both establish and disestablish governance arrangements.

The breadth of the arguments presented by Bell and Hindmoor (2009) are considerable, they argue persuasively that the state is key in the development and meta-governance (discussed below) of governing.

However, in demonstrating the multifarious complex ways in which governments work with others in different modes of governance, they paradoxically demonstrate how governments both choose and are in consequence constrained to co-govern with agents *beyond* the state. Thus by adding *persuasion, community engagement,* and *associative* forms of governance, to the usual coordinatory classifications of markets, hierarchy, and network, and stressing the relational nature of governing, they actually make the case for governance beyond the centre. Furthermore, while it may be the case that governments retain *power*, (ultimately in the form of 'legitimate' violence), this must be distinguished from *control*. Without a doubt, the exercise of power to establish for example the parameters of governance cannot be equated with a capacity to control the practices and outcomes of both the individual instances and aggregate consequences of those structuring policies. Indeed, the driver for the development of much governance theory has been the need to account for the *unintended* consequences of government strategies of governance (Burnes *et al.*, 1994; Rhodes 1997; Newman and Clarke 2009).

3.3.1 Governmentality

Governmentality is the term coined by Foucault (1991a [1978]) to describe the 'art of governing'. It will be returned to in Chapter 4 in considering how communities are called upon to enact public policy. Here the task is to explore how Foucault's work informs the governance debate, or more accurately the scholarship of those who have taken up his ideas. While it is not possible to discuss this work in depth, it is necessary to highlight that the approach attends not to a consideration of the state or the operation of government; but is instead directed towards uncovering the ways of 'thinking and acting embodied in all those attempts to know and govern the wealth, health and happiness of populations' (Rose and Millier 1992:174). Governmentality attends to the management of *people*, and the processes necessary to make their actions governable. Analytically it seeks to identify:

> ... governmental technologies, the complex of mundane programmes, calculations, techniques, apparatuses, documents and procedures through which authorities seek to give effect to governmental ambitions *(ibid.*:175).

Governance from this perspective, especially in its programmatic manifestations (Communities First being a prime example) can be seen as a technical project, in which particular problematistions of life are constructed so as to be answered by the governmental programme directed at it (Rose and Miller 1992:181; Rose 1993: 288). And the artfulness of governmentality, like Foucault's conception of power (1977, 1980a, 1980b, 1982) lies in its diffuse and self-disciplinary operation.

Sørensen and Triantafillou (2009a), taking up this self-disciplinary aspect explore the idea of self-government within the governance debate. They argue *society* itself is reconceptualised*,* moving from a *burden* to the governors to a *resource* to be activated and harnessed. They argue:

> ... affected and involved citizens, firms, voluntary organizations and interest organizations are increasingly being regarded as knowledgeable, competent, resourceful and responsible contributors to solving governing tasks. (Sørensen and Triantafillou 2009a:1)

This is a recurring theme in the work of many scholars and can be seen in Newman's 'performing citizens' (2005) and the 'remade' and 'active' citizens, discussed by Clarke *et al.*, (2007; also Lowndes and Sullivan 2008; Clarke and Newman 2009, Chapter 4).

Sørensen and Triantafillou's (2009a) use of the concept of self-governance reconceptualises the issue of governance, moving it towards a more dynamic and complex debate in which governance is internalised by participants, creating positive and productive agents. This conceptualisation generates intangible *fuzziness* in the distinction between governors and governed, and a complex dynamic interplay between agents, in which the governed can participate in the governing, and the

governors are also governed. Governance thus becomes internalised in understandings of the self and, externalised in institutional programmes. However, constructions of governance and self-governance are not closed systems with inescapable deterministic properties. Instead, as Sørensen and Triantafillou (2009a:17) assert:

> ... institutional set ups are in most cases complex, ambiguous, contradictory and fragmented and made subject to situated and competing interpretations and articulations. Accordingly, their ability to structure social action in any strict and coherent meaning of the word is limited and depends to a considerable degree on the presence of a relatively stable and detailed institutionalized governance narrative that functions as a strong hegemonic point of reference for the involved actors.

This paradoxical picture is also emerging from the growing body of empirical work within this field. As Newman (2001) finds in discussing the governance of the first New Labour administration, while some power may have been dispersed through for example, devolution, partnerships and various initiatives to 'modernise' government, the 'penetration of the state' can also be seen to have grown, as greater numbers and diversity of actors have been drawn into direct relationships with government. This creates a range of contradictory forces and analytical paradoxes, which moves debate away from simplistic dichotomies of less/more government, freedom from/control by the state, or civil society versus the state, and challenges conceptions of the public /private and the personal / political. Furthermore, in the context of localised systems of governance which draw private citizens into public action, for example in community regeneration initiatives, understandings of governing and governed can be contested and destabilised. Both the self-disciplinary and resistive capacities of communities is discussed in the next chapter, the point to stress here is that the governmentality perspective opens up new ways of approaching the issue of governance and new sets of research questions that create opportunities to explore the experience of governing from the perspective of the governed (McKee 2009).

3.3.2. Meta Governance

Meta-governance addresses the governability (Mayntz 1993; Kooiman 2010) of the whole governance system. Having 'de-layered', 'fragmented' and shifted the loci of power, the governance approach is left with a fundamental paradox; how, given the complexity and multiplicity of multiple sites and the involvement of numerous agents, might collective purpose be secured? As Peters comments, the 'integration *within* networks may reduce the capacity to co-ordinate *across* networks...' (1998b:308, emphasis original; also Peters 2010). Thus, while governance arrangements may be perceived as improving coordination and outcomes within a specific context or around a defined task, the wider governance field may be disadvantaged. Who (or what) therefore, has the capacity for meta-governance, and how could or should it be secured? Retaining a belief in the possibility of whole system governability, Kooiman and Van Vliet (1993) writing from a complexity perspective, argue that this is now the role for central government. They identify three key tasks, addressing the *identification of the task* and key players; the *steering of relationships* towards desired outcomes; and the *integration and regulation* of coordination of the whole system.

In contrast, Jessop (2000, 2003) provides a welcome questioning of the holistic governability of governance by arguing that *failure* is an inevitable outcome of all coordinatory systems, markets, bureaucracy, and governance. Like Kooiman, Jessop identifies government as playing a major role in the development of meta-governance, and both pay attention to the why's and how's of securing it. However, Jessop's recognition of *failure* and his qualified understanding of *success* is underpinned by an ontological belief in the inevitability of conflict, grounded in the structural differentiation of group interests which may be fundamentally opposed making coordinatory integration improbable. In this light the role of government has not disappeared but becomes focused on meta-governance taking on new roles and responsibilities, in which the state:

reserves to itself the right to open, close, juggle and re-articulate governance arrangements, not only terms of particular functions, but also from the viewpoint of partisan and overall political advantage (Jessop 2000:19).

There is much agreement about the continued importance of governments in meta-governance, but divergent appraisals of it. Rhodes (2007), argues that processes of fragmentation, mean that governments have both lost and relinquished much direct control, reducing their role to the meta-governance concerns of regulation, through for example policy guidelines, 'special initiatives', and inspection regimes. Accepting the inevitability of governance *failure,* Rhodes argues that while governments may wish to *steer* both the actions of governance agents and the path of governance, their capacity to *direct* is limited. Reviewing British governance practice, he observes that while the '...centre intervenes often ... its interventions do not have the intended effects and so cannot be considered control' (*ibid.:* 1248). Government is reduced to operating 'rubber levers', which operated at the 'top' do not impact at the 'bottom' as intended (2000, 2007). Similarly, Bell and Hindmoor (2009), argue that government is the only agency that can fulfil the tasks of meta-governance. Taking an economic based approach, they identify the benefits of meta-governance as 'public goods' that should be provided by the state to mitigate against the worse consequences of 'free rider' behaviour. Unchecked or left to non-state actors, failure to discharge mega-governance threatens system governability. Given the importance of the state in this analysis Bell and Hindmoor, conclude that governance reinforces hierarchy even where government has promoted networks, because the state controls these relationships through structure, policy, and resources.

3.4   Messy Governance

Much of the debate considered thus far has been expressed in largely binary terms viz the extent to which governance has replaced government or whether governance is advanced through networks. While this

approach is useful in highlighting issues in the starkest terms it is also unhelpful in considering practice, since real life is rarely that simple. Indeed coexistence of different governing systems is not new, for example Scharpf (1994) argues that governance operates 'in the shadow of hierarchy', and Marinetto (2003a) demonstrates that that the British polity has a long history of both fragmentation and central control. However, the notion of coexistence does not in itself adequately reflect the highly complex and confusing relationship between central control and political fragmentation, nor the way in which these dynamics work for and against each other. This dynamic forms the focus of much recent empirically based theoretical work (Newman and Clarke 2009; Sørensen and Triantafillou 2009a).

As outlined above, theoretically it is possible to discuss governance as a changed form of governing (as in 'fragmented') or as an instrumental strategy of government (for example partnerships), but it is less clear to what extent this conceptual distinction is so easy to draw out in empirical manifestations of governance. Regeneration partnerships provide an example of governance as an instrumentally created phenomenon brought into existence to secure policy outcomes. However, the enactment of the partnership creates dynamics that impacts at both instrumental and governing levels. For example the involvement of local people as 'active citizens' (to use the preferred discourse language) can be seen as an instrumental strategy, but it also impacts fundamentally on the processes of governing. Thus, while local regeneration partnerships are tasked to create tangible outcomes, (participation in training or creation of job opportunities) they can also be viewed, and are promoted as, local foci of political power, taking charge of agenda setting, localised planning, and coordination with 'higher' tiers of governance (strategic partnerships) and government (local authorities). This ongoing intertwining and dynamic co-development of governing and instrumental rationalities in a wide range of service planning areas and at numerous levels of territorial decision making, has created a complex field, criss-crossed with a range of issues, aligned in a seemingly unending array of permutations.

Conceptual clarity is not possible through strategies of 'unpicking', which assume that these different dynamics can be drawn apart and understood as 'stand alone' issues, which then yield insight once put back together. One way forward is to engage with the inherently political construction of governance. *Political* here refers not to the business of governing, but what we might describe as the *politics of politics;* that which is accepted as subject to political deliberation, and that which is assumed, within any debate, to be given and unproblematic; and the contestation involved in the settling (or unsettling) of these positions. Newman and Clarke (2009) discuss this as the power to *politicise* and *depoliticise* representations. There is a growing literature (Sørensen & Torfing 2008c; Clarke 2009; Sørensen & Triantafillou, 2009a), which accepts this inherently political understanding of governance, moving beyond the presentation of governance as either a fragmented, decentred process of governing or as a stratagem of control.

Rejecting both these positions, whilst simultaneously recognising the value of each, commentators highlight the ambiguous, and paradoxical nature of contemporary governance, in which a 'double dynamic' (Newman and Clarke 2009:19) operates, bringing 'counter hegemonic perspectives to voice and action alongside ... incorporation, deflection and silencing' (*ibid.*: 19-20). These contradictions are highlighted in research in diverse policy areas, including community development (Hodgson 2004; Adamson 2006; Drakeford 2006), institutional analyses (Bristow *et al.*, 2008), and social welfare partnerships (Glendenning's *et al.*, 2002). Reflecting on the wider public policy field, Fischer (2003) refers to contemporary public policy discourse as 'post empiricist', in so far as it seeks to '... understand how ... varying cognitive elements interact discursively to shape that which comes to be taken as knowledge' (*ibid.*:130). This is an insightful way of considering governance, and offers an opportunity to make sense of the contradictory forces at play without the need to diminish or grind down the sharp edges of contradiction. Indeed, accepting these contradictions and the ambiguous consequences that inevitably arise from them, opens up

new research opportunities, (including my own) into the study of governance.

Taking this as an opening position, and building on the conceptual distinction offered by Cornwall (2004) in her work on 'invited' and 'popular' spaces, Newman and Clarke (2009) explore the creation of 'public spaces' (what might be described as manifestations of governance) and the relationship of these spaces to and with the 'publics' (those official and lay individuals and groups) involved within them. Rejecting ideas of governance as ordered and 'nested', as implied in concepts such as 'multi layered' (Pierre and Stoker 2000), they develop the concept of 'multi-ness', in which governance is likened to '...a Kandinsky painting, with uneven shapes and uncomfortable alignments held in tenuous balance,' (*ibid.*:41). Multi-ness they argue 'brings new [governance] spaces into being, or makes new framings of space visible'; it approaches governance as a set of processes that construct sites of governing as *assemblages*; '...the institutionalisation of specific projects [that] involves the work of assembling diverse elements into an apparently coherent form' (*ibid.:*9).

There are four key points to be drawn from this work that are particularly useful in considering contemporary governance. First, it draws our attention to the importance of the contextual and temporal in any consideration of governance, both in empirical and analytical terms. If manifestations of governance are dynamic and contingent, even whilst hierarchical forces seek uniformity and control, then time and place matter; positivistic political science approaches to governance are thus rendered inadequate. Second, this work problematises and invites investigation of the *assemblages* and *processes of assemblaging* governance; understood as a set of complementary and disparate discourses which coalesce in both secure and tenuous relationships around a governance project. An example here might be research into the 'community-led' discourse of regeneration partnerships in the context of centrally funded and performance managed national programmes. Third, reflecting on 'sites of governance' invites investigation of the interrelationships between 'sites'. Not however, simply as distinct phenomena that interface at their

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extremities with one layer built upon another as in conceptions of 'multi-layered', but as more complex and dynamic sets of relationships. Here, neither the core nor periphery of any governance site is fixed, but remains open to, and capable of overlapping and interfacing with other such boundary shifting sites, in the creation of potential new sites of governance. Conceptually this is useful in terms of (i) being able to better descriptively account for what is happening and (ii) useful analytically in terms of thinking about how an individual site of governance, can interact with other sites to create new sites-of-governance. Finally, *multi-ness* opens up research questions into the dynamic between 'sites of governance' as discursive spaces and their role in, relationship with, and construction of, physical spaces of governance. These are significant issues in the governance of regeneration, in which physical space plays such a key role.

This perspective suggests a four-fold dynamic in which there is contestation about (i) the discursive assemblages of governance, (ii) the settlement /unsettlement of sites-of-governance, (iii) deliberation about the physical locations of, and for, governance and (iv) how these change across time. Each of the first three can be seen as representing an axis of contestation around which complementary, competing, and ambivalent discourses and material possibilities interact. However, each axis is also directly related to the others, leading to a profoundly complex set of dynamics, in which the deliberations within one axis combine with and are integral to the deliberations of another. Furthermore, the unpredictability within such dynamics of contestation ensures that both relationships and outcomes remain contingent and potentially capricious.

3.5   Partnerships

Powell and Glendinning (2002:1) may accurately assess partnerships as 'the indefinable in pursuit of the unachievable' however, it would be difficult to refute the rapid proliferation of partnerships, both numerically and in respect to the breadth of issues to which they have been seen by policy

makers as a legitimate and constructive way forward. Jupp highlights the political salience of the term noting that, '(i)n 1999, the word "partnership" was mentioned 6,197 times in Parliament ... up from just 38 times in 1989.' (Jupp 2000:13) However, as Sterling (2005) observes, much of the debate about partnerships lacks conceptual clarity. While there is considerable commonality of language, it is often a commonality of vague concepts used in variable ways with different foci, put to work for diverse and sometimes contradictory purposes. Thus, partnerships develop in and are directed towards the resolution, of a public policy dilemma or problem, and in this sense they address a discernible instrumental task, be that at higher (e.g. strategic coordination) or lower levels of abstraction (e.g. the logistics of service delivery). Partnerships have played a prominent role in technocratic discourses, which focus on service effectiveness, efficiency, or synergy (6 1997; 6 *et al.*, 2002; Hudson and Harding 2002; Huxham and Vangen 2005). However, the idea of partnership resonates with ideological values (Freeden 1996) often deployed in 'visioning' projects as can be seen in discussions of partnerships as means of promoting an 'enterprise culture', (Edwards and Deakin 1992; Hastings 1996) or as instruments for New Labour's 'Third Way' (Clarence and Painter 1998; Powell 1999a; Clarke and Glendinning 2002). Additionally, partnerships have been enlisted (and on occasions rejected, see Davies 2007) within social and cultural discourses of civil society as enabling new kinds of social and political engagement through reconstructed conceptions of active citizens (Blunkett 2003; Bang 2005; Newman and Clarke 2009).

Partnerships are also viewed as manifestations of governance, and while some have argued that they are not new in public policy (Pollitt 2003), the breadth of their development challenges established understandings of polity, and raises issues of legitimacy and accountability. In considering the significance of partnerships within governance, it is possible to highlight a number of themes with which it is often affirmatively or problematically coupled. Although each is interconnected, they offer different entry points into the debate and as outlined below, include partnerships as a form of coordination, as exemplary networks, as political

projects and as modes of governance that challenge traditional conceptions of institutions.

3.5.1 Partnerships and coordination

The Holy Grail (Peters 1998b:295) of coordination can be seen as being given a life line by the development of partnerships. Sullivan and Skelcher (2002:5-6) identify partnerships as a form of *collaboration* in which:

> ...partners share responsibility for assessing the need for action, determining the type of action to be taken and agreeing the means of implementation ... (requiring) ... negotiation between people from diverse agencies committed to working together over more than the short term ... to deliver 'collaborative advantage.'

Fundamental to the significance of collaboration are the normative values associated with it. The idea of 'working together' is an inherently positive concept within partnership policy and coordination and inter-organisational collaboration are key drivers in the development of partnerships (6 *et al.*, 2002; Huxham and Vangen 2005). Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) remind readers that this breaks with the more usual practice of non-cooperation, or traditional rational choice approaches which locate the drivers for coordination in a negotiation between resource dependent agents. Here cooperation is reduced to a conditional, organisationally focused cost-benefit analysis, or may develop into patterns of voluntary exchange (Levine and White1962). In contrast, the discourse of partnership is built on a normative altruism that transcends organisational boundaries because 'there is ... a moral imperative for promoting collaboration ...[as] the really big problem issues facing society... fall into the *inter-organisational domain* between organisations' (Huxham 1996:239 emphasis italics).

Two issues suggest that the idea of coordination is not quite as straight forward as it seems. Bogason and Toonen (1998) point out (with more than a touch of irony) that discussions about coordination sound much like the 'centralist practices' of:

the good old days of comprehensive planning formerly heavily criticised ... (now) suddenly considered ok and effective as long as (there is) a 'bottom up' inclusion of the voice of 'target groups' (*ibid.:*208).

Indeed, the final element in Sullivan and Skelcher's (2002:6) definition of partnership cited above stipulates that partnership achievements '...are subject to the assessment of intended beneficiaries.' This ensures that partnerships are not exclusively organisationally-focused but must involve lay 'others'. The second issue challenges the idea that coordination as a neutral process of bridging gaps between policies, since policies are not simply 'authoritative guide[s] to future action' (Challis *et al.*,1988:36*),* but contested statements secured through processes of competing interests. Coordination is therefore, '... about power and the purposeful use of power' (*ibid.:* 38). Taken together these issues open up 'partnership' as political concept, put to work for political ends.

3.5.2 *Partnerships as political projects*

The politics of coordination leads to questions about the policies to be coordinated and the interests they serve. Exploring the normative values promoted through the language and practices supported by governments in the development of partnerships, gives insight into this issue. The field of regeneration over the last 30-40 years provides an illustration; partnerships have been promoted as instrumental to the delivery of socio-economic regeneration, and encouraging coordination and collaboration between 'partners' and outcome synergy have been consistent foci of both debate and practice. However, despite these commonalities, their rhetorical imagery and the political project to which partnerships have been directed, differ. The key point here is not an evaluation of political constructions of regeneration partnerships, but to highlight 'partnership' as part of a political project. The questions 'who are the partners?', 'what are the issues to be coordinated?', 'how are these interactions to be structured?' are fundamentally political questions. Thus while Edwards and Deakin (1992) argue that partnerships in the 1980s promoted the

Thatcherite project of 'privatism', Newman discussing the partnerships of New Labour, comments '... partnership working became embedded as a politically legitimated but essentially *managerial* strategy...' (2001:125).

One useful way of adding depth to this argument is through a consideration of the development and use of the partnership concept in seminal works, and Sullivan and Skelcher's book (2002) provides such an example. This work is notable for three reasons first it captures the 'spirit of the age', being published at the end of the first term of the New Labour Government. This was the same year as the optimistically entitled *Towards Holistic Governance: The New Reform Agenda*, by Perri 6 *et al.*, (2002). Both texts are crafted in an upbeat optimistic style and both recognise that the issues of coordination are as old as public policy itself. They both highlight ways in which New Labour's approach differ from earlier initiatives and both imply that this 'newness' has the capacity to impact on 'the problem' in a way hitherto unseen. Thus, it is possible to identify how re-conceptualisation of 'old' problems (e.g. coordination), creates new ways of 'seeing' and new strategies and energies with which to address them.

Second, this *zeitgeist* invoked in the above texts captured what Mackintosh (1992) described as the *transformative* model of partnership. This moves beyond a concern with instrumental objectives, to an exploration of the synergistic outcomes for collaboration, and the potential for *cultural* transformation of the partners themselves and the relationships between them. Mackintosh identifies the presence of both in the partnership literature and practice of the early 1990s. Himmelman (1996) identifying a different transformational outcome, sees the ultimate goal as the potential for 'community self-determination', a position which chimes with some of the grander claims of governance. He identifies this as emerging through community-led collaborative practices, which change power relationships between cross-sector partners, leading to increased levels of community empowerment and ultimately greater social justice. Thus although the nature of the change may be open for discussion there

is considerable consensus that partnerships can shift in quite radical ways the policy field and the organisations and relationships within it.

Clarke and Glendinning (2002) assert that partnerships embody values, and are expected to deliver both practical and symbolic outcomes. The involvement of 'other' non-governmental agents is one way in which this is secured. Sullivan and Skelcher demonstrate how New Labour Partnership outcomes should be '... subject to the assessment of intended beneficiaries' *(*Sullivan and Skelcher 2002:6 i.e. 'users', 'consumers', 'citizens', and 'communities'). While these authors are somewhat unusual in making this a *condition* of partnership, its inclusion is very much a part of the ethos and language of the partnership discourse of the time, which identifies and constitutes beneficiaries collectively, as 'a partner'. Symbolically the involvement of 'beneficiaries' speaks to the idea of an 'inclusive' society'; and the issue is given considerable prominence in the policy literature. However as Sullivan and Skelcher (2002:184) argue, the construction of beneficiaries in this way is highly problematic and:

> [g]overnment initiatives that seek citizens as partners are frequently overlaid by visions of society that are not developed with communities but none the less form the basis of their subsequent involvement.

Again, community regeneration provides an illustration with the Welsh Assembly Government's Communities First programme, being prominently promoted as 'community-led', (NAfW 2001a; WAG 2002a, 2002b), whilst simultaneously specifying specific fields of operation and monitoring outcomes. Unsurprisingly, this is a highly debated area of partnership theory and practice, and one which forms the focus of discussion of the following chapter.

Drawing on the work of Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) it is possible to see how their conceptualisation of partnership is contextually located in the 'New Labour' era. However, reference to partnerships in earlier times (Edwards and Deakin1992; Mackintosh1992) highlights the flexibility of the concept and the diversity of rhetoric and practices that go with it. The context-specificity but conceptual flexibility of partnership has made it a

valuable idea in much public policy. Understanding partnership as a multi-faceted concept, with its diverse uses and normative associations, alerts us to the significance of context and the importance of time. Partnership is a dynamic concept that is enacted in both prescribed and permissive contexts, and in directed but open systems, and is subject to change and adaptation over time. Being nebulous the concept carries negative connotations for some commentators; others have argued that it is precisely this vagueness, enhanced by symbolic infusions of rosy wholesomeness, which gives partnership its political value (Clarke and Glendinning 2002). Conceptually, accepting partnership as constructed through political and policy discourse and enacted and amended through practice, undermines positivistic concerns about definitional accuracy, opening up more nuanced explorations of partnership as a dynamic relational concept.

3.5.3 Partnership and Networks

Partnerships are clearly mechanisms of governance in so far as they are vested with public power (Bogason 2001) and directed by governments to carry out particular tasks for the 'public good'. Additionally, as argued above they play a role in wider political projects, which shape thinking about public policy issues and the construction about potential solutions (Newman 2001, Newman and Clarke 2009, Sørensen and Triantafillou 2009a, 2009b). Partnerships are structured and directed, by government through mandate, guidance, targeted resources, and audit. However, encapsulated within the rhetoric of partnership is the concept of network. The governance literature draws a link between partnerships and networks as a mode of coordination. Yet, as Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) have argued, this merging of concepts leads to theoretical confusion and analytical weakness. They propose instead that:

> Partnership as an organizational structure is analytically distinct from network as a mode of governance – the means by which social coordination is achieved...Rather, partnerships are associated with a variety of forms of co-ordination –including networks, hierarchy and market (*ibid.:*314).

This insight breaks two unhelpful theoretical couplings. The first associates partnerships with networks and second it challenges the distinction between coordinatory mechanisms as discrete and fixed. It thus, opens the way to more sophisticated and penetrating levels of analyses, in which multiple forms of coordination can be identified operating both simultaneously within partnerships and across time. This coexistence of coordinatory mechanism forces scholars to rethink both classificatory distinctions and the meaning and purpose of *coordination* itself. This is especially as partnerships draw into the field 'others' with diverse perspectives, potentially incongruous aims, and differing understandings of the policy instrument in which they are engaged (Sullivan and Williams 2009). Thus, in following network sceptics like Pollitt (2003), Rowe and Devanney (2003:393), argue that network relationships exist across different forms of governance, and that '... partnerships operate within settings dominated by hierarchies and markets.'

Powell and Exworthy (2002) refer to partnerships as 'quasi-networks', which display some of the classic characteristics of networks, but are created and structured by government, for specific purposes and are constrained by both conditions of establishment (e.g. specified membership groups) and operation (e.g. implantation of specific targets). Elaborating on this position and drawing from Jessop (2000) some have argued that partnerships should be viewed not as self regulating networks but as:

> externally managed systems, whose internal dynamics coexist, potentially uncomfortably, with powerful external direction and intervention (Clarke and Glendinning 2002:43).

Understood in this way, the idea of network takes on a limited and prescribed meaning, intrinsically linked with issues of system coordination moving into the realm of meta-governance (Jessop 2003).

3.5.4 Partnerships as Institutions?

The involvement of agents from across and beyond the state in the development and practice of partnerships poses theoretical challenges to political theorists. The appeal of network analysis as a coordinatory mechanism provides an account of the potential benefits of this approach but does not in itself contribute to an understanding of how these relationships become part of the field of governance. Neo-institutionalism engages with these issues (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; March and Olsen 1989; Lowndes 1996; Scott 1991). Moving on from a traditional focus on 'rules, procedures and formal organizations of government' (Rhodes 1997:79), neo-institutionalism is concerned:

> ... with informal conventions as well as formal rules and structures; ... the way in which institutions embody values and power relationships; and ... not just the impact of institutions upon behaviour, but the interaction between individuals and institutions (Lowndes 2001:1593).

Lowndes (2001) identifies six analytical themes that underpin contemporary institutional studies, which (i) move away from a focus on organisations to the rules *between* organisations (ii) are both *formally and informally* conceptualised (iii) *dynamic* (iv) inherently *value based*, (v) *embedded* in a multitude of values, systems, and organisations, and (vi) *disaggregated* in their formation. Thus institutional change is understood as '... inevitably a value-laden, contested and context-dependent process' (Lowndes and Wilson 2003:280). Neo-institutionalism provides an analytical framework through which to consider both the specificity of individual partnerships and the institutional status of partnerships as a form of governance. It also offers openings with which to consider the place of programme 'beneficiaries', citizens, and communities (Sullivan and Skelcher 2002). This move from a focus on institutions as fixed

entities to a wider institutionalised field is critical to understanding the 'legitimate' practice of non-governmental agents. Sørensen and Torfing (2008b:27), utilise this understanding when focusing on the wider field, and the spaces between individual instances of governance, they assert that:

> Governance networks are neither organizations nor institutions in the strict and narrow sense of the term, but relatively institutionalized frameworks of negotiated interaction.

The neo-institutional approach makes a significant contribution to the discussion about partnership in so far as its re-conceptualization of institutions opens up investigation of processes and dynamics in partnership-making, and directs attention to the interrelationship between agents within the institutionalised field. However, questions of legitimacy remain. As outlined in the opening discussion above, the 'Westminster Model' is a hierarchical rational model of government carrying high levels of structural accountability and normative values. Partnerships fall outside this model, and require alternative rationalisations. Bogason (2001) has shown how the challenge of securing public power is an open and contestable process, dependent on the enlistment of normative values and rhetorical constructions. As Jessop argues, the state continues to play a major role in this process through its structural and operational 'juggling' (2000:19), serving as a source of legitimacy for its own actions and bestowing legitimacy on prescribed and approved agents.

A notable example of state 'juggling' can be seen in the development of the 'thirds principle'. This has been taken up in Welsh policy-making under the normative banner of 'inclusion.' In this regard the Communities First programme (Chapter 2) provides a notable example, stipulating equal representation across public, voluntary and private sectors in the formation of local CF Partnerships. Early research exploring this structuring principle presents a mixed picture of the impacts of these arrangements. Bristow *et al.*, (2008) researching the effect of this on partnerships of the EU Structural Funds, suggest that while operational effectiveness may be

unchanged or made even more difficult, the thirds principle has increased legitimacy of non-governmental agents within partnerships, and contributed to the rhetoric of inclusion (see also Royles 2006; Sophocleous 2004, 2009). However, legitimacy remains fragile and open to challenge, particularly on the grounds of characteristics (theoretically at least) marking policy makers and those delivering services as 'different' from the population as large, for example via professionalism, accountability and audit. This can be seen in the criticisms attached to one high profile case of corruption with the CFP (BBC 18.03.10) and in the attempts by the Welsh Assembly Government to re-establish programme credentials through a reformulation and affirmation of governance arrangements (WAG 2010)

The exploration of partnerships through the lens of neo-institutionalism is particularly useful in opening up thinking about the research questions. First, the creation of an institutional field facilitates an understanding of partnerships as one among many interrelated parts, ascribing to partnerships, and those who participate within them, institutional credentials. Second, it creates the space to ask how non-state actors become involved in public issues within partnerships, and invites exploration of the processes and structures through which this occurs, and legitimacy secured. Third, each of Lowndes' six analytical themes (2001), represent a different but potentially interconnected entry point, to the study of partnerships, creating opportunities to engage with the institutional field from different perspectives. Fourth, when considered in the context of Newman and Clarke's (2009) insights into 'the assemblages of governance', neo-institutionalism provides a conceptual stepping stone to explore processes of institutionalisation as another facet of the power *to politicise*. Finally, it has the potential of moving debate away from considerations of the impact of policy upon beneficiaries (Hodgson 2004, Davies 2007) to an exploration of how participants use the institutional interactions and context for their own ends. This is a theme taken up in latter chapters

3.6   Conclusion

This chapter has considered the relationship between understandings of governance as a political and theoretical concept and partnerships as a policy manifestation of this. It opened with a discussion about the differences between government and governance and identified defining characteristics of each. It addressed the question of whether the task of governing has been fundamentally altered by processes of 'fragmentation', in which decision making had been dispersed and considered the extent to which government retains control. The chapter appraised the role of networks within this debate and the extent to which governance should be understood as essentially occurring in diffuse networks. Following a discussion of the continued role of government in conditions of governance, the contributions of *governmentality* and the concept of meta-governance were considered. Finally, the public policy field was considered as operating in conditions that are both hierarchically structuring and networked, creating 'messy' unpredictable patterns of governance.

The literature has demonstrated that 'essentialist' constructions of both governance and partnership, while theoretically possible, do not necessarily reflect empirical practice. In this context, partnerships as instrumental formations can be seen as the paradoxical embodiment of hierarchically mandated policy, creating opportunities for local networked practice. Partnerships have developed in a broader 'discourse of collaboration' (Powell and Glendinning 2002), and despite the alluring conceptual neutrality of coordination, the discussion has demonstrated the flexibility of the idea and the ways it has been directed towards diverse political projects. Critically, partnerships involve designated 'others', notably 'lay' others who bring different social and cultural expectations to the formerly exclusive business of governing. Thus, while the case for the location of partnerships within the governance debate remains controversial, partnership discourse also represents the coalescence of governance with citizen and engagement debates, creating both

opportunities for 'empowerment' while also potentially increasing state control over civil society (Pierre and Peters 2000). The contradictory forces driving the development of partnerships are also evident in their outcomes. This is a position well understood by Jessop (2000:23) who highlights how in evaluating, partnerships with their:

> multiplicity of satisficing criteria and ... range of potential vested interest, ... at least some of the aims are realised to a socially accepted degree for at least some of those affected.

The current research project, although not evaluative, does seek to tell a story from the perspective of some of the 'others' involved in partnership-making ; in particular those who serve as both the objects of intervention, and simultaneously 'partners' or co-governors . Crucially, by virtue of their involvement, these 'others' are ascribed institutional status, and authority, in particular the authority 'to act'. As Lowndes and Sullivan (2008:72), have noted there is insufficient research of ''bottom-up' institutions and their interaction (or not) with government sponsored instruments.' It is this shortfall, that this study aims to address. In essence it asks if local people and communities are institutional agents within partnerships, what do they 'do' with the policy, i.e., in what ways do they enact their agency and to what effects? This approach opens up new ways of considering the operation of governance, by challenging rhetorical assertions about the operation and empowering impacts of partnerships, through a co-location of designated 'others'. Within the research, 'others' are understood as 'the community' and it an exploration of communities in the literature that forms the focus of the next Chapter.

Chapter 4   Communities, People and Action

The involvement of communities in governance could be understood as a quintessentially *good idea.* However, it is far from straightforward, evoking instead questions about what constitutes a community, on what basis are they to 'govern' and what is involved in the processes of bringing them into governing? Raymond Williams reflecting on the challenges of defining his entries into *Keywords* - his 'vocabulary of culture and society' notes that each word is:

> ...inextricably bound up in the problems it was being used to discuss [and] ... in discussions and arguments which were rushing by to some other destination (1976:13).

It is an observation that aptly describes the challenge of presenting the key themes within this chapter. Thus if 'local governance' is the destination, and this chapter seeks to address the local contexts of its development, then the chapter needs to address scholarly considerations of *local communities*, *local people*, and *action*. This however is highly prized and contested territory, subject to multiple presentations and classifications, and inscribed with diverse problems and solutions, creating obfuscation in understanding the issues being considered. Moreover grasping the intricacies of these debates is not primarily a definitional task, on the contrary as Williams implies, grasping meaning is as much about developing insight into the broader cultural milieu in which the discussion operates. In the context of this thesis, this leads to a consideration of the wider political and policy framework in which concepts such as communities, local people, and action are employed, and to a fundamental questioning of what is at stake in the way debates are framed, named, and claimed.

This chapter is organised in five sections and analytically explores policy constructions and contestations of the places evoked by initiatives to promote community governance, and the kinds of people within them, in this sense it addresses the politics of public policy. It begins by setting out a heuristic framework to support the discussion and analysis that follows. Considerations of *local communities*, *local people*, and *action* are not conceptually sequential, but presented as heuristic devices that provides different, but equally valid starting points. Addressing any one requires attention to each of the others. Policy is considered important 'because of its role as a principal means for the transmission of discourse' (Prior 2009:19). However, while policy may aim to construct the social world in a particular way, reality is more complex, diverse, and unwieldy, and thus each heuristic idea is open to challenge and contestation.

The second section of the chapter proceeds with a consideration of 'community'. It traces the demise of community as a sociological construct and its subsequent rise as a governmental location of and resource for policy intervention. Community as a political resource is considered in the third section, which explores the place of community in governmentality and communitarian theory. Moving from theory to policy the fourth section addresses the place of civil society in the development of community-led governance, by way of New Labour's social agenda and the notion of civic duty. Civil society as discussed in Chapter 2 is conceptually grounded in debates about the state and democracy, its enlistment in public policy is thus considered in terms of the kinds-of-people it seeks to create and the role claimed for it in public policy. The final section reflects on the categories of actors favoured by policy as agents of community governance and addresses the discursive construction of *activeness*. Critically however, attention is also paid to the way policy evocations are resisted, altered, and ignored, creating alternative conceptions of place and action. The chapter concludes with a consideration of legitimacy, and the way community governance disrupts traditional understandings.

The chapter concludes that community-led governance brought into being through governmental policy focuses on affecting change to people in particular locations, but this is far from a uni-dimensional process on the contrary, community-led governance brings into local processes of governing a range of 'others' and gives a platform to voices it cannot silence and actions it cannot control. The fieldwork takes this insight as its starting point and uses it to explore how the issues raised are worked out in practice.

4.1   Conceptual Framework

The shorthand terms, *locations, types-of-people, and ways-of-being*, operate in this chapter as analytical tools to engage with projects of categorisation that are involved in bringing into view politically favoured *actions* by approved agents in specific governance *locations*. The ways in which these questions are settled topographically fixes (however temporarily) and brings into relief the contours and practices of local governance, constituting the territory that activists, policy makers, and politicians, both consciously and unconsciously navigate. The central question this chapter addresses is what is at stake in establishing how and why some particular types-of-people*,* acting in certain ways, in nominated places are legitimately bestowed with powers to act as agents of the devolved state. However, it is critical to note that while debates are often structured by the state through for example, policy programmes the power to fix meanings is far from assured. Notions of *citizenship*, *community,* and *action*, have developed not only renewed political salience in formal policy forums but have also been taken up by counter political and social movements. The inclusion of 'others' in the business of governance brings many of these challengers into governance. With them, they bring alternative understandings of 'problems' and many alternative possible 'solutions'. Thus the contested ground of this interface, marks out an enlivened space in which competing understandings struggle to define

categories, relations, and the parameters of legitimate action, between the private and public worlds of local people living in communities.

Governance as discussed in Chapter 3 focuses on the devolved nature of decision making. The devolved setting of this thesis is 'community-led partnerships', inviting investigation of the term 'community'. This raises many questions for example, 'what is 'community'?', 'what kinds of communities are relevant to the development of local governance?', 'why is it a favoured location and over what is it preferred?' Further, what is the relationship between *locations* of governance and *civil society* (Blunkett 2003; Hodgson 2004; Adamson 2006)? The term *location* is used as a symbolic axis around which to consider these questions. The task is not an empirical one but a consideration of locations, real and imagined, constructed and re-constructed that are presented in policy as the location of, or essential to the enactment of local governance. While 'community' is a favoured term, both academic and policy literature invoke *deprived places*, (Hohmann 2013) and *neighbourhoods,* (Atkinson and Carmichael 2007; Sullivan and Taylor 2007) and locations as arenas for action are formed through in-situ popular enactment or external command (Cornwall 2004).

Governance necessarily brings into the processes of governing 'other' people; but these are not just *any* other people, specific *types-of-people*, are understood to inhabit different locations and *some* kinds of people are particularly favoured and encouraged into the practice of governance. Both scholarly and policy literature identifies types of 'other' people through the possession, or lack of a range of ascribed and acquired characteristics, including residence, identity, and socio-economic factors. Moreover, the construction of favoured groups of people signals the implicit existence of unfavoured types of people, with undesirable or non-eligible characteristics. The *types-of-people* discussed in the literature includes *citizens* (Lowndes *et al.*, 2001; Barnes and Prior 2009), *ordinary people* (Clarke 2010)*,* and *everyday makers* (Bang 2005). Inscribed in understandings of different *types-of-people*, are both desirable and

undesirable *ways-of-being.* This refers to the enactments that different *types-of-people* are called upon to undertake or are understood to be engaged in. 'Good' local governance implies the existence of 'right' or 'better' ways of doing things and considerable attention is directed to support the practice of 'good governance'. These *ways-of-being* endorsed by the state and explored by policy analysts include *participation*, (Skidmore *et al.*, 2006; Barnes 2008), *empowered action* (Atkinson 1999; Adamson and Bromiley 2008), and active-*citizenship* (Blunkett 2003; Marinetto 2003b). These activities shape ways-of-being and offer defining characteristics by which types-of-people might be known, including *partners (NAfW 2001a; WAG 2002a), citizens* (Delanty 2002)*,* and *stakeholders.*

The dynamic interaction of these ideas is complex; it is not the case that a particular kind of location, 'civil society' for example, simplistically evokes a 'citizen.' While these concepts may have philosophical consistency, each is subject to multiple understandings and connected to other ideas that are similarly conceptual plural. Yet more challenging to grasp are the implications of a cross-scaling of terms, for example the use of citizenship in the context of community and the language of affective ties, or discussions about the development of local governance in relation to the transfer of services or facilities previously run by government agents to 'empowered' individuals. Conceptual plurality exists around most of the key ideas discussed in this chapter, and in the ways they are drawn together in a constantly dynamic field. Both theory and policy seek to fix and hold still understandings of the social world and policy interventions are made with the intention of securing particular outcomes. Reality however is infinitely messier, open and contested (Fischer 2003). Accordingly, the following discussions do not attempt to rehearse all aspects of the literature but seeks to illustrate political and policy drivers for order.

4.2   Locations of Governance

4.2.1 Spaces and places

Reflection on community as the location of community-led governance requires that attention is paid to both its physical and conceptual constructions. The idea of 'place' in everyday language suggests an almost natural phenomenon, contained by seemingly obvious boundaries, with fixed qualities. Critical human geographers like Massey (1991, 1992, 2005) and Thrift (2003), demonstrate that bounded places are conceptual constructions that transform spaces into knowable places. These are built from cultural, social, economic and political resources, and are relationally accomplished, through an iterative interplay between the practices of living and the discourses of knowing. This understanding of place, makes three significant contributions to the current research first, Massey and colleagues highlight how constructions of places and ways of knowing these places are not neutral processes but contain within them and are themselves, the product of power relations. Second understandings of place change over time, and third that place is not a singular construction, but one in which different agents and forces construct the same spaces as different kinds of places. Together these insights lead to an understanding of place as contestable, dynamic and multiple, so for example a 'housing estate' can be simultaneously understood as a social policy 'problem', a deliberative entity, an economic redevelopment opportunity, a close knit community, part of an economic region, or a community.

Analytically the opportunities arising from this work are considerable, opening up critical questioning of places as 'natural' or 'inevitable', provoking investigation of what is at stake and for whom, in the construction of places and spaces of governance. It highlights the shifting interplay between abstract ideas and material embodiments, and when applied to considerations of community-led governance it provides a framework for thinking about how institutional instruments come to be

embedded in the physical world of 'communities'; and how everyday practices in communities might also be understood as governance.

4.2.2 Community

Community is a term extensively used in both place-based regeneration and governance debates, (Rose 1996; Atkinson and Cope 1997; Davies 2000; Craig and Taylor 2002; Taylor 2003; Ilcan and Basok 2004; Sullivan 2009) and is paradoxically presented as both the location of problems and potential solutions in much government policy. While the potential to use the term and communicate little are endless, its widespread use as a prefix points to a delineation worthy of further investigation. Its ubiquitous use in public policy and political rhetoric highlights its coveted and prized status, whilst simultaneously ensuring it remains a most nebulous concept. Anderson in his oft quoted statement contends that 'all communities are ... imagined' (2006:3), suggesting as Massey (1991, 1992, 2005) does in respect to *place*, that community is not an immutable but constituted phenomenon, provoking an investigation of the resources from which that imagination draws. Whilst *community* is often used descriptively to evoke a romanticised past, its prominence in policy debates links it firmly with desirable futures, and therefore notions of progress (as in 'to make things better'). However, it is worth noting that this has not always been the case.

4.2.3 From social decline to political growth

It is perhaps an overstatement to suggest that contemporary eulogies of *community* ascribe it hagiocratic status with redemptive potential and transformative powers, but it is certainly a loaded concept. *Community* has been subject to much historical debate (Bauman 2001; Delanty 2003; Day 2006; Blackshaw 2010) with many scholars taking Tönnies's (1995) *Gemeinschaft* as their starting point (Bell and Newby 1971; Elias 1974); a place in which intimate and closed social relationships ensure tradition holds progress at bay. Community fell out of conceptual favour in the 1970s as sociologists dismissing it as middle class romanticism (Pahl

1970:113), turned instead to structural analyses of class (Pahl 1966; Dennis 1968; Stacey 1969; Pahl 2005). Despite these differences what both earlier scholars of 'communities studies' (Frankenberg 1971 [1966]) and their urban focused colleagues share is a coupling of community and tradition as the *antithesis* of progress. This throws up a critical question: what has changed in the last 40 years to have moved understandings of community from its conception as tradition and a counter-progressive force, to one in which politicians and policy makers alike, covet it for its transformative potential? Unpicking this paradox requires a movement in analytical focus from community as an object of sociological study, to one that explores community as an arena of, and mechanism through which policy operates. This brings to the fore critical questioning of the projects to which community is put to work, and the conceptual reformulations made necessary by these processes.

There are however, three assumptions drawn from recent sociological scholarship that underpins the adoption of *community* in policy discourse. The first is a belief that despite 'a body of theory which constantly predicts the collapse of community ... a body of empirical studies ... finds community alive and well' (Abrams 1984:16, cited in Crow 2002 para. 3.5); second that 'community is still very much about where people live and their local social networks' (Warwick and Littlejohn 1992, cited in Crow 2012:415). And the third evokes *back to the future* idealised notions of community, similar to those described by Tönnes (1995), setting it up as a '[p]aradise lost ... [and] a paradise still hoped to be found' (Bauman 2001:3). Woven together they create a 'community romance' (Cohen P., 1997) which transforms community into both a tangible phenomenon, existing in various conditions ('strong' 'broken' 'active' or 'absent') and a *raison d'être* for policy that seeks to move the 'broken' towards the 'fixed' and transform the 'weak' to 'strong'; establishing this process as progress. It is at this point that community becomes both a resource for and a project of, policy. The key issue here is not an acceptance of these three issues at face value but to highlight how an assumption of their presence carries the possibility of their absence, and thus defining the terms on which policy

intervention can be directed to transform the 'bad' to 'good'. However, understanding policy as the inscription of politics makes it is necessary to consider the role of community in political projects.

4.3 Community as a political resource

4.3.1 Community and the self governing individual

While the state's interest in community is not new (Craig 1989; Taylor 2003; Craig *et al.,* 2011), the concern here is its transformation from an elusive social phenomenon into a political resource. This transformation is not straightforward and requires a different analytical starting point. Chapter 2 considered neoliberalism in relation to national identity, politics and policies, and much has been written about its rise both globally and in the UK (Peck and Tickell 2002; Birch and Mykhnenko 2010). Addressing community as a location of governance requires a return to these themes. Mindful that neoliberalism is not a unitary phenomenon (Larner 2000; Clarke 2008b; Gamble 2009; Hall 2011), the focus here is on socio-political concerns and in particular a quandary created by the pre-eminence of individualism. The concepts of 'society' and the 'social' are intrinsically about large collectives of people and the mutual but not necessarily intimate ties that bind them. Neoliberalism however, with its unfettered focus on economically independent individuals struggles to develop an adequate concept of the social, as illustrated in the much cited paraphrase 'There's no such thing as society' (Thatcher 1987). However, neoliberalism develops alongside many diverse pre-existing conditions (Peck 2004), and within the UK, while social welfare may have been diminished it remains a dominant and widely accepted social and political discourse. As such, neoliberalism needs ostensibly to work *within* social welfarism; community serves to bridge this paradox.

Rose's (1996, 1999) seminal work acknowledging that while the social may not be dead, it is undergoing serious mutations, offers considerable analytical insights. Rose draws heavily on Foucault's understanding of

power (see Chapter 5), the government of the self and the concept of governmentality (Foucault 1977; 1980b; [1977]; 1991a [1978]; also Dean 2010[1999]). He ponders the rapid rise of the use of community as both an aspirational collective prefix (e.g. community workers, community care) and as a category of risk (as in community of drug users/ gays). He posits that:

> the social' may be giving way to 'the community', as a new territory for the administration of individual and collective existence, a new plane or surface upon which micro-moral relations among persons are conceptualized and administered (Rose 1996:331).

Suggesting that this is more than mere changes in professional jargon Rose goes on to speculate that there is a profound 'mutation' in the 'ways of thinking and acting', in which the problematisation of issues makes them:

> amenable to authoritative action in terms of features of communities. They shape the strategies and programmes that address such problems by seeking to act upon the dynamics of communities. They configure the imagined territory upon which these strategies should act ... And they extend to the specification of the subjects of governments as individuals who are also, actually or potentially, the subjects of allegiance to a particular set of community values, beliefs and commitments (*ibid.*).

Rose identifies three dynamics enmeshed within the idea of 'government through community' (*ibid.:*332). First is a conceptual transformation in the relationship between 'government and the people' from 'social' to 'community' creating a rescaling of the spatial units of government. This signals a move away from society and the 'social' as a single conceptual domain to numerous communities which are 'localized, heterogeneous, overlapping and multiple' (*ibid.:*333). The second dynamic addresses the ethical character of community and the ways in which '...the individual ...is both self responsible and subject to certain emotional bonds of affinity to a circumscribed 'network' of other individuals – unified by family ties, by

locality, by moral commitment' (*ibid*.:334). The third dynamic addresses the basis of identification, which Rose proposes has shifted from the seemingly remote idea of an 'artificial' society to one located in community that appears 'more direct ... and more natural' (*ibid*.). Rose argues that through the bonds of affiliation, community is more than just the *territory* of government; it is also the *means* and the way *through* which we are governed. Fragmented and manageable, community is also created as space for technical intervention onto which are directed the 'positive knowledges' of 'experts' and 'expertise' creating 'technologies for governing through community' while drawing in the community as governors of themselves (Rose 1999:188). In this way, community can be understood as simultaneously a political target and resource.

4.3.2 The Communitarianisn community

Communitarianism is a broad and disputed notion, encompassing the work of many thinkers promoting ideas across the political spectrum. They are bound by a concern with the *collective* as the foundation of the 'good society', within which the tensions between individual rights and collective responsibilities remain a focus of debate. Here, consideration of these issues is side-stepped in favour of an exploration of communitarian ideas in the development of public policy. Communitarianism in its more populist incarnation offers a seductive rhetoric, appealing to common sense and romantic idealised notions of harmonious communities, and it is easy to see how it chimes with the concerns of public policy. For Etzioni (1996:127) one of the foremost communitarian influences on public policy, community is central to his thesis and understood with:

> ... reasonable precision. Community is defined by two characteristics: first, a web of affect-laden relationships among a group of individuals, relationships that often crisscross and reinforce one another ..., and second, a measure of commitment to a set of shared values, norms and meanings, and a shared history and identity – in short, to a particular culture.

Etzioni's communitarianism 'nourishes both social virtues and individual rights' (*ibid.*:4) in ongoing and seemingly unproblematic equilibrium. However, despite its collective rhetoric, the *individual becomes* the focus of attention and the obligations of the *moral* and *virtuous* individual in particular. The 'collective good' is dependent on the moral individual, but self-referentially the individual is created by the moral society to which s/he is subjugated.

> *A good society requires an order that is aligned with the moral commitments of the members* ... The new golden rule requires that the tension between one's preferences and one's social commitments be reduced by increasing the realm of duties one affirms as moral responsibilities... (*ibid.*:1996:12, emphasis original).

Etzioni's unproblematic conception of community has been extensively criticised. Delanty dismisses it as a

> discredited functionalist understanding of community... that emphasises social order and a pre-established and relatively harmonious consensus based on shared cultural values and tradition'. (Delanty 2002:159)

Conceptually, community ossifies as it is singularly understood as '...the dominant culture ... officially recognised by the state' (*ibid.* 2002:164), and tautologically, 'the good society' delineates its moral principles as those of the dominant cultural group ensuring contestation is eliminated and all-encompassing morality erodes ethical dilemmas. In this context, communitarianism's morally responsible individual is free to act, but only with highly 'bounded autonomy' in which actions are shaped by shared cultural values. This individual is a post-social construct, a *product* of the 'good society'. For Doheny (2007:408), this creates flat unthinking citizens '...who cannot be depended upon to behave responsibly, unless called upon to do so by the community'. Liberal critiques focus on the lack of free agency that leads to a fixing of social inequalities; categories such as

'woman' or 'race' become immovable, cementing discriminatory relationships (Frazer and Lacey 1993). From the Left, critics highlight the lack of a plural conception of the 'common good', making this kind of communitarianism deeply conservative and inward looking and with ultimately totalitarian implications (Laclau and Mouffe 2001 [1985]; Torfing 1999; Delanty 2002; Mouffe 2002). Further, the absence of any discussion of power and its consensus driven logic reads as if the issue of power and interest has been eradicated. Thus despite seeking to create the 'good society', Etzioni's work has no real model of progress or development.

4.4   Types of people and ways of being

Both Rose (1996:1999) with his analytical work and Etzioni (1996) in his prescriptive project, demonstrate the intimate relationship between community as a location and its inhabitants as particular kinds-of-people. The move to action requires a consideration of the way governments implement their programmes, and seek to engage the populace. Consideration is given to New Labour because the theoretical ideas encapsulated in these administrations was crucial in shaping the discourse and policy practice at the time of the fieldwork. The relationship between New Labour and devolved Welsh policy-making was explored in Chapter 2, and while distinctions exist, there are also major continuities. On this basis, and given the predominance of scholarly attention directed towards New Labour policies these are explored below.

4.4.1 Community, civic duties and New Labour

Despite the criticism of Etzioni's work, his ideas have been remarkably successful in shaping contemporary policy discourse. Although as often happens when philosophical concepts are squeezed into policy, the ideas are selectively used and but not always judiciously applied. Never-the-less Etzioni's vision has been popularised in New Labour's 'Third Way' (Blair 1998; Giddens 1998; 2000), which sought to move away from both Conservative hyper-liberalism of the 1980s and 1990s, and the

'overbearing paternalistic state' (Blair 2002 para.9) of 'old' Labour. As Blair asserted, his vision was for:

> ... a society free from prejudice, but not from rules, from order. [With a] common duty to provide opportunity for all. An individual duty to be responsible towards all (Blair;1999 Unpaginated).

Scholars have demonstrated how this communitarian vision shaped many New Labour policy initiatives (Powell 1999a; Newman 2001; Driver and Martell 2002), here however, it is only necessary to focus on three points directly relevant to this research. The first relates to a particular construction of another nebulous concept, that of civil society and the mutually constituting link between a healthy civil society and an individualised 'civic duty' grounded in communitarian morality (Lister 1998; Lund 1999; Prideaux 2005). Blair, in an interview in 2002, made explicit his belief in the direct connection between criminality and a lack of 'social cohesion', attributed to the corrosion of 'civic duty', brought about by the unfettered 'rights' focus of both individualism and paternalism. This leads in his analysis, to the 'unravelling' of 'the moral fabric of community', making his mission therefore '... to rebuild a strong civic society where rights and duties go hand in hand' (Blair 2002:para. 9). It is clear that for Blair, civic minded kinds-of-people fulfilling their duties build socially cohesive communities.

The second point relates to New Labour's conflation of community as part of (and sometimes obtusely synonymous with) civil society and other associated concepts (see Chapter 2). Both 'community' and 'civil society' are used to describe different types of interactions and associative relationships, and are additionally applied to different organisational types such as voluntary groups or those constituting the 'third sector' (Levitas 2005:126-7; Carmel and Harlock 2008). Various practices such as 'self-help' (Taylor 2003; Ilcan and Basok 2004), and volunteering are also known as or imply 'community'. Each of these presentations of 'community' are sold neutrally as non or pre-political (Rose 1999), but

'(e)ach is an object of desire, representing important moral, social or civic virtues that are assumed to be valuable or productive'(Newman and Clarke 2009:46). Notions of community, civil society and third sector, serve as both the location for the enactment and the means through which individual responsibility is developed, and each call into being particular kinds-of-people acting in desirable kinds-of-ways. While calling forth the desirable in public policy and achieving it is not the same thing, (Bevir 2005; also Barnes and Prior 2009) the ubiquitous use of 'community' creates a kind of Orwellian doublespeak in which its use implies an unproblematic, plainly evident, and commonly shared understanding, whilst simultaneously serving to shape that very meaning (Fairclough 2000).

The final point relates to the way community depends rhetorically on the existence of its antithesis - an 'idealised failure'. Places of 'non-community' serve as binary caricatures of all that is lacking and provide a baseline from which to chart success, as the 'bad' are eradicated, overcome, renewed, or regenerated. These are the *disadvantaged neighbourhoods* of New Labour's targeted area-based policy initiatives - *Action Zones* for health, education, and regeneration. The language of community is noticeable by its absence in these downcast places or qualified as 'deprived', conjuring less positive emotions, less warm imagery. These neighbourhoods house people that have been socially excluded, and where social cohesion has 'broken down' (Sullivan and Taylor 2007). Drawing on populist theories of social capital (Putman 2000), policies are debated in terms of *repair* and *renewal* with a focus on the potential of 'relational resources ... to meet welfare, economic, democratic and service delivery ends', furthering the idea '... that it is the lack of social or 'community' ties ... that is in need of repair' (Sullivan and Taylor 2007:32-33). This diverts attention away from the state, democratic systems, local infrastructure, and social and economic investment. Thus, the subtle and unassuming substitution of *society* by *community* masks a significant shift in the placing of responsibility (Rose 1996; 1999; Ilcan and Basok 2004). Deprived neighbourhoods and the people that inhabit them become

responsible for failings due to their personal shortcomings and the challenge of 'rebuilding community' is 'thrown at the hard-pressed areas as an expectation of moral conformity and social consensus' (Amin 2005:613).

New Labour's communitarianism has been subject to considerable academic critique (Driver and Martell 1997, 1999; Newman 2001; Schofield 2002; Taylor 2003; Hale 2004 Levitas 2005; Prideaux 2005). Driver and Martell (1997:43) summarise the position of many:

> So Labour increasingly advocates conditional, morally prescriptive, conservative and individual communitarianism at the expense of less conditional and redistributional, socioeconomic, progressive and corporate communitarianism. It is torn between conformist and pluralist communitarianism ... Conservative moralism increasingly takes up a greater proportion of progressive moralism's space in the integrating community values proposed. There is a danger of moral communitarianism being seen as the solution to social cohesion at the expense of socioeconomic communitarianism. And the communitarianism of individual responsibility gets greater emphasis than the communitarianism of corporate responsibility.

It is clear that this critique targets *political* priorities and the decisions to bring to the fore certain issues as 'problems' in preference over others. However significant the criticisms levelled at moral communitarianism are, there is also recognition that a 'sense of personal obligation is essential because there is no other way to reconcile freedom with cooperation' (Jordon 1998.:59). Thus, the core challenge is the framing of debate in public policy (Lister 1998; Lund 1999; Levitas 2005). For example, the responsibilities of benefit claimants to look *for* work are given greater priority than bankers' responsibilities for ethical conduct *in* their work. The effect is to move the overall debate for some groups of people towards the more punitive, making it possible to frame debates and ask questions in ways that would have previously been unacceptable. Moreover this debate continues (Lister 2014) in a repackaged 'Big Society' manifestation. The

framing of these kinds of issues as individual civic duties, and the location of these 'problems' within communities, set in a continual rhetorical obfuscation of community and civil society, often enshrined in policy, make these problems, the problems of individuals in communities.

4.4.2   Civil Society and different kinds-of-people

Civil society is a term with its roots in political debates, and is intrinsically connected with discussions about the nature of democracy. It represents the domain of free association between free peoples, and it is the extent and nature of this 'freedom' that makes it such an important issue in debates about governance and community. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 2 a civil society made up of free individuals is considered a precondition of democracy itself, while simultaneously the ordered governance created by democracy, serves to protect the freedoms of the individuals that brings it into being. There is much debate about the extent to which the separation of the state and civil society should be distinct (Davies 2002, 2007; Hodgson 2004), or understood as dynamic and dialectic (Adamson 2006; Skidmore *et al.*, 2006; Adamson and Bromiley 2008). However, it is clear that notions of civil society are tied conceptually to those of the state (Keane 1998) and the democratic processes that it supports, not least for the legitimacy it bestows on processes of governing.

In addition to this political understanding, Day *et al.,* (2006) identify three uses of civil society: organisational, relational and idealist. The outline above is indicative of relational debates between civil society and the state. Chapter 2 addressed issues concerning voluntary and third sector organisations as agents within civil society. The third recognises that civil society like community can be bundled together with normatively positive characteristics to create an amorphous consensual arena of universally positive associations. Analytically, these three understandings of civil society are most useful in aiding recognition of the interconnected and often inconsistent ways civil society is used in both practice and political rhetoric. For example, where descriptive reference to voluntary

organisations is conceptually idealised as an instance of inclusivity, and taken to imply democratic engagement or accountability (see Chapter 2).

The quandary outlined by Williams at the start of this chapter, can be easily applied to civil society, its sense seems irrevocably tied to 'some other (conceptual) destination' (Williams1976:13) and its importance is mutually derived through its coupling with discussions of not only the state, but also citizens, citizenship, ordinary people action and association. In political readings of civil society, it is popularly understood to be inhabited by *citizens* who command rights, to which the state serves as guarantor (Isin and Turner 2007). Taking Marshall's work on civil, political, and social rights (2006 [1950]) as its point of departure, much of the debate on citizenship takes an essentialising approach as it seeks definitional certainty. In contrast Roche (1992) reflecting on social citizenship observes that social change and appraisals of that change, inevitably impact on conceptions of social citizenship itself. By extension, it is possible to conclude that changes in the political field and understandings of civil society would similarly affect understandings of political and civic rights on which citizenship is built. Thus while Dagger asserts that 'there can be no republic without citizens' (2002:145) it seems that changes in governance arrangements makes possible the existence of citizens without a republic.

Thus, while it is expedient at this point to side-step the conceptual oxymoron contained in the notion of citizens within a monarchy, it is worth holding onto the inherent tension in the relationship between citizens and the state. The pressures for order (governance) exist in uneasy and continual tension alongside the challenge of contestation ('free citizens'). As Balibar observes '[t]he history of citizenship ... is a permanent dialectical tension between moments of insurrection and moments of constitution... (2012:438). This insight makes possible three further observations. The first is an acknowledgement that contestation between these two forces can never be conclusively resolved. Second, this dialectic played out over time, means that fixing still understandings of *civil society*

or *citizens* is impossible and conceptualisations are therefore continually in flux. Third, short of despotism or anarchy, neither ordered governance nor citizen freedom, can ever be totalising. Together these points ensure that analysis, however strong can never reach a discursive full stop, the debate is always ongoing, always open.

Understanding the tensions between 'insurrection' and 'constitution' is grounded in political analysis washed through civic practice. The point to draw out here is that while citizenship and community engagement in governance may bring opportunities to raise agendas, access resources and gain influence, it also carries risks of incorporation, loss of independence and complicity; but ultimately both dynamics will necessarily coexist. This is a classic political philosophy debate. In contrast, community based public policy initiatives privilege civic readings of this tension over political ones, mixed with concern about social issues (but curiously rarely social rights). The distinctions being made here are subtle and elusive and require developing.

4.4.3 Civil society in public policy

The issues being explored emerge from the practice of public policy that promotes the civic role of citizens in a depoliticized social context, rebranded 'community'. As outlined above regarding New Labour, prevailing discourse talks as if social rights are or should be dislocated from the national state. Social rights continue to be enshrined in law and the welfare state remains intact; for example, health care and education are free at the point of use, and welfare benefits continue to be available for unemployed people, or those unable to work for health reasons. However, there is also a trend gathering momentum, that is redefining what it means to be ill, or what constitutes unemployment. For example, debates are given prominence in national media suggesting that those who can afford it *should* pay for education (Topping 19.1.14) or health. In these legislative (e.g. Universal Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance) and discursive changes the basis for social rights are being rewritten and ways of thinking about them fundamentally restructured. In

these conditions, the foregrounding of civic rights takes on different nuances to those it adopts when coupled with political understandings of civil society. Citizens are recast as people who first and foremost take responsibility for their own wellbeing as a civic duty, followed closely by that of their family and community.

Newman and Clarke (2009) argue that confusions and ambiguities within narratives of civil society can be advantageously harnessed and packed with political and governmental salience, making it a productive resourceful place. Discursively, public policy constructs civil society (often along side community) as a more pure place, uncorrupted by the dirty business of politics. In this narrative civil society is populated by an 'ordinary' kind-of-person (Newman and Clarke 2009; Clarke 2010). The presentation of 'ordinary' people as non-political and by default operationally inexperienced creates two dynamics. The first is signalled by an absence; 'ordinary' people are dislocated from their status as political citizens, or more particularly their right to claim rights is subtly and opaquely moved from vision. The second celebrates their authenticity and proximity to 'the problem' as a resource for transforming their local place (read 'community', 'estate', 'neighbourhood'). Their inexperience brings forth their 'need' for programmes of 'empowerment' (Cruickshank 1999), capacity building (Banks and Shenton 2001; Craig 2007) and training in the arts of governing, or some would suggest *managing* government programmes (Clarke 2010). This then is the role of 'experts.' Thus:

> paradoxically ... civil society is thus both the organic condition of society that provides the springboard for economic and social development and the domain that needs to be constructed and tutored ... as the site for future development (Newman and Clarke 2009:58).

This discussion points to the coexistence of conflicting dynamics, inconsistent ideas and perpetual tensions, and in this context the issue becomes not one of settling debate, but of exploring their enactment. If political conceptualisations coupling civil society and the state, and citizens

and the republic are being reformulated, the question turns to a consideration of how these changes are being played out and with what implications. Recent scholarship has highlighted how these conceptual challenges are unsurprisingly producing confusing alignments and conceptual dissonance (Newman and Clark 2009), in which action space appears to be simultaneously closed down and opened up. Certainly, this insight informs the opening position of the current research, which takes as its starting point the paradox of centrally mandated, 'bottom-up' development of governance, and the opportunities and curtailments it affords. Chapters 6 to 9 explore how these issues are played out within Hendinas.

4.5   Governance through people

A focus on the instrumentality of both the logistics of developing community partnerships and their outcomes creates the impression that the politics of governing have been diminished. It is possible to challenge this idea by highlighting how the political nature of governing is encapsulated in that which it seeks to create as neutrally instrumental. The role of people is presented as a matter of common sense, but warrants further consideration. The involvement of people in community/place based partnerships represents a significant point of departure from many other policy-led governance manifestations. Partnerships established through policy mandate most frequently create partnerships between *organisations*, with citizens or service users represented primary through voluntary sector organisations (NAfW 2001c; Taylor 2001; WAG 2006a; WAG 2008a). Community/place partnerships also enlist people through organisations (e.g. Tenant and Residents Associations) but additionally they involve people directly in their own right. Moreover people are ascribed what appears at first sight to be contradictory designations. They are cast as both *agents* of governance and its object. They are resourceful bearers of knowledge and experience of local conditions, needs, and priorities, but also *objects* of policy intervention as trainees, participants

and capacity builders. Thus it is possible to differentiate between types-of-people and ways-of-being, but not in a straightforward way, since individuals may be both concurrently and sequentially a contributor to governance, but also a target of it. It is appropriate to acknowledge the awkwardness of using the term 'people' in discussing these issues and recognise how it is illustrative of the loaded nature of other potential terms.

4.5.1 Active citizenship and activeness

While much scholarship has attended to the different kinds of citizens that formally or tacitly inhabit much public policy (Hartley 1999; Cruikshank 1999; Flint 2002; Marinetto 2003b; Ilcan and Basock 2004; Bang 2005; Clarke 2005; Newman 2006; Clarke *et al.*, 2007; Clarke 2009; Lister 2014), the term 'active citizen' is frequently used in the development of place based partnerships. Sullivan and Taylor (2007:32) critically discuss the mobilisation of citizens as a theory of neighbourhood in urban policy. Addressing the benefits of citizen involvement, they highlight differences between public goods and instrumental outcomes, and observe:

> Much policy interest ... has been instrumental, seeking to tap relational resources as a means to meet welfare, economic, democratic and service delivery ends. However, social capital and community cohesion are also valued as public goods or 'ends' in their own right, facilitating integration, sustainability, resilience and hence the health of society as a whole.

This contribution is useful for the way it references many of the critical elements within the discussion, and for displaying the commonsense appeal of the debate. Highlighting the breadth of instrumental ends to which citizen involvement might be targeted (welfare, economic, democratic, and service delivery) signals its wide ranging 'good idea' status. Adding to these panacea-like qualities, the involvement of citizens in policy work, also delivers 'public goods' that improve the health 'of society as a whole'. At face value, citizen action should be recognised as the source of considerable power and much responsibility.

However, this would be to ignore some of the more troubling issues beneath this policy gloss. This includes asking 'which groups of citizens are to be harnessed for their 'relational' assets?', 'in what kinds of relationships?', 'how are instrumental aims to be prioritised, and by whom?' Consideration of the relationship between public goods created through citizen mobilisation compared to those that might be created by other means, illustrate the inherently political processes involved in the development of citizen engagement (for example developing social capital in a 'disadvantaged community' and a redistributive tax system both deliver public goods, but on what basis is one favoured?).

Further, attending to who is not targeted as an *active citizen*, highlights that while governing may be an activity that applies across the whole polity, governance arrangements involving communities are selective. Reference back to the rhetorical importance of 'the moral fabric of community' (Blair 2002:para. 9) as the basis of social cohesion, serves as a reminder of why those communities 'lacking' that cohesiveness are ostensibly targeted by place-focused partnership policy. Active citizenship is thus selectively encouraged, with those deemed the least 'civic minded', being asked to undertake the most civically demanding tasks, even as policy acknowledges these individuals to be clustered in the most socially and economically disadvantaged areas. An irony not unnoticed (Driver and Martell 1999; Taylor 2003; Amin 2005; Clarke 2005, Mayo, 2006).

Thus, *active citizens* are particular kinds-of-people, located in particular kinds-of-places requiring public policy intervention. Documents disseminating 'good practice' are replete with stories highlighting the remarkable change brought about in communities through the actions of small groups of people (WAG 2008c). Indeed many of these actions are remarkable and are rightfully acknowledged. However, analytically the way *action* and active citizens are constructed in the wider debate, begs questions about their impact on understandings of the polity and society as a whole and its effects on analyses of governance. Both active citizens and 'ordinary' people evoke direct action within an immediate locality and

action itself is orientated prescriptively towards civic duty, while reference to the state and broader collective solidarities are eluded. The foregrounding of local action and the valorisation of community based activeness opens up suggestions that activeness might be emerging as a condition for social membership, thereby discarding previously universal principles enshrined in the U.K. post war welfare settlement. In this scenario, citizenship moves from being the status ascribed to members of the polity, to one that must be earned though approved community based action. Newman (2006:173) discusses these issues, and concludes that the 'erosion of national solidarities' alongside the focus on local and active communities,

> intersect with each other and imply a remaking of the imagined spaces and places of citizenship from something held in common to something that is localised or specific. Contestation then, is to be on local matters, and is to take place through managed processes of deliberation and participation...

4.5.2 Hailing and resistance

Thus far, the discussion has taken a policy-centric approach and considered the drivers for the construction of communities, people and action as discursively created through policy and practically shaped through guidance and funding. Public policy is however, ambiguous and evokes inconsistent and contradictory subjects. Consequently those who enact governance cannot be contained within any single category. Further policy programmes however pervasive coexist and interact with real lives. Thus while scholarship (Clarke 2004; Sommerville 2011) has drawn on Althusser's concept of interpellation (1971) to reflect on the ways subjectivities are 'hailed' or called into being through policy, it would be too simplistic to read them as some uncomplicated binary relationship. Clarke (2004:158) considering responses to the act of being hailed, suggests that people may respond and take up the interpellation but they may also

Ignore it, refuse to listen, or tune into alternative hailings that speak of different selves, imagined collectivities and futures.

Attention to the potential for alternative responses returns debate to a consideration of civil society as a location of multiple, diverse and contending claims and alternative possible futures. Communities have long been sites of counter-state movements (Craig *et al.*, 1982) from local communities protesting about hospital closures, to international *Occupy* and anti-globalisation movements. Just because policy prescriptively constructs individuals as 'moral civic actors' does not mean that they respond as such; they question the hailing, they dispute understandings of 'moral', and they develop alternative ways of being 'active.'

Thus, policy may hail its subjects but they are not bound to respond. In this light, it is possible to make the following observations (i) calling subjects into being takes place in plural, competing and contested spaces, in which multiple subjectivities and manifold possible futures coexist; alternatives are always available. (ii) Being hailed is open to partial or adapted take up. The availability of governmental resources to local communities may offer material improvement in everyday lives, but this does not equate with embracing the subjected designation unquestioningly. (iii) Inconsistencies within and between policies alongside the widely diverse potential subjectivities in everyday life means that any singular hailing will inevitable be contradicted by others and individuals always have deliberative alternatives.

Challenge to governmental encroachment of community and everyday lives is a persistent theme in analyses of policy implementation (Hogget 1997; Barnes and Prior 2009). Recognising challenge, contestation and alternative framings of the social world as inevitable every day practices, helps to prevent analysis slipping into simplistic binaries such as compliance - resistance, or obedience – subversive. Neat and apparently logically consistent policy formations are subjected to critical questioning, alternative framings, and ultimately non-compliance. Policy assumes and

directs people to act rationally as defined by the policy, but people hold and operate different rationalities (Bevir 2005). Heavily targeted communities have become policy-initiative-immune, and cynical of fancy words; participation can also be understood as 'tyrannical' (Cooke and Kothari 2001) demanding much but delivering little. Action develops beyond or independently of policy-led governance (Bang 2005), with alternative value bases and open to multiple understandings. Interactions between government agents and ordinary people create opportunities for misinterpretations (Sullivan 2009). While others take collectivist values, and activist based experience and learning into paid employment, applying skills and expertise to 'work the spaces of power' (Newman 2012a). These issues are returned to in Chapter 7.

There is a disturbing aspect to the issues outlined above; discursive hailing and policy shaping initiatives display a basic but corrosive disrespect for communities, and the resourcefulness of those who live there. Although writing in a different context reflecting on Calhoun's (1983) analysis of tradition and radicalism makes a provocative contribution when applied to community governance. To summarise his argument he proposes that 'commitments to traditional cultural values and immediate communal relations are crucial to many radical movements', (*ibid.:*886) and contained within these communities is the 'internal social organization necessary to concerted, radical collective action'. Further, 'defensive goals' are generally the most highly valued and therefore worth fighting for. Thus '[t]raditional communities give people the "interests" for which they will risk their lives' (*ibid.898*). From this analysis it is possible to approach tradition as a resistive resource and counter argument to that which hails communities as 'disadvantaged' or 'broken'. It also provides an alternative conceptual framework from which to question and analyse the fieldwork.

4.5.3 Local People, action and legitimacy

Irrespective of the levels of agreement or dissent about the framing or priorities of policy, drawing communities into policy-mandated governance arrangements turns activists into institutional agents. This creates a

number of legitimation dilemmas, as traditional sources of authority derived from democratic processes, and hierarchical lines of accountability are undermined. Bogason (2001) understands these issues as the challenge of securing 'public power' and asserts that '[t]here is a continuing struggle among interests in the society to become part of the public power, to get legitimation and material resources'(Bogason 2001:174), securing the legitimate right 'to act'. Scholars have pointed to many of these issues in broader debates about the development of governance (Stoker 1998; Sullivan and Skelcher 2002), where they are often informed by the insights and debates of neo-institutionalism (DiMaggio and Powell 1991; Lowndes 1996; 2001). As outlined in Chapter 3, within governance neo-institutionalism moves from an understanding of single organisations as the basic unit of inquiry to a focus on the relationships *between organisations* within 'institutionalized frameworks of negotiated interaction' (Sørensen and Torfing 2008b:27). Attention shifts from 'rules' to 'relationships' (Rhodes 1997:79.2007) highlighting the dynamic and value based nature of engagement (Lowndes and Wilson 2003: 280).

In the context of community-led governance, these issues are played out in specific ways, arising from and further complicated by the unstable categorisation of 'community'. As outlined above, 'community' cannot be held up as unitary phenomenon, nor does it have a singular organisational status. While communities do contain many organisations, from the very informal such as parent and toddler groups, to highly complex development and delivery agencies like development trusts, 'the community' is not in and of itself an organisation. Furthermore, a familiar theme in the promotion of community involvement in governance arrangements is a move beyond 'the usual suspects', which necessarily looks to those not involved in organisations. Drawing in these 'ordinary' (Newman 2006; Clarke 2010) people is paradoxically both problematic for, and a source of legitimacy. For example, their 'ordinariness' and proximity to 'the problem' bestows upon them and the process of governance, the legitimacy of knowledge and expertise, while the individualisation of

involvement, runs the risk of hijacking by 'mavericks'. Despite these risks, public policies promoting citizen engagement are often presented as intrinsically legitimate because they give 'ordinary' people or 'citizens' opportunities to be involved in local policy initiatives and ostensibly decision making processes (Connelly *et al.*, 2006).

One way in which legitimacy is addressed formally, is through the meta-governance practices (Jessop 2000; Kooiman and Van Vliet 1993) of governments that structure governance arrangements and bestow them with institutional status. This applies to most centrally mandated policy driven governance initiatives such as service delivery and community partnerships. The 'thirds-principle' within the Communities First programme (see Chapter 2) provides a prime example, which actively seeks to legitimate the inclusion of non-state actors, by allocating the community a specific institutional role (Royles 2006; Bristow *et al.*, 2008). In this instance, the Welsh Government serves as a kind of at-a-distance guarantor for community involvement, bestowing on local communities the seal of 'official partner', whilst simultaneously shaping and curtailing community action through policy and operational guidance (WAG 2007a), monitoring and auditing regimes. Institutional legitimacy is thus prescriptively circumscribed, at arms length by governments.

The issue of legitimacy from within communities is insufficiently addressed in the literature. There is an assumption within policy that community based people who do not directly get involved, are generally compliant or do not openly challenge practices and accept the legitimacy of those who do act. The implication being that activists 'speak' on behalf of the wider community, but little credence is given to the exclusionary potential of such practices (Hay 1998). The language of community 'buy-in' and 'ownership' imply that the lack of formal democratic accountability within this narrative is more than compensated for through direct democratic practices. It is an issue that demands further consideration.

Connelly (2011) takes up these issues exploring the development of legitimacy within 'community anchor' organisations, that is a range of community based organisations which locate and identify themselves within and of the community. It is a salient contribution in the context of the current research. Connelly (2011: 939-941) finds that internal legitimacy is grounded in both formal and informal processes. Considerable attention is given to the development of formal internal organisational governance for example, election of trustees, and organisational membership. Additional however, through an investigation of the role of paid staff within these organisations he identifies multiple and varied informal and imprecise sources of authority and legitimacy. These include the direct and immediate relationships between staff and community members in a diverse range of development initiatives and special events. This in turn increases by the way staff make themselves accessible to community members who are encouraged to 'drop-in' for a 'chat'. The effectiveness of services and their responsiveness to community needs are a source of high levels of legitimacy, while accountability is grounded in informal processes of ongoing communication. Trust of staff is high and they are accorded the right to represent community interests both within and outside of the community. Connelly concludes 'that professional staff were fundamental to the organisations' success' (20011:941; also Newman and Clarke 2009:17). These issues are picked up empirically in Chapter 7.

4.6   Conclusion

This chapter has explored understandings of community in policy, finding it to be extensively used in a plethora of ways. To aid comprehension of this dynamic field, the chapter began by outlining a heuristic framework in which *locations*, *types-of-people* and *ways-of-being* were offered as conceptual axes around which conceptual debates could be elaborated. The case was made for approaching community, the agents targeted by policy and their activeness as multifaceted, plural, and dynamic concepts, that are mutually constitutive but non-lineally connected. This sets up

understandings that are necessarily inconsistent and unstable and amenable to unlikely and surprising couplings.

The transition of community as a sociological concept to one with political value, was traced through two primary theoretical positions, that of governmentality and communitarianism. While both communitarians and those working within a governmentality approach would agree on the importance of community in public policy, they conceptualise and ascribe value differently. Communitarians identify it as the basis for the 'good society', while governmentality scholarship highlights it as a mechanism for promoting and developing self governing individuals. The chapter elaborated the ways in which communitarianism significantly contributed to the underpinning theoretical position of successive New Labour administrations informing and shaping dominant discourses of civil society and public policy. Academic scholarship has levelled significant criticisms at this position on the grounds of its normative and punitive approach. Further, governmentality informed inquiry has sought to explore the ways communitarianism masquerading behind a veneer of morality has been used as a legitimating discourse of self-governance.

The chapter demonstrated how political understandings of civil society have been de-politicised through their location within communitarian discourse, moving it conceptually from its location in democratic political debates to one located in communities. The chapter illustrated how this cross scaling of rhetoric and action has an obfuscating effect in which politically understood constructs such as citizen, come to take on localised and contingent meanings, undermining collective solidarities in favour of individualised actions. Mindful of the dangers of presenting these issues as logically coherent and practically consistent the chapter has sought to recognise the complexity, inconsistency and contradictory dynamics at play. For example, 'ordinary people' are simultaneously 'pure' and uncorrupted by politics but also the main drivers of local community based change, a process that requires high levels of skilled political negotiation. Moreover, whilst policy seeks to 'hail' a number of types-of-people,

individuals and communities do not always respond as directed. Civil society and communities are locations of many alterative subject identities and the people that inhabit these are want to make their own choices, drawing on a wide range of resources, including their own traditions. Finally, the chapter considered the issue of legitimacy as an issue in both community governance and community action. While the literature recognises legitimacy as an issue, it has focused primarily on highlighting its problematic nature rather than presenting empirical cases of its resolution.

This chapter provides many discussions that inform the analyses in later chapters. It takes the paradox of centrally mandated, 'bottom-up' development of governance, and confusing and inconsistent presentations of community as its staring point. Following Newman and Clarke (2009), it accepts that policy-created community governance stimulates both opportunities for action and restrictive processes that shape and curtail it. The challenge next is to develop a theoretically informed analysis of these dynamics within Hendinas. This is taken up in Chapter 6, first this thesis attends to the methodological approach that underpins the research.

Chapter 5   Methodology

This research is grounded in the everyday lives of people living in the community of Hendinas, who are brought into the public policy arena through government programmes. It is accepted that the research question, 'How is partnership made in, and through everyday lives?' can only ever be partially addressed. However, it is necessary to explore the boundaries and conditions of the limitations of the research endeavour. In Chapter 1, it was proposed that both the research field and the methodological approach adopted to 'know' it should be understood as dynamic and interconnected. The subsequent three chapters have illustrated how the broader contextual field is also open to multiple contested readings. From this picture, the central paradox of the hierarchical direction of local organic development emerges and the research question explores the processes and tensions inherent in securing community-led partnership in these conditions. The research is located at the local level but seeks to connect insights grounded in empirical findings to a consideration of broader policy issues. The methodological approach has been designed with these aims intrinsically in mind.

This chapter provides the methodological rationale for the thesis and is presented in four sections. The first provides an outline of the underpinning ontological position and the epistemological choices taken to address the research topic. The second discusses how these debates have been played out in the selection and construction of research methods. The third section considers ethics, reflexivity and research reliability and validity. In the final section, a brief outline of the fieldwork case study is presented. As outlined in Chapter 1 this research is about processes, it is not a completed project and cannot be talked of in fixed terms, it is a fast framing photo shoot over a longish period of time. It is

NOT a description of partnership but an empirical study of partnership-making as an ongoing, developing, emerging process through which partnership-making emerges.

5.1 Methodological Approach

This research project is located in the broad field of social policy but seeks to depart from its 'traditional' manifestations; a brief understanding of the 'traditional' as a point of departure is thus required. Becker and Bryman (2004:4) offer a textbook definition of social policy as the '...practice of social intervention *aimed at* securing change to promote the welfare and wellbeing of citizens'. Others are keen to draw attention to *how* (Bochel *et al.*, 2009) policy intervention is secured or are attentive to the political (Colebatch 2002) or ideological (Lister 2010) nature of the decision making process. Traditional debates in social policy focus therefore on contested understandings of what constitutes wellbeing, and addresses concerns about the efficiency and effectiveness of policies in securing desired outcomes. Whilst the scope for argument within these debates is enormous, they share a common orientation which starts with a problem, to which a policy understood as a blueprint for resolution is enacted through programmatic schemes. Outcomes are then appraised in terms of 'success' in addressing the original problem (Hood 1991; Henkel 1991; Simon 1994[1957]).

Variations to this basic theme have been added, for example ideas like double loop learning, (Argyris 1976, 1982) seek to bring depth to the complexity of the process. The spread of evidence based policy and the associated interest in evaluation (Pawson and Tilley 1997; Solesbury 2001; Sanderson 2002; Nutley *et al.*, 2000) are testament to the vexed issues of how and why policy does or does not 'work'. However, despite the plethora of amendments and refinements traditional policy-making, analysis and implementation continues to operate in a framework constructed by governmental priorities and within a predominantly positivist approach. The recent trend to include 'users' or other policy

targets and harness them in the implementation of policy, of which Communities First is a prime example, offer no exception (WAG 2006c; AMION and Old Bell3 2011). While these developments in policy participation may be welcome, the continuing concerns of traditional analysis are about how policy succeeds or fails, and emanates from a formal policy-making perspective.

This research project takes a different starting point and asks different kinds of questions. In brief, my initial position of 'what does partnership mean for the community members involved in it?' has moved to an exploration of 'how partnership is *made in* and *through* everyday lives'? This represents a growing ontological clarity. My opening question can be seen as a minor amendment of the framing of public policy research agendas, in which the concerns of public policy implementation are extended to consider the issue from the 'bottom up', i.e. a move from casting policy targets as passive recipient of public policy to a position in which they are granted agency but only in a limited reactive sense. In this construction of the research question, power in the policy-implementation relationship is viewed as a zero-sum game, in which one party's gain is the other side's loss. Furthermore, it continues to operate within the 'how effective is policy?' framework, in which policy action is viewed as a single unitary phenomenon albeit one, about which there may be different perspectives.

5.1.1 Unsettling the research field

In seeking to make sense of 'the field', it became apparent that the policy of Communities First and the role of 'partnership' were not necessarily at the forefront of action within communities. Whilst much that I was witnessing was clearly 'something to do with' partnership, much action was 'not the same as' partnership (Law 2003:4). Following a perhaps inevitable confusion and panic that my initial research question lacked coherence and relevance, a new understanding of the research field and research question emerged in which, action is understood as taking place *in*, *through,* and *with* a complex web of agendas, motivations and

rationalities. Another way to express this is to see this 'complex web' as simultaneously, the *context*, *dynamism*, and *resource* for the enactment of partnership. This position recognises that within any given setting, (a local community in this case), a narrow focus on public policy like Communities First while playing a significant role in shaping action, misses the many other agendas, motivations and rationalities within the local context, some of which interact with, but may be both dependent on or independent of that policy. This approach shifted the research question to one that sought to explore how actions (in particular, those that come to be known as *partnership*) are both made sense of through, and driven forward by multiple local and localised agendas, including the public policy of partnership in Communities First. Further, these are not neatly bound parallel issues, but ones that overlap, coalesce and compete with each other, sometimes creating synergistic and at other times, antagonistic effects.

It is necessary to tease out some of the implicit assumptions contained in the preceding paragraph. My position is realist in so far as I take as my starting point the materiality of the social world, but only in the sense of Law's limited 'primitive out-thereness' (2003). This is not a free–standing independent unitary reality, but one that can only be made sense of through attention to notions of complexity and multiplicity. Complexity here refers not to ontological chaos, as understood in some management based theories (Shaw 1997; Stacey 1995, 2000), and some approaches to governance (Kooiman 1993c) but epistemological possibilities. This is not as easy as suggesting that 'reality' is simple while 'knowing' is complex. However I do share a rejection of the 'god trickery' (Haraway 1988) of enlightenment informed positivist social science, and therefore accept that *knowing* can only ever be partial and situated (Law 2003; Haraway 1988). As such, it is inevitably contestable and subject to modes of ordering that co-exist and bring the phenomenon into being (Mol and Law 2002:10). And it is at this point that we can talk of complexity. Thus, complexity can be seen as addressing the extent to which we can hold onto multiple orderings or in contrast, move towards the simplicity of accepting *a* mode

of ordering which settles the phenomena (at least for a time) under consideration.

Mol and Law make two critical observations about complexity. The first proceeds from the recognition that within each mode of reasoning, order emerges through attention to particular fore-groundings and simplifications of those issues and concerns deemed most relevant. This then inevitably leads us to ask, how and why the particular simplifications have been made in each ordering, and why some orderings dominate over others. The second issue questions what happens when 'we find ourselves at places where modes join together', with Mol and Law suggesting that it is at this point where simplicity in its singularity is challenged:

> complexity is created, emerging where various modes of ordering (styles, logics) come together and add up comfortably or in tension, or in both' (2002:11).

Accordingly, partnership as an object of study, is conceptualised as dynamic enactments, taking place *in*, *through,* and *with* complex webs of agendas, motivations and rationalities, which order our capacity to know and understand. The dynamic interplay of partnership as *context*, *dynamism*, and *resource*, draws attention to the acts of enactment, and enables parameters to be draw around the field of study.

The research explores the *context* of a community-led partnership; this may be understood as a physical location, a policy discourse, and a programmatic instrument. It is also among many other possibilities, a community development project, a historically de-industrialised community, a disadvantaged neighbourhood, and a close-knit working class area. Each of these contexts provides *resources* for action, including money, buildings, people, discourse, motivations, and expertise; and together in ever shifting *dynamism* partnership is enacted. *Dynamism* is used here to encapsulate two core ideas, that of *kinesis* as movement or change in dialectic relationship with stimuli, and secondly as a recognition of *power* in situated action.

5.1.2 Power

The suggestion that multiple orderings of the social world in general and partnership in particular can be seen as offering resources for action needs to be explored alongside a consideration of power. Understandings of power that inform and have developed from this research project draw selectively from the work of Foucault (1980a [1977], 1980b [1977], 1991a 1991b), and the vast scholarship debating his work, (Gordon 1980, 1991; McNeil 1993; McNay 1994; Rose 1993, 1999; Rose and Miller 1992). His ideas have been extensively applied in numerous public policy contexts (Coveney 1998; Atkinson 1999; Joyce 2001; Ilean and Basok 2004; Carmel and Harlock 2008; McKee 2011), and have informed and stimulated broader scholarship, (Newman and Clarke 2009, Clarke 2010; Newman 2001, 2012a; McKee 2009). The contribution of Foucault's work to discussions of governance was considered in Chapter 3 and the significance of debates about self-discipline and self-responsibilisation in Chapter 4. The task here is to focus briefly, on how his concept of power informs and drives forward the methodological approach and contributes to epistemic gain.

Central to this task is Foucault's assertion that power is *productive* and

> must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or a piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads: they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power (Foucault 1980a:98 [1977]).

This understanding of the non-linearity of power in which individuals are both subjected to and exercise power, throws asunder its binary conceptions. This is not to suggest that power is distributed in equal measure but as he later states '(a)t the heart of the power relationship, and constantly provoking it are the rebellion of will and the intransigence of freedom' (Foucault 1982:221-222). Thus, subjugation can never be total. If

this provides a starting point, then many questions follow, certainly in a social policy context attention is directed towards investigation of types of power, their mode of operation and the interests they serve. Moreover, if power is not 'a commodity' to be appropriated then what is it, where is it located and how can it be accessed?

Methodologically, taking these issues forward requires brief consideration of Foucault's meditations on discourse and discursive formations. Foucault's reconstruction of history, theorises it as plural and discontinuous, he explores how understandings and practices shape what can be known and that which it is possible to know within a given historical location. 'Truth' he argues is integral to the rationalisations ('regimes of truth') in which it is located, from which it arises and which it helps to constitute. These regimes of truth or 'discursive formations', structure and shape the "sayable", construct the valid /invalid, define who has access to this 'valid knowledge', confer authority and limit, form and shape practices. Thus, ' ... 'regimes of practice' ... have both prescriptive effects regarding what is to be done..., and codifying effects regarding what is to be known'. (Foucault 1991b:75). In this light,

> power produces knowledge .... power and knowledge directly imply one another …there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations (Foucault 1977:27).

Despite theoretical criticisms of Foucault's work claiming its loss of subject and the consequential futility of his analysis in respect to any kind of social project (Habermas 1987), in practice his ideas have been extensively used in public policy, which inherently address collective social projects. Whilst therefore there are undoubtedly philosophical shortcomings in his work, there are considerable applied insights, in particular the understanding of power as productive and circular, and history as plural and discontinuous. Discussing the idea of discursive regimes Foucault (1991b.:60) asserts that he does not aim for hermeneutic inquiry into 'silently intended meanings', but seeks instead

...the fact and conditions of their manifest appearance... the transformations which they have effected [and]...the field where they coexist, reside and disappear.

This makes a significant methodological contribution to this thesis. If partnership is viewed as a dominant discourse, investigation of the truth/power it contains and the ways in which it operates become open to investigation. Governmentality, described by Foucault as 'the art of governing' refers to those ways of 'thinking and acting embodied in all those attempts to know and govern the wealth, health and happiness of populations' (Rose and Millier 1992:174). And the analytical task directed towards a study of

... governmental technologies, the complex of mundane programmes, calculations, techniques, apparatuses, documents and procedures through which authorities seek to give effect to governmental ambitions *(ibid.*:175).

It is through this 'rendering technical' that the 'art of governing' is enacted on populations that are both 'subjects of needs' and 'object[s] in the hands of the government' (Foucault 1991a [1978]:100). Much post-Foucauldian scholarship has focused on unmasking the operation of the 'technical' and McKee argues that it is this '...attention to the 'how' of governing' (McKee 2009:466) that makes Foucault's work particularly relevant for critical social policy scholars. In her own work she argues that placing 'lay perspectives' at the forefront of her analysis supports the development of 'insights ... considering how individuals directly experience their subjection and make sense of top-down political rationalities' (McKee 2011:15). This is indeed a valuable contribution. Others however have taken the spirit of this work to explore how agents, who are themselves both subject and object, utilise diverse resources productively (Newman 2012a). It is this insight that has contributed most to the methodological approach in this study. It has opened up considerations of the productive and purposeful use of power within a community project, and by staff in particular. If power circulates then it is possible to consider its operation from a position of

one's choosing. The approach adopted within this research project asks 'how does a local project use the power opportunities at their disposal and what do they do with them?' or to rephrase this, 'in what ways are they productive? and to what effects?' The chapters that follow explore these specific issues.

5.1.3 Epistemic potential

Weaving these ideas together, the research focus has become a study of the contexts and resources favoured in the enactment of partnership, why and to what effects. This is broadly akin to the postempiricist concern which seeks '... to understand how ... varying cognitive elements interact discursively to shape that which comes to be taken as knowledge' (Fischer 2003:130). Fischer's point is well made, his primary concern is to highlight the focus of research on '... *account(s)* of reality rather than on reality itself' (*ibid.* emphasis original). This moves the debate towards the situated agency and contestation involved in the making of partnership, through which the phenomena comes to be known. Total knowledge is not claimed and the inescapable based positionality of the research accepted (Gouldner 1961; Becker 1967; Khun 1970; Hammersley and Gomm 1997). This does not diminish epistemological authority, but it is accepted as localised and partial (issues of research integrity in respect to reliability and validity are addressed in section 5.3 below).

Methodologically the research employs qualitative research methods (see 5.2), and the process of sense-making has been an exercise in interpretive policy analysis. This does not offer a template for research practice and methodological understanding but emerges from analytical reflection iteratively developed through dynamic recourse to the literature and practice. Wagenaar (2011) explains that this is not simply about the identification of meanings and a limited recognition of their role in shaping policy, but meanings are 'somehow *constitutive* of political actions, governing institutions, and public policies' (2011:4, emphasis original). He continues that 'meaning brings ... into being', those institutions, practices and policies that become the object of social study. Yanow (1996) in

asking her grammatically challenging question, 'How does a policy mean?' provides an alluringly simple starting point to a troublingly complex issue. The question locates itself at the point of policy implementation and alerts us to plurality and context by linking the

> meanings of policies... values, feelings, and/or beliefs which they express, and ... the processes by which those meanings are communicated to and 'read' by various audiences (*ibid.:*8-9).

This differs from the concerns of Lipsky (1980) and his focus on the policy interpretation and enactment of individual street level bureaucrats. In this and other work Yanow (2000, 2003, 2004, 2007), explores the broader context of what *is* done in contrast to what policy says *should* be done, and how meanings emerge from and are embedded in symbolic action, text, language and objects. Further in highlighting the plurality of policy meanings, Yanow recognises that policy contestation can be about values, beliefs and feelings just as much, if not more than, explicit objectives. Interpretive policy analysts make a number of additional insights that inform the current methodological approach. Bevir (2005:31), focusing on the action shaping intentions of policy, observes that traditional positivist policy-making mistakenly assumes that those whom policy seeks to direct will behave in rational ways, *as defined by the policy*. The failure of real policy actors to behave in this way alerts us to the existence of other rationalities that influence action. While Wagenaar (2011:225), taking a different starting point considers the agency of policy targets themselves, and observes that policy programmes 'are used for different purposes than intended by their makers'.

Taken together these insights highlight inherent problems in a positivist approach to policy analysis, as more complex and multi dimensional than any single rational system of thought might suggest. However, this does not necessarily represent a retreat into meaning-making as an activity of the individual mind. Here the clarification offered by Crotty (1988) is useful. He draws a distinction between individualistic *constructivism*, and *constructionism* as the collective generation and transmission of meaning.

Wagenaar (2011) draws the point out by highlighting the differences between constructionism as an ontological theory and constructionism as social critique. Interpretive analysis is constructionist in this latter sense, challenging prevailing categorisations of the social world, by questioning whose interests are protected and promoted within them. He illustrates his point with reference to the work of Ian Hacking who argues for the unmasking of the authority of knowledge 'to liberate the oppressed, [and] to show how categories of knowledge are used in power relationships' (Hacking 1999 cited *ibid.*:185). This, Wagenaar asserts 'is the ethical program of governmentality' (*ibid.*) and is explored further in Chapter 7.

It is necessary to address the link between interpretive analysis as social critique and action as constitutive of meaning. To put this another way, social critique seeks to operate at a collective or societal level but action is undertaken by individuals; how then is action constitutive of meaning to be known? Here, this study draws on two conceptual frameworks. Yanow (2000) promotes the idea of 'interpretive communities' or 'communities of meaning', while Bevir, and colleagues working in more political contexts refer to 'traditions' that encapsulate inherited political heritages (Bevir 2005; Bevir *et al.*, 2003). Whilst both sit within an interpretive tradition, they demonstrate key differences. Yanow's work draws from Geertz' ideas of contextual 'local knowledges' (1983) that are shared by interpretive communities and 'arise around a shared point of view relative to a policy issue' (Yanow 2000:37). The approach sits comfortably within many classic ideas within ethnography, including the privileging of 'near' over 'distant' experience as the basis for conceptual development and the valuing of 'thick description' from which deeper analysis can be developed (Geertz 1973, 1983). In applying these ideas to a policy context Yanow identifies a methodological approach that seeks to draw out local knowledges by attending to written, oral, observatory and participatory methods (2000). Recognising how these provide both opportunities for sense-making and the emergence of 'puzzles' which provide the basis for further analytical enquiry. The critical point here is the insistence that analytical concepts are drawn from research fieldwork, (Schwartz-Shea

and Yanow 2012:50), thus sharing some of the approach of grounded theory, as developed by Charmaz (2006) and Charmaz and Mitchell (2001), but differing in so far as Yanow collapses the division between data collection and analysis into a single process, certainly during the period of active fieldwork.

Bevir and colleagues developing the idea of 'traditions' offer an alternative starting point for the interpretive project. Like other interpretivists they reject the positivist notion of social facts but also argue that people cannot have 'pure experiences', and that action always involves recourse to 'their beliefs and desires ... inextricably enmeshed with theories' (Bevir *et al.*, 2003:4). The implication being that pure grounded interpretation is as much a fallacy as the idea of immutable social facts. Thus, Bevir *at al* (2003:5) seek to address 'how beliefs, and so actions are created, recreated and changed in ways that constantly reproduce and modify institutions.' 'Traditions' are defined with beguiling simplicity as '... a set of understandings someone receives during socialization' (*ibid.:*7). The conceptual approach seeks to address the perennial challenge to account for freedom of action and conformity through structure; traditions may shape understandings and approaches to issues but they do not *control* action. The notion of 'dilemmas' is developed as representing critical moments when socialization and beliefs are experienced as a form of practical, theoretical, or moral dissonance requiring adaptation of either beliefs or actions, and thus effect some kind of change to predictable patterns of behaviour. Justice cannot be done to the theoretical sophistication of this approach, and Bevir has developed it at length in numerous texts (Bevir 2005, 2010; Bevir and Rhodes 2008, 2010).

These works are highlighted for three reasons. First they illustrate the diversity of approaches within the general heading of 'interpretive policy analysis'; second they have influenced my reflexive orientation to the research and third they ensure that interpretive analysis focused on local contextual action remains coupled with broader policy discourse, driving the thesis towards analytical insights of more general relevance. To elaborate, I do not propose that the fieldwork offers a site of competing

political traditions as outlined by Bevir *et al.*, (2003), but the approach opens up a set of questions about the development of ideas, beliefs and interpretations that influence any given situation, action or interpretation. It evokes historicism as an intrinsic element in interpretive analysis, and in policy terms grounds the research in broader (i.e. not just local) debates. Thus in my own methodological approach, the concept of 'traditions' stimulates consideration of the historical and cultural context of the research, the primary policy instrument of the CF programme, and the more general policy environment which impacts on the research field, (such as the discourse of 'partnership'). Historical relevance was a constant feature throughout the fieldwork for example, the de-industrialisation of South Wales was identified as the contextual environment for community development and policy-led work, and served as a means to make sense of contemporary developments. As will be demonstrated in the following chapters, Communities First was abstractly understood and practically enacted among other things as a political statement, a discourse of social justice, local government leadership, participatory democracy and for some, a settling of historical wrongs inflicted on communities. It is possible to understanding these, in Bevir's terms as 'inherited understandings' or to adjust his position, understandings shaped by inheritances These understandings undoubtedly shaped action and rationalisations, but also opened up new possibilities. Methodologically therefore my approach attends to two primary strands of inquiry, first following an approach more closely aligned to that outlined by Yanow and Wagenaar, I am interested in local situated knowledges and how these enable and account for partnership-making, and second, I look to local manifestations of wider policy dynamics and explore the relationship between the two.

To summarise, this methodological approach seeks to bring together a number of theoretical perspectives and re-articulate them into a coherent approach appropriate for the current inquiry. Drawing from Law and Mol (2002), partnership is understood as a phenomenon that can only temporally be held conceptually still, set as it is in processes of dynamic

contestation. This calls for attention to both the substance of those dynamics and a consideration of their interplay; here post-Foucauldian scholarship offers insights into the analyses of power and the multi-coalescing and conflicting resources through which it operates. The research question itself directs attention to the everyday lives of people, and interpretive policy analysis offers rich conceptual resources with which to explore this. Together these theoretical approaches, provide a broadly historicist understanding within which the research seeks to explore the community making of partnership and critically consider the connections with broader policy and governance theory.

This epistemological stance makes particular kinds of demands upon research design and fieldwork methods and the next section considers these and their enactment. Unsurprisingly, while the overall direction was clear at the outset, the design stage and more notably its execution was a more emergent and reflexive process.

5.2   Research methods

5.2.1 From ideas to action

The original proposal for this research had intended to combine two principal research methods, ethnography and action research. Participatory action research (PAR) was envisaged, as part of a wider ethnographic approach because it chimed with the participatory rhetoric around the CF programme, and would have drawn on my personal background in community development work. I also wished to avoid becoming a 'parachute' professional; jumping into a community 'taking' for personal benefit and leaving little behind. Thus, I reasoned that I could offer my experience and skills in exchange for 'knowledge'. This position carried an implicit assumption that the research could simultaneously somehow 'do good' (Fals Borda 2001; Johansson and Lindhult 2008), as well as meeting the knowledge aspirations of the research endeavour.

Moreover, I hoped that PAR would structure the research in a more equitable way, allowing an exchange between the researched and researcher (Burns *et al.*, 2012). As such, PAR was conceived of as a principled act of reciprocity, and held up as an intrinsically moral and ethical position. PAR also offered the possibility to further what Reason and Bradbury (2001), have called the 'action turn' in research; a desire to move beyond the tired circularity of argument, and limitations of the post-modern 'language turn'.

Interestingly, some of the arguments put forward in support of PAR, were also the reason it was subsequently dropped. Given the limited time scale of the project and personal experience of the length of time it takes to develop meaningful working relationships, I became convinced that PAR was not a viable objective, and would potentially confuse relationships by requiring me to adopt a quasi-professional role. Furthermore, I came to believe that it was ultimately more honest to be 'just' a researcher and concurred with Skeggs, that 'epistemological authority... need not contradict the moral equality between' (2002:363) the researcher and the researched. Further reflection also led me to conclude that PAR would compromise the ethnographic element of the research by confusing the nature of the 'participatory' element of participant-observation, by creating two types of 'participant'. The PAR participant that would take on some kind of facilitator-of-action-role, and the second as ethnographic participator-observer-researcher of community life. On these ground PAR, was rejected as a research method.

5.2.2 A case of what? Constructing a case and selecting the research site

The concern here is not with the validity or otherwise of the case study as method (see Flyvbjerg 2006), but a dilemma as to how to present to the reader an adequate outline of what the study is a case of. In keeping with the methodological approach outlined above, the case presented within this thesis is one of many potential 'things'. Moreover, this needs to be

understood in both sequential and simultaneous terms, and crucially it is proposed, exists precisely because of this plurality. So in presenting the research as a-case-study-of-a-community-led-partnership, my contention is that the object of study can only exist as such because it also exists as a-community-development-project, as an endeavour-tackling-social-injustice and an instance of local-public-policy-implementation. To present it as a case of *just* one of these 'things' fails to understand the way in which each of these is put to work in the construction of the others. It is possible to make a further two points here: first acceptance of this plurality does not equal a claim to 'wholeness' in capturing the phenomenon and second, plurality does not in itself preclude the reading of the case as an instance of any one of these things. Indeed in policy terms it may sometimes be required that this is done in order to ensure 'the appearance of' (Rhodes 2011:105-106) a particular phenomenon, as required in formal public policy arenas.

To turn to more tangible matters, the process of selecting the research site was relatively unproblematic. My research interest in the field of partnerships has a long history based in professional practice in a variety of roles, including community development, 'interagency work' and as a freelance researcher. It was also shaped by two periods of post-graduate study focused largely on issues of governance (Sophocleous 2004, 2009), with the most recent exploring the discourse of partnership among elite policy makers involved in the CF programme within Wales. Through discussions with pre existing contacts and knowledge about the workings of the programme, I drew up a list of criteria for identifying potential locations of research. I wanted to research within a local authority area that had a number of CF projects, (to aid confidentiality) and was broadly understood to be 'good' at supporting the programme. In respect to the actual project, I sought out those talked about as 'successful'. It was clear from earlier research that some CF projects were hampered by internal dissent between entrenched factions. These were ruled out because the research aim was to explore the 'doing partnership', and required therefore a focus on projects judged to be competent. Mindful of the need to

manage issues of travel and time, I drew up a prioritised shortlist of eight projects in five local authority areas. Following a period of desk research exploring project and local authority websites, and other publically available material, the coordinators in the two most favoured projects were contacted by telephone and meetings held.

The importance of the project coordinator to the success of CF projects has been a recurring theme in studies of the CFP, (WAG 2006; Adamson and Bromiley 2008; AMION and Old Bell 3 2011), and I was aware that this individual would also be my first and primary research gate keeper and informant. In reality, I underestimated just how significant the coordinator was in the project and the discussion in Chapter 7 explores the role of key staff in partnership-making. At this early stage however, initial meetings allowed me to outline the research proposal to the selected coordinators, and garner information about the work of the project and how it operated. I was keen to explore the extent of active community involvement and ensure that I would be allowed access to all sections of the community. I decided to carry out research in Hendinas, for a number of reasons. The response of Elin, the Coordinator, was a crucial factor. She was not only positive about her role but welcomed the idea of research on the grounds that it would offer direct benefits to the project, she stated in email communication 'the whole process will help us to be more reflective practitioners' (personal communication 30.4.10). Further, while I had by this point abandoned the idea of PAR, I retained a hope that the research would be of direct benefit to the project, and Elin's interest opened up these possibilities. It was also apparent both in discussion with Elin and contacts in the wider policy community, that Hendinas was viewed as a 'good partnership'. A period of formal written negotiation followed, (see Appendix1) and concluded with approval from the local CF Steering group (see 5.4 below). Formal approval was sought from the Cardiff School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, and I was cleared by the Criminal Record Bureau. These procedures were completed by early September 2010 and fieldwork began almost immediately. The fieldwork used primarily ethnographic and interview

research methods, and took place over a period of one year with mostly weekly attendance of between one to two days and a complete week in the field in the early and latter stages of the year.

5.2.3 Ethnography

The decision to carry out ethnography as the primary research method was made on the basis of four primary considerations. First, that of time; I wanted to use time as an opportunity to observe interaction and processes; previous experience had taught me the considerable truth in the old cliché that *doing* and *talk about doing,* were not the same thing. Thus, the second reason arises from an interest in understanding the relationship between meanings and actions in practice. Previous research (Sophocleous 2009) had drawn attention to the elusiveness of the concept of 'partnership', and the research question carried an expectation that meanings of partnership would be in some ways particular for 'the community'. Research methods had to be able to access the practice of partnership-making by 'the community'. This leads into the third reason which emanates from ethnography's capacity to see 'another country', offering opportunities to access the particulars that the research question sought (Geertz 1973:23), and a viewing platform from which they were capable of being seen, (Harding 2004:257); this accepts that while situated-knowledge is inevitable, it is imperative that the location for seeing is carefully selected. Finally, I believed that the depth and quality of analytical insights would be greater from longer term engagement in the field. There was therefore a direct link between the research question, its epistemological aspirations, and the selection of ethnography as the primary research method.

Ethnographically, I certainly played each of Gold's (1958) four ethnographic roles, although as Aull Davies (1999) observes the transition between each was rarely lineal. Citing Rabinow she concurs with his dialectical understanding of the relationship between participation and observation, noting how participation impacts on the researcher 'leading him [*sic*] to new observation, whereupon new observation changes how he

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[*sic*] participates' (Rabinow 1977 cited in Aull-Davies1999:72-73). This more accurately reflects my own experience, I moved from pure observer in some formal meetings to active participant, when for example I joined in keep-fit classes and became a participant-observer when I prepared Greek food for the healthy living group. I passed back and forth through many combinations of participant-observer and observer-participant roles. More significant than the labelling of the role, is a consideration of the nature (to whatever extent) of the participation.

A discussion about participation, begs the question, participation in what? This is a thorny issue in the use of ethnography in a public policy setting. I did not adopt the classic role of anthropological ethnographer by living in the community, I was not, nor could I have been a 'local person'. The other main active role in the setting was that of *professional worker*, but my ethnographic interest was in neither the community nor the staff *per se*, but the interaction that creates partnership. In this sense, I have come to understand the ethnographic endeavour as an institutional ethnography (Smith 1987), an 'empirical investigation of linkages among local settings of everyday life, organizations and translocal processes of administration and governance' (De Vault and Mc Coy 2002:751). Hence the research focuses upon both community life and the 'relations and organizations that are, in a sense *present* in them but are not observable' (Smith 2006:4). From this position, I as ethnographic participant-observer chose to share as far as possible in the public, but everyday life of Hendinas. I excluded the exclusively private realm, (e.g. people's homes) as a topic of study and sought to become involved in public-private encounters. These ranged from formal meetings to keep-fit groups, adult education classes and day-to-day interpersonal social exchanges. In the following chapter, these are explored under the heading of 'institutional life of Hendinas'. A discussion of participatory role and reflexivity is presented in 5.3 below.

Participation in the institutional life of Hendinas forms the bedrock of this research, and ethnography is the greater part of 'what I did', generating the bulk of the research data and served as the primary resource pool with

which analysis was built. It is necessary to be clear however, that of 3000 or so residents of Hendinas only a small proportion are involved in the institutional life of the area and inevitably, my engagement was with a smaller number still. It is not possible to be exact about the numbers of people I encountered, but across all the projects and groups I attended it would involve well above 200 people. But while all encounters contributed to the overall ethnographic pictures I developed, not all were of the same kind. Some people, perhaps 50 or 60, I came to know reasonably well, greeting each warmly and passing social pleasantries together; 16 of these I formally interviewed (see below). With some, I directly discussed the research and my role, while others would have been unaware of me and my task. The research sample therefore grew organically and opportunistically as my involvement in the institutional life of Hendinas became more embedded, enabling me to follow institutional connections (Smith 1987) and meet more people. This approach created both opportunities and limitations. Ethnographically its virtue lies in the power of 'being there'; following interactions in 'real time' and enabling observation of actually occurring practices. It is confined however to following a limited set of interactions, since institutional life does not only happen in one place or time across Hendinas, as a researcher I inevitably 'missed out' on other possible institutional interactions. Thus, no claim to completeness is being made, and unavoidable selectivity is, I believe   more than compensated for by the richness of the data.

5.2.4 Interviews

I conducted 16 interviews in the second half of the fieldwork. These varied in length between 40 minutes and over 2 hours, and with the exception of two, were conducted in a public building, (the other two in private homes). One person was apprehensive about being interviewed, and in this case I took hand written notes, the rest were digitally recorded and I undertook all the transcriptions. This was mostly verbatim, although some general introductory talk was paraphrased and some highly personal disclosure omitted completely.

The selection of interviewees developed from reflection on the ethnographic experience and can be seen as a *continuation* and *extension* of the relationships developed through ethnographic encounters, rather than 'single shot' (Charmaz 2002) fact finding missions, or as a source of triangulatory validity (Atkinson and Coffey 2002; Atkinson *et al.,* 2003),(see 5.3 for further discussion). They make five critical contributions to the overall methodology. Interviews are understood as inter-subjective constructions, neither encounters in search of facts, nor neutral acts of gathering stories, (Holstein and Gubrium 1995; Heyl 2001; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). Instead as Riessman (2002:704) comments, interviews recognise positionality and I selected interviewees accordingly. In doing so I sought first to explore the particular positions the interviewees adopted, their understandings and why and how they came to occupy them; second, I hoped this would provide situated accounts of the broader cultural landscape and their constructions of it. Third, they offer a means to reflect analytically on what might be involved in the construction of the narratives offered to me as researcher (Czarniawska 2002,2010; Gubruim and Holstein 2008), and fourth following the insights offered by the institutional ethnographic approach, to 'locate and trace the points of connection among individuals working in different parts of institutional complexes ...'(De Vault and McCoy 2002:753). Finally, with due recognition to the constructed nature of interviews, it is necessary to view the interview as an arena for information exchange, and they provided details (albeit situated ones) about the historical development of the project and many important particulars about the lives of the interviewees.

Arising from this approach, interviews were only very loosely structured; I had a range of issues I was keen to explore but no rigid format (see below) in terms of questions or order through which to do this (Appendix 4). The interviews did however share a common starting point, which invited interviewees to 'tell me how' they came to be involved in the project / organisation / activity and for the external professionals the question was amended, asking instead how their organisation was involved with Hendinas CF. Interviews ended with an invitation to add anything that was

of importance to them but had not yet been talked about. One interviewee used this as an opportunity to suggest that I should ask what he would like his 'legacy' to be. Fascinated by the question, the particular answer he gave and why this might have been so important to him, I included it as a closing question in subsequent interviews. This example serves as a pertinent reminder that interviews are a project of construction and this particular interviewee having grasped this was asserting his right to shape the encounter. It also illustrates how interviewees were clearly mindful of to whom they were telling their stories, and the opportunity that I might represent to serve as a conduit to a world beyond.

The role of interviews in the wider methodological approach was also interesting. Having primarily undertaken interviews in previous research, I was rather keen at the outset to privilege the role of ethnography. There are two observations worthy of comment enmeshed within this position, one that downplays the role of interviews, while the other paradoxically enhances it. If interviews are valued for the narratives they elicit, then it would be fair to assume that as a research method, interviews produce better quality narratives. However, as the research proceeded and ethnographic fieldwork notes came to be written up it became apparent that many accounts were being shared with me, through my 'everyday' encounters with people in Hendinas. I met many people who told me their stories and how they came to be involved in an adult skills or computer class; how involvement with Hendinas CF had helped them to achieve something of importance, they shared their personal ambitions and reflected on their own and their children's lives. These many not have been the exclusive one-to-one encounters that are generally understood to be an 'interview' but they did, just as interviews did, elicit situated narratives that formed the basis of much subsequent reflection and analysis. In this sense, it is possible to conclude that the need to conduct formal interviews was not great. However, this would miss the role interviews played in the life of the research.

I had mentioned in the early stages of the research that I would be conducting some interviews, and as the time passed a number of individuals and key activists became obvious candidates. I began to mention to them informally that at some point I would appreciate some of their time for an 'interview'. Two things became apparent, first, that 'being interviewed' carried status; once I had begun interviewing, a couple of people asked 'when are you going to interview me then?' I came to realise that as a researcher I was conferring an important status upon my interviewees. Tied in with this, I realised that 'doing interviews' was what I as a researcher *should* be doing; somehow this was *proper* research. Perhaps because of the opportunities that interviews afford to 'manage the self' (Coffey 1999, 2002) or possibly because of the recognisability of the interview structure in wider society, there was a general welcoming of my move to interviews. Further, I also noticed that within interviews, while I had sought to minimise the formality of the encounter by reducing structured questions etc, these were what marked interviews out as 'interviews'. Indeed listening back to the recordings, I realised that for some people the unstructured interview was problematic. Formality serves as a form of recognition, and as a researcher it was incumbent on me to play my role appropriately, over time I learnt to comply!

5.2.5 Fieldnotes and data

The creation of data within the research was an ongoing project. Ethnographic records grew accumulatively into a 'corpus', but 'without a logic of development' (Emerson *et al.,* 2001:353). In-field or 'scratch notes' (Emerson *et al.*, 1995) took two forms, first those scribbled *in-situ*, were made when it seemed appropriate in the circumstances. Accepting the vagueness of this statement, this was primarily in meetings, or when the convention of 'writing things down' was an accepted part of the social situation. In informal social settings, for example, over coffee, during everyday exchanges between people, I chose not to be seen to be making notes. The second group of in-fieldnotes were therefore more often made in catch up moments, sometimes in the car before leaving Hendinas, or during times when little else was going on. To start with, I wrote copious

descriptive notes, interspersed with questions (what? who? meaning?) reflecting what I knew I did not know, but thought I ought to. In part, this was an exercise in both anchorage and an attempt not to overly constrain what I might look for. At the start of fieldwork it also served to steady nerves and contain fears. In-field real time note taking was often fast and intensive, with little time to reflect on what or whether to record something. Reading these data as a whole it was evident, I wrote about a number of things including: what was said and by whom, what was done, to whom words and actions were directed, who did a lot of talking and who did not, who was encouraged to speak, and whose voice was being minimised, and how these interactions were attempted. I recorded the layout of the room, where people sat, who stood or sat when they spoke, and how speakers were received. While the in-field notes were mostly descriptive, I was struck looking back at them, how I had very early on asked some critical questions, included some sharp 'on the spot' analysis but also noted other instances of overlooking some key themes that only became apparent later on in the fieldwork.

After fieldwork sessions, I expanded these in-field notes; mostly they were transferred to computer files, but rather than just type them up in more detail they very quickly turned into early analytical notes. I developed a growing awareness of the importance of 'desk work' and its dynamic relationship with fieldwork (Van Maanen 1988:38), and while I did consult the growing literature on the different types of analytical tools / stages available to the qualitative researcher, I could not point to my own early work in-progress and distinguish with any certainty a 'memo' (Charmaz 2006), from 'in process analytical writing' (Emerson *et al*., 1995, 2001), nor fully unpick an *in vivo* code (Charmaz 2006), from a *sensitising concept* (Blumer 1954). Looking back, I did however develop a habit of analysis. I can trace these analytical practices, through a range of writings, from an increase in questioning and reflection within in-field notes, through desk notes, separate documents focused around an event, or an awareness of connections between events, a thought or a question. I find notes made when reading the literature, peppered with reflections and attempts to

tease out issues and understand what I saw happening in Hendinas, there is much work and re-working of both theoretical concepts and reappraisal of fieldwork recordings (Van Maanen 1988:118). Much of this analytical work forms the backbone of the chapters that follow, but it is also the case that some of this work has not found its way into this thesis; to reiterate holism is not claimed (Atkinson *et al.*, 2007). Although I had undergone some training, I did not use any computer assisted software programmes, but undertook the analytical process through basic word processing and manual processes.

5.2.6 Analytical work

While there is much in my experience that enables me to concur with Emerson *et al.*,'s observation that my fieldwork notes were 'messy and unruly' (2001:335), a consideration of the data as a body of work led to the emergence of patterns, although the process by which these were settled into the format presented in this thesis was far from lineal. While I embarked on a systematic coding of the data, the process was mundane and atomising and instead of supporting analytical development I often felt as if the vitality of Hendinas, its people and their actions was being drained of meaning and comprehension. Although much has been written about the challenges of academic analysis and writing (Becker 2007[1986]) there is also an expectation on the doctoral student to 'do it right'. In respect to the matter of coding, despite urging students to remember the iterative nature of the analytic process, discussions implicitly treat it as a distinct phase, which somehow involves working through the entirety of one's data. But this undervalues the analytical work that has already been completed. Reading and re-reading my data, coding and re-coding occurred many times throughout the research process. The analytical work continues, but the idea of coding fails to fully encapsulate the process, propagating instead something of a mythical activity that the scholar must pass *through* to reach the other side. My experience and practice of developing the analysis was much messier.

Themes emerged at different points in the research and coalesced around many of the analytical notes I had been writing throughout. I decided to use these as anchor points, highlighting possible analytical lines of inquiry and then developed a 'findings map' around these. I re-trawled my data to see what fitted, did not fit or contradicted these analytical thrusts. Also, I found this process brought to light additional analytical themes I had not yet fully appreciated. It proved to be the turning point in getting to grips with the next stage of the research project. It is useful to illustrate this process through two examples; the first is the theme of 'deserving' which is explored in Chapter 6, and the second that of 'herding' addressed in Chapter 7.

Talk about Hendinas as 'deserving', was not something that I gave much thought to during the first half of the fieldwork. Its significance emerged through a process of detailed and repeated reading of the interview transcripts, which highlighted its frequent use. On this basis I returned to the ethnographic fieldnotes to consider its everyday use. Analytically, the process involved asking of my data 'what does deserving mean?, deserving of what? on what grounds? and who might provide that which is deserved? Instrumental in helping move forward during this time was Nicolini's (2009) idea of 'zooming in' and 'zooming out'. Procedurally I zoomed into the specific contexts in which the term 'deserving' was used in search of insight; in practice this led me to zoom out through the connections that 'deserving' summoned. Thus in a non-lineal way I moved from initially examining where and how 'deserving' was used, on to a consideration of what 'deserving' was coupled with, and thereafter into a more complex mapping of the inter relationships between the ideas identified. For example, the phrase 'deserving' was used alongside terms like 'decent', and in conversations about the past and the future. Here, people made comments such as 'about time' in respect to projects that utilised the language of 'green' and 'sustainable'. Thus, 'deserving' was connected in a multitude of ways with a number of other ideas: the past, the future, greenness and sustainability. Interrogating each of these discursive ideas, the artefacts in which they were invested (e.g. the

community centre), and the practices through which they were enacted (e.g. meetings and training), brought into relief a shifting but contoured picture of analysis (Atkinson *et al.,* 2007). This formed the basis of much of the analysis in the following chapter.

In contrast the 'herding' theme was viscerally experienced during a Programme Bending meeting (see Chapter 7), in which the coordinator seemed to execute a skilful manoeuvre that took a meeting of about 40 people to a place she wanted them to be. It was a palpable experience, and I recorded in my fieldnotes 'we've just been herded!' This theme emerged very early on in the research and with heightened awareness shaped my observational orientation, serving as a key lens through which to consider what was going on. Fieldnotes referred to it with comments like 'an e.g. of herding?', and analytical notes took it as a starting point, adding detail and layers of sophistication over time. Aware of its centrality I was proactive in asking myself how it interplayed with other ideas and practices. I became attuned to looking out for instances of 'herding', and proactive in reminding myself to identify and reflect on conditions that might impact on it. Interestingly the notion of herding was brought into starkest relief, through an instance of what I came to understand as its failure, opening up deeper analytical insights that are discussed in Chapters 7 and 8.

5.3   Ethics and Reflexivity, Validity and Reliability

It is unclear when Wagennar (2011:5) asserts that '[p]olicy analysis is a moral activity' whether he is making a claim for the moral superiority of his approach or is issuing a directive to other scholars. Possibly, he holds both positions, as he elaborates,

> the origins of interpretive policy analysis as a critique of the hidden
> ideological quality of traditional analysis places a particular
> responsibility on the shoulders of interpretive analysts to live up to
> the critical, reflexive ambitions of their approach (*ibid.*:7).

While I do not subscribe to the idea that any methodological approach is *intrinsically* more moral than any other (Shaw 2003, Burns *et al.,* 2012), nor inevitably better placed to 'deliver' change and social justice, Wagennar's recognition of morality as an inescapable dimension of policy analysis (or we might add, any other research), is critically important. It introduces the issue of power within research relationships, leads to a questioning of researcher practice, and ignites an explosive debate about the interplay of these issues for epistemic gain. Confining, in the first instance, the debate about morality this section will first turn to a consideration of ethics within the research, before moving to discuss the role of reflexivity as a core research practice.

5.3.1 Ethics

The approach to ethics adopted in this research is broad and inclusive, with an active commitment to address ethical concerns as issues of 'integrity in practice' (Banks 2004), remaining attentive to ethics as multifaceted and potentially unpredictable aspects of both the period of active research and beyond into the production of this thesis, subsequent texts and presentations. Thus, this research sought to follow professional ethical guidelines (BSA 2002; ESRC undated, 2010, 2012), and has met all the official requirements placed upon it[4]. However, registration and reporting requirements have the perverse potential of focusing reflection into what *could* be a technocratic exercise of form filling. It is well accepted that ethical issues cannot be consigned to a series of practical 'to do' issues, and the capacity of academic ethics committees to serve as the guardians of research ethics is limited (Shaw 2003; Guillemin and Gillam 2004). Inevitably, therefore these procedures can only serve as a starting point for ethical research practice. Instead, it is possible to consider research ethics as grounded in two processes, one procedural, and a second that is intellectually focused, reflexively developed, but practically enacted.

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[4] School Ethnics Committee Approval - Ref: SREC/651, and
 Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care and/or the Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2004, Ref: SPON 854-10

The issue of confidentiality was raised early in discussions with the Coordinator. Anonymity of the research site and the individuals who live and work there was agreed as a condition of University ethical approval. Moreover, it formed one of the terms on which access to the research site was agreed. In negotiating entry and asking local residents, staff and external professionals to participate in the research I had, by agreement with the CF steering group undertaken to keep the project anonymous (Appendix 1). Further as the research was not in any sense evaluative, focusing instead on policy implications, the exact location is of limited relevance (see Chapter 8).

Thus, as with much community based research, the name of the locality (Hendinas) is fictitious and I have tried to be judicious in offering defining characteristics about the area while simultaneously seeking to guard its anonymity. In its more common attributes - size, general location, socio-economic make up (see 5.4 below) - Hendinas recedes easily into amorphous and predictable descriptions frequently used to characterise much of South Wales. More challenging are those features that are both unique to Hendinas and are essential to the presentation of the research; in particular the way partnership practices are organised and reported, the organisations involved and the people who lead them. Multiple strategies have been employed to address these challenges. Individuals have been given pseudonyms, and only key and relevant details about them have been presented. Some details have been omitted or presented deliberately vaguely. Occasionally I have consciously left statements unattributed to prevent the reader joining information likely to lead to key individuals being identified, or where disclosure might place them at some kind of risk (professional or social). Gender has been accurately reported because gender roles are a significant aspect of community life and appreciation of both conformity to and divergence from gender expectations is necessary to making sense of the research.

Disguising organisations has presented a mixed bag of challenges. I have disclosed the minimum amount of information necessary for contextual sense making. With one key agency, I gained consent for my presentation of them, by sharing descriptive extracts of my work for approval. The aim here has been to recognise and minimise the potential of research to do organisational or group harm (Finch in Shaw 2003). I recognise that as a social policy researcher, I cannot know how my presentation of Hendinas might be used in the future by politicians or bureaucrats, nor fully predict possible threats to the particular community of Hendinas or other similar ones, arising from my work. For example, I cannot predict how my presentation of community based partnership-making could be deemed to demonstrate 'inadequacy' in policy implementation, posing a potential risk to the policy, the idea of community-led partnership in general or to Hendinas itself, undermining for example funding or system support. Working in Wales with its small policy field, and a short chain of command from national to local levels, means that 'knowing' people, places and practices is very easy. Within the research therefore the potential for harm, although not directly obvious, is never-the-less present. Additionally, there exists the potential to do reputational harm and impact on individuals' professional lives. There is therefore an inescapable tension between the needs of the research and the commitment to protect informants and communities; its resolution has not always been easy, but I have tried to find modes of expression that meet these challenges.

One of the pivotal issues in a debate about ethics is that of *informed* consent. As Eisner acknowledges, '[w]e might like to secure consent that is informed, but we know we can't always inform because we don't always know' (1991: 225 cited in Shaw 2003:16). In this light the role of Consent Forms is inevitably limited, however they do serve as a reminder of the 'uncomfortable' relationship (Murphy and Dingwall 2001), between research participant and the researcher. The consent forms used and written information provided to research participants are included at Appendices 2 and 3. Recognising the limitations, my own experience was that the presentation of this paperwork during interviews provided an

opportunity for a conversation about the research. Generally, people were very happy to talk and tell me their stories, and most did not appear to consider themselves at any risk from doing so (Finch 1993). As a researcher however I wanted to counsel caution and therefore the *requirement* to discuss consent provided a welcome opening to talk about the research aims, explain research methods and raise issues of confidentiality and consent.

More challenging however, was the difficulty of gaining consent in an ethnographic setting. Here it was not always possible to secure consent, nor even discuss the research before an activity began and the pace of interaction was such that to interrupt the flow of discussion would have undermined both the activity and the research. I encountered many people that I never formally spoke to, or people with whom I talked about the research only in vague terms. Here formal consent was not possible, but the encounter still contributed to the ethnographic experience. In these and many more circumstances, my approach has been informed by Guillemin and Gillam (2004), discussion of 'ethically important moments.' These are those times in research practice when 'the approach taken or the decision made has important ethical ramifications, but where the researcher does not necessarily feel himself or herself to be on the horns of a dilemma' (Guillemin and Gillam 2004:265). I have used this idea to inform both my ethnographic presence during the fieldwork and to underpin the presentation of research data. So for example when research participants asked, 'what are you writing down?' I offered my note book for inspection, although not taken up, I believe my willingness to be 'checked out' contributed to a way of working that demonstrated my openness to being questioned and a willingness to account for myself and my work.

5.3.2 Reflexivity, validity, and reliability

The concept of reflexivity has received much attention in recent years, but the approach adopted here rejects the fashion for narcissistic ethnographic confessionals and seeks to avoid the dangers of 'thinly veiled nihilistic relativism' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:72; also Finlay

2002). The aim is to actively draw on a conception of reflexivity, which while recognising the presence and effect of the researcher, addresses research 'practice and process as a matter of resources and positioning' (Skeggs 2002:369), and is attuned to the development of '... good research practices, [with] ... thicker methodology' (Maton 2003:55), to ensure 'accountability and responsibility in research' (Skeggs 2002:369). It is possible to assign to reflexivity three distinct roles, while holding onto both their inherent interconnectedness, and remaining cognisant of their limits. Thus, reflexivity can be directed to both the *doing* of research (practice), and secondly towards the *extent of potential* knowing. A third issue requires reflexive attention be directed to the *links* between these two, which contributes to both methodological appropriateness and epistemic gain. Thus, there are three domains within which to consider reflexivity, each applied towards enhancing the capacity of research to deliver 'knowledge.'

In traditional social science terms, this discussion would be couched in the language of *validity* and *reliability.* The terms sit uncomfortably within the current approach, and the tensions in these debates are well rehearsed (Hammersley 1992; Seale 1999; Lincoln and Guba 2000; Flick 2006). Never-the-less it is important to consider the issues they seek to address. In an attempt to reconcile these tensions, it is possible to think about *reflexivity about doing the research* as analogous to issues of validity, and issues of reliability being addressed reflexively when considering the *extent of potential knowledge* claims. Internal validity of the research has been sought iteratively. As an exercise in interpretive ethnography, the fieldwork comprised ongoing discussion and sharing of interpretations between participants and researcher, facilitating continuous reflection of and adjustment to methods with which to hone in on research quandaries. More formally, the credibility (Lincoln and Guba 1985) of the analysis has been tested through presentations to key fieldwork staff and by sharing written material and receiving feedback. Both these practices are integral to the enactment of the research methodology which has sought to capture how partnership is created through the everyday practices of

community members and staff, and the orderings they privilege. The challenges of external validity are encapsulated in the analytical processes captured in Chapters 6 to 9, in which the relationship between the specific case of Hendinas has been used as a lens to consider wider theoretical and policy issues; again it is an approach intrinsic to the research methodology.

Interpretive methodology makes no claim to traditional notions of scientific objectivity, or universal applicability, instead its situated limitations are inherently accepted. In this light, the idea of research offering immutable reliability is impossible. However, it is necessary to 'know ... [research] limits and accompany all scientific accounts with an account of the limits and limitations of scientific accounts' (Bourdieu in Wacquant 1989:34). The research presented in this thesis is bound by its limited context within Hendinas, and took place over a short period in the life span of a dynamic public policy. There are no methodological mechanisms that could have been deployed to overcome these constraints and make the research directly replicable. However, the research is grounded in wider public trends, drawing from the insights offered in the constellation of forces (Isin 1997:116) it grew out of and will be judged by the soundness of the epistemological offerings it makes. Analytical conclusions are drawn from experience washed through theoretical questioning, it is not an exact science, but a practice systematically tackled. Analysis is grounded in 'real' data understood not just as description, since this alone is not an adequate basis for analysis, (Atkinson and Delamont 2005). Instead '[d]ata are materials to think with' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:158) and theorizing "involve[s] an iterative process in which ideas are used to make sense of data, and data are used to change ... ideas' (*ibid.:*159, also Atkinson *et al.*, 2003).

Issues of reliability within qualitative research can also be addressed through scrutiny of research processes. This touches upon the third issue identified above, that of the reflexivity directed toward the link between *doing* research and *potential or capacity* to know. Here there exists a

complex interplay between the individual researcher and the systematic methodological processes employed. In a single-researcher project, such as this one, the researcher contributes significantly to this role. '[T]racing the path of the ethnographer validates the theoretical conclusions' (Aull Davies 1999:20), facilitates questioning of the crafting of the research process (Kvale 2002), and allows for its rigor (Lincoln 2002) to be tested and contributes to its accountability. An example here demonstrates the dynamic relationship between personal action and the deployment of systematic analytical practices in an ethnographic context.

Inevitably during the course of a year 'in the field', I could not remain a 'stranger'. As in any working environment, relationships were forged, intimacies shared, advice and support exchanged, and I developed genuine respect and fondness for many people in Hendinas. My allegiance to 'my' project also grew, and I wanted in my own mind to 'defend' it when during a challenging meeting with local authority staff it was 'attacked' (see Chapter 8). I had sat in on the meeting as an observer, but afterwards engaged with project staff in a discussion about 'what was really going on'. I concurred with them that 'they' (LA staff) had got the wrong end of the stick, and there was a general feeling that the local project had been 'wronged'. Perhaps this represents the single most striking moment of my 'allegiance delusion' (Stacey 1988) within the fieldwork, and I initially dismissed the meeting as offering little of analytical value. But these human emotions in themselves did not distract from the potential to also stand back, reflect, and apply analytical deliberation. Indeed this may be one of the distinct advantages of the ethnographic method; the ability to move over time between engagement and analysis, to harness the sense of belonging in order to explore what is at stake in the given context and to apply this reflection for analytical gain. My over-developed sense of allegiance at that moment may have blinded me to analytical significance in the short term, but the analytically task was strengthened over the long term. The experience is significant not because it demonstrates that I 'was there', nor that it evidences my 'authenticity', but because I am able to apply analytical reflection to it

(Skeggs 2002), and the systematic processes that followed (e.g. coding, cross referencing and reflection), pushed forward epistemic gain. Additionally this insight was further developed through discussions with project staff, in which I shared my thinking in a context which challenged them to reflect on their work and me to explain and justify my thinking. Thus, the process engaged in processes that tested what Kvale calls 'community validity' (2002) and uses these to create opportunities to develop analytical insight of use to both the project and the research endeavour.

The issues of validity and reliability pose significant challenges within the methodological approach adopted within this research project, and it is not possible to offer water tight tick-box actions to guarantee them. Reflexivity does relatively little to diminish these challenges but can be used to ensure what Alvesson (2002) calls epistemological awareness. The approach adopted here blends transparency and systemic analytical processes mediated through reflexive practice, to underpin claims for methodological coherence and analytical rigour. Reflexive engagement occurs throughout the research endeavour with processes and data, filtered through a range of questions, unpicked and re-constructed, mulled over and rejected and sits at the very core of the research process. And through this it is the potential for research to offer something new, not previously known, to throw up 'unthought categories of thought' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:40), that makes the process both exciting and rightly open to challenge.

5.4   Case Study of Hendinas

The research fieldwork was carried out between September 2010 and early winter 2011. This section presents details about Hendinas as the basis of further discussion in coming chapters.

5.4.1 Socio-economic data

Hendinas is located in the South Wales valleys. Built on the side of the rising valley it is a few miles from the nearest town, with regular but not frequent bus services. It is a small community of about 3000 people, developed as a council housing estate from the mid-1950s into the 1960s. Project staff report that approximately one third of local residents are now owner/occupiers, made up of a combination of previous tenants taking up the 'right to buy', and some private sector housing developments. The remaining two thirds are divided roughly equally, between tenants in privately owned houses and those in social housing (recently transferred from the Local Authority control to a specially created Housing agency). Like much of South Wales, Hendinas is a post-industrialised community, and has been severely adversely affected by the loss of mining and associated heavy industry, in which male employment provided the underpinning rhythm of the community life.

The community was one of the original 100 Communities First areas, and marked by multiple deprivations. Some key indicators are presented in Table 1 below and paint a picture of a community with large numbers of young children and higher than average numbers of those children, living in lone parent headed families, and in families without an adult in employment. Educational qualification rates are low with over 50% of 16-74 year olds with no qualifications, with very high rates of young people aged 16- 24 not engaged in employment, education, or training. Like many other communities in South Wales the local population has higher than average rates of ill health, and people with long term illnesses.

	Hendinas	Wales
Children aged 0 - 17[1]	27	23
Dependent children living in households without an adult in employment[2]	35	20
Lone parent headed households with dependent children[1]	11	7
Individuals aged 16-74 with no qualifications[1]	51	33
Unemployed 16-24 year olds[1]	46	29
Working age population with limiting long term illness[1]	26	18
Households without cars/ vans[2]	42	26

Table 1 Comparison of Socio-economic Indicators Hendinas and Wales Averages (Percentages)

[1] Data Source: Local Authority Analysis 2001 Census (not referenced to maintain anonymity)
[2] Data source: WAG 2006

Outlining the fieldwork research site requires attention to the community based organisations tasked to support and develop partnership. Over time, I came to understand the fieldwork research site made up of two lead organisations. This is a retrospective understanding that I only came to appreciate some time into the fieldwork, and fully make sense of during the process of analysis and writing. The two components are the Hendinas Communities First Project and an action research charity, *Action in Communities* (AiC). At the start of the fieldwork, I believed I was exclusively researching the Communities First project, as the policy framework and institutional mechanisms were provided by the CF programme. Indeed while this did form the heart of the study, the inclusion of AiC is necessary to understanding, how partnership is created.

5.4.2 Hendinas Communities First Project

In addition to the Coordinator the project employs a Development Officer, Youth Development Coordinator, two youth workers, a Time Banking Officer, Administrative support and depending on smaller project funding a variety of short term staff. Locally the project was overseen by a community based CF Steering Group, which met monthly and provided day-to-day management and practice guidance. The CF project is directly responsible for the local development of the Welsh Government's CF programme.

The management arrangements for CF projects are complex. In most cases either the local authority or an established local development agency serve as Grant Recipient Body (GRB), a status to which is ascribed ultimate responsibility for financial and staff management, including authorising major spending and employing staff. At the time of the study it had been agreed locally and approved by both the Local Authority and the WG, that a newly established estate based charitable company, *Hendinas Renew Limited* (*Renew*) would serve as the GRB.

5.4.3 Action in Communities

Action in Communities (AiC) is an independent action research charity working in Wales, in addition to carrying out a wide variety of evaluations and commissioned work, it has developed its own research agenda supported by a variety of independent trust funds. AiC runs a small number of projects similar to those in Hendinas in other communities, but has made a major commitment to Hendinas, employing a Manager and numerous project staff. They have developed three interconnected initiatives focused on reducing the barriers to and providing support for learning. The first supports adult learners, and includes working with local colleges to provide a variety of accredited learning opportunities on the estate, including basic numeracy and literacy; additionally staff have supported individuals to progress and attend local colleges, and a small number have gained degrees. The second initiative has supported young people as they move from estate based primary schools to the larger

comprehensive and works both with the young people in the school and their families on the estate. The final element of work focuses on young men, not in education, training or employment with an interest in building trades. Identifying estate based building/ repair/ improvement needs, the young men receive on-the-job training to develop a range of building skills; some have moved on to college, formal apprenticeships and jobs in the trade.

5.4.4 Boundaries, relationships and a case study

In this context organisational boundaries are blurred, CF project staff were transformed into employees of *Renew.* Critically, the relationship between the staff of AiC, and the CF project is extensively interconnected and forms the developmental hub of work in Hendinas (see Chapter 8). Thus while my starting point for the research was the CF project, in practice I came to see these two agencies as the main organisational players, and alongside 'the community' the principal agents of partnership-making. In this way I moved from understanding the research as a case of a Communities First partnership, to a more rounded case study of how partnership is made in a community context, a major part of which is shaped by the WG's CF programme.

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to weave together a number of theoretical positions, creating both the underpinning pillars of the research and an analytical approach that permeates throughout. Methodologically the research can be presented as a case of many things, but primarily it needs to be understood as a case of 'shifting things', and a study of the agents, factors and processes involved in facilitating and constraining, and occasionally fixing that shifting. Consideration was also given to the presentation of power as diffuse and productive, which created openings from which to explore partnership-making as, at least in part, the construct(s) of active community agents. These insights are inescapably and iteratively coupled with the research methods deployed, with

ethnography providing an extensive foundation for additional interviews. The chapter also outlined the analytical approach adopted and the systematic processes followed. It concluded with a presentation of key information about Hendinas and the principal agencies working within it. We now turn to the institutional life of Hendinas, the public arena of community discourse.

Chapter 6   Community Partnership-Making: Exploring the Institutional Life of Hendinas

Stripped of the hype, and evangelical rhetoric, partnership is reduced to a service planning and implementation mechanism, but its allure has always been the value-added benefits attributed to it. As explored in Chapter 2 to 4, these have been many and complex, but can be summed up as the creation of cross agency and multi level synergy that transcends and closes the divisions and gaps in traditional planning systems, transforming the state in the process, as new agents are empowered to act. Grand claims indeed. The depth and complexity of the policy and scholarly tussles contained within discussions of partnership have been explored earlier; here it is sufficient to recall the scope of the principal debates. This includes political theory interest in the effects on governing, and ongoing deliberations about whether the reach of the state has contracted or extended, within which are contained both libertarian and critical scholarly concerns about the role and agency of citizens alongside management concerns about the effectiveness of partnerships in delivering better planning and service outcomes. Behind these lofty debates are real people, living real lives. Through analytical consideration of the case study of Hendinas, the challenge in this and the following chapters is to explore the connections between everyday lives lived within 'the community' and these abstract concerns, and in so doing address the research question of how partnership is made in and through everyday lives.

As outlined in Chapter 5, much of what I saw and participated in during the fieldwork was difficult to categorise *as* partnership but virtually all of it had something to *do with* partnership (Law 2003:4). So in analysing research findings, reflexive and analytical consideration has been directed towards

identifying what practices have 'something to do' with partnership, in what ways, and how they contribute to its formations. Taken alone it would be difficult to understand the relevance and connection of some of this work, but accumulatively, partnership-making emerges as an important construct in the institutional life of Hendinas. The conceptual leap from theoretical debates of partnership and governance, to tracing the material effects in the everyday lives of individuals is considerable; in public policy discourse, it is frequently mediated through the idea of community. The review in Chapter 4, acknowledged that community has long been of interest to the state (Craig 1989; Rose 1996; Taylor 2003; Craig *et al.,* 2011) and focused on how policy intervention is loaded with the potential to transform certain groups, instilling in them characteristics and habits deemed desirable (Rose 1996; Lund 1999; Marinetto 2003b). Paradoxically, community is also identified as a site of resistance, and counter-state mobilisation marking it as an arena through which competing agendas might be played out (Craig *et al.,* 1982). In the light of these contradictory claims for community, the role of *community development*, (understood as the practice of developing community projects and action through community organising and community-based education), becomes potentially a highly contested and political practice (Hogget *et al.,* 2007). The role of staff as community development practitioners and makers of governance will be addressed in the following chapter, and broader policy themes are addressed in Chapter 8.

This chapter focuses on the community, its people and their public lives. I call this the *institutional life of Hendinas*. Through a consideration of this and its constitutive elements, and internal dynamics the chapter explores those dimensions of community that are significant in partnership-making, and particularly what is involved in the accomplishment of community-led*ness*. The discussion is presented in six sections, opening with a consideration of what is meant by the institutional life of Hendinas, and the contributions it makes to the analytical project. Given the breadth of ethnographic material and the specificity of the analytical task, presentation of research data is inevitably selective and focuses on the

most relevant material. To this end, the second section opens with a consideration of the role of the community centre, a resource that sits at the heart of the institutional life of the community, providing an anchor point around which to explore further issues. The third section outlines two narratives that permeate community discourse. For the sake of analytical clarity, these are presented separately as *deserving*, and *greenness,* it will be seen that these are woven together through local understanding of the past and imagined futures. Section four focuses on the differences between two organisations, the community centre and *Renew*, as a means of drawing out the tensions within these narratives and exploring the means of their resolution; an essential task in the project of 'community-led partnership'. The divisions between public and private are addressed in the fifth section; it demonstrates that while these distinctions are conceptually useful, in everyday community life their enactment is highly interrelated and difficult to distinguish. These debates are brought together in the conclusion which reaffirms the ways in which 'community-led' as a required condition of partnership-making with the CF programme is secured.

6.1   The Institutional Life of Hendinas

In this thesis, I use the term *institutional life of Hendinas* to refer to and explore an *aspect* of community life, in preference to the ubiquitous but obfuscating *community*. It is used to refer to the public and collective life of the community, pointing to the interrelationship between groups and the individuals that make it up and the norms and practices that are shared or contested in the processes involved in creating a 'better' Hendinas. If communities are multifaceted phenomena (Cohen 1985; Day 2006; Mayo 2006; Lewis 2006; Blackshaw 2010) then it is their institutional or quasi-organisational dimensions that most often face and interact with public policy. After introducing the idea in this section, depth is added to the term through its ongoing use. It is acknowledged however that it is a problematic term and its usage does not fully eliminate the challenges it

seeks to address. However, it makes an analytical contribution by highlighting two key distinctive uses of 'community'.

Penny, a member of the Community Centre Committee drew out these two dimensions of community. Highlighting the first, she spoke for many when she said:

> ...everybody's friendly up here and if there's a crisis, you know there's people to turn to... it's a very close-knit community when it needs to be...

This comment points to familiar and popular understandings of community; it focuses on personal relationships, often between extended family groups, close neighbours, and friends, engaging in kinship-type interaction. The flows of interaction, norms of reciprocity and patterns of support, have long served as the focus of anthropologically informed studies of communities (Young and Willmott 1957; Rosser and Harris 1965; Frankenberg 1971 [1966]; Bell and Newby 1971). Many people in Hendinas discussed community in these terms, and judged it to be strong and close knit. This is acknowledged and taken at face value. While this aspect of community does not constitute the focus of inquiry, it is intrinsically interconnected with the institutional life of the community and is addressed in so far as it relevant for its analysis.

Describing her involvement in running the community centre, and the range of activities available, Penny commented how:

> We've got loads up here... we have discos, playscheme, youth club, what else do we do – er Taekwondo, Cheer Leading, and we do the cleaning, the general day to day opening and closing.

She went on to outline how she and other volunteers are 'up the centre every day bar Saturday' and they have 'classes five days a week'. These comments identify some of the many community groups and organisations

(see Appendix 5) that operate within Hendinas. It is this second dimension of community that the term 'institutional life' takes as its starting point: the interactions between local people, and local people and professions (both community based and beyond), directed towards what might loosely be called the collective project of 'making things better.'

Two issues need to be drawn out. First, there is an implicit taken-for-granted correlation in much social policy that the greater the number of community groups with high levels of associative ties, the stronger the community. This is most explicit in concepts like *capacity building* and *social capital.* Academic scholarship has been divided on the value of these ideas (Coleman1988; Fine 1999; Foley and Edwards1999; Putman 2000; Maloney *et al.,*: 2000; Harriss 2002; Skidmore *et al.*, 2006; Craig 2007), but the Communities First programme with its focus on groups and organisations in communities implicitly adopts this position (NAfW2001a; WAG 2002a, 2007). This assumption is not necessarily shared within this thesis; there is no claim affirming or disputing the assertion that *more* groups *necessarily* equate with a 'stronger institutional life' nor any normative 'good' value attributed to it. The issue is not the wellbeing or otherwise of the institutional life of Hendinas *per se*, but a concern to recognise and distinguish a relevant facet of community for analytical insight.

Second, within the CF policy, alongside its governance, citizenship and empowerment objectives there is a clear expectation that the programme is intended to penetrate and impact on individual private lives as a means of for example, decreasing unemployment and improving health and education outcomes. As such, the policy proceeds from a position that accepts that social conditions have an impact on individuals (although in what ways is much debated). This is an important point to hold onto for four reasons. First, it reiterates however conceptually useful the idea of a community's 'institutional life' may be, it cannot be separated from the private realm. Second, distinguishing these interconnected dimensions of community, demonstrates how reading community groups *as* community

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provides tangible points of entry and intervention in the relationship between policy and people living in localities. Third, it offers an account of why government policy is so keen to promote and support the development of certain types of community groups, especially those deemed able to contribute to the twin benefits of increasing personal capacity and enhanced civic engagement (Rose 1996; 1999; Ilcan and Basok 2004). And finally, it flags up another possible way of conceiving this debate in terms of the relationship between the private and public (Staeheli 2003; Newman and Clarke 2009; Jupp 2012, see below).

6.1.1 Public Policy and the institutional life of Hendinas

Accepting the Communities First programme as a policy instrument that aims to significantly shape and direct the institutional life of local communities, should not be conflated with actually securing these desired effects (Rhodes 2000; Rose and Miller 1992; Bevir 2005). It is necessary to hold onto the distinction between *shaping* and *directly structuring*; the former acknowledges the pressures for conformity and invites explorations of processes and dynamics, while acknowledging counter pressures. In contrast, the latter inherently leads to unhelpful totalizing conclusions. Thus, it is not being suggested that the policy has or can immutably *directly structure* the institutional life in Hendinas, as captured in the idea of '*manufactured* civil society', (emphasis added, Hodgson 2004) or implicit in calls for civil society to 'exit' government sponsored partnerships (Davies 2007). The fieldwork suggests a far more complex pattern of inter-relationships, with ever changing coalescing and diverging development dynamics.

At a conceptual level, by foregrounding the institutional life of a community a different way of investigating the implementation of public policy is opened. One of the common features in the work of both Hodgson (2004) and Davies (2007) is the position from which they view the involvement of 'community' and civil society. Both read this in terms of the given government policy (Sure Start is one of Hodgson's case studies and regional variants of Local Strategic Partnerships for Davies). Their

assessments of the value of partnerships for communities and citizens is made from *within* these policies. Or to express this another way, their appraisals are dyadic, considering the interplay of the specific policy and community involvement within it. Without wishing to diminish the considerable insights they make, their work by limiting the position from which they consider what constitutes community/civic benefits fails to consider how communities and their institutional agents utilise public policy concepts. To be more specific, they do not reflect on how partnership initiatives interact with other dynamics *within* communities, and to what effects. In contrast, while the current research is located within a single community, the idea of partnership is considered in its wider impacts, i.e., not just in terms of participation in a CF formal partnership.

While initially the research was designed to investigate partnership in a Communities First project operating within the wider programme, the fieldwork suggests the idea of partnership in practice is understood and utilised *laterally* within the community. The fact that the CF programme is mandated and largely shaped by government is no surprise. What is more interesting is that this policy interacts with other projects with different historical trajectories, diverse objectives, and varied rationales, and that these are played out on a number of levels by people taking on multiple and varied roles in numerous capacities. The contention here is that this constitutes an institutional dimension to community and takes us some way to understanding partnership-making in communities.

6.2   The Community and the Institutional Life of Hendinas

Hendinas is an active community, it has many community groups, with varied purposes, from the social and recreational (e.g. the Social Club) to policy-led groups (e.g. Sure Start). Some have a long local history, others are more recently established. External professional support is available to some, while many are self-run. It is neither possible nor useful to try and chart these groups in an audit-like fashion, Appendix 5 provides detail of

many initiatives supported by staff, but it remains inevitably partial. The approach adopted in this chapter is to start with the community centre, an important group in Hendinas in its own right, but also a group through which many other discussions also flow. In section 6.4, the community centre is considered alongside *Renew* as a means of drawing out analytical insight. Both are significant agents in the institutional life of Hendinas, in terms of the role they fulfil and the values they encapsulate. Both are infrastructural groups, supporting the foundations of community institutional life, and as such impact on the ethos and development of other groups. Further, individually and in their interactions with each other they encapsulate and rework the narratives of *deserving* and *greenness.* Time and history serve as symbolic resources and the two organisations exemplify critical dynamics at play within the institutional life of Hendinas as it goes about the business of 'making things better'.

6.2.1 The community centre

> I live for this building... I'll feel bad to see this building come down...

These words spoken by Molly, the Chairperson of Community Centre Committee, encapsulate something of the role it plays in the life of some people in Hendinas. The centre is vested with multiple and varied symbolism. (Cohen 1985; Yanow 1996, 2000). The building is at the geographical centre of the estate, and is spoken about as the centre of community life. At over 30 years old it resembled a rundown, 'tin can' (dated corrugated metal walls, darkly painted, with few windows). During the fieldwork, an initiative to build a new centre, led by Joanna, the CF Development Officer and Acting Coordinator, was reaching fruition, and work was due to start soon after the fieldwork ended. The building was the base for many regular activities and groups, including adult education, youth groups, play schemes and social events, it is also the main venue for one-off events organised by external agencies (e.g. consultation session, 'road shows' and meetings). It can thus be understood as a

community resource. Additionally as an organisation, the centre is a key *partner* in the development of community based initiatives, led by both local and outside agencies.

The centre is represented by and enacted through a group of women, formally a 'committee', known as the 'centre ladies.' Its formidable guardians, they serve as the managers of this resource, overseeing its use, maintenance, and financial viability. They are responsible for its day-to-day running, including 'setting it out', cleaning, maintaining supplies (tea, coffee, loo rolls), running 'the kitchen', and book keeping. Additionally, 'being on the committee' these volunteers run some of the activities, including bingo, discos and alongside paid staff, youth sessions. This work has gone on for many years and older members communicated a sense of resilience and deep commitment to it. A number of people talked about how this centre had been built through local efforts. For example, Molly the chair of the committee recalled:

> someone knocked at the door looking to get a centre... we started to hold street parties ... and bingo in each other's houses... we were raising about £100 a month... it went on for years.

This history is very significant to many of the women involved, and although legally owned by the local authority, the centre was demonstrably more than just a building; there was a strong sense of local ownership, unity, and community, engendering deep loyalty.

This was evident in the time invested in the centre, Penny and Bev, two of the 'centre ladies' outlined how they attend the centre six days a week. They gave detailed summaries of their daily routines, illustrating how the rhythm of their own lives and the community centre flowed together. Each day moved seamlessly between dropping children to school, opening and closing the centre, setting up, picking up children, running clubs, participating in events, shopping, attending meetings, and managing their domestic affairs. The women explained that despite having a rota, they

would often be in the centre at least 3 or 4 times each day, for both short and extended periods. And as Penny joked, '...put it this way, all our partners think that this is our first home.'

The continuous flow back and fore between personal chores to community centre duties is noteworthy. It displays the unity of the women's private and public lives, the high levels of personal investment they make, and the sense of purpose, worth, and pride they derive. 'Satisfaction' was frequently given in answer to questions about their motivation. Additionally, bonds of friendship and support between the women were evident. But from a public policy perspective, 'the centre' is a public resource and the physical and symbolic heart of the institutional life of Hendinas. While its intimate relationship with the 'centre ladies' brings benefits, (a well-managed resource) it also, as discussed below, causes difficulties. Further, as will be illustrated, the line between personal and private lives and public roles is permeable, raising questions about governance and accountability both locally and in respect to national policies (see 6.5).

6.2.2 The new centre

The 'new centre' carried much significance for those engaged in the institutional life of Hendinas. The need for it was undisputed as the existing one was run down, barely fit-for-purpose, and expensive to run. Dorothy, who sits on the community centre committee and serves as a director of *Renew*, explained why the responsibility had fallen to the community,

> ...the council, they have stopped building new centres, they haven't got the money, so if you can't patch up what you got – tough! So this is the only alternative that we had.

Local people reported that it had been talked about for years, but CF staff were credited with the project's recent accelerated progress. Although final funding was only secured as the fieldwork ended, architects drawings,

planning applications, scale models, and local consultations enabled it to be treated as 'happening'.

Legal ownership and development of the 'new centre' lay with *Renew*, the estate based development Trust, and this initiative had been one of the principal drivers for establishing *Renew*. Discussions about the 'new centre', engendered much excitement, and references to it were overwhelmingly positive. The sense of a better future was captured in often repeated phrases such as 'when we get the *new* centre we'll be able to...' and 'in the *new* centre it'll be better 'cos ...' The substance of these kinds of comments varied from the practical (more/better storage), service focused (more activities), operational (easier to run), and maintenance (things won't break down). But the overwhelming expression was one of optimism, associating the 'new centre' with a renewed sense of hope and a palpable sense of pending collective wellbeing. Penny pointed to this when she said of the 'new centre',

> Hendinas deserves something like that ... – tidy and decent.

One of the most significant aspects of the new centre was its *greenness* (i.e. environmentally-friendly credentials) and the way this had been embraced by local people. This was brought sharply to my attention by Penny soon after the start of fieldwork. Through a few early encounters, I quickly learnt that Penny was a woman with considerable presence; she was intelligent, assertive, and articulate, but also had a reputation for being loud and sometimes abrasive. Her relationship with the staff was robust; challenging but ultimately very supportive. I sensed her wariness of me but knew I needed to generate a positive relationship to support the research. So when we found ourselves the only two people in the community centre, I was keen to engage her in conversation. At that time, the latest designs for the new centre had been made available for consultation and intending to break the ice I asked her about them. I was completely overwhelmed by her response, which was mostly way beyond my grasp. She outlined in considerable detail and depth of understanding,

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how the centre was to be an 'eco build', with grey water harvesting, and photo-voltaic tiles, it was designed to capture light and require minimal heating. She talked about building materials, insulation and heat loss and told me they were aspiring to BREEAM [5] building standards. She explained how these features were essential to the design, making it both more attractive to potential funders and more manageable and sustainable for the community.

It is unsurprising that the 'new centre' should serve as the receptacle of community hopes, and aspirations, encapsulating its symbolic future. Two narrative themes run through this discussion of the centre that are prevalent across the projects developing in Hendinas. The first spoke of the community as *deserving* and the second is a set of ideas associated with *greenness and sustainability.* Both will be explored, however making sense of these narratives requires understanding symbolically how the past is shaping the future or more particularly local people's understanding of their own history and how they came to be where they are. This is explored through the narratives of *then*, *now* and what *will be*.

6.3   Time and Change: 'then'

The notion of time emerged as significant in making sense of the institutional life of Hendinas. Historicism and a focus on understanding the 'constellation of forces' (Isin 1997:116), underpins the approach rather than concerns for historical accuracy or path-dependency. Local narratives of the past and their impact on understanding future tasks stand as significant dynamics in that constellation. Perhaps because of the momentous history of South Wales from its rapid industrialisation to its dramatic hyper-deindustrialisation, culture, history and the passage of time resonate loudly in discussions of contemporary Wales (see Chapter 2;

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[5] This is an international environmental assessment method for rating the ecological standard of buildings; BREEAM standards are challenging and are considered by many as the ultimate in 'green credentials', see http://www.breeam.org

Morgan *et al.*, 1999; Adamson 2006; Walkerdine 2010). Certainly, this was the case in Hendinas, shaping understandings of what needed to be done and offering models of future action.

6.3.1 'Then'

The idea of Hendinas being *deserving* was frequently articulated and initially accepted unquestioningly but over time I began to ask 'what does deserving mean?' Being *deserving* was intrinsically linked to understanding narratives of Hendinas in a time that was 'then', and a future, that 'will be', bridged by an indeterminate 'now'. The idea of 'then' emerged in the research at two levels, the first reflects internal experiences while the second connects Hendinas to its wider social, economical and political contexts. This section will address three internal narratives of 'then' that emerged through the fieldwork. In the first, people spoke about community spirit being stronger in earlier times. Molly reflected, 'When we had nothing, people were closer'. This message was communicated in references to the take-up of activities and the involvement they engendered. Dorothy expresses this in respect to the social club:

> it's nothing like it used to be, it used to be open every day, every night, my husband and I used to go to Bingo there on a Thursday night and if you weren't there by half past six, you wouldn't have a seat.

The second narrative of Hendinas was as a 'bad place', although it was unclear whether this ran sequentially or concurrently with the community spirit one. Dorothy explained 'it wasn't a nice place to be... it was a dumping ground ... it was rough, oh dear god, it *was* rough!' This view was shared by many people. One locally based professional reflected,

> This area had a reputation as a dumping ground ... Hendinas ... used to be called ... in the 60s, 'dodge city', because you dodge the rent man, dodge the milkman, and dodge the tax ... it had a *terrible* reputation.

While the 'dumping ground' metaphor has been extensively applied to 'deprived' areas, it is none-the-less interesting in this context highlighting a sense of enforced passivity on the part of 'the community' and a powerful 'they', with power to act without regard to the effects. This serves as an important point of departure to understandings of 'now' and the future.

A third narrative of the more recent past was tied up with the Communities First project. A story frequently told was that of the ineptitude of earlier project staff contrasted with the extensive praise for the current coordinator and staff team. Alun, a local resident and Director of *Renew* said 'we had a Community First here, but they didn't do nothing!' and Dorothy commented 'the first staff – they never moved out of the office!' The consistency of this narrative cannot be overstated, and while the role of staff is addressed in the next chapter, its significance here lies in how bringing the 'community together' is attributed to staff, and in its demarcation of the parameters of 'now'.

6.3.2 *Deserving Hendinas: the past and imperatives for change*

These considerations of 'then' have not yet addressed how the *deserving* emerges as a meaningful narrative with the power to shape action. A move in focus to understandings of 'then' in wider historical contexts assists in this task. As Bevir (2005; 2010) has argued, shared historical traditions are integral elements of situated agency which, while not determining action, are resources from which it is made. It is possible to identify three historical strands of *deserving* that together influence the dynamics of change, improvement, and future aspirations.

The first is the most implicit. Literature highlights how it is embedded in the cultural subconscious of South Wales and its people. Deserving in this

sense refers to the hardships of the industrial past, the harsh working conditions, overcrowding, and challenging employment conditions experienced by communities across South Wales (Rees 1985:399). It is exemplified in the struggles to secure workers rights through collective organising and action (Francis and Smith 1980). Within Hendinas, it resonated in the stories people told about the hardships faced by their grand and great grandparents who came to the area as economic migrants.

The second strand of *deserving* is more specific and explicit. The impact of the 1984-85 miners' strike and the role of Margaret Thatcher cannot be escaped. Any discussions that invited reflection of recent history invariably referred to 'the strike'. Bitterness towards both Thatcher as an individual and the policies of her administrations had not lessened, and this history continues to be understood as a direct assault on the miners, and a callous disregard for its effects on local communities. A professional with local roots working on the estate ended our interview with an emotive and emphatic statement that 'Thatcher *destroyed* the valleys'. He elaborated thus:

> there are very few people in this world who I detest and she is one of them, I can handle Tebbit, only just, - John Major, William Hague, Heath, don't like them, that's beside the point, but Mrs Thatcher- I've got a 50 pound note in my pocket, which I call 'Thatcher's 50', I'm going to get drunk when she dies, I know it's terrible and small minded but... I know some very sensible people who hate her, some very sensible people who would not normally say they hate people, I don't know if you know this, many of the mines she shut, she had concrete thrown down there, down the shaft so that they'd never be able to open – oh she was *horrible*!' (emphasis original).

The analytical point here is not a settling of history (see Francis 2009), but a recognition of the momentous and lasting effects, that leave in their wake a collective sense of enforced bereavement and devastation

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(Walkerdine 2010 *cf.* steel making communities). A condition that impacts on understandings of community action.

A third aspect of *deserving* was articulated in the controversy emerging about the levels of investment and development in Hendinas. Local initiatives had been successful in drawing in partners and funding, and these were widely reported in the media. The local councillor was both admired and admonished for his trumpeting of these successes in 'the council', resulting in accusations of favouritism. A local authority officer expressed frustrations during an interview, articulating a belief that the estate was getting *more* than its fair share. Such criticisms referred to resources and access to senior officials in the local authority and other agencies (see Chapter 8). One local councillor told me that other elected members were 'fed up' with hearing about Hendinas. Locally this opinion was not shared and concerns were expressed that the estate might be refused further investment. Local understandings were presented as 'fighting our corner', and 'getting back to what we should have been' because of earlier prolonged underinvestment. Elin, echoed this sentiment:

> Hendinas has been underinvested in for bloody years... when [other] councillors are saying 'look at bloody Hendinas' (angrily expressed), when in fact it's a very under invested estate when I think about some of the other estates*.*

The narratives of Hendinas as *deserving*, operated at a number of levels. It could be seen as securing what was 'due' to them in terms of 'catching up' with other local areas. Additionally, it can be read as a vindication and retribution for past industrial hardships and political wrongs. In terms of local action, being *deserving* provided a rationale and inspirational resource for action, serving as both a call-to-arms and a bargaining tool with which to debate and negotiate developments with external agencies. Together these form one of the key underpinning elements of partnership-making in Hendinas.

6.3.3. Action as the parameters of 'now'

'Now' was widely spoken about as a time of transition, discussed imprecisely as spanning recent times and stretching to an immediate almost tangible future. Ill-defined as it is, action, change and improvement are its common threads, weaving together the different initiatives and projects. Alun, highlights the contribution of individuals to 'now', explaining:

> it's an active community, last year we had ..., if I remember, we had 35,000 volunteer hours, which is excellent.

While Owen points to the importance of social cohesion and 'working together'

> since Elin has been in post I feel she has brought the community together and that everybody is working together for the good of the community which I don't think was happening very much until Elin arrived.

Geoff, a *Renew* Director stressed the importance of targeted action as a dimension of working together, and reflected on the value of individuals, mutual respect, and collective responsibility:

> The reason we've got funding the way we have is that we go and ask for it, we put a case forward. We've got a marvellous team supporting Communities First and you just, you know - *sell yourself*. We're the best thing since sliced bread here!!! (laughs) ... (and then quietly and reflectively) ... We weren't, we weren't

> Christala: What turned it around?

> Er... commitment from the groups on the estate... dedication from a lot of good individuals on the estate ... (lists them) ... I think everybody fetches their own unique brand to the group, Owen ... can fetch the children's services side... Janet ... has a vast knowledge as Treasurer, Sally works with the youngsters in the two schools, ... Alun is just um um .. . 'just go out and get' you know? And you need these people. I think what I get, we all got our own mind, we all - in the meetings

we have, we argue and that's how it should be, we've all got difference of opinion, but at the end of the meeting, it's a collective decision that goes forward.

Significantly, 'now' was identified primarily in material and tangible terms, and evidenced in 'things happening.' Frequently cited examples include, crime reduction initiatives, the schools working together, the church being involved in wider community projects, the involvement of Communities in Action and their projects, youth projects, play schemes and holiday projects, drama groups, and celebratory events like a carnival, and Christmas lantern parade ... the list is long and does not do justice to the range of projects nor the complex work that goes into developing and facilitating action. But critically, 'now' as a time when things happen, was attributed by many to the commitment and tenacity of the staff group, Penny summed this up:

> They carry everything forward, they get an idea in their head, and they carry everything out.

6.3.4 Changing 'now' and making the future

A common aspect of 'now' draws together a large number of projects targeted at physical regeneration and environmental improvements. Critically these are also the foundation of what 'will be.' During an interview Elin, explained that one of her priorities was 'to create a strong sense of place, a strong sense of identity ...'. Explaining:

> people wanna *see* and *feel* change and I think where you live and your sense of place and identity is really important ... it lifts you ... there's something about people having a visual impact on their own place and being able to *see* the difference *they* can make (emphasis original).

Here Elin is making a direct link between place, action, change, and well-being. She promoted initiatives that combined development work, the use of volunteers, time credits and fundraising to materially improve the environment of the estate. Local people were encouraged to become

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directly involved, to *see* and *feel* the difference *they* can make. Examples of work include the development of a small adventure play area on unused land, a woodland walk through the heart of the estate, construction and installation of benches and picnic tables and murals on bus shelters and hitherto drab walls. These initiatives built up over time, grew in scale and ambition, and drew in more diverse and greater numbers of people. Once an area was improved physically, local projects developed to make use of it (e.g. sculpture projects in the woodland walkway). Disengaged groups were deliberately targeted as agents of improvement (e.g. young people built benches which remained largely free of vandalism). These physical improvements generated interest and desire for what 'will be' and a set of assumptions about local people's capacity to shape it.

6.3.5 *Greenness and sustainability: Hendinas is the future*

If *deserving* provides a common theme in the narratives of the past, then *greenness and sustainability* serve as the rallying call of that which 'will be.' The intimate relationship between place as a location of work, kinship and community in 'traditional' industrial communities, is well recorded (Francis and Smith 1980) and contemporary meanings of 'sustainable' with its associated notions of 'low carbon impact', 'green' and 'renewable' would not at first sight appear consistent with it. Thus, the prevalence and frequency of the term 'sustainable' was noteworthy. Moreover, closer reading of data shows how the idea of sustainability was often used alongside talk of being *deserving* and was being woven into and used to accelerate work on the estate at numerous levels and in mutually supportive, enhancing, but complex ways. For example, sustainability was cited in work to improve the physical environment, working relationships, funding priorities, recycling, energy generation, and project and group developments. Additionally, its symbolic associations with hope and optimism are evident and serve as an anchor point around which narratives of Hendinas as a place transformed and 'ahead of the game' can flourish. Reference has already been made to various initiatives that evidence this green sustainable narrative (the 'new centre', environmental

improvements) further grounds on which these claims are made will be explored here.

The social housing on Hendinas had been recently transferred from local authority ownership to a not-for-profit social landlord. Driven by new investment opportunities and the promotion of national quality standards in housing (WAG 2008b), a programme of significant upgrading had begun. The work in Hendinas involved electrical re-wiring and the fitting of new kitchens, cladding buildings in energy efficient materials, re-roofing and new insulation. In due course solar panels were to be fitted to homes with suitably facing roofs generating daytime electricity for tenants, and feeding the National Grid. The sheer scale of these activities cannot be overstated and for a time the estate was a sea of white vans, scaffolding, and workmen. A number of people when discussing the work of the CF project credited the actioning of these improvements to estate based CF staff. While this did not appear to be the case (except in so far as they advocated for the estate and may therefore have pushed it up the priority list) it was an impression that was strongly held by some people. It contributed greatly to the narrative of *greenness*, and to two additional complementary ideas. First, that it was CF staff that were making the difference adding to their kudos, respect and trust, and second that change and improvement, was 'really happening'.

Together these tangible projects happening 'now', offered major markers around which the contours of the future 'will be' shaped. But there were others in varying stages of development. Some appeared speculative, for example the development of an outside 'public space' while others were generating more action. One of these was the proposal for a wind turbine above the estate. This ambitious project was still in its embryonic stages, but sought to halt the expansion of mineral extraction in favour of a community wind turbine. This would provide a source of community income estimated at £100,000 per annum for at least 25 years. It was promoted because it would 'make the community sustainable' with generated income directed to running the community centre and other

community projects. However, the proposal required jumping a number of major hurdles; the local authority amending a pre-agreed Land Development Plan; convincing the mineral company to give up voluntarily their rights to expand; securing alternative planning permission, and not least raising the necessary funds. Each of these represents a huge challenge, collectively they conspire to create a potentially overwhelming impasse. Unfazed however, *Renew* supported by CF staff were building an alternative case. They forged relationships with health professionals and academic institutions and set about gathering evidence about the impacts of mineral extraction on both the buildings and people in the community. Health data highlighted high levels of respiratory problems in the area, so they commissioned a year-long project to test, air quality correlated against blasting and quarrying activities. Additionally, they began to investigate possible connections between the use of explosives and damage repeatedly suffered by a cluster of houses on the estate (e.g. windows blown in, door frames coming loose from their fixings). Given national priorities for health improvement and housing investment, and the poor state of both in Hendinas (see Table 1), this may prove a shrewd, albeit long-term strategy to attract additional investment.

Talk about *sustainability* is not of course the same as an initiative actually *being* sustainable and local people, despite considerable enthusiasm seemed to recognise this distinction. Within the research the conceptual significance of *sustainability* and *greenness* lies in the values and beliefs it encapsulates, and the way it bridges things 'happening now' and aspirations for what 'will be'. But this is not a holistic unified project; indeed while the 'new centre' for example garnered general approval (with varied caveats) the situation with the wind turbine was less clear. At a public meeting to discuss the issue some people were significantly more vociferously *anti*-mineral extraction rather than *pro*-wind turbine. Never-the-less it is the existence of an animated debate about 'the future' located in an appreciation of the past that is noteworthy not necessarily any consensus about it (Calhoun1983; Bevir 2005). It demonstrates an optimism that communicates *the possibility of a future*, and asserts a belief

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in the capacity and power of local people to shape it. It confidently declares that externally prescribed futures can and will be challenged and demonstrates both community resilience and a sense of collective self-worth that warrants investment 'now'. This is significant because it affirms local community action as part of a wider movement of change and progress, highlighting action as 'worth it', contributing to an accumulatively improving situation rather than dissipated in a flux of ineffectiveness. This is essential to the development of both the narrative and enactment of partnership. Furthermore, the greenness of initiatives such as the 'new centre' were celebrated for their potential to '*really* put Hendinas on the map', confirming not only that Hendinas has a future, but it represents *the* future. Thus, locally Hendinas is projecting a narrative of itself as a particular kind of place, free from negative stereotypes and in control of its future. There is a sense in which local people are revelling in future glory because finally Hendinas is getting what it *deserves*, providing a link between a wronged past and its vital future. This is a powerful narrative of local success, however it raises challenging public policy issues, and these are addressed in Chapter 8.

6.4 Community Work and Relationships: The Private Making of Public

Thus far, Hendinas has been discussed as if it were conceptually whole, whilst theoretically this may be useful it does not reflect the complex schisms and allegiances *within* communities (Cohen 1985). Drawing once again on the distinction between the 'community' and the 'institutional life of Hendinas', it is possible to recognise that those who act in the latter are a small proportion of the former. Thus, *some* people are involved *sometimes* in the institutional life of Hendinas. In contrast to mainstream participatory theory (Arnstein 1969; Hart 1992), with its normative imperative to maximise the numbers of participants and extent of involvement in participation, this thesis takes at face value the existence of these two categories, without any call to extend, expand or increase involvement. (This does not equate with saying participation does not

matter or should not be supported). However, the focus here is a problematisation of the conception of participation as a *single institutional formation*, i.e. participation in *a something,* by people who are *either* active *or* not. The research suggests that people involved in the institutional life of Hendinas live, conceptually much messier lives straddling theoretically constructed boundaries. For example, divisions between institutionally orientated activities such as 'being involved' or running a group and 'private' activities such as looking after children, or learning a skill, is much more analytically indistinct than social theory might have us believe (Buckingham *et al.,* 2006; Jupp 2010). Moreover, involvement in the institutional life of the community is not a single unified public activity guided by rational rules or consistent principles, on the contrary engagement in the public life of the community is a highly personal and emotive experience (Hoggett *et al.,*2006; Jupp 2008).

The assertion here is that patterns of involvement in the institutional life of the community criss-cross categorical boundaries, moving continually from the private to the public, and back again, accepting also that action can be simultaneously both personal and public (Newman 2012b). Thus while abstract categories maybe useful in helping to think about and explain processes, this should not be confused with any representation of 'reality'. Accepting these limitations the conceptual distinction has the advantage of facilitating thinking about the nature of action, capacity, motivations, and constraints. These themes are explored in this rest of this chapter, starting in this section with a consideration of the role of different groups that make up much of the institutional life of Hendinas and the shifting relationships that constitute and are constituted within it.

Making community happen takes work. If it involves running groups, managing venues and negotiating projects, funding, and resources, then someone has to do this work. Hendinas, like most communities has its share of cliques and cleavages. 'Running groups', being 'in charge' and sitting 'on the board' all bring status, power and control, and inevitably generate both admirers and adversaries in ever shifting alignments.

However, there are some marked differences in the type of work undertaken by different groups in Hendinas. Consideration will be given to the work carried out by the community centre ladies in contrast to that undertaken by *Renew*. Highlighting the different dynamics *within* the community (Cohen 1985), it addresses the complex sensitivities involved in belonging, and what might be at stake in this process. This is a critical debate in the context of public policy that evokes a unified community called upon to exercise 'leadership,' as directed in 'community-led partnerships'. The research suggests that a variety of strategies are deployed to create this unity.

6.4.1 *'Cleaning shit' and speaking 'tidy'; divisions and bridging*

As guardians of the community centre the 'centre ladies' are pivotal in the institutional life of Hendinas. Their work is practical, labour intensive and time consuming. Unsurprisingly, at different times other community members, locally based staff and external professionals expressed both admiration for their tenacity and hard work but also concerns that they may sometimes be a barrier to new developments and the involvement of a wider range of people. Thus while the building of the 'new centre' under the auspices of *Renew* was generally welcomed, it also brought major changes in the dynamics of institutional life, disrupting perceptions of 'ownership' and challenging established relationships. For the 'centre ladies' it engendered mixed emotions; while they actively supported the development and had committed many hours to discussing, planning and working on it they also communicated ambivalence and uncertainty about the future and their role in it. While eagerly anticipating the new, they lamented the passing of the old.

Contained within this ambivalence was a tangled mix of emotions around ownership, belonging, loss, control, and capacity. This came out during the interview with Penny and Bev. Asked about the future Penny commented:

> To be truthful, we're all only doing it until the new centre starts

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This was notable as the comment did not align with earlier accounts in which she had expressed excitement and a positive orientation. The tone of the interview changed, and Penny was clearly uncomfortable, but there was more she wanted to say. Diffident and unsure, she continued in a stilted fashion for some time, starting sentences, hesitating and then giving up, eventually with difficult to disguise emotion these words burst out:

> Because ... to be honest there's too much *crap* going on! ... if something goes on, it's always *us* that gets it in the neck!

> Christala: What do you get in the neck?

> Right okay, yeah, - children round the estate drinking alcohol right?- we get it then, as in we gotta go outside and clean up all their glass, we get the abuse off the children... and sometimes we have felt like baby sitters .... there's one or two (parents) who come to the door and its 'taaa rraa' (bye) (ie 'dump' their children)

> Christala: So it's the wider community crapping on you? So what's the difference gonna be with the new centre, 'cos you get that now?

> (after more hesitation, and many false starts)

> Everybody in that new centre by the sounds of it, is gonna be paid, whereas we don't get a penny in here... [just] a cup of tea or coffee ...
> Because they'll be people there, like the manager and that, and I suppose it'll be like... it's supposed to be *our* centre, but if *they're* getting paid and we're working *under* them, and we're doing the same job as them, and they're *shit* jobs! – Look we do the toilets we do - you know, we end up with shit on them walls and we do them, but why should we do that in a building when they'll get paid for it?' (emphasis original)

There is much contained in this extract. First Penny highlights the role of the centre in relation to the local community, 'taking the crap' from children, young people and parents; the thanklessness of community action is an oft repeated complaint in many community groups, but this is

not Penny's substantive issue. She turns next to the issue of payment, which is coupled with perceived loss of ownership and peppered with concerns about power; the tensions are apparent in the use of the terms 'it's supposed to be *our* centre', 'they're getting paid' and the challenge of working 'under' somebody. Cleaning 'shit' is okay, because 'every one' (of the 'centre ladies') does it and doing so confers on them a collective badge of ownership among *equals.* It is on these grounds that they understand themselves as legitimately claiming the right to 'run' the centre, but undertaking the same task 'under' somebody would undermine ownership, community standing, legitimacy, and self-respect. But it is still apparent that there are issues Penny is struggling to reconcile.

A little while later when asked if she would 'carry on' if funds were secured for the new centre's construction but not salaries, Penny falters and returns to the issue of ownership:

> It will be down to Hendinas *Renew* to sort that out
>
> Christala: Are you part of *Renew*?
>
> They have been asking me... [but] they have meetings like, and it's at times I'm working here [at the centre], and it's like I ain't giving this up to go to a meeting...
> ... I don't mind the meetings, but they're having loads of them at the moment and I can't speak tidy and properly and it's too formal, where as I like it informal... they know what, and how, and who to speak to,...
>
> Christala :   So you've got confidence in *Renew*?
>
> Yeah, 'cos they've all got the knowledge, they really have – they're all working together, they all know what they're doing and yeah I got loads of confidence in them.

There are a number of observations to be made about this exchange. First in distancing herself and the 'centre ladies' from the task of 'sorting out' a

potential problem, Penny is *dis*owning the problem and responsibility for it, on the grounds that the 'new' centre 'belongs' to *Renew*. Second, there appears to be a dilemma of belonging and Penny seems to suggest that it is possible only to really belong to *either* the (old) community centre *or Renew*. Here it is possible to see how the issues raised resonate, reinforce and revise existing discourses, so that the third point problematises the space between the 'old' and 'new' Hendinas, and alerts us to the transitional challenges between the two. Furthermore, despite the attraction of the new green future, Penny was also flagging up concerns about what might be lost and the value of those things. Finally, the reference to the *Renew* meetings in which the Board members speak 'tidy' and meetings are 'formal', signals both another way of doing community, and possibly another type of community altogether. Together these comments suggest an imagined future, desired but also feared because the skills and capacities so expertly demonstrated by the 'centre ladies', and most unsettling of all, they themselves, may not have, or be able to find, a place.

6.4.2 Renew

Geoff who was introduced above, spoke about the quality and skilled nature of those involved in *Renew*, their positive working relationships, and how they were leading the transformation of the estate. The Board of *Renew* was made up of many multi-role individuals, people who held a range of additional voluntary and paid posts, including a local authority councillor, a primary school head, a worker with AiC, and a community councillor. A relatively new organisation, *Renew* had been set up initially to take forward the development of the 'new centre', and was responsible for the wind turbine project. Recently it had taken on the running of two community mini-buses from a defunct community group. During the fieldwork, it became the host agency for the Communities First project, following the withdrawal of another voluntary sector organisation. In this role, *Renew* became the direct line managers of CF staff, budgets and its strategic direction. Together these projects mark it out as undertaking a

very particular type of work. It was very much an organisation of 'now', at the forefront of shaping what Hendinas 'will be.' Alun described the range of organisational training that Board members were undertaking to fulfil the CF hosting role, including Health and Safety, legal issues in the transfer of staff, and employment law. In meetings, I witnessed complex debates about these internal organisational issues as well as project discussions around the quarry/ wind turbine, the running of minibuses and the funding of the 'new' community centre.

Penny talked of her reluctance to get involved with *Renew* because 'it's formal'. My experience of these meetings was not that these were anymore formal than the ones held by the 'centre ladies' (indeed both could be described as somewhat unstructured and chaotic), but they were certainly more complex. Discussions made frequent reference to numerous agencies outside of the estate, and to people with titles like 'Director' or 'Head'. Actions discussed included 'calling N', convening or attending 'meetings', making 'presentations', examining 'research', writing 'funding bids' and making 'proposals'. The organisational culture was quite different to that of the 'old' centre. Alun for example explained how he had agreed to take on responsibility for Health and Safety, saying its 'a new thing to me, that's just been put onto me and I've got to go for training', going onto explain how this specialist training was being provided by external agencies. Asked how he felt about these developments and his Director's role, he responded:

> Comfortable, no problem at all, I'm looking forward to it (the training), I don't know it, I haven't been involved in that type of thing before, but I'm looking forward to it.

It is apparent that there are considerable differences between the two groups in their willingness to take on new challenges and their approach to learning. The 'centre ladies' are most comfortable operating on the basis of experiential tacit knowledge, while *Renew* Directors are unfazed by operating in the realm of explicit knowledge and formal learning.

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Owen, while expressing some regret at the division between these two groups, was also clear that it was *Renew,* which represented the way forward, and that it was the 'centre ladies' that should be changing how they work. He observed that:

> there is a reluctance from the ladies in the community centre to become involved on the official side of it. They love doing the dirty bits, the washing up, the nitty gritty, but it's very hard to get them involved on a higher level

It is worth considering this a little further. Owen attributed this 'reluctance' to a 'lack of confidence'. Undoubtedly, confidence will have played a role in the reticence of the women to get involved. Molly, the chair of the community centre committee, when reflecting on *Renew* was more specific. She explained she felt out of her depth, and commented 'it's way over my head' and a little later she added 'I wish I'd had more education'. She clearly felt that she did not have the necessary knowledge or skills to take on a more formal role and this perception (valid or mistaken) may have applied to a number of the women. In contrast, Penny was demonstrably capable of handling complex issues, she was a passionate advocate of the new 'green' centre and its 'green' credentials, and she intuitively understood the work of both project and AiC. On a number of occasions, I witnessed her using this to 'wind up' the workers, confronting and challenging them and playing them (to great effect) at their own game. Why then was she so reticent to bridge the gap between these two organisations and why does it matter?

6.4.3 Belonging

A return to the issue of belonging, provides a starting point to unpicking these questions. It is useful to ask, 'belong to what?' It was noted above that Penny had expressed an implicit understanding that she could belong *either* to the centre *or Renew.* A number of observations are relevant here,

the first addresses the issue of gender, the 'centre ladies' are all women, as self evident as this is, it is noteworthy. In contrast, the Board of *Renew* is much more gender balanced. The majority of the people active in the institutional life of Hendinas were women, and there was a great diversity in the nature of their involvement, from very informal to formal and responsible positions. Fewer men were involved but were more prominently represented in formal positions, of which Director of *Renew* (also the CF Steering Group) was a prime example. Put simplistically, the pattern in Hendinas reflects that of many other communities, in which women 'do in' and men 'speak for' the community (Hogget 1997:15).

The 'centre ladies' drawing on tacit knowledge, and traditional feminine roles, clearly felt 'at home' in the relatively domesticated arena of the community centre, as one commented, 'it's my second home'. It was evident and immediate to see the parallels between running the centre and running a home. The women were 'centre proud', claiming ownership of the physical space, and its uses. They 'cared for' the centre users, and expressed exasperation at what they understood to be young people's lack of respect for the centre and its 'ground rules'. While the 'centre ladies' may form a formidable and virtually impenetrable clique, those *within* it share an intense network of friendship and support. Over many years, they have invested greatly in the centre both individually and collectively, keeping it going throughout. In the 'old' order the 'centre ladies' had their 'place' and a recognised role for which they had the necessary skills, capacity and knowledge.

Extended debates about women's work and gender roles are beyond this current project, but within the study there was a sense in which the 'centre ladies' were barely suppressing fears that the domain over which they had considerable control would be lost. It is impossible to know the extent of these fears, but undoubtedly, there were real risks for this tight knit group of women, who drew much of their identity and worth from being a 'centre lady.' Moreover, acknowledging the broader social context in which the value of domestic work is low, poverty based research (Oxfam 2009,

2011) demonstrates that where families have more limited resources, the achievement of domestic tasks is proportionally a significantly greater burden. In this context, the scale of achievement secured by the women managing the centre, who run their own homes and their shared community centre 'home' is considerable. Thus, it is unsurprising that they feel unsure and insecure about their future role, and this goes some way to account for the reluctance of an individual like Penny, however competent and able, to break the bonds of loyalty and friendship, and step into an unfamiliar role.

6.4.4 Bridging the Gap: the accomplishment of a whole Hendinas

Bridging the gap between the centre and *Renew* is a critical task, because at least from the outside looking in, the 'community' needs to present to all intents and purposes as a 'whole'(Cohen 1985). The notion of 'community-led' proceeds as if 'the community' is a single entity and external 'partners' require it to be so in order to enter into partnership and report back through their planning and accountability systems. It was clear from the way external agencies interacted in formal meetings within Hendinas that they believed this task to have been satisfactorily achieved. Interview transcripts and ethnographic records highlighted at least three processes at play in securing this unity.

The first involved a key individual. Dorothy was analytically a perplexing character in the fieldwork; she was involved in numerous groups, she also had a long history of party political involvement. However, there was something about the quality of the interaction between her and local activists that seemed counter-intuitive. Despite her extensive involvement, she did not appear to be central in any networks or groups, and when other individuals talked about their colleagues, it was noticeable that she was infrequently mentioned, if at all. This gave the impression that she was a kind of 'honorary' member of the community centre committee, the CF Steering group, and a director of *Renew*. However, it became apparent

that Dorothy held a pivotal role in the project of creating a unified community even while, and possibly, because her position was marginal.

It was not initially clear why Dorothy was marginal, or more accurately marginal *enough.* For example, although she was an officer of the community centre committee, she was not a 'centre lady'; other members communicated initially through innuendo and euphemisms, that she did meet their expectations. Her 'failings' appeared to be her unwillingness to *always* put the centre first. Thus for example, the 'centre ladies' complained about her refusal to make drinks, when she was in the centre as a member of another group, and they felt she did not share enough of the necessary day-to-day work of the centre. As a Director of *Renew*, Dorothy did not have a major role, although clearly participating in the training, and an advocate of change, she was not a driving force in the group. It was Molly who highlighted Dorothy's pivotal role; she explained that the 'centre ladies' had wanted Dorothy to be involved on the centre committee because of her Community Council role, and that they had then 'put her onto *Renew* to speak for us'. While Molly's disappointment in Dorothy was clear, analytically it is possible to see that by not quite belonging to any one group, and inadvertently 'failing' to meet the expectations of each, Dorothy is able to straddle many.

Dorothy was nominated to attend *Renew* meetings on behalf of the centre, and went on to become one of the Directors, thus to all intents and purposes formal representation of the centre is secured in *Renew.* However, Dorothy is not really a 'centre lady', but was invited to join because of her role on the Community Council. She is in effect a 'strategic stooge', instrumental in the creation, of a strategically unified alliance of key groups facilitating the creation of a holistic Hendinas. However, internally there are still gaps to be bridged, and to some extent Dorothy's own orientation serves as a bridge. By belonging, at least nominally to the community centre, and fulfilling in part, the domestic orientated requirements of that group, Dorothy belongs to the 'old' Hendinas. Through her involvement in *Renew* and her personal interest in taking up

new learning opportunities and training, Dorothy has a foot in the future and as such serves as a metaphorical perforated line, uniting and separating different key groups within the community, and the old and new emerging Hendinas.

The second way in which a unified sense of Hendinas is created is procedural. I attended a number of meetings which appeared at first sight to be disorganised and unstructured. One particularly significant meeting was of the Renew Board held in the centre, to enable the 'centre ladies' to attend. Coincidentally, it was scheduled to follow a centre committee meeting that I had also attended. Although this first meeting was unremarkable in itself, the 'centre ladies' had been positive towards me and the research. As the second meeting began to take shape around a long table, three distinct groups formed sequentially along its length, first Directors of *Renew* at one end, followed by CF staff and then the 'centre ladies'. I tried to move to the physical outskirts of the meeting, beyond the centre ladies, but Molly grabbed me and sat me down next to her, *between* the CF staff and the rest of the centre ladies. Having been 'accepted' in the earlier meeting, I was being physically enlisted as a buffer. As the meeting proceeded, the 'centre ladies', listened and made frequent contributions to the discussions but throughout Molly seemed to hide behind me, asking questions, and making comments directly to me, and occasional coming out from cover to make a public contribution.

This meeting demonstrates two ways in which *Renew* and the community centre create a unified Hendinas, first the very simple one of having meetings together. This by-passes the 'centre ladies' reluctance to be formally involved with *Renew*, but facilitates communication and joint working, as Molly said, 'I like to know what's going on'; this keeps the 'ladies' involved. It also ensures that they are not solely dependent on their formal link, as manifested in Dorothy, for communication. Second, Molly's use of me, directs attention to power relations and how these are mediated. The seating arrangements from Directors, to staff and then 'centre ladies' seems to suggest some insight into group dynamics. For

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example, it is possible to note the 'old' was situated far as possible from 'the future.' Sat between CF staff and the centre ladies I was enlisted by the latter on their behalf. The buffer/mediator role to which I was enrolled is more usually fulfilled by CF staff. Indeed, Joanna had described her role as 'translator' mediating between different groups in the process of creating a whole Hendinas. Thus, what appeared to be a somewhat chaotic meeting was in practice an accomplished exercise in meeting multiple agendas, mediating the challenges of both the official / formal world *and* more informal needs of the 'centre ladies'. This mediation is critical for the accomplishment of 'community-led*ness.*'

6.5 Public Policy in a Community Context: Exploring the Public and Private

The research raised a number of conceptual quandaries, and areas of dissonance between on the one hand governance theory and public policy, and on the other empirical investigation of partnership-making. Many of these challenges arise from a difficult to conceptualise relationship between community-led partnership as public policy enactment and community based action, variously involving individuals acting on their own behalf or on behalf of a *collective good* that is also very personal and close to home (both physically and metaphorically). In this situation the distinctions between public, personal and private become difficult to distinguish, as illustrated in the foregoing discussion. The problematic nature of these categorisations is not new and the issues have been recently subject to renewed and reworked academic interest (Barnes and Prior 2009; Clarke 2010; Mahony *et al.*, 2010; Newman 2012a). Staeheli (1996) draws out the permeability of the public, private and personal, through an analysis of cases which overtly juxtaposition private actions in public arenas (gay 'kiss-ins'), and private (home) based political organising. This brings to the fore the political nature of private practices, and the personal dimensions of political (public) organising. She demonstrates that far from being fixed categories, notions of public and private are better understood as 'shifting constructions' (*ibid.*:605).

Using these insights to think about the research, a number of issues emerged during analytical iterations. The fieldwork, as implicit in the discussion thus far provides many examples of the 'shifting constructions' of the public and private spheres, However, Staeheli's (1996) work proceeds from a presentation of examples that accept these domains as distinct, and her quandary arises from their collision as acts of overt political provocation. Practice in Hendinas presents a much more diffuse and perplexing situation. It is a perennial sociological and policy truism that 'close-knit networks' are a distinguishing feature of communities (Young and Willmott 1957; Rosser and Harris 1965; Frankenberg 1971 [1966]; Bell and Newby 1971). The conceptual challenge arises when this understanding of 'close-knit' as a practice in everyday life, interacts with and is played out alongside, the concepts of community as an arena for the development and implementation of public policy. In this light the distinctions between public and private acts and understandings of public and private spheres become intensely overlain and conceptually problematic. Hendinas, as a public policy arena is very small and the prescribed field of operation, within which the pubic/private/personal takes place, is limited. Within the research, it was frequently difficult to establish what was public and what was private, or to have clarity about the capacity in which people acted or the status of the interaction between them. The result is a tightly knotted tangle of practice in which action emanates from and is directed to indiscernible domains.

There are three key points to make at this juncture. First, it illustrates that the everyday life of people in communities often straddles and fuses with public policy agendas (Jupp 2012). Everyday action (personal) and policy implementation (public) can sometimes be indistinguishable, so when the 'centre ladies' for example run a youth group attended among others, by their own children, they act simultaneously privately and publically. Indeed the public act could not exist in such contexts without recourse to the personal and private ones. This alerts us to the multiplicity of elements that contribute to the construction of conceptual categories and the many and

shifting ways in which they can be put together, understood, and known. From here, it is possible to suggest a different reading of 'shifting categories' that challenges notions of shifting *along* a continuum, that runs from '*the* public' to '*the* private' in which the categorical entities at either end are themselves distinct. On the contrary, the proposal here is that, it is the binary construction of the public/private as fixed categories that is unhelpful. Instead, the suggestion is that understandings of public and private acts are neither singular nor fixed but subject to an array of competing dynamics (political, programmatic, personal, strategic, instrumental). Moreover, 'real life' proceeds to incorporate these dynamics in various harmonious and antagonistic, but always dynamic ways. This insight permeates subsequent discussion.

The second point highlights the centrality of emotional in the creation of public value. The fieldwork fulsomely demonstrates that people do not *just* act they *act with commitment.* This moves the debate away from notions of rational actors engaged in calculative cost benefit analyses, but does not surrender it to its apparent irrational antithesis. The point is simply the recognition that emotion plays a part in the development of the institutional life of Hendinas, as both a motivation for action, and its inhibitor, and needs to be included in the analysis of public policy (Fischer 2009). The chapter, has demonstrated how emotions influence behaviour (Penny enacted loyalty, Geoff was driven by pride and Molly displayed insecurity). The critical point is that everyone I met on Hendinas *cared*; they cared sometimes about the same things and at others about different things; they got excited and enthusiastic about ideas, they argued and clashed, but emotion was always evident and readily expressed; and critically intrinsic to the enactment of the institutional life of Hendinas. This accords with a growing body of work that is foregrounding the significance of emotion and affect in public policy research (Hoggett 1997; Hoggett *et al.,* 2006; Barnes 2008; Fischer 2009; Hunter 2009; Newman 2012b).

The third issue is a dimension of the first. It takes as its starting point the interdependence of the public and private as an inherent dimension of

public policy programmes that enlist 'community'. Moreover, the suggestion is that in seeking to mobilise 'community' for public policy objectives, government programmes actively appropriate private action for public gain, and celebrate this as a virtue (Etzioni 1996; Blair 2002). From here, it is possible to discern two opposing narratives. The CF programme's sharing of 'good practice' is crammed full of stories of private individuals 'doing good' (e.g. undergoing training, sharing skills) eulogized for their public benefit (WAG 2008c). The positive reading of this position focuses on the public recognition and valuing of private actions, celebrating the 'difference' individuals make to their own community, and basks in the mastery of systematic policy programmes. Using the language of empowerment, it focuses on the development of capacity and social capital. I witnessed many real life instances that sit comfortably within this narrative, (see for example 'Susan' in Chapter 7) (Coleman1988; Putman 2000). By contrast, there is an uncomfortable lack of clarity about the processes involved with incongruent messages and dissonant values ascribed to them. And from here an alternative negative, contrived and more unsettling narrative develops, in which the private is manipulated and individuals are shoe-horned into compliance through governmental structuring of the field (Cruikshank 1999; Ilcan and Basok 2004; Craig 2007). Certainly, there were times in the research when the limitations of the programme restrained what was possible, or at least what was possible under its auspices.

Instead of squandering the research in the binary dead ends of modernist optimism or fatalistic post-structuralism, the fieldwork engages in a far more open interpretation. The research confirms the demonstrable and intrinsic interdependence of constructions of public and private, and conceptually it is possible to conclude that these are reliant on one another in their search for conceptual coherence. However, the research also illustrates how these categories are constantly re-formed in the processes of their enactment by different agents for variable purposes, marking them as contingent and situated constructions. In this respect the preceding discussion about the institutional life of the community could be

viewed as limited, however the case is made for its continued use on the basis that it aids analytical deliberation. Some scholars have tried to understand these issues through the idea of a shared, overlapping or in-between space, including the idea of 'contact zones' (Pratt 1991), 'space of betweeness' (Staeheli 2003), and 'liminal spaces' (Buckingham *et al.,* 2006). These concepts are useful in highlighting how ambiguity offers opportunities for subjugated groups to organise and shape agendas in spaces conceptualised as porous ; yet they also serves as a means through which the state can access private individuals (Jupp 2010; Newman 2012a). This offers analytical opportunities and these are developed further in Chapters 7 and 8.

6.6   Conclusion

The context of this chapter has been the institutional life of Hendinas and the creation of a notional sense of 'community' in order to secure the requirement for 'community-led' partnership-making. It began by outlining the ways in which the term 'institutional life' is understood and used in this thesis. Acknowledged as having limitations, the idea nonetheless supports analysis by signalling distinctions between different aspects of community life. In particular, between more intimate kin-ship type relationships that are evoked in many popular conceptions of community (Etzioni 1996; Bauman 2001) and those prescribed in public policy discourse. This distinction unmasks what is often conflated and is offered as one of its strengths.

The chapter has considered how a cohesive notion of 'community-led' emerges through the dynamics of the institutional life of Hendinas. The community centre, both in its 'old' and 'new' manifestations, and the work of the 'centre ladies' provided a starting point to consider how action is made sense of, in terms of both its antecedents and imagined futures. History, as experienced and narratively retold, has been recognised as a significant dynamic in constructing contemporary understandings of action.

Within Hendinas, there are strong narratives making sense of the past and shaping the future; with *deserving*, providing a rationale for change, and *greenness* casting its hue across plans for its future. Differences in the orientation and understandings of action and the future within Hendinas were explored through a consideration of the community centre and *Renew.* This brought to the fore reservations and ambivalence particularly among community 'centre ladies' in terms of emerging developments. The chapter next considered the ways in which these are procedurally bridged, recognising that unity is inevitably temporal and only ever a 'good enough' feature of the institutional life of a community.

Finally the chapter highlighted the way in which practices in Hendinas challenge conceptually the separation of the public and private, in policy contexts involving communities. The research found that in Hendinas, the public and private are woven together in community life, and enacted with passion and emotion, challenging traditional political conceptions of the public. This conflation however, is implicit in public policy in the drives it makes to shape and appropriate private action for public gain, and in its use of policy programmes to influence changes in the personal lives of those with which it engages. This, of course, does not equate with securing these ends, not least as has been seen in this chapter, because communities have their own visions of the future. Moreover, government programmes are reliant on front line staff to deliver them, and it is the role of staff that forms the primary focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 7   The Subtle Art of Partnership-Making

The significance of the role of front line staff for the shaping and delivery of the Communities First programme has been recognised in academic scholarship and policy evaluations (WAG 2006c; Adamson and Bromiley 2008; Adamson 2010; AMION and Old Bell 3 2011). While anecdotally discussion in Community First circles is that local projects stand or fall on the back of the coordinators, it is an under researched topic and analytical consideration of their role is scarce. Indeed, this research project had not initially intended to focus on staff actions. However early recognition of their critical place in the making of partnership and a flexible methodological approach brought them within the scope of the study. This chapter considers staff, and their relations with the community and external partners, exploring what they do and how they engage with others to support local partnership-making.

The chapter is presented in five sections. It explores the role of front line staff in Hendinas in relation to three bodies of literature, that of street level bureaucrats (SLB), (Lipsky 1980), boundary spanners (BS) (Sullivan and Skeltcher 2002; Williams 2002, 2012), and community development workers (CDW) (Alinsky 1972; Freire 1972). In the first section the roles of SLB and BS are considered, moving on in section two, to explore the community development role and the place of values in the work of staff in Hendinas. Together these sections conclude that while each approach has something to offer none adequately account for the role undertaken by the staff in Hendinas. This moves the discussion to a consideration of motivation and the place of social justice as a value in shaping workers practices (Lister 2000; Miller 2001; Wolff 2008). Drawing from the CF programme and their own understandings, locally based staff in Hendinas work across the Communities First axis, as presented in Chapter 2, creating two strategic directions for their work. On the one hand they focus on the needs of the community, engendering and supporting action, and

this is the focus of discussion in section three. These interventions cannot be understood in simple instrumental terms as a programme of capacity building, nor as an instance of state transfer of responsibilities. Instead, staff and local people engage in the development of what I call *critical self-responsibilisation* in which alternative conceptualisations of *action* and *activeness* are used productively in pursuit of social justice objectives*.* In section four, the second aspect of their work focuses on the role of external agencies and their inputs into Hendinas. Appropriating the notion of *programme bending*, it will be seen that staff seek to structure and manage how agencies engage in Hendinas, through a process I refer to as *herding*. The staff *herd* agencies into situations in which they both can, and want to deliver what is being asked of them. They draw on a range of resources, including programmatic power, discursive momentum, trust, and disarming charm to secure commitments and delivery. This work seeks to produce effects favourable to local people, and can be understood as challenging power dynamics, disrupting the flow and operation of power in the interest of social justice. Section five explores how power is used productively by staff to these effects.

7.1   The Role of Staff: Street Level Bureaucrats or Boundary Spanners?

On the basis of early ethnographic observations and conversations with local people, it became apparent that staff had a very significant role in the institutional life of Hendinas. As noted, three bodies of literature are useful in thinking about the role of front line workers; that of street level bureaucrats (SLB), (Lipsky 1980; Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2000; Evans and Harris 2004; Durose 2007; 2009; 2011; Evans 2011), boundary spanners (BS) (Sullivan and Skeltcher 2002; Williams 2002; 2012), and community development workers, (Alinsky; 1972; Freire 1972; Butcher *et al.,* 2007; Chanan and Millier 2013). While each offer fruitful lines of inquiry, all fall short of fully accounting for staff roles within the fieldwork. In part, this arises from the general low levels of research into this group.

However, there is an additional layer of complexity arising from the methodological decision to include staff from Action in Communities (AiC) within the analytical project. This is necessary because their highly integrated working relationship with CF staff means that they play a critical role in both the development of the institutional life of the community and in processes of partnership-making. Their involvement is therefore essential to sense-making and analytical insight. Yet their integrated practice makes analysis challenging. These two staff groups work for different agencies, yet they are clearly front line workers often working on complementary aspects of the same project or picking up work from the earlier intervention of the other. AiC receive low levels of funding from the CF programme, and most of their income is secured from independent trusts, but their organisational objectives are largely complementary to the programme and together with CF staff, their work appears to produce high value synergistic outcomes. Explored further in Chapter 8, these issues do highlight one of the challenges of contemporary forms of governance yet to be addressed by scholarship. Namely, the emergence of complex patterns of service delivery brings staff from different agencies together to work on joint projects, requiring new analytical approaches to explore these formations.

The discussion in Chapter 3, demonstrates contemporary governance to be messy, incomplete and inconsistent, with the coexistence of different governing rationalities (Newman 2001; Newman and Clarke 2009). It is unsurprising therefore that front-line staff working in a neighbourhood environment who are called upon to interact most immediately with different governing rationalities in 'real-time', are subject to coexisting but inconsistent role conceptualisations. Conceived thus, the challenge is not *which* conceptual framework accounts for staff practices, but *how* in the context of differing governing rationalities, do staff draw these disparate aspects of their work together to create and make sense of workable practice.

Lipsky's (1980) influential work on street level bureaucrats demonstrating how front line staff in their everyday practice re-make policy in their implementation of it, has provoked continued debate about the issues of discretion, self interest and professionalism (Evans and Harris 2004; Evans 2011). However, despite the analytical insight offered by its bottom-up approach, Durose (2007, 2011) is critical of the way it retains traditional lineal conceptualisations. In her own work she explores the capacity for creativity and innovation among frontline staff within neighbourhood settings subjected to inconsistent governance practices. She suggests that in these circumstances staff should be understood as 'civic entrepreneurs' (2009, 2011). These workers develop practices in the unsettled spaces of local governance, creating opportunities for service and delivery innovation. These are important contributions in considering the role of front line workers, and there is much in Durose's analysis (2007, 2009, 2011) that chimes with findings in Hendinas.

However, while there is some accord between the roles of staff in Hendinas and both Lipsky's SLB and Durose's 'civic entrepreneurs', there are also differences. First, staff are not directly employed by a government agency but a local community organisation, with alternative systems of accountability (although many CF staff are direct employees of local authorities). Second, while staff are directed to fulfil the objectives of the national programme, this explicitly involves supporting 'community-led' development, a focus on local solutions and the involvement of many locally relevant partners. Each of these creates unknowable priorities, actions and agents, challenging the possibility of centrally mandated staff action. Third, is the issue of worker's understanding of their own role. Certainly none of the staff I spoke to defined themselves in terms that remotely suggested they saw themselves as 'bureaucrats' if defined as rule-bound functionaries. This raises some perplexing challenges which are further explored in 7.2 below.

7.1.1 Boundary spanners

Recent work on boundary spanners (Williams 2012:1), identifies these as a range of

> individual actors who work in theatres of collaboration ...[engaging in] ... activities that cross, weave and permeate many traditional boundary types, including organisational, sectoral, professional and policy.

Analytical attention in the boundary spanning role is directed at the diverse locations, contexts, and organisational positions held by these workers (Sullivan and Skeltcher 2002; Williams 2002, Williams 2012). This draws attention to actions undertaken in preference to organisational positions. Williams (2012:144) identifies four roles undertaken by boundary spanners: reticulist, interpretation/communicator, coordinator and entrepreneur, and attends to the many diverse competencies required within each. He summarises these as:

> managing and influencing without formal sources of power – facilitating and convening; dealing with complexity and interdependence...: working with diversity and different cultures...; managing conflict as much as collaboration, requiring diplomacy and negotiation; managing different modes of governance; and building and sustaining interpersonal relationships constructed around trust and networking.

Within a governance narrative attending to the issue of coordination and the creation of 'collaborative value' (Huxham and Vangen 2005; Vangen and Huxham 2010), Hendinas staff roles could with relative ease be described in these terms. The focus on collaboration sits more comfortably with their role than that of SLB. However, while Williams does acknowledge the importance of 'power arrangements' (2012:32) between organisations, his focus on what is done and how collaboration is secured, fails to address adequately the question of interests. This creates the impression that BS are, and more importantly *can be*, non-aligned. Moreover, his assertion that BS do not themselves have a 'formal source of power' is contentious. The fieldwork presents two interconnected

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challenges, the first questions the assumption that boundary spanning work can be unaligned or neutral, while the second demands that the issue of power and in particular that of formal power, be more closely examined. The reduction of policy action to the realm of the technical is a strategy of depoliticisation (Rose 1996, 1999; Li 2007) that demands interrogation.

Within the CF programme, it would be naive to suggest that government funding is invested in local projects in which the principal drivers of change are its core staff, without also investing in them *some* power to secure programmatic outcomes. Of course, whether they have sufficient or the right kinds of power are different debates. Where Williams talks of 'formal' power, he may be correct in respect to traditional hierarchical power systems, but in conditions of governance, power is not necessarily hierarchical. Moreover, in the frontline of local governance, where workers develop practice at the sharp end of policy contradictions, with competing rationalities the resulting confusion creates paradoxical conditions (Newman and Clarke 2009). Workers are both constrained by policy programmes but also find opportunities to work productively within the contradictions they encounter. This is a familiar theme in much recent policy analysis (Newman 2012a; Jupp 2010), and the current research documents similar findings.

As will be discussed below, front line staff within Hendinas have the potential to grasp programmatic power as the formal basis of partnership building and to use this in complex combination with an array of other sources of power and skilful practice to effect service delivery and advance social justice priorities. The rest of this chapter will elaborate this claim through a consideration of the principal activities engaged in by staff and their effects, before returning in the next chapter to consider some of the broader policy implications. First however, it is necessary to address the third set of literature identified earlier, that of community development alongside a consideration of associated staff values.

7.2 Community Development and Social Justice as a Practice Guiding Value

Very early on in the research, it became clear that staff in Hendinas aligned themselves with the interests of local people, and the role they most explicitly identified with was that of community development worker. It is not necessary to establish a definitive understanding of community development and the role of community development workers as there is a considerable literature, that attends to the role of workers and the dilemmas they face (Craig *et al.,* 1982; Craig1989; Craig and Taylor 2002; Butcher *et al.,* 2007; Hoggett *et al.*, 2007; Ledwith 2011; Chanan and Millier 2013). Within this it can be noted that the location for much of the discussion concerns the risks of incorporation and the appropriation of community work by the state. In this thesis, as will be demonstrated, community work is understood by staff to be located on the 'side' of communities.

Methodologically the imperative is to consider understandings of community development work held by staff, and the part they play in shaping project work, particularly in the way they sit alongside and interact with formal government programmes. There are a number of issues to highlight about the way staff interpreted and actioned their work. The first relates to the role of 'community'. Rhetorically, the staff position was much the same as that in the CF policy (NAfW 2001a; WAG 2002a, 2002b, 2007). This can be seen in how staff made 'community' their primary focus and the driver of their work. For example, Avril who supported the time-banking project reflected on how she prioritised her work commenting:

> it's not about what's best for me, (or) for Communities First, but it's about what's best for the community ...

Implicit in this comment is the idea of the community itself taking a lead and deciding both what and how to achieve priorities. Sally who worked for AiC, expressed this whilst reflecting on her earlier experience in another

CF project. She was critical of a former boss because of his focus on physical regeneration, and concluded that:

> ... yes ... we should regenerate areas but you have to work with the community to take that on *themselves.*

Given the importance attached to the idea of community control, staff frequently discussed their own roles, deliberating about the appropriateness of various interventions. They asserted regularly their belief that effective community development required staff to be free from direct government control, picking out the local authority (LA) as the least appropriate agency to host community development staff. Of the six staff interviewed, four had previous experience of working in other CF LA run projects, and they described their experiences in terms that suggest they are 'embattled and encumbered by the state' (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2000:356). Peter, a CF Development Officer described with exasperation earlier experiences of having to wear a suit and be 'an officer of the council' and how before taking action he would have to 'check (it) out' with the local councillor and CF partnership chair. Similarly, Sally reflecting on a previous role supporting a number of CF projects across a local authority makes this explicit, explaining that:

> the council had such a strong hold on the staff and what they could or couldn't do, and what the community wanted to do the staff weren't allowed, because it wasn't on the council's agenda.

Joanna spoke about how she had rejected a job offer because the organisation 'wasn't community focused.' One of the common features that runs through these assertions of commitment to 'the community' is the staff's positive orientation to work in Hendinas. This is articulated alongside a strong value base, with the clear message that working in Hendinas provides a favourable environment for the expression of these values, their development, and enactment.

7.2.1 Exploring values

The staff did not express an overtly unanimous or coherent set of occupational or personal values but over time, it became apparent that their commitment to 'the community' was underpinned by something more than policy direction. Towards the end of the fieldwork I decided to ask key staff about this directly. Their responses highlight the way a range of issues are drawn together by individuals to create a coherent account of their actions, linking personal choices, values and public policy enactment. Staff typically articulated a set of values that coalesced around commitments to social justice (Miller 2001; Wolff 2008). Within the research this is taken at face value, since it is their presence and the way they shape practice that is of primary concern.

Sally had previously worked for the civil service and identified personal commitment as underlining her choices. She had first encountered community development work as a volunteer in the Hendinas CF project, and had 'loved it' so much that she changed career. Talking about her experience of moving into community development work Sally drew a distinction between the rewards of her former employment and those in her new career:

> ... it had great perks... I was working from home, I had a company car, they paid for my internet, my phone, everything ... And I had a nice wage, but once I was unhappy, really, and feeling really miserable and [I was told] 'there's a job coming up in [another CF project]' .... And I ended up with the job...

But the new job did not meet her expectations:

> ... and I basically hated it! I hated the coordinator because he was a bully and he didn't actually believe in community development.

Sally subsequently moved into other CF roles before moving to work in Hendinas, but her experience highlights the distinction made by staff, between Communities First as a programme of work and community development *per se.* It seems that while the CF programme is capable of

allowing community development to flourish, it does not in itself guarantee it.

Asked why he came into this work Michael, who led AiC in Hendinas, laughed and asked, 'you mean why give up a good job... take a pay cut, and trash a good pension?' He went on to explain:

> ...it's down to my faith... I believe fundamentally that everyone is created equal ... and society is judged on its treatment of the weakest and.... I do this [work] because I believe passionately that the only way to change society is to address the injustice of those who are weakest.

Elin the CF coordinator, played a particularly important role in the direction of the overall project and it is no surprise that her coherent and well considered perspective about the work had a direct impact on setting the tone of discussion and debate among staff. Like Michael, she expressed deeply held beliefs about equality and issues of social justice, and had consciously chosen community development work as a means to enact these values. Reflecting on her younger self, she cited a long list of social theorists and explained with much irony how 'they hadn't *quite* got it right', (emphasis original) followed by the realisation that, she too would:

> ...never ... come up with the perfect ideology because everybody has a different view and values and we need to find a way of doing society in a way that accommodates that, but that isn't complacent about social justice and inequality ...

> as a society, we've got to learn to do democracy and we've got to learn to do community and society better and we've got to learn it together. So the whole concept of community development was just like - this is what we gotta do! – *this* is participatory democracy – *this* is something we've got to try and work on and its okay, it might not work easily and smoothly but we are evolving and this is a slow process

> Christala: and so what does community development mean for you?

> I think it's about achieving at the same time a more liberal and a more equal society in parallel, and I think it's about trying to achieve social justice in a way that everybody is respected and in a way that when we

muddle together as a community, as a society, to try and create a better, fairer community and society - it's part of our evolution, it's about a representative democracy, I think that links with making a fairer society.

Together these expressions of commitment to value-led practice incorporate a diverse range of ideas, including notions of community empowerment (Alinsky 1972), equality (Rawls 1999 [1971]), civil and social rights (Marshall 2006 [1950]; Keane 1998), participative democracy and plural democracy (Mouffe 1992; Laclau and Mouffe (2001 [1985]).

7.2.2 Values, culture and action

Integral to the articulation of these values, is their contextualisation as a basis to shape strategic work directions. As explored in the previous chapter, historical and cultural narratives of the past give particular shape to understandings of the social problems of the present. Two narratives were intrinsic to the way staff enacted the values they articulated; the first relates to the community and the second public services. Once again, in Elin's words:

> I think since the industrial revolution ... in the south Wales Valleys, the culture that I'm part of, is being cogs in a big wheel that we haven't got any control over and I think we did establish roots of control of ideas – the trade unions and miners welfare and that sort of thing, but with the 1980s and Thatcher, all of that was destroyed... so people see themselves as passive recipients of anything that happens, not active participants of change.

While Elin identified the destruction of earlier bonds of solidarity as a key issue, Michael also referred to the persistence and mutation of some unhelpful remnants of earlier times. He sums these up as:

> corporatism translated into mini-Stalinism ... that controlling thing of 'we know what's best for you' ... with a very strong pecking order.

In this analysis, benevolent paternalism creates dependency, passivity, and rigid norms of social control. What both these accounts share is an

understanding of communities and local people as passive, in the face of both the extremes of hyper-deindustrialisation and corporate largesse, alongside a state that either knowing or unknowingly, is disengaged from its citizenry. These perspectives about the relationship between the state and its citizens are not specific to South Wales, and were for a time fervently discussed at national level (Hall and Jacques [Eds] 1989; Burns 1994; Rhodes 1997). Within Hendinas these understandings, engender two key strategic responses that share much in common with the rhetorical position of the CFP.

The first addresses issues of passivity on the part of local people, and Elin outlines her approach to addressing this in her discussion of community development:

> And what keeps me in this job now more than ever is ... and I've yet to meet somebody who doesn't fall into this - everybody wants to be useful and needed in some way and as soon as people find out that they are useful and they are needed and they have got a role to play – I think something changes internally that's permanent.

This understanding shapes the work that Elin leads in Hendinas, and summarises her approach to the task of working with local people. This message, that everybody has the capacity to act and every action can make a difference, forms the foundation of project work *within* the community. While it shares the language of *activeness*, prevalent in discourses of citizenship in the last 30 years (see Chapter 4), and could be seen simplistically as 'capacity building' or as a case of self responsibilisation, the fieldwork suggests far more complex patterns of action and more discerning levels of understanding. These issues are explored in the next section. The second strategic response attends to the role of service providers and seeks to address what Michael sums up as the problem of 'poor people getting poor services'. The project engages purposefully with service providers to secure their commitment to work on Hendinas, through direct services, resources etc, but more critically, to ensure their engagement to strategically important initiatives. They call this their 'programme bending' work, and this is considered in 7.4 below.

In addition to the two strategic areas of work identifiable within the understandings articulated by staff, it is possible analytically to identify a third. In Chapter 2 the case was made for reading the Community First Programme as *relational,* on the basis that the primary resource of the programme was the people that it employed. Bringing this insight together with the fieldwork data, it is possible to reflect on how the two core strands of work within the CF programme - that directed towards the community on the one hand and the second directly engaging service providers - brings to the fore the *relationship* between these two. Earlier this was described as the Communities First Axis. CF staff are uniquely placed to mediate this axis. By focusing specifically on these relationships, or axes staff are, engaging in a conceptually distinct and crucial stage in the making of partnership. To be clear, this discussion does not suggest that *working the axis* involves a separate set of activities, on the contrary, at the level of practice, it is subsumed into the two strategic areas identified above and discussed below, but it forms an essential dimension of each. These ideas are explored throughout the subsequent discussion and in Chapter 8.

7.3 Community Development – Scope of Work and Critical Self-Responsibilisation

7.3.1 *Staff and community action*

Community action is an overused idea in public policy and as argued in Chapter 4, amenable to appropriation by a range of political projects. Chapter 6 explored local community members' understandings of the community and its institutional life, this section considers community action as supported by staff. It would be easy to see the action promoted within Hendinas as 'evidence' of the 'Big Society' 'coproduction' 'empowerment', 'active citizenship' or 'partnership'. However, as outlined above, staff espouse an explicit value base, align themselves with the interests of local people, and present themselves as contributing to the enhancement of social justice. They are in effect making their own claims about the kinds of people they are and the kinds of projects in which they believe themselves

to be engaged. Their position shares much common purpose with the Communities First Programme not at least a commitment to 'community-led' development. However, staff are also acutely aware of the inconsistencies and tensions contained within the CF Programme, for example, they experienced directly the pressures for change as the programme moved from being a 'regeneration', to a 'capacity building', and then an 'anti poverty' programme (see Chapter 2). They live with the inherent contradiction of trying to impose a 'community-led' agenda through policy edict; and they spoke with regret about what they saw as the erosion of the programme's innovative risk-taking ethos by a growing risk-averse audit focused governance regime (NAfW 2001a; WAG 2002a, 2006c, 2007, AMION and Old Bell 3 2011). In this context, different governing rationalities operate in uneasy coexistence for example, the requirement that project plans be centrally approved within nationally determined timescales, sits awkwardly with the principles of organic community development, or ideas of networked local governance.

While these tensions are played out nationally (Sullivan and Taylor 2007; Lowndes and Sullivan 2008), it is appropriate to explore their dynamics within Hendinas. The CF policy confers on the staff a multitude of ambiguities in their role. They are positioned as facilitators of action within the community, supporting nationally established strategic priorities, but also as servants of community-led development. As a government sponsored group, staff provide the first line of accountability for the delivery of the programme, and must serve as managers of programme tensions. Additionally staff face self-imposed dissonance between their own espoused values and the policy. Whilst they remain programme compliant (see Hoggett *et al.*,: 2006), as outlined above, their value-based commitment is to community development as a means of furthering social justice. However, not only must they balance this independence of mind with programme requirements, they simultaneously draw on it for legitimacy, authority, and power (see 7.5). In the context of these complex dynamics there are many overlaps and considerable synergies between their own construction of themselves as community development workers

and the government policy of Communities First, but there are also many tensions and schisms. The purpose of drawing out the differences between the policy as a statement of intent and the staff who enact it, is threefold. First, it is a reflection of the empirical findings of the research. Second, it contributes to theoretical debates about policy enactment highlighting the part of agency, deliberation and values in the delivery of front line services. Third, it opens up analytical lines of inquiry in respect to the research questions; in particular, it enables exploration of the relationship between staff, policy and outcomes, recognising and exploring the ways staff contribute to the making of partnership.

7.3.2 *Supporting community action*

The range of work undertaken by staff to support both individuals and groups within Hendinas is extensive. Supporting community action is a fundamental part of CF Programme work. However while an essential part of the work in Hendinas, analytically the research focus here does not require detailed consideration of community action *per se*, but directs attention to community development activities in promoting the institutional life of the community, partnership-making and strategic change within Hendinas. Appendix 5 offers a summary of the types of activities and projects that staff facilitate and support. Accepting that community based action has a multitude of intrinsic benefits to individuals, local communities and wider society, the interest here is how it is harnessed in the making of partnership and how partnership in turn drives forward and adds to, community well-being and policy based constructions of social justice (WAG 2002a, 2005, 2007: Miller 2001).

A key contention deriving from the data is that these particular developments constitute the foundations on which partnership is built within Hendinas, creating the conditions and orientations that make partnership *deliverable.* In this sense, these are the necessary preconditions of partnership-making, but do not in themselves guarantee it. Drawing on ethnographic observations captured in fieldnotes, the following examples are useful in teasing out this issue.

Susan

I first encountered Susan indirectly; she was one of many people that came in and out of the project office and community centre and was present at various meetings, training sessions etc. It was also very clear that she was a woman whose sense of self was extremely fragile. Thus, on ethical grounds I did not draw her into the research. Over the months however, she changed dramatically. She initiated conversations, made eye contact and grew more confident. She also expressed interest in and wanted to know about the research and what I was 'doing', so towards the end of the fieldwork I felt confident enough to ask her for an interview. Although I made clear that, I only wanted to talk about her involvement with community projects, she told me about her life and how following many traumatic experiences she had suffered with serious and prolonged mental health problems.

Her life started to change when supported by CF staff she was persuaded to accept professional counselling, through which she felt able to accept her experiences and move on. From this point, she had thrown herself into learning and community projects, telling me with absolute and infectious joy 'I'm having the time of my life now!' In addition to taking up many learning opportunities (including Basic Skills, Mental Health First Aid, and Community Development training) she was instrumental in the running of a depression support group, and made a point of encouraging others to attend this and other support groups by 'going along with them' and 'bringing them up the centre', so that they would not have to take the first step into a strange environment alone. She was hopeful that in the following year, she might also find paid employment within the mental health field.

Susan had also become an accomplished and confident public speaker. At the CF AGM she reported how, based on her own experiences, she had addressed health professions talking about the needs of people with mental health problems. She explained how professional services often

failed to meet real needs or were delivered in appropriate, inaccessible and unhelpful ways. She had become a powerful advocate of local services to her neighbours within Hendinas and the needs of a marginalised group to agencies outside of it.

Freddy

Community work involves taking risks. Freddy a local resident had been present at every public event I attended on the estate and both in one-to-one conversations and publically he was forthright in pointing out all manner of shortcomings; all that had NOT been achieved and issues NOT yet addressed. Nor was he shy in offering advice to the workers about their need to take a more hard-line approach to 'irresponsible' people, particularly young people and 'bad parents'. Undoubtedly Freddy posed a problem for staff, described by one as 'slightly right of Attila the Hun', he was respected for his willingness to voice an opinion, his commitment to community participation and his independence of mind, but his refusal to engage in any purposeful action, was both of concern and to some extent, a relief to staff. At the second CF AGM towards the end of the fieldwork I was surprised to see Julia his wife speak about a newly established weekly group for young people that she and Freddy had just started running.

Discussing this development with staff, they reported how during another encounter in which Freddy had rebuked the staff for failing to adequately deal with young people 'properly', Elin had offered CF resources to help him set up a group, including offering the support of the CF youth development team. As another member of staff reflected Elin was taking a 'huge risk' in supporting this project; Freddy's views and youth work approach were as far as they could be from the mainstream liberal youth work profession, and there were concerns about how he might manage potential situations of conflict. However, drawing Freddy in from his metaphorical bottle throwing position on the back row of community life, into active community contribution was seen as a significant achievement.

Susan and Freddy are just two examples of the many local people that engaged with the local project, and provide rich data with which to reflect on the institutional development of Hendinas. This will be drawn on, as the analysis proceeds.

7.3.3 Nuanced Activeness

A familiar criticism levelled at community projects is that they engage with the 'usual suspects'. Typically, a small group of people who while benefiting themselves, act as a barrier to the involvement of others (Skidmore *et al.,* 2006). This has been acknowledged as a problematic aspect of the position and work undertaken by the 'centre ladies' discussed in Chapter 6. While these issues are acknowledged as potentially serious, it is also possible to overstate the case, and in the process diminish the authority of the challenges made by those who are engaged. Implicit within this 'usual suspects' narrative is an assumption that categorises participation and community involvement in binary *involved/not involved* terms. This in turn infers that the only acceptable position is that of *involved,* and moreover there is a 'right kind' of *involved,* and a 'right kind' of *thing* to be *involved* in. This kind of 'tyrannical' (Cooke and Kothari 2001) approach to community involvement or participation is highly prescriptive, with echoes of Etzioni's (1996) moralistic communitarian ideals (see also Blair 2002). It follows that communities not meeting this impossible prescription of 'full participation' are deficient in some way.

Chapter 6 made the case for understanding as conceptually distinct the institutional life of a community, whilst recognising the ways in which everyday lives continually and indistinguishably moved between and across the public and the private. From this perspective, it is possible to identify an alternative interpretation of longevity, breadth and diverse forms of involvement. These draw on a more nuanced appreciation of action and a deeper understanding of work in communities with people who have experienced long term multiple disadvantages. In quite different ways both

Susan and Freddy demonstrate that, there are many diverse dimensions to being *involved.* Levels of involvement ebb and flow, and take different forms with varying levels of intensity. There are times when taking on a more overt role in the institutional life of a community is more possible than others. *Involvement,* needs to be understood in tones and hues, rather than monochromatically. The role of staff is critical in this task. Both Susan and Freddy were highly involved with the CF project; Susan by virtue of her intense need for one-to-one support, and Freddy through his continual berating of the project.

By engaging over the long term and providing multiple opportunities, without judging individuals as less deserving 'usual suspects', staff remain alert to the possibilities of supporting people to see themselves differently and take on new kinds of roles, embedding community action deeper into the institutional life of Hendinas. Staff committed many hours to supporting Susan, not because of her potential to contribute instrumentally to community action, but quite simply because she needed it. Susan described local staff as her 'life line', but over time the nature of her involvement changed from being dependent to highly active in strategically important ways. Embracing Freddy as a 'youth worker', irrespective, or perhaps because of his unpalatable views, acknowledges that purposeful engagement is much more challenging than tokenistic voice listening exercises, both to those who act and those who facilitate that action.

7.3.4 Critical self-responsibilisation

It is possible to read community activeness as evidence of civic engagement (Etzioni 1996) or self-responsibilised control (Cruikshank 1999; Ilcan and Basok 2004; see Chapter 4); as an instance of local community governance or of civil society 'manufactured' (Hodgson 2004). The understanding that emerges from this research is more complex. It suggests rather than becoming incorporated state agents, many of those that become active within Hendinas do so with enhanced knowledge and a more attuned criticality which they apply in purposeful ways. Taking action and being involved provides a basis from which to engage in more

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informed, critical, and substantive dialogue with service providers. Local people have rich experiences, and their understanding of themselves as historically *deserving* have made them 'savvy' and more demanding of their future. In this sense while taking on some responsibilities for running local projects, critical reflection is used to hold to account the state in its various manifestations, challenging them to deliver services in a manner that better suits the users of services.

Susan again provides an example. She became in effect a community and mental health advocate, using her own experiences and openness in talking about them, as a resource for community benefit and she was instrumental in drawing health professionals into dialogue with the CF project. Staff had experienced significant challenges in communicating and engaging with local health services, particularly the GP practice. Planned meetings had been postponed because key professionals had been unable (believed unwilling) to participate. Driven in part by Susan and her first hand experience of poor services, staff developed a different approach, instead of asking health staff 'out' to attend meetings in the community, they used alternative channels to get Susan 'into' the GP practice. Susan's venture into the practice was an exercise in reframing the problem; her input was presented as assisting the professionals to meet *their* challenges, to understand local needs and explaining the potential of the depression support group to support *their* work. But it also allowed Susan to share her experiences of being in need, and unable to access health services. This was a pivotal moment. It created a basis from which constructive interaction between the GP practice and the local project developed, and towards the end of the fieldwork, I was told that they had begun talking about potential joint projects.

Two critical issues can be drawn from this example. First, it demonstrates how staff interventions focused on developing 'community' both through support to groups (e.g. depression support group) and individuals (Susan) can be seen as creating the conditions on which partnership is subsequently made. In this sense, attending to community is about

creating the antecedents of partnership. Second, it illustrates how community action does involve taking on local responsibility; however, this is not a simple process of some duped collective absorption of centrally mandated edict. While not baulking from responsibility local people supported by staff actively engage with service providers, challenging them about their services, their relevance, appropriateness and quality; they make demands and they hold them to account, I term this process *critical self-responsibilisation*. Local people are proactive in taking on new initiatives, and as will be discussed in the next section, they use planning forums structured by staff to draw in a greater number of local people and create a momentum that agencies want to be part of.

Caution is required in developing this argument; it not being suggested that the local community can sit outside or cast off the neoliberal discourse of rights and responsibilities that establish action as the basis from which to judge individuals and communities 'worthy'. Additionally the 'success' of local action raises questions about the adequacy of universal provision and government responsibility. These are critical issues and will be considered further in Chapter 8. The idea of *critical self-responsibilisation* is intended to capture a sense of what people do, in a context that recognises action as a loaded concept. Perplexing dynamics emerge from the uncomfortable alignments between the discourses of neoliberalism valorising individual action, and social movements built on collective action (Laurie and Bondi 2005, Fraser 2009, Newman 2012a). Every day personal action in the institutional life of Hendinas, supported by a government policy programme is enacted within these tensions. Susan is an example of an individual made-good, supported by a government programme to take on civic responsibilities, but she is also an agent of a collective agenda, that challenges discourses that denigrate poor people asserting alternative versions of 'community'.

Developing the *active community* is both aided and hindered by neoliberal individualism. Within Hendinas, local people are encouraged and supported to take on a wide range of actions but this is not a simplistic

transfer of state responsibilities and the creation of self-responsibilised individuals organised in self-governance. Post structural concerns about the operation of power rightly point to its complex and pervasive modes of operation (Foucault 1991a, 1991b[1978]; Rose 1993,1996, 1999; Rose and Miller 1992), but experience also demonstrates its contradictions and the opportunities that these open up (Li 2007; Mckee 2009; Newman 2012a; Newman and Clarke 2009). Thus within Hendinas community action is emboldened by the discourses of partnership and activeness, but these are not neatly enacted within predefined boundaries, but used in unpredictable ways producing unknowable effects. These are further explored through the second strategic area of work undertaken by staff.

7.4   Programme Bending, Herding Partners and Partnership-Making

The CF programme identifies the involvement of external agencies, particularly statutory services, as essential to the success of local projects. While much of the attention within the CF programme has been focused on the role of local communities, within the WG guidance (WAG 2002a, 2002b, 2007) service providers are required to *bend* their services in order to better target and meet the needs of CF communities. *Programme bending* is a curious concept especially when applied to those agencies, like education and health that are supposed by definition to be universal and needs-led. It is noteworthy that despite its identification as an essential part of the CF programme, *programme bending* has never been subject to any direct evaluative attention despite it being consistently affirmed as in need of significant development (WAG 2006c, NAfW 2010, AMION and Old Bell 3 2011). The 2011 evaluation of CF programme did note however, that in the limited instances in which programme bending had developed, it had been 'bottom-up rather than top-down' (AMION and Old Bell 3 2011: 175). Experiences in Hendinas would seem to affirm this assessment.

From a policy perspective, programme bending conceptually positions service providers in the driving seat of action, and confers on them the *potential* for proactive power. By this, I mean the power of being at the fore front of an initiative, for example, establishing frameworks for action and rules of engagement. Together with the considerable power available to these agencies on the basis of their statutory status, professional associations and organisational hierarchy, they are theoretically considerably more powerful partners than local community projects. Yet paradoxically programme bending has been a damp squib (AMION and Old Bell 3 2011). The squandered opportunities of service providers will have to remain the concern of research proposals yet to be written, but their failings certainly created openings in Hendinas that are of significance.

Within the structure of the CF programme, statutory agencies were to constitute a third of the membership of local partnerships (WAG 2002a 2002b). Theoretically, this should have provided a platform from which statutory agencies could develop better understandings of local needs and *bend* provision accordingly. Here Ceri, a local resident and *Renew* Director is talking about her experience of service providers in the driving seat of partnership in the 'old' Hendinas:

> Partnership meetings didn't work because it would be 30 people in suits and only 2 or 3 local people ... [others] wouldn't come or speak because of the suits ... the suits would say 'I think the community needs this or that' and the worker would organise it and then no one [from the community] would come.

The gap between theory and practice could not be greater. Ceri was expressing frustration at the waste of time inherent in these practices, anger at the way they diminish local people and exasperation that they get in the way of real developments. But it also says something of what happens when in the name of partnership; lots of people from different agencies that have a shared interest in a common agenda are brought together in order 'to do something'. Crucially it illustrates how partnership

is never a neutral act of coordination, but an inherently political process that, even when apparently being frittered away, serves interests and has consequences.

7.4.1 Programme bending meetings

The term *programme bending* has been appropriated within Hendinas and applied to locally developed practices, with an associated set of contextual meanings. A number of people reported that they used to have partnership meetings in Hendinas but that Elin had since 'got rid' of these in favour of 'programme bending meetings.' This was generally perceived to be a positive move. Elin reported that 'programme bending is how we do partnership'. Dorothy spoke for many when she said:

> I think it's improved since we did away with the partnership meetings as such; it's more of a hands on thing now.

These meetings were organised around a specific area of work, every 6 to12 months. During the fieldwork, I attended two programme bending meetings focusing on children and young people (C&YP) and two on health and wellbeing (HWB) issues. CF staff organised these events, planning agendas, and structuring the format. The meetings were attended by local people active or interested in the issue and representatives from relevant statutory and voluntary agencies. Key individuals were directly targeted with personal invitations. Given the breadth of the agenda, meetings were short, typically a morning followed by a buffet lunch designed to encourage informal networking. Ostensibly, these were planning meetings intended to establish work programme priorities for the CF project with their partners. Short presentations were followed by about 10-15 minutes of discussion. Presentations were made by Hendinas staff outlining existing projects, lessons learned and challenges still faced. External agencies made proposals for projects and diverse agencies gave information-type presentations communicating 'who we are and this is what we do.' Interestingly there were subtle differences in the focus of the two target groups. The HWB meetings spent more time debating and seeking consensus about the nature of 'needs' and the challenge of

developing shared prioritises across agencies. By contrast the C&YP meetings seemed to begin with a greater consensus about need and focused more on questions of *means.*

But these were not just meetings they were *events*, key happenings in the institutional life of Hendinas. There was an emerging folklore about them and they were spoken about as one of the developments putting 'Hendinas on the map'. They were talked about in terms that made meetings sound edgy, unusual and cutting edge. They were certainly theatrical events; *avant-garde* in the sense of the interaction boundaries of audience and performers were collapsed and being involved and making a contribution was the preferred state of being.

C&YP Programme Bending Meeting

The second C&YP meeting was held in the church, in a longish room, with chairs arranged in an arc to create a 'front' at which sat a table with a computer, projector, and the usual accoutrements of meetings. The room was packed with over fifty people, and before the meeting started, it was full of chat and buzz with many conversations and a palpable energy. Introducing the event, Elin thanked everyone for coming, expressed her confidence that the meeting would be 'fab' and that the next couple of hours would produce 'amazing things.' Time was short so a volunteer was sought from the group to serve as time keeper, a local resident was given a large metal catering sized tea-pot and a spoon, that was to be banged at the agreed times. With growing assuredness, each time the pot was due to be struck the volunteer would lift it up high signalling his intention, creating an urgency to complete the current discussion and then strike it with aplomb! The meeting would briefly descend into laughter only to be quickly gathered up by Elin who would summarise whatever had just been discussed and agreed, recording it on a flipchart before moving onto introduce the next contributor. Many factors came together to create urgency and positive pressure: the room was a bit too full, time a bit too short, and the ground to cover a bit too large, but there was also a powerful collective will.

Traditional planning approaches would favour a more systematic approach to priority setting, and would suggest that these programme bending meetings would not 'work'. It is appropriate therefore to consider analytically the dynamics at play both within the meetings themselves and their place in the wider institutional life of Hendinas. It is possible to identify programme bending meetings as tangible representations of 'partnership' meeting the 'strategic compliance' (Hoggett *et al.*, 2007:155) requirements of the programme, but they are much more than this. They are staged theatrical moments that both consolidate and reconfigure work in Hendinas, paradoxically both fixing and throwing open priorities, affirming existing working relationships and forging new ones. They are markers of time and progress, representing the public face of hundreds of hours of work; discussions, negotiations, brainstorms, arguments, cajoling, supporting, reflecting, writing, meeting, making calls, and ...; the list is exhaustive. And as showcase moments they enable key areas of work to be set on a pedestal marked 'successful partnership' or even simply 'good work' and dangled as an incentive to carefully chosen, potential 'partners' to sign up to 'success.' Such moments are skilled accomplishments in '... the art of impression management' (Hoggett *et al.*, 2007:155).

Staff in Hendinas are fully aware that moving even a short way towards the kinds of social justice objectives they aspire to requires other agencies to *do something*, even if that is as basic as *allowing* as opposed to *hindering* development. They also know that working with statutory partners and bureaucratic systems can be challenging and waiting for them to take the lead is unlikely to yield results. The scant progress of programme bending initiatives across Wales bears witness to this (AMION and Old Bell 3 2011). Their response is audacious. They take control of the situation locally and encourage carefully selected agencies, and in some instances individually cultivated allies to engage directly. But critically they are judicious in what they seek, ensuring first that through their own work within Hendinas they support the development of the local conditions that will aid successful delivery, and second, that what they ask for is deliverable by other agencies, i.e. it falls within their remit, capacity and

expertise. An example of a project that was tracked across the fieldwork process serves as an illustration. It was initially proposed at the first C&YP meeting I attended at the start of the study in Hendinas.

7.4.2   School reading group

Educational issues had long been a priority in Hendinas, and AiC were running a project supporting children making the transition from Hendinas based primary schools to the secondary high located in the nearby town. Literacy levels were poor and as the work developed, staff identified the need to target intervention at younger children. This was raised at the first C&YP programme bending meeting I attended. Discussion was enthusiastic but initially vague, three different agencies raised the issue of literacy among younger children and the important role of families, and a number of different projects were considered. Eventually it was decided that a follow up meeting would be convened to explore the development of a school based literacy project. Before moving on, Elin as facilitator, turned to a representative from a large not-for-profit organisation, asking directly 'is there anything you could do?', instantly the representative agreed to support the initiative with funding, and provide volunteers through the organisation's Employee Volunteering Scheme for 6 weeks.

Attending the follow up meetings, involving staff from CF, AiC, the not-for-profit organisation, and one of the primary schools, I observed them work systematically through a range of practical issues, including timing, training, quality of reading materials etc. A number of months later I attended one of the school based reading group sessions. It was led by the not-for-profit staff volunteers. The session began with a reading of a story to foundation phase aged children and their parents, followed by craft activities linked to the story through which parents and children were encouraged to talk about the book[6] and the experience of reading it. Talking to parents, I learnt of their support for this project and concerns

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[6] The book read during the session I attended was one of the *Lighthouse Keeper's*.... series by Ronda and David Armitage, Published by Scholastic: and children made lighthouses complete with small battery operated lights.

about what might happen after the volunteering input ended. A number of women said they would like to keep it going; staff from both AiC and CF offered support. Over the next few months, whenever I met parents from this group in other contexts they were keen to tell me that, the group continued and was 'doing really well'.

Although much could be written about this example there are four particularly relevant issues. The first attends to the importance of allies and shared but different interests. The not-for-profit agency's primary agenda was quite different, but they did have a general remit to support community projects through a grant scheme, and an internal policy of supporting staff as volunteers. Hendinas staff knew this and good working relationships meant they could tap into it. This is an example of simple resource exchange (Levine and White 1962). The agency got considerable kudos for meeting its social responsibility agenda and Hendinas got access to the resources it needed to kick-start a key project. The second point concerns the community development role undertaken by staff working both with local parents and the school to create acceptance and interest in this project. The third point builds from this and relates to the development work required to support parents to move from users to organisers/ users of the group, extending the initiative beyond its original timeframe. The reading group moved from being an agency project, to a community group, and I observed two key volunteers embrace leadership roles developing personal confidence and skills. The fourth point asks where was the programme bending? The answer to this is rather unclear. Entry into what is often regarded as the hallowed turf of schools can be problematic, and educational services are not known for flexibility in meeting needs. Through this project, staff in Hendinas established a footing in the school and through practically focused relationships, delivered a project that met the needs of the school, its children, and their families, with little more than use of a school hall being asked for in return. The *bend* may be small, but not insignificant.

7.4.3 Herding

The analytical issue here does not need to establish whether this is *really* programme bending, but attends instead to the way project staff structure the conditions of interaction to engage other agencies, and establish joint local priorities. Very early on in the fieldwork, I referred to this process as *herding,* a phrase I coined based on the experience of being in a meeting which felt as if participants were being rounded up and moved from 'over here' to 'over there'; and once enough of the flock started to move, others followed willingly. Staff in Hendinas engaged directly and personally with key representatives of statutory partner agencies and secured high levels of 'buy-in' to meeting a range of needs. Crucially staff retained an open mind about the means by which to meet priorities and were amenable to taking up the most advantageous at the time, evincing a blend of intransigence about core values but flexibility about means. More than this however, they offered something particularly attractive to mainstream service providers; a solution to the problem of delivering services to local communities like Hendinas. Health professionals may know a lot about health and teachers much about education, but engaging with communities is of a different order. CF and AiC staff offer the *knowhow* of community based delivery, and they make it available to others that they want to work with.

Analytically it is possible to identify four interconnected elements to *herding*. What is noteworthy about these elements is who is claiming leadership in their operation, and the effects that are produced. The following discussion focuses primarily on the third and fourth elements, because these are the most significant in the research. First, the staff in Hendinas are at the forefront of 'identifying the problem', an age old starting point for management intervention, but unlike the tendency in public sector agencies to identify it on the basis of a lack or deficiency on the part of the community (Taylor 2003) staff in Hendinas structure the problem as arising from its abandonment by statutory agencies. This is evident in the narratives of 'deserving' and talk of Hendinas as having been 'under invested in for years' (see Chapter 6). This is intimately tied

up with the second element of *herding*, which is having or being able to devise 'solutions'. Of course, this is not *the* solution as in having an all encompassing grand plan, but having the capacity to see ways forward that mean some kind of positive effect can be achieved. In offering 'solutions', staff target both the community and external agencies, creating opportunities for both to act. Thus, for example developing literacy among children requires something of both parents and schools, and local staff create the conditions to enable both to be involved. This way of casting the relationship speaks to the kinds of communitarianism favoured by both New Labour (Etzioni 1996; Blair 2002), and Cameron's Big Society (Wind-Cowie 2010) but *only* if the analysis stops there.

Foucault's work on governmentality (1991a [1978]) and the critically engaged literature that has followed (Rose 1999; Li 2007; Mckee 2009; Dean 2010) is particularly useful here in driving the analysis forward. Li (2007) drawing on Rose (1999) coins the term *rendering technical* to refer to multiple and interconnected processes of depoliticisation, that re-problematise the previously contested issues of government, as amenable to technical management. She notes that in a field of development '[t]he identification of a problem is intimately linked to the availability of a solution' (Li 2007:7). Unpicking this technical coupling of *problem-solution* highlights politics as inherent in the contestations involved in settling problematisations. Within this thesis the contention is that while staff do seek to develop alternative problematisations these can only ever be limited in their success, given the pervasive narratives of 'welfare scroungers', 'the work-shy poor', 'problem families' etc rendered 'common sense' through mass media. Analytically staff engagement with 'partner' agencies is more significant. The staff team is skilled in working with mainstream providers in a community context; they make education, from adult basic skills to early years literacy *deliverable*; they *know* how to run community health projects that 'hard-to-reach' people will want to participate in, (from Zumba to depression support groups); and 'active citizenship' grows through their endeavours. In these contexts, they are 'technical' experts, and they use this expertise to manage the processes of

development. This technical management is the third element of *herding*, it moves from theoretical problematisations to tangible 'solutions', with staff *rendering technical* processes that structure and manage the practical interventions of others. The fieldwork provides both successful and unsuccessful examples of this technical management (7.4.2 above and Chapter 8)

Understanding the operation of governmentality requires attention to issues of power; here reading Foucault analytically rather than prescriptively helps to formulate questions about the flows of power in the interrelationships between community, staff and agencies. It demands identification of the paths that it carves and through which it operates, and consideration of the acts that enhance or disrupt it. This is the fourth issue that *herding* evokes; directing attention to where powers lie, how they operate and which interests are served. Attention to power, simultaneously calls for attention to its contestations (Foucault 1982: 221-222). Here the purposeful use of the plural descriptor *powers*, signals the multiplicity involved in partnership-making. The case being advanced is that staff consciously and reflexively manage the processes of community development, programme bending and partnership-making to disrupt, bend and flex powers in favour of 'the community' in accordance with the social justice values they espouse. Their acts seek to use the diffuse power of governmentality and turn it back on itself. These processes can be seen as part of what Wagenaar (2011:185) calls 'the ethical program of governmentality' and is understood in this thesis as *critical self-responsibilisation*.

7.5   Operating Power

The practical operation of power in the consideration of *herding* requires further attention. Towards the end of the fieldwork Joanna and I were reflecting on what I might write and I shared with her my thoughts about

the staff as *herders.* She listened carefully and then pithily fed back my analysis with growing passion:

> so this might be simplistic, or it might be wrong, but what you're saying is we manipulate the system to make it work for local people
>
> (shared laughter)
>
> Christala: well... er yes... but manipulation sounds very negative
>
> Yes but ultimately that's what we do. The problem we've got is that people DO manipulate the system and it often tends to be the people who manage and oversee the system [and they] often forget the people at the bottom. We are THOSE gatekeepers and we manipulate THAT system to work for US (emphasis original).

The idea that staff, whether they are understood as street level bureaucrats, boundary spanners, or community development workers can be catalytic facilitators without agenda or power is untenable, a position Joanna clearly demonstrates. This section will consider the power that staff have recourse to in relation to their work with outside agencies and the ways in which they use it.

As discussed above, staff are clear about whose side they want to be on, but they are required to meet the need of their employment contracts and the policy programme through which they operate. However, although this may present constraints and boundaries, it also serves as a considerable resource. Partnership as an institutional instrument bestows *programmatic power* on staff*.* The abandonment locally of formal partnership meetings may free staff from the prescriptive constraints of straight adherence to the 'thirds principle' but the stipulation in policy guidance to involve statutory agencies in local CF projects, is critical to enabling staff to act as they do. It exerts influence and expectations on both willing and reluctant potential partners, creating the normatively ubiquitous *motherhood and apple pie* construction of partnership that neither benevolent state agencies, nor social campaigning action groups can reject without fear of being placed beyond the pale of policy interaction. Appropriating this discourse and

setting themselves up as its moral guardians, staff claim legitimacy and authority to promote and manage *partnership*, whilst simultaneously re-articulating understandings of it. In this sense, staff do act as street level bureaucrats, stepping inside the programme as a means of harnessing its power.

The literature points to the significant impact of workers on public policy outcomes. For example, Durose (2011) demonstrates this in her consideration of civic entrepreneurs who are proactive in grasping opportunities, and Williams' boundary spanners (2012) mediate and negotiate to secure development. Staff in Hendinas can be seen in these terms, but there is another aspect to securing buy-in and more importantly action. The personal characteristics of the staff group need to be noted. Trust and trustworthiness are significant sources of power that help staff to widen and deepen the constituency from which they claim legitimacy to act. In part this trust develops from the knowledge and skill possessed by the staff, quite simply they are 'good' at what they do, but the application of their abilities towards tangible win-wins that deliver positive outcomes for partner agencies cannot be underestimated. Success confers a degree of authority and provides a powerful base from which to move on to the next challenge. Thus, they are able to move and carry people and agencies with them from safe projects to those with greater risks. Moreover, 'success' can also be used as leverage to draw in those who may be more reticent, reassuring the cautious and validating involvement as professionally acceptable.

Success however can be problematic, and the Hendinas staff team find themselves targeted by others who want to be involved with them. This can be positive, but it can also bring unwanted attention. They respond by being selective about who they chose to work with. I witnessed one particularly noteworthy case of filtering out unwanted attention. During a planning meeting for the reading group (see above), another proposal was also considered. While the reading group idea was actively supported, and logistical challenges addressed systematically, the second was discussed in more constrained and polite terms and no workable solutions could be

found for the problems raised. My fieldnotes at the time ask 'am I detecting less enthusiasm?' and staff later explained that they thought the idea ill-conceived and inappropriate for local needs. Demonstrably acting as gatekeepers, this project never got past this initial stage.

Another way they managed the role and involvement of agencies was to control when discussions take place. For example, an initial HWB programme bending meeting was postponed because as Elin explained staff 'weren't sure if we have enough committed people to attend'. The sub-text here is recognition that the necessary underpinning conditions required for interagency discussions, had not yet developed sufficiently well. To have gone ahead would have been potentially counterproductive. Instead, staff met on their own to reflect on what they could do to develop appropriate relationships. Sitting-in on this discussion, I observed them debate how they might involve the GP surgery, concluding 'we need to engage them through action because if we don't ... it won't work'. One strategy they considered included offering to support community members involvement in a Patients Participation Panel that the GP practice wanted to establish i.e., offer them a solution to their problem. Adopting the same strategy, staff subsequently supported Susan to discuss her experiences within the Practice.

AiC combines community action with research, and they have a reputation as a well respected agency in part due to their independence. Discussing the value of independence Michael talked about the organisation's role:

> the truth about being independent and vulnerable and small and in one sense only being there by invitation, [is it] occasionally gives you a chance [to speak], knowing and understanding the challenges of their job, knowing that it's not all monochrome but still never-the-less asking questions ...

Michael described himself as the 'story teller... learning the lessons and .... linking all the staff' to enable the larger and more powerful narrative to emerge from the detail (see Chapter 8). He spent some time talking about a joint project AiC had developed with a provider of major services on the estate. He explained that the project offered the agency an opportunity 'to come out smelling of roses' but it had taken six months to negotiate because of 'blockers' and AiC staff had to fight constantly to progress the work. He described many frustrating incidents where supportive words were not backed up by practice. He then explained how he had:

> found a brochure from [the agency], with a picture that *I'd* taken on *my* camera phone... and they were trumpeting it as a piece of work, and it actually said 'N [agency] decided to...' Bastards! You didn't 'decide to', I had to work my butt off to get it... so he's [Chief Executive] caught because he's promoting it as good practice. So now I can go back and say 'that was good practice – what about the next one?' ...the art is keeping the relationship there, keeping them friendly as you bate them... and say 'how could you NOT agree with this' (emphasis original).

This demonstrates how investment in long term relationships even when there appears to be very little progress in the short term and commitment to joint projects appears to be one-sided, provides a greater source of power in the longer term. As Michael summed it up 'you can't just rail at them, it's much harder for them to deal with conversation'.

7.6   Conclusion

The interpretive methodology adopted within this research, ensures that the study is attuned to a consideration of staff roles in terms of their own understandings and in respect to the policy. This chapter focused on the role of staff and opened by questioning how the staff in Hendinas might be conceived. Although those employed by the CF programme could be thought of as SLB, there was much in their role that chimed with the role of BS, except in so far as staff reject any notion of neutrality, explicitly aligning themselves with the interest of local communities. Instead they

identify with the role of community development worker. In this role they attend to two principle strategic tasks the first, is directed at the development of the community itself, and while this work shares something in common with popular ideas of capacity building and notions of self-responsibilisation, the case was made that while the community accepts much responsibility for its own development, this position develops in the context of critical questioning and challenge of other agencies. The second strategic aim is directed towards increasing involvement and accountability of mainstream service provides. Here staff position themselves as being able to offer 'solutions' in the delivery of community based services, and on the basis of this expertise they structure and shape processes of interaction, 'manipulating' the system to work in the interest of local people. The effect of this is to flex some power relations in favour of local people.

The role of values within the staff group, is key to understanding the research and how partnership is shaped in Hendinas. The complexity of the environment, may make recourse to values even greater. The shared value base supports the development of a strong local team and provides a resource to drawn on in deliberations and decision making in difficult situations, where 'knowing' what to do is never straightforward. Like the women in Newman's (2012b:473-4) research, these workers 'are engaged in a creative process that opens up new potential pathways and that generate new emergent practices.'

The analysis based on the empirical research, proposes that far from a simple direct absorption of the self-responsibilisation discourse, partnership-making supported and to a large extent directed by staff is appropriated and utilised critically, in which locally situated 'traditional' values such as mutuality and cooperation are re-asserted, re-worked and re-enacted. Partnership discourse is broadly accepted but with a large dose of criticality, which draws in the policy rhetoric only to re-work it and turn it back on itself, and more specifically on those agencies also enlisted within it.

The roles that the staff undertake provides a microcosm of the tensions within the rest of the programme and illustrates the multiness of partnership-making. It is never one thing nor even a series of things laid one upon the other or something dependent on one's perspective. Drawing on Mol and Law's work (2002) it can be argued that partnership is brought into being through multiple strategies of construction, and acted upon in such a way as corresponds to the dominant (current) strategy of use. This foregrounds, at the time and place of its use, a particular fixing of partnership, but remains connected and dependent on other possibilities. While this chapter has explored understandings and practices of partnership-making within Hendinas, making sense of the accomplishment of the local benefits from an understanding of the wider context in which it operates. The next chapter follows the links that connect local practice to these broader institutional issues.

Chapter 8   Mediations, Manipulations and Partnership-Making: From Hendinas to Beyond

The previous two chapters highlighted some of the particular ways in which partnership-making is accomplished within Hendinas. This chapter focuses more specifically on the relationships between practice in Hendinas and the wider policy field, following in particular the institutional relationships that crisscross everyday practice. In so doing, the chapter directs attention to the multiplicities of partnership beyond Hendinas, and the relationship between local community practice and the national policy programme. While it would be possible to contain analysis to the fieldwork site by focusing on the local interactions through which partnership is made this would not do justice to the accomplishment of the 'local'. Nor would it address the methodological imperative and research questions as set out in Chapter 1, and developed in Chapter 5 that require the study reflect on broader policy issues. This chapter therefore also considers what partnership-making in Hendinas may indicate about wider policy debates, and how in turn these discussions aid reflection about practice in Hendinas.

This task is particularly important in the context of the Communities First programme; a policy anecdotally described by some front line workers and programme support officers (e.g. in the voluntary sector) as the promotion of 'IMBY'ism'- *In* my back yard. The suggestion contained in this charge is that the emphasis on the local and the prioritisation of 'community-led' created unrealistic expectations within communities. Colloquially these are often represented as the extremes of leisure centres within each locality to dog-poo-free streets. This had, is the implication, contributed to ineffective strategic direction of national policy, the fragmentary nature of its enactment and uncertainty about the value of its outcomes (WAGc; AMION and Old Bell 3 2011). The accuracy of this claim is not the issue

here, but like much folklore, the IMBY story is powerful for its kernel of truth. It helps to formulate a set of questions about the relationship between practice in Hendinas, the broader policy context in which it is located, and the national field. This is an important set of issues, because the Hendinas CF project in the narrative of Communities First (as reported to me by council officers and support staff in national voluntary organisations) is considered 'successful' in a national programme with disputed achievements (WAGc; AMION and Old Bell 3 201; Dicks 2013). It is not possible to explore how representative or otherwise is the Hendinas project but it does offer an interesting perspective from which to explore the tensions between local and national issues. This chapter can be understood as an exploration of these tensions, it considers the differences between partnership-making within Hendinas and those promoted by the local authority. This brings to light the operation of different models of partnership and different understandings of its purpose. This facilitates both a better insight into the accomplishment of partnership within the institutional life of Hendinas and crucially something of its limitations.

Discussion in this chapter is organised in four sections. The local authority is a significant 'partner' in the development of work in Hendinas. This relationship is explored through a consideration of ethnographic data in the first section. The chapter argues that some parts of the LA and the CF project operate antithetical models of partnership. The LA model encapsulated in the term 'partnership *for* action' is considered. In the second section the preferred model within Hendinas, understood as 'partnership *as* action' is addressed. The contention made is that the LA model has become unduly 'narcissist' focusing on process and system issues to the cost of service users and outcomes (Matland 1995). In contrast the approach favoured by front line staff in Hendinas privileges action. This is explored through the relationship between the Hendinas CF project and Action in Communities (AiC). The third section returns to a consideration of the CF model presented in Chapter 2 in which the CF programme is understood as an interrelationship between the community

on the one side and service providing agencies on the other. This section focuses on the idea of 'working the axis' between these two elements of the programme. It argues that partnership-making requires attention be directed at the axis itself, and proposes that this work should be understood not as neutral mediation but in productive and political ways (Newman 2012a, 2012b) . In section four these themes are drawn together to consider the limitations of partnership-making within Hendinas. The example outlined in the first section of this chapter is revisited and discussed in terms of a 'failure to herd' on the part of the project staff, and throws into relief the limits of their approach. Further, local experiences are used as a lens through which to consider the national policy. These threads are brought together in the concluding section.

8.1 Local Authority Partnership-Making

Work to support developments in the institutional life of Hendinas was unsurprisingly very 'Hendinas-orientated' (even IMBY'ish). Staff and local people alike were proud of their focus on benefiting the local community, and this was apparent in the use of the 'deserving Hendinas' narrative discussed in Chapter 6. In contrast, local authorities (LA) have a county wide brief, and in keeping with national initiatives, (NAfW 2001b, WAG 2001, WAG 2006a, WAG 2007b) the authority within which Hendinas was located, had spent many years developing complex multi-tiered 'local planning' systems across many service areas. These were separate from but theoretically connected with local CF partnerships (e.g. Strategic Planning Partnership). Numerous 'local planning' groups with a responsibility for service coordination and needs-audit functions were established on both geographical and service group bases. These were responsible for 'feeding into' statutory planning systems (e.g. Children and Young People Planning Forums, Health and Wellbeing Strategies etc). Structurally these groups were also envisaged as the conduit for top down dissemination of for example, information, training and 'good practice' models. Many glossy publications had been written outlining both the

corporate and service area planning systems and asserting how these would make the lives of the electorate 'better'. This is planning at its most rational, wherein structural diagrams and procedural flow charts abound. In this context, the LA had been trying to set up a county wide network of Young People's Local Action Groups (YPLAG) in response to the National Youth Work Strategy (WAG 2007b), to coordinate youth work services in local areas and collate information about needs for central planning processes.

Supporting young people constitutes a major focus of work in Hendinas, and takes many forms; activities include 'youth club' type provision, environmental projects, life skills project, building trade training, school based projects, and leisure/health focused groups. Young people were highly visible in Hendinas and many young people would frequently drop into the project office or the centre for 'a chat', to ask a question or just hang out. They were actively encouraged to participate in meetings and they were supported to make presentations about local work in a range of environments, including the CF project AGM. In discussions about the future, many community members spoke about 'doing it for the kids' commenting that 'they're our future'. The CF project directly employed youth work development staff and young people formed the focus of two AiC projects.

8.1.1 Planning youth services

During the latter part of the fieldwork, staff began talking about a 'problem' that involved the young people from the neighbouring community of Cwmhir[7] and their use of services in Hendinas; telephone calls had been made and emails exchanged. Staff disclosed they had sought to find a solution and they hoped that a way might be found to extend their services to these young people by working 'in partnership' with the LA youth services and Cwmhir Community Council. They had initiated discussions,

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[7] This is a pseudonym

but these had not gone well, and it was clear that there was much bad feeling. A meeting was arranged between staff in Hendinas and two members of the local authority; I was invited to attend as an observer.

This meeting was by far the most bad tempered witnessed during the fieldwork. Much of the discussion ostensibly focused on the role of Elizabeth, a recently appointed LA youth worker. There appeared to be disagreement about a number of issues. Among them were how her work was to be prioritised, who should be involved in this process, and whether the role that Hendinas staff were proposing should be a priority area of work. Contentious as these seemed to be it was clear that much more than this was being disputed. In analysing the data, it became perplexingly apparent that this meeting was at odds with every other analytical trend identified about partnership practices in Hendinas. I was on the verge of casting it aside when I finally recognised that the 'failure' it represents marks out something of significance in understanding partnership-making. In discussing the YPLAG (see below) my fieldnotes observe 'this is a battle about whose strategic group this is'; it is an insightful comment but this was not just a 'battle' about a local group, but represents a direct clash between two models of partnership with different priorities and understandings of action, process and objectives (Netto *et al.* 2012).

The meeting began fractiously with justifications and positioning about who said or did what, with two incompatible narratives about the events leading up to the meeting. There was an evident subtext, among all the participants seeking to 'blame' the other and exonerate themselves. The tone was hostile, with sharp comments embedded in professional language, masked by a thin veil of politeness (Derkzen et al. 2008). For all the positive passions and exuberance witnessed during the fieldwork, this was Hendinas staff as never seen before, grouchy and uncooperative. Emma, the LA youth services officer outlined the organisational priorities for the service and how they deploy their limited resources. She explained that 'each school has one day a week', thereby utilising an equity-of-input approach to decision making challenges about the allocation of limited

resources. This was described by her as 'fair', and a necessary approach on the part the LA. Much discussion followed about the youth worker's role contesting once again what this meant in practice. Joanna straight to the point, asked rhetorically,

> Let's be honest here, what *is* her role and what can she do for us?

The peevish exchange continued until clearly attempting to be conciliatory, Julia the LA Communities First Officer concluded that the difficulties were 'just' a 'communication problem.' Below are some key extracts from the discussion that followed:

> Sally (AiC): (responding to the comment about communication) yes *we* need to know what Elizabeth (youth worker) is doing in this area

> Emma (LA Youth Service): in every other cluster (local authority area) that communication happens at the YPLAG

> Joanna (CF): No this isn't how it happens, meetings don't always happen It would be helpful to know what Elizabeth is doing

> Julia (LA CF Officer): Does Elizabeth know what *you're* doing?
> .... (long monologue follows about role of YPLAG)
> ... the point of the YPLAG is to stop working in isolation

> Return to discussion about the substantive issue, and then ...

> Julia: this all comes back to communication .... we can sort this out ... YPLAG's are there to sort out these problems

> Talks about the role of YPLAG as 'strategic' describing them as a 'coordination body'...

> It's about working in partnership ... it makes a bigger impact

> Emma: we're looking to our partners to work with us ... Some YPLAG are not well developed, and it frustrates me because I can see the potential ...

Discussion about 'coordinated planning' and the way YPLAGs *should*:

> Julia: Bring the action plans together .... [to] see the gaps

> Joanna: I don't go to YPLAGs because I don't see the point, I'm not getting anything from them...
> ... I can't waste resources attending meetings

> Julia   but we've got to get partnership working...
> ... You're responsible as well.

Both the problem and solution, as understood by the LA officers are equally straightforward and encapsulated thus: the participation of Hendinas staff in the area YPLAG, where all participants 'communicate' - share what they are doing - discuss how their work fits together - agree to avoid duplication - and identify unmet service needs to be fed 'up' to the next level of the planning hierarchy. This, the planning model logic suggests, would 'fix' the grievances of both the LA youth worker and Hendinas community based staff (Williams 2004). But it was neither the 'problem' as understood by local staff, nor therefore a possible 'solution.' On one level, this truculence could be read as aberrant, given the vigour with which Hendinas staff approach working in partnership in other contexts. After the meeting, they told me they believed the LA staff to be 'out of touch', and without 'a clue' about the 'real' issues, and that they did not trust the officers (Klijn 2010). There is much to reflect on in this event; and when read along other ethnographic observations and interview transcripts it becomes clear that this discussion encompasses a number of interconnected and critical dynamics. These will be explored in the rest of this chapter.

*8.1.2 Partnership **for** action*

The discussion in this meeting demonstrates that Hendinas staff and LA officers have two different understandings of partnership. As outlined above, the LA has a complex corporate planning system, and while neither its advantages nor shortcomings are pertinent to the current debate, what is relevant is the construction of 'partnership' as an instrument of rational planning. In this model, partnership is conceptually understood as addressing the short comings of traditional single-organisation planning. In particular, partnership by increasing the pool of available knowledge through the involvement of 'others', is understood as reducing the problem of bounded knowledge (Simon 1965), overcoming silo working, and better tackling of 'wicked problems' (6 1997; Clarke and Stewart 2003; Jupp 2000; Ling 2002). While 'complete knowledge' may not be possible, partnership as presented in the ideas of these officers continues to strive for this idealised state. The involvement of 'partners' can be presented as enabling communication and coordination (because 'everyone' that matters is around the table), and as Julia states by bringing 'action plans together' planners can 'see the gaps', thus moving the process closer to the Holy Grail of 'holism'. Moreover by packaging service needs into definable units (young people), i.e. by limiting the boundary of what needs to be known, this model of partnership assumes you can maximise the level of specialist knowledge, towards a near-as-possible completeness. Further, just as the model accepts that the LA cannot have complete knowledge on its own, it assumes that other 'partners' are similarly constrained, and are therefore dependent on the LA to 'run' the partnership through which they too can have access to the knowledge and resources of other 'partners.' And in this scenario, as Julia informed Hendinas staff, every organisation is 'responsible' for both contributing to it and 'making it work.'

While the above synopsis may be overly neat, it does throws light on critical conceptual conflations and divisions implicit in the model of partnership deployed by LA staff. On the one hand, it collapses the differences between knowledge, coordination, and partnership and takes

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'knowing what's going on' to equal 'coordination', and the involvement of many agencies in this 'coordination' to amount to *partnership*. Second, it draws a clear demarcation between the collapsed knowledge/coordination /partnership on the one side and action on the other. Action in relation to partnership develops *from* knowledge of 'the gaps'; it thus constructs knowledge/coordination /partnership as a *pre-requisite* for action and action therefore as developing *from* partnership. This is demonstrated in the meeting outlined above. LA staff focused on communication, understood as the sharing of information and coordination as their primary concern and their refusal to be drawn into discussion about the development of local services outside of the YPLAG highlights how partnership is understood as a required precondition *for* action and as the location of decision making processes. The LA officers focused on getting the system in place; prioritising the involvement of Hendinas staff in the local YPLAG, but getting 'frustrated' because they were unable to establish the network of YPLAGs across the county leaving the system's 'potential' unfulfilled. This shortfall arises because it is unable to secure the involvement of every local youth work agency in their local YPLAG, thus necessary knowledge cannot be made known to the youth services county planning group. If this potential were met, then the planning hierarchy would be able to make as near-as-possible rational decisions about service needs; and of course this structure would theoretically enable coordinated information to be then fed back down the system to be actioned. These are managerialist strategies (Newman 2001), in which the rhetoric of partnership is shared but the practices within it shift to favour management practices (*Gold et al.* 2007). The agendas and priorities of those outside of state controlled processes are pledged allegiance to and 'taken onboard' but the focus subtly altered (Williams 2004) and the processes controlled to constrain action.

8.1.3 Narcissistic partnership

Partnership is valued in the literature and policy discourse for its synergistic potential, (Huxham and Vangen 2005; Vangen and Huxham

2010) and its capacity to impact on a given issue more deeply; but this does not in itself say anything of the objectives to which the synergistic endeavour is directed (6 *et al.*, 2002). The contention here is that, in the model adopted by the LA officers in relation to Hendinas, partnership is perversely harnessed towards servicing a planning system rather than service outcomes (Erasmas and Gilson 2008). The retort to this criticism could legitimately be that a better planning system will eventually lead to better service outcomes, and this *possibility* is not disputed per se, but consideration of further examples from the fieldwork suggests practice to be otherwise. As outlined in Chapter 7, I attended two C&YPs programme bending meetings at either end of the year of fieldwork, both were also attended by a LA officer supporting the development of Children and Families Local Action Groups (CFLAGs); these are additional planning mechanisms, similar to YPLAGs, in their formation and purpose operating within a national strategic framework (NAfW 2006).

At the first C&YPs programme bending meeting the officer made a short presentation about the CFLAG and how the network would act as 'an umbrella,' coordinating work around the nationally agreed 'seven core aims' in children and families services (NAfW 2006). The presentation was organisationally focused describing structures and systems, and as I note in my fieldnotes, the 'primary concern is about ensuring appropriate reporting structures, and how the work in Hendinas will fit in with the wider plan.' There was considerable emphasis on communication, and how CFLAGs will *know* what has been done. Most critically, addressing herself to the meeting, the LA officer reported that the CFLAG would be interested in 'how this (local Hendinas action) fits into the wider plan'; she concluded with a congratulatory flourish that 'your contribution is valuable across the seven core aims'.

My fieldnotes observe that this input was 'very different to other presentations', stylistically it was full of professional jargon making it inaccessible to many local people, but most significant is the relational positions it displays. C&YP programme bending meetings in Hendinas,

were purposefully established to explore tangible proposals for Hendinas-focused action, and indeed other presentations sought, albeit with varying degrees of success, to offer something *to* the community. In contrast, this officer was asking for something *from* the community; 'your contribution' and how it 'fits into the wider plan' was the primary concern. Other than 'good communication' nothing was being offered back, and by default the message also being delivered was that the CFLAG were not interested in local action that did not fit into the 'wider plan.' Interestingly a whole year later, a similar presentation was made about the work of CFLAG and once again, the benefits were presented as 'better coordination'. On this occasion Elin asked 'how can we know that the CFLAG is doing stuff for us?'; the response was 'through working together'. Without any hint of irony, this was followed by the suggestion that instead of focusing on Hendinas level planning such as the C&YP programme bending meetings, staff abandoned these and prioritise working with the local CFLAG instead. It was not a proposal that was taken up.

Curiously, the perverse effects of the emphasis on process issues (Hogget; 1996; Hood 1991) to the detriment of action were well recognised by Julia the CF LA officer. During a one-to-one interview she spent over half an hour describing an extremely complicated planning system made up of numerous partnerships at different hierarchical levels, required to feed both 'up and down' within a service area and 'across' to associated ones. Asked about how things operated, her answers began with the terms 'allegedly' and 'technically', indicating the existence of a divide between theory and practice. She outlined a confusing messy set of relationships between those involved in strategic and operational issues and described strategic partners as being:

> busy up here (indicating a high position with hands) sorting out standards, and telling people what to do, but there's no connection at all to what people are actually doing.

The impression given was that of a complex web of strategic and service delivery partnerships, operating within shifting priorities, which led to the

establishment of different groups meeting for a short while before being put in abeyance and superseded by other groups addressing more pressing priorities. Indeed reference to the county *Children and Young People's Plan* (unreferenced to protect anonymity) located the development of CFLAG in the context of twenty different statutory measures, and strategic documents, operating at UK, Welsh and county levels.

While LA planning systems will be necessarily complex, the data indicate that this way of working privileges the planning system over outcomes and the needs of local communities and local people. It locks partners into systemic priorities, and the colloquial use of the terms 'feed up' and 'feed down' appear appropriate since, it is the system that is enriched, not direct services or service users. Partnership in this system takes on a narcissistic quality, gazing endlessly on agency relationships as it seeks to secure an elusive state of idealised coordination (Hudson and Hardy 2002). In itself this would be of little concern were it not for its perverse effects. 'Action', or certainly meaningful action as understood in the context of Hendinas, is continually pushed forward to a never-to-arrive 'next stage', in which action *will* happen *once* partnership is in place, but when understood as knowledge/coordination, partnership cannot be secured.

8.2   Partnership *as* Action

Returning to partnership-making within Hendinas, it was clear that the meeting outlined above called to resolve youth work issues, concluded with much the same level of animosity with which it started and there was no discernible progress towards increased understanding, coordination, or priorities for action. Throughout the fieldwork in addition to work focused on the needs of young people, I witnessed many initiatives supporting children and families that could be understood as operating within the seven core aims for children's services (NAfW 2006), and would technically be of interest to CFLAG, but I never heard of, or witnessed any

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Hendinas participation in this LA run partnership group. To my knowledge, nor did local staff attend any YPLAG meetings. This raises a paradox about the practice of partnership. The CF project in Hendinas has a reputation for and is held up as a model of 'good partnership'. Discussing Hendinas with officers from other organisations, it was evident that they are admired and envied for their innovative practice and the developmental progress made within the community through partnership working. Yet by drawing on the YPLAG and CFLAG examples it is possible to see that at the time of the fieldwork, they are not well integrated into the LA planning system, and could even be described as resistant, if not antagonistic to it. Thus they are simultaneously, 'good' at developing partnership within Hendinas, but poor 'partners' in these LA run processes.

The previous two chapters explored some of the practices that 'have something to do' (Law 2003) with partnership-making in Hendinas, but there has been little direct consideration of how partnership is understood. In part, this is because the work in Hendinas paid very little conscious attention to the development of partnership *per se*; it was never an objective targeted for developmental consideration. I never heard anyone talk about how they might 'develop partnership', although the idea seemed to be infused in and ever present in practice. It is appropriate to consider this absence in greater depth. The fieldwork highlights two main analytical thrusts around which particular formations of partnership coalesce in time and space.

The first of these can be seen as the antithesis of the LA 'partnership *for* action' model. In contrast, practice in Hendinas can be seen as 'partnership *as* action' and synonymously therefore much (but not all) action comes to be understood as partnership. In this sense, partnership is many things, and many things may be known as partnership, but the crux of this model is the focus on practical, localised action, with tangible outcomes, engaged in by two or more parties. Thus while 'partnership' may be multiple things, in practice it is the work and working, not the

partnership *per se* that is privileged. This is explored below through a consideration of the relationship between the CF project and AiC. The second analytical thrust derives from its status as an institutional formation which enables staff to utilise it as a resource.

The importance of action and 'things happening' was explored in Chapter 6, however it is worth briefly considering local understandings of partnership further. For some people partnership was a non-issue. A maths class provides an example. Chatting informally to participants in this environment, I was asked about my research, and explaining in my usual terms along the lines of 'it's about partnerships in Hendinas and how they help to get things done – things like the new centre.' One participant responded: 'partnerships? That's to do with business isn't it?' My reply included a reference to the maths class and that it had come about through a partnership between the local project, AiC and the college. It was met with a disinterested shrug. What was important was the fact that the class was being run locally, and in an accessible way (in both physical and symbolic terms). Our conversation then turned to the class itself and her experience of it. This developed into an open group discussion, in which participants were animated and engaged. The contrast between the disinterest in partnership with the rich and detailed narratives of educational experiences communicated powerfully the *insignificance* of 'partnership' to this group. It focuses attention instead to the importance of action and outcomes *within* the community. This position was confirmed by Sally, one of the AiC workers. She commented:

> No I don't think they (local people) care whether we're working with X or Y or Z (agencies), as long something is happening, they don't care who you work with.

The focus on action and outcomes was no less a priority for those local people more actively engaged in the institutional life of Hendinas. Action and 'things happening' were identified as one of the defining features of 'now'. Dorothy, who was introduced in Chapter 6, a local resident involved

in numerous groups described partnership as 'working together', going on to explain that the essential element in developing 'good' partnerships is:

> having a good project, they've got to have something to aim for otherwise ... well - you're just sitting talking then.

This comment draws attention to how the *working together* aspect of partnership, must connect with a purposeful outcome. The Reading Group discussed in Chapter 7 demonstrates this approach. The project can be traced through a number of stages; from the initial programme bending meeting through to the task focused discussions involving 'partners' to the group run by external volunteers and then being taken on by local people. It provides an example of involving the community, representatives from different agencies and local staff, who *work together*, for a *specific and tangible* purpose. This initiative highlights how partnership *as* practice represents an orientation or way of 'doing things' rather than an object of developmental attention in itself. Partnership, as a high trust relationship (Klijn 2010) is constituted in the processes of doing. The close working relationship between the CF project and AiC provides another particularly interesting case of partnership *as* action. The critical issue is the way partnership *as* action harnesses the strengths of partners to drive work forward, but is not an object in its own right.

8.2.1 CF and AiC: critical friends ... ticking each other's boxes

Thus far, the relationship between Hendinas CF and AiC has not been addressed in depth. Both staff groups have been presented within this research as 'front line' workers, supporting and developing the institutional life of Hendinas in the collective project of 'making things better'. There was considerable consensus between the two organisations in terms of their identification and framing of priority issues, solutions, working styles and as outlined in Chapter 7, values that guided their practice. It took quite some time to understand the relationship between them. Each occupied their own separately accessible flat (known as 'the office') within a single house on Hendinas, with one ostensibly occupying the upstairs, the other,

the downstairs flat, but staff moved freely between the two, and locating any given individual often involved looking in the 'other' flat. They were intimately aware of each other's work, they shared weekly team meetings, periodic review/ planning sessions and over time had become involved in the appointment of each other's staff. The managers of each team drew on the other for support and both told me how they welcomed the other's honest contributions to their own deliberations, trust was evident (Gambetta 1988). Each organisation had a portfolio of projects that could on paper be presented as both distinct and paradoxically a model of integrated partnership working (Jessop 2000). In practice their work was highly inter-dependent. Local people, even those very active in the institutional life of the community were frequently unaware or confused about the differences between the organisations and unsure about which any given individual worked for.

AiC staff were keen to highlight that despite being very close to the CF project they were an independent organisation with their own objectives. Moreover, that there was significant and essential value in this independence. Michael explained how when AiC started work in Hendinas:

> for the very best of intentions Elin offered us use of [CF] email system ... and we said 'No because we are Action in Communities and for us to be of use to you [CF] we need to be a critical friend to you and, you to us... we need to have a relationship and not become a single entity. If we become a single entity then we've lost the plot. We need to model in our partnership, in the way we interact' ... and actually, people can't tell who's who but actually we're separate.

Sally who worked for AiC described working in this way, in the following terms:

> you're all coming at from the same way, you're all on the same level, you're all going to put in equal amounts of work, really the partnership is all merged, because we're all equal and we're all trying to achieve the

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same thing and we have team meetings and it's all of us there, and who's part of what team, just doesn't really matter, it's just the team.

Reflecting further, Sally began to tease out the advantages of being close but separate (Levine and White 1962) She explained how AiC was funded by a range of independent trust funds encouraging greater innovation and risk-taking in their work. This was contrasted to the more prescribed guidelines and constraining audit requirements of the CF programme:

> with AiC we don't have that [restrictions], so whereas I could run things more freely, it could end up in a tick box in Communities First, but Communities First might not have been able to start that up because they didn't have the money, or the staffing... so it's difficult, but it works really well.

She went on illustrate her point with reference to a food group she had set up. Sally, who had been supporting a number of local young people in the High school, had been keen to engage with their families in the community. She had made a number of attempts at setting up parenting support type groups, but these had been unsuccessful. Reappraising her approach, and following expressed interests, she decided to set up a group focusing on healthy eating and exercise. The group generated interest and people started attending the weekly sessions. As Sally explained:

> it ticks Communities First boxes as well. This is where AiC and CF tick a lot of each other's boxes. That is my AiC [work]..., cos I'm engaging the parents I'm working with, but [other] parents and other people come along, I won't stop them, so it ticks CF boxes as well.

In this way, a single initiative can meet the organisational targets of both the CF project and AiC. Work seems to pass between one project and another, starting within the remit and capacity of one, passing to the other before possibly splitting into two (or more) further developmental initiatives, only to re-converge at some point in the future.

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Adult learning initiatives provide another example. This was a priority for both organisations. AiC had secured trust funding for two projects, one supporting young people in the building trade, and the second offering intensive supporting to adults returning to learning. The CF project was also involved in developing and delivering learning opportunities (e.g. Community Development, Food Hygiene, computer skills) and the local college was a major partner across this work. No single organisation on their own could have delivered the range of courses available locally, and the momentum generated drew people in, and created mutual support systems. AiC and the CF project started talking about stimulating 'cultural change' in which 'learning' would become a positive cultural value, creating positive effects across generations of families. They talked of drawing all the learning opportunities together and presenting them under the title of the 'Hendinas College.' Partnership here is an intrinsic part of the action; and action 'ticks' many boxes for the 'partners'. At one level, this can be read as an example of effective 'holistic working together' (*6 et al.*, 2002). But critically for the current analysis it is the emergence of 'partnership' through action that is significant. Developmentally of course, it will also come to precede action, but it is never conceived of as a pre-condition of action.

8.2.2 *Drinking each other's coffee to ... develop the narrative*

Perhaps the most apt description of the relationship between the two organisations was offered by Michael when he said '... we drink each other's coffee'. The symbolic *sitting together* (Freeman and Peck 2007) implied in this comment, makes a significant contributed to a unique role undertaken by AiC of benefit to the work of both. As Michael explained:

> part of my role is being the story teller, is to be learning the lessons amongst the staff, linking all the staff, not just our own, and among the community members and others to help the narrative develop.

Developing 'the narrative' was a prominent theme within the work of AiC, and as Michael said, the work is 'never just the practicalities, it's also

about – what does this *mean*?' (emphasis original) Drawing out *meaning* is intrinsic to the action research basis of the organisation. He went on to explain:

> What does it mean for someone to have moved from not doing anything in particular to being an apprentice or getting a string of qualifications, or going to university, which is as far as we can see a direct result of our involvement? What does it mean not just for the individual, but for that family, for this community and for the learning culture that we're trying to foster? What does it mean for our responsibility to disseminate and understand, for the wider community?

AiC take the development of 'the narrative' seriously, and have established a variety of ways in which to ensure that they capture the details of their work and learning. This includes daily work diaries, team meetings, planning meetings and review sessions (every 6 to 12 months). These are brought together by Michael and used in three critical ways. First, they support reflexivity about the work within Hendinas. Insights are shared with and discussions take place between, the whole AiC and CF staff team to improve work practices and inform future priorities. Second, mindful of the importance of sharing and learning from good practice, writing the work up in reports and evaluative documents mitigates the risk that 'the good work disappears.' AiC draw on local learning to inform their wider work and they disseminate research findings in many national policy forums. Third, as 'story teller' Michael described how he is uniquely placed 'to speak' to service providers, managers, policy makers and politicians. Drawing together the experiences of 'all staff' and 'community members' AiC are able to create an alternative sense of 'holistic' and share it with local partners and decision makers to influence local practice.

Michael provided an example when he described how through work diaries the organisation was able to follow the life of an individual young person, identifying numerous professionals offering specialist but fragmented support. This narrative highlighted the way different professionals and practices, often worked against each other in their effects in this young person's life or just failed to connect with each other. Additionally they

were able to demonstrate the consistent involvement of an AiC worker who supported the young person at home, in school and in the community, enabling a different kind of support to be offered; following and responding to the young person in qualitatively more effective ways. Having drawn out this narrative from many months of work diaries, the organisation was able 'to speak' with authority, both as an advocate for the individual and in formal policy-making environments (Czarniawska 2010).

Within Hendinas having the capacity to develop these kinds of narratives adds a different dimension to the understanding of partnership. The CF project, funded and accountable through a governmental programme is tied to formal monitoring systems. Local projects are precariously structured in their relationships with mainstream service providers. In contrast AiC as an independent organisation has fewer constraints on how it speaks and what it says. The partnership between AiC and the CF project is intimate and provides an example of partnership *as* action. Moreover, the CF project yields its learning to AiC and supports and trusts them to articulate critical messages and insights drawn from across their joint working. This ensures that the narratives that AiC tell are deeper, more robust and substantial. Partnership is thus shown to develop in the purposeful action between agencies. Moreover, it is not a neutral activity but one directed towards the development of the social justice as espoused within the projects and set against national priorities (e.g. WAG 2007b; SCF 2008). These themes are returned to in 8.4.

8.3   Working the Axis: Mediations, Manipulations and Making partnership

Chapter 7 explored the way staff attend to either side of the Communities First axis. Within Hendinas, they adopt a community development approach to supporting the institutional life of the community. While on the 'other side' of the axis, they appropriate and adapt the idea of programme bending to *herd* agencies towards greater investment and more effective service delivery. Additionally it is possible to identify a third area of work.

This has been referred to as *working the axis*. There is no suggestion that this represents a separate set of practices that can be bundled together into a definable package. The epistemological value derives from a different way of viewing that which has already been presented.

Analytically focusing on the *axis* requires consideration of the multiplicities of partnership-making, and the mobilisations and mediations that must be secured to set partnership in time and place. To put this another way, understanding what is involved in working the axis, is an exercise in recognising the practices, rationalities and interactions that have 'something to do' (Law 2003) with partnership at a given moment, and the contestation to secure a conceptual ordering that will evoke desired action. Some of what is involved in this task was explored in Chapter 7, in the discussion about *herding*. The undertaking here is to present further data about the kinds of practices that attend to the axis, and to consider the analytical issues that are raised.

8.3.1 Bringing the axis into view

First, however it is necessary to consider why attending to 'the axis' matters. This thesis has argued that the driver of the CF policy is located in its relational construction, and the principal agents of change are community based front line staff. However, the objects of that change sit on opposite 'sides' of both a conceptual and material interactional axis. At this level the programme is structurally innovative. It removes 'the community' from direct hierarchical intervention opening up creative and productive opportunities. However, practically this division stacks the odds against the 'smaller' and less powerful community side of the axis, restricting and prescribing the arena of engagement. It is within this context, that relationships are grounded in the CF programme, and vested with developmental power. But recognition of power imbalance is weak in the policy (WAG 2007a). The rhetoric of 'equal partners' that permeates guidance (*ibid.*) provides a façade of parity, from which the dissonance between the language of partnership and the experience of 'working in

partnership' with large powerful organisations, become difficult to articulate. It is appropriate therefore to explore how these relationships operate and focusing on the axis offers such opportunity. Highlighting the axis as a topic of analysis owes an intellectual debt to scholars that have focused on other points of contact between conceptually and materially dissonant worlds. In Chapter 6 this literature was called upon in exploring the relationship between the public and the private, here it is taken up as one of politics (Pratt1991; Newman 2012a, 2012b).

The literature attending to the challenges of partnership working, (Huxham 1996; Hudson and Hardy 2002; Sullivan and Skelcher 2002; Hudson *et al.,* 2003) could theoretically provide some insight into the nature of relationships in partnership-making processes. However although much of this scholarship identifies a range of familiar challenges in 'working together', including the problems of power imbalances and cultural dissonance, their response is overwhelmingly technocratic in its orientation (better communication, clarity of objectives etc). Implicit in this approach is the assumption that these 'problems' and the proffered 'solutions', are *the* problems that need to be addressed (Rose 1999; Li 2007). Or perhaps more accurately, they conceptually stabilise partnership-making, in terms of the problems and solutions identified. Operating from the perspective of public policy makers, these problems-solutions are invariably constructed within this policy frame of reference.

Thus, contained within the discourse of partnership is a disconnected momentum in which the only problems of partnership-making, including deliberation itself, are technological ones, which systematically addressed make possible the progress of partnership-making. The productivity of the endeavour is taken for granted, and agency itself is confusingly dispersed. As in the LA youth service model of partnership encapsulated in the term 'partnership *for* action', the partnership encounter is de-politicised and partnership-making is 'rendered technical' (Rose 1996; Li 2007), for example in terms of 'gathering information' and 'identifying the gaps'. Boundary spanners (Williams 2012) acting as partnership makers may be

called upon to address the challenges of negotiation, translation and bridging gaps etc, but these challenges are logistical ones, not deliberative (Fischer 2003). In this light focusing on *working the axis* entails a decision to recognise the *political*. Staff in Hendinas are productive agents (Newman 2012a, 2012b), seeking to mould interaction for the benefit of the community. However, partnership-making is an ongoing project, and its conceptual fixing can only ever be temporary. Numerous resources, sources of authority and grounds for legitimacy (discourses, organisational systems, authority, programmatic power, democratic power, community authenticity) are brought to bear in the project of fixing or stabilising partnership, but these themselves are open to multiple understandings. Thus within these dynamics, contestable narratives are themselves resources in contested orderings. In this context Michael's emphasis on meanings and developing 'the narrative' of the work, is an important element in seeking to shape local discourse and action to meet needs as understood in the orderings presented by staff to advantage the local community.

8.3.2 'Naff' partnerships

Earlier the preferred partnership model in Hendinas was identified in terms of 'partnership *as* action'. However, development work does not often occur in ideal conditions, and staff worked reflexively to maximise progress within the prevailing conditions. Sally recognised that not all partnerships are equal. She told me some partnerships are:

> a bit naff (laughs), but you've got to have them for a reason, and you have partners like N (names agency), it's atrocious! But we do it for our own benefit, because of what we can get out of it. So it's NOT partnership.

'Naff' partnerships are instrumentally based and may be developed for numerous reasons. Staff offered a number of possibilities including because one or other of the partners 'needs your money or your skill base'; or because having a partnership 'matters to the funding we can get in' and because 'funders want to see you working with others'. Staff are

fully aware of the differences between rhetorical and meaningful engagement and the shallowness of some partnerships is well understood. Partnership is accepted as a game. It is a condition for gaining resources, legitimacy and status. Playing the game is a means to an end, driven by mandated government policy in which everyone knows enough of the rules to play to the policy gallery. Recognised as pastiche, the game continues because disclosing it carries too many risks (loss of funding, legitimacy, status). Sally embarrassed at this state of affairs said, 'it sounds awful doesn't it?'

In this context working the axis is little more that the 'manipulation' Joanna spoke of in Chapter 7. But its significance lies in its purposeful appropriation. In this formation 'partnership' is packed with institutional meaning. Paradoxically its requisition by the project and use in this way may be particularly well developed, and carry greater significance within Hendinas because of its deviation from the standard CF model of a formal partnership. In this understanding partnership as an idealised institutional concept can be used in the game of partnership to encourage aspiring partners. But it also serves as a carrot to feed inspiration, and where necessary, a stick with which to harangue the reluctant and a showcase to shame the unwilling. This seems to capture something of Heclo's (2006) call to 'think institutionally.' Having abandoned the security of the institutional formation of a formal 'Partnership Board', local staff have developed an 'attentiveness to the world' of partnership-making (*ibid.*,:735) and seem, to paraphrase Heclo, 'think partnership'. They draw together the validity ascribed to partnership as institutional formation, and the normative cultural values inscribed in it (working together etc) and use these to engage others in making 'the future'; sometimes more or less 'naff'ly' than others.

There are three issues to draw from this discussion. The first recognises the importance analytically of working the axis. The second relates to the way the axis is worked. Within Hendinas, this is framed within the social justice values espoused by staff, but theoretically, it could be put to work

for different ends. This relates to the third issue, which is the inherently political nature of this work. Thus, while some conceptualisations may present partnership-making as neutral (*cf.* boundary spanners, Williams 2012) and non-political, and thus amenable to technocratic intervention, this thesis does not find this to be the case. The way relationships between partners are framed and the terms of that interaction have political consequences. Therefore, purposefully acting on that interaction to mediate and shape its outcomes is an inherently political act (Clarke and Glendinning 2002).

8.3.3 Mediating the CF axis through 'times of contact'

Discussion in Chapter 7 explored the way staff appropriating the idea of programme bending seek to develop alternative construction of problems (McKee 2011) and alternative 'technical' solutions, as they work across the two strategic strands of CF work. Another way of reflecting on the axis is as a 'contact zone' (Pratt 1991), described by Newman and Clarke as 'profoundly unstable places' (2009:62). This instability creates opportunities for those who offer even temporarily attractive strategies of stabilisation. It is possible to read staff actions as endeavours to stabilise the 'zone' in favour of local people. However, this needs to be understood not as a single act but as ongoing contested processes of mediation. The strategies adopted in Hendinas attempt more limited temporal and contained *moments* of stabilisation. These might more appropriately be thought of as *times of contact* in which staff mediate relationships within the CF arena of action and seek to control when and how different partners come into contact, the terms on which they engage and the framings of problems and possible solutions. The structuring and management of programme bending meetings can be viewed in this way.

It is a strategy with both more and less 'successful' outcomes. As outlined in Chapter 7, the Health and Wellbeing (HWB) programme bending meeting had initially been postponed because as Elin told me 'we haven't got enough people on board'. This was a recognition that staff, were not

yet at a stage of having secured sufficient numbers, and/or relevant critical agents to sign up to the narrative of problems for which they were seeking to secure solutions. It is possible to reflect on the nature of the dissonance between narratives of health held within Hendinas by staff and community, and by key health professionals. As noted in Chapter 7, when the HWB meeting did eventually go ahead, it spent more time debating and seeking consensus about nature of 'needs' and there were higher levels of contention in the presentation of 'problems' and the establishment of priorities across agencies. Indeed, at one of the meetings, a health planner spoke up publically to ask with puzzlement 'what are we doing here?' the response 'oh this is how we do partnership' did not satisfactorily settle concerns. The health representative remained unconvinced about the capacity to develop joint work. Pointing to the issue of smoking she said, 'well it's a priority for us, but it may not be for local residents.' The dissonance between narratives of the problem, the conceptualisations of the process, and disagreements about solutions remained considerable. In this instance, the 'time of contact' was not ordered in terms favoured by project staff, and local narratives of health that sought more diffuse approaches to promoting good health (e.g. health in wider context of family support), did not have resonance with mainstream providers who favoured more targeted interventions (e.g. educational programmes aimed at smoking reduction). Working the axis is not always successful.

8.4   Herding Failure and National Policy

The discussion in this chapter has highlighted a number of ways in which localised understandings and practices of partnership-making have been challenged by policy practice beyond Hendinas. It has been suggested that the interchange between Hendinas based staff and LA officers in respect to youth services, could be viewed as an instance of 'herding failure' on the part of the local project. Focusing on 'failure' or perhaps more accurately areas of intense contestation is important for highlighting the boundaries of local work. This brings into relief the relationship

between national policy and local implementation, and local narratives and dominant discourses. Running through the discussion of work in Hendinas has been a story of an 'innovative and successful' local project. Certainly while recognising they still had much to do, local people and staff alike actively reflect on developments in the local community and the operation of its institutional life in positive terms. It was a narrative also repeated and embellished by many representatives from a wide range of external agencies, from senior civil servants to small voluntary groups. In this context, it would be easy to restrict analysis to the level of internal project dynamics however this approach is rejected on three grounds.

First, by placing the study in a broader context it is possible to recognise both the many and considerable achievements within Hendinas, whilst also identifying the limits of their work. Second, addressing 'failure' invites investigation of that which is 'failing'. Taking up the provocation contained in the rhetorical use of such an emotive term, it is possible to use the idea of 'failure' to reflect on what is being attempted by whom, and at what level. Theoretically, policy proceeds as if it 'cascades' through a system that 'fits together'. The role of 'guidance' is testament to how that system is supposed to be enacted, (although of course it is less clear, whether it serves as a statement of what is, or that to be aspired to). Reflecting on 'failure' provides a conceptual inroad to the 'whole' policy system. It is possible to take up a position in Hendinas, at the point of 'failure,' and look across the system of which it is a part. However, as the discussion of governance in Chapter 3 identified, the picture, is more like a Kandinsky painting than carefully ordered Russian dolls (Newman and Clarke 2009:41). Focusing on 'failure' brings into relief the 'uneven shapes and uncomfortable alignments' of governance, but instead of seeing these 'held in tenuous balance,' we see them as they either fall apart, or are being reconfigured . At this point it is possible to consider what is being broken, or not constituted or constituted in different ways and examine why this might be the case. This then takes debate to the third reason for shifting the analytical horizon. Looking out from the vantage point of Hendinas it is possible to ask 'what does local success and failure tell us

about the Communities First programme?' These three themes are woven throughout the following discussion.

8.4.1   The failure to render technical

The role of staff in Hendinas has been presented as one in which they seek to develop both favourable community conditions and a positive orientation and action in local developments on the part of agencies. Chapter 7 explored processes of 'herding' and this chapter identified how staff 'work the axis' to facilitate partnership-making. The case has been put that contained within the ideas and practices and encapsulated in the term 'herding', staff develop alternative narratives drawn from local conditions and experiences, filtered through their commitment to a set of social values. These are then brought to bear in the contested processes of partnership-making. In particular, they seek to develop alternative constructions and presentations of 'technical' acts. Within the narrative of critical self-responsibilisation proposed in this thesis, *this* 'rendering technical' is inherently political.

The work in Hendinas provides examples of 'successful' construction of the 'problem-solution', such as the case of offering educationalists a school-based but community-run literacy group. While these actions are open to interpretation as disciplinary self-responsibilisation (Rose and Miller 1992; McKee 2009), it is also possible to recognise the ways staff 'worked agencies' productively to secure community-focused outcomes. However, in the case of youth services outlined above, staff were not able to 'herd' agencies, nor were they able to secure access to the 'axis', leaving them unable to shape action towards their desired outcomes. The 'failures' within the youth work example can be understood at many interrelated elements. Li's (2007:7) assertion that '[t]he identification of a problem is intimately linked to the availability of a solution' while insightful does not in itself address how in conditions of governance many agents may compete to offer differing versions of both problems and solutions, within contested contexts and in the midst of multiple dynamics .

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In the case of the 'problem of young people', consideration of 'the problem' offers a starting point to reflect on these issues. There are a number of interconnected threads to draw attention to. First, unlike their carefully considered and planned programme bending meetings the 'problem of young people' was thrust upon local staff. Within Hendinas there was a well developed programme of work and although inevitably full of challenges, these fell within the realms of expectations. 'The problem' was unanticipated and came from a group (neighbouring community) with whom they had not been actively working. This is the second issue. Sally explained with disbelief that Hendinas had been accused by representatives of the Cwmhir Community Council of trying 'to take over.' In relative terms in small valley communities, Hendinas had become 'big' and their success in terms of investment and community action had been well reported in local media. In this context, offers to 'work in partnership' resonate with different, less favourable meanings. This flows directly into the third issue, that of the perceived over investment in Hendinas, and connects with issues of 'fairness' and an implied sense that not everything was 'above board' (see below). Within the meeting outlined earlier, the LA officers aligned themselves with the interests of Cwmhir, in what seemed to be an instance of supporting the 'underdog' against the (perceived) better resourced and dominant Hendinas.

The issue of 'fairness' resonates in many different ways. The 'fair' allocation of resources was a critical issue in the meeting. Thus when Joanna asked of the youth worker, 'what can she do for us?' the question provoked antagonism. The community of Hendinas was in receipt of CF programme investment, including specialist youth development staff, and AiC projects made an additionally significant contribution. Cwmhir had none of these. From the LA perspective, the implicit expectation contained in the question was disputed, and added to a picture of Hendinas getting 'too much.' This issue was raised by the CF LA officer during our one-to-one interview where she pointed to other ways in which she believed Hendinas to be unfairly privileged. For example, local authorities are large

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organisations, and while the discussion about the YPLAG and CFLAG represents a planning model antithetical to the style of work in Hendinas, other parts of the authority welcomed opportunities to work creatively with the project. Many of the environmental initiatives in Hendinas were well supported by other departments in the LA including their attempts to make Hendinas a 'zero waste zone' which again was well publicised. Further, support in many of these initiatives had come in the form of access to and cooperation with, senior executive officers of the authority. This was portrayed as both unfair, and somehow not 'proper'. The decision of the not-for-profit organisation to support the school based reading group with volunteers from their Employee Volunteering Scheme, was questioned on the basis 'that it's not happening anywhere else' and as this officer said, 'god knows where they went to get their links with AiC and ... well good luck to them, but ... '

There are many issues at play here but most significant is the operation of different understandings of equality. Equality, as expressed by the LA officer, was about everybody *getting* their fair share, a utilitarian equality of input, and an approach underpinned by economic rationalities and widely debated (Arrow 1971; Sen 1979; Lister 1998; Drakeford 2007a; Jordon 2008). This contrasted with understandings adopted in Hendinas, where staff spoke about the need to invest heavily in order to impact meaningfully on long term and complex disadvantage and embed cultural change. This approach can be seen in the idea of creating the 'Hendinas College' as a hub of learning and means of changing attitudes to education. It was expressed locally as working towards the 'tipping point'. An idea popularised by Gladwell (2000), and used by staff to inform their problem-solving deliberations and to aid planning.

The incompatibility of planning models is another source of contestation. The discussion earlier concerning 'partnership *for* action', and 'partnership *as* action' highlighted the differences in understandings of partnership between Hendinas staff and officers operating the YPLAG and CFLAG groups. But the existence of difference does not in itself account for the

dominance of one over the other. The weight of the mainstream policy logic, the momentum generated by the local authority planning system and the prevailing narrative were powerful. Local authority officers had at their disposal not only discursive power but access to material resources to structure interaction and the bureaucratic legitimacy and authority to impose it. Worthy of note however is that these resources would have been equally available to senior officers working on environmental issues, but they chose to use them to rationalise a different strategic approach with different kinds of actions to those deployed within youth services (see Bevir *et al.*, 2003; Bevir and Rhodes 2010). Thus within the same organisation both hierarchical and dispersed systems of governance operate (Newman and Clarke 2009; Bell and Hindmoor 2009) and are confusingly directed to the same project. Analysis of the issues at play within the local authority is beyond the scope of this study, but the coexistence of these different strategies highlights inconsistencies between prescriptive theoretical alignments of structure, strategy and action, and their operation in practice. Bureaucracy does not necessarily lead to hierarchical command-control decision making, nor does partnership secure network governance (Lowndes and Skelcher 1998). This suggests that the role of culture, among other factors, is significant and needs to be included in analytical deliberations (Bevir and Rhodes 2010).

Within Hendinas, the failure of local staff to shape the problem-solution in the 'problem of young people' had the effective of restricting the actions of local staff, closing down their opportunities to shape the discourse and take away from them the right to 'work the axis'. Their strategy to appropriate the processes and offer alternative technical solutions was not effective in this instance. This closing down of space for manoeuvre rendered local staff ineffective in structuring or controlling the encounter between agents or shaping plans for local service development. It is on these grounds that the example is understood as 'failure.' However, although presented as a 'problem of young people' it is clear that 'the problem' had little to do with them. The 'failure' relates to the model of

enactment developed by Hendinas based staff and its relationship with other agents and other action models, within a national policy context. In this instance the 'uneven shapes and uncomfortable alignments' (Newman and Clarke 2009:41) of governance can be seen through the instance of local failure to have been reconfigured. In this case, the reconfiguration has taken on a more hierarchical ordering. However the refusal of Hendinas staff to participate, and unwillingness of LA officers to negotiate, had the effect of pushing out of view those elements that do not, or will not, 'fit' in. Thus in Hendinas an impasse developed between the LA and local staff. Hendinas staff withdrew in the short term from the local governance of youth services, conceding to the LA the right to structure and run the local system. Two issues should be noted here, first the situation is always dynamic, and 'failure' and withdrawal at a given moment does not necessarily signal the end of the matter, re-engagement is potentially always possible. Second, throughout these tussles, the youth work in Hendinas continued. This reminds us of the existence of a gap between the governance and practice of public policy.

8.4.2 Local success, failure and the national policy

Reflecting on the national policy from a local perspective brings to light a number of key issues. The CF policy is permissive and creates or allows space to be grasped for innovative local practice (NAfW 2000a, WAG 2002a, 2007a). The skill and commitment of local based staff is apparent, but without this policy space they could have not operated as they do. And putting the 'failure' outlined above in its wider context, it is possible to recognise local achievements as impressive in terms of both their breadth and scale. The new centre, the environmental projects, and the development of extensive learning opportunities for example, were very real and tangible developments in an area that had suffered significant and long terms multiple disadvantages. Many individuals as well as the collective institutional life of the community have benefited from these initiatives. And while these developments should rightly be celebrated, they do not exist in isolation and their presence alongside their reported

absence in many other parts of Wales raise questions about national policy and its implementation. A cautionary note is required here, this study explored practice in Hendinas, these findings therefore cannot attest to the type of developments in other CF projects, however within these limits, there are cognate issues that need to be addressed.

The NAfW described the Communities First programme, as 'flagship' and Chapter 2 argued it could be seen as emblematic of the new devolved politics of Wales. Intrinsic to this narrative is the equality duty (Chaney 2004; Chaney and Fevre 2004) enshrined in statute but taken further as an aspiration in the greater challenge of equality of outcomes (Drakeford 2007b). Despite its presentational shifts, refocused priorities and ill-defined targets (AMION and Old Bell 3 2011), the CF programme has always operated within a broader narrative of social justice, commensurate with a focus on equality of outcomes. In this light the CF policy can be recognised as enabling and facilitative, supporting community leadership and developmental innovation. However, it is also possible to see it as a driver of fragmentation and division between communities, exasperating rivalries and feeding petty differences. Paradoxically the case of Hendinas, demonstrates both these dynamics.

The programme's flexibility can be seen in the way it creates the opening for local staff to take control of community based planning involving local residents and agencies, presented as community development work, programme bending and 'herding' This demonstrates the spaces of possibility found in contemporary governance that can be harnessed to produce positive effects by and for, local communities. However, coexisting alongside these opportunities are also limitations and risks. In the case of Hendinas, 'delivering success' required high levels of engagement within the institutional life of the community, and significant levels of commitment and skill on the part of staff. It is unclear to what extent these represent particulars within Hendinas or are representative of the programme as a whole. Certainly AiC investment is not representative (accepting that they do work in a small number of other CF areas). While

the working practices adopted by local staff have had demonstrably positive effects Joanna was right when she said 'we manipulate [the]... system,' and Michael taking up the role of advocate, defended the practice because 'what we are doing is giving back what people get.' And while this study does not question the integrity of the staff encountered in Hendinas, it is possible to raise the issue of ethics. Not however as a question of moral philosophy or the ethics of practice (although both are open to investigation), the interest here attends to the ethics of structures and systems. While the outcomes in Hendinas are understood in broadly positive terms the programmatic space to 'work the system' might equally be harnessed by others for less positive ends. The experiences of Hendinas staff who had worked in other projects, (see Chapter 7) tell us something of the power plays engaged in by some people. Indeed the problematic role of councillors and their undue influence in local projects was specifically addressed within revised Welsh Government guidance (WAG 2007a).

The tensions between the neighbouring communities of Hendinas and Cwmhir needs consideration. While there may be historical antecedents at play in these dynamics, undoubtedly the CF programme was a source of further aggravation. Cwmhir is just an administrative boundary away. Its socio-economic makeup was not markedly different to that of Hendinas. Anecdotally, it was the presence of a small private housing estate in the ward that lifted it out of the category of 'most deprived,' in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. Indeed, one of the Lower Super Output Areas within Cwmhir, was ranked lower than one within the Hendinas ward (WIMD 2011). There was much that united these communities, their children went to the same schools, they used the same services and many people in Hendinas told me about their family 'down in Cwm'. Yet the CF Policy through its use of an administrative boundary has directed innovative resources up the hill and left only the means for building resentments at the bottom. This type of differentiated investment in poor communities supports a focus on minor differences and ultimately undermines development in both communities. Hendinas is intimately

connected with its neighbouring and wider communities. While theoretically, differences between equality of opportunity and equality of outcome facilitates the targeting of resources, this strategy is dependent on the appropriate initial identification of needs. Within the CF programme, the compilation and use of statistics failed to recognise needs in Cwmhir[8] and separated it from its neighbour Hendinas. Arguably therefore, the CF policy was inevitably restricted in its ability to contribute as effectively as it might otherwise have done, to increasing equality of outcomes (Drakeford 2007a, 2007b). In terms of its effects on local partnership-making and project building, it highlights the limitations of what can be achieved within a single community. Achievements may be different in different locations at different times, but partnership-making in respect to social justice cannot develop in isolation. Thus between Hendinas and Cwmhir, difference and division were progressed rather than unity and collective action.

There is another aspect of local innovation that raises issues for the national policy framework. Although proposals for the wind turbine were still at an early stage and had many obstacles to overcome, its identification as an area of work raises issues pertinent to the development of equality and a more just society. Some people in Hendinas presented this project as an opportunity to secure a source of guaranteed community income for many years; and indeed this may be so. However, within a national policy it raises challenging questions. On the one hand the extent of community self organising it demonstrates is commendable, but read through the prism of equality, one is left asking 'What of those communities without access to a suitable hillside for a turbine or a waterway to generate hydro-energy?' Community energy initiatives have grown significantly across the UK in recent years (a *Google* search produces many pages of contacts). However, pulling back from the individual instance to gain an overview, the picture that emerges is unclear. The issues being teased out here, re-engage with those

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[8] The revised CF Programme, operating since 2013 has attempted to overcome this problem (WAG 2013)

encountered in earlier discussions about the 'death of the social' (Rose 1996, 1999 see Chapter 4). Contained within these kinds of initiatives are paradoxically fragmented collective dynamics. Many community energy initiatives are established as cooperatives or community interest companies and speak to collectivist ideas and democratic ethics. However, it is necessary to consider the possibility that they represent another form of 'gated community', in which those 'within' are able to heat their homes (or fund their community centre) while the excluded shiver. Within a national programme that encompasses 20% of the population, these are critical issues, not because of the immediate effects within communities, but for the path its sets. The kinds antagonisms represented in the spat between Cwmhir and Hendinas hold within them these tensions, and instead of progressing equality of outcomes, they potentially highlight the resource-*less*ness of some communities

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the partnership-making pathways created in the interactions between the local project in Hendinas, 'its partners' and the national policy. The aim has been to understand better the accomplishment and limitations of local partnership-making through a consideration of the wider context in which it operates. Additionally this offers some insights into issues relevant for the national policy. For example the analysis of 'herding failure' has provided ethnographic data on the challenges of community-led partnership-making. Moreover, examination of 'the problem of young people' and the interchange between local staff and officers of the LA provided the basis from which to explore different models of partnership-making. Although not representative of the entire local authority in which Hendinas is situated, local planning forums (YPLAG's and CFLAG's) have been shown to operate a partnership *for* action model, which draws on traditional planning rationalities to prioritise knowledge and coordination as a precondition for action. This was described as 'narcissist' notwithstanding policy aims to

the contrary, it was characterised by an undue focus on process and system issues to the cost of service 'users' and outcomes.

In contrast, the local project has developed an in-practice model of partnership *as* action in which partnership-making is an integral part of action-planning and delivery. This was further explored through consideration of the relationship between the Hendinas CF project and Action in Communities. It demonstrates the mutuality in the meeting of organisational objectives contained in this approach. This is captured in the phrase 'ticking each other's boxes.' The involvement of AiC offered many opportunities to Hendinas and the CF project. In addition to a range of practical projects, AiC's capacity to 'develop the narrative' adds a unique dimension to partnership-making. Together these narratives feed into the practices described as 'herding' and 'working the axis', and additionally facilitate the construction of alternative understandings of 'holistic' practice when viewed from the perspective of service users.

Encapsulated in the idea of partnership *as* action is recognition that the approach requires purposeful work. This is understood with the CF model presented in Chapter 2 as 'working the axis'. This idea is offered as a counterbalance to notions that partnership-making can be viewed as a neutral act, one amenable to technocratic interventions. Notably the fieldwork illustrates the productive agency of staff who apply their interventions purposefully towards social justice goals. It was acknowledged that partnership-making operates at different levels and some relationships, in the words of Sally are more 'naff' than others. Accepting the limitations of these interactions, staff draw on institutional narratives of partnership, and their power as a leading advocate within the community to maximise potential of action and securing behaviours, commitments and investments on terms favourable to local people (Derkzen *et al.*, 2007). Even in these less-than-ideal conditions, ways can be found to work the axis productively.

This lies in contrast to the example of 'herding failure' presented in 'the problem of young people'. Drawing from this example the chapter explored what was at stake in the exchanges between local staff and officers of the LA. It was demonstrated that the failure stemmed not from service issues, but concerned contestation about the power to shape narratives and construct the problem-solutions. In this instance a variety of factors were explored to account for this failure. The discussion illustrates the way in which governance arrangements are subject to contestation and remain dynamic and liable to reordering. The example of 'failure' demonstrates the way local partnership-making cannot exist in isolation, but is part of a wider system of interaction, within which coexist both supportive and restraining dynamics. Within this field, the parameters of local work will shift across time and place as it is accelerated through supportive networks (such as in environmental projects) or curtailed when less favourable conditions apply (as in youth services). The development of the local, particularly when isolated from its immediate environment (i.e. its neighbours) raises issues about understandings of equality at a national level and questions the appropriateness of some policy drivers in advancing the delivery of equality of outcomes, as espoused in policy discourse (NAfW 2006; WAG 2007b; SCF 2008)

Chapter 9 Analytical Themes and Future Directions

This final chapter of this thesis brings together the themes discussed in earlier ones and considers them in respect to the research questions set out in Chapter 1. It is presented in three sections. In the first, the methodological position is revisited. This approach has been core to understanding both the research questions and the type of study undertaken. As this research project has developed and been written up, these questions have come to be understood as lines of inquiry that hint at levels of interconnected practice and rationalisations requiring exploration rather than questions capable of direct and simple answers. Partnership has come to be understood as made up of many things that 'are to do' (Law 2003) with it. These are explored in the second section of the chapter. Contained within the 'things to do with partnership-making ' are the 'answers', such as they are, to the research questions, and these will be drawn out as the discussion proceeds. The final section explores some of the policy implications and further research directions arising from this study. It considers the contribution it makes to scholarship and highlights areas of further inquiry that it provokes.

9.1   Research Approach, Methodology and the Research Question

I have claimed that the methodological approach adopted to studying community-led partnership has been somewhat distinct, taking as its starting point a blend of ontological understandings, the framing of the policy-practice context and epistemological priorities. The three are interconnected and imply each other and it is worth briefly re-visiting them

in the light of the experience and learning. This research diverges from traditional policy analysis which explores issues of implementation from *within* a given policy or service, for example addressing concerns about the effectiveness of delivery in respect to meeting targets, or users experiences of services. In contrast, this research does not reflect on the implementation of policy *per se,* and does not evaluate the effectiveness of the CF policy within Hendinas. Instead, it takes its cue from the community as a location primarily of everyday life together with its construction as both a policy target *for* transformation and a policy agent *of* transformation. In this context, the *agency* of the community in partnership-making becomes the focus of research interest. This is a particularly pertinent focus for research because the framework established to deliver the CF policy bestows upon 'the community', not only agency, but also the status of 'leader' within an institutionalised 'partnership'. Moreover, it is not a research position hitherto adopted and contributes to the originality of this thesis. Thus within this context, the research explored 'how partnership was made in and through everyday lives' The language here is rather contrived, but the couplings created in policy are themselves uneasy and uncomfortable. The phrasing of the question points to this dissonance and the frequent conflation of different meanings in both the presentation of problems and the policy directions for their resolution. It is in these tensions that the research is located.

'Community' provides a key example of these conflations and was explored in the literature in Chapter 4. Chapter 6 drew out the distinctions between two understandings of community, the first grounded in intimate relationships and affective bonds, and the second an institutional dimension of community that exist both independently and in response to policy interpellation. The research has been primarily located in this latter understanding. I have referred to this as the 'institutional life of Hendinas.' This distinction is central to analytically grasping the research question, and opens the way to deeper and more nuanced analytical insight. Paradoxically however, while this problematisation of 'community' is implied within the research questions and awareness of it informed the

research interest, it was a distinction that was not at first fully appreciated. Thus, the insights implied in the research question were iteratively brought to bear on their development, extending and pushing forward the inquiry. Certainly, the conceptual openness inherent within the research methodology has been one of its strengths, facilitating the application of emergent findings and extending the questioning of the empirical field and analytical task.

9.1.1 Positioning the research

Highlighting the institutional life of Hendinas as distinct from the community as a whole also helps to shed light on another challenging conceptual relationship. This is the positioning of the research itself in relation to both the community and the CF policy. It has been claimed that the research is located within the community (as distinct from the policy) and explores community partnership-making practices. However, conceptually partnership is given meaning by its location in public policy discourse, and this forms the basis on which thinking about the research coalesced and emerged into a plan amenable to enactment. In this sense, the research is inevitably framed by the policy and takes its lead from partnership-making as constructed by it. However, community activeness is not synonymous with that called for by the policy, i.e. the institutional life of the community operates both within the CF policy and beyond it. Similarly, the policy itself interacts formally with the institutional life of the community as 'community leader' but seeks also to impact on the personal and private lives of people living in communities. This is represented in Figure 3 below.

The harmonious representation of a computer generated image cannot do justice to the uneven interplay between unsettled concepts. However, its purpose is to communicate *only* the interconnected nature and mismatch of concepts within the field. What is more difficult to encapsulate figuratively is the dynamic movement between these spheres. The fields of enactment that constitutes 'the community', its 'institutional life', and the

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'CF policy' are each in continual flux, but dynamics are not paced equally, with the same regularity or intensity. Thus, they push and pull against each
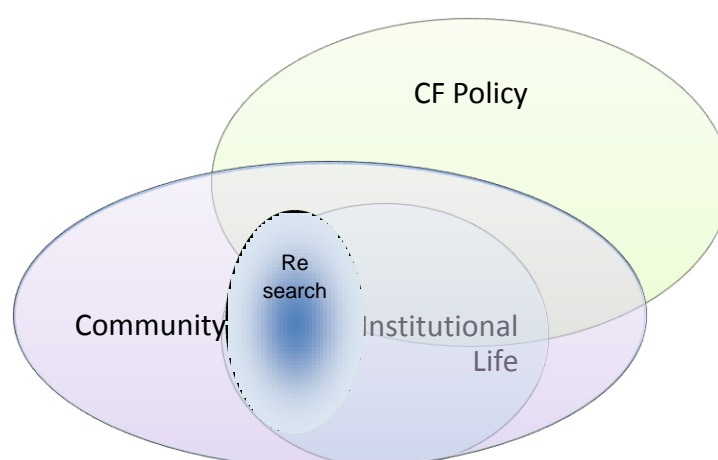

Figure 3 Relationship between research, community, institutional life and CF policy within Hendinas

other, coalescing and breaking off in ever shifting, and often unpredictable alignments. Thus while the CF programme overtly constructs 'the community' as a principal agent of its development, it also targets it for transformation. In the first instruction, it speaks to the community in its institutional formation while in the latter it addresses a particular kind of community inhabited by people in 'need' (of education, skills, confidence etc.). It instructs the first evocation of community (as agent), to work upon the second, in a muddled and perplexing dynamic, whilst also seeking to control the parameters within which acceptable action falls (e.g. as in the 'Vision Framework' WAG 2007a).

Within this dynamic field, the research itself takes a position. Given the research interest was the agency of the community, it was located primarily within the institutional life of Hendinas to enable exploration of community-led partnership. But as seen in Figure 3 this drives the research towards both the policy as it seeks to influence the institutional life of Hendinas and beyond into other aspects of the institutional projects aimed at 'making things better' (e.g. AiC educational projects and long term plans for the wind turbine). The distinction between aspects of

community makes it is possible to see how partnership as a concept, drawn into the institutional life of Hendinas can be pushed out beyond the overlap between it and the policy into other projects within the institutional life of the community. It is in this sense that partnership is understood as being utilised laterally, i.e. beyond (but not separate from) the specific remit of the CF programme. These issues are returned to below, here it is sufficient to grasp that the research is located within community rather than policy readings of partnership.

One of the ways in which this debate has been conceptualised is to recognise it as emerging from the interplay, competition and synergy of different conceptual orders. Chapter 5 introduced the idea that partnership as a quasi-stable phenomenon is brought into being through a multiplicity of practices and orderings that 'have something to do with' it (Law 2003:4). This epistemological understanding of social phenomenon has informed the research, the task of identifying how partnership is made in and through every day lives, is not therefore an essentialist one. The research cannot offer definitive statements, instead it has explored the multiplicity of things 'to do with' partnership and tried to draw out those that come to represent and constitute, in the temporal and given context, community-led partnership-making in Hendinas. These things are of many different sorts, they include a range of resources (historical narratives, skilled staff, tenacious activists, policies, buildings, finances), complex sources of power (programmatic, expertise, institutional legitimacy), diverse forms of action (community development, leadership, 'programme bending') and many kinds of interaction (negotiating, 'herding', conceptual). Of course these are not distinct neatly packaged 'things', but each contribute in dynamic interaction with other rationalities, orderings and sense-making strategies to constitute the orderings that bring partnership into being.

Adopting this methodological approach has supported the investigation of the research question by drawing out the distinctions between homogenous evocations of holistic communities inherent in and evoked by policy and the communities in which real people live their lives. As others

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have shown these are heterogeneous made up of many diverse groups (Cohen 1985). The unique contribution offered in this research comes from the concept of the institutional life of a community, which opens up reflection on the collective (but not necessarily consensual) projects of 'making things better.'

9.2 Things to do with partnership-making

While accepting that methodologically partnership-making remains an open and dynamic project, it is also possible to identify a range of 'things' that interact with and contribute to its formation. The practices and orderings that enacted 'community-led partnership-making' within Hendinas were judged both locally and as reported to me by many representatives from external agencies, as largely 'successfully' accomplished. There are two observations to be made about this position, first that 'success' had a material base. This is encapsulated in the idea of 'things happening.' It is possible to point to a large range of projects, activities and initiatives that demonstrate this 'success', some of which have been highlighted in preceding chapters (e.g. the new community centre, educational classes, and environmental improvements). It is not possible to judge whether these outcomes are the direct result of partnership-making, or other factors, but they certainly had 'something to do' with it, and their success was often attributed to it. Second, epistemologically 'success' suggests that there is a level of concord and alignment between orderings in respect to the development and presentation of 'things happening,' and this section addresses some of these.

9.2.1 *The institutional life of Hendinas, policy agency and the limits of action*

It is necessary to reflect on how the conceptual distinction between the community as a 'whole' and its institutional life contributes directly to the notion of community-led partnership-making. The idea of the institutional

life of the community was presented in Chapter 6 as referring to the collective and publicly orientated interactions that are aimed at the project of 'making things better' (not to be confused with their achievement). This could be thought of as the realm of community activism. A further distinction has been drawn between projects within the institutional life of the community that emerge from within the community and those evoked by the CF or other policies. The distinction is not a fixed one and empirically impossible to sustain however, conceptually it provides a way of reflecting on the research field. What is being highlighted here is how public policy constructs communities (as opposed to individuals) as agents of collective action. This is a defining distinction and one made by the CF programme that has significant consequences for the understanding of partnership-making. However, it should be noted that communities such as Hendinas are more than that constructed by the policy.

To create community as an agent of partnership-making in Hendinas requires the community, at least in its institutional life to have a sense of itself. Public agencies, and their representatives enter into partnership-making relationships, (negotiating, bargaining etc) as conceptual entities that are brought into being by virtue of their organisational status given substance through stated values and purpose as expressed in statute, mission statements, policy directions etc. For people within communities to enter into such relationships they too need to understand their actions as *beyond-themselves* as individuals. The construction of organisations like *Renew* and the community centre make a critical contribution but there remains a need to construct 'the community' as an entity. On the basis of the research in Hendinas it has been suggested that one way to explore this issue is through a consideration its institutional life. Chapter 6 explored some of the ways that a unified sense of Hendinas was mediated between different groups active in institutional community practice. It was an imprecise and unsettled accomplishment, but as Fischer reminds us 'ambiguous meanings often have important political functions' (2003:63) and in this context imprecision allows for the blurring of difference to fade behind the appearance of unity (Cohen 1985).

Policy brings into being community agency and instructs it to act within its predefined framework. As discussed in Chapter 4, much public policy evokes particular kinds of communities, often ones that support the enactment of individual civic duties and constitute desirable kinds of moralised agents, (Etzioni 1996; Blair 2002; Blunkett 2003). However, bestowing agency and calling into being particular kinds of communities does not necessarily equate with the communities that take up that agency. Nor can ascribing agency be understood as synonymous with controlling what is done with and in the name of, that agency. Among the strengths of reflecting on community agency through recourse to its institutional life is the way it shifts the debate away from policy framings of communities. This opens up recognition of the broader base of the institutional life (i.e. its existence as - more than - just the policy) and enables locally grounded community framings to be privileged, challenging in the process the parameters and terms of the debate.

The institutional life of a community is a concept grounded in its own location, with its own history and constellations of forces (Isin 1997) from which engagement takes place. These give it a sense of purpose based on local priorities derived from local narratives and knowledges. Moreover, understanding the institutional life of a community as more than that spoken to and evoked by policy programmes, creates the space to focus on community activities beyond those recognised by policy. It becomes possible to bring into view and value a greater range of practice as constitutive of community activeness. Communities can also be seen as resourceful places that facilitate and support local institutional projects. This of course is in sharp contrast to the focus on *deficiency* and *brokenness* implicit in public programmes. There is a need to read this presentation cautiously; recognising local resourcefulness in no way suggests that there are not also real socio-economic needs, tightly clustered in geographical areas.

The analytical insights in this research point to the coexistence of complex local relationships, in which it is possible to recognise local strengths,

whilst also acknowledging the power of policy interventions to potentially, both enhance and weaken them. Research findings suggest that the Communities First programme was used in Hendinas to largely positive local effects. It is possible to construct a narrative about the policy 'giving to' the community resourceful and skilled workers and a framework that enabled the community to drive forward a range of initiatives in the collective project of 'making things better.' However, local history reminds us that this was not always so, as many people in Hendinas reported the earlier staff group were as Dorothy put it a 'waste of space.' In this instance, the policy was perceived as a drain on local resources, offering little to the project 'of making things better.' In both scenarios the institutional life of Hendinas exists (e.g. the community centre, social club etc. continue to operate). Thus, the policy is not essential to the existence of a community's institutional life, but it does have the capacity to both extend and/or constrain it.

Understanding the way community action can develop within the policy but also exist beyond it, helps to conceptually grasp how staff can be simultaneously both policy and community agents. The institutional life of the community drives forward collective projects, but is both bolstered (e.g. given legitimacy) and restricted by the CF policy (e.g. constrained in its parameters for action). Thus, locally the relationship between the policy, its resources and its outcomes is not straight forward. Policy initiatives do not necessarily enhance community action (for example when deployed by an ineffective staff group), nor are they necessarily antithetical to it. These paradoxical conditions are highlighted rather than diminished by bringing the institutional life of a community into debate. Greater nuance does not equate with enhanced simplicity.

Resourcefulness of local communities as evidenced in its institutional life also brings into relief the parameters of that resourcefulness. The Communities First programme has been subject to much political debate within Wales. It has been criticised by politicians for its failure to impact on key socio-economic statistics. An example of this can be seen in the

questions asked by the Welsh Liberal Democrats leader, Kirsty Williams, of the First Minister. Following the publication of a critical Welsh Audit Office report (NAfW 2010), she sought statistics on the impact of the programme on household incomes, educational attainment and health equalities (Williams 2010). In addition to highlighting the lack of clarity about the programme's core purpose and its weak monitoring (Williams' primary political point), the question contains within it the assumption that the CF programme can have a direct, widespread and measurable impact on these complex multi-layered issues. There is a profound disingenuousness in this position, which propagates unrealistic understandings of communities and their capacity to significantly impact on these issues. It shifts the focus of this debate to the level of community, and away from the remit of national governments. Within the focus of this research, the contribution to this wider debate may be small, but potentially recognising community action as taking place within a community's institutional life, contributes something to appreciating both its strengths and its parameters of operation, and thus the limitations of what can be asked of it.

9.2.2 *Critical self-responsibilisation*

Recognising the institutional life of the community as distinct from the communities evoked in policy also adds depth to the idea of critical self-responsibilisation discussed in Chapter 7. This idea engages with governmentality discourses (Rose 1996, 1999; Ilcan and Basok 2004; Dean 2010 [1999]; McKee 2009, 2011) that highlight the self-disciplinary aspects of policy-led community programmes. The research found that while local initiatives in Hendinas could be interpreted as instances of self-governance with considerable potential for self-disciplinary enactment, this needs to be tempered by the recognition that local people retain significant degrees of criticality. In part, this is based in wider readings of community and the community's institutional life. The research highlighted narratives of the past in which Hendinas was presented as 'wronged' or as previously receiving less than it was 'entitled' to. These narratives contribute to

alternative understandings of the community and its history and are brought to bear in deliberations about contemporary developments. Thus public polices like the CF programme can be both reflected on critically and selectively harnessed for that which can be gained, without necessarily buying into the policy rhetoric uncritically.

Criticality in itself does not protect from the imposition of deterministic self-governance, however recognising community agency as grounded in local history, traditions and practices creates the space to see the institutional life of communities as simultaneously whole and fragmented. In practice, communities while sharing much are not homogeneous, thus while it is possible to talk of the institutional life of a community as an arena of activity (i.e. as 'whole') it is not a unified phenomenon. It inherently encompasses diversity. Within Hendinas there was a largely shared commitment to 'making things better' and a field of action in which groups were formed, local services developed and new projects emerged. However, there were also schisms within the community, shifting alliances and conflicting interests. People questioned each other, disagreed, protected self interests and challenged one another, creating imprecise, sometimes conflicting, at others coalescing initiatives in the project 'of making things better.' Thus, communities that are called into being by policy are not the same as the communities that emerge as agents in partnership-making. They are less certain, but also more grounded projects. Idealistic rhetoric that speaks of renewal and regeneration is tempered by both community reactionaries and radicals, and future visions may draw on external frameworks like CF but also on local narratives, practices and priorities. Thus criticality and dissent, sometimes within the programmatic schemes and at others in positions counter to it, is always present.

Critical self-responsibilisation is offered conceptually as 'something to do with' partnership-making because of the way it draws attention to both the diversity within the institutional life of a community and between this aspect of community and its engagement in policy programmes. The

totalising dynamic within the idea of self-responsibilisation relies on notions of community that are homogeneous and closed (ironically the same assumption implicit in much public policy). Ethnographic data demonstrates that Hendinas is heterogeneous and open. Thus, it would be naive to suggest that diversity, conflict and schisms are somehow eradicated in acts of partnership-making. In practice, those involved in the institutional life of Hendinas engaged critically, continually assessing whether what was on offer through the governmental programme was of value to the community. The discussion about the role of CFLAGs at the children and young people' programme bending meeting provides an example (see Chapter 8).

It should be noted that critical self-responsibilisation does not necessarily deliver alternative action. While the research demonstrates how the practices of 'herding' and 'programme bending' can be worked to produce effects in line with local priorities, the case of 'herding failure' discussed in Chapter 8 illustrates their limitations. 'The problem of young people' shows how the existence of different and conflicting orderings of partnership and understandings of 'the problem', coupled with significant material and symbolic resources can be brought to bear on a situation. These resources include greater levels of power, statutory status, multiple and reinforcing planning systems that shape interaction to disadvantage the local project. In these conditions, the local project is unable to shape processes and outcomes, although of course withdrawal from engagement can be seen as a form of resistance (Prior 2009).

9.2.3   The CF model and the role of staff in making it work in Hendinas
Chapter 2 introduced a model of the CF programme that has informed the analytical direction of this thesis. It was argued that the programme should be understood as promoting a relational model of development not least because the modest (in real terms) financial allocations to individual projects were invested significantly in programme staff, making them the programme's greatest resource. Rhetorically the CF model calls for equal

participation of both the local community and external agencies within local partnerships, and promotes development through the relationships of these two groups mediated within the partnerships by staff. This has been referred to as the CF axis of interaction. It has also been suggested that while the model has theoretical coherence, this has not been borne out in practice where work undertaken in the name of partnerships had a greater community action focus. Within the programme, more work has been undertaken by and within the community, rather than by external agencies as evidenced in the limited success of programme bending (NAfW 2010; AMION and Old Bell 3 2011).

The effect of this was to create a perception of partnerships as community organisations or 'voluntary sector' groups. This was highlighted as an issue among the CF elites interviewed in research undertaken previously. It is made explicit in the following two extracts. The first is an interviewee from a county voluntary organisation, while the second is a senior civil servant (both cited in Sophocleous 2009:47):

> (T)here's a clear message .... the partnerships, whether they're incorporated or not, are certainly, what they would consider themselves to be is, voluntary sector organisations with a much more closer and trusting relationship and affinity with the voluntary sector ...

> The partnerships that see themselves as third sector partnerships have got it wrong ... they need to be cross sector.

The contrast between these two positions displays something of the vested interests of the two sector representatives but the key point remains. Partnerships were perceived as more 'community' and more 'voluntary' than 'cross sector'. A position acknowledged as much in the emphatic denial by the civil servant as the enthusiastic affirmation by the voluntary sector representative. Within Hendinas while partnership working was never discussed in terms of being or creating a voluntary sector organisation, the work certainly operated more within the community realm. This could be interpreted as in-keeping with the policy of partnerships being 'community-led', but guidance is clear that within the

partnership, external agencies should be equally involved and active. In practice within Hendinas their role was much more distanced and reactive. Further, while external agencies were involved in Hendinas, staff sought to manage their involvement as demonstrated in the discussion about programme bending meetings and the practice of 'herding' discussed in Chapter 7. There are two issues to draw out here. The first relates to the role of staff in relation to 'community-led*ness*,' and the second concerns other agencies.

The staff group were undoubtedly instrumental in the development of community based initiatives and in driving forward the many projects that constituted 'things happening now.' Within the research, frontline staff were taken to be not just those employed by the CF programme, but also those employed by Action in Communities. Together they supported many diverse initiatives that could be understood as community development projects. It has been suggested that this represents work on one side of the 'CF axis.' Additionally this can be understood as enhancing the institutional life of Hendinas and supporting the development of community-led*ness,* as explored in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 identified the important of values within the staff group and it was suggested that existing literature does not adequately address their role. The role they undertake incorporates the legitimising elements of the street level bureaucrat (Lipsky 1980) alongside the bridging, negotiating and translational aspects of boundary spanning work (Williams 2012), which are mixed with a commitment to social justice more commonly associated with the community development role. Like the public sector workers researched by Hogget *et al.* (2006:764) it is possible to conclude that for staff in Hendinas the work is '...not so much a 'career choice', as an expression of who they are', and that they align themselves with local people 'more in solidarity than altruism' (*ibid.*:766).

From here, it is possible to identify partnership-making, not as a neutral act of coordination but a political project infused with values, of which the workers were at the forefront. The research within Hendinas thus proposes

that instead of seeing staff simply as agents of policy their actions need to be understood both within the policy but also beyond it. The task of analytically grasping this role is derived from and builds on the insights of diverse range of scholarship. From a governance perspective, Newman and Clarke (2009) demonstrate that action space is created by the uneven alignments, and contradictory dynamics of shifting governance arrangements. Cornwall's (2004) distinction between 'invited' and 'popular' brings into view different kinds of spaces and different ways of understanding action. Staeheli (1996) Buckingham *et al.*, (2006) and Jupp (2010) highlight the challenges and opportunities, and the controlling and resistive potential of work that straddles, shifts and blurs the boundaries of the public and private spheres. Newman (2012a) demonstrates the way individual workers find spaces and carve out opportunities to progress value based work. Post-Foucauldian scholarship has taken up the challenge to consider Foucault's insights about the operation of power through non-deterministic readings of governmentality (Li 2007; McKee 2009, 2011) in pursuit of 'the ethical program of governmentality' (Wagenaar 2011:185). Bevir reminds us that the existence of alternative rationalities ensures that policy enactment never runs quite as policy-makers intended. Together this scholarship points to (at least) three interconnected insights that are supported by this research, (i) the non totalising nature of government structures, policy and programmes; (ii) the existence of 'other' rationalities, historical antecedents, and priorities, and (iii) the tenacity and criticality of both staff groups and 'ordinary' people. In this context, the role of staff alongside local community leaders can be understood as being at the forefront of local activeness, creativity and collective productivity.

Staff as productive agents are aligned to the policy in so far as their value base and that of the policy coalesce. They are also instrumental in engineering interventions that sit within the CF programme and push at its boundaries, for example the 'herding' of agencies and management of programme bending meetings. These are inherently political processes, in which staff align themselves with 'the community' and use their skills and

knowledge to 'render technical' (Li 2007) the local processes of partnership-making and direct them to the involvement of external agencies. Joanna was right, they do use the system and 'make it work' not for themselves but 'the community' whilst also promoting community development and community criticality.

Thus, staff can be seen to be actively working across the two sides of the CF axis, on the one hand facilitating community development initiatives and enhancing and extending the institutional life of the community. This work supports the capacity of the community to develop local priorities, critical capacity and undertake its policy prescribed 'leadership' role. Alongside this, staff created opportunities and structured interaction with external agencies, encouraging them to participate in the CF partnership-making processes, and within partnership projects including, programme bending meetings. Within this work, staff created favourable conditions and offered agencies practical ways to engage with the local community and deliver services. This second, agency 'side' of the axis is a more difficult arena of work for local staff for a number of reasons. (i) Programme guidance is more easily applied to work within communities, for example through its emphasis on building local capacity. (ii) The greater participation of the community in local planning events inevitably produces plans that target community actions. (iii) Staff are located 'in the community' and are thus physically but also as they made explicit, philosophically 'closer' to the community. (iv) Harnessing public sector organisations for local individual projects is a more challenging task for workers located in community based partnerships in terms of access to appropriate individuals, negotiating power differentials and capacity to influence organisational priorities. (v) Large, hierarchical bureaucracies with many and diverse strategic and service pressures are challenged by the requirement to direct attention to small local community-led partnerships.

In this light, securing effective statutory agency involvement with tangible outcomes is a notable accomplishment within Hendinas. Brining agencies

into interaction within Hendinas has been referred to 'working the CF axis'. This is a purposeful strategy led by staff with the aim of structuring discussions in focused and productive ways. The critical message for policy is that this work needs attending to if partnerships are to be made. Within Hendinas staff directed much of their attention to this work, but there was a sense in which this was a constant up-hill battle for them. While policy guidance certainly highlights this as an area of work, it limited progress in terms of programme bending suggests that it has not been adequately addressed (NAfW 2010, AMION and Old Bell 3 2011).

9.2.4 Lateral partnership-making

Community work with its emphasis on working across a community is orientated towards building links between different elements of local work. This can be interpreted as facilitating more lateral thinking and work practices. This is in contrast to more lineal approaches to developing local practice within a given policy, for example within a service area. Lateral thinking helped the integration of work within Hendinas. There was a strong sense of work being 'joined-up' (6:1997; 6 *et al.*,:2002; Ling 2002) for example, the new community centre provided a logic and impetus for the wind turbine project, and the school reading group supported the explicit educational priorities of AiC but also the more diffuse community engagement ones of the CF project. In this context, the idea of partnership drawn from the CF policy and its pervasiveness in public policy discourse was easily drawn into the institutional life of the community and the working practices of staff.

Partnership was thus a concept that permeated everyday thinking and practices. Staff used the discourse of partnership across their work, even if that work took place outside of 'the partnership' i.e. the work carried out under the auspices of the CF programme. For example AiC's work with young people developing skills in the building trade, had formally little direct connection with the work of the CF project. Yet, as seen in Chapter 7, Michael used the language of partnership and a vague connection to

'the partnership' in Hendinas as a form of leverage to draw the social landlord into joint work. Thus, the language of partnership was ever present in interaction within Hendinas. There are two points to draw out here, the first is that this presence was never expressed in terms of saying 'let's work on the partnership' i.e. partnership was neither the desired output not long term outcome of intervention. It was however, always present as a way of thinking and acting (Heclo 2006).

Second, it is possible to draw parallels between the idea of developing partnership work laterally and some of the insights about the strengths and limitations of networks as governance. Peters (1998b and 2010) has argued that in conditions of governance the strength of the internal network system may reduce the capacity to coordinate vertically 'up' the system. The experience of partnership-making *within* Hendinas can be contrasted with the participation of the local project in partnership-making with the system as a whole beyond Hendinas. It would seem that the focus on lateral work comes with risks to its integration and connection within mainstream (vertical) policies. The examples of the YPLAG and CFLAG discussed in Chapter 8 give weight to this understanding. Paradoxically however, the experience of Hendinas also demonstrates that this is not *necessarily* the case. The example of environmental projects demonstrates that the larger bureaucratic organisation (the LA) and the smaller community one can work productively together across different scales and networks. It is not possible to comment on how the LA accounted for its flexible relationship with a small local project, but the work was presenting as 'good practice' suggesting that rationalities can be found to support particular kinds of action, if other conditions are also favourable.

9.2.5 Institutional legitimacy - gained and lost

One of the principal resources available to community leaders and staff when developing partnership work and seeking to draw agencies into CF relationships, was the institutional legitimacy bestowed on 'community-led

partnerships' by the programme. This is perhaps the single most significant and distinctive feature of the policy. The 'thirds principle' that instructed the formation of partnerships on the basis of equal membership of the community, statutory agencies and the private/third sectors alongside the clear guidance that partnerships were to be 'community-led' marks the CF programme out from other community focused policies. This is a position recognised by the Welsh Government and is made explicit in this statement by a government spokes person, cited in Sophocleous (2009:54):

> I think the thirds, thirds, thirds is there to establish the legitimacy of the partnerships, ... well this is not direct democracy let's not kid ourselves - we're not having the community turn up at an annual general meeting and electing its representatives to do this ...nor is it based on traditional representational democracy, so it's not councillor, Assembly Member or MP whatever, taking a lead in it. So you have to have ... some constitutional basis for the partnerships that allows people to recognise that there are good reasons for the other people to be around the table, if you're going to take these things forward. And [the] hope [is] that the third, third, third, approach [has] gone some way towards that.

Undoubtedly, these arrangements created spaces for action within communities and as demonstrated within Hendinas the community leadership role, albeit with staff playing a major part, was instrumental in enabling and driving forward partnership-making processes. From a local perspective, staff expressed a belief that it had also an effect on the orientation of external agencies and their interaction with local communities. Elin was clear that this change could be significantly attributed to the programme, as she said:

> ...since I was doing community development work before the Communities First Programme to where I am now, I think there's been a lot of progress in the agencies response to the community that I work with. I still think there's a long way to go, but I think Communities First has helped that.

It is difficult to gauge the extent to which this institutionalising aspect of the policy was fully utilised across the programme as a whole. Certainly, the impression given in the evaluative literature (AMION and Old Bell 3 2011) and the changing tone of Welsh Government guidance is that it was problematically understood, or was used inappropriately by factional interests as implied in the more prescriptive guidance seeking to control the role of elected members (WAG 2007a). Within Hendinas, this legitimacy was extensively used and Chapters 6 and 7 suggested that it underpinned much of the development work across the CF axis.

Chapter 4 discussed the way in which government policy calls into being particular kinds of people, and communities. Hajer (2003) observes that contemporary policy-making turns traditional understandings of the relationship between politics and policy on its head. He argues that politics is no longer about securing appropriate *representation* of communities instead 'policy discourse can be *constitutive* of political identities' (emphasis original *ibid.*:88). Politics thus moves from preceding policy to emerging from it. This is an interesting insight when set alongside the institutional legitimacy ascribed to communities and community-led partnership by the CF programme. Hajer is correct when he points to the constitutive potential of policy but it is necessary to reflect on the field from which the political/policy constituents emerge. Within Hendinas and across South Wales, the political identities brought into being by policy, overlap and interact with older ones, i.e. while the *evocation* of particular political agents within a policy may be new, the individuals and communities that take up the challenge emerge from pre-existing communities. Moreover, they bring with them their own understandings of political history, dynamics and priorities. Thus based on the research in Hendinas, the community that takes up the CF challenge does so armed with narratives of the past that shape understandings of the present and priorities for the future. Interestingly, it would seem that the power of these narratives remains dynamic. The recent release of Cabinet papers relating to the 1984-85 Miners strike, (which indicate that previously denied political intent accords with living memory i.e. that mines were targeted for closure

[BBC 3.1.14]) may well have significant impacts on local narratives that reaffirm stories of the past and give renewed purpose and direction to those shaping the future.

One of the most striking features of the post-2013 revised Communities First programme (WAG 2013) is the *de-institutionalisation* of partnerships as the principal agents of change and the role of communities within them. Although introduced after the period of fieldwork, this move is relevant to the analysis within this thesis. The new Welsh Government CF guidance does not refer to communities as programme 'leaders' and relegates their role to one of 'community involvement' (*ibid.*:19-24). Partnerships are no longer the main drivers of change instead 'in the new programme the focus is on working with partners to support delivery rather than partnerships' (WAG 2013:2). Leadership is firmly rooted in Lead Delivery Bodies, and their 'partners' in which 'community involvement' is an 'essential' *contribution,* but with no ascribed leadership status. The majority of Lead Development bodies across Wales are local authorities. The emphasis in guidance on governance is focused towards programme accountability, in contrast to readings of governance as devolution of power. Thus overall the new programme is established in terms that imply significantly increase governmental control (central and local), and a more managerialist delivery model. It would seem that Jessop (2000:19) is accurate in his observation that the state:

> reserves to itself the right to open, close, juggle and re-articulate governance arrangements, not only terms of particular functions, but also from the viewpoint of partisan and overall political advantage.

The clear message is that the first ten years of the CF programme did not deliver the kinds of outcomes the Welsh Government came to realise it wanted (the evaluative documentation makes clear that aims were confused at the programme's outset, [WAG 2006c; AMION and Old Bell 3 2011]). Moreover, the implication, one must assume made explicit in its radical overhaul, is that the governance model, and in particular the

institutionalisation of community-led partnerships was not capable of delivering those outcomes.

This raises interesting questions in the light of the discussions about contemporary governance as outlined in Chapter 3. It adds weight to the arguments of scholars like Bell and Hindmoor (2009) that governments retain significant control in governance arrangements and contributes something to Davies (2007, 2011) contention that new configurations of governance continue to serve hierarchical rather than community based interests. In Chapter 3 it was suggested that this research was in part a response to Lowndes and Sullivan's (2008) call for more 'bottom-up' research to explore and answer the question: 'how low can (community governance) go?' Based on the research in Hendinas, an answer might have been 'pretty low', but looking at the programme as a whole and the changes made to it as it enters its second decade that response might have to be adjusted to 'not *that* low.' While in 2002 the Welsh Assembly Government were reminding local authorities that the CF programme was about encouraging 'creativity, risk taking and imaginative approaches' (WAGb 2002:5), the 2013 guidance fails to mention risk taking at all, preferring to focus extensively on 'good' and 'effective' governance, which it links to issues of finance, programme accountability and the Nolan Principles (1995). 'Creativity' and 'imaginative approaches' are sought only when encouraging the participation of children and young people (WAG 2013:19). In response to Lowndes and Sullivan (2008) it would seem that communities are too risky a group to entrust the leadership and delivery of government programmes.

This discussion has drawn together the research findings and demonstrated that answering the research questions is not a straight forward endeavour. Partnership-making can be understood as developing primarily within and through the institutional life of Hendinas. It is part of the project of 'making things better.' Partnership-making *per se* is not the primary task of those agents engaged in its making, and ironically this is may be one of the reasons that it has been deemed to have been made

'successfully' within Hendinas. The CF programme and in particular the institutional legitimacy it bestowed on the community as a form of 'public power' (Bogason 2000:68) created the conditions in which the concept of partnership could be used as leverage in support of local projects. In this context the CF policy and the idea of partnership was an open and permissive project. Within Hendinas this potential for action was taken up by an active community led by a skilful staff group. Not without its limitations, it has never-the-less both formed and served as a resource for local development. Communities remain however discerning, the concept of critical self-responsibilisation serves as a reminder that communities are not as policy evokes them, and they engage critically with the constraints and opportunities it offers. Ultimately, however, their role as *leaders* in state sponsored partnership-making processes while enabling and facilitative, can also be withdrawn.

9.3   Beyond the Academy Policy Implications and Research Directions

9.3.1 Engaging in practice

In Chapter 5, the original idea of conducting action research was discussed, and a commitment to research as a reciprocal endeavour was explored. While action research itself was rejected, an obligation to finding other ways in which to contribute to local project development was retained. This commitment still stands and while it has begun, it remains an open project. Seeking to drive forward the relationship between the research, researcher and practice engages with what Burawoy calls the issue of *public sociology* (2005) and Flyvbjerg discusses as engaged *phronesis* (2001). The difference in their ontological positions is not of concern here; the issue they both passionately address is how academic scholarship engages in the 'real' world, and to what effect.

This research project, located in contemporary policy practice has engaged in a small way in community level policy delivery and development. During the period of active research, I acted as a sounding board for the reflections and deliberations of the local staff team and key activists, over time this moved to a more proactive sharing of early analytical thoughts. For example I discussed the idea of 'herding' and staff reported that they thought the analysis both accurate but also useful in terms of analysing some of their more challenging moments of practice. Beyond the fieldwork, I participated in a Hendinas working day, in which CF and AiC staff prepared to move into the new Communities First Clusters, exploring how the local work might fit into the new programme and how to support that which might not. Earlier drafts of chapters have been shared and discussions have begun about how to make the research more accessible and useful to local project work. Beyond the thesis, a number of meetings have been agreed with key individuals to discuss both formal dissemination but also ongoing contribution to emerging issues in practice networks that extend beyond Hendinas. 'Reciprocity' is being reframed as a project across time and to a field rather than just to a project that has itself moved on.

9.3.2 *Civil society, institutional legitimacy and de-institutionalisation*

The creation of community-led partnerships as institutional bodies underpinned much practice within Hendinas. Reflecting on this from the perspective of debates about civil society throws up some issues worthy of consideration not least, because the relationship between policy and civil society remains dynamic, leading to yet more perplexing questions in the light of the withdrawal of this status in the 2013 programme reconfiguration (WAG 2013). Chapters 2 and 4 considered the role of the voluntary/third sector and civil society in public sector policy. Despite the disputed status of CF partnerships as illustrated above, within broader debates 'community' involvement in them can be read as participation in 'civil society.' Of course, this both propagates and illustrates the conceptual

confusions between community and civil society, and as shall be seen shortly, the voluntary/third sector.

Balibar (2012) discussed civil society in terms of its constant tension between moments of constitution and insurrection. The policy construction and institutionalisation of community-led partnerships in which communities take the lead in civic action, could be seen as a movement towards greater constitution. Civil society via communities is brought into 'constitution' through partnerships. Drawing on the arguments of Kendall (2009) explored in Chapter 2, this could be read as further evidence of 'hyperactive mainstreaming' (Kendall 2009) extending beyond the voluntary sector understood as constituted groups and organisations, into 'communities' thus expanding in Carmel and Harlock's (2008) terms, the field of 'governable terrain.' Acknowledging as this thesis demonstrates, that this is a far from closed project, it is still possible to recognise the existence of a trend. However, what then do we make analytically of the situation where partnerships, and in particular communities are cut loose by government in the act of de-institutionalisation? Provocatively one could ask, does this signal a move towards greater insurrection?

Drawing this out a little further, it is possible to recognise the emergence of a perplexing irony across the life of the CF programme. The original community-led partnerships formed on the basis of government guidance (NAfW 2001a) were broad based and inclusive, encouraging much community action to be drawn into the partnership remit. While communities were ascribed an institutional role in partnerships they were allowed considerable freedoms in how they developed the work. Central control was weak as evidenced in the increasingly tighter prescriptions in each subsequent revision of guidance (WAG 2002a, 2002b, 2007a, also WAO 2009) Thus, we could argue that government had looser control but further reach into the everyday lives of community members. The post-2013 programme (WAG 2013) appears to be much more tightly focused and prescriptive in terms of both work to be prioritised and outcomes to be aimed for. As described above, it ascribes no formal institutional role to

'the community.' In this sense, it may become a more penetrating but narrower programme, ironically with less potential for governmental incursion into everyday lives. In this light, freed of the responsibility to 'lead' and the constraining influence of being formal 'partners' might communities, or at least some elements within them, become more demanding of governments? Or will the loss of 'leadership' status undermine local action? These issues will need to be subjected to considerable research scrutiny in the years to come.

Reflecting on the nature of civil society as manifested in CF partnerships it is possible to observe that contrary to policy evocations that call into being 'ordinary' and non-political kinds-of-people (Newman and Clarke 2009; Clarke 2010), the community that came forth in Hendinas was inherently political. The people in Hendinas maybe 'ordinary' in so far as there is little to distinguish them from their neighbours across South Wales and probably beyond, but their interaction with public policy is political (Hajer 2003). There is no reason to suggest that this is likely to change within the new programme, although *how* they enact their politics may well do so.

This discussion highlights a number of issues from which further academic inquiry could be developed. The loss of institutional status for communities within the new Communities First programme is a significant change and could be read as the withdrawal or at least the diminution of 'the community as agents of governance. Further if the community are no longer ascribed a formal leadership role, what are the consequences for local action?; Are there alternative spaces or different mechanisms within the new policy to support community-led developments or is this work, in-effect no longer a priority?; and does this matter? While this thesis has made a contribution to exploring *how* communities, and in particular their institutional aspects become involved in governance projects, the impact of these relationships with the 'state' on both the community and understandings of governance are yet to be fully investigated. However, while it is appropriate to call for further research into these issues, it is also

the case that further theorising must necessarily take a retrospective perspective, given the extent of programme changes.

The role of staff group within the programme offers an additional entry point into further consideration of the impact of programme changes on communities. This thesis has highlighted the limitations of existing literature in understanding the role of staff employed within a public policy programme, but located within communities. Whilst simultaneously highlighting the need for further research to understand better their work, it is necessary to note that new programme management arrangements has in-effect drawn a greater number of this staff group into local government employment. Certainly during the fieldwork within Hendinas, the overwhelming opinion was that local CF staff worked on community-led priorities; since the implementation of the new programme, it has been suggested anecdotally, that local staff are considerably more constrained in the work they are able to undertake. Further research into what locally employed staff actually do, has the potential to inform both theorising about the role of staff, policy implementation and the extent to which communities are supported to take a role in community based policies.

Another line of inquiry generated by this research emerges from the claim outlined above that, the new CF programme is more focused and prescriptive in respect to work undertaken and desired outcomes. Given this new service delivery orientation, it is possible to ask whether the programme can be considered a community governance initiative at all. While it is located within communities, the revised programme is much more focused on impacting directly on the lives of individuals *within* communities (for example educational achievement, employment opportunities). It is possible to suggest that this more targeted focus is less concerned about the institutional life of the community as evidenced in the lack of any formal mechanism with which to engage with it (i.e. no formal community-led partnerships). While accepting new programme priorities are important public policy issues, it is also the case that there are significantly different to those set out in the early days of the Community

First Programme. Simplistically, this raises the question 'where is community governance now?'

9.3.3 Local opportunities and national priorities

The development of local community solutions is often celebrated as stimulating active citizenship and community empowerment. Initiatives such as those in Hendinas explored throughout this thesis can be viewed as instrumental in the turnaround in the fortunes of local communities. Additionally they may be credited with supporting a move towards greater social justice for those previously excluded from accessing the social goods generally believed to be the basis of the just society (Miller 2001). There was much within Hendinas to support this understanding of community action. It is also possible to read these developments in the context of the debate outlined in Chapter 2 which highlighted how devolved governance in Wales aspired to a different kind of policy-making that was inclusive and more socialist in its orientation. Here it is possible to recognise the original CF programme (NAfW 2002a) as enshrining these values and approach. The inclusion of 'communities' at the heart of the programme and their leadership role is testament to that commitment. There are three points to raise here and while each takes a different starting point, they all move towards the same core issue.

First, the last chapter argued that while local community action can be celebrated there are also some disturbing undercurrents and unexplored consequences within the dynamics between local and national priorities. The example of the wind turbine was used to question whether public policy initiatives like Communities First ran the risk of inadvertently exasperating divisions between communities. For example, between those who by chance of their location have access to a resource (e.g. a windy hill side) and the expertise to exploit it. The vexed nature of debates about fuel poverty, energy generation and collective and individual costs, throws these issues between local empowerment and wider social justice into stark relief.

Second, another way of reading this issue is through a governance lens. Here it is possible to reflect on these issues as arising from the unexplored and unintended consequences of harnessing the fragmented spaces of power. Governance brings into being many such spaces and there is a growing body of scholarship that is empirically tracing how these spaces and opportunities are being harnessed by community groups for progressive ends (Newman and Clarke 2009; Newman 2012a). However, these issues have not been well considered in respect to their impact on and consequences for more general and society wide understandings of social justice. If one group successfully works the opportunities found in a 'space' what does this mean for the wider field?

The third approach is thrown into relief by the CF programme reconfiguration. The post-2013 programme leads to the unavoidable conclusion that the first decade of Communities First, in which communities were structured as partnership leaders, has not delivered desired outcomes to a sufficient level. It is unclear whether this change is premised on the abandonment of the principle of inclusion or its reconfiguration. Whichever it may be, it does point to a degree of tension between inclusion in the processes of governance and securing desired outcomes. This could be framed as a tension between social justice in process terms and social justice as an outcome, if indeed such a distinction is possible.

Together these three issues point to a tangle of largely un-posed and certainly unanswered questions around the implementation of national policy aspiring to 'big ideas' such as social justice, being blown off course through local implementation. This is a perverse and counter intuitive way of looking at the issues. The mantra, 'local is good' is deeply engrained in the psyche of public policy-making and implementation, and indeed this research project demonstrates this largely to be the case. However, too prolonged a look at the local has a de-sensitising effect and progress on broader issues may be lost. These are challenging but pertinent issues

that may be condensed into a concern about what is at stake in the success of the local in relation to wider projects of social justice. Moreover what is clear from this thesis is that this debate cannot be framed in either/or binaries or simplistic formulas for action.

These are taxing issues for both researchers and policy-makers alike, particularly in a wider context that valorises community action (from *partnerships* to the *Big Society* and *Co-production*). Policy such as the Communities First programme proceeds on the assumption that the accumulative effect of local intervention, necessarily and inevitably adds up to improved and widespread social 'improvement.' It is an assumption worthy of more rigorous investigation. The example of youth services in the communities of Hendinas and Cwmhir within this research suggests that while targeted intervention may be of benefit within the zone of operation, (i.e. it has the desired narrow policy impact) such a strategy also produces undesirable effects (heightening divisions between communities) thereby diminishing progress towards overall policy objectives (a more 'just' society'). Such questions require research that steps back from simply evaluating a programme of intervention in order to assess its immediate impacts, to more value based appraisals. This is an underdeveloped area of empirically based academic theorising. Perhaps an opening position might be a re-reading of research to date, that investigates these spaces of governances with these questions about wider societal impact in mind. Certainly, such a project should be of interest to both politicians and policy makers within the Welsh Government, given their espoused social policy position.

9.3.4 Final Thoughts
This research study began in the small community of Hendinas in South Wales, the 'ordinariness' of the place and its people makes it as a suitable a starting point as any, in which to consider community-led partnership-making. The research found remarkable people engaged in challenging tasks, making significant differences to their shared lives. Undoubtedly, they were supported in this work by a permissive policy that provided key

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resources, most notably in the shape of skilled staff, and institutional legitimacy to drive forward local agendas. The key message from this research is that policy does matter. However, there remains an uneasy but un-testable sense that Hendinas was 'a bit different' and that based on the radical changes to the programme since 2013, local success was not mirrored throughout the CF programme. These contradictory dynamics confirm therefore that while policy matters, it is implemented in local contexts, in which agency remains an open and contested project.

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Cardiff School of Social Sciences
Cardiff University
1-3 Museum Place
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CF10 3BD

Tel: ██████████

1 May 2010

Dear ██████

Request to Carry out Research in ████████

Following our recent meeting and telephone conversation, I would be grateful if the Steering Group would consider my request to carry our research in ████████

Attached is an outline of the research and key information for the Steering Group. I am of course happy to answer any further questions the group may have. As I said on the phone, I am happy to attend the next meeting or to come along to the project for discussions at another time.
Many thanks for your time and support.

Best wishes

Christala Sophocleous

Request to Carry out Research in █████████

The Research

I am interested in the idea of 'partnership'. While there has been a lot of research looking at the idea of 'partnership', very little of it asks local community members what they think. I would like to carry out research that finds out what community members think of this idea, and to look at what they actually do when they make 'partnerships' happen.

This type of research accepts that what you think of 'partnership' can depend on who you are and what you do. I would like to tell the story from the view point of community members.

What would it involve?

- The main way of carrying out the research would be to watch and listen to what is going on, as this is a good way of finding out what people really think and to see what people do.

- With agreement from the Steering Group, I would choose one area of your work, (probably one of your annual priorities), and sit in on the group meetings, come along to events, and join in with whatever is going on.

- By coming along, I can listen and ask questions informally.

- The research would take place for about 10 – 12 months and I would attend for about 1-2 days a week, depending on what is going on.

█████Later in the research, I may also carry out some more formal interviews with Partners involved in ████████

- Although I have ideas about how I would like to conduct the research, I welcome ideas from community members about how to reach more people or get a better understanding of what is going on.

Why choose ████████**?**

- Your Project has really taken off and it seems that the community in ████████ have grabbed the idea of partnership as a way of getting things done that matter to you. This means that there are lots of interesting things going on and a strong community based partnership story. I believe that this point of view that needs to be heard by more people.

Confidentiality and ethics

- All research from Cardiff University has to be approved by an Ethics Committee. If the Steering group agrees to my request to work in ██████, before I can start the research, I will have to tell this committee about my research and what I plan to do. Confidentiality, is one of the things this committee will look at, as well checking that my research won't do any harm to the people I will work with.

- Confidentiality is a very important issue. When I write about the research, I will not name your community. I will give it a made-up name and give very little information about the area.

- For individuals to be involved in the research, they will need to give their written consent. Before being asked to sign a Consent Form, I will talk directly with individuals, and explain the purpose of the research and the way the information they give will be used. I will also provide written information about the research project, which will include my contact details.

- At any time, individuals can withdraw their consent to be involved in the research, without any need to give a reason.

- When I write about the research, I will not use individual's real names; of course, this does not mean that you will not recognise yourselves! But everyone who I describe or quote will be given a 'research name'. I may leave out, change, or be vague about personal details to help protect their identity.

What and where will I write about the research?

- I am doing this research to gain a PhD qualification, this means I must write a thesis; this is a very academic piece of writing.

- Because I believe the research is important, I would like more people to benefit from the things I will learn, I would like to write about the research in Journal articles. Journals publish articles that help researchers get their message across to a wider group of people. These will be much shorter than the thesis.

- I would also like to make sure that policy makers hear about the research, and this will mean both writing about the research and possibly letting them know about it, at conferences or workshops.

- Finally, I think the research could help your Community Project tell the media, politicians, and other community groups what you are doing. Because of confidentiality, this kind of article might be better being written in the name of the ██████ Community project, but could include things learnt from the research.

Benefits to ███████ **Community Project**

- This research will give local community members a chance to talk about their work, this can sometimes be a good 'stock taking' opportunity.

- Research can open up opportunities to reflect on what you have achieved and where you want to go next.

- I am committed to sharing what I am learning with the community, and to doing this as the research is going along, not just at the end.

- I would like to make my learning of benefit to you in the way that suits the community project best, this might mean coming along to key meetings to tell you about the research, or writing 'Research Updates', or just informally updating the coordinator as the research goes along. I am happy to remain flexible and respond to your needs.

University Details

- I am a student of the Cardiff School of Social Sciences, at Cardiff University.

- I am in receipt of a grant from a research council for 3 years (October 2009 – September 2012), to carry out my research project.

- My work is being supervised by 2 academics, Paul Chaney and Andy Pithouse, from the Cardiff School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University. They can be contacted through the Graduate Studies Office on
███████████

Christala Sophocleous

11 May 2009

SophocleousC@cardiff.ac.uk

Christala Sophocleous
Tel: ██████████
Email: SophocleousC@cardiff.ac.uk

Consent Form

Project Title: **Citizen Experiences of Partnership Making**

Name of Researcher: **Christala Sophocleous**

	Please initial
1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered to my satisfaction.	
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.	
3. I agree to take part in the study.	

_____   _____ _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____ _____
Name of person taking consent Date   Signature

Cardiff School of Social Sciences
Cardiff University
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CF10 3BD

Christala Sophocleous
Tel: █████████
Email: SophocleousC@cardiff.ac.uk

Citizen Experiences of Partnership Making
A Research Project

Information for Interviewees

My name is Christala Sophocleous, and I am carrying out research in █████████

What's the Research Is About
I am interested in the idea of 'partnership'. While there has been a lot of research looking at the idea of 'partnership', very little of it asks local community members what they think. My study will look at what community members think of the idea of 'partnership', and try and find out what they actually do when they make 'partnerships' happen.

This type of research accepts that what you think of 'partnership' can depend on who you are and what you do. I would like to tell the story from the view point of community members.

My research is funded by a public body called the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), and I am based at the Cardiff School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University, and I am doing this research for a PhD. You can contact me, if you want any more information, (█████████). Also my work is being supervised by 2 academics, Paul Chaney (tel: █████████), and Andy Pithouse, (tel: █████████) at the University, and you can contact them too, if you want to talk about the research or my work.

Why would I like you to be involved?

You are involved in ▮▮ community. I would like to know more about your experience of being involved in ▮▮ community, because your view point and thoughts are important.

What would it involve?

The main way of carrying out the research so far has been to watch and listen to what is going on, as this has been a good way of finding out what people really think and to see what people do.

Now I would like to carry out some interviews. This will be a chance to ask you some questions about your involvement in ▮▮ community. The interview will last for about an hour. It will be informal and hopefully you will just feel like we've sat down for a chat. With your permission, I would like to record this interview.

Confidentiality

When I write about the research, I will not name your community. I will give it a made-up name and give very little information about the area. If I use the information you have given me I will give you a made up 'research name'. I may leave out, change, or be vague about personal details to help protect your identity.

Writing about the research

I am doing this research to gain a PhD qualification, this means I must write a thesis; this is a very academic piece of writing.

Because the research is important, I would like more people to benefit from the things I will learn, I would like to write about the research in Journal articles. Journals, publish articles that help researchers get their message across to a wider group of people. These will be much shorter than the thesis.

I would also like to make sure that policy makers hear about the research, and this will mean both writing about the research and possibly letting them know about it, at conferences or workshops.

What happens now?

You have time to think about it and when we next meet I will ask you if you'd like to be involved. If you do, you will need to show your agreement by signing a consent form. We will both sign two copies, one for each of us.

Thank You for thinking about taking part in this research.

Christala Sophocleous
SophocleousC@cardiff.ac.uk

Citizen Constructions of Partnership
Individual Discussions

Thanks
Outline of project
Confidentiality and Consent

Tell me about xxxx (your organisation)

- What's its purpose?
- Brief history

Tell me about your involvement. What do you get personally from being involved

- explore motivations
- who else gets involved? What kinds of things do they do? (active/ activist/ participant)

What other organisations / groups do you work with?

- Local, regional national

In what ways do you work together? Can you give me some examples? Why do you work together?

Can you give me an example of a difficulty you faced that was made easier by working together?

I'm sure you will have heard lots in the media and from politicians about 'partnerships' – tell what you think the idea of partnership means for you?

 What differences can working in partnership make (from you experience)

- For organisations
- For individuals
    - Professionally
    - Personally
    - Explore ideas of social/organisational networks

How do partnerships (working together) get developed?– are there any agencies / individuals that help bringing people together?

- What do they do?
- How is this useful?
- Why?

Any questions to me - Thanks

Summary of Community Activities Promoted by Staff

A very large part of the work of the staff group was direct engagement with individuals and groups within the community of Hendinas. While this work plays a critical role in the development of partnership, the detail of it is secondary in the analytical trust of this thesis. For this reason it is presented as an appendix.

Inevitably, as in any categorisation, there is considerable overlap and interrelatedness in the list presented below; it is also acknowledged that this list falls well short of adequately accounting for both the extent and complexity of the work undertaken.

- *Development, facilitation and delivery of 'services'*; including health focused groups like Zumba, Depression Support Group, keep fit classes; employment focus groups like 'Job Clubs', educational classes, including basic numeracy and literacy, vocational courses like Food Hygiene and self help type initiatives like, parenting support groups.

- *Celebratory and one off event;* like carnivals, Christmas events, and fun days. Explicitly designed to engender community spirit, a sense of place and described by staff as 'an engagement tool', to help 'extend our reach', i.e. meet with and involve a wider group of people.

- *Support to individuals*; both those who seek it out and those staff believe would benefit from it. Two examples are illustrative here. Susan was a clearly troubled woman, and during the year of fieldwork, I saw her approach different members of staff for a private conversation. Towards the end of the fieldwork sensing a

dramatic change in her personal wellbeing, I asked her for an interview. She told me about the support she had received directly from staff and specialists that they had organised:

> I've been one of the lucky ones I suppose, because I would say I found a family with Communities First, Joanna, Avril, any one of them I can turn to them at any point and they have helped me no end

On another occasion, at the end of a planning discussion between staff, the issue of vandalism was raised and staff reflected on who might be involved. Based on their knowledge and 'grape vine' information Johnny, a young man with whom they had previously worked but had recently become distanced from local projects was identified as a likely leader. Staff discussed how they might re-engage him; they identified specific workers both from Hendinas and from a key partner agency, devising a strategy to 'adopt him', as a means of supporting him into more constructive projects. Personal skills and interests were nurtured and given a showcasing platform.

- *Education and training projects;* this represents a huge element of work for local staff and it is impossible to do justice to the range and depth of provision. Many of the people staff engaged with reported bad experiences of formal education, and as highlighted in Table 5.1 a staggering 51% of the adult population had no formal qualifications. AiC projects focus on educational issues but they work closely with CF staff to both facilitate and directly deliver provision. Examples of local provision including:

Basic skills, both numeracy and literacy classes – sitting in on these groups and chatting to participants I was left with an over whelming sense of personal pride in achievements. For example, Pam spoke about how she had set aside special time at home for homework,

which both she and her child sat down and did together. Georgie told me how because of her learning in the class, she had been able to help her daughter with her maths home work for the first time ever.

Vocational training, one example of such courses is the nationally recognised Community development NVQ. Susan's experiences highlight how the provision of educational opportunities needs to be accompanied by appropriate support. She explained how she had been on the brink of giving the class up because 'it was beyond my level of understanding'; Joanna had encouraged her to stick at it and directly addressing her difficulties she

> re-wrote the questions in a way I could understand ... and I thought why didn't they write them like that in the first place! After that I learnt to break those questions down and learnt to find out what those words meant and once I learnt how to do that, I just sailed through it
>
> Christala: So did you get your NVQ level 2?
> Yeah I done it! and when I passed that, then I found the more I was doing the more I wanted to do, I suddenly found I could do something and I wasn't as dull as I thought!

Work with young people previously not in education or training (NEET's); An estate based programme of targeted intervention to support and develop young people's entry into the building trade. Working with the social landlord, training had begun by renovating vacant property, and had successfully supported some young people into formal apprenticeships.
Practically focused classes; for example a Parenting support group was run over a number of weeks, aimed at supporting parents to develop practical strategies for dealing with the challenges of parenting

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Direct support to young people in school; this programme supported local children as they moved from the local primary schools into the larger High school, addressing basic support issues, attendance, literacy etc

Reading project; working alongside one of the primary schools and using volunteers from a partner agency, staff set up a weekly after school reading group, for infant aged children and their parents.

- *Family Support; supporting* young people in the High school led Sally to build links with their parents back in the community. Taking this work further, she set up a food/ weight/ health focused group aimed specifically at parents, explaining that she had set up a number of different groups, but all until this one, all had failed. The group provided an opportunity for parents to sample freshly prepared homemade low cost food and served as a self-directed discussion group. By encouraging parents to raise issues that concerned them, Sally was creating a support group both within the meeting space and beyond. Interestingly as an ethnographic participant, I was asked about both my Greek identity and my vegetarianism and subsequently prepared a vegetarian Greek meal.

- *Infrastructure support*: as discussed in Chapter 6 support to groups like the Community Centre and RENEW formed a significant part of the staffs work, but in addition to these 'big' projects, staff supported many initiatives that had started out as services, move towards greater independence, for example the depression support group had become a self help and collectively run initiative; the school based reading group, formed a committee and began to run the reading sessions without external volunteers. The project also ran a Time Banking scheme that supported the development of many of the projects on the estate, by encouraging volunteering through time credits.

- *Information and sign posting*; Staff also serve as an information point, and sign post to other services. Susan expressed her confidence in staff when she said 'I do find it's a good place to start because if they don't know a place to go then it's not very likely that you're gonna find a place to go'. One example of the links between information and development from the field work was when a parent approached Peter looking for information and support for her child recently diagnosed with ADHD (Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), finding sources difficult to access, Peter organised for an expert to visit Hendinas and provide information sessions.