

**Knowing and caring:
Performing legitimacy in Neighbourhood Planning**



Andy Yuille

**This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.**

July 2019

Department of Sociology

Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted in support of an application for another degree at this or any other university.

Abstract

Neighbourhood Planning is a form of small-scale, community-led land-use planning, introduced to England by the Localism Act 2011. It constitutes a radical shift for UK planning and a striking example of the participatory and localist turns in governance, allowing ‘laypeople’ to write their own statutory planning policies. Its promoters portray it as a straightforward transfer of power from state to community which prioritises local experiential knowledge and care for place. However, drawing on theoretical and methodological resources from Science and Technology Studies and four years of ethnographic fieldwork at two sites in the North West of England, my research suggests a more complex picture. I show how the practices of Neighbourhood Planning reproduce the category of the expert and the expert-agency coupling by producing a new subset of lay-experts. However, they occupy a precarious position, being reliant on established expertise to stabilise their expert identity, but also subject to displacement by that expertise. They must also perform other identities alongside that of the expert to establish and maintain their legitimacy, and powerful tensions arise between these identities. Successfully enacting this composite of identities enables them to draw on complex, hybrid forms of representative, participatory, and epistemological authority. This constrains their ability to represent the neighbourhood as experienced and forces them to reframe the issues that they want to address, but also enables them to make real differences to the ways in which the neighbourhood will change. Framing the production and evaluation of evidence in terms of ‘matters of concern’ (Latour) and ‘matters of care’ (Puig de la Bellacasa), situated in a narrative context, would enable the diversity of things that matter to these groups to be addressed more directly, and allow better critical consideration of both those knowledge claims labelled as ‘objective’ and those labelled as ‘subjective’.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation for the help and support that I have had in assembling this thesis. First, to my supervisors, Prof. Claire Waterton, Dr Vicky Singleton, and Dr Noel Cass, for their inspiration, commitment, wisdom, and good humour. They were brilliant from my first tentative suggestion that I might have an idea for a PhD through to its completion. Particular thanks go to Noel for his tremendous dedication in doing this outside of the system, unable to be formally appointed because of the short-term nature of his research contracts. Second, to the two Neighbourhood Planning Groups who participated in the research, who generously let me work alongside them (for a lot longer than any of us expected!), and whose persistence and resourcefulness were a lesson in themselves. Third, to the PhD colleagues who made it all more colourful, sociable, intelligible, and dare I say it, sometimes even fun. Special mention to the various permutations of Write Club and particularly Jess Phoenix, Becky Willis, Cath Hill, Cosmin Popan and Lula Mecinska.

Thanks to my wife Anna for her unstinting support and encouragement, reminders that it's supposed to be hard, comments on the final drafts, and for organising writing weekends for the two of us so that I could enjoy it as well as get it done. Thanks to my parents for not throwing up their hands in despair at my wanting to go back to school in my 40s, and for being as wonderfully understanding and supportive of this as they have been for everything else ever. Thanks to my friends who pretended to be interested, bought me wine, and mostly refrained from asking if I've got a real job yet. And thanks to Lancaster University, the sociology department, and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) for hosting and funding this adventure, and for enabling my participation in all aspects of the conferences, seminars, training and teaching from which I've learned so much.

Contents

Declaration	i
Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Contents.....	iv
List of tables and figures	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2: Context and critique of Neighbourhood Planning	7
2.1 Introduction.....	7
2.2 Planning in principle.....	8
2.3 Planning in practice	10
2.4 Planning reform	13
2.5 Doing Neighbourhood Planning	17
2.6 Related planning reforms.....	23
2.7 Wider context and critique.....	33
2.8 Countering the critique	42
2.9 Impacts on the ground.....	46
2.10 Conclusion	52
Chapter 3: Theoretical framings: Science and Technology Studies.....	54
3.1 Introduction.....	54
3.2 Participation and citizen engagement	56
3.3 Knowledge, evidence and expertise.....	59
3.4 Ontological politics.....	71
3.4.1 Co-production	71
3.4.2 Assemblages.....	72
3.4.3 Hybridity and purification, translation and inscription	74
3.4.4 Performativity, multiplicity and politics	77
3.5 The ‘turn to care’	80
3.6 Conclusion	85
Chapter 4: Methodology and meeting the participants.....	87
4.1 Introduction.....	87
4.2 An ethnography of Neighbourhood Planning Groups	88
4.3 The research sites.....	91
4.3.1 Overview	91
4.3.2 Detailed introductions	95
4.4 In the field – gathering data	102

4.5	Between field and office – attaining critical distance.....	108
4.6	In the office - analysis and interpretation	111
4.7	Conclusion	114
Chapter 5: Neighbourhoods and Neighbourhood Planning Groups: identity and legitimacy		116
5.1	Introduction.....	116
5.2	Empowering the neighbourhood.....	118
5.3	Enacting the neighbourhood	119
5.4	Legitimacy, identity, and relationality	122
5.5	The multiple identities of Neighbourhood Planning Groups.....	125
5.5.1	In the neighbourhood	126
5.5.2	Of the neighbourhood	134
5.5.3	Apart from the neighbourhood.....	140
5.5.4	Tensions between identities	145
5.6	The material entanglement of identity and legitimacy	147
5.7	Conclusion	150
Chapter 6: Experience, evidence and examination: framing and translating		152
6.1	Introduction.....	152
6.2	The role of evidence in Neighbourhood Planning.....	153
6.3	Expanding the evidence base?	157
6.4	Two surveys.....	163
6.4.1	Separating the surveys.....	163
6.4.2	The Housing Needs Survey.....	163
6.4.3	The opinion survey.....	172
6.4.4	Survey effects: Framing and Othering	177
6.5	Assessing green spaces	178
6.5.1	Local Green Spaces.....	178
6.5.2	Conflicting approaches.....	179
6.5.3	Being reasonable	182
6.5.4	Changing focus.....	184
6.5.5	Calculative rationalities.....	188
6.6	Foreclosing expansion and pluralisation.....	192
6.7	Conclusions.....	200
Chapter 7: Expertise, agency and power		204
7.1	Introduction.....	204
7.2	Re-framing power and reconfiguring relations.....	205
7.3	Reproducing power relations	216

7.3.1 Reconfiguring actors, reproducing categories.....	216
7.3.2 De-centring the new centres	218
7.3.2.1 The conditions of possibility	219
7.3.2.2 The right letters.....	237
7.3.2.3 The long reach of the LPA	249
7.4 Conclusions.....	252
Chapter 8: Stories of Care and concern.....	258
8.1 Introduction.....	258
8.2 Lost in translation	259
8.2.1 “ <i>Felt in the bones</i> ”	259
8.2.2 Travelling from experience to evidence?.....	262
8.2.3 Difficult articulations	268
8.3 Discussion: Matters of care and concern	273
8.3.1 Interpreting the deficit.....	273
8.3.2 Neighbourhoods of care and concern.....	277
8.3.3 Opening up and closing down.....	281
8.3.4 Practical implications and applications	283
8.4 Conclusion: Planning modestly	293
Chapter 9: Conclusions.....	296
Coda.....	308
Bibliography	311
Appendix 1: Project Information Sheet and Consent Form	350

List of tables and figures

Table 1: The multiple identities of Neighbourhood Planners	149
Figure 1: Extract 1 from Wroston Housing Needs Survey report	171
Figure 2: Extract 2 from Wroston Housing Needs Survey report	171
Figure 3: Extract 1 from Wroston Opinion Survey: quality of life section.....	175
Figure 4: Extract 2 from Wroston Opinion Survey: environment section	176
Figure 5: Extract 3 from Wroston Opinion Survey: final “write in” section	177
Figure 6: Sample Oakley green spaces map.....	180
Figure 7: Part of environment display, Oakley consultation event	187
Figure 8: Neighbourhood engagement, Oakley consultation event	188
Figure 9: Map of sites assessed for the Wroston Neighbourhood Plan.....	238
Figure 10: View out of playing field over site WR1	240
Figure 11: View south over site WR1 from road junction at corner of site WR1.1...240	
Figure 12: View across site WR2 from western end.....	241
Figure 13: View into site WR2.1 from road.....	241
Figure 14: Extract 1 from consultants’ landscape character assessment template.....	244
Figure 15: Extract 2 from consultants’ landscape character assessment template.....	245
Figure 16: Representations of Wroston consultation responses.....	263
Figure 17: Extract 1 from Wroston children’s consultation response collages.....	267
Figure 18: Extract 2 from Wroston children’s consultation response collages.....	267

Chapter 1: Introduction

“Neighbourhood Planning is about letting the people who know about and care for an area plan for it”

(Planning Advisory Service, 2013)¹

In 2005 I graduated from an interdisciplinary course at Lancaster University examining environmental problems from a social perspective (MA in Values and the Environment). I subsequently worked with a variety of environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community groups – primarily the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). I often represented these groups in the planning system and other deliberative forums that were ostensibly intended to widen public and stakeholder participation in decision-making and incorporate a wide range of knowledges and values.

I found that much of what I was doing was acting as a translator, taking the heart-felt, real-life experiences of individuals and groups and transforming them into technical jargon and instrumentalised arguments that would fit into particular policy pigeon-holes: i.e. turning them into something other than what they were presented to me as, to enable them to have traction in formal and sometimes intimidating settings. I also observed members of the public and community groups representing themselves, particularly in formal spatial planning settings. They often expressed themselves eloquently and passionately, to apparently sympathetic Planning Inspectors who

¹ The Planning Advisory Service is a Government-funded programme providing support to Local Planning Authorities to help them understand and respond to planning reform.

listened carefully, ensuring that everyone felt that they had had the opportunity to fully contribute. However, that testimony would often then be all but discarded because it didn't fit easily into the scales with which the 'planning balance' was weighed. Even in these theoretically inclusive forums, the things that really mattered to people were often excluded and made invisible: what Science and Technology Studies theorist John Law describes as being 'othered' (2004). Representing community groups and NGOs in other technocratic locations, such as the North West Regional Assembly, Regional Development Agency and Government Office, I found debate foreclosed because the questions and problems to be considered were framed in particular ways (Wynne, 1993) and there were unofficial but taken-for-granted restrictions on the types of knowledge and value considered valid (Wynne, 1996).

Then, in 2011, the Government introduced Neighbourhood Planning² through the Localism Act, enabling community groups to write their own land-use planning policies, to decide what evidence was needed to support them, and to produce that evidence. They were enabled to do what previously only qualified experts working within the machinery of government could do. The discourse of Neighbourhood Planning emphasises local, experiential knowledge – people are portrayed as being qualified to plan for a place because of their experience of living there. It emphasises people's affective, emotional connections with place, something that the planning system (and planning scholarship) has previously disparaged (Baum, 2015; Bradley, 2017a). It was claimed that it would shift the focus of hyper-local planning from a bureaucratic, technical, expert-led process to a more democratic, community-led one.

² I capitalise 'Neighbourhood Planning' throughout to denote the particular sets of practices, meanings and relations brought together by this specific policy instrument, described in detail in Chapter 2, as distinct from the many other ways there may be of planning a neighbourhood.

Even before any Neighbourhood Plans started to be developed, critiques were levelled at it – that it would primarily benefit already privileged communities, entrenching inequalities still further; that it would co-opt resistance, giving communities the illusion of power while in effect having very little control over change; that it would distract opposition from bigger, more strategic issues. But, however imperfect it would (surely!) be, I felt that something could be learned from it. It appeared to open up a new, experimental space for evidence production and policy development, in which the knowledge and values which could be effective in planning would be expanded and pluralised (Bradley, 2018a). Within certain constraints, the regulations and guidance framing Neighbourhood Planning left a high degree of flexibility about what it could address and how it should be done. Given the juxtaposition between this initiative and my previous experience of participatory practices, I – with invaluable help from my supervisors - developed a research project to address the following central questions:

- Does Neighbourhood Planning expand the range of participants, knowledge and values that can be effective in planning?
- What kinds of knowledge are made visible, included or excluded, and how?

My answers to these questions unfold through my thesis as follows. In Chapter 2 I situate Neighbourhood Planning in the historical context of the continuously-reforming UK planning system. I outline the legal requirements for producing a Neighbourhood Plan, and some key elements of the wider suite of planning reforms of which it was a part. I then theoretically situate it in the participatory and localist turns,

review some of the critiques levelled against it and claims made in its favour, and conclude by observing some of the practical impacts it is having on the ground. In Chapter 3 I introduce my theoretical framing, drawn from Science and Technology Studies (STS). I explain why its focus on the details of unfolding practices *in situ*, the ways in which the social and the material are intertwined, and how particular sociomaterial relations become durable (or do not) make it an appropriate framework to analyse Neighbourhood Planning. I explore its advocacy for and critique of citizen participation in decision-making, its explanations of the processes and performativity of knowledge production, and its recent turn to care. In Chapter 4 I describe my ethnographic methodology and introduce the two sites in which I conducted my research.

I then begin to introduce and analyse my empirical material from the field. In Chapter 5 I focus on the relations between the groups developing the Plans and their wider communities. I observe that both groups perform three very distinct identities in relation to their neighbourhoods. Each of these identities affords them a different type of legitimacy, and the ways in which they hang together affects the evidence that can be produced and therefore the neighbourhood that can be planned for. In Chapter 6 I turn my attention to the processes of evidence production. I discuss the role of evidence in Neighbourhood Planning and the promise that it held out for generating more diverse forms of evidence. I then examine in detail specific instances of evidence production in each site, highlighting how some forms of knowledge are privileged over others and the effects that this has on the potential pluralisation of evidence. In Chapter 7 I explore the effects that the enactments of identity and evidence previously described have on relations of power. I contrast Governmental

discourse describing Neighbourhood Planning as a transfer of power from state to communities with a more nuanced model. This model describes a reconfiguration of relations through the production of two new actors, and the reproduction of relations between categories of actor. I describe the ways in which Neighbourhood Planners in both sites have been able to take advantage of these reconfigurations and reproductions to make material differences. However, I also identify ways in which the marginalisation of excluded actors, knowledges and values is perpetuated. I begin Chapter 8 by describing some of the ways in which the groups I worked with attempted to engage with these marginalised knowledges. I then go on to elaborate a theoretical discussion of how these knowledges might be better engaged, drawing on Latour's concept of matters of concern, Puig de la Bellacasa's concept of matters of care, and the use of narrative. I suggest that such an approach might enable better critical consideration of both those matters that are marginalised as insufficiently factual, and those that become reified as incontrovertible matters of fact. In Chapter 9 I draw together the themes that have emerged through my thesis and set out my conclusions in relation to my research questions. I conclude with a coda reflecting on the parallels between my producing this thesis, my collaborators in the field producing their Neighbourhood Plans, and the experiences that led me here.

In developing this thesis, I make the following original contributions to knowledge:

Theoretical

- I have extended an STS approach to analysing knowledge production and participation to the arena of Neighbourhood Planning, and shown how this approach can make processes and relations visible in novel ways, enabling

new critical reflections, interpretations, and speculations about how they could be done differently

- I show how Neighbourhood Planning Groups achieve legitimacy by enacting a specific set of fluid, conflicting identities, contributing to theory in fields such as planning, governance, participation and deliberative democracy, which investigate the relations between publics and the people who, in a variety of ways, can be said to represent them

Methodological

- I have conducted the first ethnographic study to follow two Neighbourhood Planning Groups all the way through the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan. An ethnographic approach is the only way in which to make visible some of the things which are effaced or concealed through the practices of Neighbourhood Planning, and simultaneously studying two groups adds a comparative dimension.

Substantive

- I show how and why the apparently experimental space of Neighbourhood Planning can tend towards a reproduction of existing knowledge practices, thereby reproducing many of the problems which it was intended to address. I also show how Neighbourhood Planning Groups can make real differences in the context of this reproduction. I indicate ways in which Neighbourhood Planning could be done differently to better reflect its stated aims.

Chapter 2: Context and critique of Neighbourhood Planning

“The problem with the current planning system is that it is not seen to be fair to local communities. It seeks to drown out their voices rather than to amplify them. Despite the clear wishes of local communities and local councils, the local view is that developers eventually ram through inappropriate developments on appeal... pitting local residents against the might and resources of developers.”

(Alok Sharma, MP, in Hansard, 2011)³

“Neighbourhood Planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.”

(Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), 2014a:
Paragraph 001 Reference ID 41-001-20140306)⁴

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I introduce Neighbourhood Planning. I sketch out how the English land-use planning system is intended to function regarding public participation in

³ Alok Sharma is a Conservative MP and was Minister for Housing and Planning in 2017-18. This extract is from a debate in the House of Commons on The Localism Bill, the legislation that brought Neighbourhood Planning into being.

⁴ The Department for Communities and Local Government was the Government department responsible for land-use planning (referred to throughout as DCLG). This is an extract from their online Planning Practice Guidance, which is intended to clarify and help implement national policy. The name was changed in January 2018 to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

decision-making. I then highlight some criticisms of the system, contrasting the participatory ideal with people's experience in practice, and set out some of the reforms introduced by the Coalition Government of 2010-2015, which, in part at least, were intended to address these criticisms. Prominent amongst these reforms was the introduction of Neighbourhood Planning. I provide an overview of the requirements for preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, and some of the key aspects of the wider suite of reforms as they affect the abilities of the public to participate meaningfully in the system.

I then go on to situate Neighbourhood Planning in relation to the turns to participation and localism. I note that it is subject to criticisms levelled at participatory and localist initiatives more widely, while also recognising a counter-current to this critique which suggests that it does introduce potential for real progressive change.

2.2 Planning in principle

The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) claimed in 2017 that "*Planning remains one of the most controversial aspects of local life, generating more political heat than almost any other local policy issue*" (TCPA, 2017a: 1). Neighbourhood Planning is one of the most recent in a long series of reforms of the planning system (see TCPA, 2017b for an overview). The contemporary planning system was instituted by the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, in a climate of rising concerns about public health, poverty, inequality, spatially imbalanced economic growth and employment, environmental quality, countryside conservation, and agricultural self-sufficiency. Its purpose was to regulate the development and use of land in the public

interest: to determine what kind of development is appropriate, how much is desirable, where it should be located, how it should look and function. The Act established 145 Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), based on district and county councils, that would be responsible for preparing comprehensive development plans and for granting (or refusing) planning permission for most proposed development. While there have been many changes to the system over the intervening years, this remains its cornerstone.

The public were initially expected to have a fairly passive role: evidence would be gathered by expert planners and decisions made on the basis of that evidence, and consultation was very limited. However, following the Town and Country Planning Act 1968, and the “People and Planning” report from the Skeffington Committee (1969), public participation in the decision-making process became a central tenet of the system. While the degree of inclusiveness has varied over time, the New Labour government (first elected in 1997) made a concerted effort to increase public participation that has been sustained to the present, on the principle that:

“Planning shapes the places where people live and work. So it is right that people should be enabled and empowered to take an active part in the process. Community involvement is vitally important to planning.” (ODPM (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister), 2004: 1)

The planning system is thus one of the longest established participatory decision-making arenas in the UK. There are legal and policy requirements to engage stakeholders and publics at various stages of plan-making and decision-taking. The knowledge and views of affected communities are, in principle, central considerations

in these processes. Indeed, at public inquiries and 'Examinations in Public' (the formal culminations of plan-making processes), Planning Inspectors tend to be at great pains to ensure that members of the public and other 'non-expert' stakeholders feel that they have been able to 'have their say' and that their points have been listened to. However, the automatic privileging of some forms of knowledge over others (Aitken, 2009) means that although they can 'have their say', they may not necessarily be effectively heard.

2.3 Planning in practice

In contrast to the rhetoric about community engagement, in practice the experience of non-expert participants in the planning system is often that it is “*complex, remote, hard to understand, difficult to engage with, slow and unpredictable and, generally, 'not customer friendly'*” (Baker et al., 2007: 80). Specifically:

- it is complicated and makes specific (although not always obvious) requirements of participants – Abram (2000: 356) notes that “*The highly ritualized preparation of local and regional plans sustains their exclusivity and inaccessibility*”;
- it requires a degree of specialised knowledge to have an impact, including membership of particular epistemological communities and use of the languages and assumptions that are associated with them – Davies (2001b: 207) highlights that “*In the context of planning, the expert or professional culture which surrounds the process may be central in creating a dependent public and facilitating the reification of certain forms of environmental*

knowledge and value”;

- it ‘pre-frames’ problems and potential solutions in a relatively narrow way - Allmendinger and Haughton (2012: 90) argue that the “*planning system is not so much an empowering arena for debating wide-ranging societal options for future development, as a system focused on carefully stage-managed processes with subtly but clearly defined parameters of what is open for debate”;*
- technical knowledge is privileged as evidence, while experiential knowledge, gained from the lived experience of engaging in social practices in a place, are sidelined as mere opinion – according to Burningham et al. (2014: 12) “*a clear public deficit model of understanding is evident, with the assumption being that given ‘facts’ or shown ‘the reality,’ members of the public will think more like the experts”;*
- the things that matter to people are, by definition, emotive issues, things they feel strongly about often due to engagements with them that are not wholly cognitive. Yet planners “*focus on the ‘rational’ analysis of mostly quantitative data, with the implications that emotional concerns are not a source of information, emotional thinking is not a method of understanding, and interaction is typically a diversion from methodical planning. In the end, there is something about planning that actively ignores and resists emotion”* (Baum, 2015: 512)
- the points at which participants are able to “have their say” are often not those at which significant decisions are made – as campaigning charity Civic Voice (2015: 8) states, “*Communities are usually ‘consulted’ on proposals that have already been formulated without their input and see themselves excluded by both developers and planning authorities from the real decision making”;* and

- the outcomes of engagement frequently do not appear to communities to be in their interests, and the terms of engagement with LPAs are not reciprocal – Gallent and Robinson observe that “*Communities clearly have things that policy actors want, but these things – knowledge and mandate – fuel a coercive relationship*” (2013: 170) which often appears solely designed to achieve the aims of the more powerful actor.
- There is a fundamental imbalance in the system, in that an applicant can appeal against a refusal of permission, but objectors cannot appeal against permission being granted, generating procedural and perceived unfairness (Green Balance et al., 2002).

Promises of empowerment confront “*the reality ... of a planning system that seems difficult to input into and causes frustration*” (Gallent and Robinson, 2013: 165), a system that is remote, technocratic, top-down and dominated by powerful actors. Even initiatives that had enabled local communities to plan collaboratively to produce formal documents – such as Parish Plans and Village Design Statements which could be adopted by LPAs as Supplementary Planning Documents – often led to frustration when decision-makers gave them little weight as they did not have the statutory force of Local Plan policies.

This gap between rhetoric and reality is as familiar a story in planning as in participatory initiatives more generally (Brownill and Carpenter, 2007; Cass, 2006; Cooke and Kothari, 2001), and the planning system has undergone numerous reforms in order to tackle it, alongside participatory and localist reforms of governance structures more generally (Brownill and Parker, 2010a; Connelly, 2015).

2.4 Planning reform

Despite concrete moves towards increasing participation in the system from 1997 onwards, critics drew attention to their contradictory relationship with other changes which increasingly centralised power and control (e.g. Bailey and Pill, 2015: 290). In fact, the reforms themselves – resulting in constant change and increasing fragmentation of the system - arguably made the system more inaccessible, and participants “*often felt that the language of planning had become more obscure, adding to the sense that a professional group was ‘marking its territory’ and closing the door to external input*” (Gallent and Robinson, 2013: 173).

In the mid-late 2000s the Conservative Party mobilised this criticism alongside many of the arguments outlined above to mount a sustained attack on the Labour Governments of 1997-2010 for being top-down, target-driven and bureaucratic (Haughton and Allmendinger, 2013: 2). Particular targets included:

- Regional Spatial Strategies, which set out strategic policies for the eight English regions and London, to which Local Plans had to conform, and which were viewed by some as lacking democratic accountability and imposing unpopular decisions upon local areas;
- the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime, introduced in 2009 – whereby particularly large or significant projects would be decided by a new Infrastructure Planning Commission rather than by LPAs, under a ‘fast-track’ system that reduced opportunities for public and local council involvement;

- a Planning Inspectorate that the Conservative Party viewed as overly-powerful, with power concentrated in the hands of centrally-managed officials rather than (locally or nationally) elected politicians or communities;
- the perceived inability for local people to influence decisions which would have major impacts on the places they lived, due to the inaccessibility, complexity and sheer quantity of planning policy, which acted as a barrier to participation and could only be taken advantage of by well-resourced development interests.

In response to these framings, in February 2010 the Conservatives published a Green Paper, “Open Source Planning”, which set out their vision for a planning system that would be more accessible for local people, with greater local and public influence over decisions. It proposed “*radical change*”, stating that their

“conception of local planning is rooted in civic engagement and collaborative democracy as the means of reconciling economic development with quality of life ... Communities should be given the greatest possible opportunity to have their say and the greatest possible degree of local control. If we get this right, the planning system can play a major role in decentralising power and strengthening society.” (The Conservative Party, 2010: 1).

This included the outline of a system of locally-determined Neighbourhood Planning, which would:

“create a new system of collaborative planning by giving local people the power to engage in genuine local planning through collaborative democracy – designing a local plan from the ‘bottom up’, starting with the aspirations of neighbourhoods” (Ibid: 2)

After forming a coalition Government with the Liberal Democrats in May 2010, the Conservatives quickly enacted a variety of planning reforms (Roze, 2014). This included abolishing Regional Spatial Strategies; merging the Infrastructure Planning Commission into the Planning Inspectorate, and reserving decision-making powers on ‘nationally significant infrastructure projects’ for the Secretary of State; replacing (almost) all national planning policy documents with a single, simplified National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) less than 5% of the length of the policies it replaced; and introducing Neighbourhood Planning as a “community right” in the Localism Act (House of Commons, 2011).

Neighbourhood Planning enables communities to draw up their own spatial plans for how their areas will change e.g. where new homes, shops, offices etc. will be built; how new development should be designed and connect to existing settlements; and which areas should be protected from change. Once adopted, Neighbourhood Plans become part of the Development Plan for the area and have statutory force: all planning decisions must be made in accordance with them, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This puts them on an equal footing with Local Plans made by LPAs, which establish the higher-level, strategic policies for the LPA area. This is the first time that lay people have been able to produce such plans themselves.

LPAs have a ‘duty to support’ these communities, and Government has made (limited) funding available for communities to engage consultants and specialist contractors, so experts are not excluded from the process. However, the stated intention is to reverse the situation in which

“people have been put off from getting involved because planning policy itself has become so elaborate and forbidding – the preserve of specialists, rather than people in communities” (DCLG, 2012a: ii),

towards one where plans will be

“written by the local community, the people who know and love the area, rather than the Local Planning Authority” (Locality, 2017),

thereby

“taking power away from officials and putting it into the hands of those who know most about their neighbourhood – local people themselves” (DCLG, 2010).

Neighbourhood Planning is thus represented as an inversion of existing relations: not mere participation in a state-led initiative, but rather *“[i]t was up to citizens to construct the process”*, of which they would be in control (Vigar et al., 2017: 425).

Experts are to play a subordinate role by providing support on request; thus promising to overcome the double divide between experts and laypeople and between ordinary citizens and decision-makers (Callon and Rabeharisoa, 2008). It is framed as a

particularly strong form of participatory democracy, with citizens not only having the right to participate, but having a powerful, in some ways determinative, influence over the future of their neighbourhood - a very strong claim and set of rights over public authorities and over private interests (Sorensen and Sagaris, 2010). It is claimed to put communities in control of decision-making, putting them at the top of notional hierarchies of participation (Arnstein, 1969; Wilcox, 1994)⁵.

2.5 Doing Neighbourhood Planning

Despite this claim, Neighbourhood Planning communities are not free to plan for whatever they want, however they want. There is a prescribed process that must be followed to develop a Neighbourhood Plan, focused around a series of legal procedural requirements and a set of basic conditions that a Plan must meet to be 'made' (i.e. adopted by the LPA as part of the statutory Development Plan). I describe these below (see Chetwyn, 2013 or DCLG, 2014a for more detail).

1. Establish a 'Qualifying Body'

Only two types of organisation may initiate a Neighbourhood Plan. In areas where there is a Town or Parish Council, that is automatically the Qualifying Body. In non-parished areas (i.e. most urban areas), a Neighbourhood Forum may be formed. An application to become a Neighbourhood Forum must be submitted to the LPA, who may allow or refuse it. A Forum should reflect the character and diversity of the area's

⁵ Despite substantial critique, these kind of hierarchies often continue to be employed fairly uncritically (Baker et al., 2007).

population and meet a number of other criteria (Chetwyn, 2013: 21). There have been a number of refusals, e.g. due to the proposed Forum not being representative or not covering an appropriate area, or where two Forums-in-the-making are competing to represent the same or overlapping areas (e.g. Colomb, 2017). However, the Qualifying Body will not necessarily do or even guide the work of preparing the Plan; it is merely necessary that it initiates and takes overall ownership of it. The day-to-day work is often done by a separate group, which may be a sub-group of the Qualifying Body, or may be made up of other local residents with or without members of the Qualifying Body. The names used for these groups vary, but I will describe them throughout this thesis as Neighbourhood Planning Groups (NPGs).

2. Designate a Neighbourhood Plan Area

A Qualifying Body must apply to the LPA to designate the area it wants the Plan to cover. There is some guidance as to what might make a suitable area, but it is entirely up to the Qualifying Body to propose a boundary (Chetwyn, 2013: 19). The LPA must run a six-week public consultation on this application. It may then decide to approve the designated area, reject it, or designate an area with different boundaries that it believes are more appropriate.

3. Plan preparation

Once an area has been designated, Plan preparation can begin. LPAs have a legal duty to support Qualifying Bodies in this, but implementation of this duty is variable (Parker et al., 2014). Limited funding is available for Qualifying Bodies to contract

specialist support, especially to assist in areas where they (or their NPGs) feel they lack technical expertise. There is also an ever-increasing raft of formal and informal guidance and advice, toolkits, workshops, templates etc. available online, face-to-face, and via phone and email from both from Government-supported sources⁶ and private contractors. But there is no prescribed process for Plan preparation. It depends on the content and level of detail of the Plan, but in general involves gathering and analysing evidence, community engagement to identify and agree issues, aims, options and proposals, and eventually writing policies (Bailey, 2015: 3). But within these broad parameters, there is very considerable scope for creativity, experimentation, and innovation. Once it has a Plan that it is content with, the Qualifying Body must conduct a formal six-week consultation on it.

4. Plan submission

After making any changes it considers necessary following the consultation, the Qualifying Body submits the Plan to the LPA, which then publishes the Plan and its supporting documents (which set out the evidence on which the Plan is based), and invite comments in a further six-week round of public consultation. Comments at this stage are sent to the independent Examiner (see below). The LPA must also satisfy itself that the Plan is legally compliant, i.e. that the steps outlined above have been carried out properly.

⁶ E.g. <http://locality.org.uk/projects/building-community/>, <http://www.ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk/home>, and <https://mycommunity.org.uk/take-action/neighbourhood-planning/>.

5. Examination

Following this second formal consultation, the LPA arranges an independent examination of the Plan; they must agree who will conduct the examination with the Qualifying Body. The Examiner may be any suitably qualified and experienced independent person who does not have an interest in any land that may be affected (House of Commons, 2011). Senior and retired Planning Inspectors, consultants, and academics are common choices. DCLG, the Government department responsible for planning, has supported the establishment of a referral service by relevant professional organisations to ‘broker’ Examiners (Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service (NPIERS)), but there is no requirement to use this service.

The examination consists of the Examiner reviewing the draft Plan, the evidence and supporting statements submitted, and the comments from the second formal consultation. If they consider it necessary, they can hold public hearing sessions, although these are not normally called. They may also ask the LPA and/or the Qualifying Body questions, most often via email, which will then be published on the LPA’s website, along with all the other documentation. The purpose of the examination is “*limited to testing whether or not a draft Neighbourhood Plan ... meets the basic conditions*” (DCLG, 2014a: Paragraph 055, Reference ID: 41-055-20140306). This means whether it:

- is appropriate with regard to national policy;
- contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan;

- is compatible with human rights requirements; and
- is compatible with EU obligations.

The Plan must have policies that deal with the use and development of land, and must not plan for less development than is set out in the Local Plan prepared by the LPA, most prominently in relation to housing numbers. Within these very broad parameters, there is very little prescription regarding either the content of the Plan, or the evidence put forward to support and justify it, other than that the evidence should be “*robust*” and “*proportionate*” (Ibid: Paragraph 040, Reference ID: 41-040-20160211).

These ‘basic conditions’ represent a very different and much lower bar than the ‘tests of soundness’ that a strategic Local Plan is required to meet in its examination. One of the very few clear and direct prescriptions regarding the examination of Neighbourhood Plans is that the Examiner “*is not testing the soundness of a Neighbourhood Plan or examining other material considerations*” (Ibid). This policy prescription has been repeatedly validated in the courts, which have “*confirm[ed] that examination of Neighbourhood Plans is less rigorous than is required for Local Plans and that examiners can apply a ‘lighter touch’*” (Carter, 2014, cited in Bailey, 2015).

Following examination, the Examiner must recommend that:

- the Plan should proceed to the next stage, a local referendum, as it meets the basic conditions; or
- the Plan, if modified in specified ways, would meet the basic conditions and then could proceed to referendum; or

- the Plan should not proceed to referendum, as it does not meet the basic conditions and is not capable of being modified to do so.

The Examiner reports to both the LPA and to the Qualifying Body, but the LPA is responsible for making any recommended changes to the Plan. The Examiner's recommendations are not binding (unlike those of a Planning Inspector examining a Local Plan), but not following those recommendations would open the Plan up to legal challenge and potential intervention by the Secretary of State. If the Qualifying Body is not happy with the modifications, it can withdraw the Plan – meaning that, if they still wished to produce a Plan, they would have to go back to step 3.

6. Referendum and adoption

Assuming the Plan passes examination, either as submitted or with modifications, the final stage is a local referendum, arranged by the LPA. Eligible voters will usually be all residents of the Plan area, but the Examiner can recommend that this area is varied (e.g. to include adjacent areas if they will be significantly affected)⁷. If a Plan gets a simple majority, the LPA will formally adopt (“make”) it - it will become part of the statutory Development Plan, and it will (alongside the Local Plan) be the starting point for deciding all planning applications in the area. Neighbourhood Plans may – and often do - also have other uses, e.g. to set out actions for the Parish Council or others, shape negotiations about land management or use of public spaces, coordinate

⁷ In certain circumstances it is also possible for referendums to include, or be restricted to, businesses operating in the Plan area.

community activity, or provide recommendations for infrastructure spending, but their only legally binding function is in relation to land-use planning.

As is evident from these procedural requirements, while official discourse around Neighbourhood Planning promises to deliver power to the people, and the relevant legislation and policy provide Qualifying Bodies and their NPGs with substantial freedoms and flexibilities as to how they go about developing a Plan and what it can contain, they do so within a quite tightly drawn and heavily constrained framework. And, far from being freed from the top-down influence of officials, specialists and technical experts, there is “*substantial influence being exerted at each stage by the local authority and the Examiner*” (Bailey, 2015: 15).

2.6 Related planning reforms

The introduction of Neighbourhood Planning must also be seen in the context of other planning reforms introduced at the same time, in particular the simplification of national planning policy and abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies. While the rhetoric around these reforms was similarly focused around inclusion, decentralisation, and empowering local communities, their effects in practice often served to make many communities feel more disempowered and unable to influence decision-making (Bailey, 2010; CLG Select Committee, 2014: 28, 48).

The central reasons given by the Conservatives for wanting to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies was that they were produced by the Labour-created Regional Assemblies, which they characterised as unaccountable. They claimed that the

Assemblies imposed unnecessarily high and unpopular housing targets on democratically elected LPAs, and that due to the resentment this generated, these targets actually led to more objections and less house-building (Pickles, 2013). This, they alleged, often meant that LPAs would be forced to allocate more land for housing (and other uses) than they or the communities that they represented wanted. Regional Assemblies and their strategies were therefore represented as doing undemocratic, top-down, technocratic planning (Gallent and Robinson, 2013: 3-4).

The National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012 – henceforth referred to as the NPPF) was the new, simplified and ostensibly ‘public-friendly’ statement of national planning policy. It was far shorter than previous planning policy (around 50 pages as opposed to over 1,000), condensing many separate Statements, Guidance Notes and Circulars into one document, and was intended to be understandable to the general reader, not just to planning experts. It required LPAs to set their own housing targets, and not to have regard to the soon-to-be-abolished Regional Strategies⁸.

This appears to represent substantial devolution of power, and increased flexibility for LPAs and their communities to make their own decisions, especially regarding housing numbers. However, the NPPF also introduced a series of new or redefined concepts, which had the effect of giving greater priority to national agendas of increasing economic and housing growth than to local self-determination. I outline the most important of these below, to provide the immediate context within which Neighbourhood Planning is situated.

⁸ The NPPF was revised and updated in 2018, but the key policies continued to function as described here, except where I specifically note changes.

a) The presumption in favour of sustainable development

In paragraph 14, the NPPF establishes a “*presumption in favour of sustainable development*”, which is “*the golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking*”, and which means, specifically, that:

- *When making Development Plans, Local Authorities should plan to meet the **objectively assessed needs** of their area, unless other policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted (e.g. because of environmental designations), or unless the adverse impacts of doing so would **significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits**;*
- *When taking decisions, permission should be granted for applications that accord with the Development Plan; and permission should also be granted for applications where the Development Plan is **absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date** - unless, once more, other policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted, or the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. (DCLG, 2012: 4 (emphasis added))*

The concepts emphasised in bold above have become significant challenges for communities who want to shape their own surroundings. They formally embed “[t]he hegemonic position of pro-growth planning [which] means that development is

effectively synonymous with the public interest, the primary good that the planning system should seek to promote” (Inch, 2015: 411). This has led to many LPAs and communities perceiving national policy as taking power and influence out of their hands and concentrating it in the hands of developers and Planning Inspectors. I explore how these concepts operate to favour growth over participation below.

b) Objectively assessed needs

Local Authorities are required to “*objectively assess needs*” for housing and other forms of development in their area “*based on facts and unbiased evidence*” (DCLG, 2014b: Paragraph 004 Reference ID: 2a-004-20140306), and then to set targets in their Local Plans to meet those needs. But there was no further guidance on what this meant for several years, and the means of “objectively” assessing needs remained open to interpretation⁹. What it does seem to require is a ‘technical’ assessment process, conducted by specialists, making use of a variety of demographic, economic and other evidence and related assumptions, usually with the assistance of software models that act to ‘black-box’ the process (i.e. conceal internal uncertainty, ambiguity, contingency and complexity, and render it difficult to understand, let alone critique (Latour, 1987)).

⁹ In September 2017 the Government consulted on a standardised methodology for assessing housing need, which was launched in 2018. However, it failed to provide the results the Government wanted, and so it has been announced that it will be revised within the next two years. In the meantime, LPAs have been ordered to use the methodology, but not to use the most up-to-date data with it. The paragraph referenced here was revised on 20.02.19 (new Reference ID: 2a-004-20190220) to set out how LPAs should use a prescribed set of specific facts to conduct their ‘objective assessment’. This methodology has tended to give radically different results to previous ‘objective assessments’.

The intended objectivity of the process is belied by the fact that it is not uncommon for numerous assessments, conducted on behalf of different parties (developers and landowners and/or their professional representatives; local residents; campaign groups), using different methodologies, and in many cases different computer models and software simulations, to indicate wildly varying levels of need¹⁰. This is often the main controversial issue in plan-making (Bailey, 2015). These competing assessments are put forward to the Planning Inspector responsible for the Plan's 'Examination in Public'. Considerable amounts of time are spent debating different figures and the assumptions and tools used to construct them. Great weight is given to institutional and technical expertise, and to 'black-boxed' results (Latour, 1987; 1999): figures that were materialised from computer models, the technical operations of which are not transparent, are given more weight and greater respect than verbal discussion about, for example, the assumptions used to reach or to support particular results.

Technologically-mediated and technically-accredited evidence is used to shut down debate and contestation, for example about the quality or robustness of underpinning assumptions (See Aitken, 2009; and Rydin et al., 2018 for parallel findings in other planning contexts). After hearing the arguments and evidence, the Inspector will have to decide which assessment of need is more likely to be 'objectively' correct, and, if

¹⁰ I witnessed this on several occasions as a representative of CPRE, e.g. the Examination in Public for the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan and a technical meeting before the Examination of the Cheshire East Local Plan. At the former, nine "objective assessments" were presented, with the highest more than 100% greater than the LPA's own assessment: the LPA's assessment was accepted in the end. At the latter, more than a dozen assessments were put forward, with the Inspector eventually pushing the LPA to re-assess their own need using different criteria, which resulted in an increase of around 33%.

necessary, to advise the LPA to amend their targets or to do more work to establish the evidence base for new targets.

Even the (then) Secretary of State responsible for planning has described this system as resulting in “*an opaque mish-mash of different figures that are consistent only in their complexity*” (Hansard, 2017a). A common outcome of this process is that LPAs are compelled to increase their housing targets, sometimes very significantly, and often to levels well above the targets previously set by Regional Strategies. This is generally against the wishes of the LPA and of the local community, and is seen as an imposition from a remote centre, despite the absence of any specific ‘imposed’ target (Goodchild and Hammond, 2013: 87). The 2018 revision of the NPPF additionally requires that ‘objectively assessed needs’ are met as a minimum, and that unmet housing need from surrounding areas is taken into account when setting targets, putting further upward pressure on supposedly locally-determined targets.

c) Significant and demonstrable

The requirement that the adverse impacts of development must “*significantly and demonstrably*” outweigh the benefits before Plans may cater for less than their area’s “*objectively assessed needs*”, or before a planning application may be refused, raises the bar of proof significantly. It does so both in terms of the degree of harm that must be caused, and the evidence that must be marshalled in support of any such claim.

Previously, national policy generally required permission to be refused if the adverse impacts outweighed the positive – the ‘planning balance’ has therefore been tipped significantly in favour of new development, and “*the emphasis on economic growth is*

overshadowing the wider social and environmental goals of sustainability” (Roze, 2014: 130). This is explicitly acknowledged by decision-takers in justifying their decisions, as in this extract from a Planning Inspector’s decision letter: *“It is necessary to aggregate all the adverse impacts and weigh them against all the aggregated benefits, but applying the tilted balance”* (Hill, 2017: para 109).

The balance is thus tilted in favour of allowing considerably more harm to be caused, and in favour of those actors with the resources to produce more and ‘better’ evidence; both of which tend to disadvantage public participants. Furthermore, it *“effectively elevates a conception of the good [i.e. economic and housing growth] above democratic rights to decide where the public interest lies”* (Inch, 2015: 412).

A further problem arises in that neither of the terms “significantly” nor “demonstrably” are further defined, leaving it open to various participants in the system to interpret them in different ways. And this in turn points to a pre-existing issue: where the ‘planning balance’ lies in individual cases, whether the positive impacts outweigh the negative, is also inevitably a matter of judgement and interpretation, particularly because the positive and adverse impacts tend to affect different dimensions of ‘sustainable development’ (i.e. economic, social, and environmental) and are therefore difficult to compare directly. Planning Inspectors and LPA planning officers are expected to have the expertise and training to make this judgement effectively, consistently and impartially. Other participants’ ability to make such judgements may also be ‘pre-judged’, positively or negatively, with reference to their imputed level of expertise.

d) Absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date

The requirement to grant permission for applications where the Development Plan is “*absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date*” leaves the door open for much development that would not previously have been considered acceptable and/or that would be opposed by the local community, for several reasons¹¹:

- many LPAs do not have an ‘up-to-date’ Local Plan (in the common-sense meaning of up-to-date), for a variety of reasons;
- as one requirement for a Local Plan is that it conforms to national policy, it could be (and has been) argued that any Local Plan adopted before the NPPF came into effect (i.e. the vast majority of them) could be considered out-of-date (Goodchild and Hammond, 2013: 87);
- crucially, the NPPF specifies a set of circumstances regarding housing development, where “relevant policies” may be considered out-of-date, even if there is a Local Plan in place that would otherwise be considered up-to-date. This is known as the ‘five-year supply rule’, and I outline these circumstances below.

e) The five-year supply rule

A Local Plan usually covers a period of 15-20 years. Under the presumption in favour of sustainable development, it is required to provide for the ‘objectively assessed’

¹¹ In January 2019, only 44% of LPAs had a Local Plan that was recognised as being up-to-date (National Audit Office).

development needs of its area for the whole of that period. But in terms of housing ‘need’, the NPPF also imposes a shorter-term time horizon.

In paragraph 47, it requires LPAs to identify enough specific ‘deliverable’ sites to provide five years’ worth of housing, plus a ‘buffer’ of either 5% or 20% (depending on past performance) to provide ‘flexibility’ for the market. In practice, a ‘deliverable’ site tends to be one that already has planning permission, although the issue is complex. This list must be updated at least annually. Crucially, if an LPA is not able to demonstrate such a five-year supply of housing land (plus buffer), then the housing policies in its Plan (and any Neighbourhood Plans in its area) are to be considered out-of-date, and the presumption in favour of sustainable development is triggered, giving LPAs “*relatively little room to manoeuvre when faced with planning applications which it might otherwise seek to refuse ... undermining the general move towards planning decentralisation which the government has otherwise been claiming to promote*” (Sibley-Esposito, 2014: para 10).

As highlighted above, the ‘objectively assessed need’ for housing for an area can be strongly contested. Whether an LPA has a five-year supply is also often strongly contested when planning applications are made. This contest favours developers who usually can support their claims with more technical and financial resources than are available to communities (and often to LPAs). Where an LPA is found not to have a five-year supply, planning permission is usually given for applications that would have been refused otherwise. Research by CPRE (2014) showed that at least 39 out of 58 major housing applications were given permission at appeal in the year to March 2014, after having been refused by the relevant LPA: double the number in the

previous year. And in at least 14 additional cases, LPAs have felt obliged to grant permission for developments that conflict with their Local Plan, for fear of having a decision to refuse taken to appeal (with all the resource implications that has) and losing on the basis of lack of a five-year supply, which could also result in costs being awarded against them (Ibid)¹².

f) Permitted development rights

At the same time, the Government has also dramatically extended the scope of permitted development rights, i.e. development for which planning permission is not required. The most notable new rights included doubling the size of extensions that householders can build, allowing the conversion of offices to residential use, and later, the conversion of barns to residential use (Goodchild and Hammond, 2013: 87).

The overall impact of this inter-connecting matrix of concepts has thus been to put the rhetoric of community empowerment strongly at odds with national policy imperatives of deregulation and increased housing and economic growth.

Neighbourhood Planning was explicitly introduced as a means of enhancing public and local participation in decision-making, as part of a wide-ranging commitment to 'localism' and the devolution of powers. But it was also explicitly intended to reduce opposition to new development and to promote growth, on the basis that if people

¹² In December 2016 the Government introduced a measure to partially protect policies in Neighbourhood Plans from being declared out of date in this way. This covered cases where the Plan had been formally adopted less than two years ago, allocated sites for housing, and the LPA had at least a three-year supply of land (Hansard, 2016). However, these criteria effectively excluded the great majority of Neighbourhood Plan areas.

were more in control of development in their area, they would be better able to identify what development was needed, and less inclined to see it as an unwelcome imposition. Yet it was set in a context where changes to national planning policy were leading to many people feeling less empowered and less able to influence those decisions than ever before.

2.7 Wider context and critique

So, Neighbourhood Planning is situated in the broader ebb and flow of the English planning system. But the English planning system does not exist in a vacuum. Brownill and Parker (2010b) point out that the Skeffington report ‘People and Planning’ was published in the same year as Arnstein’s influential paper developing the idea of a ‘ladder of participation’ (1969), locating the English planning system in much broader circulations of concerns about citizen empowerment. As well as being at the most recent end of a series of participatory reforms to the UK planning system and local governance more widely (Connelly, 2015), Neighbourhood Planning is also situated in an international turn towards participation and localism (Bradley, 2017c; Davoudi and Madanipour, 2015; Sturzaker and Gordon, 2017). As such, it is subject to many of the claims made for, and critiques of, this historically longer and geographically broader movement, and may in turn be able to offer lessons for participatory initiatives more widely, because, despite decades of efforts, “[t]he spectre of hierarchical power continues to elude all attempts to deepen democratic participation in land-use planning ... participation still eludes its anticipated empowerment” (Bradley, 2017c: 39). Many authors contend that the same applies across the board of participatory initiatives (e.g. Cooke and Kothari, 2001), although

in some cases holding out hope that changes in design and philosophy could still enable the promised rewards of participation to be reaped (Reed, 2008).

These promised rewards have been amply described elsewhere (e.g. Fiorino, 1990; Innes and Booher, 2004; Reed, 2008; Rydin and Pennington, 2000). In summary, more participatory decision-making has been encouraged and become ‘mainstreamed’ for a variety of reasons: to enable a wider range of knowledge, skills and values to be brought to bear; to enable decision-makers to learn more about public perspectives and priorities; enabling disadvantaged groups to be heard, thus promoting fairness and justice; securing legitimacy for public decisions; ensuring that knowledge relied upon is fit for purpose; increasing the quality and effectiveness of decision-making and delivery; empowering citizens to ‘take control of their own destinies’; and being simply the right thing to do in a democratic society. The manifold appeals of and rationales for extending participation have become so deeply embedded in governance arrangements at all scales that for more than two decades citizen participation and community empowerment have become the new orthodoxy (Stirrat, 1996). However, there are also robust critiques of Neighbourhood Planning, and of the participatory turn more generally. I briefly sketch some below.

Firstly, as set out above, there is a fundamental conflict between two of the central aims of national planning policy: to empower communities collectively to exert more control over development, and to ‘roll back’ planning to prevent its interference in markets that are assumed to be capable of delivering ‘better’ outcomes, in particular more economic growth and more housing (Haughton and Allmendinger, 2013). It is

“a political culture that paradoxically encourages engagement but also defends against its disruptive effects” (Inch, 2015: 405).

This apparent contradiction may be resolved, from the perspective of the government promoting it, if another aim and assumption of Neighbourhood Planning is operationalised. While the rhetoric of Neighbourhood Planning focuses strongly on its supposed transfer of power from LPAs to communities, it also has the explicit aim of increasing growth. If communities have genuine control over the specifics of development in their area, it was assumed that *“growth would be regularly embraced rather than rejected”* (Gallent and Robinson, 2013: 21). Communities with new, real planning powers are framed as more likely to accept and promote increased and accelerated rates of development:

“if we enable communities to find their own ways of overcoming the tensions between development and conservation, local people can become proponents rather than opponents of appropriate economic growth” (The Conservative Party, 2010: 1).

‘The local’ is frequently represented as the best, if not the only scale at which these tensions can be resolved (Bailey and Pill, 2015), reflecting a *“dominant consensus ... that equates good policy-making with the local scale”* (Raco et al., 2015: 2) and local communities as *“those best placed to find the best solutions to local needs”* (Hansard, 2011: 14). The apparently conflicting aims of the reforms – more community control and more growth – no longer conflict if it is correct that resistance to development is generated largely by resentment of the imposition of development by external forces,

and that local communities will want to promote better, but not less, development. On this reading, Government would not be governing through communities (Rose, 1996), but enabling them to meet their local needs, which they would recognise and want to fulfil once freed from the stifling imposition of state planners.

However, in case this assumption proved wrong, the basic conditions wrapped around Neighbourhood Planning constrain the autonomy that NPGs have to restrict new development. While arguments can be made that alignment with higher level strategies and/or principles is necessary to maintain a focus on the wider public good over narrow parochial interests (Gallent and Robinson, 2013: 49; McKee, 2014), the requirements to conform to national and strategic local policy severely limits room for manoeuvre. In particular, the explicit requirement that Neighbourhood Plans “*should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies*” (DCLG, 2014a: Paragraph 044 Reference ID: 41-044-20160519) means that communities may be obliged to sanction development allocations that they have previously opposed. Many commentators have claimed that Neighbourhood Planning largely functions to deliver the centrally-determined objectives of economic and housing growth (e.g. Parker et al., 2015).

Neighbourhood Planning is also inextricably a part of the Coalition Government’s discredited Big Society logic, which, while presented as advancing an agenda of community empowerment, critics have denounced as a cynical drive to impose neoliberal policies of austerity: shrinking the state and outsourcing its accountabilities; burdening communities and individuals with responsibilities, risks, and costs without (sufficient) additional resources; coercing them to volunteer time and effort in order to

secure outcomes that were previously theirs by right; obscuring and marketising state responsibilities; prioritising cost-cutting over the availability, consistency and quality of service provision; and replacing skilled, paid professionals with amateur, unpaid volunteers, and state employees oriented towards the public good with private contractors driven by the profit motive (Kisby, 2010; Lowndes and Pratchett, 2012; and with particular reference to planning, Lord and Tewdwr-Jones, 2014; Lord et al., 2017). In contrast to the often-claimed progressive aims of localism and participation, Coalition localism has been branded a “*straightforward conservative force*”¹³ (Clarke and Cochrane, 2013: 10; Featherstone et al., 2012).

All of this taken together means that, for some critics, all Neighbourhood Planning empowers communities to do is to enact decisions which have already been taken elsewhere (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2012). It merely allows tinkering with the finer details of those decisions, and does “*not necessarily give communities greater leverage over the principal changes that they are most concerned about,*” (Gallent and Robinson, 2013: 160). It can thus be characterised as a ‘post-political’ form of governance, which has the effects of avoiding controversy rather than enabling genuine alternatives to emerge (Marris and Rose, 2010), closing down and co-opting resistance and dissent (Mouffe, 2005), thereby cultivating consent or legitimacy for decisions and practices that are not in the interests of the communities concerned (Swyngedouw, 2009). This would imply that it effectively reinforces rather than reforms (much less reverses) existing structural power relations (Bailey and Pill, 2015: 289; Huxley, 2000).

¹³ ‘conservative’ is here used in opposition to ‘progressive’, and is not intended to minimise the sometimes radical nature of the reforms.

As noted in Open Source Planning, the participation envisaged in Neighbourhood Planning is based around “*collaborative democracy*”. It draws on Habermas’ theories of deliberative democracy and communicative action, based on inclusive, formal debate between all those affected by an issue with the aim of reaching consensus on the best decision (Habermas, 1996). This theory has been developed specifically in relation to planning by scholars such as Patsy Healey (1997) and Innes and Booher (2000). Critics claim that this central insistence on consensus-building negates the possibility of a more agonistic form of debate in which genuinely irreconcilable differences can be engaged with (Mouffe, 2005), either within the territory of the Neighbourhood Plan, or between the neighbourhood and higher levels of governance: that “[i]t is an example of participatory design which attempts control from a distance and represents a linked effort to de-politicise planning” (Parker et al., 2017: 455), rather than any real opportunity for communities to shape their own destinies. This reflects a long-standing critique of the turn to participation:

“Far from being a transformative process in which local people are able to exert control over decision-making, participation becomes a well-honed tool for engineering consent to projects and programmes whose framework has already been determined in advance – a means for top-down planning to be imposed from the bottom up.” (Hildyard et al., 2001: 59-60)

As discussed above, the Government openly states that the purpose of empowering communities is so that they will make particular choices, i.e. to embrace higher levels of development. It is therefore not simply a project of empowering communities, but

of producing communities that will make those choices. According to Brownill, four distinct aims can be identified in the overall project of Neighbourhood Planning, including precisely this identity-shaping work on citizens who “*are encouraged to participate in the spaces of Neighbourhood Planning in a particular way ... turning ‘the folks’ into local citizen-planners who accept the need for development and who willingly engage to deliver this*” (Brownill, 2017b: 32).

Neighbourhood Planning reflects the assumption that not only can communities engage in planning, they can lead it. This cultural change reallocates roles and responsibilities from officials and specialists to citizens. Lord et al. (2017: 359) point to the “*host of requirements relating to the skills and implicit code of semi-professional practice that will be made of private individuals in order to transform them into citizen planners*”, while Inch (2015: 409) highlights the need for “*the cultivation of specific civic virtues, including particular conceptions of how the common good should be understood and what constitutes legitimate political behaviour*”. He emphasises that the subjectivities required for collaborative and agonistic planning are antithetical, and so a process that shapes individuals and communities to be fit for one kind of engagement simultaneously makes them unfit for the other, and that only certain types of citizen can legitimately participate in this model of planning.

There are therefore concerns that the localism agenda, and Neighbourhood Planning in particular, will entrench privilege and further empower the already relatively powerful who are most able to take advantage of opportunities for participation in governance. This would then increase inequalities and insider/outsider dynamics both within and

between communities, such that those with access to the greatest social, cultural, symbolic and economic resources would become even more dominant (Bailey and Pill, 2015; Hastings and Matthews, 2015; Matthews et al., 2015; Wills, 2016). Existing power relations amongst ‘the public’ as well as between ‘the public’ and other actors (such as national and local government, developers and landowners) would be reinforced rather than countered. The democratic accountability and representativeness of NPGs has been questioned, suggesting that they favour existing ‘elites’ and/or the views of only a limited segment of the community (Davoudi and Cowie, 2013; Gallent and Robinson, 2013; Vigar et al., 2017: 430). The literature finds a trend towards “*an uneven geography of representation in favour of the more affluent, better educated and more vocal social groups who often have time, resources and know-how at their disposal*” (Davoudi and Madanipour, 2015: 185). Despite this, Governmental rhetoric has tended to downplay asymmetries within and between neighbourhoods (Parker, 2017), although there have been more recent changes to the support regime to offer more funding to deprived neighbourhoods and those facing more complex challenges.

Ludwig & Ludwig (2014) argue that even though Neighbourhood Planning is intended to smooth the path to more development, in practice it is often likely to give ammunition to those who want to stop development and to stir up inflammatory anti-development feeling. Samuels observes “*the big defect with this system is that our lives are not constrained within the medieval boundaries of parishes*” (2012: 41), and argues that the relentless focus of Neighbourhood Planning on the very local is bound to lead to narrow, parochial concerns being given priority over wider strategic objectives. Any such resistance to the policy objectives of increased housing or

economic growth tend to be characterised as “*regressive, place-bounded, small-world self-interest*” (Mace, 2013: 1144), and there have been concerted efforts to characterise Neighbourhood Planning as a “NIMBY’s Charter” (see e.g. King, 2011; Orme, 2010).

This labelling of any resistance to the neoliberal agenda as ‘NIMBY’ (Not In my Back Yard) further reduces the scope for agonistic approaches from NPGs. The association of Neighbourhood Planning with NIMBYism threatens to construct an imagined public with a specific subjectivity that is likely to generate responses from other actors that would compromise the capacity of NPGs to function (cf. Walker et al., 2010). To be successfully labelled as a NIMBY is, in planning terms, effectively to have one’s identity spoiled (Goffman, 1968). As Wolsink (2006: 87) observes, NIMBY is not a well-defined concept, but rather is “*used as a pejorative to imply selfish behaviour on the part of opponents*”, consisting of the irrational obstruction of reasonable development proposals that, by implication, the objectors would be happy to see built elsewhere. The derogatory label functions as a negation of one’s capacity to engage in collaborative efforts and to see the bigger (and implicitly more important) picture. It implies the clouding of rational judgement by emotion (Cass and Walker, 2009). It seeks to dismiss all and any arguments the labelled subject might present as irrelevant and ill-founded; “*a by-product of subjective vested interests and/or ignorance and mis-understanding of what it is that experts are seeking to do*” (Raco et al., 2015: 8). However, Matthews et al. (2015) suggest that by virtue of mis-conceptualising the roots and reasons behind resistance that is characterised as NIMBY, the new localism agenda, especially Neighbourhood Planning, is likely to fail to overcome such resistance and actually lead to an increase in effective oppositional action. Parker et al.

(2015: 530) summarise both horns of this dilemma: “*the danger is that the plan and its content simply results in performing national agendas, or conversely in reflecting the predilections of a small group of people residing in the neighbourhood.*”

2.8 Countering the critique

The critiques of Neighbourhood Planning are deep and wide-ranging. But some authors – including some of those providing the warnings of danger above – also see the potential for real change to be achieved through Neighbourhood Planning. The extent, nature, and outcomes of devolution are contested and complex, and the foregoing critiques are evidence of complexity, not dichotomies. While the localism agenda clearly needs to be viewed critically, the possibilities that it introduces also need to be explored (Parker et al., 2017). The literature suggests that some of the concerns raised by commentators are borne out in practice, but others are not (Sturzaker and Shaw, 2015).

Despite claims that Neighbourhood Planning essentially continues existing patterns, whether of entrenching privilege or subjecting communities to post-political governance at a distance, a number of authors have suggested that Neighbourhood Planning represents radical change (e.g. Bradley, 2017c: 45; Bradley and Brownill, 2017a: 255; Lord et al., 2017: 349; Parker et al., 2017: 446), or at least has novel elements that make it quite different from previous initiatives (Sturzaker and Gordon, 2017; Sturzaker and Shaw, 2015). Indeed, Vigar et al. (2017: 425) suggest that the central role of ‘ordinary citizens’ “*renders much of the planning literature on*

collaboration and participation – with its assumption of a ‘planner’ at the heart of the process – only tangentially useful’.

One aspect of this novelty is that it enables the construction of a new collective identity or planning polity with the ability to determine its own membership, boundaries and issues – ‘the neighbourhood’. ‘The neighbourhood’ becomes a significant new actor in the planning system, where previous participation tended to aggregate consumer preferences from ‘outside’ and cast organised collective action as self-interested (Bradley, 2015). A clear boundary line is drawn between autonomous polities – the neighbourhood and the LPA – which enables agonistic encounters both within the new polity (in an alternative discursive forum away from the modulating influence of officials and their specific framings and rationalities), and between it and the LPA and other actors (Bradley, 2017c). While the politics within Neighbourhood Planning may be constrained, the existence of a Neighbourhood Plan is inherently political. It is argued that, while in its present form, Neighbourhood Planning does not wholly meet the demands of either agonistic or collaborative planning theory (and indeed, what concrete form of participation does?), it opens up spaces for both kinds of engagement (Bond, 2011; Parker et al., 2017; Vigar et al., 2017).

While Neighbourhood Planning may have been intended to tame the antagonism between communities and the planning system and smooth the way for the achievement of neoliberal objectives, instead it has displaced this antagonism, allowing communities to produce policies that conflict with the corporate interests of the liberalised housing market (Bradley and Sparling, 2016). Instead of producing communities that were acquiescent to the requirements of the speculative housing

market, it produced communities that became differently attuned to the needs of the area and the community, and the different ways in which these could be met, favouring models that conflict with those of the volume housebuilders (Bradley et al., 2017).

The literature shows the potential for NPGs to ‘work the spaces of power’ (Newman, 2012) and to assemble neighbourhoods around distinctive and progressive priorities, subverting the implicit intentions of the processes of governmentality (Rose, 1996). It is “*constituted by and constitutive of the statecraft of localism... [but has] ... already exceeded its boundaries*” (Bradley and Brownill, 2017a: 263). It suggests that “*neighbourhood plans have demonstrated a different way of ‘doing’ planning, emphasising different considerations*” (Field and Layard, 2017: 107), and that NPGs are attempting to prioritise local distinctiveness, sense of place, and protection of green space (Bradley and Brownill, 2017a: 260). They are putting concrete characteristics above the abstract calculations of ‘sustainable development’, asserting the primacy of environmental quality, place identity and social wellbeing against the balance tilted towards market demands and growth (Bradley et al., 2017). In this way, as well as (re)assembling and (re)configuring neighbourhoods, they begin to open up spaces to reconfigure the purposes and aims of planning itself (Brownill, 2017a), with “*the neighbourhood emerging as the proponent of sustainability and social purpose*” (Parker et al., 2017: 458).

To the extent that this may appear to cast Neighbourhood Planning precisely in the role of a ‘NIMBY’s charter’, Matthews et al. (2015: 57) note that “[t]he literature which interrogates and criticizes the NIMBY concept recognizes that much of the

opposition is valid and linked to broader societal concerns such as sustainability and social justice” (see e.g. Burningham et al., 2014; Devine-Wright, 2009; Sturzaker, 2011). Far from being parochial and self-serving, the caring-for-place motivations dismissed as NIMBYism often relate to concerns that run much more widely than the relatively narrow act of calculation performed in the planning balance. It has been suggested that Neighbourhood Planning could offer a site where these much-derided concerns could be *“reframed as legitimate attempts to assert a local narrative of place over external versions”* (Mace, 2013: 1144). Traditionally, both planners and planning scholarship have tended to steer away from the emotional realm and the attachments that people feel to place (Baum, 2015; Hoch, 2006), despite their central role in driving participation (Porter et al., 2012), while the policy of Neighbourhood Planning explicitly invokes and relies upon these commitments (Bradley, 2017a).

Neighbourhood Planning, then, represents a cat’s cradle of contradictory relations simultaneously supporting and undermining each other. Indeed, as Brownill and Bradley observe,

“In no other case study of devolution, across a broad international canvas, do we see so vividly the liberatory and regulatory conflicts that arise from the assemblage of localism, or the tangled relations of power and identity that result” (2017a: 251).

Whatever the intentions of this particular brand of localism, such conflicts are likely to open up spaces for the unexpected and unintended, where difference can be achieved (Levitas, 2012; Newman, 2014). It has even been suggested that focusing solely on the

indications of ‘post-politics’ not merely ignores, but may also contribute to the suppression of other possible outcomes (Williams et al., 2014). Regardless of the powerful critiques above, localism and participation remain central narratives worldwide. Their differing manifestations and the different effects of these manifestations cannot be ignored (Parker et al., 2017), and before dismissing them outright, it is important to get a detailed understanding of their operation in practice, and the practices implicated in their operation (Parker and Street, 2015: 796). The rationales for participation remain valid, despite the failings of individual instances and the deeper, structural critiques of its ‘dark side’: “*participation is not always desirable in practice ... Yet at the same time the idea of participation ... must ultimately be desirable*”: (Brownill and Parker, 2010b: 281).

2.9 Impacts on the ground

However it is theoretically characterised, Neighbourhood Planning is having significant practical and political effects, becoming established as “*one of the most widespread community initiatives in recent years*” (Brownill and Bradley, 2017). Lord et al. (2017: 349) claim that Neighbourhood Planning constitutes “*radical*” and “*fundamental*” reform – although they are far from persuaded that this is a positive thing. A briefing paper by No. 5 Chambers, one of the country’s leading planning law practices, described it as “*one of the most important issues in land-use planning today. It sits at the epicentre of the seismic tension between Localism and the national policy imperative of significantly boosting the supply of housing*” (Young and Burcher, 2014: 1). Vigar notes that Neighbourhood Plans “*have come to exert much greater authority*

over land-use policy than initially thought” (2017: 423) and *“been shown to exert real power in decisions over land use”* (439).

By August 2017, at least 2,272 communities had formally applied to begin the process of developing a Plan, while 430 Plans had been through examination, and 328 had been formally adopted by their LPAs (Planning Resource, 2017) However, growth in take-up since then seems to have slowed considerably. Far from being unwillingly or unwittingly coerced into the Government’s neoliberal agenda of increased growth and less control, Sturzaker and Shaw (2015: 587) note that a report from planning consultancy Turley found that of the first 75 published Neighbourhood Plans, over half focused on preservation and protection – while still meeting the legal requirement to promote no less development than the Local Plan.

In many cases, Neighbourhood Plans have had a real impact on decision making, both in terms of the effect that they have in individual cases and the wider impact that decisions involving them are perceived to have. As Bailey (2015) shows, early Plan policies were strongly defended at appeals by the Secretary of State, and by the courts when they were legally challenged. A few indicative examples demonstrate the kind of influence that Neighbourhood Plans had throughout the planning system in their first few years.

In September 2016, in an appeal decision over a major housing application in Yapton, the Planning Inspector recommended allowing the appeal and granting permission, because the council could not demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land, and so the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ applied, with its inbuilt bias

towards granting permission. But the Secretary of State, in disagreeing with the Inspector, stated that

“Neighbourhood Plans, once made part of the Development Plan, should be upheld as an effective means to shape and direct development in the Neighbourhood Planning area in question. Consequently ... even in the absence of a 5 year housing land supply, the Secretary of State places very substantial negative weight on the conflict between the proposal and [the] policy” (Javid, 2016: para 16).

As discussed above, since 2012 the absence of a five-year housing land supply had frequently been used to push through unpopular development that conflicted with LPA Local Plans. This decision showed that even where Plans were technically ‘out of date’ due to the lack of five-year supply, policies could still hold weight and even be determinative. In April 2017, the legal basis of this decision was challenged in the High Court, which upheld the Secretary of State’s decision (Mrs Justice Lang DBE, 2017b). The same judge delivered an even more significant judgement in July 2017, with a ruling that established: firstly that the requirement for Neighbourhood Plans to be ‘in general conformity’ with the Local Plan allowed for a considerable degree of flexibility, and that as the question of whether two Plans were in general conformity was a matter of planning judgment, this would be very difficult to legally challenge; and secondly that it would be very difficult to challenge the legality of a Neighbourhood Plan by way of attacking the reasons (or absence thereof) given by the Examiner as to why s/he considered the Plan to meet the basic conditions (Mrs Justice Lang DBE, 2017a).

These are just two examples in a series of legal judgements that have taken a “*generous approach*” (Sturzaker and Gordon, 2017: 12; see also Bailey, 2015) towards Neighbourhood Plans, and which appears to indicate that the courts are attempting to interpret the law in a way that maximises the power of NPGs to make decisions, and to minimise the ability of traditionally more powerful actors to use their more substantial resources to over-rule them through judicial review.

In July 2017, the Secretary of State again overturned the recommendation of a Planning Inspector to reject a planning application in Buckingham. The Inspector had made a weak interpretation of the Neighbourhood Plan in question, and therefore concluded that there was no conflict between the application and the Plan – indeed, he concluded that the Plan was ‘silent’ about the site in question, and so the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ should be triggered. The Secretary of State made a stronger interpretation, as a result finding “*a policy conflict to which [he] attaches very substantial negative weight in view of the Framework policy ... that Neighbourhood Plans are able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area*” (Javid, 2017b: para 18). He therefore refused the application primarily on the basis of its conflict with the Plan, despite giving little weight to other adverse impacts (Ibid: para 39).

Even in cases where decisions were made which conflict with Neighbourhood Plans, a wider awareness of the implications of such decisions was shown. In an appeal decision in West Sussex in March 2017, the Secretary of State noted that allowing the appeal may undermine local confidence in Neighbourhood Planning, saying that this

“would be a harmful outcome having regard to the importance placed on this in national policy” (Javid, 2017a: para 246) – although in this case this importance was outweighed by other factors, especially as the Plan was not yet formally adopted and had significant unresolved objections to it. The Secretary of State did though increase the weight that he gave to the emerging Plan from ‘limited’ (as recommended by the Inspector) to ‘moderate’.

Planning Inspectors have also factored in the importance that the Government places on Neighbourhood Plans. In August 2017, an application for 65 houses on the edge of a village in Aylesbury Vale was refused due to conflict with an emerging Neighbourhood Plan, even though the proposal accorded with adopted LPA Local Plan policies. The Inspector found that proposal would compromise the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and dismissed the appeal, stating that:

“Whilst I accept the emerging LCPNP [Long Crendon Parish Neighbourhood Plan] has not yet been made ... Given the very advanced stage that the Plan has reached and the strong level of local support and the fact that date for the referendum has now been set I consider that ... it provides a clear picture as to how the local community consider that the village should be allowed to develop. As a consequence I consider that the LCPNP is a material consideration to which I must attach very significant weight” (Dowling, 2017: para 71).

Despite this early support, more recently there has been growing evidence that the localism of Neighbourhood Plans is being overturned in favour of national agendas.

Early victories for NPGs at appeal and in the courts are starting to be overshadowed by an increasing number of decisions going against them which allows development that conflicts with them. These decisions are, in the main, due to LPAs being unable to demonstrate enough supply of housing land, or Neighbourhood Plans being found out of date due to changes to Local Plans to which they have not had an opportunity to adjust— i.e. factors entirely beyond the control of NPGs themselves. Recent changes to the NPPF, and the introduction of a variety of higher-level spatial planning structures, will only put more pressure on LPAs and Planning Inspectors to rule against Neighbourhood Plans (Burns and Yuille, 2018). As just one example, the Yapton case referred to above has been revisited and permission granted, due to the LPA's severe shortfall against its housing land requirement. Furthermore, a requirement in the 2018 update of the NPPF that Local Plans must be reviewed every five years – meaning that Neighbourhood Plans must do the same to remain up-to-date – will create serious cost and capacity issues for NPGs. This all suggests that urgent action is required to address the way that Neighbourhood Plan policies are treated in decision-making and NPGs are conceived of (Wargent and Parker, 2018).

Nevertheless, the drives towards localism and participation that Neighbourhood Planning embodies remain central narratives worldwide (Legacy, 2017). The very existence of increasing numbers of appeals and court cases (and the associated resource implications) that revolve around Neighbourhood Plans indicate the impact that they are having. The Government has used several different mechanisms to strengthen the role and powers of Neighbourhood Planning since its introduction, including reducing the housing land supply requirement for Neighbourhood Plan areas that allocate sites for housing. Both the Conservative Government and the opposition

Labour Party remain committed to “*Neighbourhood Plans being central to a new streamlined system of plan making*” (Blackman-Woods, 2018). Neighbourhood Plans are having substantial consequences and appear to be here to stay for the foreseeable future.

2.10 Conclusion

Neighbourhood Planning has enabled local communities to set statutory planning policies and produce the evidence needed to justify them, an ability previously reserved for technical specialists in processes that were perceived as remote and inaccessible. While there are legally prescribed stages that Neighbourhood Plans must pass through, there is great flexibility in the content and processes for producing them. This is presented as a significant transfer of power which enables communities to plan collaboratively. However, it is set in a context of wider neoliberal planning (and other) reforms that aim to drive growth through deregulation and to enable governance through, rather than by, local communities. Research on Neighbourhood Planning provides contradictory messages, with both positive and negative impacts being theorised and observed. The context-specific experience of participation leads to a rather fragmented tapestry of encounters that do not easily lend themselves to universal claims.

There has been a call for research to focus more on specific, situated episodes, and issues left unexplored by a focus on the ‘bigger picture’ of such universal claims (such as entrenching privilege, post-political governmentality, or agonism vs collaboration) – for “*more nuanced analyses of the conflicting rationalities underlying planning*

practice and the dynamics and contradictions often found at the micro-level”

(Brownill and Parker, 2010b: 276). In the following chapter I set out how I intend to contribute to this call by using theoretical and methodological resources drawn from Science and Technology Studies.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framings: Science and Technology Studies

“[W]e see power not as held, but as relational, tied up in the relations between all people and things, and working through the mediation of all collectives of participation. We see the multiple realities of participation not simply as externalised, fixed and pre-given models...but as actively and materially made and remade through the performance of situated participatory practices”

(Chilvers and Kearnes, 2016: xvi)

“The point is to make a difference in the world, to cast our lot for some ways of life and not others. To do that, one must be in the action, be finite and dirty, not transcendent and clean. Knowledge-making technologies, including crafting subject positions and ways of inhabiting such positions, must be made relentlessly visible and open to critical intervention”

(Haraway, 1997: 36)

3.1 Introduction

The planning literature is divided over Neighbourhood Planning. Two poles emerge, with some seeing real possibilities for community empowerment and citizen participation, and others a post-political technology of governmentality and/or the entrenchment of existing privilege (Sagoe, 2016). While these dichotomies are useful to emphasise the gaps between rhetoric and possible realities, the practices of Neighbourhood Planning are too complex and fragmented to be explained by any one

high-level, totalising account (Brownill, 2016); indeed, they simultaneously open up and close down possibilities to challenge and shape the agendas and outcomes of local development policy (Parker and Street, 2015: 797).

Metzger sees this polarizing tendency as running throughout planning scholarship, leading to constant negotiation to avoid the opposing poles, caricatured as being merely “*a useful idiot for the powers that be*” and “*self-righteous zealotry or cynical nihilism*” (2014a: 1001). In this thesis I join a relatively small, but growing, cohort of scholars who have used the tools of Science and Technology Studies (STS) to help challenge this polarization, in planning in general (e.g. Blok and Farias, 2016; Farias and Bender, 2011; Lieto and Beauregard, 2016; Rydin and Tate, 2016) and in hyper-local planning in the UK specifically (Bradley, 2018b; Brownill, 2016; 2017a; Natarajan, 2017; Parker and Street, 2015; Rydin and Natarajan, 2016). I draw particularly on feminist technoscience and Actor Network Theory and its “successor projects” (Law, 2008a), but I will use the generic shorthand of “STS” throughout – not to imply an artificial unity within this highly diverse field, but in recognition that there are no fixed or given boundaries between its different elements, and that I am mostly interested here in what might be termed a “*core STS sensibility*” (Law, 2008b: 630; see also Haraway, 1991; Haraway, 1997; Mol, 2010; Singleton and Law, 2013).

This sensibility provides “*a range of tools for understanding, problematizing, and undermining the naturalisation of ... identities, practices and social relations*” (McNeil and Roberts, 2011: 33) and brings a new and nuanced perspective to some of the problems at the heart of Neighbourhood Planning. It attends to specificity, its theories emerging out of empirical detail, resisting the pull to the general, and bridging

macro and micro-scales. It is concerned with the ways in which the social and the material are inextricably intertwined, and in how particular sociomaterial relations become established and durable (or do not); and how they then act to suppress or support other relations. In doing so, it challenges naturalised dualisms such as nature/culture, fact/value, emotion/reason, subject/object. It acknowledges and examines the historical, cultural and material situatedness of all subjects, objects and knowledge claims. It therefore problematises the very notions – such as community, power, knowledge and care - invoked by the discourse and practices of Neighbourhood Planning, and facilitates the exploration of how plans, evidence and neighbourhoods are assembled, held together, and mobilised. I flesh out this sensibility and its relevance to Neighbourhood Planning below.

3.2 Participation and citizen engagement

Neighbourhood Planning appeared to be the most bottom-up and open to a plurality of knowledges of a variety of initiatives in the UK in the early 2010s intended to increase public participation in decision-making affecting the environment. As discussed in Chapter 2, interest in participatory processes and deliberative democracy has flourished over the past two and a half decades (Fiorino, 1990; Hage et al., 2010; Innes and Booher, 2004; Reed, 2008). STS scholars have made a significant contribution to this ‘participatory turn’, both as advocates and critics (e.g. Callon, 2009; Cass, 2006; Chilvers and Kearnes, 2016; Latour, 2004a; Marres, 2012; Marris and Rose, 2010; Swyngedouw, 2010; Tsouvalis and Waterton, 2012; Wynne, 2007). They have mobilised powerful arguments for increasing public engagement and plurality in both knowledge-making and decision-taking, in order to

“uphold the standards of democratic society; test the framing and direction of expert-led processes; subject institutional interests to public scrutiny; establish cultural bases for knowledge and decision-making; and enhance civic capacity to reflect on the challenges of modernity” (Leach et al., 2005: 38).

But despite apparent increases in local, bottom up, and democratic participation, these same STS researchers show that practices of decision-making in public policy have proved remarkably resistant to incorporating lay people’s understandings of, and engagements with, their environments. Indeed, they suggest that participation can be ritualistic, manipulative and harmful to those that it is notionally intended to empower; can (re)produce contingent identities, relationships and social patterns, thus concealing and perpetuating existing power relations; and can often insist on reductionist simplifications and assumptions about the power and agency of participants and the knowledge, experience and skills that they can contribute. One key way these effects are achieved is through the ‘framing’ of participatory and expert-driven processes and their subjects and objects: e.g. defining who is a valid participant, what are valid modes of participation, what kinds of knowledge matter, what issues are salient, what options can be considered, what kind of outcomes might be desirable, what methods should be used etc. (Jasanoff, 1990; Stirling, 2006; Welsh and Wynne, 2013; Wynne, 1992). These definitions are considered to be external to the matter at stake and are excluded from reflection or discussion, forming the parameters which ‘frame’ the process. As such, they often have a determinative influence on outcomes, even while their role is concealed.

Stirling (2008) goes on to consider participatory processes in the context of two conventional pairs of oppositions. He contrasts processes of appraisal (gathering information in order to inform decision-making) with those of commitment (making tangible social choices); and participation (broad-based, deliberative, and often bottom-up engagement) with analysis (technical assessment conducted by experts). He then seeks to decentre these as the most relevant oppositions in terms of governance, in favour of a focus on the opposition between processes which open up issues (in which a process “*poses alternative questions, focuses on neglected issues, includes marginalized perspectives, triangulates contending knowledges, tests sensitivities to different methods, considers ignored uncertainties, examines different possibilities, and highlights new options*” (280)) and those which close down options (which are intended to “*develop clear, authoritative, prescriptive recommendations informing decisions*” (279)), suggesting that processes that appear to hold out the promise of the former often tend to concentrate on the latter.

The question is therefore not just who gets to participate and how, but how those participants, the issues at stake, and the processes themselves are constructed and contextualised through particular encounters. STS scholars have thus tried to generate social change and more inclusive, transparent and plural processes first by calling for greater public participation in knowledge-making and decision-making, and then by drawing attention to the concealed social and material elements of actual participatory, democratic and expert-led practices: elements that are not seen or shown, but which have powerful and often determinative effects (Johnstone and Stirling, 2015; Wynne, 1982). They have also begun to actively intervene in reworking both the theory and practice of participation (e.g. Chilvers and Kearnes, 2016; Lane et al., 2011; Tsouvalis

and Waterton, 2012). They approach publics as sociomaterial collectives, not aggregates of autonomous individuals, with knowledge, values and preferences that are mediated and emergent, not pre-given. Participation in governance, and the issues that are addressed, are likewise seen as in-the-making, enacted through contingent practices rather than existing in an *a priori* set form. From this perspective, micro-scale practices of participation are co-produced along with large-scale political, social, and scientific configurations. STS thus provides a fitting framework within which to interrogate an initiative which aims to increase communities' involvement in shaping their environment.

3.3 Knowledge, evidence and expertise

The field of STS has grown largely out of questions about knowledge: e.g. what counts as knowledge, who can produce knowledge, how knowledge is made and can be (re)presented. These questions are central to planning in general, and Neighbourhood Planning in particular, given its focus on the local knowledge of non-experts. While STS originally developed to understand and reconceive the making of scientific and technological knowledges, over the past few decades it has arguably become “*a generalised study of expertise*” (Roosth and Silbey, 2009: 466), as its tools and terms have proved relevant for the study of other fields claiming to produce objective knowledge (McNeil and Roberts, 2011). The knowledge practices of the natural sciences have extensively informed the models and norms of knowledge production in Western culture generally, and specifically influenced “*the Enlightenment foundations of modernist planning, anchored ... in an epistemology*

that privileged scientific and technical ways of knowing” (Sandercock and Attili, 2010: xx)

In the planning system overall, “[g]enerally greater weight is attached to issues raised which are supported by evidence rather than solely by assertion” (Planning Aid, undated). The closer this evidence appears to be to ‘scientific’ knowledge, the more weight will generally be attached to it. As Rydin (2007: 66) observed, all participants in the planning system tend to present their claims, as far as possible, as representing this kind of objective knowledge, as this increases the status of those claims (see also Daston, 2007). Planning (and environmental management more broadly) is susceptible to a generally perceived hierarchy of knowledge in which lay, local knowledge rests firmly at the bottom (Eden, 2017: 51-53) and institutionalised and scientifically-framed claims are at the top (Ockwell and Rydin, 2006). As Rydin and Natarajan (2016: 2) highlight in relation to consultation on ‘strategic’ Local Plan-making, “[t]he way that community experience of the environment is conveyed explicitly combines values with knowledge”; reducing its status by ‘tainting’ its objectivity with subjective values. They explain that such meaningful and affective¹⁴

¹⁴ ‘Affect’ has been variously described as “visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally other than conscious knowing” (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010: 1), “sensation that is registered but not necessarily considered in that thin band of consciousness that we now call cognition” (Thrift, 2009: 88), and “embodied meaning making” that is “both discursive and pre-discursive” (Ahmed, 2004: 24). It is not clearly defined or bounded in the literature, and I do not attempt to more precisely define it here. However, in keeping with the wider ‘affective turn’ in the social sciences, I recognise that affects are important to us, to our experience of the world and to the ways in which we understand the world as meaningful (Smith, 2009). They are crucial components of a sense of place, of how we know and value our surroundings and through which places and things become imbued with meaning and significance (Casey, 2001; Duff, 2010; Thrift, 2004). Indeed, “the embedding of affect in place, is the primary means by which thin places are transformed into thick places” (Duff, 2010: 892) – the very notion of place ceases to make sense without recognising the affective, felt, relational experience of place (Soja, 1989; Thrift, 2008). The term ‘affective’ is often conflated with ‘emotional’, but it also invokes wider and deeper meanings (Pile, 2010). Where emotions are considered to be the wholly subjective inner experiences of pre-existing atomistic individuals, affects are conceptualised as transpersonal flows that emerge from the dynamic and relational interactions of bodies and places (Smith, 2009; Massumi, 2002) and which contribute to ongoing processes of subject formation (Curti et al., 2011).

knowledge-value hybrids have to be reframed or translated into terms consistent with planning and other policy before they can be considered relevant to the planning process.

In other words, what local people think they know about the place in which they live, and the things that they care about in that place – the bases of Neighbourhood Planning - are often treated as not knowledge, not capable of being evidence or of being given weight. Indeed, Davies describes “*a widespread popular culture of silence about emotive environmental issues in the face of apparently unquestionable scientific or utilitarian values that dominate political decisions*” (2001a: 87). Based on these culturally dominant assumptions about knowledge and evidence, what local people know about an area through their experience of living there tends to be valued less highly than what remote experts know through their application of computer models, economic and demographic forecasts, schematic/formalised assessments, quantitative surveys, etc. Broadly speaking, representations of abstract space (known from a distance through technical methodologies and technologies, categorizable, quantifiable, focused on what is substitutable between locations) are automatically privileged over those of lived place (known from within through practical and often emotional engagements, meaningful, symbolic, focused on the particular concrete qualities and characteristics of a specific location) (Agnew, 2011; Massey and Thrift, 2003). STS provides a set of tools to understand and problematize these naturalized assumptions about what legitimate knowledge is and who can produce it.

Thinking in terms of affect therefore helps to de-centre the atomistic individual as the object of study and maintain a more relational focus (Dawney, 2011), as well as acknowledging that the ‘forces’ or ‘sensations’ of the affective register may manifest in ways not conventionally understood as ‘emotional’.

STS studies demonstrate that professional expert knowledge is often privileged in situations where other ways of knowing the world might be equally valid, but that these are suppressed and de-legitimised by the same mechanisms that legitimise the expert (Shapin, 1984; Wynne, 1996). This reflects a scientific (as opposed to scientific) approach which excessively valorises scientific methods as the only valid means to acquire reliable knowledge, as being capable of describing all relevant aspects of reality, and of being the only proper basis for (normative) decisions (Stenmark, 1997). These issues have often been brought into sharp relief in questions about environmental change and impact (Beck, 1992; Frewer et al., 2004; Wilsdon, 2004; Wynne, 1982; 2002; Yearley, 1992), and are particularly relevant to land-use planning, where the ‘soft’ experiential knowledge of communities is juxtaposed with ‘hard’ technical evidence produced by central Government, LPAs, developers, and consultants.

Through detailed empirical and theoretical work STS scholars have unpicked the stories that have been constructed around science, and that have subsequently been used as a yardstick against which all knowledge claims in Western culture have been measured. The story (and power) of science, and of knowledge claims more generally, rests on a series of assumptions, so deeply ingrained that they are rarely even noticed, let alone exposed to a critical gaze. This story begins with the absolute separation between matter and mind, the world ‘out there’ and our knowledge of the world ‘in here’: the objective and the subjective. This tells us that the world is what it is, passively waiting to be discovered, a singular, definite, independent, pre-existing entity (Law, 2004). But, the story goes, as subjects we experience all sorts of

interference that gets between us and this world: affective, somatic, perceptual and intellectual biases, assumptions, and distortions. To produce genuine knowledge about the world – descriptions of the world as it really is – we must therefore strive towards objectivity. In effect, we must get out of our own way, by carving out a space into which our own subjectivity does not intrude. We must become “*the legitimate and authorized ventriloquist for the object world, adding nothing from [our] mere opinions, from [our] biasing embodiment*” (Haraway, 1997, 24).

The quest for objectivity requires a second strong separation to be made between reason and emotion: “*the splitting of affective matters from the researcher’s experience*” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2011: 97). These separations can be achieved using ‘technologies’, broadly understood. Shapin and Schaffer (1985) describe the development of three ‘technologies’ that came to define the scientific method, and by implication, objective knowledge: a material technology (the scientific apparatus); a literary technology (a ‘naked’ way of writing about the experiment); and a social technology (a set of conventions determining how scientists’ claims could be validated by direct or indirect public witnessing, and who was capable of such witnessing). Insofar as planning practices seek to produce objective knowledge, they reproduce these technological categories, with material technologies ranging from consultation questionnaires to demographic software packages such as POPGROUP; literary technologies such as maps and Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment reports; and social technologies such as planning committees and Examinations in Public.

Objective knowledge requires the effacing of the subjectivity of knowing subjects. They must become transparent: “*unmarked, disembodied, unmediated, transcendent*” (Haraway, 1988: 586). The adoption of scientific methods enables them to transcend their own viewpoint, to see and to represent the world as it is, beyond subjective differences of perspective. Nothing of the knowing subject should be present in the knowledge presented: their role is merely to allow others to see more clearly what is already ‘out there’ (Haraway, 1997). By extension, the closer any knowledge claim can position itself to this ‘gold standard’, the weightier its claim to be good evidence. This is the overarching Enlightenment/Modern imaginary in which Neighbourhood Planning finds itself. The knowledge practices of Neighbourhood Planning cannot be understood without getting to grips with the imaginary that shapes them.

While there are a plurality of interpretations of ‘imaginary’ as a noun in disciplines such as STS, sociology and geography (McNeil et al., 2017), I use the term to mean the sets of understandings, orientations, metaphors, norms and institutions that structure practices, discourses, and experiences in particular spheres of activity, and are also produced and circulated by those practices etc. They enable common practices and simultaneously legitimise and are enacted in those practices. They are both representative and performative – they both describe how things are, and bring things into being in a specific way - they are “*constitutive of, and constituted by, ontic and epistemic commitments*” (Verran, 1998: 238), which undermine and weaken alternative ways of knowing and being. They are generally tacit and taken-for-granted, structuring reflection rather than being reflected on themselves. As such they tend to become naturalised both as the way things are, and the way things should be. However, they are also always contingent and (at least in principle) contestable,

despite the strong hold they have over our understandings (Davoudi, 2018). Because they co-constitute (and are co-constituted by) material practices they have material effects, and also co-constitute the subjects who are implicated in those practices (Jasanoff and Kim, 2015). They are the glue that holds societies, or collectives within societies, together in a common world. Recognising the power of imaginaries helps to explain that *this* community (e.g. planners), and the practices they perform that make them a community, do not just exist, are not natural givens, but rather only exist because they are collectively imagined in certain ways (Taylor, 2004).

Imaginaries become materialised and embodied in particular figures and figurations, that are also both descriptive and normative, representative and performative.

“Figurations are performative images that can be inhabited ... condensed maps of contestable worlds ... We inhabit and are inhabited by such figures that map universes of knowledge, practice and power” (Haraway, 1997: 11). Such figurations are both literal and figurative, at once both themselves and more than themselves, tropes for a wider network of meanings and norms. *“A figure gathers up the people; a figure embodies shared meanings in stories that inhabit their audiences”* (ibid: 23)

The expert as unmarked knowing subject (particularly the Examiner who will test the Plan), objective knowledge, evidence, and weighing and measuring are all powerful figurations in and of the imaginary of Neighbourhood Planning in the case studies that follow.

While it is commonly acknowledged that planning is as much an art as a science, the tropes and metaphors used to describe the activities of planning belie this and create an imaginary in which planning decisions are quantifiable and precise. Evidence is

only admissible if it is ‘objective’. The more removed from human fallibility, and the more closely associated it is with mechanistic, technological processes it is perceived to be, the closer to the gold standard it can be considered. Decision-takers ‘weigh’ the evidence on both sides in ‘the planning balance’. Arguments are metaphorically quantified to be made measurable, and assigned, for example, ‘great’ or ‘limited’ weight. Judgements are often described as ‘finely balanced’, implying a degree of computable precision: “*robust and credible is interpreted as quantifiable and measurable*” (Davoudi, 2015: 317). In this imaginary, the figure of the planner (or the Planning Inspector or Examiner) is the figure of the expert, innocently (i.e. without bias or preconceptions) revealing and assessing the objective facts from an Archimedean point and calculating the correct solution on that basis. These imaginaries, figures and tropes do not merely inflect the discourse of planning: they shape its practices and constitute its realities, “*hold[ing] the material and the semiotic together in ways that become naturalized over time*” (Suchman, 2012: 49).

STS scholars have systematically deconstructed the assumptions and beliefs about science and knowledge that underpin the Enlightenment imaginary and have become ingrained as common sense. STS scholars have also proposed alternative narratives that, they claim, not only give a better account of the world, but can also enable better, more liveable worlds to flourish. There is no space here to give a detailed account of the de- and re-construction of the story of science and knowledge-making. All I can do is gesture towards some of the more significant critiques and alternatives, and suggest how they may be relevant to Neighbourhood Planning.

First, the very idea of objective knowledge has imploded. Early STS studies demonstrated how the production of scientific knowledge is a social and cultural process: that all data is already theorized (indeed, that “*One should never speak of ‘data’ - what is given - but rather of sublata, that is, of ‘achievements’*” (Latour, 1999: 42), that the rigid division between facts and values is artificial, and that the ambition of objectivity is impossible (e.g. Knorr-Cetina, 1981; Latour and Woolgar, 1979). “*Values and interests are inseparably constitutive of the judgments that frame the choices scientists make about which questions to ask and their assumptions about what data are relevant and how they are to be interpreted*” (Millstone et al., 2015: 24), specific practices and sociomaterial relations have contingent but penetrating and lasting effects, and ‘Science’ as the “*culture of no culture*” turned out to be a historically-situated culture after all (Traweek, 1988: 162). The ‘Strong Programme’ of the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge (SSK) insisted, *inter alia*, on treating all knowledge claims symmetrically, i.e. explaining their acceptance or rejection in terms of the same kinds of causes (Bloor, 1976). Donna Haraway established the recognition that *all* knowledge is partial, and situated in a historically contingent position: scientific knowledge is not transcendent but specific to the material practices, conceptual frameworks and institutional structures in which it is produced. In order to understand what knowing is, and what it is that we know, we have to also consider where we are knowing from (Haraway, 1988).

Haraway describes the idea of an objective perspective, of extracting ourselves from our situated position to become a disembodied observer capable of viewing the world from no position at all as “*the god trick*” (Ibid: 581). It is a literal impossibility, which conceals and naturalises the value-laden assumptions of the knowing subject,

privileging ‘his’ perspective by creating the illusion of value-neutrality (Haraway, 1997). The early men of science were described as ‘modest witnesses’ for their ability to efface themselves from accounts of the production of stand-alone, universal knowledge. Haraway instead contends that by recognising all knowledge as being situated, refusing the possibility of self-invisibility, we can construct better, more reliable knowledge through a different kind of modest witnessing, one whose modesty comes precisely from the limitedness, positionality and specificity of its claims, and which recognises that “*knower and known cannot be separated in any meaningful way*” (Massey and Thrift, 2003: 290). It is “*about telling the truth, giving reliable testimony, guaranteeing important things, providing good enough grounding...to enable compelling belief and collective action*” (Haraway, 1997: 22).

She is adamant that this is not intended to undermine the validity of scientific knowledge – she retains “*a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a ‘real’ world*” (1988: 579). For many in the natural and social sciences, as well as in policy and politics, this insistence on the fundamental entangledness and mutual embeddedness of science and politics, facts and values, knowledge and institutions, would appear to be a form of powerful criticism – it cuts at the heart of the worldview that rigidly separates these domains. But for Haraway, and for STS scholars more generally, the problem with scientific accounts of the world is not that they *are* entangled in this way – they could not be otherwise – but rather that they are presented as *not* being so, thus obscuring information crucial to a full understanding of the claims in question. Rather than attempting to subvert scientific and other ‘objective’ knowledge, it is an attempt to re-describe more carefully the conditions by which it comes to be known. This is not relativism, but “*partial, locatable, critical knowledge*”

(Ibid: 584), which, as a corollary, requires that knowledge which does not fit standard Western models of objectivity and rationality be taken seriously and critically engaged with rather than simply marginalised or dismissed *a priori* (Verran, 1998; Wynne, 1996; Yeh, 2016).

Sandra Harding (1986) developed this notion calling for knowledge claims to be subjected to a test of ‘strong objectivity’, which would include analysis of the positionality of the knowledge-claimant alongside analysis of the knowledge itself, as this positionality is inevitably caught up in the knowledge produced. It shapes what kind of claims are intelligible, who can be heard, and what kind of justifications are acceptable. This connects with feminist standpoint theory, which suggests that thinking from the perspectives of marginalised groups and suppressed ways of knowing may help to produce better knowledge because they are literally able to see a different world and to ask different questions (e.g. Smith, 1987). STS thus requires us to look at the entanglements of power and knowledge: the specific ways in which power shapes knowledge as much as the ways in which knowledge generates power (Stirling, 2006; 2015) and to recognise “*the imprints of power in what is seemingly true*” (Stirling, 2016: 263).

Seen through this lens, the issues about knowledge practices in Neighbourhood Planning - what counts as evidence, how it can be produced and presented, and who gets to decide - change markedly. A new set of questions opens up. If the purpose of Neighbourhood Planning is to allow people who know and care about a place to take responsibility for its future, it would be reasonable to expect that the final Plans and supporting evidence

would demonstrate, in a way that is intelligible to an external audience, both *that* they care and *why* they care. Neighbourhood Plans are required to be based on “*robust*” and “*proportionate*” evidence but there is very little guidance on what this might consist of, and Government guidance explicitly states that “*there is no ‘tick box’ list of evidence required for Neighbourhood Planning*” (DCLG, 2014a: Paragraph 040 Reference ID: 41-040-20160211).

This is therefore a potentially open, experimental space, without prescription or precedent, where care and experiential knowledge are explicitly valued and given as a rationale for the project. Neighbourhood Planning, for reasons that I explore in Section 6.3, appears to offer a set of conditions that could be particularly conducive to expressing and acting on more qualitative, affective, ‘meaning-full’ knowledge, of a kind that the planning system has previously tended to render invisible. STS perspectives are particularly well-suited to analysing the emergence of such knowledges and their interactions with other, more conventional, forms of planning knowledge.

Questions have been asked about whether the unpaid, unqualified amateurs producing Neighbourhood Plans will be able to produce sufficiently robust, objective evidence to adequately justify their Plans, and whether this evidence will stand up to independent examination and scrutiny by hostile barristers in subsequent public inquiries and court cases (McDonnell, 2017; Parker et al., 2015, 2016). The question for me is more about whether the practices of Neighbourhood Planning can enable more modest, situated knowledges to be presented as robust evidence. Can it be a practice that “*makes*

understood as discourse what was once only heard as noise” (Ranciere, 1999, cited in Sagoe, 2016: 3): a practice that enables the often-erased concerns of communities to be made visible to decision-makers? Given that the definition of legitimate knowledge often involves contestation over who has the right to determine what counts as knowledge (or as a fact, or as evidence) in specific situations, can Neighbourhood Planning enact new legitimate holders, producers, and types of knowledge?

3.4 Ontological politics

3.4.1 Co-production

Thus far, these questions could be understood as epistemological – purely concerned with what it is that we can know about the world (or about the neighbourhood), and how we can know it. But the claims made by many STS scholars are more profound than this: they claim that *“the ways in which we know and represent the world (both nature and society) are inseparable from the ways in which we choose to live in it”* (Jasanoff, 2004c: 2). Knowledge, and the ways we produce and represent it, act to stabilise and support particular ways of living and being in the world. These institutional forms, social practices, identities, relationships etc. in turn act to support and stabilise particular ways of knowing. This process is always already ongoing and has performative consequences: it shapes what we (can) know and how we (can) live, as these consequences sediment down and become more stable, more apparently fixed, natural and given. Thinking about knowledge and society in this way *“helps us to examine how knowledge about the world enables certain ways of being in it”* (Lovbrand, 2011: p226).

Sheila Jasanoff coined the term ‘co-production’ (2004b) to describe the ways that material and conceptual processes of ordering the material world through knowledge and technology are interwoven with material and conceptual processes of ordering the social world through culture and power. Like Haraway’s ‘situated knowledges’ (1988), this is an explicit attempt to get away from either natural or social determinism (Jasanoff, 2004a: 20). It is not possible, on this account, to make the rigid separations that underpin the Enlightenment imaginary.

Realities, on this account, are enacted through practices, and particularly through practices of knowing. STS research is concerned with “*the ways in which technoscientific ... knowledges and practices describe and, indeed, produce material ... differences*” (McNeil and Roberts, 2011: 30). We are physically embodied in a specific sociomaterial world where we do particular things, and that doing generates realities (Ingold, 2000). Each sociomaterial entity emerges (acquires its particular form and character) as an effect of the specific network of relations in which it finds itself. STS research therefore focuses its attention more on the relations between entities than on the entities themselves. It draws attention to Neighbourhood Planning as a knowledge practice, and how the relations enacted within that practice support some ways of acting and undermine others.

3.4.2 Assemblages

Brownill (2016) highlights the particular advantages of assemblage thinking in examining the practices of localism. Firstly, it insists on a focus on actual unfolding

instances, without assigning them to pre-formed categories. Secondly, it prioritises relations between the material and the social. This fits particularly well with the notion of ‘the neighbourhood’ as an entity that is quintessentially hybrid, inherently defined by both social and material relations. With this as a starting point, it becomes easier to consider other actors – groups, individuals, institutions, policies, plans, maps, places – as heterogeneous assemblages that are unintelligible without accounting for the (sometimes surprising) relations between both their social and material elements.

Thirdly, it understands power as a relational effect rather than being possessed by groups or individuals. It can thus capture the complexities of shifting power relations, and explore the opportunities that actors have for “*working the spaces of power*” (Newman, 2012) in a system with roots in neoliberal post-political intentions.

Assemblage thinking is interested in two kinds of power – the *power to do*, to act, to make a difference, and in *power over* other actors – to make them make the difference you want. But it always starts with the former, and how that power grows out of ‘webby’ relations and practices (Singleton and Law, 2013).

Thinking in terms of assemblages suggests a sense of instability, emergence and contingency; of subjects and objects as impermanent and variable effects in a process of continually becoming. As discussed further in Chapter 5, Governmental discourse assumes a coherent, static, unified version of ‘neighbourhood’. But neighbourhoods are assembled, not already given, brought into being through particular practices (Brownill, 2017a) and around particular issues framed in specific ways (Bradley, 2018b). This enacts them: puts boundaries around them, spatially and conceptually establishing where they start and finish, their relevant and defining characteristics. All

assemblages are necessarily imperfect, incomplete and open, not natural or inevitable (Law and Singleton, 2014). Assembling entities in specific ways supports or subverts their enactment in others (Moser, 2008): the more that a description of a neighbourhood as being ‘like this’ becomes accepted and normalised, the less possible it becomes to describe it as being ‘like that’. There are two types of ‘boundary work’ going on here. Firstly, the boundaries of what is and is not objective knowledge, what is a legitimate way of representing the world and who can legitimately make those representations are marked (Gieryn, 1995). Secondly, the boundaries of an object of study, defining what it is that may legitimately be known are marked. As Haraway puts it, “*who and what are in the world is precisely what is at stake*” (2003: 8). Objects (and subjects) are not just being described but being made – and they could always be made otherwise.

3.4.3 Hybridity and purification, translation and inscription

The processes described above rely upon the fundamental entanglement of things, but then conceal that entanglement in order to produce ‘objective’ facts. Latour describes this as a process of hybridity and purification. From this perspective, all ‘things’ are hybrid, complex combinations of social and material elements that are connected to the rest of the world in multifaceted sets of relations. Context is not easily separable from an object once you start looking at the relations of assemblages – they spread out everywhere with no obvious cut off point (Law and Singleton, 2014). All knowledge production requires this network to be cut, counting some things in and some things out of the object of study: decisions must be made (Strathern, 1996). Latour suggested that these decisions were made - that knowledge was produced - in ‘centres of

calculation' (1987). These centres are continuously constituted through a three stage process of mobilising resources (bringing human and non-human elements into the centre); combining and stabilising those elements to make new knowledge claims through "*reductions, transformations and abstractions*" (Jöns, 2011: 160); and extending their networks through successfully submitting the newly stabilised knowledge claims to "*trials of strength*" (Latour, 1987: 78) in different settings. So (allegedly) relevant attributes of various objects can be abstracted and quantified (while other attributes are obscured) in order to make the objects as a whole comparable (Callon and Law, 2005; Callon and Muniesa, 2005). This enables the exercise of the (distributed) calculative rationality (or 'calculative agency' (ibid)) that is so prominent in the tropes and metaphors of planning.

These decisions shape the nature of the objects being studied. But the modernist framework of objective knowledge insists that these cuts were already there, given in the world: that the facts correspond directly to atomistic objects. It thereby erases the traces of the process of cutting. This purifies the knowledge produced into objective facts and the objects produced into 'real things': 'black-boxing' them in a way that erases the messy traces of their sociomaterial production (Latour, 1987). Black-boxing is "*the way scientific and technical work is made invisible by its own success*" (Latour, 1999: 304), concealing internal complexity and historical contingency behind an opaque veneer of naturalised simplicity.

This is a process of translation, of enabling one thing to stand in for another, so that we can say that one thing (e.g. a report back from a consultation event) is in some way equivalent to something else (e.g. the views of the community). Translations thus

enable things to travel - i.e. to have effects beyond their original context of production (Latour, 1995). However, they also necessarily, to a greater or lesser extent, result in betrayals, because equivalence is never perfect, and something is always lost and gained in translation (Galis and Lee, 2014; Latour, 1999). So, translation is also about transformation. Translations can become durable (indeed, obdurate), but they are also precarious (Callon, 1999). They can become more stable by being inscribed.

Inscriptions - reports, maps, graphs, plans, surveys, templates, pictures, diagrams, software, etc - enable action at a distance by giving material form to particular translations (and not others) and allowing them to circulate, thus propagating particular patterns of action (Latour and Woolgar, 1979; Latour, 1987). Circulation across networks, enrolling other actors in their use, and becoming re-inscribed, combined with, or superimposed on other inscriptions, all contribute to the durability of particular translations.

Processes of translation and purification are often initially achieved by experts and/or through inscribed expertise in the form of technologies (Woolgar, 1988). But they also constitute the worlds that we live in and our everyday experience of them, and we reproduce these taken-for-granted cuts in our day-to-day lives and practices: contingent things are naturalised into common sense. Specific translations, purifications and inscriptions, while themselves contingent (i.e. they could have been otherwise) become sedimented into ways of doing things, and come to limit apparent possible futures. Knowledge practices such as Neighbourhood Planning are therefore 'path dependent': assumptions, materials and relations that become established early on in any one instance of Neighbourhood Planning, or in the career of Neighbourhood Planning as a practice, shape and constrain what can be done later (Arthur, 1994;

David, 1985; Urry, 2004). An STS perspective helps to unpack these dependencies and inscriptions, and to make visible the hybridity within the purifications and the processes of translation.

3.4.4 Performativity, multiplicity and politics

These processes of purification perform or enact the world in specific ways.

Knowledge is always under-determined by the material world. By making some things visible, methods of making knowledge necessarily make other things invisible by directing attention away from them, concealing them, ignoring them, or otherwise silencing them (Law, 2004). Law contends that, *contra* to our common-sense realist view of the world, when we generate representations of the world, we generate worlds along with them. When we attempt to find some sort of meaningful pattern in the messy complexity ‘out there’ – which we do when we represent aspects of the world, as much in academic research as in Neighbourhood Planning – our methods impose order, rather than discover it. An STS sensibility “*suggest[s] a reality that is done or enacted rather than observed ... Rather than being seen by a diversity of watching eyes while itself remaining untouched in the centre, reality is manipulated by means of various tools in the course of a diversity of practices.*” (Mol, 1999: 77). And if realities are enacted through practices, this implies that different practices can make different realities: overlapping, entangled, partially coherent, distinct but not separate realities. The neighbourhood as experienced is not the same as the neighbourhood represented in the charts and tables of the planner, or the profit and loss accounts of the developer. But these different neighbourhoods are not “*so many aspects of a single*

reality ... they are different versions of the object, versions that the tools help to enact. They are different yet related objects. They are multiple forms of reality” (ibid: 77).

On this account, the ‘tools’ used to represent a neighbourhood – land surveys, community surveys, spreadsheets, memories, conversations, maps, cameras, theodolites, GPS, the census, district-wide and local assessments of housing need and growth potential, everyday practices – actually help to bring into being different versions of the neighbourhood. These multiple realities depend upon, support, and/or undermine each other in complex sets of relations. Worlds (or neighbourhoods) cannot be made at whim. Realities require constant re-enactment; they do not just get built and stay built. They are precarious even when stable and dominating. They take a lot of work both to make and to un-make. Not just any worlds are possible - the material resists and accommodates our engagements with it (Hacking, 1999), and “[t]here is a backdrop of realities that cannot be wished away” (Law, 2004: 31). Nevertheless, from this perspective, realities emerge out of our practices: the world is enacted in heterogeneous networks of social and material actors in specific relations to each other, and different networks in different practices enact different worlds.

Classic studies by Ann-Marie Mol (2002) and Ingunn Moser (2008) have shown how diseases (atherosclerosis and Alzheimer’s respectively) are enacted differently in different locations and through different practices, such that all the different versions of the disease hang together or co-ordinate in a variety of ways, but are not the same, single object. The diseases emerge in different forms in different locations through different practices, and require different kinds of response in each. I contend that the same is true of the neighbourhood. The specific neighbourhood that is enacted through

the practices of evidence production enables and constrains the specific responses that can be made in policy. A neighbourhood enacted differently, through different knowledge practices, would require different responses. Processes such as Neighbourhood Planning thus do not just produce plans and evidence, but also identities and entities – individuals, communities, and places. It produces subjects as well as objects. In planning practice it is usually assumed that ‘the community’ has something to say, as an aggregation or a fragmented set of individuals. But from an STS perspective those individuals and communities are not just given, with an opinion that is fixed and that can be straightforwardly extracted. Rather, the kinds of worlds that they can express depend on the framings of the process, on the kinds of identities and issues that are created by and for them through the process (Marres, 2005).

So, the business of producing knowledge is not a distinct domain isolated from the rest of social and cultural life. Instead, it “*both embeds and is embedded in social practices, identities, norms, conventions, discourses, instruments and institutions*” (Jasanoff, 2004c: 3). There are social and material consequences of knowing the world in a specific way and acting on it with a specific set of tools. If knowledge practices shape realities as well as representations of realities, questions about knowledge and evidence are not just empirical, but also political. The realities – the neighbourhoods - produced by different knowledge practices are relational and may be more or less desirable from different perspectives. The question for Neighbourhood Planners would then become not how to acquire objectively factual knowledge, but “*how to interfere in and diffract realities in particular locations to generate more respectful and less domatory alternatives. How to trope, to bend versions of the real, to strengthen desirable realities that would otherwise be weak*” (Law, 2008b: 637).

3.5 The ‘turn to care’

There has been a recent upsurge in STS research revolving around the theme of care: the care which we as scholars enact in our relations with the worlds we study, and that which circulates within those worlds. In this vein I try to remain “*critical and attentive to the situated workings of care in the world*” and ask “*questions about the practices of care in sites not traditionally associated with care*” (Martin et al., 2015: 627). I have approached this project from an ‘engaged’ perspective (Sismondo, 2008): I care about the issue at hand, having spent years in practice observing how some ways of knowing the world are privileged and others devalued. Acknowledging the role that this played in shaping this project is an important part of its framing, as is reflexively analysing its implications and considering how my work can be more ‘care-full’ with regard to the worlds I have encountered.

Local community care for place is one of the central assumptions underpinning the rationale for Neighbourhood Planning. However, as Martin et al. (2015) note, care is hard to pin down. It is necessary for life but multivalent and extremely problematic once one tries to define, legislate, measure or evaluate it, and this applies to care for place as much as for any other cared-for entity. Care for place can be of vital importance to self-identity, wellbeing, and for flourishing places (Church et al., 2014; Hernandez et al., 2007; Knez, 2005; Manzo, 2005) - and is a central driver for community action such as Neighbourhood Planning (Devine-Wright, 2009; Devine-Wright and Clayton, 2010; Vidal et al., 2013). Although there is an established literature on place attachment and place identity from an environmental psychology

perspective (Devine-Wright, 2015; Lewicka, 2011), there is little work on the ways in which local residents enact care for place through the practices of spatial planning (Metzger, 2014a).

Paying more careful attention to the cared-for dimension of place in spatial planning therefore appears to be a potentially fruitful avenue of inquiry. Planning scholars, like planners in practice, tend to have an aversion to the emotional and the affective, with a few notable exceptions (Porter et al., 2012; see also Baum, 2015; Davies, 2001a; Hoch, 2006; Rydin, 2007; Rydin and Natarajan, 2016). As something of a bastion of positivism, planning tends to insist on ‘objective’ facts, and shy away from the ‘taint’ of subjectivity. The difficulties inherent in making ‘care for place’ an object of evidence often lead to its neglect in a reductionist, positivist culture dominated by the crude but practical assumption that ‘if you can’t measure it, it can’t (be shown to) matter’.

Martin et al., drawing on Lorraine Code (2015), call attention to one particular formulation of care that positions it as the rhetorical opposite of knowledge, underpinned by the Enlightenment norm that affective involvement can only muddy rational knowing. Those who care are disqualified from producing objective knowledge: “*to be an advocate is to be partial and thus to compromise or taint knowledge claims*” (Martin et al., 2015: 630). If planning policy must be based on robust evidence, and caring compromises one’s ability to produce such evidence, this suggests a paradox at the heart of Neighbourhood Planning. How can Neighbourhood Planning empower communities “*if caring and knowing, or caring and clout, are opposed*” (Martin et al., 2015: 631)?

This cuts to the heart of the problematic, unspoken assumptions of knowledge production which dominate public policy spheres, including the UK planning system. Neighbourhood Planning, by insisting on the relevance of the affective dimensions of people's relations to place alongside the cognitive, appears to offer a way towards more inclusive planning practices (Bradley, 2017a). Like Neighbourhood Planning, the loose research programme around care in STS also re-entwines knowledge with care: rather than declaring them as incompatible, as in the dominant model of objective knowledge, it posits them as inseparable (Code, 2015), and therefore provides a critical tool with which to analyse this apparent shift in whose knowledge can count and how it can be constituted.

Many authors draw on Maria Puig de la Bellacasa's article 'Matters of care in technoscience: Assembling neglected things' (2011) as the wellspring for this new current. In it, she picks up on Bruno Latour's worry that 'critique has run out of steam' (Latour, 2004b) because it has become too corrosive, leading to cynicism about and disbelief in objective knowledge; merely deconstructing the world without reconstructing anything in its place. Latour proposed thinking of things as 'matters of concern', which would gather all the social and material elements that constituted those things (facts or sociotechnical assemblages). For Puig de la Bellacasa, the affective connotations of 'concern' are helpful, but she finds Latour's overall formulation, a move to respect all views, as shrinking too far back from the critical edge that is still necessary in a world of inequalities and injustice. She proposes drawing attention to care as a means of avoiding the pitfalls that Latour identified,

while retaining a critical perspective that is also geared to generating new caring relations.

Puig de la Bellacasa's paper rehearses many of the central concerns of STS: that "[w]ays of studying and representing things can have world-making effects" (86); that facts and things are "not just objects but knots of social and political interests" (86) and that "interests and other affectively animated forces – such as concern and care – are intimately entangled in the ongoing material remaking of the world" (87). She agrees with Latour that "[t]he purpose of showing how things are assembled is not to dismantle things, not undermine the reality of matters of fact with critical suspicion ... [but] to enrich and affirm their reality by adding further articulations" (89). This is a particularly crucial point to make in an era when UK Cabinet Ministers can claim that we've "had enough of experts" (Mance, 2016) and the President of the USA and his team can assert "alternative facts" and "fake news" solely on the basis of personal authority, with little or no relation to the sociomaterial assemblages to which they purportedly refer (Swaine, 2017).

Where Latour's formulation of 'matters of concern' helps to resist the bifurcation of nature (into subjective and objective), thinking in terms of matters of care also resists the bifurcation of consciousness (into affective and rational) – and both of these dichotomies are strongly present in planning practice. Puig de la Bellacasa also emphasises the active and multi-valent nature of care as a practice, signifying "*an affective state, a material vital doing, and an ethico-political obligation*" (2011: 90). Each of these aspects is highly relevant to Neighbourhood Planning – i.e. the emotional state of caring, the material work of care (through making a Plan), and

decisions about what should be cared for and why. Studying (with) care leads us to ask not just ‘who benefits?’ (Star, 1990), but who cares, for what, how, and why – and how could things be different if they generated care?

However, care cannot be taken as a self-evident good (Metzger, 2014a; Murphy, 2015). It has a dark side - it is a selective means of drawing attention to some things, which necessarily requires withdrawing from others; and it is already embedded and circulating in the worlds we wish to study, often associated with domination, exploitation, and inequalities. Valorising care for place in one neighbourhood by one specific group of people may lead to injustice and harm to other people and/or places, e.g. exclusion of the knowledge of people who care for this place in a different way, damage to other places whose residents cannot or will not demonstrate care in legitimized ways, or exclusion from consideration of potential future residents or other interests.

The STS turn to care requires that we “*pay attention to the workings and consequences of our ‘semiotic technologies’*” and their “*consequences in the shaping of possible worlds*” in particular ways that attend to interdependency and care, and foster caring relations (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012: 199). As so often throughout the research, I am struck by the similarities between my project and that of my object of study. The focus of my research is the ways in which people know and care for place and are able to express that knowledge and care in order to generate a policy response. I am interested in the semiotic technologies and institutional arrangements that reveal or conceal that care, that valorise or marginalise it, make it visible or invisible in its multiple manifestations. And in parallel, my own care for the subject, and my

commitment to engaging with under-represented modes of knowing in decision-making processes, directs my attention and shapes the kinds of care that I bring to the work by highlighting which worlds, neighbourhoods, and ways of being are supported or undermined. STS care scholarship has worked to recover the contributions of neglected actors, to emphasize the necessity of (undervalued) care work, and to suggest how “*more or better or different care could be generative of better survival, politics, and knowledge*” (Martin et al., 2015: 628). I hope that this thesis can make a small contribution to those aims.

3.6 Conclusion

Neighbourhood Planning presents itself as a site which is appropriate for analysis using STS resources, and which could be of significant interest to STS scholars. It is underpinned by the principle of letting the people who know and care for a place participate in its governance, legitimising the presence of subjectivity and values in an arena where the power to act has traditionally been legitimised by appeals to objectivity and fact, resonating with STS interest in participation, knowledge and care. It is a new, not-yet-stabilised practice where “*follow[ing] the actors themselves*” (Latour, 2005: 12) in fine-grained detail may reveal insights unnoticed by broader explanatory narratives. It is a process that revolves around the production, interpretation, presentation and validation of knowledge. It brings together a variety of expert knowledges – of planners, economists, demographers, landscape architects, etc. – with deliberative democracy, public participation, and very different practices of knowing and valuing. It also promises to put local communities in control, valorising

their claims rather than marginalising them as ‘polluted’ knowledge-value hybrids, and consigning experts to be ‘on tap, not on top’.

It appears to be the most theoretically interesting of a range of recent participatory environmental governance initiatives in the UK: the most bottom-up, the most connected to the lived experience of participants in their environments, the least mediated by abstractions and translators, and the most likely to enable the stories of people and places to carry weight in decision-making. It holds the potential for making different things visible and invisible, and for casting some light on the mechanisms through which this happens. It is therefore a rich site for STS inquiry as different modes of knowing and relating are brought together in new ways, in a new framework with the potential to unsettle past certainties and ways of working, redistribute agency and produce a whole new set of technologies and processes. An STS sensibility also suggests that knowledge practices generate subjects as well as objects, worlds alongside evidence, realities as well as policies. Knowledge practices produce particular worlds in particular ways. I want to ask whether Neighbourhood Planning, as a new form of knowledge practice, has the capacity to remake worlds afresh, better informed by the affective states, material practices and ethico-political obligations of care. In the next chapter I set out the methodology I used to investigate this question, and introduce the specific sites in which my research took place.

Chapter 4: Methodology and meeting the participants

“It would be nice if all of the data which sociologists require could be enumerated because then we could run them through IBM machines and draw charts as the economists do. However, not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.”

(Cameron, 1963: 13)

“[Y]ou have ‘to follow the actors themselves’, that is try to catch up with their often wild innovations in order to learn from them what the collective existence has become in their hands, which methods they have elaborated to make it fit together, which accounts could best define the new associations that they have been forced to establish”.

(Latour, 2005: 12)

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I explain why my research questions and theoretical approach lent themselves to ethnography as a method, and to the specific more-than-human approach taken by STS ethnography. I set out how I selected the two sites in which I was a participant-observer and introduce some of the salient features of those sites including discussion of how the groups formed. I conclude by describing my processes of data production and analysis.

4.2 An ethnography of Neighbourhood Planning Groups

My research questions ask which types of knowledge, and whose knowledge, gets included in the making of a Neighbourhood Plan, and how. I am interested in how diverse knowledges and affects are articulated and recorded; how some are made visible through translation into concrete material forms called ‘evidence’ and acted upon to produce policy; and how some are made invisible and ‘othered’ - concealed, silenced, rejected, or taken for granted and ‘smuggled in’ (Law, 2004).

Answering these questions required me to trace how legitimacy was achieved in the production of evidence and Plans, through examining the knowledge practices and the materials and spaces which made them possible. It necessarily dealt with “*the things STS often cares about*” (Jensen, 2007): the cultural and historical context, and a fine-grained observation of practices as they unfold *in situ*, enabling rich and textured thick descriptions (Geertz, 2005). STS practitioners place great store on detailed scrutiny of the heterogeneous sociomaterial assemblages that comprise the groups, institutions, objects and processes they investigate, and focus on the constitutive relations within and between them. This very close-up examination takes account of the mundane and the happenstance, and is one of the keys to STS analyses’ often-surprising results. It can reveal that enacted practices are often quite different to accounts given about them, and that taken for granted assumptions about people, places, practices and objects are often contingent and contestable. As such, ethnographic methods have been widely used by STS scholars since the earliest laboratory studies up to the present day (e.g. Dugdale, 1999; Easthope and Mort, 2014; Gusterson, 1998; Knorr-Cetina, 1981; Latour, 1979; Mol, 2002; Singleton and Michael, 1993; Suchman, 2007;

Wynne, 1982), and are widely recognised as the best method for gaining insights about situated, lived practices as they unfold.

As Uwe Flick (2014: 308) points out, “*practices are only accessible through observation; interviews and narratives merely make the accounts of practices accessible rather than the practices themselves.*” And arguably, it is only possible to observe those practices from within – from the perspective of someone engaged in those practices - by participating in them oneself (Adler and Adler, 1987). Angrosino tells us that “*Only in the field could a scholar truly encounter the dynamics of the lived human experience*” (2007: 2). Examining the processes and practices through which knowledge gets filtered into or out of the development of a Neighbourhood Plan required first-hand experience of those practices in action. As “*a situated practice that locates the observer in the world*” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008: 4), and which is “*grounded in a commitment to the first-hand experience and exploration of a particular ... setting*” and “*attention to the realities of everyday life*” (Atkinson et al., 2007: 4, 5), an ethnographic approach appeared to be the best method for gaining insights into the construction of knowledge, the co-construction of knowledge and society, and the interweaving of knowledge, culture and power in this setting (Hess, 2001).

In both of my research sites, there was a Neighbourhood Planning Group (NPG) who were the human actors at the centre of these processes of articulation and translation. NPGs are required to be “*inclusive and open*” in developing the Plan, ensuring that people are able to be “*actively involved*” and to “*make their views known throughout the process*” (DCLG, 2014a: Paragraph 047, Reference ID: 41-047-20140306). My

study therefore revolved around the practices of the NPGs and their relations with a range of other actors (e.g. the wider community, their Town/Parish Council and their consultants). However, I was studying the *process* of producing a Plan, rather than any group of individuals *per se*, “*drawing attention instead to the diverse discursive and material, human and artifactual elements that must be assembled together in the construction of stable organizations and artifacts*” (Suchman, 2000: 312).

I was concerned less with the NPGs as groups of individuals, or with knowledge as a body of propositions, than with how embodied practices were translated into written accounts and other materialisations, and how they were understood, evaluated and mobilised. Through the process of Neighbourhood Planning the NPGs can be seen as performing certain realities through engaging in specific practices. These performances rely upon a network of material and immaterial elements (e.g. national policy documents; institutions such as Parish Councils, LPAs and the planning system; the places they are planning for and where their practices take place; the materials and technologies that those practices rely on; ideas of ‘community’ and ‘neighbourhood’, ‘plan’ and ‘evidence’) that both enable and constrain the realities that can be performed. This network with all its heterogeneous elements formed my object for study, adopting the STS sensibility of blurring the boundaries between people and environment, recognising their co-constitution, and recognising the agency of non-humans (taking agency to be the ability to have effects on the world).

The role of practices in performing and stabilizing particular realities (Law, 2004) applies as much to my performance of research as to the NPGs’ performance of Neighbourhood Planning. Approaching the sites with this particular set of theoretical

and methodological resources, and my own autobiographical ‘location’, has shaped the development of my thesis. It would have been a very different piece of work if I had, say, surveyed consultants who had worked on Neighbourhood Plans, or been sensitised by a focus on socioeconomic inequalities or social network analysis. But rather than detracting from its objectivity, this situatedness enacts a particular kind of knowledge claim: “*rational knowledge does not pretend to disengagement: to be from everywhere and so nowhere, to be free from interpretation, from being represented, to be fully self-contained or fully formalizable. Rational knowledge is a process of ongoing critical interpretation among ‘fields’ of interpreters and decoders. Rational knowledge is power-sensitive conversation*”. (Haraway, 1988: 590)

4.3 The research sites

4.3.1 Overview

My original intention was to conduct an ethnographic study of one NPG. My fieldwork would revolve around attending regular meetings. I wanted to follow the NPG all the way through the process (and ideally beyond), and official guidance suggested that this was likely to take 18-24 months (Chetwyn, 2013: 14). I therefore needed to find a community who would be at an appropriately early stage in early 2015, within a reasonable travel time from Lancaster, and which would be willing to participate in my study. I researched potential NPGs through personal and professional contacts and online networks. In December 2014 I attended a workshop for groups in North West England who were considering or had just begun the process of Neighbourhood Planning.

At this event I had initial conversations with members of eight groups that were either considering or had already started the first stages of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, and who were willing for me to meet with their groups to discuss participating in the study. I followed up by email and whittled them down to five based on practical criteria, i.e. where they were in the Plan process and where they were geographically. I ruled out two groups early in January 2015 as both decided not to progress a Plan immediately, although both invited me to stay in touch and to check on progress and decisions later. I met the Town Clerk of a third in February 2015, and attended a later meeting of Town Councillors, which decided to defer a decision on making a Plan until after the May 2015 elections. I also met with the NPGs from Wroston and Oakley¹⁵ in February, and received permission from both to attend a few meetings while I decided which I would work with.

At each of these initial meetings I outlined the purpose, design, methodology, and intended outcomes of the project; what participating in the project would involve and the risks it might pose; and the ways in which I might be able to help them. I explained the principles of informed consent and the rights that participants would retain over their data and their right to withdraw from participating at any point during the project. All NPG members were provided with a project information sheet and, once the decision on research sites had been finalised, asked to sign a consent form¹⁶. I discussed these issues separately with NPG members who were not present at these

¹⁵ The names of both places, as well as the names of all participants, have been replaced by pseudonyms in accordance with standard anonymisation practices

¹⁶ The information sheet and consent form, as approved by the Lancaster University Ethics Committee, are reproduced as Appendix 1.

initial meetings and with other key actors (i.e. consultants and LPA officers). Ethical considerations remained at the heart of the project throughout, requiring reflective revisiting as the project unfolded over four years and I became increasingly deeply embedded in and entangled with the NPGs.

After my first two meetings with each group, the variations between Wroston and Oakley made me think that studying both might be useful. Conducting research on multiple sites brings with it both advantages and challenges. It complicates the oscillating movement between specific setting and theory, requiring movement between sites as well as between context and theory – as well as doubling the amount of fieldwork, note-taking and analysis required. But the benefits appeared significant. Primarily, it would give me an opportunity to observe multiple instances of Neighbourhood Planning in practice. This would assist in analysing the relationships between the trope of ‘Neighbourhood Planning’ (as an assemblage of regulations, policies, guidance, ideologies, technologies, institutions, politics, etc.), and its reproductions and partial transformations as it gets enacted in different places. It would enable me to observe variation circulating within the practices of Neighbourhood Planning, and how similarity and difference emerged in different contexts. It would also allow for my continuous reflexive re-positioning, not only as researcher and NPG member, but also as member-and-researcher-of another NPG. Notwithstanding their initial selection for practical reasons, interesting issues emerged early on in my meetings with both NPGs, and they displayed a set of divergent characteristics, including:

- Scale: Wroston is a village of just over 500 people, Oakley a town of over 4,000;

- Strategic context:
 - Local Plan status: the LPA in which Wroston is located did not have an up-to-date Local Plan, so exactly what and where will be allocated for development and protection over 15-20 years was yet to be decided. The process of preparing this Local Plan overlapped in time with the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, enabling potential interactions between the two processes. A Local Plan covering Oakley was already in place. Development sites in the town were already allocated, so the focus of the Neighbourhood Plan and interactions with the LPA were quite different.
 - Statutory designations: Wroston is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which places some restrictions on development; Oakley is in an LPA that is dominated by a National Park, but which the town itself is outside of, increasing the development pressures and opportunities that it faces.
- Scope: Wroston was primarily concerned with controlling the scale, rate, type and location of housing development, although this was quite densely imbricated with other issues. Oakley was concerned with a wider range of issues: e.g. managing the impacts of development on already-allocated sites (e.g. in terms of design), protecting specific green spaces; transport, and economic development.

Both NPGs were self-selected. They were entirely white British, with majorities who were middle aged and middle class, with many working or retired professionals. This does not appear to be especially unusual for communities that are doing

Neighbourhood Planning (Parker, 2017). There were roughly equal numbers of men and women in each group¹⁷. But this says relatively little about the NPGs as assemblages, nor does it give much of a feel for the relations, or the productions and performances of atmospheres and dynamics in either. To convey some of these impressions, I reproduce below some of my own first impressions, through extended extracts from the fieldnotes of my first encounters with both NPGs.

4.3.2 Detailed introductions

The following sections are extended extracts from my fieldnotes from my first meetings with both NPGs. In these initial meetings I assured NPG members that to protect their privacy and confidentiality, all contributions to the data would be anonymised by deleting or disguising information that could render a person identifiable to an outsider. To this end, all proper nouns (of people, organisations and places) have been substituted for pseudonyms, and place names have been redacted from reproductions of primary materials. Despite this, it is of course possible that participants will be identifiable to other participants and to people closely familiar with the organisations and places involved, and all participants agreed to this condition.

Extract from fieldnotes 03.02.15 – first meeting with Oakley NPG

“I arrived ten minutes before the 7pm meeting start-time, having cruised up Main

¹⁷ My focus here is not on the (re)production of ‘big categories’ such as race, class, and gender, and I note the heterogeneity within these broad categories.

Street to the roundabout and back down, unsure of where Elizabeth Hall was or where to park. I found a spot and a likely-looking building – Edwardian, little town-hall-y.

‘We need you to vote YES’ banners and posters on the wall and in the windows, with “Oakley Neighbourhood Plan” in smaller letters above – I’d come to the right place. I headed for the side door and upstairs.

I nodded and said hi to a man with a trimmed grey beard at the top of the stairs. He did the same, and I followed him to the open door of a lit room, which announced that it was the council Chamber. I asked the room in general if this was the Neighbourhood Plan meeting. A couple of other people were already inside, a very neat woman sat at the very large board-room style table which dominated the centre of the room, and a man getting coffee from the pump-action flask in the corner. Heavy wooden panels hung on the walls listing past mayors ...

...The huge polished wood table is almost full when Stephanie takes charge and, after briefly introducing me and a round of introductions for my benefit, turns to the first item of business, an update on tasks from the previous meeting. Everyone had a printed copy of the chart listing themes, actions, and person responsible, for perhaps a dozen themes. Extremely organised! They quickly went around, efficiently chaired by Stephanie, mostly simply confirming that actions had been done, and occasionally providing some detail. Robert went into some detail about publicity - banners, posters on lamp-posts and so on. Seemed to have an attention to detail, happy to look after the little jobs. This section included quite a detailed scrutiny of a draft letter that Stephanie had drafted for the local business community...

...The group are, except Katie (employed as Deputy Clerk, the contact I first met in the December workshop), almost all retired. This came out in a discussion about whether to move meetings to daytime – proposed by Andrew, there was some debate, most seemed broadly in favour but it would not be convenient for Katie. ... They are dressed well, not richly or extravagantly but in different ways neat, respectable, well groomed, quietly confident. They belong in the room, which is well-appointed, and feels kind of how they feel. Middle class. Settled. Grounded. Comfortable. Around the table from Stephanie (cllr) they were Mary (cllr), Katie, Martin, Henry, Geoffrey, Julia (cllr) Andrew (cllr), Robert, Paula, me, Sarah.”

Extract from fieldnotes 05.02.15 – first meeting with Wroston NPG

“I arrive at the village hall just before seven. There are signs directing people for the NP meeting to the first door on the left. It is small, with a table that could comfortably seat four, folded chairs around the edges of the room, and a shelf-like work surface along one side. There is evidence of multiple use – as storeroom, meeting room, Wroston computer centre (a sign, a couple of large laptops, and a server continuously emitting a high-pitched whine) – and the NP hub, with A4 laminates on the walls identifying the village’s ‘assets and issues’. This is evidence, I later learn, of the NPG’s first consultation, identifying the significant material features of the Neighbourhood Plan area and the opportunities and challenges it faces. An older man is unfolding an A3+ size document, very old, on the table.

The setting is much more informal than Oakley, and the people are too, although the social/cultural backgrounds seem pretty similar; quite a bit younger too it would

seem, but still broadly 50s plus, Ewan being the most obvious exception, Susan and possibly Anne as well; a lot more of them are still in work. Hard to tell, but they appear fairly affluent, fairly high social and cultural capital, high confidence (broadly). I'm instructed to go and find Susan in the kitchen, who is making tea before we start. I do; we chat; I come back, my offer to help not taken up, and take a seat. Many questions from all sides along the lines of, 'are you the student?'; and I get talking to a chap across the table about my background.

Simon (the Chair) enters and the meeting is called to order: he is quite by the book and formal, but many of the group are not, particularly Anne (who turns out to be the group's informal vice-Chair), who regularly laughs, jokes, swears, and interrupts. However, she clearly has a lot of respect from the group, is a central figure in Wroston and is a woman who can – and does – get things done. Runs her own business, outdoor based I'm guessing, and it shows. Fun and irreverent but efficient. The atmosphere in general is more relaxed than in the formal council chamber at Oakley. Round the room, from my right, were Simon, Laura, Anne, Susan, Tom, Jodie (Parish Council clerk), Elliot, Ewan, Ray, and Scott, their consultant. They laughed a lot. Simon, Scott, Ray and Ewan were arranged on three sides of the table, with the rest of us clustered around. Tom sat well back from the table (well, as well back as the room would allow), leaning on a desk in the corner; Jodie, Susan and Anne were also positioned at a bit of distance...

...Simon is particularly keen that I help them with data analysis for confidentiality reasons – the village is so small that people will be readily identifiable, even though surveys etc. are supposed to be anonymised. Having outsiders involved at this point is

seen as a big bonus. I make it clear that I still have to talk to other groups, but am made to feel very welcome. With that agreed, Simon moves onto the main topic, which takes up the vast majority of the 2 hours, the local housing needs survey. Scott has made a draft, based on a housing association survey that had previously been accepted by the LPA – vital for getting it okayed for use. Their discussion around this was extremely thorough, going into great detail, and all giving deep consideration to points raised, and developing or countering them thoughtfully.”

Hopefully these extracts convey a little more of the felt experience of being present in these situations. However, I acknowledge that at best it will only be a little more, with the conventions and norms of a PhD thesis (not least the maximum word count) compounding the difficulties of expressing in words affects, atmospheres, and embodied experiences that are in any case challenging to articulate in writing. Hopefully, too, they begin to gesture at some of the materiality and relations that helped define the NPGs and produce them in their specific form – the detailed wording and material forms of surveys and letters; sheets of paper with minutes and agendas; lists highlighting some features of the neighbourhoods (and therefore directing attention away from others) that can be displayed on walls as symbols of presences and absences, pasts and futures. One thing that neither extract draws attention to, though, is the very significant role that consultants played in both NPGs. One of the first actions of both NPGs was to contract consultants (Scott in Wroston, Andrea in Oakley) to guide them through the process, helping them to interpret the policy and guidance that framed their new powers as Neighbourhood Planners.

In Wroston, the decision to produce a Neighbourhood Plan arose directly out of a packed public meeting in the village hall in July 2014. Agents of a local landowner had suggested that the land enclosing the village on the north and east sides might be developed for housing, and had put the land forward as sites for the LPA to consider allocating for development in the Local Plan. Up to 400 houses were mentioned, in a village that currently contained around 200 houses. The reaction from the meeting was overwhelmingly negative, and attendees were invited by a Parish Councillor to set up a Neighbourhood Plan Group to help them plan a future for the village that was more in keeping with the mood of the meeting.

An NPG was set up, initially consisting of around 15 residents and Parish Councillors who volunteered to get involved, although the Parish Councillor members all left either the NPG or the Parish Council between the first formally minuted meeting in September 2014 and my first meeting with them in February 2015. There were no formal reporting mechanisms between the NPG and the Parish Council, although the Parish Clerk attended meetings of both and produced (quite minimal) minutes of them. These were then posted on the Parish website and sent to interested residents, including some Parish Councillors. Informal channels of communication were thus open all the time but were not necessarily used. The size and nature of the neighbourhood also meant that NPG members and Parish Council members would often meet each other informally. But there was no direct Parish Council involvement with the Neighbourhood Plan until 17.09.15, when the new Parish Council Chair agreed to start attending occasional meetings in a deliberate effort, initiated by the NPG, to get more Parish Council involvement. Before long, she became an established part of the NPG and a regular attendee at meetings.

Oakley NPG was substantially different, made up of a mixture of Town Councillors and ‘ordinary’ residents. As might be expected given the size of the settlements (and therefore of the size and budget of the Town/Parish Councils), Oakley Town Council was better resourced, more professionalised and more active. The Neighbourhood Plan had been initiated by the Town Council (who then invited other members to join via their website and the local newspaper) for two main reasons. They resented the LPA for what they viewed as inappropriate development allocations in the Local Plan, and a history of permitting badly designed, poorly sited developments that contributed to existing problems, e.g. traffic and drainage. They felt that as a Town Council their views were regularly discounted on planning matters and were therefore strongly attracted to the statutory powers afforded by Neighbourhood Planning. They also resented the LPA for what they considered to be a failure to invest sufficiently in the basic infrastructure of the town, blaming this on its geographical and figurative peripheral status within the LPA: most public money was spent in and around the main town in which the LPA offices were based. They were therefore attracted by the promise of additional funding that a Neighbourhood Plan would bring¹⁸.

The Chair of the NPG, Stephanie, regularly reported back to the Town Council, and ensured that they were kept updated about progress. As in Wroston, the Town Clerk / Deputy serviced both the Town Council and the NPG. The NPG nevertheless

¹⁸ The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge paid by developers to LPAs after the grant of planning permission to help fund local infrastructure. Where a Town/Parish Council has a Neighbourhood Plan in place, 25% of the money raised by the charge in the neighbourhood area must be passed on to that Council. Where there is not a Neighbourhood Plan, it will only receive 15%, and that will be capped at a level of £100 per existing household. However, not all LPAs have a CIL schedule in place, so this benefit is not available to all potential NPGs.

developed a distinctive identity of its own, and defined itself as separate to rather than a part of the Town Council. This sense of separation and distinctiveness surfaced frequently in NPG meetings, although they also saw themselves as sharing some common aims and responsibilities (e.g. to represent the people of Oakley) with the Town Council.

Having briefly introduced my two research sites, I will now outline how I engaged with them: how I gathered and analysed data and managed to craft moments of critical distance from the field.

4.4 In the field – gathering data

From its start in February 2015, my fieldwork quickly developed into a pattern. I attended fortnightly meetings of both NPGs and took copious notes in A4 or A5 notebooks. I focused on interactions, between individuals and with the material and immaterial elements that made them an NPG: maps, draft Plans and parts of Plans, surveys, matrices, steadily-growing bodies of documentary evidence, the constantly-felt absence of evidence yet to be generated, the final Plan in its tangible yet unformed absence, their sense of identity as an NPG, and the shadow of the independent Examiner scrutinising their efforts from the future. Soon afterwards - that night or the following day wherever possible - I would type those notes up into Word documents. In July 2015 I received permission from both groups to audio-record the meetings as well. I would synchronise a stopwatch with my dictaphone so that I could make a note in my fieldnotes of the times at which events occurred, making future navigation of the audio files easier. I transcribed extracts from these recordings that appeared

particularly salient into my fieldnotes. Between February and May 2016 I fell behind in typing up my fieldnotes and so hired a professional transcription service to transcribe the audio files from meetings during that time. I made notes of (but did not record) other events outside of the regular NPG meetings, e.g. public consultation events; meetings with consultants, LPA officers and developers; meetings of NPG sub-groups; and telephone conversations and informal meetings with NPG members. I also intermittently kept a field diary in which I reflected on my fieldwork experiences. The Oakley Plan was finally adopted by the LPA in August 2018. The Wroston Plan passed examination in December 2018, and at the time of writing has yet to be put to referendum. I continued to meet with and work with both NPGs throughout this time, so my data from each case spans around 3 ½ years. In both cases, meetings and other interactions became less frequent over time, and tailed off almost entirely over the last months as the main responsibility for action shifted onto the LPA.

These handwritten and typed fieldnotes and the audio recordings provided the bulk of my data. I also retained email correspondence from both groups, and from individual members of both. I collected copies of the materials with which the NPGs worked and which they produced (iterative drafts of Plans and comments on drafts from the NPGs and the LPAs; survey forms, responses and reports; agendas and minutes; assessment forms; maps etc.) electronically and/or in hard copy, along with copies of the Examiner's reports and, in Wroston's case, her questions and the NPG and LPA responses to them¹⁹. I took photographs of consultation events and materials, and of sites in the neighbourhood which generated significant debate. I accessed materials

¹⁹ The Oakley examination was conducted with no contact between the Examiner and the NPG until he had produced his draft report and asked them to check it for factual errors.

online that provided the wider contexts for these particular enactments of Neighbourhood Planning, such as national policy and guidance, government press releases, records of debates in Parliament, articles from trade journals, decisions from public inquiries and court cases involving Neighbourhood Plans, etc.

I present selected extracts from my fieldnotes throughout the rest of this thesis in order to illustrate my argument. Fieldnote extracts are presented in italics and enclosed in double inverted commas. Where the extract records direct speech from a participant within a longer extract, single inverted commas are used within the double inverted commas. The date and context for all extracts will be provided in the text, and speakers will be identified where direct speech is recorded. Square brackets are occasionally used within fieldnote extracts to provide additional clarity, e.g. when the referent of a pronoun in the original fieldnote or reported speech is not evident from the context. Quotes from academic literature and other documents are also presented in italics in double inverted commas: these are identified by author, date of publication and page number.

In my fieldwork I was, at first, unobtrusive. I wanted to blend into the background, to become part of the scenery. I would chat with the people on either side of me when I sat down in the meetings and afterwards. I would be polite and friendly but on the whole, I did not take part in the discussions. I would occasionally volunteer uncontroversial information (e.g. what national policy said, how policy had been interpreted by Planning Inspectors or the Secretary of State, where information could be found, or how particular activities had been done elsewhere) based on knowledge from my previous professional experience and ongoing sociomaterial networks. My

presence appeared to be accepted and business continued, as far as I could tell, as usual. The friendly and accommodating attitudes of individuals in both NPGs suggested that I was accepted, and my impression was that people were not adapting their conduct in any way because of my presence. This impression was reinforced by the 'back-stage' behaviour and conversations that I witnessed (Goffman, 1959).

Indications of this included: the relative informality with which the Wroston meetings were conducted; open admissions of confusion and uncertainty from both groups about what they were doing; banter, joking and relaxed chat, before, during and after the meetings; and occasional outbursts of emotion, bad-temper and disagreement.

Although in the early days I did little more than look, listen and write, playing very little part in the meetings themselves, both NPGs treated me with benevolent interest but little directed awareness: I seemed to blend into the background. I was concerned about the effects interventions on my part might have: I had decided that I would actively work with the NPGs to help them to do what they wanted to do in the way that they wanted to do it, but that I would actively try to avoid influencing what they decided to do and how they decided to do it.

However, from an STS perspective, research is itself an intervention: it is not possible to choose not to intervene, and so the question revolves around *how* to intervene and what the effects of that might be (Downey and Dumit, 1997; Zuiderent-Jerak, 2007).

If social and material worlds are co-produced, ordered into provisionally stable constructs simultaneously through the same sets of processes (Jasanoff, 2004b), then there is no hard and fast line between interpretation and action: "*A description is always an intervention, even if ever so modest*" (Vikkelsø, 2007: 306). The stories told by ethnography (or any other method) are not innocent descriptions but enact

particular versions of reality, and interfere with other enactments in particular ways to support, extend, undermine or celebrate them (Law and Singleton, 2000: 769). The question became which partial connections with participants my particular approach to intervention would strengthen, and which partial disconnections it would establish (Zuiderent-Jerak and Jensen, 2007: 232). It became clear that a more active mode of intervention on my part might be more beneficial, both to the NPGs in terms of better engaging my skills, experience and knowledge to achieving their aims, and to me in terms of engaging in the practices that they engaged in, working with the same materials and material and non-material alignments (Suchman, 2000).

So over time, I began to increase my involvement in the NPGs' activities in several varied and specific ways. I participated more actively in meetings, and sent relevant news, guidance and information to both Chairs by email. I became more integrated into the fabric of the projects of both groups, taking on work to do between meetings like other NPG members, e.g. collating and analysing the data from Wroston's community opinion and business surveys, and becoming a member of Oakley's green spaces sub-group. Later in the process I increasingly provided advice and comments on policy wording and the approach of both NPGs to controversial matters. I also occasionally joined some Wroston NPG members in the pub after meetings.

This increased involvement with both NPGs had several positive interconnected effects:

- Doing useful work for the NPGs – giving something back, giving them some benefit from agreeing to participate in the study: a “research exchange” (Adler

and Adler, 1987: 40), both in terms of being ‘another pair of hands’ and applying my relevant skills and knowledge. However, I remained wary about having undue influence (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 70), and attempted to restrict my engagement to helping with the ‘how’ of what they were doing, without influencing the ‘what’ they wanted to achieve – while also being aware that a total separation of the two was not possible.

- Showing my appreciation, doing social-emotional work, demonstrating that I *wanted* to give something back, and thus building relationships of trust and engagement (Rock, 2007: 33-34).
- Sharing in their responsibilities, worries, pressures, frustrations, pleasures, breakthroughs, reliefs, and satisfactions, thereby getting first hand rather than second hand experience of the process and a more direct experience of their experience (Adler and Adler, 1987: 59-60).
- Having the shared experience of participating in attempting and achieving something in a joint venture as a ‘rite of passage’.
- Taking part in the practices, and working directly in and with the spaces and materials that define the process, rather than merely observing them.
- Gaining access to dimensions of the work and interactions of the NPGs that would not be available to me if I did not participate, e.g. membership of sub-groups and the conversations and activities that took place as part of these outside of the main groups.

These effects all tended to have the effect of embedding me deeper within the NPGs, becoming more of a committed member or insider, and giving me access in one way or another to different ‘backstage’ spaces, literally and metaphorically (Goffman,

1959) – although I acknowledge the dangers in uncritically accepting conventional wisdom about the advantages of insider (or outsider) roles (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 86; Labaree, 2002). This “*more engaged and interventionist practice*” (Criado and Estalella, 2018: 2) led to an approach that was in some ways more epistemic collaboration than traditionally-conceived participant-observation: I was playing an active role in producing the knowledge whose production I was investigating, working towards the end-points of both Neighbourhood Plan and PhD thesis. I gained an increasing awareness that the “*highly reflexive, creative and investigative practices*” (Ibid: 4) of the epistemic communities I was working with differed from my own primarily with respect to the ways that we problematized and oriented our attention to the ‘same’ situations. Participation in these spaces and ways also led to increased and different tensions in the “*web of demands that come from different directions at once: academia, personal interests...and the interests of the subjects*” (Fortier, 2000: 9).

4.5 Between field and office – attaining critical distance

The central tensions in undertaking engaged ethnographic fieldwork are between participation and observation, between first-hand experience and critical analysis. I was both insider and outsider, researcher and participant, relatively-expert (in terms of the knowledge and skills I had from previous professional experience and my theoretical grounding) and relatively-ignorant (in terms of my detailed knowledge of the specific localities and situations). However, as Mesman (2007: 292) observes, “*engaging in*” and “*being critical*” need only be mutually exclusive if one assumes a stability and coherence of the role and responsibility of the researcher that was at odds

with her, and my, experience. My role – I myself – was always situated, and continuously in flux. I switched between roles and identities in an ongoing, reflexive oscillation between participation and observation, between thinking in and through the theoretical frames set out in the previous chapters, and in and through the frames of achieving the NPGs' objectives within the structures of Neighbourhood Planning.

But even this is an oversimplification. There were indeed times when I could retrospectively describe myself as 'wholly' participant (e.g. when frantically trying to finish drafting my part of the December 2015 consultation materials for Oakley before the train pulled into Euston at 6pm on a Friday so that I could get them agreed with the NPG Chair before the weekend) or as 'wholly' observer (e.g. when scribbling down snatches of conversation in meetings that resonated with the themes of my thesis) – but for much of the time in the field both things were going on at once. It makes more sense to talk of analysis and participation as complementary activities, than analyst and participant as (potentially) incompatible identities. But even taken as nouns, these identities are not static either, they shift and develop with time, and inform each other's development.

The hybrid role of participant-observer is particularly visible as being ambiguous and fluid, partially open, partially connected. And, as Bal and Mastboom (2007) reflect, I could 'act with' or become a part of the practices being studied, and also reflect critically on those practices, including on my own engagement with them, from both participant and analytical perspectives. Additionally, due to my immersion in two different case studies, I could also observe and analyse each one from the perspective of a researcher also embedded in the other. My experience was of my role within and

in relation to the NPGs being shifting and ambiguous (Mesman, 2007; Zuiderent-Jerak and Jensen, 2007). I came to see that not only were my roles multiple and heterogeneous, so too were the emerging Plans and the project of producing them, as well as the participants themselves. As I discuss in Chapter 5, the NPGs themselves revealed themselves to have multiple and shifting identities. This understanding helped to provide a critical distance and developed my analysis with the recognition that there was not one single, stable object of study, but that 'it', and all the (human and non-human) actors that constituted it, were in the process of being enacted – as was I.

I was also able to attain critical distance by the differential sorting of attachments (Jensen, 2007) in different physical and institutional situations – by the spatial, temporal and social separation of my work as participant-observer and my work as an analyst. This involved the ongoing reflexive reconfiguration of my relationships with the NPGs and with the process of Neighbourhood Planning from 'inside' to 'outside': from actively working with them within one set of physical spaces and political and institutional obligations and agendas, to critically reflecting upon them from within another set. This minimised any risk of co-option or some other version of the 'going native' problem (abandoning or compromising my critical stance or becoming excessively aligned with my participants' agendas and outlooks) (Downey and Lucena, 1997; Mesman, 2007), given that the majority of my time was spent 'attached' to the University and to the research perspective rather than immersed in the field. Of course, this too is an oversimplification – it would be ridiculous to claim that no analysis went on in the field – but there were also times when I could position

myself as ‘wholly’ analyst (e.g. when considering potential structures for the thesis), away from the field, and immersed in the academic world. I briefly turn to that now.

4.6 In the office - analysis and interpretation

Away from the field, analysing and interpreting my data, I still had divided responsibilities and accountabilities, albeit different ones. I was keenly aware that as the world is never fully available for description, both what I include and what I leave out - the choices, selections and interpretations that I make - had the potential to offend and distress, from the level of particular occurrences and utterances all the way through to entire cosmologies and conceptions of ‘reality’ (Markussen and Olesen, 2007; Murphy and Dingwall, 2007). My version of events would inevitably differ from others and may be both alien and objectionable to participants and readers. However, while managing this problem sensitively, the theoretical map laid out in the previous chapter sets out my main set of accountabilities during this stage of the process: to render “*faithful accounts of a ‘real’ world*” (Haraway, 1988: 579) in accordance with the principles and tools of this intellectual framework. This required following the actors themselves (Latour, 2005): being led by the specificity of the data. This led me in surprising directions, and certainly far away from my original expectations of what I would find. Many of my anticipated findings were turned on their heads, and unpredicted observations came to play a dominant role.

This drove the iterative process between fieldwork and analysis (Lofland, 2006). The STS framework, my original research questions and personal history sensitised me to attend to certain types of relations, practices and issues. This guided my data gathering

in the field in an open and partial way – I was sensitised to attend to particular things, but was also able to attend to others, and/or to interpret things in ways that were not necessarily suggested by my sensitising concepts. The introduction of audio-recording NPG meetings meant that I would have detailed records of meetings which I could revisit with differently-oriented attention.

Through reading and re-reading my fieldnotes, re-listening to my audio-recordings, and reflecting on my encounters both through my fieldwork diary and through discussions with my supervisors and others, I was able to identify emerging patterns, which I systematised and developed into themes. As these themes developed they re-sensitised me to different or more nuanced sets of issues and relations to specifically attend to in the field, and they prompted further re-reading and re-listening. In this re-sensitisation and re-visiting of the data I was attentive to encounters that substantiated and developed those themes, but also to counter-examples that might undermine, destabilise or re-orient them. Over time this resulted in the iterative development of the precise formulation of my research questions and my focus of attention – for example, a broad emphasis on affect was refined to a more specific focus on care, and I moved away from an early theoretical interest in using ‘cultural ecosystem services’ as a sensitising concept as this felt too remote from the language and practices of the NPGs²⁰.

²⁰ Although from a different theoretical-methodological perspective, this could be a useful approach for analysing the content and intention of Plans and conceptualising some of the more difficult-to-articulate elements of neighbourhood.

Working across two sites proved to be a powerful tool in triangulating sources of information. For example, the NPGs' performance of the same specific multiple categories of identity was very strongly manifested in both field sites throughout my fieldwork from an early stage (as discussed in Chapter 5). This was a theme that arose directly from the data, rather than from either my professional background or theoretical map. Likewise, as discussed in Chapter 7, the consultants emerged as significant actors in both sites, which were not figures that I had intended to focus on. It became apparent that the function performed by the consultants in each site was broadly similar, but that it was performed in very different ways, illustrating the scope for doing significant difference within the same functional framework.

“Knowledge is always mediated by pre-existing ideas and values, whether this is acknowledged by the researcher or not” (Seale, 1999: 470), so rather than vainly striving for an unachievable objectivity, I have attempted to be clear about my own positionality. My personal history informed both my research and my participation and made both richer, adding to my ability to understand and recognise what was going on from each perspective. I cannot unlearn the things I know, cannot and would not want to try to make myself invisible in the natural scientific model of the ‘modest witness’ (Shapin, 1984). Instead, I attempt to be the kind of modest witness sketched out in Chapter 3 (Haraway, 1997): one who can give a partial and situated account, grounded in and faithful to the specificities of experience, and reflexively aware of the theoretical framework that I engage to make sense of that experience. I aim to exercise humility (Jasanoff, 2003), because whatever assumptions I may contrive to make visible, more will always remain invisible.

Yet, while on the one hand believing that all knowledge is situated and partial, that we can only see and know and understand things from our own embedded and embodied positions, our historical, geographical, physical and cultural specificity (Haraway, 1997), translating this into my actual analytical practice was not so simple. The ‘god trick’ is not so easy to spot when it is your own ‘Archimedean position’ under scrutiny (Haraway, 1988) – or at least, not so easy to wholeheartedly accept. Despite my theoretical map, I remain embedded and implicated in (and therefore in important ways, inevitably embodying) a world in which the Enlightenment imaginary is very much dominant. I had to deliberately and repeatedly bring to awareness not just switching between participant and analytical perspectives, but also scrutiny of that analytical perspective to re-situate myself and recognise that describing what I observed from my particular situated position was one story amongst the many possible, and not an (or rather, ‘the’) ‘objective’ description of ‘what was’.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined why long-term ethnography as an engaged participant-observer in two locations was an appropriate approach to addressing my research questions within my chosen theoretical framework. I have explained why NPGs emerged as my object of study, how and why I came to work with these two specific NPGs, and provided brief introductions to them. I have described how I gathered data, how that data is presented in this thesis, and how my relations with the NPGs developed over time as that data was produced. I have reflected on the interplay between my fluid roles as participant, observer and analyst, and how my interpretations of data and the ways my attention was oriented in the field developed

as a result of that interplay. I acknowledge that my account is just one of many possible, and also acknowledge the difficulties of practically embodying my theoretical commitments.

Adopting this methodological approach, I hope to have produced a ‘generalisation that intervenes’ (Winthereik and Verran, 2012) – an account that speaks to many instances of Neighbourhood Planning, and to the ‘career’ of Neighbourhood Planning as a practice (Shove, 2012). However, I also hope that it unsettles both its own and other accounts’ status as generalisations by drawing attention to its own specificity, and thus its own limitations as a partial, situated account, thereby actively engaging readers in *“the constant work of figuring out just what the world is made of”* (Winthereik and Verran, 2012: 44). All knowledge production is a political act. My aim has been to attend to neglected things (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017) and to enact a reality in which they can be better cared for - although I am also aware that the effects of this intervention are beyond my control (Zuiderent-Jerak and Jensen, 2007). In the following chapter the intervention begins in earnest as I begin to present and analyse empirical material from the field, focusing on the relations of identity between the NPGs and their neighbourhoods.

Chapter 5: Neighbourhoods and Neighbourhood Planning Groups: identity and legitimacy

“Neighbourhood Planning is a new way for communities to decide the future of the places where they live and work”

(DCLG, 2012b: 3)²¹

“The neighbourhood has emerged as a precocious new actor in the contested production of space”

(Bradley et al., 2017: 71-72)

5.1 Introduction

Neighbourhood Planning is framed by its promoters as a straightforward transfer of power from state to existing communities. In this chapter I examine the experience of my two case studies in order to problematize this framing, taking a performative and co-productionist approach (Chilvers and Kearnes, 2016), with specific attention to the idea of ‘existing communities’. I emphasise that Neighbourhood Planning produces two mutually dependent new actors: local communities as ‘neighbourhoods’ and NPGs as their spokespeople. I trace the NPGs’ performance of multiple identities in relation to the neighbourhood, drawing attention to the tensions between these identities and to the ways in which each one confers legitimacy on the NPG. I specify the connections between these different identities and different material relations,

²¹ Extract from Government briefing note on Neighbourhood Planning.

knowledge practices, modes of representation and enactments of legitimacy. I conclude by proposing that holding these identities together in different configurations will lead to different enactments of neighbourhood²².

Much Governmental discourse and much of the literature uses ‘the community’ and ‘the neighbourhood’ as interchangeable terms in relation to Neighbourhood Planning. However, the referents of these terms are slippery. While ‘the community’ refers to all (or some of) the social actors resident in a given area, ‘the neighbourhood’ may refer to either these social actors, or to the physical territory and features within the Plan area’s boundaries, or to the heterogeneous, sociomaterial assemblage of the two²³. The relational social and material overtones of ‘neighbourhood’ make it especially fitting as a term for participatory land-use planning. I tend to use ‘neighbourhood’ when referring to the communities of Neighbourhood Planning, to draw attention to this multivalency, to highlight that ‘the neighbourhood’ is a specific instantiation of community, and to emphasise that from an STS perspective, to speak of a geographical community is necessarily also to speak of the materiality of the territory which defines it, and the sociomaterial relations which generate its particular form.

²² I take an expanded, sociological approach to identity, in contrast to the individualist and psychological perspectives that tend to dominate the Enlightenment imaginary (Lawler, 2008) with an additional material dimension to reflect the STS material-semiotic sensibility (Symon and Pritchard, 2015).

²³ The Oxford English Dictionary gives, as its first three definitions of ‘neighbourhood’: “The people living near to a certain place or within a certain range; neighbours collectively”; “A small sector of a larger urban area, provided with its own shops and other facilities” and “A district or portion of a town, city, or country, esp. considered in reference to the character or circumstances of its inhabitants” (www.oed.com).

5.2 Empowering the neighbourhood

In Neighbourhood Planning, as throughout the wider national and international governance trend towards citizen participation and localism, ‘the local’ is lauded as the scalar level at which competing priorities can best be resolved, and ‘the community’ are the people who can achieve that resolution, if appropriately empowered to do so. Local knowledge (implicitly understood as deriving from lived experience) notionally becomes privileged. But who exactly are these communities? Can they be as easily and universally identified and subsequently empowered as suggested in the opening quote of this chapter? It has been noted that “*the governmental rhetoric surrounding the Localism Bill appeared to downplay asymmetries of knowledge and capacity, or other differences existing between one neighbourhood and another*” (Parker, 2017: 76). As discussed in Chapter 2, apparently equal access to Neighbourhood Planning might conceal problems of over/under-representation, legitimacy, territorial and social justice, and uneven distributions of capacities. Additional support being made available to more deprived areas and those facing more complex issues (Hansard, 2017b) indicate some Government awareness of relevant differences between communities, and at least a token attempt to help address them. But this awareness of differences *between* communities does not seem to extend to an understanding of difference *within* them. National policy and Government statements indicate that

“*[t]he social and spatial imaginary that underpins parish and Neighbourhood Planning entails the idea of a relatively homogeneous, stable, identifiable and self-conscious ‘local community’ that possesses a sense of neighbourhood*”

belonging and attachment and a set of common interests in relation to a defined place” (Colomb, 2017: 127).

This suggests that the Government sense of Neighbourhood Planning ignores the uneven distribution of time, skills, and resources, which can be as pronounced within geographical communities as between them. But more fundamentally, underpinning this, official discourse tends to assume that there is a pre-existing, stable entity with fairly well-defined characteristics that is identifiable *as* ‘the community’, to which power is to be devolved. This entity is also assumed to have an already-existing stock of knowledge of, attachments to, and desires for the neighbourhood.

5.3 Enacting the neighbourhood

However, the incipient NPG itself gets to propose the boundaries of its Plan area, and therefore of its neighbourhood. This can be contentious (Colomb, 2017), and is always contestable. In both of my cases (as in many parished areas), the parish boundary was eventually adopted – but other boundaries were considered and could realistically have been chosen. This would have enacted different neighbourhoods. This provides the first clear indication that the neighbourhood is actively assembled rather than being the kind of pre-given entity that the Government’s construction suggests: that Neighbourhood Planning is productive, not just descriptive, regarding the neighbourhoods and communities to which it refers.

Painter et al. (2011) highlight wider problems with the conceptualisation of community in attempts to mobilise localist governance to empower communities: they

are not simply ‘out there’ as pre-given entities. This reflects generations of debate over the contested meanings of ‘community’ from the earliest development of social theory to the present (Crow and Mah, 2011; Mulligan, 2015; Somerville, 2016). Claire Colomb draws attention to the “*ambiguities, tensions and conflicts that can emerge in the process of defining what and who is the neighbourhood*” (2017: 134). Likewise, the knowledge, values, attitudes and preferences of the community are not already simply in existence, waiting to be drawn upon, but are generated relationally (Waterton and Wynne, 1999). Nortje Marres argues that far from existing ‘out there’, communities are called into existence by engagement with specific issues and by specific material encounters (2012; 2005). This suggests that specific communities are produced as an effect of Neighbourhood Planning in a more profound way than the simple drawing of boundaries. Sue Brownill explores the process of coming-into-being of neighbourhoods by the folding in of various actors and interests into a newly emergent space:

“neighbourhoods come to be ‘assembled’ through these shifting and contentious relations [between] ... people, discourses, policies, objects, laws and the administrative measures that constitute them, and a variety of political actors.” (2017a: 148).

For some scholars, it is precisely this performativity that makes Neighbourhood Planning exciting (Bradley, 2015). Neighbourhood Planning engages and produces neighbourhoods as a new collective identity. Outside of Neighbourhood Planning, community involvement in planning tends to engage citizens as individualistic, aggregative commentators on expert-produced plans, and collective community action

is often portrayed as obstructive, self-serving, and/or 'NIMBY'. Neighbourhood Planning generates a new collective identity, a "*notionally autonomous locally constituted body*" (Ibid: 103) which can choose its own boundaries, membership, and issues. This collective becomes an actor in its own right: it is precisely action *as* a collective that is empowered. It is enacted as a knowledgeable entity: the collective experiential knowledge it can mobilise from within itself is acknowledged as being the appropriate beacon to guide local development (within the constraints of higher-level policy). Furthermore, it is enacted as a collective that cares. Shared caring and affective relations with place are fundamental elements (Bradley, 2017a), whereas in the planning system in general such affective relations are dismissed as irrelevant. Additionally, it is enacted as having the capacities necessary to perform the complex task of producing a Development Plan underpinned by that knowledge and care (including the capacity to resolve internal disputes that they may engender). It is therefore a very specific, and novel, instantiation of 'community', with a specific orientation to the territory which establishes its boundaries, which in turn will have effects on relations within that neighbourhood. I am not seeking here to define 'community' (or 'neighbourhood') in advance, but rather to see how it gets performed in these specific enactments of Neighbourhood Planning, as a new actor with the capacity to have significant effects.

Government policy and publicity tends to imply that this actor incorporates all the residents of the Plan area (setting aside the issue of how the Plan area is determined). In theory, they are all entitled to contribute to the Plan, and they are all entitled to vote in the final referendum. They are all in principle members of the new polity. But in practice, of course, not everyone in the area will be involved, and those who are

involved will be so to different degrees. A relatively small group actively do the work of producing the Plan. In both of my case studies, as described in Chapter 4, these are the NPGs. They, not the neighbourhood at large, are the ones that take up the newly legislated powers. They are also a significant new actor. Bradley, drawing on Della Porta, describes these two actors respectively as the association - the NPG - and the assembly – the neighbourhood, “*the imagined constituency, the subject of representative claims and a space of counter-identities*” (Bradley, 2018b: 11).

In Government discourse, these two actors are often conflated. However, while they are clearly quite different, they are mutually dependent: the specific instantiation of community that is ‘the neighbourhood’ could not exist without an NPG actively developing a Neighbourhood Plan, and the NPG could not exist without the instantiation of ‘the neighbourhood’ as a new polity. The creation of these two new actors creates new boundaries, alignments, inclusions and exclusions. They emerge together and stabilise each other. The NPG effectively becomes the spokesperson for the neighbourhood (Callon, 1999), and its legitimacy to act depends on the relations between the two.

5.4 Legitimacy, identity, and relationality

Several authors have interrogated this relationship between NPGs and their neighbourhoods in terms of their democratic accountability and legitimacy. Sturzaker and Gordon (2017) analyse the tensions between the different claims to legitimacy of the different actors in the Neighbourhood Planning process, arising from the sources of their claims: direct democratic voting; direct citizen participation; and formal or

informal representation. Davoudi and Cowie (2013) discuss the democratic legitimacy of neighbourhood forums, contrasting them with Parish Councils, which formally represent their communities as democratically elected bodies. But they do not engage with the issue that in many cases, including both of my case studies, while the Parish Council retains formal ownership of the Plans, it is not the Parish Council itself which takes on the powers of Neighbourhood Planning, but a separate NPG which is not formally representative and which can forge a very distinct identity and outlook from their 'parent' Parish Council. This dynamic is succinctly illustrated by the email sent by Wroston NPG to their LPA, in response to a consultation on a methodology for determining which settlements should be a focus for growth, which began:

“I write on behalf of the Wroston Neighbourhood Planning Group. Whilst we are a sub-committee of the Parish Council our views are not necessarily theirs. I understand that the Parish Council will be responding separately.”

(17.07.17)

Much of the discussion on the ways in which neighbourhood forums may (or may not) represent their communities in a variety of informal ways therefore also applies to these NPGs. Many authors (e.g. Gallent and Robinson, 2013; Tewdwr-Jones, 1998) have also pointed to shortcomings in the nominal representativeness of Parish Councils, adding to the need for NPGs to enact other modes of legitimation. Some have argued that NPGs are little more than new vehicles to legitimise the imposition of externally-decided objectives on local communities (Haughton and Allmendinger, 2013), while others suggest they will empower the already relatively privileged within communities (e.g. Wills, 2016). Parker and colleagues have pointed to the powerful

influences that external actors such as Local Authorities, consultants, and independent Examiners have over the process, and the limiting effect this may have on neighbourhood ownership of Plans (Parker et al., 2014, 2015, 2016). Bradley (2015: 98) has analysed the “*unsettled accommodation*” between participatory, representative, and market models of democracy in Neighbourhood Planning. Connelly (2010), analysing analogous situations, concluded that the defining characteristic of new, localist forms of governance such as that seen in Neighbourhood Planning is their hybridity in drawing on different sources of representative legitimacy. These different sources are in tension and combine only uneasily, and require new norms of evaluation to understand the nature of their representativeness. In the absence of (or alongside) formal democratic representation, new forms of ‘situated legitimacy’ are required (Connelly et al., 2006; Leino and Peltomaa, 2012).

However, all these authors seem to consider the identities of the NPG and the wider neighbourhood to be relatively singular, fixed and stable. Adopting an STS sensibility offers an understanding of identities as fluid and temporary, rather than stable and permanent, multiple and often non-coherent, rather than singular and unitary, relational, rather than atomistic, and continually in the process of being made, rather than simply existing (Law, 2008a, 2008b; Mol, 2002). In the rest of this chapter I examine the ways in the NPGs are enacted as legitimate spokespeople for their neighbourhoods through the performance of multiple identities, drawing attention to “*the often overlooked politics of citizen-subject formation in planning practice*” (Inch, 2015: 405). I suggest that specific identities are able to draw on certain specific sources of authority, each making a crucial contribution to the NPGs’ situated legitimacy.

5.5 The multiple identities of Neighbourhood Planning Groups

The identity of the NPG is defined primarily in relation to the neighbourhood. However, in neither case study was this relation singular or unified. Both NPGs performed the same three strikingly different identities in relation to their neighbourhoods; identities which implied ways of being in the world that were often in tension. These enactments of identities were evident across a wide range of situations: in the NPGs' own meetings, in casual conversations, in meetings with other actors, and at public consultation events; in the inscriptions the NPGs produced – draft Plans, minutes, emails, publicity, evidence documents, etc.; and in the inscriptions and discourses of other actors (e.g. national and local Government, Neighbourhood Planning support organisations, consultants, publics). They applied both to the NPG as a whole, and to sub-sets of it, e.g. small groups working on specific elements of the Plan or meeting with external actors: the collective identity did not require the entire collective to be present in order to be enacted. Broadly speaking, these identities could be defined as being:

- **In** the neighbourhood: socially, affectively and materially embedded in the neighbourhood; embodied and indivisibly entangled in a dense mesh-work of sociomaterial relations;
- **Of** the neighbourhood: arising out of the neighbourhood in order to be able to face it and engage with it reflexively on the one hand, and to represent it, to mediate between it and other actors on the other; and

- **Apart from** the neighbourhood: separate, different and detached from the neighbourhood, with experiences and knowledge that are distinct from, and sometimes in conflict with, the wider neighbourhood.

As I became increasingly aware of these identity performances, I observed that each one relied on and enacted different material relations and types of knowledge. My subsequent analysis suggested that each one afforded a different source of legitimacy. Public decision-making requires an “*accommodation of competing forms of moral, political and epistemological authority*”, which, due to tensions between them, is “*often partial*” (Chilvers and Kearnes, 2016: 1). The performance of these different identities enabled the NPGs strike the difficult balances required between expert knowledge, popular representation, and the right to be involved in decision-making. I shall refer back to this three-fold framework throughout the chapter. I show that it was necessary for the NPGs to make all three identities hang together somehow. But due to the tensions between them - the identities ‘in’ and ‘apart from’ the neighbourhood could be seen as each other’s constitutive other (Hall, 1996) - it was also necessary to maintain them as separate and distinct. In the following sections I explore these identities as manifest phenomena, following the practices and speech of the groups themselves.

5.5.1 In the neighbourhood

“The meeting finishes early, so I join Simon and Elliot for a pint in the Anvil & Hammer down the road. Conversation drifts and meanders, but what comes

out most strongly is the deep sense of connectedness that both have with the village, physically and socially. They discuss in great detail who lived in which (named) houses and when, prompted by discussing when Elliot had come to the village; and this leads them in and out of other snatches of village life and times and stories: the Millennium New Year's Eve and other NYEs; the different landlords at the pub and their quirks; buildings and the works done to them to repair, restore, replace, and extend; specific detailed walks that would take them by particular trees, hedges, bits of rivers, and views; all of which make up shared reference points and which both provide and enable the construction of shared meanings. They are deeply embedded here, although both are relative newcomers compared to people like Owen, Tom and Anne who have lived here all their lives (Elliot arrived in 1998). Their lives, families, friends and identities are all deeply entwined with their sense of place.” (Fieldnotes, Wroston, 14.05.15)

As Brownill notes, “[t]he Government’s perception of Neighbourhood Planning is based on a spatial imaginary that sees the neighbourhood as homogenous, persuadable and consensual” (2017: 34). There is no sense that either the neighbourhood might be fragmented, or that it is not the neighbourhood *en masse* who will take up these powers. In this imaginary, the people doing the planning synecdochically *are* the neighbourhood: i.e. they are the part standing in unproblematically for the whole, they *are* the people who know and care about the place.

While this collective identity is the most prominent in Governmental discourse about Neighbourhood Planning, it was seldom present in the ‘formal’ discourse of the NPGs themselves, e.g. in minutes, evidence documents, meetings with LPA officers etc. Indeed, as I explore in more depth in Chapter 6, NPG members often took care in such situations to conceal any traces of their own subjectivity and material experience, to avoid any suggestion that they could speak as/for the neighbourhood as a whole. But despite the relative absence of this identity from their formal discourse, it was constantly present around the edges, alongside, beneath and beyond this discourse, flavouring their everyday, apparently insignificant actions, conversations and decisions, the things that they do not (have to) think about, write down, or justify: implicit and taken-for-granted. The fieldnote extract above gestures towards this kind of shared spatial imaginary: the “*socially held assemblages of stories, images, memories and experiences of places*” (Davoudi, 2018: 101) that embeds and is embedded in their Neighbourhood Planning.

In both sites, the ‘chatter’ in and around the meetings (before, after, and as explanation or digression while they are going on) revealed the in-depth knowledge of people and place that the groups shared. It generated a powerful sense of being enmeshed in these neighbourhoods, with personal identities bound up with social, affective and material ties. Individual instances often seemed, to group members themselves, somewhat trivial or difficult to precisely articulate or source. This partially explains why they tended not to be formally recorded, but these countless concrete and lived connections informed and permeated everything the NPGs did.

A few vignettes from my fieldnotes can help to illustrate this. At one Wroston NPG meeting, Susan showed a YouTube video about erosion in the river that runs through the village, provoking a long discussion about the changes they had all personally seen in the course and flow of the river over the years, connected to their practices of walking, driving, cycling, fishing, gardening and more. The observation of these changes anchored these practices in place and time. In another meeting, Tom and Owen brought up ‘the’ train crash of 1876, and the time when the village briefly had its own train stop, and jumped from there into tales of how their parents and grandparents and aunts and uncles used to get around, and the links between the nearby villages - who used to work and shop and go to school where and how, and how these patterns had changed over time to arrive at the present configurations. When discussing which addresses to send business surveys to, Anne asked for suggestions of local businesses and the NPG collectively reeled off a long list, contributed to by every member of the group, of the many ‘invisible’ ones (e.g. sole traders working from home) as well as the few obvious ones.

In December 2015, Simon, Elliot and Ray drove Scott, their consultant, around the village to ‘re-familiarise’ him with the place in all its concreteness. The NPG had agreed at the previous meeting that some of the things that Scott had been saying and suggesting for policy inclusion were surprising given the materiality of the village that they were all so familiar with – its layout, location, relation to the surrounding countryside, architectural styles and materials, services and facilities etc. They felt that his rather generic statements didn’t reflect the particular specificity of the village: as Laura put it, “*it doesn’t sound like he’s talking about Wroston, y’know, specifically about Wroston*” (03.12.15). And as Anne said over coffee one morning, after hinting

at long-standing personal and political feuds and disagreements in the village and between NPG members, “*But it’s good, it’s like Cheers, isn’t it, the place where everybody knows your name, it’s nice.*” (29.04.15).

Similar accounts of shared experiential knowledge saturated my encounters with the NPG in Oakley. Everyone knew when the ‘hanky tree’, with its distinctive blooms, came into flower. Everyone knew, too, of the problems that Oakley experienced with drainage and flooding. It wasn’t particularly liable to coastal or fluvial flooding, and so was considered by the council and the Environment Agency to be largely an area of low flood risk. But discussions at meetings frequently revolved around the problems caused by the area’s sloping topography and limestone geology, combined with the impermeable barrier of the railway line at the bottom of the hill. This combination of materialities leads to sudden and powerful surface water flows (as Andrew often repeated, “*it’s not so much flooding, as the damage that moving water can do*”) and to springs appearing apparently out of nowhere. Jane told a story about discovering one that had appeared in the study room of the library overnight, filling the room six inches deep with water. Everyone had watery stories to tell: very specifically tied to the materiality of the area, and repeatedly ignored by developers and decision-makers.

There were disagreements in the NPG about precisely how to encapsulate the character of Oakley, and the group had several focused discussions attempting to do this in summer 2015. Although they could agree on the most important and relevant features of the town, they struggled to articulate satisfactory ways to characterise them to get across the atmospheres, meanings and sense of place that were driving them – and these disagreements became quite passionate. Despite this, they did agree that

they as a community had a much stronger sense of what mattered and why than decision-takers at the council, which they perceived as remote and ill-informed. They also agreed that one defining characteristic were the many green and open spaces dotted throughout the town. The first meeting of the three members of the green spaces sub-group was able to list over 70 of these offhand, indicating a remarkable depth of knowledge.

Problems with traffic and parking were another universally agreed-upon phenomenon in Oakley. The NPG brought a sophisticated, multi-dimensional understanding of the problems to their frequent discussions on this theme, drawing on many years' worth of their own encounters and conversations to evoke the perspectives of tourists on foot and on bikes, in cars and with caravans; residents of the roads in question; parents of young children; resident pedestrians and cyclists; older people; disabled people; resident drivers; lorry drivers; and through-traffic drivers. The problems that are caused in the town had not, they believed, been adequately surveyed, because surveys either do not pick up or discount 'abnormal' events – such as long hold-ups caused by lorries and/or caravans meeting each other on narrow roads and having to reverse long distances. But these 'abnormal' events were, for the NPG, a part of the normal experience of living in Oakley.

These stories were woven into an ongoing narrative of neighbourhood. They combined personal experience with stories of chance encounters, informal exchanges, and chatter in community groups. These were not 'consultation', just conversations, and obviously they only engaged specific social circles. However, both neighbourhoods had been subject to extensive consultation in recent years for various

plans and initiatives. This led Oakley's NPG to talk of consultation fatigue – a generalised reluctance to engage with yet another process, when there was little evidence of previous engagement having effects. But it also led to both groups feeling that they had a sense of the mood of the neighbourhood – not from a detailed re-reading of consultation responses, but from a generalised incorporation of what they felt were the main concerns into their own thinking.

This sense of the NPG synecdochically standing in for the neighbourhood was also drawn on by the consultants. For example, when the consultant Andrea said to the Oakley NPG, "*we want to find out exactly what you want for Oakley*" (03.03.15), "*you*" stands in for both the collective in the room with her, and the neighbourhood at large. This was reinforced over time, as Andrea repeatedly said, starting from 19.05.15, that "*now that we know what the community wants*", the Plan will be based on "*what the community wants*" – despite there having been no further consultation in the intervening period. This identity was also manifest in the sheer commitment of time, effort and emotion that the NPGs invested in the project. They spent hours – sometimes many hours - of almost every week for more than three years in the process of developing these Plans, which speaks to a very particular attachment and care for the neighbourhood. A sense emerged of the NPG being deeply embedded within and multiply connected to this sociomaterial neighbourhood.

These attachments and entanglements were not understood or presented as evidence, more as background noise or context from which the groups attempt to extract, or define, a signal. But this casually intimate knowledge of the neighbourhood, which could only arise from ongoing practices and experiences in place, was partly definitive

of what they were as a collective. This identity was performed most clearly when the NPGs were in closed discussions amongst themselves, or when they were in meetings with their consultants. When inhabiting this identity, the collectives spoke *as* the neighbourhood: *we* think, *we* want, *we* know, with no distinction between NPG and neighbourhood. Their identity derives from their positioning as an indivisible part of the lived neighbourhood, as these fieldnote extracts illustrate:

Ray: *“As far as Hobson’s Farm is concerned, we as a village, we as a group, what sort of things do we think ought to be being considered for that?”*

(Wroston NPG meeting, 31.03.16)

Robert: *“I think it’s for the people of Oakley, that is the Neighbourhood Plan steering group I think it’s for the people of Oakley to put it to the council: these are the ideas we would like.”* (Oakley NPG meeting, 05.01.16)

This synecdochical identity broadly maps onto the moral dimension of the threefold matrix of authority (moral, political and epistemological) referred to above.

Neighbourhood Planning is a tool for people who are entangled in their neighbourhoods, who have a deep and intimate knowledge of and care for it, which has grown out of their own lived experience. It is precisely by virtue of being affected, being moved by the sociomaterial neighbourhood and what happens to it, that gives a collective the moral authority to take up the powers of Neighbourhood Planning. This extends beyond Bradley’s description of representation based on a *“discourse of neighbourliness ... conjured through face-to-face contact, regular encounters, routine interactions and local knowledge”* (2015: 106), into material and affective

embodiment. The knowledge that is expressed by this identity comes from direct lived experience and relations of social and material entanglement and immersion. It connects with Lorraine Code's critique of the epistemological tradition that "*knowledge properly achieved must be objective*" (2015: 1), in which she argues that knowing effectively can – and in some cases must - be bound up in affective, caring material relations. It is an implicit repudiation of the dominant understanding that to participate in decision-making one must be free, at least temporarily, from the material entanglements of life: that only such a disentanglement enables one to become a public rather than a private actor, to engage in the public sphere, the realm of mind rather than body, of objective knowledge rather than subjective care, of rational discourse rather than emotional attachment (Calhoun, 1992; Marres and Lezaun, 2011). Affect and care tend to be positioned in rhetorical opposition to knowledge. However, this dichotomy is problematised in the explicit conjunction of knowing and caring in official discourse about Neighbourhood Planning. It is further troubled by this enactment of identity done through Neighbourhood Planning, and of Neighbourhood Planning as done through this identity.

5.5.2 Of the neighbourhood

"Community engagement is ... a key part of any NP. The final vision, aims and objectives need not just to reflect group views, but the views of the community so it is essential that they have a clear chance to help shape them. DH said views from previous surveys (e.g. the Parish Plan) may help provide a starting point – the group agreed. CS said that it is important that aims and objectives don't come 'top-down' and can be kept under review while they firm up – the

group agreed. A working outline of potential objectives need to be determined asap so that the group can consider, in the light of this, how best to debate them with residents... This is a starting point only, and will be likely to change over time and as more views and information are collected.” (Minutes of Wroston NPG meeting, 11.09.14)

In this identity, the NPG is enacted as arising out of the neighbourhood in order to be able to face it and reflexively engage with it on the one hand, and to represent it, to mediate between it and other actors on the other. They gain the knowledge which they are then able to represent by making use of what may broadly be described as technologies of participation (Chilvers and Kearnes, 2016) (building on previous descriptions of technologies of ‘citizenship’ (Inch, 2015), ‘community’ (Rose, 1999), ‘elicitation’ (Lezaun and Soneryd, 2007) and ‘democracy’ (Laurent, 2011)). These technologies are the combination of material devices, specialist knowledge and social practices that serve to elicit information from communities, citizens and publics, but also to productively define and organise how those communities, citizens and publics are constituted. In this case, they include the array of surveys, templates, guidance, advice, workshops, newsletters, websites, roadmaps, feedback forms, activities, assessments etc. made available to NPGs by a variety of support agencies. These tend to focus on quantification and measurement, and gathering views and information from the community in ways that can be quickly and easily presented as evidence: they shape community engagement in particular ways. Stephanie, regretting the approach they took with the Oakley Community-Led Plan, reported on 29.03.17 that

“the big mistake we made was asking for people’s comments. You can’t quantify comments. With a tick-box exercise you can easily set out what people have told you, but we had reams of people’s thoughts ... it really held things up”.

They then sought to avoid similar hold-ups with their consultations on the Neighbourhood Plan. Performing this identity, NPGs remain connected to the neighbourhood they consult and for whom they speak. However, the use of technologies of participation distances them from their own affectedness and material experience and renders their representations apparently disinterested and independent, enabling them to represent the experience of others in simplified, codified forms and to speak not as the neighbourhood, but for the neighbourhood (Potter, 1996).

The excerpt from minutes above speaks to Wroston NPG’s commitment to deep and wide engagement, also illustrated by the care they took in designing, delivering and collecting surveys in February – May 2015, in order to ensure that as many people as possible would complete and return them. The group agreed to hand-deliver surveys to every home in the parish – and where possible talk to the householders, not just post the surveys – including the 29 homes on ‘the fell’, some many miles from the village. They also arranged survey collection times with each household along with easy alternative methods (e.g. at sealed collection boxes in the post office), as well as scripting the survey to maximise responses.

The response rate to their Housing Needs Survey was over 66%. In March of 2017, the city council employed consultants to conduct a district wide housing needs survey. They anticipated returns of around 20%, indicating the scope for Neighbourhood Planning to engage much more widely with their neighbourhoods than larger-scale initiatives.

Scott, the NPG's consultant, suggested (on 19.02.15) that the people knocking on doors should have a script, and perhaps ID badges and high-viz jackets. This idea was roundly mocked by the steering group – but similar ideas were treated seriously, and indeed acted on, in Oakley, indicating some of the differences between the two locations, amongst other things in terms of the relationship between the NPG and the neighbourhood, and what rituals of legitimacy might function in each place. In Oakley, the visible trappings of professionalism were perceived as, generally speaking, helpful to assert legitimacy: marked out as distinct from the community at large, while still belonging to it. In Wroston, however, the ways in which that would distance members from the community was seen as detracting from their legitimacy as it would detract from their identity as being a part of the neighbourhood, indicating how the authority conferred by these different identities and their material performances might mobilise differently in different circumstances.

Oakley NPG also demonstrated commitment to widespread consultation, recognising that there were groups in the neighbourhood that were less likely to engage – and that they were not 'descriptively' representative of (Davoudi and Cowie, 2013) – that they needed to reach out to. The first few meetings I attended were focused on getting 'the community' to vote in favour of their draft vision and objectives. As well as

widespread general publicity (e.g. posters and banners about town, an insert and full colour double-page spread in the local paper, the Town Council's website and Facebook page), they also made concerted efforts to contact specific groups – the elderly, disabled people, young parents, late teenagers, and businesses - through letters, emails and face-to-face visits, as well as running pop-up stands in the town centre and at the train station. At the NPG meeting on 21.07.15 Robert said of the stands that *“We got a really good response doing that, we picked up a lot of different people”*, and as Martin insisted later that meeting, to no disagreement, *“the Neighbourhood Plan has to include everyone”*. Consultants in both sites also emphasised this aspect of their identity, repeating phrases such as: *“There has to be a justification, there has to be a mandate from the community”* (Andrea, 31.03.15).

Members of both groups also made frequent reference to not exceeding their remit or going beyond what the neighbourhood had already mandated them to do. On 05.03.15, for example, Anne said (in relation to their draft Vision) *“It’s very contentious We’ve got nothing but our personal opinions at this point in time, I’d rather not put it in yet, we can add it after the opinion survey.”* In the same meeting, Tom said *“Do we need more houses, do we want to attract more people to Wroston? ... I want to know exactly what people in the village want, that’s why I want this survey out ASAP.”* The theme was reprised at the next meeting (19.03.15, with Elliot saying *“The Plan’s got to be done by the village, not just by a group of people”*), and repeatedly throughout the Plan’s development. Similar concerns were echoed in Oakley, e.g. on 21.04.15, while the NPG were reporting back about work that its sub-groups had been doing on gathering evidence and developing potential solutions, I noted *“the recurrent theme*

throughout the meeting is that we have to test this [each of the 3 pieces of work] with the public NOW – before drafting policies.”

Both NPGs, for the first year, made ongoing efforts to communicate with their neighbourhoods through regular articles in the local papers, as well as publishing agendas and meeting minutes online. On 16.04.15, one of several times, the Wroston group debated for some time how open their meetings were in practice, and how they could and should publicise them to ensure that they were open to input and that they could enable involvement from anyone who wanted. The Oakley NPG also discussed this subject several times, and on 05.05.15 made specific plans to recruit someone to the group from an outlying part of the town – ostensibly a separate settlement – that was not currently represented. But they continued to maintain a clear line at this point between people being able to come to meetings and to joining the group.

In this identity, there is not a hard boundary between inside (the NPG) and outside (the neighbourhood); the soft boundary is permeable and easy to cross; and the NPG remains connected to the neighbourhood who they are consulting and for whom they are speaking – but there is a boundary. The NPGs distance themselves from their own embodied experience and knowledge in order to access those of the wider neighbourhood. This requires specific forms of engagement and can be represented in particular ways. They explicitly recognise that their claims to know the neighbourhood need mediation via technologies of participation, that they cannot unproblematically stand in for the wider neighbourhood. In this identity, the NPGs speak in terms of “*they*”, repeatedly emphasising the importance of hearing what *they*

want before *we* can make any decisions; of keeping *them* engaged, of keeping *them* on board, of taking *them* with *us*, of making sure it's *their* Plan.

This identity maps broadly onto the *political* element of Chilvers and Kearnes' three-part model of legitimacy. Despite being initiated by Town/Parish Councils, both NPGs had developed their own independent identities and operated as more-or-less autonomous bodies, and could thus only rely to a very limited extent on the formal democratic legitimacy of those Councils. Both showed a keen awareness that their claim to represent the neighbourhood rested on their ability to position themselves as having striven to solicit and act on the views of as wide and inclusive a cross-section of the neighbourhood as possible, through technologies of participation. These technologies were assumed by the NPGs, their consultants, the LPAs, etc. to provide a reliable and replicable way of establishing the views of the neighbourhood. They also served to distance the NPGs from their own affective and material entanglements: their identity as being affectively and materially embedded in and entangled with the neighbourhood conflicted with their perceived capacity to fairly and impartially represent the cares and concerns of the neighbourhood at large.

5.5.3 Apart from the neighbourhood

“Sarah reports back for her and Paula, Paula occasionally interjects. They both seem very keen on the Shared Space concept – quite a radical option, and they show awareness that it will be resisted by the community, but they see it as the best way of achieving what the community says it wants ... Sarah says ‘I think Oakley people would be totally against it, they won’t like a big change

like that'. John argues that the NPG's role is to open people's minds to possibilities, look beyond 'no change' ... there is some discussion of their potentially conflicting roles as leaders/changers of public opinion versus 'channellers' of it. No real resolution, but they agree that whatever they finally come up with, they have to have the community behind them, regardless of where ideas originated." (Fieldnotes, Oakley, 21.04.15)

In this third identity, the NPGs are enacted as different to and separate from the neighbourhood, in some instances even adopting positions that they see as conflicting with it.

This identity is framed as being a result of the collective work and experiences of the NPGs. In some instances, it is tacitly understood as an inevitable part of the process: the practices of Plan preparation require them to “*adopt professional methodologies*” and “*adapt ... an expert discourse*” (Bradley, 2018: 31, 38) that enable them to speak for the facts of the material world. The NPGs become ‘lay-experts’, necessarily distanced from the wider neighbourhood. However, in other instances, it can also be understood as a failure to perform the other two identities, to either embody the neighbourhood and ‘be one of them’ or to ‘keep them on board’.

This manifested itself in several ways. For example, the fieldnote above records a subgroup of the Oakley NPG reporting back after researching traffic problems in the town centre. They concluded that the most effective solution would be to redesign a specific area as a ‘shared space’ – removing pavements, curbs, road-markings etc. and forcing pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles to engage more actively with each other and with the

street scene. Recognising this was beyond their planning remit, the NPG deliberated it as a ‘community aspiration’. After considerable discussion and further research, they decided that although they thought the scheme would work, it would be roundly rejected by the neighbourhood more broadly.

At the same meeting, on a different subject (a derelict public building being brought back to its original use), Andrew noted that “*That is still something that people emotively want, and we need to be ready for that*”, marking a clear distinction between ‘the people’ (who want something that they can’t realistically have), and the NPG (who understand and accept that). Similarly, on 05.01.16, when Martin was reporting back on feedback on his work on developing walking and cycling options, I noted

“Much laughter as the first few [feedback forms] ask for no cycling on the prom, where the NPG are promoting shared foot/cycle paths. He concludes wryly that ‘I think that’s gonna say that we need a bit of, uh, management of community expectations...’”

When the NPG were preparing the event from which this feedback came, it was envisaged as consultation on near complete draft policies. However, following a series of ‘mini-consultations’ on housing design they rapidly changed its nature to more of an information-giving event, as they realised that a gap had opened between their understanding of the Plan and the neighbourhood’s in general. On 01.09.15 I noted that they had

“a very long discussion involving the whole group about where the group sit in relation to ‘the community’ – a recognition that many, if not most people don’t know what they’re doing or who they are, what an NP is in general or what this one in particular can and intends to do, and what they can do to address that.”

On 22.09.15 they again discussed concerns about people “*resisting the Plan*” (Mary) and that this event might be “*your last chance to get people on board*” (Andrea). They decided that the event should emphasise what the Plan could legally and technically do, and highlight the broad areas that it tackled. They decided to seek broad feedback rather than consult on specific policies, fearing that the differences between their and the neighbourhood’s understandings of the remit and purpose of the Plan were too wide.

Such observations about the distance and separation between NPG and neighbourhood were not new, they had been present from the outset, as expressed by Stephanie on 17.03.15:

“Actually, we haven’t asked the public yet ... it’s important that we put together some creative and plausible ideas that people can agree with ... the more radical we are, the more likely it is that people will reject them, and we’ll lose the whole lot”

The LPA in which Wroston is located was in the process of producing a new version of its own Local Plan while Wroston were producing their Neighbourhood Plan. The

LPA decided to leave white spaces on their own Proposals Map in areas where Neighbourhood Plans were being prepared. This effectively ceded control of what happened in Neighbourhood Plan Areas to the respective NPGs, publicly enacting them as having the requisite skills and knowledge to produce a Development Plan, in stark contrast to the status accorded to the neighbourhood at large (or any other instantiation of community). Formal and informal feedback at a Wroston public consultation event in March 2017 also reflected the extent to which the neighbourhood identified the expertise built up by the NPG, epitomised by comments on anonymous feedback forms such as: *“Very impressed with the extent and quality of work undertaken by the group. Very professional – well done!”*

In this identity, the NPGs are constructed as being lay-experts, credited with understanding systems and processes that others do not, able to see matters of fact for what they are, while the wider neighbourhood is swayed by opinion and subjectivity. The wider neighbourhood is often represented using a deficit model (Wynne, 1993): if they were only in possession of the information and applied the rational approach that the NPG did, they would see things differently. This identity is associated more with abstract space than relational place (Massey and Thrift, 2003; Agnew, 2011), and maps broadly onto the epistemological element of the threefold matrix of authority that Chilvers and Kearnes draw attention to. Their legitimacy to act derives from their privileged access to specialised knowledge and know-how.

This identity is, like the previous one, enabled through the use of particular technologies, techniques and practices that can ostensibly detach the NPG from their subjectivity and material entanglements in order to deal with unsullied objective

evidence. This is necessary to achieve the unmarked position of the knowing subject, the view from nowhere (Haraway, 1988), to establish themselves as part of the culture of no culture (Traweek, 1988), vital to achieving credibility in a positivist planning system. The boundary here between NPG and neighbourhood is hard and clear. 'We' (the NPG) are separate from 'them' (the neighbourhood) and 'it' (the neighbourhood), so 'we' can see the neighbourhood clearly. Even as 'we' recognise the need to attempt to bridge this (social) gap to connect with 'them', 'we' (and other actors) also recognise that 'we' are now essentially different to 'them'.

5.5.4 Tensions between identities

Clear conflicts begin to emerge with the previously described identities: the authority to act on the grounds of expertise or specialist knowledge that is only available to those who are by definition *apart from* the neighbourhood sits uneasily with the authority to act on the basis of representing the views of *one's own* neighbourhood, and even more so with being an affectively and materially entangled *synecdoche* for the neighbourhood. The NPGs achieve their mandate to act not through electoral representation, but through a reliance on the different forms of legitimacy that are enacted through these different identities, that therefore must be somehow held together despite the tensions pulling them apart.

For example, in Wroston, the early part of Plan development up to mid-2015 was largely taken up with community consultation. But following this, there was very little formal engagement outside the NPG, as they became immersed in the technical processes of structuring the Plan, assessing potential development sites, and writing

policies. These processes were more difficult and time consuming than had been anticipated, and the group (particularly Simon, the Chair), was reluctant to ‘go back to the community’ until there were concrete results to share. Even one-way communication via the local paper tailed off as the group’s attention became focused on more technical matters.

The group discussed this growing gap with increasing frequency through 2016, with comments such as “*well, I agree wholeheartedly that we should have been putting articles in the local paper, we’ve been remiss...because we’ve not had a lot to report to be honest...*” (Simon, 07.07.16) becoming more and more common. On 18.08.16 I recorded that:

“Simon and Barbara discuss whether to send the site assessments, once complete, to the planners again or to get opinions from the village. Barbara pushing hard again for more and earlier village involvement, Simon and others more keen to get the technical input from the planners first”.

This debate remained unresolved for months as the site assessment work continued. Barbara’s argument was not just that they needed the views of the neighbourhood, but that they needed to be seen as acting with them (in and of the neighbourhood), not apart from or against them. At the same meeting, Barbara emphasised that: “*there’s a danger in leaving too big a gap between going to the planners and going to the village...if it gets out that sites have been sent to the planners, but not to the village...*” – my notes record that “*she leaves the threat hanging tangibly in the air*”.

Tensions reached a crisis point on 17.11.16. Barbara was again advocating a community event as soon as possible. She felt that the NPG had become too autonomous, separated from both the Parish Council and the neighbourhood, risking its legitimacy. The NPG agreed that this was a problem. But Simon in particular continued to maintain that they should wait until they had a technically-credible set of site assessments before engaging more widely. The disagreement continued, tempers got short, voices were raised, heels were dug in, debate became argument and the group was eventually drawn into a shouting match. One member stormed out, barking “*I’m not taking this!*” after he and another member repeatedly, and with increasing frustration, tried to shout each other down. The situation was finally calmed, with others trying to placate the more agitated members, and a compromise was agreed (to draft a detailed timetable for the remainder of the project for the group to discuss and agree at the next meeting, including engagement with the parish council and the neighbourhood).

This episode illustrates the tensions between the different identities that the NPGs had to adopt. Everyone in the NPG recognised the need for all the actions discussed to be done – to demonstrate technical competence and credibility with experts as well as securing widespread popular support. But while some of the NPG were strongly performing the primacy of the expert identity, being apart from the neighbourhood, others were strongly performing the primacy of the representative identity, being of the neighbourhood.

5.6 The material entanglement of identity and legitimacy

Enacting each of these identities plays a crucial role in the ordering of sociomaterial relations: different, specific relations are performed by each identity, and in turn each identity is bound up with specific materials and practices and is thereby dependent on particular more-than-human networks (Barad, 2003; Latour, 2005). This enables each to produce different forms of knowledge and to generate different forms of representative legitimacy.

In the first, the NPG and its members are enacted as being socially and materially entangled, legitimised by their direct bodily experiences of and encounters with the human and non-human elements of the neighbourhood, and the knowledge and affects (particularly care for place) generated by these encounters. They are wholly part of the neighbourhood assemblage. In the second, they are enacted as partially disentangled through the use of technologies of participation; as able to encounter the materiality and affectedness of others' experience and translate it into a form legible to external actors. They straddle the boundaries of the assemblage. In the third, they are enacted as wholly disentangled, able to encounter the materiality of the world through practices, technologies and inscriptions. This technological mediation distances the knowing subjects from the neighbourhood, enabling a version of the "*god trick of seeing everything from nowhere*" (Haraway, 1988: 581); of viewing objective facts from a remote Archimedean point in stark contrast to the messy, immersive encounters of the first identity. They are detached from the neighbourhood assemblage, able to view it from a distance. These three positionings are illustrated in Table 1:

Identity	Material relations	Type of knowledge	Represents neighbourhood as	Type of legitimacy	Visual metaphor
In the neighbourhood	Embedded, embodied, entangled, lived	Direct first-hand experience, informal social contact	Synecdoche	Moral	
Of the neighbourhood	Technologically mediated, engaged but distinct	Formally synthesised & codified second-hand experiences	Mediator	Political	
Apart from the neighbourhood	Technologically mediated, detached, distanced	Technical, specialised, 'objective', 'factual'	Expert	Epistemological	

Table 1: The multiple identities of Neighbourhood Planners

The NPGs are thus hybrid, multiple entities, relying for their legitimacy on their capacity to enact all sides of a variety of interconnected oppositions: to be at once entangled, partially engaged and distant; experts, lay people, and mediators between the two; and servants, peers, leaders and challengers of the neighbourhood. They must mobilise local experiential knowledge and abstract technical evidence, engaging local aspirations and strategic priorities. The neighbourhood may well have “*emerged as a precocious new actor in the contested production of space*” (Bradley et al., 2017: 72), but it is also a fragile one, highly vulnerable to destabilisation. The successful enactment of place-plus-community as ‘neighbourhood’ relies on an NPG that is able to translate itself through each of these obligatory passage points (Callon, 1999) and hold these identities-in-tension together while also keeping them sufficiently apart. However, this holding-together can be achieved in many ways, with different balances between the manifestations of the different identities. This is important because the neighbourhoods that are represented and enacted by each identity are quite different – the knowledge practices of different identities “*make places show up differently, so that they might be worked with differently*” (Massey and Thrift, 2003: 286). The

balance between identities-in-tension determines which versions of neighbourhood get represented, and thus get planned for, as I discuss in the following chapters.

5.7 Conclusion

Neighbourhood Planning is framed by its promoters as devolving power to pre-existing, well-defined communities. I have problematised this characterisation by claiming that Neighbourhood Planning is performative. It does not merely give powers to an already-existing community, but produces two new actors, the neighbourhood and the NPG: mutually dependent sociomaterial assemblages brought into being through particular practices which define them (Brownill, 2017a). In these case studies the NPGs were enacted in three distinct but fluid identities. I have argued that each of these different identities enabled the NPGs to draw on a different source of legitimacy, and that all of these are necessary to do Neighbourhood Planning successfully. However, these identities are always in tension and sometimes in outright conflict and holding them together requires considerable effort and skill. These different identities not only perform the NPGs' relations with neighbourhood differently, they also perform the neighbourhood differently, making different inclusions and exclusions, different simplifications of an endlessly complex reality (Law and Mol, 2002). Each identity intervenes in the world in a different way, co-producing different knowledges and realities (Moser, 2008). So, it matters in what balance these identities are held together, because this determines which relations and knowledges are made visible and strengthened or weakened. In the following chapter I examine in detail two instances through which the balance between identities produces and is produced by specific forms of evidence.

Chapter 6: Experience, evidence and examination: framing and translating

“...there is no ‘tick box’ list of evidence required for Neighbourhood Planning. Proportionate, robust evidence should support the choices made and the approach taken. The evidence should be drawn upon to explain succinctly the intention and rationale of the policies in the draft Neighbourhood Plan”

(DCLG, 2014a: Paragraph 040 Reference ID: 41-040-20160211)²⁴

“What you’re saying is we need an evidence base, that has power, if it’s evidence no-one can say no to it.”

(Martin, Oakley NPG member, 17.03.15)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is about the use and production of evidence in Neighbourhood Planning. In Chapter 5 I set out three distinct identities that the NPGs enacted, associated with three distinct kinds of knowledge and sources of legitimacy. In this chapter I examine one of the central mechanisms through which these identities are enacted and come to dominate or be suppressed: the translation and inscription of particular types of knowledge into evidence. I outline the requirements on Neighbourhood Plans to be evidence-based, sketch out what is conventionally counted as evidence in the planning

²⁴ Extract from the Government’s Planning Practice Guidance.

system, and then suggest why the kind of evidence produced to support a Neighbourhood Plan might be expected to be more expansive, inclusive and varied. Next, I document two instances of evidence production, one from each of my case studies, exploring how the NPGs interpreted what counts as evidence. I discuss these findings and their implications, analysing how what counts as evidence rests upon assumptions about and enactments of the legitimacy and authority of different kinds of knowledge, which in turn enact particular relations of power, illustrating the performativity of ‘evidence’. I conclude with some speculative comments about the potential for producing more inclusive forms of evidence. These raise issues that I explore further in Chapter 8.

6.2 The role of evidence in Neighbourhood Planning

As detailed in Chapter 2, there is a process that Neighbourhood Planning communities have to go through, focused around a series of legal requirements for becoming established as a Qualifying Body, designating the Neighbourhood Plan Area, consulting on the draft Plan, undergoing independent examination, holding a local referendum, and formally adopting a successful Plan. The requirement that was of most concern to the NPGs I worked with, and the one that was seen as the highest hurdle to get over, was the public examination. This is conducted by an independent expert (‘the Examiner’), who must be satisfied, on the basis of the evidence put before him/her, that the Plan fulfils the four basic conditions. So NPGs need to produce and present evidence to support their policy decisions: like all planning policy, Neighbourhood Plans are required to be evidence-based (Davoudi, 2015).

Specifically, they need to persuade the independent Examiner that their policy choices are adequately justified by the evidence that they present. However, as the extract from the guidance at the start of this chapter makes clear, there is no concrete definition of what that evidence should consist of. At the time my fieldwork started, in early 2015, Neighbourhood Planning was very much a novel, emergent phenomenon. Less than three dozen Plans had made it all the way through to adoption, although well over a thousand communities were in the early stages of the process²⁵. So, as well as a lack of prescription about the type, form and content of evidence, there was little in the way of precedent. Neighbourhood Planning communities, and the experts advising and examining them, were entering uncharted territory: an experimental space appeared to be open for creative approaches to evidence production and presentation²⁶.

As discussed in Chapter 3, there is a tendency for ‘good’ evidence in planning to be associated with the positivist ‘gold standard’ of objective science, apparently purified from any trace of subjectivity or value judgement (Davoudi, 2012; Rydin, 2007). This approach assumes that “*cause and effect can be established between planning problems and planning solutions through the deployment of scientific methods by value-free expert planners*” (Davoudi, 2015: 318). This positivist view of evidence connects with an instrumentally rationalist view of the interface between evidence and

²⁵ <http://www.planningresource.co.uk/article/1212813/map-neighbourhood-plan-applications>, accessed March 2015 (paywall protected). The web page contains a map and table listing, amongst other things, the number of Neighbourhood Plan Areas designated and Plans adopted in each English Local Authority area.

²⁶ Since then further guidance has been produced for both NPGs and examiners (e.g. NPIERS, 2018), but the overall requirement to demonstrate meeting the four basic conditions based on unspecified evidence remains.

policy which “*assumes that the relationship between evidence and policy is unproblematic, linear and direct*” (Davoudi, 2006: 15). Evidence may be produced in response to particular broad areas of policy concern, but in itself it will not be influenced by policy considerations or other subjective influences or be ‘retrofitted’ after the event in order to justify choices that have already been made. Rather, it will be in place first to provide the firm factual bedrock on which policy decisions will be taken (Davies, undated).

However, in practice it is widely recognised that there is a “*mismatch between notions of how the policy process should work and its actual messy, uncertain, unstable and essentially political realities*” (Young et al., 2002: 218). The public narrative of the process does not reflect what happens when planning is being done. As an example of this, I reflect on my own experience as a policy officer for the Campaign to Protect Rural England, attempting to engage with an LPA who were undertaking a review of their Green Belt in 2011-12. I, and other concerned stakeholders, were repeatedly told during the early stages of the process that we could not be involved yet, but that we did not have to worry: the LPA were only gathering evidence. It should not matter to us that we were unable to have an input at this point, because they were only assembling the facts, no decisions were being taken. Once those facts were in place, then there would be an opportunity to debate what the policy response to the facts should be. But once the consultation on possible options was opened, it became clear that there were very few possible responses to the facts presented, and that the only way to achieve an alternative policy response was indeed to challenge the ‘facts’ and how they had been produced. What evidence is produced (what questions are asked, how they are asked, and of what sources) determines the range of policy responses

that are possible, acting to open some options up and foreclosing others. The production of evidence makes some things visible in particular ways and others not visible at all (cf. Stirling, 2008; Wynne, 1996).

Rydin and Natarajan (2016: 2) highlight that in Local Plan-making, “[t]he way that community experience of the environment is conveyed explicitly combines values with knowledge”: the expressed encounter with place is experiential, value-laden, meaningful, and affective. They explain that such knowledge-value hybrids must be reframed into terms consistent with planning policy before they can be considered relevant as evidence for the planning process at that level: translated from experiential knowledge into technical ‘planning speak’. However, such translations are necessarily partial and incomplete, and may betray as much as they convey (Galis and Lee, 2014; Law, 2008a). Affective and practical engagement with the environment is made invisible, gets lost in translation (Law, 2004) – even though this is often what matters most to people, what co-constitutes their identities and their subjective experience of living (Macnaghten and Urry, 2001). People’s situated, lived experience of place is replaced by an abstraction that has been sufficiently ‘purified’ or simplified as to be heard and understood in the terms of planning policy (Law and Mol, 2002).

Producing evidence is necessarily about making translations and simplifications. In an STS analysis, all knowledge is situated, partial, and value-laden, and what counts as knowledge and who counts as knowledgeable are likewise historically and socially contingent and situated (Haraway, 1988; Jasanoff, 2003). From this perspective, attempts to present evidence as ‘just the facts’, is always a misrepresentation, concealing the social commitments and material processes of production embedded in

those claims (Latour, 2005). What is necessary for producing good evidence is therefore not a superficial objectivity that conceals the cuts made in the sociomaterial network to constitute the object of knowledge, but an attempt at transparency as to why those particular cuts, those particular simplifications were made (Strathern, 1996).

Neighbourhood Planning appears to offer an arena in which different simplifications could be mobilised and where experiential knowledges could be worked with differently. It is a new, relatively open, potentially experimental space, with limited prescription or precedent, where care and experiential knowledge are explicitly valued and given as a rationale for the project. Rather than translating or re-framing these hybrid encounters in which knowing and valuing are intimately entangled, Neighbourhood Planning may offer scope to appreciate their hybridity. Indeed, one of the reasons why Neighbourhood Planning is interesting theoretically is precisely because it offers the opportunity to work different kinds of knowledge together in new ways.

6.3 Expanding the evidence base?

As Bradley (2018a: 24) observes, “*It [Neighbourhood Planning] promised to widen both the sources of knowledge and the ways of knowing incorporated into local development plans*”. The discourse promoting Neighbourhood Planning revolves around the idea that residents of an area are the best people to take responsibility for planning its future because, due to their experience of living there, they know it

intimately, value it deeply, and understand how it functions. They know what its needs are, and the best way that these can be met:

“People around the country value and love the places they live in. They want great local public services, to protect the things that make their neighbourhood special and to help their community grow and develop in the right way. To make sure that you and your neighbours have the community you aspire to, the government has given you new legal powers and new opportunities to preserve what you like and change what you don’t like about the city, town or village you live in” (DCLG, 2013: 4)

The heavy emphasis on community (rather than expert) leadership and control, on care and place attachment, and on local knowledge derived from lived experience in the discourse around Neighbourhood Planning all suggest an opening up of what might count as evidence to a wider, more inclusive approach. This is further accentuated by the Governmental insistence that the examination of Neighbourhood Plans should be ‘light touch’, and its testing of the basic conditions which Neighbourhood Plans must meet is intentionally less onerous and rigorous than the ‘tests of soundness’ which a Local Plan has to pass (DCLG, 2014a: Paragraph 055 Reference ID 41-055-20140306).

This opening up would imply a significant change for planning. Although there has been a growing recognition of the need for public buy-in for decisions, lay knowledge remains mistrusted in many spheres (Petts and Brooks, 2006). Institutional planning practices continue to maintain a deficit model of lay knowledge (Wynne, 1996), i.e.

treating it with suspicion and assuming that the public are either ill-informed or misunderstand the issues, and reproducing a hierarchical structure in which remote expert accounts of abstract space continue to dominate lived lay accounts of experienced place (Allen and Crookes, 2009; Bradley, 2018a). This “*serves to distract attention from those expressions of lived space that are rejected and excluded from planning practice*” (Bradley, 2018a: 24) by framing them as irrelevant, subjective, anecdotal, or otherwise not fit to be considered as robust evidence. But there are a number of factors which indicate that Neighbourhood Planning, *a priori*, might be more conducive to the articulation and validation of the kinds of experiential knowledge that are usually scripted out of planning decision-making:

- **Affect:** The explicit acceptance, and indeed endorsement, of the affective nature of the relationship between Neighbourhood Planners and their neighbourhood. Their right to plan is officially justified as being based not just on their knowledge of the area but on their care for and emotional connection to it (Bradley, 2017a), their identity as being embedded and entangled in the neighbourhood;
- **Scale:** The very ‘human’, ‘dwelt-in’ scale of Neighbourhood Planning. It is concerned with the places that people are most connected with, the places in which they actually ‘dwell’ for most of the time, and where they are likely to have developed stronger and deeper practical, knowing and affective relationships with place through their everyday, embodied practices and experiences (Ingold, 2000; Urry and Macnaghten, 1998; Yeh, 2016);

- Lay status: The absence of an expert body leading the process, which has the potential to generate more of a perceived ‘epistemological equality’ between the people producing the Plan and the wider community:
 - people may feel more free to articulate ‘felt’ knowledge and values than if they were being consulted by a body perceived as ‘expert’ or an ‘authority’ which deals in professionalised discourse. It may reduce the common “*insecurities about articulating felt or emotional responses*” (Davies, 2001a: 98);
 - the group leading the process may indeed be more inclined to accept and acknowledge such knowledge and value as legitimate as it may reflect their own experiences, and they have not been subject to the professional disciplining of a community of practice which is taught to discount such ‘subjective’ responses.

- Breadth of engagement: The heavy emphasis in guidance on Neighbourhood Planning being shaped by the wishes of the community, including a commitment to engage ‘the whole community’ in decision-making. This requires going significantly beyond existing interest groups who may be used to articulating their concerns in ‘planning speak’. Due to the relatively small scales involved, engagement with a much wider spread of the population than at more strategic levels is at least a possibility and was certainly achieved in both of my case studies. Engaging with groups and individuals with no other experience of planning is more likely to elicit thoughts and feelings expressed in ‘non-planning speak’;

- **Broad criteria:** The ‘light touch’ approach to public examination and the insistence in legislation and guidance that examination would only test whether a Plan satisfied the very broadly-drawn ‘basic conditions’, not whether it met the more rigorous tests of soundness required of Local Plans, or examine other material considerations;
- **Buy-in:** The requirement to pass a local referendum suggests the need to secure the ‘buy-in’ of the wider community, and therefore the need to address their felt relationships with the neighbourhood area. As noted above, these are experienced and often expressed in terms of the very knowledge-value hybrids that are ‘purified’ out of planning at a larger scale, where the challenge of passing a referendum is not faced;
- **Containment:** The ‘containment’ of Neighbourhood Plans within existing national and local policy may reduce the likelihood of conflict with ‘othering’ knowledge practices. For example, disagreements at Local Plan level are often dominated by technical issues such as housing numbers. In theory, such ‘strategic’ issues are resolved outside of the remit of Neighbourhood Plans and provide them with parameters to work within, giving more room for different dimensions of concern, care and experience to play out. It is constructed as a ‘safe space’, contained by the checks and balances provided by higher levels in the planning policy hierarchy (Parker et al., 2016: 521). The boundaries of this space are firmly demarcated in the logics of abstract space which reign beyond those boundaries, allowing the logics of lived place to be asserted within them;

- Openness: The absence of any prescribed form for the production and presentation of evidence, leaving communities free to choose for themselves what the most important issues are, how to investigate them, and how to represent their findings.

Each of the identities sketched out in Chapter 5 is associated with a different type of knowledge. Each type of knowledge contributes to the performance of an element of legitimacy. As Bradley (2018a) sets out, it is expected that Neighbourhood Planning would enable an expanded range of sources of knowledge and ways of knowing to be mobilised. The need for technical knowledge of abstract space is not removed, but could be complemented by other ways of knowing, in particular, the kind of place-based, experiential knowledge that is associated with the NPGs' identities 'in' and 'of' the neighbourhood, and that tends to be devalued elsewhere in the planning system.

However, my experience was that this did not happen. Indeed, the NPGs that I worked with took great pains to self-censor any manifestation of subjective experience in their formal evidence, the production of which strongly reinforced the dominance of their 'lay-expert' identities. They took great care to fit into conventional evaluative structures, as their assumptions (structured by their consultants) about required form and content for both evidence base and Plan compelled particular translations and simplifications to be made. The ways of knowing associated with the political/representative and especially the caring/embodied identity were suppressed, manifested in a retreat from qualitative, affective, 'meaning-full' evidence and arguments into quantitative, objective, technical evidence, to remove all traces of

subjectivity. In the following two sections I illustrate this with stories about evidence production from each of my case studies.

6.4 Two surveys

6.4.1 Separating the surveys

As I started attending Wroston NPG meetings in February 2015, they were focused on producing what they then considered to be their key piece of evidence, a survey of the community. However, they quickly decided that this would be better split into two separate surveys. This was partly because they felt that a single survey would be so long and complex that people would be discouraged from responding, partly because they came to see the different elements of the survey as performing different functions, and partly so that they could progress the one they considered more important more quickly.

6.4.2 The Housing Needs Survey

One – the Housing Needs Survey (HNS) – was intended to objectively demonstrate the level of housing need arising within the Plan area. As their Plan was going to have policies about housing provision, they would be expected (by the LPA and Examiner) to have evidence about housing need and demand²⁷. The assumption of the group,

²⁷ On 11.02.16 this expectation was formalised in updated national guidance to say that where Neighbourhood Plans “contain policies relevant to housing supply, these policies should take account of latest and up-to-date evidence of housing need.”

<http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/revisions/41/040/>, accessed on 07.12.16.

based on their local knowledge of the numbers of houses coming up for rent and sale, the time taken to complete sales, the formation of new households within the village etc., was that locally generated need would be very small. The survey was intended to codify and formalise this unofficial knowledge: to translate it into a form of usable evidence. Encouraged by their consultant, they believed that if they could provide evidence that locally-generated need for housing was low, they would be able to plan for relatively low levels of housing growth, and thus fend off proposals for higher levels of growth with the incontrovertible facts of hard numbers.

The other was a survey which would assess what the community valued about the area and why; what they thought needed to change and how; and what they thought was important for the Plan to address. This would tap into local knowledge about the state of, issues affecting, and potential for, the area. It would build on the results of their initial consultation and on previous consultation for a Parish Plan.

The ways in which the two surveys figured the gulf between facts and values in this Neighbourhood Planning imaginary rapidly became clear (Haraway, 1997). As Scott, their consultant, said to the NPG in relation to the HNS,

“I’ve started referring to the other one as the opinion survey ... This is evidence, the other one’s opinion” (05.02.15)

This view of the HNS was confirmed later in the same meeting by NPG member Ray:

“This is our really basic facts that we’re trying to establish”

The title given to the second survey – “*the opinion survey*” denoted its lesser importance, as NPG Chair Simon indicated:

“*We need to know what people think, but it is just what they think, just opinion ... it’s best to keep them separate*” (05.03.15)

And Scott confirmed this view:

“*It’s really just to find out what people think, you’re not bound by it*”
(19.03.15)

The group assumed and consequently performed a rigid and clear division between the function of the two surveys: one would produce hard facts and would be binding; the other would ‘merely’ canvas what people thought. While NPGs are required to consult widely with their communities, the status of the results of these consultations are ambiguous: they are seen as both separate to, and a (discrete) part of a robust evidence base. The implication is that what can be learned from the lay knowledge and subjective values and opinions of the community is radically different to technical, objective evidence. So for example, one popular guidebook²⁸ provides advice separately on “*building the evidence base*” (Chetwyn, 2013: 35-37) and on “*community and stakeholder engagement and involvement*” (Ibid: 30-34). It

²⁸ Neighbourhood Plans: Roadmap Guide (Chetwyn, 2013). This is one of the key technologies of participation and a central means of legitimising other technologies and helping them to travel.

emphasises “*the need for a robust evidence base and effective community engagement as an essential part of producing a realistic plan, which has a sense of community ownership*” (Ibid: 5). This enacts evidence and realism on the one hand, and community input and ownership on the other, as quite different things. The status of the HNS, which endowed it with the purified epistemological status of dealing only with facts, enabled it to contribute to the evidence base, while the opinion survey, based on experiential knowledge, was relegated to the realm of consultation.

The NPG went to great lengths to ensure the HNS could function as a technology producing objective facts. They entrusted leadership of the HNS project to Scott: a man who by virtue of his qualifications and position - as a paid consultant, and as a member of a professional association (the Royal Town Planning Institute) - was considered a relevant expert. At his suggestion, they based their survey closely on one which had been produced by a Housing Association (also accredited experts in the field) and used recently within their LPA area in an analogous situation. The LPA (one of the key audiences for this evidence) had accepted that survey’s findings as valid: it was already recognised as a proven fact-making technology. They also dedicated significant time in meetings over six weeks to discussing which questions should be included and their precise wording, to ensure that the survey dealt only with factual matters and so would produce only facts.

I noted after the NPG meeting on 05.02.15²⁹ that:

²⁹ The following fieldnote extracts are all from this meeting, until stated otherwise.

“the main topic, which takes up the vast majority of the 2 hours, was the housing needs survey ... Their discussion around this was extremely thorough, going into (sometimes apparently excessive) detail but often making very good points, and all giving deep consideration to points raised, and developing or countering them thoughtfully.”

Tensions arose between the different sources of legitimacy that the NPG relied upon for the survey during these “*hot debates*”. For example,

“Scott recommended deleting two questions from the HNS because they were opinion, not fact (despite the fact that the survey they were taken from had been approved, and used, and that was the basis for using it as a template)”.

The original technology, while being used as a template precisely because of its proven ability to generate facts and exclude anything ‘less than’ factual, was itself open to criticism on this front.

On the other hand, following a particularly “*intricate and detailed*” discussion about whether a question should include reference to family members who had moved away and wanted to return to the area, they prioritised the legitimacy of the form of the template over the effectiveness of its function:

“At various points during the debate, not just on this point but others, Scott resorted to responses like ‘This has been used already, it’s imperfect but it’s been used by the council’ to defend not making changes [to the survey] and to

get it out. So, even if it does not derive exactly the information that they want, it's better to use it because it has existing legitimacy, and if they change it to suit their purposes better there is a risk that it may be de-legitimised and they are back to square one. Susan in particular also defends this line of reasoning; no-one strongly challenges it. So, they recognise (even outside of this 'returners' issue, there is long debate over many points) the inadequacies of the method, but want to use it simply because it is a recognised fact-generating device."

During these discussions the NPG also developed detailed plans for ensuring that everyone in the community would have the opportunity to complete a survey, and for maximising their rate of completions and returns:

"Detailed local knowledge is deployed in order to maximise response rates – surveys are planned for delivery the week after half term, to maximise the chances of people being at home, and just after the fortnightly recycling collection, to minimise chances of it being thrown away.

Making response easy is also a strong focus. Susan suggests different coloured paper for different parts of the survey, a technique used in her school. They discuss if this could disadvantage people with sight problems, but they know the best colour combinations to use (black on yellow); delivering and collecting completed surveys from the houses by hand, providing mechanisms to get extra surveys, providing FAQs and clear instructions for completion and return, giving Simon's phone number for any queries, being scrupulous about

anonymising; Simon compares it the with postal vote form and wants a similar design – clean, accessible, attractive. They really care about getting communications right.”

They also included an introductory letter signed by the Chair of the Parish Council (adding institutional legitimacy), and clearly distinguished the two parts of the survey (part 1, to be completed by everyone, was just one page and printed on different coloured paper to part 2, which was much longer, but only needed completing by people who identified themselves or a family/household member as being in housing need). At the next meeting (19.02.15) I noted that “*everyone's been emailed the proposed changes [to the survey] and reasons. Still considerable debate over details – they are applying themselves with precision*”, and again at the following meeting (05.03.15),

“There is lots of concern again about the possibility of households returning multiple forms in order to skew the results of the HNS, despite Scott’s assurances that it is highly unlikely. The group are placing very strong emphasis on procedural rectitude in order to be sure that their evidence can’t be challenged. Elaborate plans for distribution and collection are rehearsed and revised in order to properly involve the whole community”.

The HNS became, in this imaginary, a kind of ‘fact-making machine’ (Latour and Woolgar, 1979), analogous to experimental methodologies used in the natural sciences, or the computer models used by planning authorities and consultants to establish housing need. It became a form of technology, a machine into which data

would be fed into the front and facts would come out of the back. Its status as a technological object – designed by experts, with proven capabilities, and free from ‘polluting’ subjective characteristics - is what guaranteed the factual nature of its outputs (Potter, 1996; Woolgar, 1988). Any trace of the subjectivity of the NPG or of the respondents was removed, purified by its technological performance. As Law notes, this is a crucial step in being able to claim to have positivist knowledge about the world:

“Statements about objects in the world are supposed to issue from the world itself, examined in the proper way by means of proper methods, and not from the person who happens to be conducting the experiment” (2004: 36).

The process of producing the survey is summed up in Figure 1, an extract from the report on the survey results prepared by Scott, emphasising its institutional and procedural legitimacy. The factual nature of the findings produced by the HNS was repeatedly asserted in the report: it served not just to report but to reify them, insisting upon their objectivity in both its content and its form (a housing needs survey report being an accepted material form in which facts are presented as evidence in the planning system). This is illustrated in Figure 2, a second extract from the report.

This extraordinary exhibition of care and attention demonstrated a strong desire to ensure the authority of the knowledge produced. The survey invoked the figure of detached expertise through a variety of tactics: using a proven inscription (designed by experts and recognised as capable of producing authoritative evidence) as a template;

SURVEY DESIGN

Collaboration

██████████ Parish Council, myself and officers from ██████████ Council worked together to produce a Housing Needs Survey together with help from various housing associations operating in the ██████████ area. This was to ensure that the survey met the standards required by all the institutions operating in the vicinity so that they would feel confident in the results and also to help make the information compatible with other studies in the Borough, in particular the Housing Needs Survey conducted in the ██████████ AONB.

Questionnaire

It was agreed that the best way to conduct the survey was with a 2 part questionnaire as this would enable those who were not in housing need (correctly anticipated to be the vast majority) to finish the survey quickly without going through irrelevant questions thereby making it easier to complete which would ensure a higher response rate as well as making it easier to analyse - a strategy which had proved successful in ██████████. The first part was on 2 sides of white A4 while Part 2 was 4 sides of yellow A4 making the 2 parts very distinct. Clear instructions made this easy for respondents to understand.

Figure 1: Extract 1 from Wroston Housing Needs Survey report

Purpose of Housing Needs Survey

In order to ensure that housing development in ██████████ is informed as best as possible the Parish wish to objectively assess housing need and a housing need survey provides an important piece of primary data which can be used alongside other data sources to evidence this.

Specifically the Housing Needs Survey aims to:

- Establish the extent of affordable housing need in ██████████ due to people living in ██████████ and people working in ██████████ but living elsewhere
- Establish the number, type and tenure of affordable housing need
- Determine whether there are people who have a housing need that can be met on the open market
- Provide evidence for the purposes of policy writing and land allocation for the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan
- Provide additional information regarding ██████████ Council

Figure 2: Extract 2 from Wroston Housing Needs Survey report

having an accredited expert lead their process; making extensive efforts to maximise returns and to prevent the data being biased or influenced; and excluding issues identified as non-factual. However, the central question on which the device's ability to make facts hinged (Question 8: "*Do you need to move to another home in this parish now or in the next five years/ Does anyone living with you need a separate home now or in the next 5 years?*") could only ever elicit contingent, situated, partial responses, and contained a whole host of hidden and contestable assumptions. The survey was not 'discovering facts', but rather constructing potential futures, based on a range of contestable and unknowable variables. This is not a criticism of the survey – from an STS perspective it could not have been otherwise – simply an observation of the necessary contingency of 'factual' claims. But notwithstanding this, and despite other problematic elements in the development and deployment of this technology (e.g. the tensions between the different legitimising forces), this picture overall illustrates the great weight that was placed upon this technology and the (kind of) knowledge that it produces.

6.4.3 The opinion survey

In marked contrast, the 'opinion survey' was treated with far less care. Scott was not involved in its production, although he was present at the meeting that signed it off, nor was there a 'proven' template used to lend legitimacy. It was developed, instead, by the NPG agreeing after minimal discussion on 19.03.15 the broad subjects it should address, and two NPG members volunteering to write a draft which would be

reviewed and finalised at the following meeting on 20.04.15³⁰. However, the draft was only finished and circulated to members a few hours before that meeting. At the meeting, it was clear that several members had not yet had a chance to look at it; but it was also made clear by Anne (the NPG's unofficial vice-chair and one of the two members that had prepared the draft - the chair was not present at this meeting), that only very minor comments would be welcome. The purpose of the meeting was to agree, not to debate. At the time, I noted "*Anne in the Chair ... It's a low turnout and she seems keen to rattle through. She chairs firmly, impatiently, with little time for discussion and a clear sense that much discussion will not be tolerated.*"

My notes continue:

"First major item – the opinion survey. It was put together by a sub-group – Anne and Rebecca – and sent out to the group just today so that it could be discussed and finalised at this meeting. But the emphasis is very much on the 'finalised'. Anne makes it clear that there will be no wholesale revision, in fact very little revision at all: 'Just a short, quick review', she says. She's really looking for 'small tweaks, typos, minor details' to be changed, if anything at all. Nothing substantive. 'We're not here to go over the whole thing again, we want to get it out'. Suggestions and questions and proposals to develop it further from around the group - and from me – are largely rejected."

³⁰ All of the fieldnote extracts in this section are from this meeting on 20.04.15.

The tactics that were so vital to the construction of the HNS – that would enact the NPG as being ‘apart from’ the neighbourhood - were not considered necessary for the opinion survey. However, although this survey was ‘only’ dealing with ‘opinions’ – a category less valued by the NPG - it disciplined and ordered those opinions (cf. Foucault, 1977; 1980). Through its structure, it made them more amenable to being considered as evidence, representable by the NPG in their identity as being ‘of’ the neighbourhood.

I noted at the time that

“The survey has a strong focus on yes/no or numerical ranking questions ... There is a very strong focus on gathering quantitative not qualitative evidence, partly because that is what the group perceive evidence to be – numbers, measurements, quantities, statistics. Because this brings precision and objectivity. But from another perspective what this quantitative approach lacks is precision, specificity, detail – its very reductionist nature strips out the essence of what would make it a meaningful piece of work.”

Opinions would be aggregated into numbers. Multiple choice and yes/no answers enabled the qualitative to become quantitative. The space for qualitative responses was deliberately minimised to facilitate analysis and presentation of outputs: to tame and discipline. Although the information the NPG were seeking was affective and experiential, these very qualities were abstracted by the technology of the survey and rendered invisible. The survey was trying to get at individual relations with and experiences of particular qualities of place, but its form precluded these from being

recorded or carried forward. Anne was quite clear about this disciplining of the qualitative: it was necessary

“...so that it can be measured, quantified, that’s what we need to do ... that’s why we’re doing closed questions, we just want to measure them”.

This approach can be seen in Figures 3 and 4, extracts from Wroston’s Opinion Survey:

Quality of Life

L1. You have identified the following key assets of [redacted]
Please indicate their importance to you (1 to 3, 1 being most important)

The Character of the village	1	2	3
The quality of the landscape	1	2	3
Local Heritage	1	2	3
Natural Environment	1	2	3

L2. In your opinion what could be improved in [redacted]
Childrens play area

L3. What is needed for the sustainable development of [redacted]
Please indicate their importance to you (1 to 3, 1 being most important)

Making it easier for young people to live & work in & around the village	1	2	3
Making sure local services / facilities are maintained	1	2	3
Maintain Local heritage	1	2	3
Other (in your opinion)			

L4. You have identified the following issues in [redacted]

Figure 3: Extract 1 from Wroston Opinion Survey: quality of life section

E2. Should the Neighbourhood Plan aim to protect & enhance the quality of the village by promoting the following?

(Please tick)

Design that respects the village heritage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Minimum living space in houses	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Use of traditional local building materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
High level of energy conservation in any new builds	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Green space & gardens within any proposed development	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Other (please give details)

E3. Should the Neighbourhood Plan aim to promote the following:-

Please indicate their importance to you (1 to 3, 1 being most important)

Increased provision of green spaces	1	2	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 3
Enhanced protection of the landscape	1	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 2	3
Enhanced protection of historic natural features	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	2	3

E4. In your opinion which aspects of [redacted] would you like to see conserved?

Please tick the boxes of all those that are important to you

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rivers & streams	<input type="checkbox"/> The Farmed landscape	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Footpaths
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natural habitats	<input type="checkbox"/> Hedges	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trees
<input type="checkbox"/> Field patterns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local built heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> Ridges & skylines
<input type="checkbox"/> Unspoilt public landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

Figure 4: Extract 2 from Wroston Opinion Survey: environment section

My notes from the same meeting go on, “Anne also asserts that there’s no need for open-ended questions because ‘there’s space to write in anything they want at the end’” - which there is, a couple of lines under each of five broad themes (see Figure 5). But these are not directly tied to the specific questions about which the NPG were seeking information. Space to write qualitative responses was deliberately minimised. The responses in this section were recorded, but only analysed insofar as they could be aggregated into previously defined categories and they were not directly referred to in the presentation of the results of the survey. The way in which the NPG discussed, designed, and reported the survey made it clear that its purpose was reductionist: to order neighbourhood knowledge and views into a pre-determined, quantifiable range of expressions that was perceived as usable as evidence at examination. It actively discouraged the expression of detailed affective understandings of place. In distilling

opinions to aggregate them into facts, the specificity and lived experience of place that constituted the ‘opinion’ in question was filtered out to leave quantitative data about abstract space.

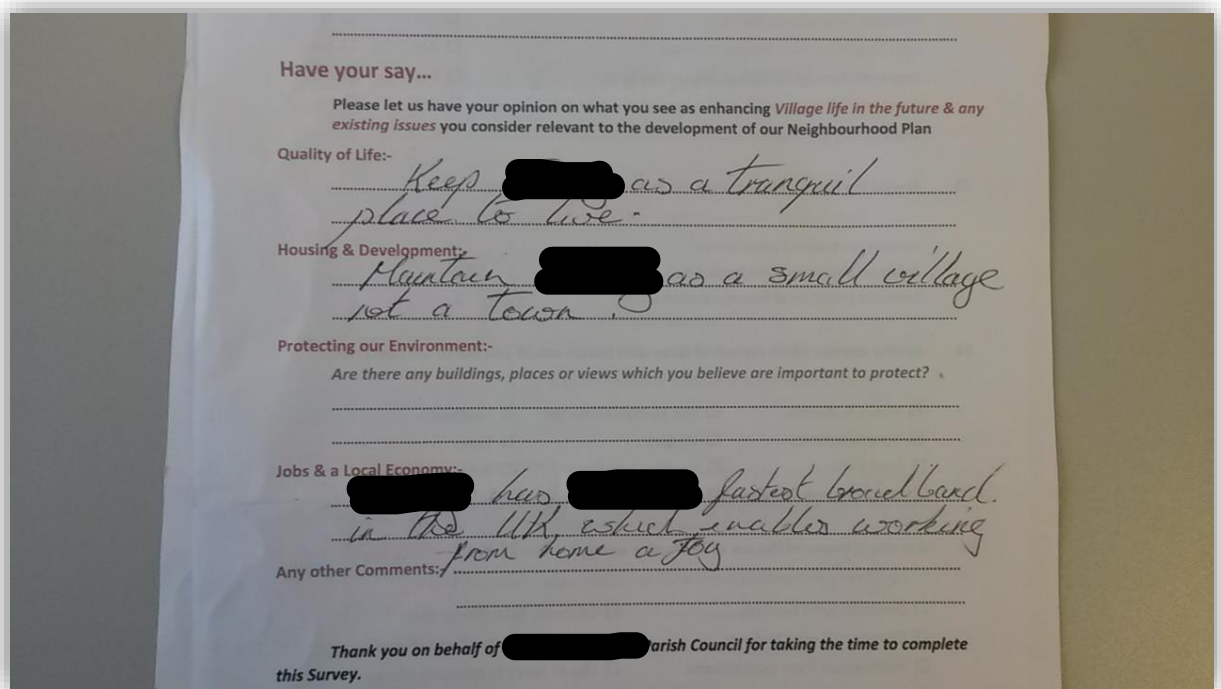


Figure 5: Extract 3 from Wroston Opinion Survey: final “write in” section

6.4.4 Survey effects: Framing and Othering

The effect of these two surveys was to render a certain picture of the neighbourhood visible. The reality of the neighbourhood is, of course, far messier and more complex – materially, socially, relationally, affectively - than that presented by these partial pictures. It is the purpose of research methods such as surveys³¹ and their inscribed

³¹ or ethnographies!

results, to impose order on these messy realities, to make them manageable by focusing attention on specific things and making them visible in specific ways. But the very action of ordering things so as to make some things visible necessarily makes other things invisible, silences and conceals them: ‘others’ them (Law, 2004). In this case, the lived experience of place, the specific, the affective and the relational are obscured, either entirely or through their marshalling into narrow, pre-defined categories.

6.5 Assessing green spaces

6.5.1 Local Green Spaces

One of the main motivations for Oakley Town Council initiating a Plan, and for the NPG in delivering it, was to protect green spaces in and around the town from future development, within and beyond the Plan period³². One of the ways in which they wanted to do this was by designating some places as Local Green Spaces (LGSs). ‘LGS’ is a designation introduced in 2012 by the National Planning Policy Framework. It was created because “*Local communities through local and Neighbourhood Plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them*” (DCLG, 2012: 18). LGSs can only be designated when a Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared or reviewed; once designated, building on them is prohibited except in “*very special circumstances*”. There are a number of criteria that a site must meet in order to be designated,

³² As the LPA’s Local Plan was already in place, sites were already allocated for development, but other places were susceptible to speculative planning applications.

including that it is “*demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife*” (ibid: 18).

The NPG put a huge amount of effort into identifying the Town’s green spaces and deciding which should be protected in this way, initially through a sub-group (consisting of Robert, Geoffrey, and Andrew, and of which I was also peripherally part), and later through the NPG as a whole. This was a long, difficult and contentious process.

6.5.2 Conflicting approaches

There were divergent approaches to how to tackle designating LGSs between the NPG and the consultants from the start, exacerbated by the way meetings with Andrea were conducted (as discussed in Chapter 7). Andrea encouraged the group to identify their ‘top’ green spaces, and then to “*quickly ask the community*” (e.g. by consulting established community groups) which they valued most and why:

“what I want you to do is to start looking at green space in a more realistic way. Think about what there already is and what you would never want to have built on and why. But you need to do some work in the community. A lot of work, get the community to start feeding in so that we have real justification, the community is behind us. What are their top 3 green spaces?”

(Andrea, 31.03.15)

However, the group did not feel this was a helpful approach: they did not believe that the ‘top’ green spaces were in any danger from development; they already knew which spaces would be identified in this category and didn’t think that it would gain them any useful information or lead to a productive outcome.

Instead, the sub-group first concentrated on precisely identifying and recording all the green spaces within and adjacent to the town. They used six very large-scale maps of the town to outline each green space within and bordering the built-up area (see Figure 6), plus one smaller-scale map to identify the larger spaces outside the town, plus one ‘key’ map, showing what the other maps covered and how they fitted together.

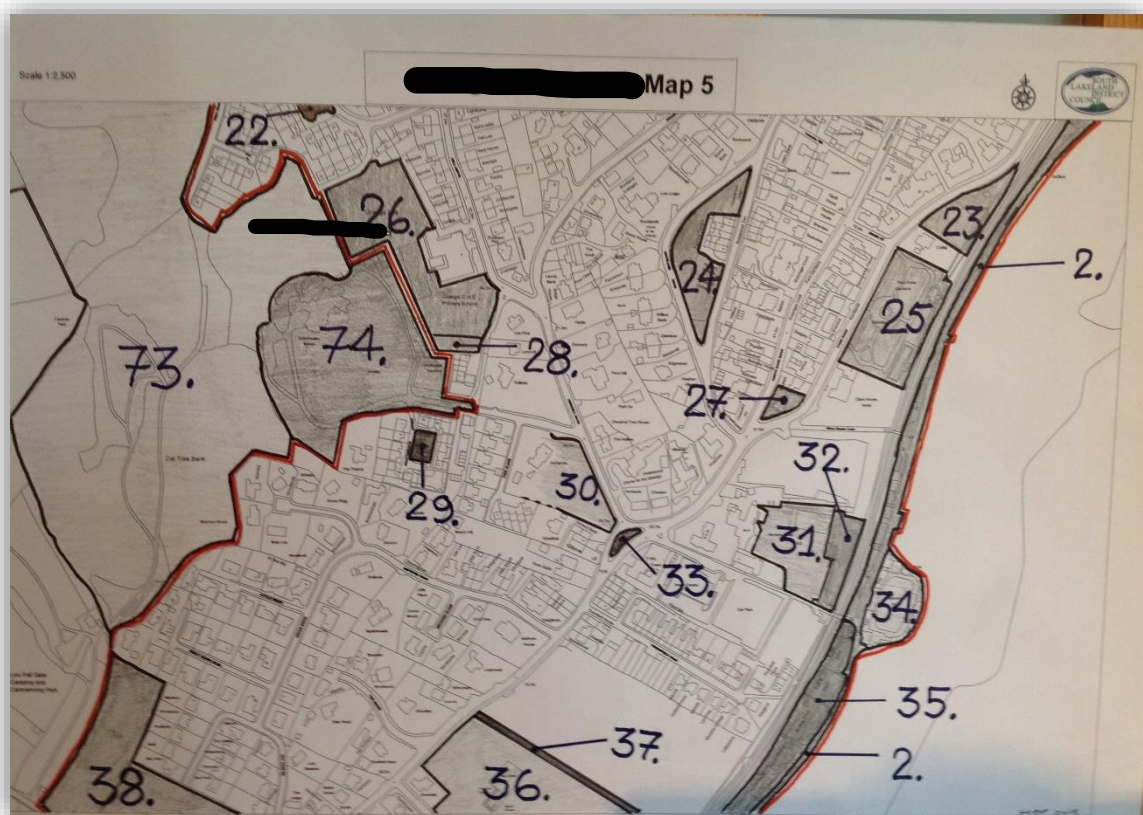


Figure 6: Sample Oakley green spaces map

In parallel, they created a spreadsheet containing details about each of these green spaces – 82 in all – including map references, short descriptions of characteristics, ownership where known, and any existing policy or statutory designations. This was achieved through the comprehensive knowledge the sub-group members had of the town and the surrounding area, supplemented by legwork; walking around the town and checking and amending their records as necessary. It again indicated the inclination towards gathering evidence that is precise and technical, rather than ‘soft’ and qualitative, reflecting the implicit assumption that this was the kind of evidence that would be required by the Examiner.

Progress on this exercise, and the difficulties encountered along the way, were reported back regularly at NPG meetings, at some of which Andrea was present. She encouraged members of this sub-group, as with the others, to send their findings to her as they developed:

“just send what you’ve got, brilliant, brilliant, you’ve done so much work ... don’t worry about the technical data, we can do all that, the policy is something that we would do for you, we wouldn’t want you to do that, we’re just asking you what it’s like on the ground ...” (19.05.15)

However, despite her fulsome praise it was not clear to the NPG what, exactly, was being done with this – or any of the other evidence that they were gathering.

6.5.3 Being reasonable

As time moved on, the sub-group faltered. Andrea insisted that the group nominate no more than five or, if they absolutely must, ten of the most important green spaces. She repeatedly told them that any more than this would be seen as unreasonable and would be rejected by the Examiner:

*“the Inspector would chuck it out ... he would say it’s unreasonable.”*³³

(22.09.15)

Through repeated references across several months, an imaginary of the Examiner and examination was built up of a man (always a man) that embodied and tested a particular type of rationality and reason: the implicit model of knowledge that is committed to the scientific ideals that the more abstract and universal, the better, more objective or more persuasive that knowledge is. This model – figured as a fully-formed and already-given individual with fixed views and judgements - is committed to certain ways of knowing the world, which in turn entails a commitment to certain ways of valuing the world (Haraway, 1997). However, as Parker et al. (2016) observe, due to the lack of standardised guidance, training, benchmarking, or appointment criteria for Examiners, and their different professional and personal backgrounds and experiences, approaches are likely to vary considerably between Examiners.

³³ As discussed in Section 7.6, consultants and participants in both NPGs repeatedly describe the Examiner as “the Inspector”, which is suggestive of a more general interpretative conflation between the Examinations in Public of Local Plans (run by Planning Inspectors) and the independent examination of Neighbourhood Plans (run by Examiners).

Andrea repeatedly stated that the Examiner would insist upon robust evidence:

“Without strong evidence to support it the Plan will fail at examination so it is really important that the evidence is justifying the policies and holds up under scrutiny” (07.10.15, by email)

“We have to have firm evidence, particularly for something like that, because a developer, the Inspector, won’t accept the general public’s view only”

(10.11.15)

Andrea also frequently emphasised the need to conform to this figure’s standards of rationality, often repeating phrases such as:

“You need a nice manageable number that looks reasonable ... it’s about looking reasonable” (22.09.15)

“When we put the Plan together we need to have a reasoned justification for the policies, we need evidence for the Inspector for what we want to do”

(19.05.15)

As in Wroston, ‘evidence’ is consistently interpreted as meaning ‘objective’, quantified, measurable data:

“Yes, you really have to quantify the data, you can use the photos as a stimulus, but then separately give them a series of questions with tick boxes ...

that'll give you data that you can actually use, it'll give you numbers" (John, 07.07.15)

"We have to somehow quantify it." (Andrea, 22.09.15)

"That's what Andrea likes, isn't it, numbers?" (Sarah, 24.11.15)

The group, meanwhile, were struggling to work out a means of deciding what should be protected - the most important spaces were not threatened but nominating 'lesser' spaces without acknowledging these 'jewels in the crown' would seem incoherent. The figure of the Examiner, as constructed by Andrea, mediated both the total number of green spaces they felt able to consider, and the ways in which they felt able to justify their protection.

6.5.4 Changing focus

This consistent pushing from Andrea to nominate only a very limited number of sites changed the operational question for the NPG from 'why might we want to protect specific sites?' to 'which are the top-ranked sites to protect?': a shift from a qualitative to a quantitative question. I was reluctant to disagree with Andrea in open meetings, but I was aware of other Plans in which more than ten LGSs had been designated, in situations that seemed to have parallels with Oakley. I brought some of these to the attention of Stephanie (as Chair) and Robert (who, by now, was undertaking pretty much all the work of the greenspaces sub-group). Robert took one of these Plans, Tattenhall, as a model for breaking the deadlock. He divided the green spaces into

three categories, recreation, open space, and wildlife, and on the basis of his judgement of the significance of the sites in relation to these criteria drew up a shortlist that he thought warranted protection under each category, with a short justification of each suggested site. He intended for this to be agreed by the group and consulted on with the neighbourhood.

Andrea had repeatedly tried to direct the NPG to seek community views on which green spaces were important to them and why. However, because she didn't know the area well, the way that she framed this put her at cross-purposes with the group, who found that her instructions did not match up with their understanding of reality on the ground. Her insistence on focusing on the "*top three*" green spaces that were most important to or most highly valued by the community did not fit well with the group's sense of which spaces might be at risk, and her insistence that they minimise the number of green spaces that they attempted to protect conflicted with their sense that there were a large number of small spaces that collectively made a significant contribution to the character of the town.

In November 2015 Stephanie told me in a phone conversation that she wanted to shift the focus of the green space work from value to vulnerability, saying that there's "*no point in wasting our firepower on protecting places that will never be developed in any case*". She wanted to highlight the ten most vulnerable places and get the public to focus their attention on those when they were consulted. This was the third shift in the framing of the green space assessment, from most valued overall, to most important in terms of specific functions, to most vulnerable. She took over the process from Robert, who had said that he thought it would be best if someone with a fresh pair of

eyes took over, and I assisted her. Another key steering group member temporarily resigned around this time due to tensions and some misunderstanding over how the consultation on green spaces was being developed. This issue seemed to dominate the discussions and difficulties of the group as the hardest to resolve. As Stephanie said, the whole process felt like “*pinning jellyfish to the wall*” (24.11.15).

Stephanie and I drew up three lists of green spaces, allocating each of the 82 to one list. The A list were the most important places, which were already protected and not likely to be threatened by development. The B list were those places that she thought may warrant protection by an LGS designation. The C list were those places that she did not think would warrant protection – that were not threatened, or too small, or not that valuable. This was taken to the NPG and amended following their feedback. This was what the public were eventually consulted on in December 2015 as one element of a three-day drop-in consultation event in the Town Hall. Stephanie also extracted a selection of the B list and asked, on the general feedback form for the event, which places people had visited recently and how frequently.

The result was quite a complicated request to the public. The general feedback form was simple but gave no indication of ‘subjective states’: it showed which sites people had visited but not why, or what they felt about their experience. Everyone who visited the display was asked to fill in one of these forms, which they were given on entry. This ensured a high feedback rate from those who attended (although only about 90 people attended in total). The specific feedback form on which green spaces people valued and would like to see protected was part of the ‘environment’ section of the display (part of which is shown in Figure 7). It required them to look through three

lists (although their attention was directed to the B list) and 8 maps, all of which were located on the same desk or on a display board behind it, and to select their top five by ticking a box next to the name of the site on the list. People were also invited to write down on separate sheets of paper why they particularly valued specific green spaces. The attempts to achieve precision had resulted in complexity and nuance, but also complication. It captured elements that more simplified methods could not have done but required a potentially exclusionary amount and type of effort. However, many people who attended the event did make the effort to understand the system and to add their feedback (Figure 8).

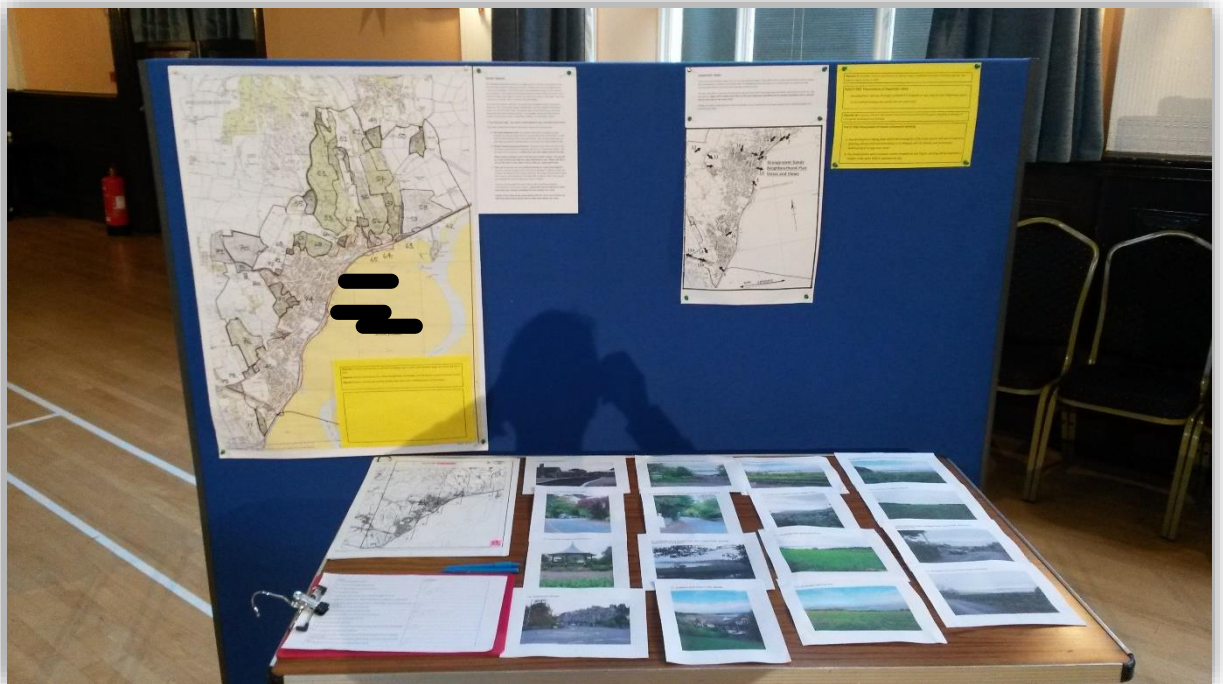


Figure 7: Part of environment display, Oakley consultation event



Figure 8: Neighbourhood engagement, Oakley consultation event

6.5.5 Calculative rationalities

From the feedback gained through this consultation the lists were amended, and a new sub-group (Julia, Martin and James) was formed to finalise the list that would be put forward for designation. I prepared an assessment form and instructions to help the sub-group decide which sites they would put forward and to justify their choices according to national policy requirements. I emphasised the value of qualitative evidence – describing and explaining why these places are special and important, who (or what) ‘uses’ them and why - and also that the criteria are not additive – a site can be designated if it is important for only one reason. I anticipated that the sub-group might use the form to articulate *why* they felt that each particular place may – or may not – be worth protecting.

However, the subgroup decided to make a quantitative assessment, instead of a descriptive, qualitative one, reinforcing once again the value placed on quantitative, objectified evidence. In effect, they adapted my inscriptions to develop their own system of multi-criteria analysis that combined deliberative and technical-rational approaches to decision-making, which “*mirror[ed] or approximate[d] the decision analysis processes undertaken by the authorities themselves*” (Cass, 2006). This was directed at delivering definitive answers that could be justified within the assumed evaluative framework of examination (Stirling, 2006; Wittmer et al., 2006). To make it locally specific, they weighted each of the criteria in relation to Oakley – for example, tranquillity was given a lesser weighting, as Oakley is a relatively tranquil place anyway; richness of wildlife was given a greater weighting, as previous feedback from the community had suggested that this is highly valued.

At the next NPG meeting (16.02.16), this sub-group proposed a simple voting process. In his introduction to the session, James said, “*What we want to get out of today is anything that actually says this is something that we can measure*”. For each site on the final ‘B list’, for each indicative criterion (e.g. tranquillity), the NPG voted on a score from one to ten. Before each vote there was some brief discussion, a score was proposed, there was sometimes some ‘haggling’ as members argued for it to be raised or lowered. Reasons were given and debated, but not recorded in any way to indicate how they contributed to the score. The process was summed up by Martin: “*Kate’s got a spreadsheet so we’ll shout out a number and then argue it into a balance and then Kate will bung that on.*”

The tone of the discussion was light-hearted, collegiate. There was a palpable sense of relief at finally having a resolution to this problem that had dogged them for so long, dominating the process for many months. Debate was limited on each vote because, as various members mentioned at different points, they had little time and lots to get through. All the votes were unanimous or with a large majority. Each score was recorded, and then the next criterion was voted on, until all the indicative criteria had been scored for each site.

The rationale for making decisions and generating evidence in this way was very heavily predicated on conforming to a particular type of rationality, a type of reasonableness that relied on calculative processes, as embodied in the figure of the Examiner. For example, James asked the group before the voting began, *“So I guess the first question is, does that look reasonable in terms of a weighting ... do they look reasonable against each other?”* And Julia emphasises that they chose this method because *“The main thing is we just felt this was defensible”*.

At the end of the process, the scores for each site were counted up and announced by Katie, giving a ranked order of sites, from which they identified their top five – Andrea having pushed them consistently to propose no more than five sites. The responses from the community consultation were then factored in, with some discussion about what weight the ‘public vote’ should have against each of the other criteria. The low numbers of people attending the consultation event was set against the need for the Plan to represent the views of the whole neighbourhood. Even if very few members of the community had attended the event, the group worried about being seen to not pay enough attention to their responses. In the end, they selected the five

sites that scored the highest in their voting exercise (which became six due to a tie in fifth place), and added two sites that had scored well in the public consultation but not in their voting. (Other than these two sites the two ‘assessments’ gave broadly similar results). They therefore agreed on a list of eight sites to propose for protection, based on a combination of two different scoring systems (NPG voting and public voting).

As well as generating quantitative evidence and procedural legitimacy to justify decision-making, this method was also seen as providing closure to the issue, as demonstrated by this exchange at the end of the voting session:

Martin: As there are quite a few people not here today, would you like me to email the email that I sent to you yesterday, about how we've done it today?

Mary: No, they weren't here and we're not going to have them arguing with us, 'no, it's too weighted towards nature' or something.

Martin: Well so they are aware that's all.

Mary: You could say 'we used these criteria to...', rather than leave it open.

Martin: That's all we're suggesting, I'm not requesting anybody's feedback in terms of 'no you should have done it like this'.

Mary: This is what we've done.

The perceived restriction of ‘robust evidence’ to that which can be abstracted, quantified, and objectified had foreclosed the kinds of evidence that could be put forward in support of the NPG’s decision-making, and had led to a specific decision process. It was also used, for very practical reasons, to preclude any possibility of opening up what had proved to be a very difficult issue for further discussion. Despite

the various different framings that the green space discussion had been through, once a process had been created that would give the kind of measurable data that the group considered could constitute ‘defensible’ evidence, all other potential framings were foreclosed (Wynne, 1996). This final process therefore served a utilitarian function for the NPG – ‘closing down’ an issue that needed a concrete decision. However, due to the aversion to qualitative, relational evidence throughout the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, the issue had never really been thoroughly reflexively ‘opened up’ (Stirling, 2006)³⁴.

6.6 Foreclosing expansion and pluralisation

The previous sections have highlighted the work done and care taken by the NPGs to present only certain (types of) representations of the world, that fit with specific models of what constitutes evidence. They illustrate a general trend across the activities of the groups: embodying an acceptance of the radical separation between facts and values or opinions; valuing quantitative data over qualitative; and taking great pains to separate the known object from any trace of the knowing subject.

In both examples, some things are made visible while others are made invisible (Law, 2004). Subtle, complex and diverse forms of knowledge are simplified and abstracted

³⁴ In the end, Andrea persuaded the NPG that only two of these sites should be put forwards, on the basis that the others already had a degree of protection from Local Plan policies or other designations and designating would therefore require a particularly strong justification, and/or that they were in private ownership and that designating them would therefore be especially difficult. This represented a typically conservative approach (Parker et al., 2015), which was not necessitated by policy or guidance and did not meet the aspirations of the NPG. However, by that point this issue had taken up so much time and effort and been the locus of so much difficulty and frustration that they were unwilling to dedicate more energy to it and to conflict with their expert adviser.

in order to be presented as ‘evidence’ in forms that participants assume will be acceptable, guided by the relevant ‘technologies of participation’, their advisors, and their assumptions (Law and Mol, 2002). The specific, the personal and the experiential are made invisible, silenced by being categorised and numerically aggregated. Meanwhile, the objectively factual is created by means that are no less subjective. The practices that produced these results are also rendered invisible, veiled by the final quantified output (Latour, 1987). While these exercises have generated one form of knowledge, another has been suppressed. As Bradley and Brownill conclude, rather than “*demonstrate the triumph of local knowledge ... Neighbourhood Planning has reinforced planning’s arcane privilege*” (2017a: 261).

These knowledge practices correspond to the NPGs’ identity as lay expert, as being ‘apart from’ the neighbourhood, and to knowing and representing the neighbourhood as abstract space. They suppress their identities ‘in’ and ‘of’ the neighbourhood and translate or exclude the associated knowledges. The tensions between knowing and representing territory as abstract space and as lived place are well established (Agnew, 2011; Massey and Thrift, 2003). In public decision-making, where these two kinds of knowledge conflict, “*the epistemic authority of scientists, planners and urban engineers in matters of space – their power to decree what counts as spatial knowledge – guarantees the dominance of their conceptions of space over ‘lived’ understandings of space*” (Allen and Crookes, 2009: 463). However, in Neighbourhood Planning these conflicts have to be managed within the same collective identity. The NPG is responsible for producing and mobilising all kinds of knowledge. They are required to be both the expert and the lay person, the detached

planner of abstract space and the entangled dweller in lived place, the unmarked knowing subject and the marked known object (Haraway, 1988).

The NPGs felt compelled to represent their neighbourhoods in terms of abstract space for their knowledge to count as evidence, despite the lack of similarity of those representations to their lived experience (Bradley, 2018a). This translation appeared necessary to guarantee the epistemological authority of their evidence, to enact the legitimacy of the expert. As Allen and Crookes observe,

“[p]rofessional planners’ involvement in neighbourhoods occurs at a social and spatial distance from those places ... Indeed, for the professional planner, ‘legitimate’ knowledge of neighbourhoods necessitates a ‘critical “distance” between the observer and territory, as though this “taking of distance” were a necessary condition for the knowledge of territorial phenomena” (2009: 463)

The pressures on the NPGs to take this distance, and to suppress or translate knowledges that derived from a more entangled engagement with place, were threefold. First, there was pressure from the generally pervasive positivist imaginary of knowledge and evidence and its rigid line dividing facts, objectivity and reason from values, subjectivity and emotion - and which locates expert knowledge on one side of that equation and lay knowledge on the other. Lay people as well as experts construct expert and lay knowledge as clearly distinguishable (Aitken, 2009).

Second, the tropes and metaphors that planners use to describe themselves and their work lend it a particularly scientific, quantifiable, positivist aspect which intensifies

this distinction. The evidence mobilised by planning is not scientific, and it is a commonly-heard refrain amongst planners that ‘planning is as much an art as a science’. However, descriptions of planning continuously evoke tropes from the practices of the natural sciences, particularly around quantification and measurement. Claims framed as objective knowledge are given more weight than other claims (Rydin, 2007). There are practical hierarchies of knowledge, with the more scientific and universal claims at the top, and the more experiential and local at the bottom (Eden, 2017). Evidence that is framed in terms of accredited technical expertise fares better in the system than less formally-expressed knowledge, and evidence that can claim the distancing effect of technological production, better yet (Rydin et al., 2018). Evidence is described as being ‘just the facts’, and as coming before, and being independent of, policy. ‘Objective assessment’ is the gold standard of evidence gathering, and subjectivity is a pejorative term. Decisions are described in terms of a rigorous cost-benefit analysis, where different issues can be quantified and assigned ‘weights’ with a degree of precision that allows ‘finely balanced’ judgements to be made. These descriptions and metaphors are not just words, they are practices. They shape the way that things are thought and therefore the way in which things are done, in both an everyday and a performative sense of ‘done’ (Haraway, 1991; 1997). This performs planning in certain ways and undermines other possibilities. The NPGs felt compelled to operate in these ways, despite the implicit and explicit indications that Neighbourhood Planning was intended to enable a new way of doing planning.

Third, and following on from this, the particular ways in which the examination and the Examiner were figured by LPA officers, consultants, and the NPGs themselves, had the effect of further reinforcing this approach, inducing a “*hardening of the*

categories” (Verran, 1998: 241) of objectivity, evidence and reliable knowledge. As the imagined embodiment of this specific rationality of planning, the Examiner functions like a future-situated panopticon (Foucault, 1977). An imaginary figure was constructed and imbued with particular opinions, judgements and requirements - none of which exist in legislation or regulations, in policy or guidance - and these assumed characteristics were used as a disciplinary device to control and limit the work that the group did in the present. These assumptions were essentially a distillation of the Modernist theory of knowledge into the figure of an idealised expert planner (as interpreted by the NPGs, consultants, and LPA officers) rather than the dispositions of any actual individual who might eventually be responsible for examining the Plan, or of the rules and regulations which would guide him or her in that task.

These effects were compounded by the extent to which the consultants constructed the conditions of possibility for the NPGs, as discussed in Chapter 7. The interpretations that consultants (and LPA officers) made of the requirements of the examination and the Examiner were influenced by their own professional background and experience in the planning system outside of Neighbourhood Planning, facilitating the ‘creep’ of meanings and competences across practices (Shove, 2012). This was illustrated by the repeated reference of consultants in both case studies to the Examiner as “*the Inspector*”: a Planning Inspector would conduct an examination of a Local Plan, with very different standards and requirements to the examination of a Neighbourhood Plan. The consultants appeared to treat the examination of Neighbourhood Plans in these case studies as requiring the same sort of evidence as that of Local Plans, albeit perhaps to a less rigorous standard. This disregarded the specific intention of Neighbourhood Planning of pluralising evidence by valorising local knowledge.

Consultants' commitments and entanglements in the Neighbourhood Plan are also not the same as the NPGs: while they overlap, they do not align. The consultants' aim is primarily to get the plan through examination (rather than ensuring that it goes as far as it can to achieve the NPGs aspirations), which is again likely to lead them to promote the use of forms of evidence that are tried and tested in the expert planning arena beyond Neighbourhood Planning. In fact, the very openness and absence of firm guidance may also contribute to the tendency to fall back upon that which is known to be acceptable in other planning arenas rather than to experiment or push the boundaries with forms that may better reflect participants' experience of place. Of course, the technologies of participation relied upon by consultants and NPGs alike often also tend towards the production of evidence in this mould. All of this places the NPGs under very considerable pressure to adopt conservative approaches to the evidence and policies that they bring forward, self-censoring and self-regulating in an attempt to make them fit within established norms that were not intended for Neighbourhood Planning, and/or to submit to their translation by consultants (Parker et al., 2015; 2016; 2017).

NPGs must indeed show that they are in command of technical information, that they can mobilise the portrayal of place as abstract space. Successfully enacting the expert identity is one vital element to successfully doing Neighbourhood Planning. It is arguably enacting this identity that more than anything generates the shifts in power relations with external actors, that generates the NPGs' capacity to act in a reproduced expert-agency coupling. It guarantees the epistemic authority of the NPGs and their evidence. But as these stories illustrate, this comes at the cost of suppressing,

concealing and highly imperfectly translating the local knowledge and care which is supposed to underpin Neighbourhood Planning: of being unable to represent the world as it is experienced.

The implication of this is that NPGs cannot evidence the relations with place that motivated them to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan in the first place, or adequately capture the knowledge and values of the rest of the neighbourhood. This can result in apparent betrayal of their intentions by enacting neighbourhoods that are quite different from the ones that they sought to plan for. Bradley describes this as “*the alienation of Neighbourhood Planning*” (2018a: 29). Both NPGs I worked with felt that the remote, distanced knowledge that their consultants and other planners dealt in, and which they felt they had to conform to, failed to match up with their lived experience of place. Indeed, it often did not even make sense to someone who knew the place well - e.g. Robert complained on 30.09.15 that after a year he was “*sick of educating the consultants about Oakley*”, and as discussed in Chapter 5, Town A NPG felt the need to physically take their consultant out on a tour around the village to “*re-familiarise*” him with its material specificity. This suppression of lived experience in favour of remote abstraction results in documents which are

“dry as dust. Life’s juices have been squeezed from them. Emotion has been rigorously purged ... [instead] they serve to perpetuate a myth of the objectivity and technical expertise of planners. In doing so, these documents

are nothing short of misleading at best, (dishonest at worst), about the kinds of problems and choices we face” (Sandercock, 2003: 21)³⁵

This means that Neighbourhood Planning, essentially, is not achieving what it set out to do. In practice, it prevents the ways that people know and care about place from being articulated or explicitly mobilised in support of Plan policies. There is a need to be both more open and more analytical about all the knowledge and value claims being brought to bear. It is not the case that all claims are equivalent. But it is the case that all require investigation and analysis, and that expecting one way of knowing to be framed in terms of another is fundamentally inimical to the intentions of Neighbourhood Planning. Echoing Helen Verran, we still need to find better ways of ‘going on together’, of working knowledges together in less dominatory and exclusionary ways (Verran, 1998; Watson-Verran and Turnbull, 1995).

This need is amplified by the recognition that planning and producing evidence is performative. It enacts multiple NPG identities, as discussed in Chapter 5, and it also enacts multiple neighbourhoods, making some aspects visible and others invisible, supporting specific ways of knowing and acting and undermining others (Mol, 2002; Moser, 2008). It “*modifies the perception and material production of place as the object of that knowledge*” (Bradley, 2018a: 24). Plan policies can only be justified based on the evidence presented to the Examiner. Different evidences will represent the neighbourhood in different ways – will, indeed, represent different

³⁵ Sandercock, an award-winning urban planner and academic specialising in community planning and multiculturalism, is here talking about planning documents in general, and the documents of Neighbourhood Planning have tended to follow this pattern.

neighbourhoods. Only the neighbourhoods that are represented – not those that are silenced or concealed – can be planned for. The neighbourhood as depicted in the Plan is the one that future decision-makers will encounter. Decisions on whether proposals comply with the Plan or not will not be taken by residents and will not be taken in the Neighbourhood Plan area. They will be taken by experts and quasi-judicial decision-makers, at a social and spatial remove from the lived experience of place. Only what is made visible through policy will be accessible in these encounters, and only what is made visible in evidence can be made visible in policy.

6.7 Conclusions

There are many ways that the characteristics of a place can be known, valued and measured (Foster, 1997; Massey and Thrift, 2003). As established in Chapter 5, NPGs need to draw on different types of knowledge to enact different types of legitimacy. The planning system is an arena that brings together different kinds of knowledge and values, of varying degrees of commensurability. As Rydin and Natarajan (2016) acknowledge, the kind of knowledge-value hybrids that are associated with the NPG identities ‘in’ and ‘of’ the neighbourhood tend to be excluded from consideration unless they can be translated into a different type of concern. But these are often things that really matter to people. It is precisely because they have richly textured meaning both that they are important, and that public decision-making struggles to find a place for them. Neighbourhood Planning, by invoking local experiential knowledge and place attachment among its grounding principles, appeared to offer just such a place.

However, Neighbourhood Planning as currently practiced tends to reproduce the ‘purification’ of processes and entities that are necessarily hybrid, as the diverse knowledges drawn on by the NPGs are reduced to an epistemology of abstraction. Paradoxically, it appears to reify the very kinds of knowledge that it was intended to provide a complement to, through the pressures to adopt the “*knowledge, understanding and linguistic resources*” of the expert planner to engage successfully with the system (Matthews et al., 2015: 62). In practice, affective and material dimensions that are central to Neighbourhood Planning in official discourse tend to be suppressed. This frustrates participants even as they actively take part in that suppression, in order to conform to implicit and explicit assumptions about what kinds of knowledge can count as evidence, subject to pressures that “*arise as distributed social cognitions and emergent intentionalities in encompassing flows and gradients of power*” (Stirling, 2016: 260). By continuing to privilege the remote knowledge of abstract space over the lived knowledge of meaningful place, it excludes already-ongoing material ecologies of participation in place and community: the messy sociomaterial encounters from which knowledge and care about place emerge (Bødker et al., 2017; Chilvers and Kearnes, 2016; Marres, 2012). The practice of Neighbourhood Planning is effectively isolated from the countless other practices which are intended to inform it.

There is, of course, a need for technical evidence and expert knowledge In Neighbourhood Planning - increasingly so, as guidance on requirements has developed, and developers have shown themselves willing to use their financial and other resources to find any technical weakness that can be exploited (Parker et al., 2017; Bradley, 2018a). But there is also a need for space to be made for other, non-

conventional approaches to evidence that can deal more directly with the lived cares and concerns of residents³⁶. If Neighbourhood Plans are produced in the same way as Local Plans, asking the same kinds of questions, valuing and legitimising the same kinds of evidence and the same objects of knowledge, drawing the same boundaries around facts and values, objectivity and subjectivity, then they will also reproduce the same problems and dissatisfactions. What questions are asked, and how they are asked, frame and constrain the answers that can be given. Challenging these boundaries and the practices that produce them opens up two distinct but related possibilities: a mode of planning that is more responsive to the lived experiences of its local participants, and a deeper, broader, and more open understanding of knowledges as situated and hybrid rather than objective and absolute (Haraway, 1988; 1997). The legal, policy and discursive frameworks in which Neighbourhood Planning is located still offer the possibility of exploring these wider understandings of what it is to plan. And while there is much in the current practice of Neighbourhood Planning that militates against and stifles these wider understandings, there are also indications of difference being done to relations, inscriptions, and outcomes (Bailey, 2015; Bradley and Sparling, 2016; Bradley, 2017b).

³⁶ Some authors have suggested that, on the contrary, NPGs just need to become more professionalised and get better at producing technical evidence in order to resist developer challenges (e.g. Parker et al., 2016). There are good reasons for this – developers have attacked Neighbourhood Plans through the courts as well as at planning appeals, and they do need to be robust enough to withstand challenge. However, where NPGs and their Plans have been censured (in examinations, appeals, or courts) for not having adequate evidence, it has not been because they have attempted innovative forms of evidence production or presentation, but that they have attempted to reproduce technical, abstract forms of evidence and have made errors – which is not surprising, because they are not experts in producing technical information, but rather experts in the lived experience of place. That is their moral authority for acting and that needs to be more strongly acknowledged and foregrounded in the kinds of evidence that are produced and the ways in which they are presented. As Sturzaker and Gordon (2017: 1335) note, *“that the courts appear largely willing to avoid an excessively technical approach to the Neighbourhood Planning rules is significant.”* Neighbourhood Planners are at risk when they attempt to produce (or to ‘fix’) technical evidence beyond their technical competence, not experiential evidence which represents their qualifying competence.

Neighbourhood Planning, as nationally inscribed and locally enacted, is doing politics, not only with how the material form of the neighbourhood will change over time, but with what counts as valid knowledge and evidence. A more explicitly open framing of what evidence can consist of in Neighbourhood Planning could help to both undo the naturalisation of claims that are objectified as matters of fact and enable a more adequate consideration of claims that are effectively excluded as being insufficiently factual. This would do the politics of planning differently, by making different versions of the neighbourhood visible and enabling different responses as a result. In the following chapter I explore how Neighbourhood Planning has disrupted power relations sufficiently to enable material differences to be made in Oakley and Wroston, but has also reproduced the categories on which those relations are based and therefore rendered the NPGs vulnerable to displacement.

Chapter 7: Expertise, agency and power

“In theory, planning was always supposed to give local communities a say in decisions that affect them. But in practice, communities have often found it hard to have a meaningful say. The government wants to put power back in the hands of local residents, employees and business, councils and civic leaders - those who know best the needs of their local areas.”

(DCLG, 2012b: 3)³⁷

“This will lead to a fundamental and long overdue rebalancing of power, away from the centre and back into the hands of local people... as planning shifts away from being an issue principally for ‘insiders’ to one where communities take the lead in shaping their own surroundings.”

(The Conservative Party, 2010: 2)³⁸

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I further problematize the description of Neighbourhood Planning as a transfer of power from state to communities. In Chapter 5 I distinguished NPGs from their neighbourhoods, and characterised them as enactments of three distinct identities in relation to those neighbourhoods. In Chapter 6 I reviewed one of the key processes through which those identities are enacted, and by which one specific identity comes

³⁷ Extract from Government briefing note on Neighbourhood Planning.

³⁸ Extract from Open Source Planning, the Conservative Party Green Paper that formally established the concept of Neighbourhood Planning.

to dominate the representations produced and performed by the NPG. In this chapter I explore the effects that these enactments have on relations of power.

Drawing on ‘post-Actor Network Theory’ and feminist material semiotics, I re-frame power as an emergent effect of practices enacted in sociomaterial networks. I propose that the creation of the two new actors – the neighbourhood and the NPG – disrupts existing patterns of relations. I show how this disruption enables the NPGs to have effects on policy- and decision-making that would not otherwise have been possible. However, I then go on to show that while specific actors and relations are reconfigured, the category of the expert is reproduced and the expert-agency coupling along with it. While the NPGs are partially able to inhabit the figure of the expert, they are also de-centred from this figuration by accredited professionals in a variety of ways. As power is manifested through the ability to be enacted as expert, the NPGs are heavily constrained as well as enabled by the disruptions to power enabled by Neighbourhood Planning. Throughout, I draw attention to the role of materials, inscriptions and devices in enacting expertise.

7.2 Re-framing power and reconfiguring relations

Neighbourhood Planning is commonly presented as “*the redistribution of power from the centre downwards and outwards*” (Sturzaker and Shaw, 2015: 604). This sense of power being held by insiders at the top or the centre (and being withheld from ‘communities’, at the periphery) was shared by both the NPGs I worked with. Many of the meetings I attended in the first few months made reference to the individuals, institutions and practices of the LPA as being both spatially and socially remote from

them – physically distant from their neighbourhood, and also removed from their understanding of and wishes for it (Allen and Crookes, 2009). There was a feeling, that the NPGs believed was widely shared, that the LPAs were not acting on their behalf, did not take into account their local knowledge, and did not care about the neighbourhood's wishes. They believed that the wellbeing of the neighbourhood was deprioritised in favour of abstract strategic goals such as economic growth and housing targets. This was succinctly summed up by Oakley NPG member Martin, saying “*You mention the LPA in Oakley and people just go ‘thhhpt’*”, and mimed spitting on the ground (21.04.15), while Stephanie, in discussing the origins of the Neighbourhood Plan, explained that in her view “*the community felt excluded, let down, betrayed by the LPA*” when they produced their strategic Local Plan a few years previously (29.03.17).

Drawing on the ‘sensibilities’ of ‘post-Actor-Network Theory’ (Law, 2008a; b) I consider power not as a property that can be possessed or given, but rather as a distributed effect that is enacted through particular practices. Power can be understood as the capacity to act – agency - and to have effects. But this capacity only arises through the complex webs of sociomaterial relations that actors are composed of and a part of. Without these specific associations in particular more-than-human networks, that capacity (and indeed, that actor) would be different. Agency is thus a product of relations between actors, rather than a cause of those relations (Latour, 1984). It takes work to maintain these arrangements, but also, once established, it takes work to re-arrange them.

Framed in this way, Neighbourhood Planning can be considered as a practice which does some of this work of re-defining and re-assembling actors in new sets of arrangements. As outlined in Chapter 5, two new mutually-dependent actors are produced at the same time: the neighbourhood, and the NPG as its 'spokesperson' (Callon, 1999). This is achieved by both reconfiguring the relations between the elements that come to constitute that actor, and the addition of new elements, e.g. policy, legislation, and the associated technologies of participation, materials, devices and inscriptions. The production of those actors in turn reconfigures relations with other actors that have a relationship with the neighbourhood. The most significant of these is perhaps the LPA – the insiders from whom power is ostensibly being redistributed into the hands of communities, the centres to whom these neighbourhoods felt themselves to be peripheral. The enactment of specific fluid and in-tension identities confers legitimacy on the NPGs, without which their capacity to act would be severely limited. This both enables and is enabled by the (re)configuration of their relations with other actors, in particular the LPA (Law and Mol, 2001; Law, 2002).

Through these new arrangements they were able to generate effects that would not previously have been possible. In both cases, fairly early on in the process a change became evident in the approach of the LPAs and the NPGs towards each other, as the NPGs developed distinct identities that distinguished them from 'the community' at large. Their status as an expert group doing 'real' planning associated them with networks of power and expertise from which other instantiations of 'the community' have been excluded as they came to be able to at least partially inhabit the figure of the expert (Haraway, 1997: 11). Their new position in the reconfigured network, as

spokesperson for the neighbourhood, performed them as a more legitimate representation of the community than the community itself. This change in relations altered the attitudes and actions of the NPGs, LPAs, and other significant actors such as landowners and developers. For example, I noted on 14.05.15 in Wroston that

“The LPA planners have asked to be invited to the next meeting – initial enthusiasm from the NPG ... There is markedly less animosity towards the LPA than has often been the case, they are here viewed as wanting to help, engage openly, find out what’s going on.”

Both LPAs sought and arranged meetings with the respective NPGs, in which both ‘sides’ got to shape the agendas and participate in at least some ways as equals (e.g. the officers’ greater technical skills and the NPGs’ greater knowledge of the local area were both acknowledged, and the officers explicitly recognised the NPGs as having equivalent Plan-making powers). Over the course of my fieldwork I joined members of both groups in meeting with groups of LPA officers on several occasions, and they shared documents and exchanged emails outside of these meetings.

At the first meeting between Oakley NPG and their LPA planning officers (24.04.15), I noted that, after some awkward moments earlier on, by the end of the meeting

“The diminishing barriers between the sides finally break out into expressions of collegiality when they hit common affective turf – e.g. difficulties of contacting the County Council, dealing with traders’ paradoxical perceptions

of parking problems [‘they want lots of on street parking, but not outside their shop’]; the LPA team markedly relax”.

A major local landowner and developer, Country Estates, also requested regular meetings with the NPG. Country Estates owned and were actively planning to build on the largest and most controversial site allocated for development in the Local Plan. The site was the last open green space separating three settlements, and its inclusion in the Local Plan had been vigorously opposed by the Town Council, local action groups, and many Oakley residents, including some members of the NPG. A subgroup of the NPG met with the director of Country Estates and his planning consultant several times. It was made clear on both sides in these meetings that the NPG and the developer had different perspectives on the details of developing the site. However, there was a dialogue that appeared to be meaningful and a willingness to attempt to reach compromises. Both sides acknowledged and took into consideration the positions and statements of the other and made apparently genuine efforts to see where the gaps between their positions could be narrowed. Reporting back to the NPG after a meeting in June 2017, Stephanie said *“It was so positive I didn’t really believe it ... it’s the first time a developer’s ever said ‘we’ll keep bringing it back and bringing it back until we’ve got something everybody’s happy with”* (06.06.17). Even the Town Council, the formally representative community body, had never previously been able to achieve the same level of access and dialogue with the developer.

The LPA invited the NPG to participate in the very early stages of drafting a Development Brief³⁹ for this site, far earlier than the point at which any representatives of ‘the community’ (e.g. the Town Council, action groups, residents in general) would normally be consulted, and the final document very much reflected their early input. Following an early discussion group, Stephanie reported to an NPG meeting on 13.10.15 that

“We are doing the right thing. This is the first time that I have felt that the Neighbourhood Plan has actually had some teeth. And it felt really good ... There are very few occasions when you feel that you’ve actually got, not the upper hand, but at least a bit of power behind you. And it was really good to feel that.”

and later continued that

“Everything that the Neighbourhood Plan has mentioned, practically, got mentioned and written down. It was just ... it was like sitting and watching the balls line up on the jackpot on the TV and you think, hey, haha, they’ve written it down. It was great!”

There was much intensive discussion between the LPA and the NPG (as well as within the NPG) about the interaction between the Neighbourhood Plan and the development brief. When it appeared that both the LPA and the developers were

³⁹ A Development Brief provides more detailed guidance on how specific individual sites should be developed, beyond the more generic and high-level policies contained in the Local Plan.

content that Neighbourhood Plan policies could directly inform the brief Stephanie commented to the NPG, “*Actually, this is a huge compliment, that the LPA think that we’re capable of actually doing that*” (05.01.16). In the final development brief, the southern part of the site was allocated as open green space, which aligned with the NPG’s ongoing attempt to have it designated as Local Green Space, against the landowner/developer’s stated wish for it to be available for building housing. This pushed at the boundaries of the rules for such designations – not only because it was part of a site that was allocated for development, but also because much of the acknowledged value of the site was future-oriented, i.e. it was being partly valued for what it could provide once the new development had taken place, rather than solely for its current value (e.g for recreation as the site was not at the time publicly accessible). If the Development Brief had not included this allocation, the designation as LGS in the Neighbourhood Plan could very easily have been argued to ‘undermine the strategic policies of the Local Plan’ at Examination. NPG members agreed that it would not have been possible for them to have these kinds of effects if they had not been preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. This was despite the technical relationship between the development brief and the Neighbourhood Plan being unclear:

Neighbourhood Planning powers only extend to producing the plan, not specifically to wielding greater influence over other planning matters. The site was eventually allocated as a Local Green Space in the Neighbourhood Plan, but when these discussions were taking place the Plan was at such an early stage of development that it would not have been considered to hold much weight if challenged. If the development brief had been adopted in advance of the Neighbourhood Plan without a clear indication that this part of the site would not be built on, it would have been

highly unlikely that an attempt to designate it as Local Green Space would have survived examination.

They were also able to produce a range of other policies that went above and beyond Local Plan policy. They prioritised a relatively central site for a residential care home for older people, within easy walking distance of essential services. There had been considerable pressure from developers to build such a home in other, less central locations which would have left the home's residents isolated. They required at least 35-40% of homes on larger housing developments to be one or two bedroom houses or bungalows (not flats), suitable for first-time buyers or for older people downsizing. They required new developments to show how they would provide safe walking and cycling routes internally and to key services, and to comply with a design guide intended to help new buildings respond to and cohere with the best of existing townscape character. Two key views were protected, as were dry stone walls - a characteristic local feature - and another Local Green Space was also designated in the final Plan.

The LPA in which Wroston is located was, during this time, in the process of producing a new version of its own Local Plan. So unlike in Oakley, where major development sites were already allocated in a statutory document, the site selection process was still underway and it was not a foregone conclusion where new development would take place. The LPA took the decision that, in areas where Neighbourhood Plans were being prepared, they would leave white spaces on their own proposals map (first definitively agreed with the NPG on 28.05.15). Effectively, they ceded control of what happened in Neighbourhood Plan Areas to the respective

NPGs – with the caveat that if the Plans were not sufficiently advanced by the time the Local Plan was ready to be submitted for formal consultation and examination, they would take back control and allocate sites as they saw fit. For Wroston, given the external pressures on the LPA, this would almost certainly have resulted in the two large sites surrounding the village on the northern and eastern sides being allocated for development, and the NPGs' key brownfield site in the centre of the village not being allocated.

Tony, the LPA planning officer who led on engagement with NPGs, explicitly stated in a meeting on 29.06.16, that he would be willing to support the Wroston NPG in over-ruling the established policy of the LPA and national Government to achieve the aims of the Plan, giving clear precedence to very local circumstances and wishes over national and district priorities and objectives. My fieldnotes record:

“Tony says that as building a new farm in open countryside would not normally be permitted (as departing from local and national policy which have a presumption against building in the open countryside), he strongly recommended either allocating a site for a new farm in the Plan, or identifying an ‘area of search’ where it would be located. The policy could also include a clause making permission for a new farm conditional on gaining permission to redevelop the existing site and on continuing as an active farm for a certain period. Tony would help with wording this”.

The LPA had initiated a Local Green Space designation exercise as part of their Local Plan development, over which they also relinquished control in Neighbourhood Plan

areas. Wroston had put forward three sites, of which the Authority had accepted two and rejected one. Tony acknowledged (15.02.17) that the NPG could take the designations forward through the Neighbourhood Plan instead, and he agreed to send all the documentation, including the original submissions and the LPA's reasons for approval and rejection, to the NPG. He also said that the LPA wouldn't object if all three sites were included – although he did advise them to look at their reasons for rejecting the third site, and to strengthen their arguments in response.

Most significantly, the LPA strongly objected to elements of the Wroston Plan throughout the process (the allocation of one specific site for housing, and the rejection of the two large sites and sub-divisions of them). They nevertheless continued to engage supportively with the NPG, attempting to persuade them to amend their policies and/or to produce different evidence to support them, but acknowledging their right to decide. In the independent examination where outstanding objections were judged, the Examiner sided with the NPG. Policies which were proposed by the NPG and supported by the neighbourhood (as far as this could be ascertained through the extensive consultation carried out by the NPG) but which were opposed by the LPA gained statutory status. The LPA had explicitly and repeatedly criticized the evidence on which these policies were based, but the Examiner considered the NPG's evidence able to withstand these criticisms. As discussed later in this chapter, the key piece of evidence was a landscape character appraisal commissioned and informed by the NPG, which directly contradicted the findings of an appraisal done by consultants working for the LPA. As well as this very significant achievement in terms of the allocation of specific sites, the final Plan also included an overall development strategy that was based on landscape capacity, with

detailed policy expressions of how new buildings should integrate with the existing built and natural environment. It also sought the maximum possible amount of affordable (subsidised) housing from new developments, encouraged small-scale growth of local businesses, and established a list of community assets and services to be protected.

The relations of the NPGs with the LPAs were thus markedly different from the relations of any other instantiations of ‘the community’ with the LPAs. They were trusted, supported, listened to, involved early on and meaningfully, and recognised as having the right to make decisions about their neighbourhood (within statutory limitations), even when the LPA or other significant actors disagreed with them.

Inscriptions that were central to the shaping of practices and decisions, but which were conventionally withheld from the public, were shared with them. This was almost exactly the opposite of the impression given by NPG members of the ways in which the LPAs had previously engaged with ‘the community’ on planning matters. The reconfiguration of relations between actors, enabled by the definition of the NPG as possessing expertise and the introduction of specific materials, inscriptions and devices, means that agency is enacted for the NPG as a very specific instantiation of community. On this account, Neighbourhood Planning does not devolve powers to already-existing communities, but rather produces new actors and redefines relations between actors in ways that enable these new actors to have effects. It reconfigures networks in such a way as to disrupt existing power relations and engender new form of agency. However, as well as enabling the NPGs to have these effects, these arrangements also constrained them.

7.3 Reproducing power relations

7.3.1 Reconfiguring actors, reproducing categories

Neighbourhood Planning is promoted as redistributing power downwards and outwards from insiders to communities. I have characterized it as producing new actors – specifically, ‘the neighbourhood’, and the NPG as its spokesperson - which reconfigure networks in such a way as to disrupt existing power relations, and to enact new forms of agency through these new actors. However, rather than inverting the expert-lay relation and breaking the expert-agency coupling (as suggested by the discourse advocating it), it reconfigured the actors to which expertise could be attributed, and which could therefore act and have effects. Rather than simply transferring power from the centre to the periphery, it generated new centres and new associated peripheries. This process stabilised new forms and arrangements of power – a process closely connected to what has been described as the ‘professionalisation’ of Neighbourhood Planning (e.g. Parker et al., 2015); the ‘becoming-expert’ of NPGs.

These new centres and peripheries are most obviously enacted between the NPG and the neighbourhood, in the NPG’s identity ‘apart from’ the neighbourhood⁴⁰. Indeed, when performing this identity, the attitude of the NPGs towards the wider neighbourhood often seemed to reflect the ‘deficit identities’ that are commonly performed (and resisted) between centres of expert power and their lay counterparts

⁴⁰ Even more peripheral to these new centres (and therefore from the new arrangements of power) are those places and communities – the vast majority - that are not undertaking Neighbourhood Planning (see e.g. Parker, 2017).

(Wynne, 1993). They are also mobilised to an extent in the NPG's identity as being 'of' the neighbourhood, in which they are detached through the technologies of participation from both their own messy and subjective affects, and from those which they are reporting.

It is these identities as centres of calculation (Callon and Law, 2005; Latour, 1987) which are enacted in their reconfigured relations with the LPAs. It is not the passionate, caring, embedded 'neighbour' but the lay-expert citizen planner who is trusted, listened to, and supported. At the same time as being represented as the legitimate spokesperson for the neighbourhood, the capacity of the NPG to act on its behalf comes precisely from their separation from it. It is their capacity to inhabit the figure of the detached, objective expert, in possession of the facts and applying an instrumentally rational logic to them, which is strengthened by these reconfigurations. They are able to have effects to the extent that they act within the expanded boundaries of the expert planners' community of practice (Wenger, 1998), mobilising its repertoire of resources in a joint enterprise.

The expert-lay divide is therefore also reproduced through the dominance and suppression of the different identities of the NPGs. The knowledge that is gained from each identity is necessary to perform a 'complete' NPG: epistemological authority of a sort is gained from each. But the knowledge from the 'apart from' identity is tacitly valorised⁴¹ as expertise; the knowledge from the 'of' identity is tacitly somewhat denigrated as 'just opinion' (albeit opinion that gains some status the more it can be

⁴¹ By the NPGs, LPAs, and other actors working within the dominant planning imaginary.

presented as an objective assessment), and the knowledge of the ‘in’ identity is tacitly denigrated as subjective and emotive (Cass and Walker, 2009). The valorisation and denigration of these categories and identities aligns with the existing states of affairs in the planning system (and more widely), which were central to the problems which the introduction of Neighbourhood Planning was intended to address. ‘The expert’ is re-figured through these sociomaterial practices, and power is re-enacted in the figure of the expert.

7.3.2 De-centring the new centres

Relations of power and agency are thus both reconfigured and reproduced simultaneously. The expert-lay divide and the expert-agency coupling are maintained, while the boundaries of expertise are shifted, to partially include the NPG but to continue to exclude the wider neighbourhood. The ways in which the NPG can be ‘done’ – the identities that it can perform – are also constrained at the same time as its agency is enacted: the ‘expert’ identity comes to dominate the others, which are associated with denigrated forms of knowledge. The performance of agency in the NPGs’ identity as ‘experts’ undermines their identities ‘in’ and ‘of’ the community, and strengthens their identity as ‘apart from’ the community.

However, even though the NPGs are produced as new centres of expertise (and therefore agency), they are de-centred in their relations with certified experts - consultants and other paid professionals. Governmental discourse – and the discourse of these professionals themselves – strongly reflects the oft-repeated maxim and *raison d’être* of Neighbourhood Planning that experts should be “*on tap, not on top*”.

In this section I will explore three examples where the promised inversion of power relations is itself inverted, and the reconfigured arrangements stabilise relations in ways that limit the NPGs' capacity to act by figuring them as not-expert. Woven throughout these examples I also emphasise the central role played by the expertise embodied in inscriptions of various types and the consequent agency of these materials in shaping the actions of NPGs and experts alike.

7.3.2.1 The conditions of possibility

As already observed, Oakley NPG members were largely from professional backgrounds, and possessed the kind of skill set that is considered necessary for developing a Neighbourhood Plan (as they self-certified in a skills audit during my first meeting with them on 03.02.15). Several of them had worked with, or employed, consultants in the past in their professional roles. However, from the outset, it was clear that control over the Neighbourhood Planning process was in the hands of their lead consultant (Andrea). In a meeting with the LPA on 22.04.15, Stephanie summed up their relationship as:

“They’re steering the steering group ... we’re providing them with lots of raw data, evidence, we prepared the vision and objectives and policy areas to consider, they’re thinking about how to make that into the shape it needs to be for a Neighbourhood Plan”

This reflects the almost ubiquitous use of paid consultants by NPGs (Parker et al., 2015: 528), driven by the relations in the networks of Neighbourhood Planning:

“The grant drives behaviour, and that is to employ consultants, and I have not yet seen a consultant that doesn’t try to work to a template ... they are targeting their offer on what they know the grant is and they can’t afford to do much in that budget. We are finding communities grabbing the grant and employing consultants as they think that is the easiest way of doing it, and then finding that key issues are left out ... [the consultants] get policies from other plans that they know got through the examination process.” (Bradley and Brownill, 2017b: 119)

The relationship between Andrea and Oakley NPG appeared to conform to this pattern. One way of reading this relationship would be in terms of competing interests and a power struggle: that the power of Neighbourhood Planning is taken by the consultant, not by the community or their representatives. But in the relational context of an actor-network, Andrea and her apparent power are just as much an effect of the network as the NPG and their apparent lack of it: she is held in place by the relations generated by the new legislation and policy and stabilised in the practices of doing Neighbourhood Planning. Her status and role as expert were not contested or disputed by the NPG but were mutually understood as being constituted by the arrangements of Neighbourhood Planning. This role was to explain to the NPG what they could (and couldn’t) do with a Neighbourhood Plan and to police this boundary. It was to help them articulate what they wanted to achieve within these parameters, and to gather information from them (which they, in turn, would produce through gathering evidence and consulting with the community). She would then use this information to

help her write the Plan, as Andrea explained to the NPG in her first meeting with them on 03.03.15:

“We’re trying to help you with the process so that you know what you can and can’t do ... We will find out what’s feasible, what’s technically possible”

“You’ll provide the evidence to start with, we’ll work out what’s out there already, what else we need. It’s all got to be based on real evidence”

“What we do today will enable me to make a skeleton draft Plan ... we want to find out exactly what you want for Oakley and what that means in practice for writing policies”

This first workshop was introduced, and referred to throughout and afterwards by all parties, as *“training”*, indicating a hierarchical relationship of expertise between consultant and NPG. Her ability to command and define what is *“real evidence”* and what is *“technically possible”* indicated her ability to define reality and possibility for the NPG. But her possibilities and realities were also defined by the material networks in which she found herself, mediated by, for example, particular inscriptions such as Plans that have already passed examination, Examiners’ reports, guidance documents and the texts of Court judgements, and the specificity of available grant funding.

Andrea repeatedly insisted that developing the Plan would be an iterative process, with the NPG helping to shape each iteration of draft policy to ensure that it did what

they wanted it to, and she frequently asserted that decision-making and ownership rested with the NPG:

“What we think is immaterial, it’s what you think that’s material. Our job is to take your recommendations, once you’ve got steering group agreement and the community behind you” (31.03.15)

“I won’t judge what you want, it’s your community, it’s your Plan, what you do is entirely up to you.” (19.05.15)

However, as the expert figure, Andrea controlled the process in three important dimensions, performed unquestioningly by both her and the NPG. Firstly, she controlled the individual meetings at which she was present. When she was present, she ran the sessions more like a team leader or a schoolteacher than a facilitator. She directed specific questions to the NPG, formed them into sub-groups, allocated tasks to them, took reports back from them, praised and encouraged them, and set them further tasks. The atmosphere produced was more of a manager directing her team than a dialogue between equal partners or a contractor working for a board, with efficiency rather than democracy as a guiding principle, as my fieldnotes record on 31.03.15:

“[Andrea] takes control, runs through the agenda on an ‘if you want a policy for x, you’ll have to do y, by z time’ basis ... Asks for volunteers to develop the vision, to be brought back to whole NPG. Checks they’re happy they know what they need to do, that the rest of the group are happy with that. Stresses

the need for a vision before they can move on to objectives. She's setting the discrete tasks – 'this is what you have to do'. Relationship seems to have shifted somewhat, she's not facilitating, she's managing, co-ordinating."

The NPG were able to 'push back' against this to an extent. For example, on 17.02.15 Stephanie encouraged the group to depart from the questions that Andrea had asked them to address and instead follow their own instincts about what was important, saying "*It's our local understanding of what the issues are that Andrea doesn't know about; it's our local knowledge that needs to be put in as well as the questions that Andrea is asking*". But overall, the pattern of "*steering the steering group*" remained a prominent feature, accepted by NPG and consultant alike as the natural order of things.

Secondly, Andrea controlled the overall process, like a producer recording a music track. Everything that the NPG did – in their extensive work between, as well as in meetings – was geared towards satisfying the requests that Andrea had made of them. Each of the subgroups (covering their allocated policy areas of housing, economy, environment, transport, health and wellbeing, and vision and objectives), were delivering their own partitioned pieces of work – as if laying down their individual tracks for drums, guitar, bass, vocals – but only Andrea had in mind (shaped by the inscriptions of previous Plans and templates) what the final piece would look like, how these different inputs would combine. This eventually led to a feeling amongst the NPG that they lacked direction and control. John captured their disquiet in an NPG meeting on 01.09.15:

“What’s been happening is, in a sense we’ve been driven by the consultants and what they’ve required from us to meet their if you like almost a technical specification and we’ve really thrown ourselves over the last two or three months into that to meet the consultants’ needs.”

and as Stephanie said during an NPG meeting on 27.10.15:

“The thing that’s partially holding us back now is that Andrea herself has not got a clear idea of what the gaps are, which is very annoying, actually, um, because we can’t work on it until we know, and I think we’ve got too much of some stuff and not enough of another ... so we’ll wait and see what she says.”

And this leads to the third, and perhaps most crucial, dimension of control. Andrea was in control of *actually writing the Plan*, of performing the alchemy that would bring together vision and objectives with evidence and transform them into policy. There was a strong sense throughout process that the NPG were providing Andrea with raw materials that she would then convert into policies. This crucial aspect of Plan production was taken for granted as being outside the competence of the NPG, and solely within the purview of the expert. This was illustrated in an NPG meeting on 01.09.15, while they were preparing for their community event in December. At one point, Julia asked *“will we have something from Andrea that we’re able to present?”*; later Andrew commented that it was hard to make detailed plans for the event *“until we know if she’s produced anything we can consult on”*. And on 2.10.15, Stephanie related that:

“What Andrea said was that ... if we wanted to protect the landscapes, we needed to be able to say why the landscapes needed protecting and which ones and so on, and then she would try and find a policy that matched what we wanted to do”.

This highlights the material agency of inscriptions in shaping the actions of professionals and NPGs alike. Andrea relied heavily on the embodied expertise of inscriptions⁴², her approach being to *“find a policy that matched what we wanted to do”* rather than to develop one based on the unique circumstances of the locality as experienced.

Once the consultants had produced draft policies, they did bring them back to the NPGs on several occasions for comment, to check whether they said what the NPGs thought they should to achieve their objectives. But their means of doing this was similar to some of the consultation practices of LPAs about which communities are very critical. For example, the NPG were initially asked to make comments just at a very high level, on the broad principles of what the policies were trying to achieve. On 12.04.16, on Andrea’s instructions, Stephanie repeatedly asked the group to focus on this level:

⁴² In common with other consultants, as highlighted by the planner officer quoted above: *“I have not yet seen a consultant that doesn’t try to work to a template... they get policies from other plans that they know got through the examination process”* (Bradley and Brownill, 2017b: 119).

“So, now this is, broadly agree the outline Plan, broadly agree ... I don't want us to get caught up on the minor corrections, it's the broader agreement to begin with.”

Months later, they were asked to comment on very specific details – the accuracy of descriptions, typos, formatting etc. They rarely had the opportunity to make ‘mid-range’ comments, below the level of ‘broad principles’ but above presentational detail.

The NPG took it for granted that this was how the process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan would unfold, as the expert-lay relation was continuously reproduced through the material encounters of meetings, draft texts, and accumulating evidence. It was not necessarily a source of dissatisfaction for them, and they never resisted or questioned it as an overall approach. At times they did chafe at it, e.g. Robert described Andrea's emailed instructions as *“the thou-shalt job from down south”* on 27.10.15, and they did have critical discussions amongst themselves, although they never confronted her directly. But these discussions were about the quality of specific pieces of work, not about the structures of expertise or arrangements of power relations. Indeed, they sometimes felt that these arrangements needed tightening rather than reconfiguring. For example, at their meeting on 27.10.15, the NPG were unable to identify how the policies suggested by Andrea mapped on to their objectives and the evidence they had provided her with (Sarah summed it up by saying *“I'm just baffled by her document, frankly!”*), meaning that they were unable to assess whether her policies would achieve what they had said they wanted, and what gaps may exist in the supporting evidence for each. In response, John suggested that

“what we need from her is a list of tasks that we’ve still to do. A clear list that we can see so we can work our way through it and tick it off, like a bullet-pointed list that she’s extracted out of the Plan, and said, ‘right, can you get on and do that?’ And then it’s clear where we’re going, because the problem was, after the last visit, I mean, it was alright when she was there, but when she went, I completely lost in my head what it was that she wanted us to do. So, I think she’s going to have to be much more specific in her requests of us really.”

The reality-in-the-making of Neighbourhood Planning in Oakley performed power, expertise and agency in particular ways that sedimented out through its practices and the materials, devices and inscriptions that they relied on. Andrea was interpellated from the outset as being in possession of specialised, expert knowledge, and therefore able to frame the Plan, what the NPG could hope to achieve, and how they could do it. This defined the conditions of possibility for the entire enterprise. These framings were maintained and reinforced throughout the process, by allocating individual tasks and making specific requests that would contribute to Andrea’s expert vision of the completed Plan, on the basis of privileged knowledge of what the independent Examiner would accept or find ‘reasonable’, as discussed further in the previous chapter. Andrea (along with her qualified planning colleagues) wrote the actual policies and supporting text, as they were enacted as being in possession of a specific skill set, being able to translate the NPG’s intentions and evidence into the required expert language, known colloquially as ‘planning speak’. And once those policies were drafted, only very limited amendments were permitted to be made to them.

As time went on, members of the NPG began to express a palpable sense of disappointment about outcomes and a disconnect between the work that they had done and the emerging Plan. In a meeting with specialist planning consultants who Andrea had arranged for them to work with on their housing policies on 04.12.15, the three members of the NPG present all expressed discontent:

“We’ve worked solidly on evidence until it comes out of our ears, but we don’t know if it’s the right evidence.” (Mary)

“We’ve had five versions of the main document now, we’ve tried to match up the emerging policies with the evidence we’ve collected and the things we want to get out of it, but it’s been really hard.” (Stephanie)

“We haven’t really had time to discuss the policies, but they’re very general, I think that as far as we’re concerned they’re a bit feeble, a bit lacking.” (Jane)

By the end of May 2016, there was a sense that the group could barely reconcile their almost-finalised Plan with their original intentions, or even recognise its depiction of their town, combined with feelings of impotence and helplessness:

“We started with a list of ideas about what people wanted, and they’ve been knocked out one by one.” (Stephanie)

“I just can’t see anything of us in there, it’s just like a document from the council, it doesn’t feel like Oakley.” (Jane)

“It doesn’t sound like our voice.” (Sarah)

“We’ve done all that work, and it counts for nothing.” (John)

The imaginary of Neighbourhood Planning which framed these actions and reactions enacted power in actors that could mobilise expertise through their association with specific devices, inscriptions, and professional qualifications. This imaginary holds together the material present and its possible futures in specific relations. It clearly illustrates the pattern identified by Parker et al. (2015), referred to above: the Government provides a grant for NPGs to hire specialists for technical or particularly difficult tasks, which reproduces the expert-lay divide. NPGs, performed again as being in deficit, contract consultants for tasks that appear to them to be particularly difficult for those defined-in-the-making as non-experts (in particular Plan-writing and *“identify[ing] the ‘policy space’ that the plan may choose to occupy and ... how to go about examining ... different ways in which it could be occupied”* (Bradley and Brownill, 2017b: 123). Consultants, aware of the limited resources available, tend to adhere to a calculative regime (Parker et al., 2017), and tailor and limit their interactions with NPGs to that parameter, often relying on the embodied expertise of inscriptions and devices (e.g. already-approved Plans, model forms of policy wording, Examiners’ reports, tried-and-tested surveys etc.) and importing practices - ways of doing and knowing - from their past experience in other parts of the planning system (Shove, 2012). As the experts, consultants frame the conditions of possibility for

NPGs by defining what can and cannot be included in the Plan and how it will be structured. This then shapes the work that NPGs do by providing a script to follow and re-scripting their aspirations “*often to the detriment of community desires and legibility*” (Parker et al., 2015: 530).

In Wroston, similar dynamics operated in the early stages of the process, which defined Scott, their consultant, in a central role. Scott drove the process along, co-ordinating the action, taking lead responsibility for the work that was considered most important and technical (as discussed in Chapter 6) and recommending a shape for the Plan, a structure which the group could populate with their own content. It was notable that, in the first few months, meetings at which Scott was not present were concluded much faster – without his input there was often little business to discuss, a point which the group frequently joked about. Scott would sometimes deal directly with the LPA - for example, on 19.02.15, when discussing further potential amendments to their Housing Needs Survey, I noted that “*Anne pointed out that if Scott's agreed his draft with the LPA then it's pretty much a done deal*”. The specific arrangement of relations between key actors only enabled them to act in specific ways: while the NPG were notionally in control, in practice decisions over form and content (in this case, with respect to what they then considered their key evidence-gathering device) could be taken elsewhere.

Scott took a different approach to Andrea, attempting to construct a different Neighbourhood Planning process. While Oakley NPG were constrained in their scope for action by assumptions about what was achievable and what the future Examiner would find ‘reasonable’, Scott urged his NPG to push for what they wanted, to test the

boundaries of the possible: for example, at a day-long workshop on 03.12.15 I noted that

“Scott suggests early on, and repeats several times, that the group, if they want to do or say something, should do so and ‘make the council say no, put the onus on them to show why you can’t. Otherwise you’re self-policing”.

Agency is enacted in experts, and expertise is enacted in and distributed through specific human and non-human actors. The NPG, by virtue of the legitimacy enacted through their multiple identities, is here performed as capable of challenging established policy and practice – which, as shown in the first section of this chapter, was in some cases possible. The imaginary enacted in Wroston appeared to have more expansive boundaries than that of Oakley – but in both cases, while the NPGs became active participants in the enactment of these imaginaries, they were originally defined by the actors in the specific expert role of NPG consultants. Any imaginary is a form of material control, both enabling and limiting the potential to act. Like Andrea and Oakley NPG, Scott and Wroston NPG relied heavily on the ‘safe space’ provided by inscriptions: for structuring their work on the Plan (from 03.09.15 they start to plan their work around a document that Scott had adapted from a template in the ‘Neighbourhood Plans Roadmap’, one of the key technologies of participation); for developing policy (as described below); and for producing evidence (as discussed in Chapter 6). Despite Scott’s encouragement to be experimental, the wider set of relations in which the NPG were embedded tended towards reproducing already existing modes of ordering and instantiations of expertise. Despite the consultants’ proximate role in defining the imaginary of Neighbourhood Planning and their relative

roles and agencies, these are already (constantly) being produced in wider circulations of expertise in the shape of these inscriptions and devices.

In May 2015, while the Wroston NPG were waiting to hear the results of the application for their next tranche of funding from the government, Rebecca asked what they'd do if the funding didn't come through. Simon replied, "*Having come to rely on Scott and Andy⁴³ to hold our hands through it all, I'd feel a bit daunted by that*" (14.05.15), indicating their reliance on external expertise: 'the community' felt unable to undertake Neighbourhood Planning without expert support and guidance, which inevitably shapes what it is that 'the community' can and will say and how they go about it – and even who and what 'the community' are enacted as. Without Scott's involvement, there was a hiatus in activity.

They trusted in his expertise and ability to do what was best for them, to provide a structure for them to work within, to frame their efforts. I noted on 05.03.15 that:

"Scott, as part of next tranche of funding, suggests considering a character assessment – formalising as evidence the kinds of things they've been saying. ... Scott also talks them through a series of things they may need to do for the next phase, including screening for SEA & HRA, sites surveys and ecological site surveys if allocating. Simon suggests and the group agrees that Scott writes up 'his own job description' for the next funding application, which they

⁴³ While my status in relation to both NPGs remained ambiguous, I was at times and in some senses seen as occupying a relatively 'expert' position, with prior knowledge and experience of the planning system and some insight into the wider operation of Neighbourhood Planning.

can then submit – i.e. he manages the process totally, he sets out what needs to be done, how to do it, and how long it will take. The group are interested in the content and the intention; they want the complicated, ‘experty’ parts of the process taken off their plates.”

As in Oakley, the NPG did not have a concrete imaginary of the eventual Plan, a clear idea of what it would look like, for most of the process. In a discussion about the shape of the Plan on 03.12.15, Simon (who, along with Ray, had the firmest grip on the process) said: *“I haven’t got a clear picture of the Plan we’re going to write ... we have these discussions saying we’ll cover this and that, but I’m not really clear about what that means.”* This initiated a long discussion about how the Plan would be developed, revolving around two opposing views – whether it should closely mirror the Local Plan (advocated by Ray), or be *“structured by the things you care about”* (advocated by Scott). These conflicting views resulted in the development of two different ‘skeletons’ on which the NPG and Scott began to hang the evidential and policy meat of the Plan, which caused some ongoing confusion and conflict. The Plan was seen as having a life and an agency of its own, of exceeding their grasp and control. As in Oakley, as I noted in an overview of an NPG meeting on 03.09.15,

“They have a sense that they have taken their eyes off the prize, that lots of analysis and evidence gathering work has been done but that they don’t really know what to do with this, and don’t see how it will lead to a Plan that will do what they want. They repeat several times that what should have been a small, focused project aimed at restricting housing growth to an organic rate to meet local needs has grown into ‘a monster’, with a much wider remit and scope

than they wanted, something they don't really feel that they can, or want to, handle."

However, unlike in Oakley, Scott was very reluctant to write the actual Plan policies, preferring to deploy his expertise in other ways – such as producing what he and the NPG conceived of as the most important evidence. The NPG were also reluctant to take on writing policies and tried hard to convince him otherwise. In the end, NPG member Ray took on writing the vast majority of the Plan, with regular, if limited, feedback from the rest of the group. However, this process also illustrated the central role that professional expertise continued to play at the heart of Neighbourhood Planning. Firstly, Ray was a retired Planning Inspector, and was therefore able to draw on his specialised knowledge and experience from the planning system generally – even though Neighbourhood Planning operates to unique standards and criteria. Secondly, he drew very heavily on the expertise embodied in an inscription: a draft Development Plan that the LPA were producing for an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) elsewhere in the district. Wroston is also in an AONB, and it had been a cause of considerable discontent that this other AONB received substantially different (and in the NPG's eyes, preferential) treatment compared to their own in relation to planning (discussed in detail on 03.12.15). Echoing this draft document fulfilled several functions for the NPG: it promised their sought-after equivalence of treatment between the two areas; it saved them from the burdensome and difficult tasks of deciding which policy areas they need to cover and precisely how to phrase those policies; and it provided them with institutional legitimacy in the form of the expertise embodied and embedded in that draft Plan. An oft-repeated sentiment in the

NPG was that the LPA couldn't criticise the Neighbourhood Plan if it was based on one of the LPA's own documents.

The NPG did however continue to rely on Scott to 'expert-proof' their Plan before they submitted it for examination: he agreed to check through the Plan once it was written; check that they had, in his view, adequate evidence in place to support it; and, crucially, write their 'basic conditions statement'. This is a document that sets out how a Plan conforms to the four basic conditions that set out its baseline conditions of possibility, and this conformity is what the independent examination is intended to test. But as Andrea admitted, "*The basic conditions statement is terribly technical, you know, even I don't understand it when it it's done*" (10.11.15). The key inscription that will demonstrate the Plan's legitimacy is represented as being beyond the grasp of the people who are ostensibly being given the power to produce the Plan – and even beyond some of the experts who are accredited with being able to assist them.

There is considerable openness and scope for interpretation around what constitutes, what is required of, and what is possible for a Neighbourhood Plan (Parker et al., 2016). But in many cases, rather than leading to experimentation and creativity, to testing the boundaries of possibility, this openness has driven participants to very conservative positions, to a strategy of 'safety first' in an uncertain new arena. This is marked by an extensive reliance on inscriptions such as Plans that have already got through the process as templates and standards (Parker et al., 2017). These inscriptions embody acknowledged expertise and enable that expertise to travel and 'reach in' to new sites from remote locations in space and time. Where NPGs may be inclined to try to develop ambitious and far-reaching policies, in order to enact their hopes and

intentions, the main concern of many consultants is often to get the Plan through examination – this being the mark of success for them (Parker et al., 2015: 530-531).

As shown in Wroston, even where consultants encourage a more experimental approach, this can also be an over-riding consideration for the NPGs themselves.

The reliance of consultants and NPGs on the embodied expertise of inscriptions and devices indicates the material agency of these artefacts and associations and the extent to which they are embedded in and defined by a web of relations. The actions of NPGs and consultants are driven not simply by their own interests, cares or concerns, but by, for example, the specificity of the availability and documented uses of Government funding. They are shaped by inscriptions that have emerged from the earliest experiences of Neighbourhood Planning and by the technologies of participation that have shown themselves ‘able to travel’ between neighbourhoods (Latour, 1995).

These materials close down the experimental possibilities of Neighbourhood Planning, as ‘what has been done’ - embodied in these inscriptions - morphs, not as a matter of necessity but with considerable frequency, into ‘what can be done’. A contingent and fairly narrow set of inscriptions (e.g. a few early Plans and their examination reports (which rarely contain sufficient detail to understand the specifics of why an Examiner has made a decision to reject or amend a policy); specific technologies of participation; other Development Plan documents beyond the realm of Neighbourhood Planning) rapidly come to sediment down into the horizons of possibility for resource-constrained consultants tasked with scoping out what a Plan can contain, how it should be expressed and how it can be justified. The conditions of possibility for the NPGs are thus limited, not by what legislation and policy enable them to do, but rather by the path dependencies marked out by material associations such as resource

constraints, inscribed precedents, technologies of participation, and reproduced hierarchical relations of expertise (David, 1985; Urry, 2004). Artefacts and procedures become sedimented into ongoing practices and circumscribe the field of possibility into the future, ‘locking in’ particular arrangements and relations (Arthur, 1994). These configurations markedly constrain the scope of the NPGs – and their consultants, for that matter - to be creative, experimental, and to push the boundaries of what Neighbourhood Planning can achieve. However, once we start to attend to the practices and processes through which Neighbourhood Planning is stabilised and simplified, we are informed about how they can be recomplexified, destabilised and opened back out again (Law and Mol, 2002).

7.3.2.2 The right letters

Over time, consultant Scott’s involvement with Wroston decreased, primarily due to the considerable time the NPG spent on assessing sites around the village for their suitability for housing. Their main interest was in the two large sites that enclosed the village on the north and east sides, marked on Figure 9 as WR1 (including WR1.1 and 1.2) and WR2 (including WR2.1)⁴⁴. These sites featured in the LPA’s Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and the potential for large-scale building on them had triggered the Neighbourhood Plan process. The other key site was the farm that the NPG wanted to help relocate in order to provide a housing site in the centre of the village (WR5), but they also investigated the other sites identified on Figure 9.

⁴⁴ Identifying names have been redacted from the map.



Figure 9: Map of sites assessed for the Wroston Neighbourhood Plan

The edges of the village facing both of the large sites are indented and ‘organic’ (i.e. not a flat wall of built development in a straight line). The site to the east of the village is made up of pastured fields, divided by hedgerows and fences, that slope gently down from the edge of the village towards the river, faced by a woodland on a steep slope (clough) rising up from the opposite river bank. There are unobstructed views out of the playing field in the middle of the village into this site and to the countryside beyond (Figure 10), connecting the heart of the village (Main Street) to its rural setting. The site is important in defining the village setting as nestling within the landscape, and the unique profile of the clough is a defining landscape feature seen from many places within and around the village. A well-used footpath runs parallel to the river (along the treeline Figure 11).

The site to the north is marked by a rare intact medieval strip-field pattern, divided by hedgerows and dry-stone walls. It slopes gently away from the village (Figure 12), providing open views out to a nearby castle and a more distant wooded ridge, the only side of the village that is not contained by steeply-sloping land. Historic green lanes connect with footpaths and tracks to the north and west (Figure 13).

The NPG, with wide support from the neighbourhood, felt that the land that was now identified as sites WR1 and WR2 played an important role in giving the village its sense of place, its particular feel, by framing Wroston and giving physical and visual access to the countryside. Their experience of these places was visceral and embodied, constituted by all the senses of sight, smell, sound, touch, taste and beyond, infused by memory and the kinaesthetic connection of walking in and through an environment



Figure 10: View out of playing field over site WR1



Figure 11: View south over site WR1 from road junction at corner of site WR1.1



Figure 12: View across site WR2 from western end



Figure 13: View into site WR2.1 from road

(Ingold and Vergunst, 2008) of being surrounded by living greens, birdsong, river chatter, spring flowers, a warm breeze on a hot day or the taste of rain coming in from the fells.

Initially, the NPG took on the task of this assessment themselves. They used template forms that had been used by the consultants who had conducted site assessments for the Development Plan in the other AONB in the LPA area. This partially mobilised the institutional legitimacy and embedded expertise of the forms, in an attempt to translate their embodied knowledge into a form that was legible as evidence.

However, Tony, their main contact at the LPA, strongly and repeatedly advised them that if they wanted to challenge the findings of the consultants who had assessed the sites for the Local Plan and had declared both the large sites to be developable⁴⁵, they would need a professional assessment carried out by a certified expert. The NPG therefore had to carefully weigh up on what kind of expertise they could best spend their limited funds. As described above, with access to the embedded expertise of the draft AONB Development Plan to help with policy-writing, they decided that their greatest need was for expert-produced evidence of landscape and visual impact of potential development. However, without Scott's involvement, progress on the Plan substantially stalled for many months while the issue of site assessment dominated.

⁴⁵ The LPA had employed two different sets of consultants, at different points in time, using different tools and templates, to conduct the assessments for a) the AONB development plan and b) the wider strategic Local Plan that covered the whole district. The NPG tended to rely on the templates of the consultants who had worked on the AONB Development Plan.

The landscape assessments produced by the LPA's consultants appeared technically robust at first, but on closer inspection lacked qualitative depth. They had used template survey forms (extracts reproduced below) specific to landscape character assessment, i.e. more specific than the more general site assessment forms referred to above, which covered a range of factors. The landscape survey templates had pre-defined categories arranged in a set of matrices to identify the most significant characteristics of the landscape (Figures 14 and 15). The shaded boxes represent the categories which are observable on this specific assessment. This gave the air of a more scientific approach, but as revealed by the NPG's analysis, artificially constrained the characterisation of the sites and led to inadequate and inaccurate descriptions. Their efforts to mechanically render landscape objectively knowable as an abstract summation of a sequence of pre-given categories removed any traces of meaningfulness from the description, erasing the sense of place which was central to the care and concern for these sites and their place in the neighbourhood. By attempting to render the landscape in objectively factual terms, they were unable to represent the landscape as experienced, and therefore the ways in which it mattered.

The NPG were very critical of the absence of a clear chain of reasoning from the 'objective' findings on the character of the landscape generated through the templates, to their conclusions. Ray described them as "*incoherent ... It looks like a cut and paste job, something knocked up in three minutes*" (03.12.15). They were also critical of the photos used to illustrate the assessments, as not being taken from the most appropriate spots or picking up on the most important features. Barbara critiqued the findings themselves in detail in late 2016 (following a meeting discussing the assessments on 18.08.16), highlighting relevant features that they had missed, misinterpreted, or

Landscape and Visual Field Survey Sheet

Project Name: _____

Receptor Ref: _____

Date of Survey: _____ Surveyor: _____ Sheet No.: _____

Assessment Type: Landscape

Key Landscape Elements

Topography	Vegetation Type	Woodland / Trees	Farming	Heritage	Built Form	Hydrology	Corridor
Flat	Freshwater Mosses	Deciduous	Pasture	Vernacular	Farm Buildings	Drained	Road
Low Lying	Wetland	Coniferous	Damp pasture	Designed Estate	Settlement	Stream	Railway
"Poljes" – Flat Plain / Depression	Coastal Marsh	Mixed	Improved Pasture	Ancient Enclosure	Tourism	Open Water	Canal
Low Limestone Hills	Saltmarsh	Shelterbelt	Limestone Pasture	Medieval	Pylons / O/H Power Line	Coastal	Lane
Drumlin	Reeds	Hedgerow Trees	Hedgerow	Parliamentary Enclosure	Masts	Natural pond	Green Lane
Limestone Pavements	Limestone Grassland	Wet Woodland	Fences	Modern Enclosure	Industry	Artificial pond	Bridleway
Gently Rolling	Marsh	Tree Clumps	Dry Stone Walls	Prehistoric Site	Wind Turbines	Lake	Footpath
Crag	Water Meadows	Isolated Trees	Field ditch	Hill top Enclosure / Fort	Power stations	Tidal	Cycle route
Scarp / Cliff	Saltmarsh	Scrub	Strip Fields	Religious	Camping	Estuary	CROW Access land
Rolling	Dunes	Alder / Willow Carr	Laid Hedgerows	Monument / Tower	Golf course	Raised Mires	Country Park
Glacial Erratics	Foreshore	Wind sculpted		Ridge and Furrow Field System	Brownfield	Fishing Lakes	Common Land
Distant Fells	Fen	Yew Woodland		Relict Parkland	Quarry / extraction		
		Coppiced			Urban		
					Spite Walls		

Figure 14: Extract 1 from consultants' landscape character assessment template

Landscape Visual Characteristics				
Pattern	Dominant	Strong	Broken	Weak
Scale	Intimate	Small	Medium	Large
Texture	Smooth	Textured	Rough	Rugged
Colour	Monochrome	Muted	Colorful	Garish
Complexity	Uniform	Simple	Diverse	Complex
Unity	Unified	Interrupted	Fragmented	Chaotic
Remoteness	Wild	Remote	Active	Busy
Enclosure	Vast	Open	Contained	Constrained
Form	Straight	Angular	Curved	Sinuous

Key Site Qualities						
Key Quality	Tranquility (Views and Noise)	Landscape Condition / Quality	Seascape Condition / Quality	Settlement Character	History	Countryside Access
Rolling pasture	Quiet with intermittent views north west along [REDACTED]	Rural pasture to edge of settlement		Historic rural estate settlement	Estate,	excellent

Figure 15: Extract 2 from consultants' landscape character assessment template

described inaccurately (such as footpaths, views, slopes, the presence of plant and animal species, visual connections with other places). These were places that the NPG knew intimately, in detail, at all times of the day and seasons of the year, in all weathers and lights and as they changed over time. They were keys parts of their stories of living in Wroston, of what it means to live in Wroston, as settings for experiences but also as lively, changing actors. The opinion of the NPG was that the consultants' assessments had been based on a single, brief visit to the sites and on inscriptions borrowed from elsewhere (e.g. higher-level landscape assessments, that

did not go into fine-grained detail at this micro-level). The superficial tick-box methodology of the consultants contrasted sharply with the NPG's in-depth knowledge of and engagement with the sites, and their conclusions were likewise different. Nevertheless, it was taken for granted by both the NPG and the LPA that only a qualified professional could produce acceptable evidence on the matter, echoing Raco et al.'s conclusion that "*Lay criticism of expert-led proposals is dismissed as a by-product of subjective vested interests and/or ignorance and misunderstanding of what it is that experts are seeking to do.*" (2015: 8). As I noted at a day-long workshop of the NPG on 03.12.15, where considerable time was spent discussing how to go about site assessment,

"The group agree on the need for 'proper evidence to properly challenge the council' (Elliot), and that only a properly qualified person 'with the right letters after their name' (Elliot) can produce this: 'I'm sure we could all do it if we had the matrix they used, but it would have no strength' (Simon)".

The NPG eventually commissioned an independent landscape architect from Cambridge, who had previously done work commissioned by their AONB, to carry out the assessments. They briefed her in detail about the work that needed doing, their critiques of the flaws in the original assessment, the background to the project and the context of the sites in relation to the village and the wider landscape, along with important viewpoints, approaches and travel lines. This new expert spent a whole day undertaking fieldwork, in contrast to the apparently hurried visit of the LPA's consultants. She walked around (and where possible through) all of the sites that the NPG had identified as having potential for development, not just the two large sites.

She also spent time walking around and through Wroston and its surroundings, building up a picture of the area as a whole and making use of the NPG's advice. She located her assessments of the sites within a broader appraisal of this area as a whole, which she divided into discrete 'character areas' while also recognising the interplay between these areas. As well as being deeply informed by the NPG's spoken and written information, her material practice of fieldwork therefore also more closely resembled their modes of engagement with place. She finalised her report in March 2017, after giving the NPG the opportunity to comment on a draft report. The final report reflected some, but not all of those comments, indicating that tensions remained between their ways of knowing. This tension had however been productive, and working their ways of knowing together had generated new representations of the world that enriched both lay and expert perspectives and generated new effects (Tsing, 2005; Verran, 2001). It was, however, still an expert-led process that benefitted from extensive lay input, rather than a genuinely co-produced process or output.

The final report provided a stark contrast to the assessment of the LPA's consultants, which it directly critiqued, as well as developing a much more in-depth and nuanced picture of the individual sites and their relationship to Wroston and its setting, relying on richly textured qualitative description rather than the pre-given categories of a matrix. Its methodology and conclusions differed greatly from the previous assessment, and clearly incorporated elements of the NPG's embodied and intimate knowledge of the place. Its conclusions and recommendations about the suitability of sites for development were also very different. Despite the production of new evidence by a qualified expert, the LPA continued to insist that their consultants' assessments were authoritative and therefore continued to object to the NPG ruling out

building on either of the large greenfield sites, and to proposing it on the brownfield site in the centre of the village. However, at examination, the Examiner accepted the NPG's evidence as authoritative and approved the Plan to be taken forward to a referendum in spite of the LPA's formal objections. The worked-together knowledges of the NPG's assessment were therefore able to 'travel' – to have effects in the kind of setting in which an LPA would usually expect to have their evidence and conclusions given greater weight⁴⁶.

However, the NPG had struggled for some time to find a suitable expert willing to take the commission. They were turned down by several who freely admitted that they did not want to be associated with an NPG opposing an LPA, as they feared that would damage their reputation and future commercial prospects⁴⁷. This again illustrates how the practice of Neighbourhood Planning does not live up to the promise of delivering power to neighbourhoods. In relational terms, the reconfiguration of relations generated through Neighbourhood Planning does not necessarily enact power in the neighbourhood: without alignment with suitable experts, they remain powerless. It also demonstrates how the configurations of expertise and agency extend into other material dimensions beyond the coupling between the ability to produce credible knowledge and the power to act. Experts are also humans who need to make a living, and their capacity to make a living interferes with their capacity to produce credible knowledge in complex ways. Experts' views may also differ dramatically – another local landscape architect met with members of the NPG on site to discuss a potential commission and concluded from a brief look around that she would probably come to

⁴⁶ As discussed in Section 7.3.2.2.

⁴⁷ In the relational terms of this thesis, the networks that constituted them could be destabilised.

similar conclusions as the LPA's consultants. The results of assessments are not truths out there waiting to be discovered, but are constructed through the materials, devices and discourses that are enrolled in the process. And crucial to this construction is the rigorously enforced boundary between the qualified expert who can legitimately make findings and draw conclusions, and the lay community who cannot: enacted as being trapped in "*irrationality and archaism ... muddled natives caught up in strange beliefs or representations of the world*" (Callon, 2009: 93).

7.3.2.3 *The long reach of the LPA*

As discussed at the start of this chapter, in both cases the LPAs had, in some ways at least, recognised the NPGs as belonging to the 'charmed circle' of experts. Their very presence at the table appeared to give them licence to present knowledge claims and arguments that would be listened to and recognised as coming from the 'right' side of the expert-lay divide.⁴⁸

The Neighbourhood Plan was acknowledged in these instances as being the NPG's territory, in which they have the agency conferred by expertise - the right to decide what the policies will be and how they will be justified. But despite this recognition of a boundary between the territories of the LPA and the NPG (Bradley, 2015), the LPA still reaches into Neighbourhood Planning spaces as an expert into a lay community.

⁴⁸ This illustrates how the NPGs are simultaneously recognised and performed as experts – they are at the table because they are recognised as experts, and they are treated as experts because they are at the table. Their presence is predicated on their ability to be enacted as detached from their knowledge claims through devices and technologies. However, once at the table, their claims do not (always) have to rely on these technologies – once their position in the category of expert is established, their claims automatically accrue greater weight.

Quite apart from the ‘basic condition’ requirement that Neighbourhood Plan policies must be in general conformity with the LPA’s strategic Local Plan policies, the influence of the LPA permeates the practices of Neighbourhood Planning in several ways.

They have formal roles from the start to the end of the process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan: designating (or rejecting) the proposed Neighbourhood Plan Area, and the Neighbourhood Forum in unparished areas; assessing whether submitted draft Plans meet the legal requirements to go forward to examination; organising the examination and associated formal consultation (including appointing an Examiner, in agreement with the Qualifying Body); making any changes to the Plan recommended by the Examiner; organising the referendum; and, eventually, formally adopting the Plan as part of the statutory Development Plan. All of these stages can and have produced conflict and contestation in a number of places and can directly or indirectly hinder or prevent the development of a Plan. While consultants play a major role in defining the conditions of possibility for NPGs in terms of shaping their imaginary of the enterprise of Neighbourhood Planning, the LPAs define those conditions in much more directly material ways, starting with the ability to define the boundaries that will determine how ‘the neighbourhood’ is constituted⁴⁹.

⁴⁹ See for example conflicts in Hackney (<https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2014/12/03/neighbourhood-forums-stamford-hill-rejected-hackney-council/>) and Bermondsey (<http://www.london-se1.co.uk/news/view/7803>), and especially Rickmansworth (<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/rickmansworth-neighbourhood-forum>), where the LPA chose first not to designate the area proposed by the incipient Neighbourhood Forum, but to designate a significantly larger area, and then rejected the group’s application to be designated as a Neighbourhood Forum on the basis that they did not adequately represent the newly enlarged area.

Alongside these formal roles, framed by their somewhat vague ‘duty to support’, LPAs also engage with NPGs to a greater or lesser extent as possessors of specialised knowledge, skills or resources. In both of my case studies, the LPA conducted a screening assessment on the emerging Plans to see if they required Strategic Environmental Assessment. They provided ongoing advice on what, in their expert opinion, the Plans and their evidence bases might need to make them sufficiently robust to pass examination. They provided maps that could meet the NPGs’ very specific requirements, which became some of the most significant materials in ordering the planning process and the engagement between social community and material neighbourhood. They played the role of ‘critical friends’ – but friends who occupy the upper element of the value-hierarchical dichotomy of expert and lay, and whose advice and critique therefore acquires more pressing force. In Wroston, this critical advice led the NPG to spend a sizable chunk of their limited funds on a landscape professional to produce evidence that was more commensurable with their lived experience. However, they continued to resist the pressure from the LPA to change their policies, and through aligning their hired-in expertise with other material allies (e.g. the LPA’s Development Plan for the other AONB in its area) were able to successfully take those policies through examination.

Perhaps their most important role in relation to Neighbourhood Plans begins after the Plan is adopted: they are the end-users of the Plans. Neighbourhood Plans can shape decisions, but those decisions are still made, in the first instance, by the LPA.

Decisions may also be taken at an even greater literal and figurative distance from the communities who produced the Plans. Developers can appeal against LPA decisions, which are then decided by Planning Inspectors or by the Secretary of State, and the

Secretary of State can also call in or recover cases to decide him/herself. It is commonly accepted that different policies in a Development Plan will be, to varying degrees, in tension with each other, and that it is for the discretion of the decision-maker to decide how much weight to give such competing policies. And even the most clearly-expressed and finely-crafted planning policy is open to a degree of interpretation⁵⁰. So while the neighbourhood now has the power to produce a Plan (albeit a rather limited and constrained power), the power to interpret that Plan's meaning and its relation to the Local Plan and to other material considerations remains with the experts and decision-makers in the LPA, the Planning Inspectorate, and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. This ensures that the expert/lay, citizen/decision-maker 'double divide' continues to be performed (Callon and Rabearisoa, 2008). The actors' relations are reconfigured, to an extent, as far as the practice of Plan-making is concerned, but they remain undisturbed with regard to decision-taking. Burns and Yuille (2018), in an analysis of a large sample of appeal decisions involving Neighbourhood Plans, show that in very many cases other policy considerations are able to 'trump' Neighbourhood Plans, leading to decisions which conflict with those Plans.

7.4 Conclusions

⁵⁰ For example, in December 2015 the Milton Keynes LPA decided that an application for a new shopping centre was not in conflict with the recently-adopted Central Milton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan, and this decision was confirmed by the Secretary of State in June 2017 – while the Milton Keynes NPG remained adamant that it directly conflicted with their Plan. See <https://www.planningresource.co.uk/article/1439947/javid-rules-milton-keynes-mall-extension-not-compromise-pioneering-neighbourhood-plan>, paywall protected.

Despite the rhetoric of community empowerment and letting local people rather than experts and insiders ‘do’ planning, the figure of the expert retains a central position within Neighbourhood Planning: “*citizens achieved the status of (lay) planners but their successful incorporation in the profession reinforced the universality of abstract rationality and underlined the exclusion of other spatial cultures*” (Bradley, 2018a: 31). This is in no way intended as a critique of expertise or of experts. There is of course technical work to be done that non-experts will not have the skills or experience for; there are challenges that NPGs will not feel able to tackle alone; there is specialised knowledge that is essential for informing the actions and decisions of NPGs, and contextual and processual knowledge that would be costly and time-consuming for them to re-discover themselves with each new Plan. However, my aim “*is to contribute to the politicization of the ongoing innovation process not by demonizing hidden interests and mobilising for or against a particular design, but by showing up different partial realities of politics as they become articulated and selected in the process of articulating methods of participation*” (Voß, 2016: 251). It is an exploration of the ways in which the rhetoric of community empowerment conceals the continued valorisation of the expert position, the ways in which the figuration of the expert is achieved (Haraway, 1997), and the relational processes through which the expert-agency coupling and expert-lay relations are simultaneously reconfigured and reproduced⁵¹.

⁵¹ Where the literature engages with the role of experts, it is often to discuss the effective privatisation and marketisation of planning, in terms of a shift of power and resources from the public to the private sector, rather than addressing the ways that power relations unfold between communities, NPGs and the experts that both serve and shape them (e.g. Bailey and Pill, 2015, Lord and Tewdwr-Jones, 2014, Lord et al. 2017), although there are some notable exceptions (e.g. Parker et al. 2015 and 2017, which discuss the constraining and re-scripting of community desires into more conservative forms through the interests and commitments of experts and other pressures).

Experts play integral and multiple roles in the practices of Neighbourhood Planning, but these are not made highly visible. The discourse of Government, Neighbourhood Planning support agencies, and the specialists themselves all emphasise the devolution of power and the ability of communities to populate Plans with the issues that concern them, rhetorically placing them at the top of the decision-making hierarchy in ‘community-led’ Neighbourhood Planning. The Plans themselves, publicity around them, national policy and guidance all refer to experts in vague and general ways (if at all) as being in supporting roles. Their active and central involvement is literally written out of the inscriptions that are the outputs of the process. Little attention is paid to how experts’ relations with NPGs frame specific enactments of Neighbourhood Planning, order processes and translate material relations into inscriptions in ways that are acknowledged as legitimate – all of which, in the end, underpins NPGs’ capacity to act.

Even less attention is paid to the agency of the inscriptions, e.g. templates, Examiners’ reports, and adopted Plans, which order the imaginaries and actions of experts and NPGs alike. These are rather presented as neutral means of facilitating the achievement of the NPGs’ intentions and requirements, not as actively shaping them⁵². These networks of human and non-human actors constitute the realities in which the NPGs operate, and which they subsequently reproduce through their own enactments. The tendency to devalue local and non-accredited actors, and the use of artefacts, embodied expertise and institutional legitimacy to close down contestation or experimentation reflects Rydin et al.’s (2018) findings at the other scalar ‘end’ of the

⁵² Although see Rydin and Natarajan (2015) for discussion of the materiality of community consultation in Neighbourhood Planning.

planning system, in inquiries into Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. But while this kind of technoscientific closure might be expected in such a large-scale, highly formalised arena, its ‘bleeding’ into the arena of Neighbourhood Planning is perhaps more surprising.

The contingent realities of the Neighbourhood Planning process constrain (as well as enable) the actions of the NPGs, ordering their imaginaries in specific ways, sometimes to the extent of pushing them into conservative, risk-averse positions that do not necessarily serve their interests well or reflect the individuality of their particular situation, and which reinforce their reliance on the figure of ‘the expert’. NPGs often show a healthy scepticism towards ‘purified’ expert knowledge, but nevertheless recognise its power and status. They are very much aware of their own framing as not-expert-enough. They are aware of the partial and situated nature of their experiential knowledge, and attempt to purify it into the universal, abstract knowledge of expertise. However, they are also aware of the partial and situated nature of the knowledge of expertise, because they see its faults and its flaws in its failures to connect with and represent their experiences of place. Liminaly positioned as not-expert-enough, they are able to view the situated truth of various knowledges from perspectives that are not available to the unmarked subjects of expert objectivity – but struggle to represent this in acceptable material forms (Haraway, 1997; Harding, 2008).

The simplifications made by experts in order to translate a messy and complex intersection of social and material relations into a manageable, representable neighbourhood are not the only simplifications that could be made (Law, 2004); they

may not be those that the NPG would have chosen, and others would be possible within the legal and policy framework of Neighbourhood Planning. The reliance on templates and other inscriptions to produce evidence and Plans can result in standardised policies and a somewhat ‘identikit’ quality that appears markedly at odds with the stated intention of Neighbourhood Planning to be very locally specific, to draw out the special distinctiveness of particular places, and to do so using the deep and detailed knowledge and care that only local residents can bring. Both NPGs I worked with expressed concern about their consultants’ lack of local knowledge and their related tendency to ‘find’ policy solutions from elsewhere (although the NPGs also used inscriptions as templates and guides in their own work). The result of these processes were epitomised by Oakley NPG chair Stephanie on 29.03.17, when she reflected on the shrinking of the Plan from their original ambitions to “*the smallest shreds of what we’d wanted to do*”, and NPG member Jane on 12.05.17 saying that “*It just doesn’t sound like us, I can’t see Oakley in there when I read it*”. And as Stephanie commented the following month “*We have tensions pulling in two opposite directions, Andrea keeps saying to make it simple, and we’re saying, ‘make it good!’*”. The path dependencies that have become sedimented down make it very difficult to “*make it good*” from the NPG’s perspective.

Beneath the veneer of co-production is a deep, intransigent and automatic privileging of expertise and associated ways of knowing. The practices of Neighbourhood Planning reproduce this at the figurative level, while simultaneously reconfiguring the specific actors that can enact the expert role. While in certain circumstances NPGs are recognised as being a new centre of expertise in their own right, in other ways they are decentred and relegated once again to the lay side of the divide. This acts to suppress

the expression of certain types of knowledge and value that are considered to be on the wrong side of the line that divides “*nature, facts, objectivity, reason and policy from ... culture, values, subjectivity, emotion and politics*” (Jasanoff, 2004c: 3). It closes down the potentially open and experimental space through the obduracy of taken-for-granted assumptions and inscriptions that valorise the impossible “*singular definitively prescriptive ‘sound scientific’ ‘evidence-based’, ‘rational choice’*” which excludes other ways of knowing and valuing from decision-making (Stirling, 2014: 88). It limits the potential for “*understanding what the social world means for the people who live in it*” (Davoudi, 2015: 320). However, it matters that, while the expert-agency coupling is reproduced, the NPG-as-experts sit in a different relation to their neighbourhoods than the experts they have partially displaced, in an identity-multiple that necessarily incorporates relations other than expertise. These relations, even if their visibility is marginalised in formal inscriptions, nevertheless persist and continue to frame the actions and understandings of the NPGs. The shifting of relations and identities as these multiple displacements take place close down some possibilities, but also open up other possibilities for intervention and different outcomes. It also matters that even within this expert-dominated framework, other ways of working knowledges together do sometimes emerge (Watson-Verran and Turnbull, 1995). In the next chapter I describe some of the NPGs’ attempts to work with marginalised knowledges, and then speculate about a theoretical framework which would enable a better critical engagement with such knowledges.

Chapter 8: Stories of Care and concern

“Planning documents, from maps, to models, to GIS, to plans themselves, do in fact all tell a story ... there is no such thing as mere description, or pure facts. There is always an author ... who is choosing which facts are relevant, what to describe, what to count, and in the assembling of these facts a story is shaped”

(Sandercock, 2003: 21)

“If it’s supposed to be a new way of planning, it’s for the planners to learn to speak like us, not the other way around. We get sucked into their world, they do and say things like this because it’s what they’re used to, and then we just go along with it because they know that they know what they’re doing, even if they don’t, if you see what I mean, because they’re the experts”

(Martin, Oakley NPG member, 12.05.17)

8.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses some of the neglected things in Neighbourhood Planning: the experiential knowledge and care for place that previous chapters have shown often get excluded. It begins by describing some of the attempts the NPGs made to engage with these knowledges and cares, and the difficulties they encountered in articulating, capturing and translating them into evidence. I suggest that if a process that is intended to be driven by community knowledge of and care for place struggles to engage directly with those matters, then some change of approach is needed.

I then draw on the concepts of matters of concern (Latour, 2004b) and matters of care (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017) to develop a speculative theoretical reflection on what such a change of approach might involve. I propose operationalizing these concepts in the production and evaluation of evidence for Neighbourhood Planning. This would support an imaginary in which the diversity of things that matter to NPGs and the neighbourhoods they speak for can be taken seriously and be capable of becoming ‘weighty’ evidence. It would also enable a more faithful rendering of the things that are made to matter as ‘facts’ (Latour, 1993), and would help avoid prematurely closing down which issues and sources of knowledge are included (Stirling, 2008), by acknowledging the partiality and situatedness of all knowledge claims. I briefly review narrative and other approaches that have attempted to integrate excluded knowledges into planning and related spheres, but which remain marginal. I suggest that Neighbourhood Planning, despite the foreclosures indicated in this thesis, remains an arena in which such a ‘modest’ form of planning could take place (Haraway, 1997).

8.2 Lost in translation

8.2.1 “*Felt in the bones*”

The NPGs produced representations that comply with the planning imaginary of abstract space, but which are nevertheless shaped by experienced place, emotion and connectivity. This enables them to make material differences (see section 6.3, and also e.g. Bailey, 2015; Bradley and Sparling, 2016; Bradley, 2017b; Brownill and Bradley, 2017; Vigar et al., 2017). However, it is also somewhat misrepresentative. It is not transparent. It does not allow ‘othered’ knowledges and ways of knowing to be

opened to examination: analysed, interpreted and worked together with dominant ways of knowing. The automatic privileging of the language and logics of abstract space also prevent an adequate interrogation of claims couched in those terms, by black-boxing their complex situatedness and partiality. The way that evidence is figured therefore risks replicating the situation common across the rest of the planning system, in which “*planners end up thinking with only part of their mind about part of what matters to people, part of why they act as they do, and part of what would move them to act*” and where “[*t*]he resulting partial understanding is undermined by the resulting misunderstanding” that this represents a complete picture (Baum, 2015: 513). It performs certain versions of neighbourhood (and of Neighbourhood Planners) at the expense of others.

As previously indicated, NPG members and other residents had a deep sense of what made their neighbourhoods valued. However, articulating this sense was an entirely different matter. As Tuan (1975: 165) concluded, the experience of and relationship with place is “*felt in the bones*”, and for Metzger,

“places exist in registers of intensities that are wickedly challenging to grasp or enumerate, to put into words or agree upon a definition of, to map or sketch exhaustively – at least without committing a serious fallacy of unwarranted reduction. Place-phenomena nevertheless appear to be crucial to be aware of in any endeavour to understand the complex entanglements of social realities” (2014b: 90).

The kind of experiential engagements that people have with place - crucial components of sense of place and how we know and value our surroundings - are often tacit, felt, affective and/or corporeal, and hard to articulate. The difficulties in expressing them are magnified in a knowledge tradition and practice that tends to marginalise such ways of knowing as a matter of course. They are not considered to be evidence, or material considerations⁵³ - not the kind of thing that planning can be about. As such, the processes of knowledge production are implicitly designed in such a way as to exclude them. But they are also quintessentially what planning *is* about: how people and place relate to each other. They are what drive people to engage with Neighbourhood Planning. But while they are not presented as evidence or made explicit in Plans, to an extent they are able to penetrate and shape policies.

Both NPGs were conscious that their evidence did not adequately represent their (or their neighbours) lived experience of place, or what made their neighbourhood special, and they repeatedly referred to this. While recognising a need to articulate this sense of place and emplacement, articulating and presenting this kind of knowledge-value hybrid as an acceptable material form of evidence was extremely challenging, lacking any clearly defined process or outcome. It was also something that was repeatedly deprioritised by both groups in favour of gathering 'hard facts' through technical work. Although both NPGs repeatedly agreed that it should not be difficult, because

⁵³ "Material considerations" is the overarching term to describe the issues that can be considered in planning decision-making. It is a category that is at once absolute and pre-given (if a matter is cast as not being 'material', it simply cannot be considered to have any weight in planning terms), and ambiguous, fluid and shifting (there is no definitive list of material considerations - some things are ruled in and ruled out but there are substantial grey areas and policy and guidance are framed in such a way as to maintain that ambiguity and fluidity – see e.g.

https://www.planningportal.co.uk/faqs/fag/4/what_are_material_considerations).

“we’ve got it all in our heads, the only thing is getting it down on paper” (Simon, Wroston NPG Chair, 03.12.15), in practice, weaving together these disparate sources of knowledge and value into an acceptable material form was overwhelming. Unable to find ways to foreground these matters that would do justice to their significance to the NPGs and their neighbourhoods, they were marginalised, translated into forms and frameworks that were deemed appropriate, but which were unable to capture the richness and texture of this experiential knowledge. The material relations and knowledge practices associated with the NPGs’ identity ‘in’ the community were suppressed in formal inscriptions and discourse, and the experiential entanglements of other neighbourhood residents were purified through the knowledge practices associated with their identity ‘of’ the neighbourhood. Form was privileged over content, broadly reflecting the practices of LPAs at larger spatial levels of planning.

8.2.2 Travelling from experience to evidence?

Both NPGs engaged with experiential knowledges in a variety of ways throughout the development of their Plans. For some weeks before and during my first few weeks with them, NPG member Susan had been consulting with various community groups in Wroston on the initial lists of assets and issues that the NPG had drawn up. She emphasised the importance of face-to-face discussion with people, and the ability to talk around the meanings of questions, answers and their referents. She reported that the response from one group was much less informative than from others because she hadn’t been present for their discussion - she gave a short presentation and left them some forms to fill in. On collecting the forms, she said that *“I looked at it and thought, that’s not what I meant by asking that question”* (16.04.15). However, these

contested and meaning-full discussions and interpretations were not recorded, only a truncated summary of conclusions. Susan had also run a discussion group with some of the village's older children and teenagers (15-19 years old), who had produced mind-map diagrams about the assets, issues, and development potential of the village rather than completing forms. Likewise, these were not taken forwards as evidence in their own right but left vaguely to somehow inform the thinking of the NPGs. They were treated more like points of data to be abstracted and aggregated, rather than points of departure to be opened up and explored.

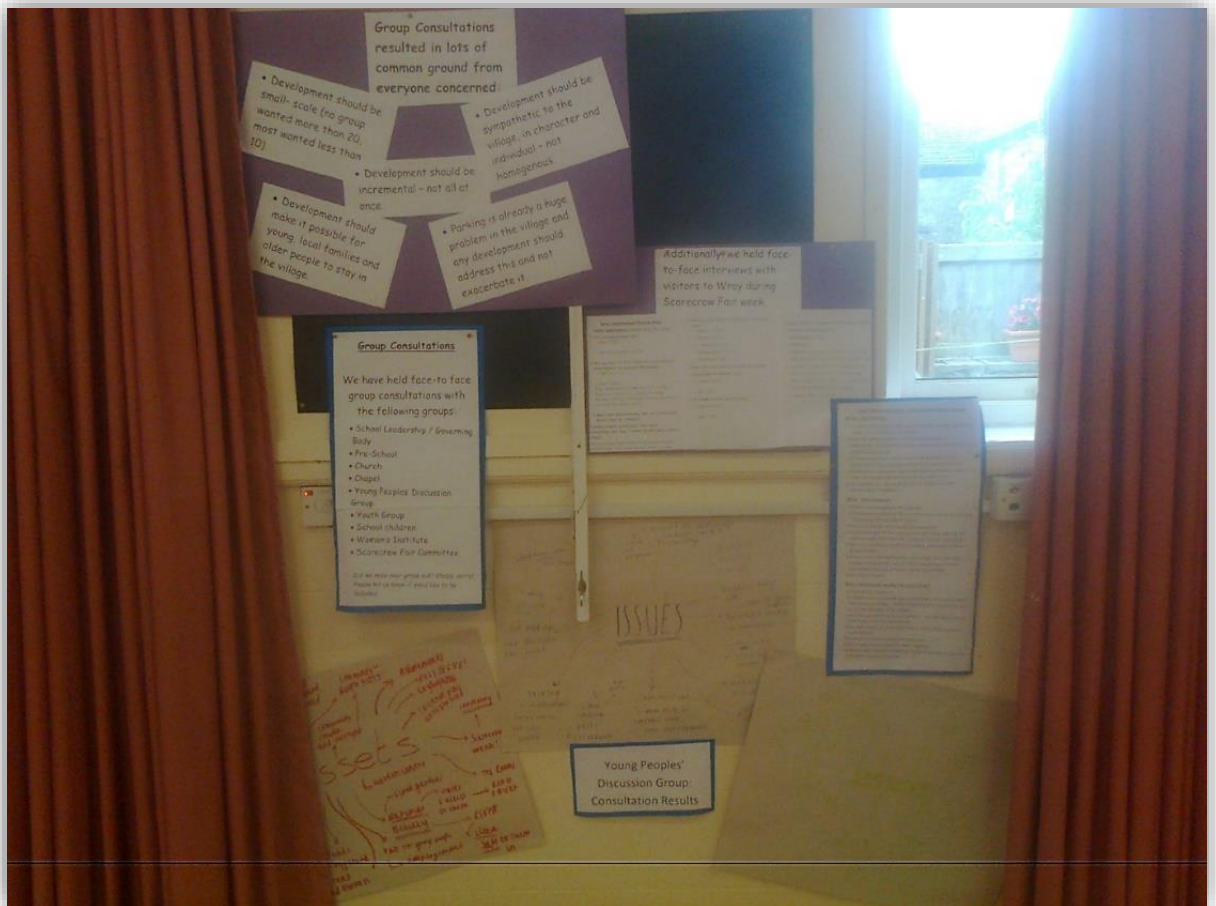


Figure 16: Representations of Wroston consultation responses

Figure 16 shows a summary of the group consultation responses, with the teenagers' mind-map responses below, displayed at the first Wroston consultation event on 04.07.15. At this event, as well as the displays and formal feedback channels (a form with structured questions, a map to identify suitable locations for development and features to protect or take action about, and sticky labels to comment on the vision and objectives), I noted that:

“there was no formal consultation face-to-face, but visitors talked amongst themselves and to steering group members in a fluid and unstructured manner, asking questions and making comments. This could be thought of in terms of a shared space to co-construct Wroston and its meanings. Visitors’ attention was focused on Wroston and the parish in a way in which they were not accustomed to; it provided the space to think about and to shape what the village meant, how it was, how it is and how it might be. Informal commentaries and unforced social interaction made for a much less structured, formalised and constrained means of gathering/co-constructing knowledge with the community than the largely quantitative surveys. People clearly felt able to express themselves freely and fluently; there were no epistemological divisions, no us and them, no (obvious) filters on expression. However, likewise none of this was formally captured” (fieldnotes, 04.07.15)

This extract illustrates how the lived, affective experience of place both shaped and was excluded from the process of developing the Plan. As an open, informal event there were no restrictions on what could be discussed, what issues could be raised, what ideas could be put forward. The NPG were able to learn directly from people,

and indeed the very fact that they were able to engage in conversations naturalistically, like neighbours rather than experts conducting consultation, enabled a more open and natural expression of knowledge, cares and concerns⁵⁴. The displays triggered memories, the (re)telling of stories, the discovery of common interests and practices, a sense of curiosity and engagement between attendees and NPG members. These would all shape the approaches and decisions of the NPG, who were keenly aware of the need for wide community support. But the lack of any mechanism to record these conversations meant that much of this was lost: the inscriptions that formally reported the results of the event were the limited responses to the structured feedback questions and the stickers on the map and the vision and objectives. These represented the tiniest fraction of the interactions over the course of the event. While the event did act to open up issues for relatively unrestricted discussion, its recording constrained both the content and form of what could be presented as evidence. The specific processes of knowledge production determined the knowledge that could be produced and the forms it could take. Knowledges were mobilised and produced in the interactions occasioned by the event and the material specificity of its format, but they remained immaterial, their influence untraceable in the inscriptions supporting the Plan.

As part of this consultation the NPG had engaged with the local primary school, and the pupils (at Key Stage 1 and 2) had produced collages featuring their own drawings, creative writing, headlines of what they liked about Wroston, ideas about what would

⁵⁴ Although it is also possible that this could result in some opinions and perspectives that were opposed to the general approach and trajectory of the NPG being suppressed. This is not something that I observed – but then, arguably it would not be visible, unless dissent was explicitly encouraged as a key part of the process (cf. Tsouvalis and Waterton, 2012).

make things better and what would spoil it, and printed photos of valued locations and features. But again, it was not clear what contribution these made to shaping the Plan or how, or the pathway between evidence and policy. They were referred to in the documents submitted to the independent Examiner, as one item amongst 41 listed in a consultation chart, which was itself one appendix of four in the consultation statement required to show that the NPG had met its legal obligation to consult widely on the Plan. But they featured much more prominently at this consultation event, and were displayed on the walls of the room in the village hall where the NPG met for many months afterwards.

The material form of the display sheets as produced by the children folded in far more meaning, substance and affect than their truncated representation (as selected quotes from children) in the chart. For me, they became ghostly reminders of the experiential knowledges that were not-translated through the extensive processes of consultation and evidence production, “*the plural worlds and multiple stories of irreducible inhabitants whose lives are characterized by relations, expectations, feelings, reminiscences, bodies, voices and histories, all layered into living urbanities*” (Sandercock and Attili, 2010: xix). Examples are shown in Figures 17 and 18.

On 18.08.16, Simon emphasised that as well as their technical work, “*then there’s all the softer stuff, we need a lot more information, the context, that’s really important, to get a flavour of what the village feels like*”. At the time, Barbara was trying to develop a project for heritage lottery funding about “*the heritage and the feel of the village*” that would involve talking to schoolchildren and adult residents to get information from them about their favourite landscapes, their favourite views of and out of the

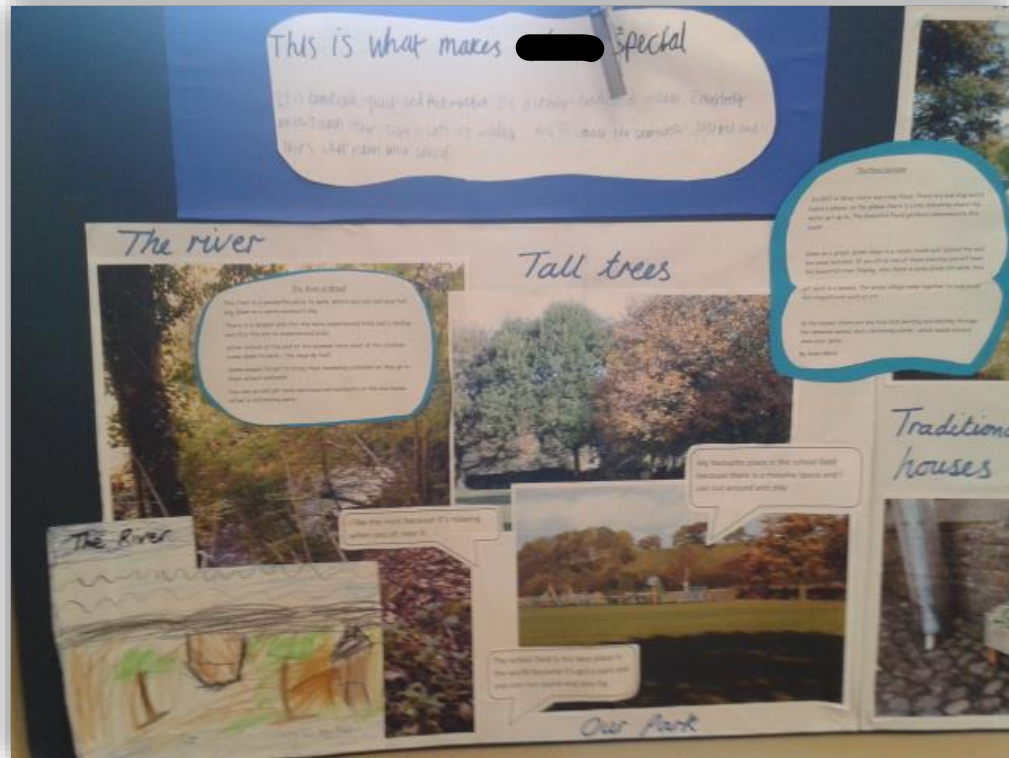


Figure 17: Extract 1 from Wroston children's consultation response collages



Figure 18: Extract 2 from Wroston children's consultation response collages

village, building on the work that Susan had done in talking to community groups at the start of the Neighbourhood Plan process. She suggested that:

“it could be really quite powerful ... you get people saying, ‘we live here, and this is valuable, ... this is important to us, whatever it is’ ... so you can add a formal layer to your maps, where people are saying ‘this is what we value’”.

However, the NPG as a whole, while agreeing that this would be a good thing to do, and might provide a representation of the village that would be more recognisable to residents than the evidence that they had gathered, decided that it was not a priority for them: they did not count it as real, weighty evidence, because they did not think that the Examiner would treat it that way. Neither the form nor the content matched their understanding of the kind of expert knowledge that could endow them with agency.

8.2.3 Difficult articulations

Similar discussions and processes took place in Oakley NPG. Even when some attention was given to voicing these experiential aspects of place knowledge, part of the difficulty of capturing it was that it appeared to require articulating something that was in some sense obvious, but which was nevertheless very hard to express in the dominant language of planning. Oakley’s consultants had asked the NPG to distil a sense of place of the town for them into a few sentences, because *“we need a very clear understanding of what you mean by that [sense of place] ... what is that really important bit? ... we need to know for ourselves”* so that *“I can then relate that to all the policies”* (Andrea, Oakley consultant, 16.06.15). In response, the NPG kept a

standing item on their fortnightly agenda throughout summer 2015 to spend at least some time each meeting trying to define the character of Oakley and what made it special. The difficulty in expressing something so seemingly evident clearly made people feel uncomfortable and disconcerted, and exposed real differences amongst the NPG about what it was that they were trying to express, as well as how to express it. On 21.07.15, when the NPG were discussing some draft statements drawn up by Katie, the town clerk, based on ideas from the previous meeting, my fieldnotes recorded that:

“The discussion is very heated. The usual polite, respectful turn-taking breaks down almost entirely, with people chipping in dis/agreements from all sides, and side conversations starting up around the table. “Genteel” is the first aspect under attack: it’s nothing like that, someone hates the word, it’s so old-fashioned, it’s a lively town, it’s not, there’s a lot going on, there’s nothing to do. Some people never venture into town ... other words are suggested, and equally torn apart”.

The debate aroused participants’ passions, indicating different affective relations with place, as well as the difficulty of trying to meaningfully express affective relations in a few short sentences. The way that the exercise was framed pushed the NPG into trying to close down the meanings and sense of place of Oakley, to condense and capture them in “*a few sentences*”, rather than to first open them up and explore their diversity and potential synergies and conflicts. It implied that such a sense of place could be effectively articulated through the material form of a few typed sentences.

On 04.08.15, Katie asked the NPG to think about what made people want to live here—why they, in particular, had chosen to live there. However, despite their evidently strong affective relations with the place, their responses did not really engage these. An initial lack of responses and some awkward mumbles became more animated once John volunteered that he had asked a visiting friend what he thought was special about Oakley, and the group then quickly settled into discussing why tourists and others chose to visit. They couched their comments in terms of instrumentally rational choices (e.g. “*it’s a logical location*” (Henry), “*Oakley’s a good base to explore from*” (Andrew)), eluding and sidestepping affective relations with place and their own narratives of living, or choosing to live, there. These kinds of answers fitted better into the imaginary of what kind of knowledge can count in Neighbourhood Planning, and the Modern rationalities of planning more broadly.

Later in the process, similar issues arose when the NPG tackled a narrower, but related, challenge of describing what was special about views that they wanted to protect. For the NPG, certain things appeared to be so obvious that they did not require saying, but were also very difficult to articulate when they were required to be said⁵⁵. Trying to lead her struggling NPG to explain the value of these views for their consultant on 10.05.16, Oakley NPG’s Chair, Stephanie, emphasised for them to

“Bear in mind she doesn’t know the town, and she’s writing it for somebody who doesn’t know the town, so don’t be defensive towards me, make it work ... Think of explaining it to somebody who doesn’t know this place”.

⁵⁵ Although as indicated above, even within the NPG, the relations with place were not uniform.

However, it proved exceptionally difficult to capture this sense for someone who did not have any significant direct experience. Oakley NPG showed a very reflexive awareness of this tension between experience and representation – between the different modes of attention that the epistemologies of space and place rely on and (re)produce (Gill et al., 2017) and the barriers and flaws that they felt were imposed on the translations made from one to the other. On 23.03.17, reflecting on the process to date, Stephanie commented that after their initial period of intensive evidence-gathering they had been told by their consultants that “*all the things that people have told you have nothing to do with planning policy*”. This was something of an exaggeration, but clearly demonstrated the difficulties they experienced in (re)presenting people’s concerns in terms that mattered within their imaginary of Neighbourhood Planning imaginary.

This approach resulted in many of the issues raised by the public and researched and debated by the NPG being omitted from the Plan and the final evidence base.

However, most of these issues were imbricated with spatial planning (e.g. traffic and parking, public transport and active travel, the specifics of retail and employment development, the future of a derelict public building), although they were not amenable to complete solutions through planning policy alone. Stephanie went on to critique the processes of translation that they were forced to go through:

“You’ve got to use their language, and it’s not neutral, it’s there to do certain things, make particular things happen, and it’s supposed to be objective but it’s not. It does things, it makes you think in certain ways”.

Neighbourhood Planning appears here as an attempt to work together the rationalities of planning expertise with the cares and concerns of community, albeit one in which the rationalities of expertise often colonise the newly-opened experimental space. In both NPGs a gap arose in discussions about what they knew and valued about the place and what they wanted to achieve in relation to it on the one hand, and how they could justify their proposals - i.e. the matters and material forms they believed could achieve leverage – on the other. Conversations about these two distinct issues often conflated them and slid from the more relational one to the more detached one: from ‘what do we know’ and ‘what do we feel’ to ‘what will we put on paper’. But despite this fluidity, these issues were also at times identified as quite separate in the conversations and perceptions of the NPGs, as epitomised by Laura in a discussion about how to present a description of the way they envisaged the future role of Wroston and its particular qualities: “*I suppose it depends which plays better ... which would be more credibly received by the planners*” (17.09.15).

Their evidence did not represent what mattered to them about their neighbourhoods; it (re)presented what they believed would carry weight in a specific evaluative framework. This translation was not a representation of their cares, concerns and knowledge, but was nevertheless a carrier of them. It manifested care for achieving credibility in the eyes of planners, rather than care for authentically representing the neighbourhood of experience. However, these arrangements are precarious because that which is cared for – the neighbourhood of experience - remains un(der)-represented. The object of care is therefore particularly vulnerable to (mis)interpretation of policy, future changes in policy etc. as it is made present only

by proxy. Distancing decision-making from the rich, textured, lived qualities of people's life-worlds distances it from reality as experienced (Holland, 1997). In the remainder of this chapter I speculate about how things might be otherwise, through a theoretical discussion of conceptual and practical frameworks that might enable the cares, concerns and knowledges of the neighbourhood to be mobilised more directly as evidence.

8.3 Discussion: Matters of care and concern

8.3.1 Interpreting the deficit

The previous section has explored several instances where NPGs have attempted to grapple with experiential knowledge of place and, in one way or another, substantial elements of this have been 'lost in translation' - have failed to make the journey from affect and experience to evidence. This is not intended as criticism of the NPGs, but as an indication of the difficulties of making these articulations within the dominant imaginary of Neighbourhood Planning. It further develops a theme opened up in previous chapters: that a process which is ostensibly about letting communities plan for the places that they know and care about, in practice struggles to recognise or represent the ways in which people know and care. Conventionally, this situation might be explained in one of two ways:

1. What might be called a 'community-deficit' interpretation. This relates to the public deficit model often found in the field of public understanding of science (Wynne, 1991; 2007). Under this interpretation, the community simply don't know

enough about planning, or lack the relevant skills, to properly frame their knowledge, concerns and cares. In which case, they must either be educated (including self-education) so that they are able to respond in suitable ways, or their responses must be translated by a suitably knowledgeable and skilled expert/mediator. In these ways, their views can be presented in terms and material forms that are commensurable with relevant policy frameworks and can be given weight and withstand challenge. This appears to be the broad position of many planning scholars (e.g. Lord et al., 2017; Parker et al., 2016; Salter, 2017), and as previous chapters suggest, is the position broadly enacted by the NPGs themselves.

2. What might be called a ‘policy-deficit’ interpretation. Under this interpretation, the planning policy framework itself is not able to perform the functions that it is intended for. It is unable to hear, capture, or engage with many of the cares and concerns of communities as experienced or expressed: things that matter to them. It is unable to deal with these (situated, concrete, meaningful, relational) matters of care and concern, and instead insists that they be re-constructed as (detached, abstract, context-free, objective) matters of fact (Latour, 2004b). In other words, it replicates many of the very problems, outlined in Section 2.3, that Neighbourhood Planning was intended to address.

But what if, instead of this rather rigid and reductionist understanding of the policy framework, we thought of policy as “*a set of heterogeneous practices done variably in multiple locations*” (Law and Singleton, 2014: 381)? From this perspective, the defining characteristics of Neighbourhood Planning (as outlined in Section 6.3) could

enable a distinctive space to be carved out within the planning system in which different ways of knowing, usually suppressed, could be brought to the fore through different processes. Evidence could be figured more openly to include ways of knowing that can more directly address matters of care and concern. I describe these issues as matters of concern and care not (merely) because they are the things that people are concerned or care about, but to engage the specific concepts of matters of concern (Latour, 2004b) and matters of care (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017). I believe that the arguments made by these authors for understanding phenomena and accounts of phenomena in this way support an imaginary in which the cares and concerns of NPGs can be taken seriously – unlike in the dominant planning imaginary. And I believe that taking the cares and concerns of NPGs seriously, in this experimental setting, can support the project of recasting all knowledge claims and the things that they represent as matters of care and concern. I now go on to speculate how these concepts might be engaged in the practice and research of Neighbourhood Planning.

From this perspective, the issues at stake in Neighbourhood Planning, far from being simple, singular, one-dimensional ‘facts’, are “*gatherings*” (Latour, 2004b: 233) bringing together heterogeneous sociomaterial elements in a knot of interest. They are in the process of being done, undeniably partial, emerging from specific, located practices. Questions about whether a local green space should be protected and why, for example, gather together the physical characteristics of the space itself (its constituent flora, fauna, topography, geology, hydrology etc), its social and material relations to its surroundings, how and why it is used and by whom, various experiences of its use, its history and the traces of that history, along with representations of all these features and the methods and materials used to make those

representations. How people feel about it, the lived experience of place, matters: it must be “*demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance*” (DCLG, 2012a: 18). However, as I show in Chapter 6, even issues like this, recognised as knowledge-value hybrids and sociomaterial gatherings can be reduced to numerical indicators under the pressure of the dominant planning imaginary to (re)present issues in the factual registers of quantification.

Also in Chapter 6 (and Section 2.6 (b)), I have shown that this reductive tendency is even stronger for other ‘gatherings’ that are presented as being matters of fact: closed, inert, naturalised as what they ‘objectively’ are in the cold categories of abstract space. The national housing shortage, and therefore the need to “*boost significantly the supply of housing*” (DCLG, 2012a: 12) is presented as a matter of fact. It is a question of numbers, it can be proven statistically. It provides the context for the assessment of housing need for an area, which in turn is represented as drawing only on factual information and subsequently generating a new set of facts. Precisely what the facts are can be contested during the process of assembling them, but what people feel about them does not matter. However, under closer analysis, such matters of fact can be seen as “*only very partial and, I would argue, very polemical, very political renderings of matters of concern and only a subset of what could also be called states of affairs*” (Latour, 2004: 232, emphasis in the original). When the processes of making matters of fact are traced back and the means by which their sociomaterial dependencies are erased to leave apparently purified objectivity are attended to, they are also revealed as partial, situated, in the process of being done, and intimately connected to ‘subjective’ and affective states (Latour, 2004a).

This is not to suggest that planning should not be based on evidence. It is to suggest that the objective facts of abstract space and the subjective experiences of lived place are both ‘gatherings’, both matters of care and concern. It is to suggest that the line between them, far from being given and self-evident, is fluid and constantly in-the-making. As Latour (2004b: 231) insists, the intention of critique of this kind “*was never to get away from facts but closer to them, not fighting empiricism but, on the contrary, renewing empiricism.*” Empiricism is, quite literally, learning from experience. Planning needs a way to engage with the experience of place which makes people care for it and want to actively take part in shaping its future. It is an aim of planning policy to engage with the cares, concerns, and knowledge of the community, and it is the aim of Neighbourhood Planning that it should be led by those cares, concerns and knowledge. If they are unable to be expressed directly in the current policy framework, the practices which enact that framework need to change. Opening the practices of Neighbourhood Planning to a more generous approach to evidence (Law, 2004) could also enable planning practitioners to engage with the black-boxed facts of technical evidence in a way that takes account of the sociomaterial processes of their construction and their partial, situated contingency.

8.3.2 Neighbourhoods of care and concern

For Latour, viewing the world as ‘matters of concern’ means acknowledging the necessary situatedness and incompleteness of all knowledge; recognising the complex material and social relations that enable and constitute that knowledge; and rejecting the notion that objects (of knowledge ‘in here’ or as material objects ‘out there’) are autonomously ‘given’ as they are, rather understanding them as constantly in a process

of ‘being done’. Matters of fact are carved out of matters of concern, but the contingent cuts that make them are made invisible, thereby naturalising the matter of fact as the thing in itself, and concealing the net/work that necessarily holds it in place.

For Neighbourhood Planners, viewing the world as ‘matters of concern’ would mean producing evidence that engaged directly with lived experiences and the things that people care about, without having to re-frame them: exploring and articulating the relationships between communities, individuals, practices and places. In other words, taking place-based knowledge and values seriously as key factors which matter in their own right (Perkins and Manzo, 2006). It would also acknowledge the *“controversies concerning the correct definition of the identity, boundaries, components and important values related to a specific place”* (Metzger, 2014b: 100) that they bring.

‘Matters of concern’ are clearly not the same things in the descriptions above. However, for both Latour and participants in Neighbourhood Planning, matters of concern have much in common. They are relational knowledge-value hybrids. They are necessarily partial, although in their acknowledged relationality are ironically in some ways more complete than the artificially simplified matters of fact for which objectivity is claimed. They are concrete and situated, and get obscured or occluded by the abstractions of matters of fact and by practices which insist upon matters of fact. They can be better understood through a recognition that the scientific and the political are inseparably bound up, and that presenting claims as objective matters of fact is a political act with political consequences. If the world is understood in terms of matters of concern in Latour’s sense, then the matters of concern of the

Neighbourhood Planners become easier to recognise as tangible, real, and worthy of attention. If the matters of concern of Neighbourhood Planners can be admitted as evidence, other ‘factual’ evidence becomes easier to recognise as partial, situated, open-ended and in the process of ‘being done’, rather than black-boxed as unmediated, indisputable matters of fact.

In Puig de la Bellacasa’s terms, these issues could also be described as matters of care (2011). This specifically draws attention to the various, sometimes contradictory ways that care is both entwined with and held apart from knowledge throughout the processes of Neighbourhood Planning, and in critically analysing this, offers a way forward that can account for and even embrace that entwining. The inability of the practices of Neighbourhood Planning to formally recognise material and affective relations of care suggests an immanent critique of those practices, which I have developed in this thesis. My critique is intended to foster new caring relations, in two dimensions. Firstly, in terms of the community’s ability to materially care for the neighbourhood through shaping its trajectories of development and the balance between conservation and change (Holland and O'Neill, 1996). And secondly, in terms of care *for* that care: recognising those caring relations and the experiential knowledge they grow out of as meaningful and valuable, and enabling them to mobilise and have effects. Place as experienced and care for place are both things that have been neglected by UK planning practices. Representing both matters of fact, and matters dismissed as ‘not-fact’, as matters of care can generate care for neglected things by *“counting in participants and issues who have not managed or are not likely to succeed in articulating their concerns, or whose modes of articulation indicate a*

politics that is 'imperceptible' within prevalent ways of understanding" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2011: 94-95).

Treating issues as matters of care also indicates a more concrete way forwards for *how* care for place might be mobilised. I draw on Puig de la Bellacasa's speculative exploration of three practices – "*thinking with*", "*dissenting within*" and "*thinking for*" – that might unfold when "*thinking with care*" (2012), and relate them specifically to the practices of Neighbourhood Planning.

"*Thinking with*" the sociomaterial networks that generate issues as matters of care would require resisting the reductionism that would translate those issues into abstract, black-boxed facts. It would acknowledge the ecologies of social and material participation – the everyday experience of emplaced living - that enabled these issues to arise in the first place, and which maintain them as live things (Chilvers and Kearnes, 2016), drawing more explicitly on knowledges and affects rooted in the NPG's identity 'in' the neighbourhood, and more qualitative exploration of the wider neighbourhood's knowledges and cares. Neighbourhood Planning and its evidence base would become less isolated, less 'pure', and more explicitly connected into the everyday practices and interactions of neighbourhood (Bødker et al., 2017).

"*Dissenting within*" the practices of Neighbourhood Planning would require NPGs to acknowledge the different ways that they are implicated in the world, i.e. the three conflicting identities that they must both hold together and hold apart, and the implications and consequences of the knowledges and practices with which each is associated. This may help them to retain a balance between these identities and relations that resists the suppression or dominance of any one of them, enabling the

knowledges produced by each to be articulated and opened up to critical appraisal. “*Thinking for*” the neighbourhood would require drawing explicitly on all three sources of knowledge and authority, enabling representations and decisions to be made that more adequately reflect the lived, experiential knowledge of the community. Recognising the ‘dark side’ of care (in that care for some objects must imply neglect or lack of care for others), it would also require reflexively engaging with and responding to the implications of these practices, representations and decisions both within and beyond the neighbourhood.

8.3.3 Opening up and closing down

Neighbourhood Planning is a process that necessarily involves both appraisal and commitment, participation and analysis, and opening up and closing down of issues (Stirling, 2008). However, as I have shown, as practiced in the locations of study it has tended to quickly shift from favouring participatory to analytic styles, and closing down over opening up. Clearly, the earlier part of the Neighbourhood Planning process should be focused on opening up as NPGs work with their communities to explore the issues which the Plan can and should engage with, and the later parts on closing down, as neighbourhood priorities are clarified and refined within the scope of the policy framework. However, much of the work of ‘opening up’ was prematurely or unnecessarily ‘closed down’, by the reproduction of boundaries between expert and lay knowledges and ways of knowing, between quantifiable facts and qualitative values and the automatically privileging or denigrating of the categories on either side. Matters such as housing need are purified into matters of fact, stabilising them and endowing them with agency. Matters such as experience of place are purified out of

the realm of what can count as reliable evidence or reduced to impoverished material forms that sap their agency. These practices reinforce the rigid boundaries between knowledge of lived place and abstract space, between lay and expert, even while the rhetoric around Neighbourhood Planning promised to bridge these gaps. However, both ways of knowing are integral to the purpose of planning. Both are enacted, partial, situated, contingent knowledge-value hybrids. But one is represented as such and thereby denied the status of evidence, closing down the range and type of issues that can be considered, while the other is purified to conceal this hybridity in order to be admitted as factual evidence, thereby also closing down opportunities for contestation even within this narrowed band of available issues.

These boundaries and categories are both performed (i.e. constantly being done, not fixed or given but “*a collective accomplishment which endures only in its continuing reiteration*” (Freeman, 2017: 195)) and performative (through enacting them, identities and possibilities for being in the world are brought into being and/or suppressed). Only that which is made visible is capable of being cared for through policy – and that which is erased or concealed is liable to be harmed as a consequence (Gill et al., 2017). These case studies have provided numerous instances of the (re)production of these boundaries and categories and the marginalisation of affective relations with place and the knowledge of lived experience. Treating knowledge claims as matters of care/concern may enable the epistemologies of place and space to be worked together differently. One example arising from these case studies was the Wroston Landscape Character Appraisal (discussed in Section 7.3.2.2), which was conducted by an expert but was richly informed by the collaboration of the NPG, and successfully included rather than excluded experiential knowledge. This is one

concrete indication (see also Bradley, 2018a) that Neighbourhood Planning practices may be able to gather different knowledge practices in ways that can “*work together and in relation to each other without trying to reduce them to the same thing ... allowing the two sets of practices to go on better in difference*” (Freeman, 2017: 199). It is often in such tensions between practices and epistemologies – ways of doing and knowing – that new ways of ‘going-on’ arise (Haraway, 1991; Tsing, 2005; Verran, 2001). However, in Neighbourhood Planning as currently practiced, it appears that opportunities for such generative tensions to arise are rather constrained.

8.3.4 Practical implications and applications

As shown in Section 7.2, NPGs are making a difference. But, as shown earlier in this chapter and previously, this difference is not transparently based on the experiential knowledge of and care for place that (partly) underpins their legitimacy to act. Their objects of knowledge and care are not being represented: they are largely being silenced at the same time as they are being planned for by proxy through the objects of abstract space. The Wroston Landscape Character Appraisal reveals some potential for working expert and lay knowledges together differently, without automatically privileging one over the other or insisting that one is framed or described in the terms and logics of another (Watson-Verran and Turnbull, 1995). I have suggested above that operationalizing the concepts of ‘matters of concern’ and ‘matters of care’ in producing and evaluating evidence could more generally help bridge the gap between apparently incommensurable ways of knowing place. How could this be achieved in practice? What sort of approaches would enable more open and generous ways of

developing evidence and policy? How could the matters of Neighbourhood Planning be gathered differently?

A number of attempts have been made by researchers to find methods through which other ways of knowing, valuing and caring can be incorporated into decision-making in planning, creative approaches that create “*a radical potential for planning in a way that can be very difficult for planners to achieve on their own*” (Metzger, 2011: 213-14).

In one recent example, several projects associated with the Arts and Humanities Research Council’s (AHRC) *Connected Communities* programme (<https://connected-communities.org/>) have explored issues around articulating place and human-environment relations. The *Localism, Narrative and Myth* project used arts-based interventions to interrogate academic and narrative interpretations of ‘the local’, to draw out plural understandings of place that could inform new hyper-local forms of governance (Layard et al., 2013b). The *Stories of Change* project (Smith et al., 2016) recognised that many people feel put off by the way that environmental issues are talked about, and find it difficult to respond in kind. It used narratives and storytelling to encourage more imaginative approaches to energy choices, making a space to work through the tensions that arise between the wide acceptance that action is necessary, and the disputes generated by individual planning proposals. *Creative Participation in Place-Making* (Layard et al., 2013a) found that for community participants, place-making is broader and more material than conventionally-conceived planning practices. Communities can be more effectively and creatively involved if their engagement extends from ‘merely’ planning the built environment to include the “*felt*

environment” (ibid: 1), i.e. the rich and textured neighbourhood that they experience, as distinct from the reduced and flattened materiality of abstract space.

The *Loweswater Care Project* is an example of participatory environmental governance that directly tackles many of the issues raised in this thesis. It was developed as part of an interdisciplinary research project to bring together local residents, farmers, scientists, researchers, institutional representatives and others as equals to work on the complex challenges posed by blue-green algae in Loweswater, a lake in Cumbria. It explicitly set out to avoid the common problem in participatory processes of focusing too quickly on ‘closing down’ and moving to solutions without first ‘opening up’ and appreciating the full range of complexities of a problem as understood through different knowledge practices. It also sought to challenge to the idea that such problems could be resolved through the application of scientific methods alone by ‘un-black-boxing’ those methods and their objects (Tsouvalis and Waterton, 2012). It did this by applying the principles, agreed by its members, that there is not a single ‘right’ way of understanding the problem; that all knowledge and expertise needs to be debated; that uncertainties in knowledge need highlighting and accepting; and that doubt and questioning needs to be extended to all representations, including scientific ones (Waterton et al., 2015). In this way it reframed matters of fact, knowledges that would typically be excluded as insufficiently factual, and their referents, as matters of concern and care that could be built upon (Tsouvalis, 2016).

Jones et al. (2013; 2015) and Insole and Piccini (2013) provide two examples of the growing trend for using technological developments, particularly around mobile and GIS technology, to enable new means for alternative knowledges to be (re)presented

and engaged with. Jones et al. describe a pilot project in which residents walked around the neighbourhood with borrowed smartphones, recording audio clips, taking photographs and adding comments, all of which were mapped using GPS and uploaded to a central community map. The explicit intention was to inform planning with experiential knowledge of the ‘felt environment’ and well as spatial knowledge of the built environment (as set out in the working paper Jones et al. (2013)). Similarly, Insole and Piccini (2013) describe a project in which participants could add their own media (photos, videos etc.) and metadata to the LPA’s planning website in order to inform decisions about planning at the neighbourhood scale. The intention was to include and validate informal and domestically produced visual information as evidence that could influence formal planning processes.

These examples all attempt to find ways to take seriously ways of knowing lived place that planning typically struggles to engage with, by finding alternative ways to represent them. They are attempts to develop “*alternative material, social and literary technologies*” (Wylie et al., 2014: 121) that might resist the dominance of the material, social and literary technologies upon which the culture of scientism has been built (Shapin and Schaffer, 1985), and that the culture of planning reproduces in adapted forms. These alternative technologies attempt to (re)present what David Strong (1994) has described as disclosive discourse: the language of engagement, standing in sharp contrast to the abstractions of detachment. Disclosive discourse (verbal or non-verbal) expresses precisely that which *cannot* be captured by abstract discourse, which cannot by its very nature be measured or quantified. It articulates situated knowledge deriving from lived experience and particular relationships to particular entities and places. It is of its essence not an abstraction *from* the world, but demonstrative of engagement *with*

the world, orienting its audience in the world to make them present and engaged rather than absent and detached. These alternative technologies thereby unsettle the boundaries between expertise and its constituent other.

Narrative approaches in particular have been posited for over two decades as offering material, social and literary technologies that can better engage excluded knowledges in planning (e.g. Fischer and Forester, 1993; Sandercock, 2003). Storytelling has been proposed as both a model *of* planning (how it is done) and a model *for* planning (how it could and should be done, providing potentially “*powerful tools of a democratic, progressive planning practice*” (van Hulst, 2012: 304; see also Throgmorton, 1996; 2003) that might destabilise dominant planning discourses (Bulkens et al., 2014).

Weaving the knowledge practices of abstract space and of lived place explicitly into stories, forms through which they gain and convey meaning, is one way of operationalizing them as matters of care. Situating knowledge claims within narratives that give them meaning can bring together different knowledge practices in productive tension. The issues that planning addresses are ‘wicked problems’ (Rittel and Webber, 1973) which by definition can’t be solved purely by processes of expert calculation, and so experiential knowledge given meaning through narrative situating can help decision-makers navigate their complex terrain (Thiele and Young, 2016). This happens already – inevitably – but is often obscured in accounts of decision-making, and should be both more fully recognised and explicitly developed.

As Singleton and Mee observe in the parallel arena of healthcare, “*stories offer the potential for reflexivity at a deep and nuanced level ... Patient stories tend to narrativize patient experience in ways that differ from dominant professional and*

policy narratives” (2017: 132). If for ‘patient’ we read ‘resident’, stories can reveal materials, affects, relations and practices that are silenced by conventional planning practices, but which are acknowledged as important in planning discourse in terms of wellbeing, quality of life and sense of place. As well as enabling better care to be taken of planning’s neglected things, narrative approaches can also help with the project of also viewing “*transparent, unmediated, indisputable facts*” (Manuel et al., 2017: 1698) as matters of care. The tropes of objectivity, quantification, and calculation that dominate the practices of planning are themselves embedded in specific stories about how the world is and how we can know it, and in turn they embed those stories further. Their telling as being able to reveal the world ‘as it really is’ prevents the telling of other (authoritative) stories. If these ‘unmediated facts’ could be seen instead as integral parts of ongoing narratives, they could gain a richer and more textured meaning, rather than being understood as atomistic points that are isolated from meaningful connection to wider stories (e.g. housing requirements could be seen in the context of past, present and future patterns and changes in neighbourhood life). By opening the black boxes of evidence production (as, for example, Wroston NPG did in relation to the LPA’s landscape character assessment) stories can also be told about how points of data were produced and how the processes of production relate to outputs and conclusion - and about how alternative modes of production, with greater responsiveness to the concrete characteristics of particular places, could produce richer information.

Stories in and of themselves are not, of course, any more reliable than abstract numbers. No matter how detailed or laden with meaning, they will never be complete, and “[w]e still need to question the truth of our own and others’ stories. We need to be

attentive to how power shapes which stories get told, get heard, carry weight

(Sandercock, 2003: 12). Like any other knowledge practice, they are partial, situated and connected to vast hinterlands of associated performances (Law, 2004). They are, necessarily, simplifications (Law and Mol, 2002). But thinking through stories – through knowledge given meaning by being situated in a narrative flow and explicitly acknowledging the role and function of that narrative *as* a narrative – can help actors to negotiate and decide which simplifications might be most appropriate in this particular setting: which features and relations are most significant, which ways of knowing are most useful, and how different knowledges might be juxtaposed or interlaced. They organise our attention in ways that can reveal meaning and connections, in contrast to planning practices that bulldoze participants into making the simplifications demanded by instrumental Enlightenment rationalities.

Adopting a more open approach to evidence, especially through a narrative approach, would also enable better connections to be made between land-use policies and wider issues and actions. Many Neighbourhood Plans relegate issues raised by the community and developed by the NPG, but which are not considered to be solely amenable to spatial planning policies to a ‘community aspirations’ or ‘community projects’ appendix. This isolates them from the main substance of the Plan rather than (re)presenting them in ways that would situate both them and the statutory planning policies in an ongoing, locally-specific, meaningful, engaged narrative about the development and change of the neighbourhood. This draws yet another hard boundary, between those issues that are amenable to land-use planning and those that are not.

When the Oakley consultants proposed doing this, NPG member John complained that “*We mustn’t lose that it’s Oakley Neighbourhood Plan, not just a general one with Oakley in mind, it’s these references to local things that make it unique*” (06.06.17)⁵⁶.

In practice, of course, these land-use planning and non-land-use planning issues do not exist in isolation, as recognised in national governance reforms of the early 2000s which aimed to integrate land-use planning with other place-making policy areas, enabling better spatial sensitisation of wider development narratives (Lambert, 2006). Neighbourhood Plans that built in the interconnections between land-use policy and other modes of relating to and acting in and on place rather than trying to artificially separate them would be better able to make visible matters of care and concern.

Making explicit the connections between statutory policies and other actions and orientations could provide greater clarity and deeper understanding for decision-makers, help community, the development industry and other actors see how it all connects, and retain in view some of the liveliness of the issues at stake. Exeter St James’ Neighbourhood Plan provides one early example (before the practice of separating non-land-use policies, projects and actions into a separate appendix sedimented down) of strongly making these connections. The section entitled “*Delivering the Plan*” starts with a set of projects that “*will be the focus of community action to implement the Plan*” (Exeter St James Forum, 2013: 14), outlining actions that the neighbourhood will take (e.g. enhancing public community spaces, developing

⁵⁶ The consultants for Oakley did eventually re-incorporate some community actions in the main body of the text, but some issues were lost and the ones that were included were not well-integrated – demonstrating that while this approach has the potential for better connection of issues it requires careful application. The Examiner of the Wroston Plan recommended placing community actions in a separate appendix, but in revising the Plan on behalf on the NPG I was able to retain them in their context.

partnerships with other agencies to tackle planning-related problems), which is followed by the land-use policies.

As well as acting as a focus to mobilise and stabilise the resources and relations that were brought into new alignments through the Neighbourhood Planning process, these projects provide context and meaning for the policies by setting out the neighbourhood's intentions and active plans for the areas and features the planning policies refer to. This would also contribute to keeping the Neighbourhood Plan a live document, a technology of ongoing engagement in the narrative of place as lived and experienced, rather than a one-off event (albeit an extended one). This is increasingly relevant as the first Neighbourhood Plans are now coming up for review, and if they are not updated to keep up with changing circumstances they will soon become out-of-date and lose their agency. It would thus help to generate and perpetuate the care that *“is essential to producing liveable worlds and yet is undervalued and has been consistently seen as secondary and supportive to technical expertise”* (Singleton and Mee, 2017: 146, endnote 11).

Stories always have wider resonances beyond themselves, are always figurative – both themselves and more than themselves (Haraway, 1997; Suchman, 2012). These resonances often embed and are embedded in the stories that are not explicitly being told, but which provide the context within which they, and hence the knowledge claims they carry, become meaningful. Thinking in terms of stories will help in paying attention to what they do, as well as to what they say. They may, for example, be tied into wider narratives of rurality, urbanity, community and social change – of decline, revival, or solidarity. They may resonate with imaginaries of the relations between

humans and the non-human world, of dominance, stewardship, instrumentality or co-existence. They may tell meta-narratives of plucky defenders of a place and a way of life resisting overwhelming pressure from predatory developers and uncaring bureaucrats, neither of whom know from the inside the place that they are going to destroy. Or they may be contextualized in a narrative of obstructive NIMBYs selfishly getting in the way of necessary progress for the greater public good, who would act differently if only they looked at the facts and responded to them rationally.

So matters of care and concern, the knots of interest made up of sociomaterial assemblages and their multiple relations and representations, may be better described in stories that are recognised as stories than by the automatic de/privileging processes embodied in the concealed yet continuous enactment of boundaries dividing the world into oppositional categories of fact/value, reason/emotion etc. Most obviously, stories can better capture the dimensions of meaning that are marginalised by these processes. But more profoundly, these processes themselves reproduce stories about the world that are taken for granted, but are stories nevertheless. Situating not just facts accepted as evidence and experiential knowledge rejected as not-factual-enough, but also the processes of making facts and evidence in and as narratives opens up all knowledge claims to critical engagement (Haraway, 1989). This may sound to some like a Trumpian post-truth dystopia, but enacted in the spirit of Latour's intention "*never to get away from facts but closer to them*" (2004b: 231) and Haraway's "*no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a 'real' world*" (1991: 187), it offers quite the reverse: a method through which to gain a deeper and more critical understanding of all claims, the meanings that they carry and which carry them, the processes of their production and the principles and commitments that underpin them.

Working different knowledges together should improve rather than detract from the robustness of Plans. “*Critical judgment will always be necessary in deciding what weight to give to different stories, as well as what stories are appropriate in what circumstances. The telling of stories is nothing less than a profoundly political act.*” (Sandercock, 2003: 27). But at present, it is very hard, if not impossible, to bring that critical judgement to bear, as one set of stories has managed to tell itself as “*mere description, or pure facts*” (ibid: 21), with the effect that other stories are marginalised or silenced – also a profoundly political act. However, any such changes would require support from a progressive state and a strong and properly resourced (although possibly somewhat re-oriented) planning profession, rather than the environment of neoliberalism, austerity and hostility to planners in which The Localism Act was launched (Lord et al., 2017) ⁵⁷.

8.4 Conclusion: Planning modestly

A key tension in planning in general, and Neighbourhood Planning in particular, is how processes and policies that are dominated by the language and logics of abstract space can better reflect and engage with the cares and concerns of lived place: how policy can be made to do care better (Gill et al., 2017). I have shown that care for place, and the reasons why people care for place, are difficult to capture, codify and quantify. But this doesn't make them any less central to the purpose of planning -

⁵⁷ I also acknowledge and support the recommendations made recently by Wargent and Parker ((2018)) to re-imagine the future of Neighbourhood Planning, and I suggest that the proposals made here could complement and contribute to the realisation of those recommendations.

indeed, an account of planning realities that omits affective and experiential knowledge is an inadequate account – “*we cannot grasp the full complexity of the phenomenon of place if we disqualify a priori its crucial subjective side from the analysis*” (Metzger, 2014b: 102). This points to a need for new approaches to enable and legitimise articulations of such knowledge. Indeed, there is arguably a need to be especially attentive to such marginalised things and vulnerable viewpoints precisely because they are more likely to be neglected (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017; Stirling, 2015). Attending to these neglected things can show how policies that are intended to protect and nurture can harbour relations of harm (Gill et al., 2017) – such as when “*dry as dust*” planning policies (Sandercock, 2003: 21) that are stripped of their referential meaning, colour and texture are interpreted by decision-makers in ways that directly conflict with the intentions of their authors (Burns and Yuille, 2018: 57-58).

In this chapter I have speculated that treating planning matters as matters of care and concern, and specifically operationalising these concepts through a narrative approach, might allow a more humble approach to knowing, planning and evidencing. This would enact NPGs more like Haraway’s modest witness (1997) than the modest witness of the Enlightenment ideal – implicated in the world, with partial knowledge deriving from multiple relations with multiple sources and ways of knowing, rather than self-invisible, detached and remote, in possession of objective facts that have lost their meaning through the process of objectification. I am proposing opening up both matters traditionally privileged as fact and marginalised as not factual to interrogation as matters of care and concern, not just in the research of Neighbourhood Planning but in its practices of production, presentation and examination of evidence. All claims are

most certainly not equal, but the practices through which the boundaries between facts and values, evidence and policy, reason and emotion, expert and layperson, are constructed and reproduced prevent an adequate analysis of claims that end up on either side of those boundaries. Such an approach would absolutely not seek to do without or ignore the technical facts and modes of inquiry which currently drive planning, but rather to shed light on their particular situatedness and bring them into more open conversation with other situated ways of knowing. It would conceptualise planning as a practice of knowing, with knowledge understood as something that planners, citizens, and citizen planners *do*, rather than something that they *have* (Davoudi, 2015). It is not a silver bullet for the problems of hyper-local planning, but rather a way of ‘staying with the trouble’ (Haraway, 2016): of acknowledging the difficulties and contradictions inherent in the project of Neighbourhood Planning, including the NPGs’ implication in the world in contradictory ways, and of foregrounding and working with them instead of silencing them. In the final chapter I will now draw together the themes, tensions and contradictions that I have foregrounded and worked with throughout the thesis, and set out my conclusions in response to my research questions.

Chapter 9: Conclusions

“We ignore at our peril the anger and disaffection felt by so many communities at the failure of current planning policies and procedures to listen to their concerns and respond to their needs. Restoring public confidence in the planning system is one of our generation’s greatest challenges”

(Raynsford, 2018: unpaginated)⁵⁸

“It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories”

(Haraway, 2016: 12)

In this chapter I draw together the themes that have emerged through my thesis. I set out my conclusions in relation to my research questions, and reiterate my original contributions to knowledge.

Planning is supposed to be an inclusive arena that engages a wide range of stakeholders, knowledges and ways of knowing. Yet it has consistently been perceived by communities as exclusionary and inaccessible. The decades of reforms intended to address this problem are, on the whole, perceived to have failed – as demonstrated by each successive set of reforms intended to yet again promote inclusivity. This is at

⁵⁸ Extract from press release launching the findings of Lord Raynsford's independent, root-and-branch review of the UK planning system on behalf of the Town and Country Planning Association.

least partly because the knowledge and ways of knowing that citizens bring to planning, in particular their cares and concerns based on their lived experience, are not able to be meaningfully heard in planning institutions. They tend to be expressed by citizens and understood by planners as knowledge-value hybrids that emerge from the phenomenological experience of ‘emplacement’ – of lived and practical entangled engagement in and with place. In contrast, through all its reforms the planning system has only been able to ‘hear’ matters couched in terms of abstract space and objective fact (or at the very least, exponentially more weight and value are attributed to claims made in these terms). For these cares and concerns to have effects, they must be translated into matters that are compatible with the policy structures of the system. These translations often betray as much - if not more - than they enable, by preventing important elements from travelling from experience to evidence. A central element of the rhetorical construction of Neighbourhood Planning by Government and its support agencies was that it would widen and pluralize the ways of knowing available to evidence production and policy development. Due to its characteristic features⁵⁹, this seemed to be a plausible claim. In particular, it appeared that it could enable the articulation and translation into evidence and policy of some of the affective and embodied knowledges and values that had previously tended to be ignored, silenced or otherwise made invisible within the planning system.

This research project therefore set out to address the following central questions:

⁵⁹ Relating to the materialities of scale, the emphases on community leadership and involvement and on experiential knowledge and care, and its legal and policy parameters.

- Does Neighbourhood Planning expand the range of participants, knowledge and values that can be effective in planning?
- What kinds of knowledge are made visible, and included or excluded, and how?

Working with two neighbourhoods enabled me to engage these questions in relation to NPGs grappling with substantially different issues (e.g. the allocation of sites in Wroston, and the mitigation of potential harm and maximisation of potential benefits from already-allocated sites in Oakley; and the substantial conflict about the content of the Plan between Wroston NPG and their LPA, where Oakley's LPA supported their policies fully). It also enabled me to observe substantially different ways in which NPGs might operate (e.g. the different relationships with their consultants and the larger scale of Oakley led to markedly different working practices). However, despite these differences, the key themes that have emerged through this research, as set out in the following paragraphs, have been remarkably consistent between the two sites. One noteworthy difference was the much greater level of alienation experienced by Oakley NPG members, which can perhaps be accounted for by the specific mediating relation performed by their consultants between them and their Plan throughout the process, or by their more constrained possibilities due to the presence of an adopted Local Plan.

There was certainly greater community participation in producing the Neighbourhood Plans in my sites of study than there had been in producing Local Plans. The process was actively led by citizens – the NPGs - in both cases including some who had had no prior engagement with the planning system or involvement in local governance.

Much greater levels of engagement between the NPG and the neighbourhood were achieved than had been the case between the LPAs and the neighbourhoods in preparing Local Plans. This was demonstrated, for example, by the hundreds of votes in favour of Oakley NPG's broad approach in their initial consultation, the high response rates generated by Wroston NPG's practice of hand-delivering surveys to every household and talking to as many households as possible while doing so, and the active outreach of both NPGs to specific groups within their neighbourhoods. The range of participants was clearly expanded.

However, my research revealed a series of processes through which NPGs self-censored and self-regulated to try to reproduce the ways of knowing and valuing that were dominant within the planning system but outside of the Neighbourhood Planning regime. To establish themselves as legitimate spokespersons for the neighbourhood, NPGs had to enact three distinct identities, each with its own distinctive material-semiotic relations with the neighbourhood – distinctive ways of interacting with, experiencing, knowing and representing it. These identities were, respectively:

- **in** the neighbourhood - immersed in the neighbourhood as synecdoche (the part standing in for the whole);
- **of** the neighbourhood - distinct from but connected to the neighbourhood as reflexive mediator; and
- **apart** from the neighbourhood - detached and remote from the neighbourhood as expert.

The NPGs had to hold these identities together in order to perform all the necessary elements of legitimacy. But they also had to hold them apart to insulate them from the

conflicts inherent between them. In particular, the detached expert identity which produced epistemic authority, whose knowledge was privileged, had to remain untainted in a planning imaginary where emotive, relational knowledge of place as experienced is marginalised, implicitly without worth. While the successful performance of each identity was necessary, the knowledges produced by each were not equally valued. The effect was that the NPGs produced representations of abstract space and silenced those of lived place: they represented (and enacted) the neighbourhood in certain ways, and not in others. Only those versions of the neighbourhood that were made visible could be directly planned for.

While the NPGs were able to have material effects, as I discuss below, this did not fulfil the radical promise of Neighbourhood Planning. Where the discourse of Neighbourhood Planning appeared to invite openness, experimentality and plurality, its practices led to foreclosure, conservatism and narrowness. Where it seemed to call for the embedded voices of direct lived experience, instead it produced purified inscriptions mediated by technologies. Affective relations with place were clearly strong drivers for people to engage with the process, but they were difficult to articulate and to translate into material forms of evidence that were considered appropriate within this framework of knowledge practices. They were therefore written out of the record, driven out by tropic figurations of evidence and expertise. Knowledge arising from the NPGs' identity 'in' the neighbourhood was suppressed entirely. Knowledge arising from the wider community's entangledness with neighbourhood was purified by technologies of participation through the NPGs' specific performance 'of' the neighbourhood. The category of the expert and the expert-agency coupling were reproduced, with the NPGs enacting a new centre of

expertise – albeit a rather precarious one, both reliant on established expertise to stabilise their position, but also subject to unsettling by that expertise. Ways of knowing and doing established elsewhere in the planning system and imported into the practice of Neighbourhood Planning proved obdurate, resisting destabilisation even through a process that was (at least notionally) intended to unsettle them.

Stabilised categories, institutions, power relations and norms were reasserted alongside stabilised forms of knowledge that could be accepted as valid, highlighting the difficulty, in a co-produced world, of doing or knowing in new ways.

Notwithstanding this, I have also shown how positive differences were achieved in the locations of study. A new spokesperson (the NPG) was created for a new instantiation of community (the neighbourhood), whose presence and actions re-arranged the relations of local planning, re-aligning the flows and knots of power. The status and position of ‘the community’ in relation to the Local Authority and to developers and landowners was fundamentally changed. Statutory Plans were produced that contained policies that would not have existed otherwise. Different sites were allocated for and protected from development than otherwise would have been. The NPGs influenced policy development beyond their own Plans in ways that would not previously have been possible. In the act of foreclosing certain possibilities (of producing a Plan and evidence that foregrounded experiential knowledge and felt connection with place), other possibilities were opened up (of producing a Plan and an institution that could have effects in the expert-dominated regime of planning). The sociomaterial assemblages that jointly produced the realities in which the NPGs operated – e.g. consultants and LPA officers; templates, surveys and other technologies of participation; published Plans and Examiners’ reports; imaginaries both general and

specific (from the figure of Modern knowledge to the figure of the Examiner) - reproduced framings, practices and meanings from outside of Neighbourhood Planning which constrained the ability of NPGs (and the neighbourhoods for which they spoke) to enact 'neighbourhood' in relational, place-based terms. But these actors were enabling as well. They produced the NPGs as having the authority to act by enabling their performance as 'apart from' the neighbourhood and the purification of the knowledge arising from the NPGs' identity as mediator. The NPGs became recognised as the bearers of expertise, and therefore of legitimate agency. Despite a succession of unexpected challenges and disappointments, neither of the NPGs that I worked with had the slightest doubt that real differences were made because of their work in developing their Plans. Both were proud of their achievements.

Furthermore, despite their elimination from the formal inscriptions of Neighbourhood Planning, the cares and concerns of neighbourhood got woven into its outputs and outcomes anyway. The experience of place, with its inextricably emotive components, inflected the representations of abstract space that ended up inscribed in policy by framing the questions asked, the orientations taken, the methods used, the choices made. The sterile language of planning policy was steered by the affective forces that were rendered invisible, but not eliminated, by the translations of Neighbourhood Planning. While NPGs are constituted as lay-experts and it is through this constitution that much of their power arises, this aspect of identity cannot exist on its own. Even if it is this identity that is enabled to exercise agency through relations with other social and material actors who would usually close down the voice of community, this identity depends on the others. The enactment of NPG-as-expert relies upon the enactment of NPG as affectively embedded and NPG as consultative and mediating to

fulfil the full range of conditions of an NPG. It is only the holding-together of these conflicting identities that provides a platform for the lay-expert to exercise agency. NPGs can therefore be thought of as a place where the rich and varied sociomaterial experience of neighbourhood is brought together with information from formal consultation and with the measurements and categorisations of abstract space. So, it is significant that it is NPGs themselves who are producing these representations of place as space, rather than experts who are socially and spatially remote from the lived experience of neighbourhood. The situated knowledge practices of their identities ‘in’ and ‘of’ the neighbourhood, essential to establish their situated legitimacy, influenced the actions and representations of their identities as experts ‘apart from’ the neighbourhood.

While representations and logics of abstract space tended to crowd out and suppress those of lived place in most of the formal inscriptions across both sites, the development, output and outcome of the Wroston Landscape Character Appraisal provides an example of expert and lay ways of knowing being worked together effectively. The NPG disagreed with the conclusions of the original assessments from the LPA’s consultants. They felt that the mechanistic methodology had failed to capture key elements of the sites and to respond adequately to their internal characteristics and their relation to the village and the wider landscape. The LPA had insisted that if the NPG wanted to contest the assessment’s results (in order to draw different conclusions and to allocate different sites for development), they would need an alternative assessment by a qualified expert. The NPG engaged such an expert, who they briefed thoroughly on their concerns about the previous assessment, highlighting the factors that had been missed or captured inadequately. They directed her to

relevant locations and viewpoints, helping her to understand the sites to be assessed in the holistic context which they experienced them. Her methodology – of walking around and through the Wroston and its setting as well as in and around the sites, taking time and space to understand the sites as integral parts of a wider lived landscape – also reflected, to an extent, the ways in which the sites were experienced by the neighbourhood. Informed by this material practice and the detailed input from the NPG (who were not at this point attempting to produce evidence themselves, and who were therefore less limited by the constraints that producing evidence places on the expression of affective, relational knowledge), she produced an assessment which was able to take account of much that the original assessment had neglected, and which therefore drew different conclusions as to the suitability of specific sites to be allocated for development⁶⁰.

I have also speculated about the possibility for the practices of Neighbourhood Planning to come closer to its rhetorical claims, by understanding planning matters as matters of care and concern. This would entail a more ‘generous’ approach to evidence, treating affective, experiential ‘lay’ knowledges, and abstract, quantified ‘expert’ ones alike as incomplete sociomaterial assemblages that are in the process of being done. While this approach is often taken by STS scholars researching knowledge production and mobilisation, it remains extremely rare as an approach in actual decision-making situations. I have drawn attention to some attempts to include excluded knowledges in planning-related decision-making, including one example –

⁶⁰ I have focused here on this instance as the clearest and most significant example of working together different knowledges. However, Oakley NPG also managed to do so, perhaps to a lesser extent, in their eventual justification for the two Local Green Spaces that were finally included in their Plan.

the Loweswater Care Project – that explicitly seeks to undo the binary oppositions between different knowledge categories, as I am proposing here. I have suggested that, within the current legislative and policy framework of Neighbourhood Planning, adopting a more explicitly narrative approach to evidence production might offer a fruitful way forward to better work together different knowledges and ways of knowing, as it is through such narrative frameworks that evidence gains and conveys meaning. I have also suggested that a narrative approach could better integrate land-use planning issues with other issues, as they are in practice experienced by communities, which could increase participation in Neighbourhood Planning, help to ensure that a made Plan remains a live document that continues to engage, mobilise and generate the care that initiated it, and provide a springboard to wider local governance and participatory opportunities.

I can therefore conclude that, overall, Neighbourhood Planning does expand the range of participants in planning, and that those participants can have effects. However, this process is not straightforward as knowledges and values – and ways of knowing and valuing – that have traditionally been excluded from the planning system are again marginalised by the importation and adaptation of meanings, norms and practices from elsewhere in the planning system. The practices of Neighbourhood Planning often result in the exclusion from explicit visibility of the very kinds of knowledge and value that it promised to take seriously. However, because of the central role of the NPG, and because the NPG is necessarily constituted in a variety of different knowledge-relations to the neighbourhood, knowledges and values that are largely made invisible in the inscriptions of Neighbourhood Planning are nevertheless carried by them and able to permeate the eventual Plan policies. In some cases ways of

working knowledges together in new ways have been found, and I have suggested that adopting a narrative approach to evidence production and plan-making could offer greater possibilities for this in future.

In drawing these conclusions, I have made the following original contributions to knowledge:

Theoretical

- I have extended an STS approach to analysing knowledge production and participation to the arena of Neighbourhood Planning, and shown how this approach can make processes and relations visible in novel ways, enabling new critical reflections, interpretations, and speculations about how they could be done differently
- I have shown how Neighbourhood Planning Groups achieve legitimacy by enacting a specific set of fluid, conflicting identities, contributing to theory in fields such as planning, governance, participation and deliberative democracy, which investigate the relations between publics and the people who, in a variety of ways, can be said to represent them

Methodological

- I have conducted the first ethnographic study to follow a Neighbourhood Planning Group all the way through the process from designation of the Plan area to adoption of the Plan. This methodological approach is the only way in which to make visible some of the things which are effaced or concealed through the practices of Neighbourhood Planning

Substantive

- I have shown how and why the apparently innovative space of Neighbourhood Planning can tend towards the reproduction of existing knowledge practices, thereby reproducing many of the problems which it was intended to address. I have also shown how Neighbourhood Planning Groups can nevertheless make material differences in the context of this reproduction. Finally, I have suggested ways in which Neighbourhood Planning could be done differently to better reflect its stated aims.

Coda

I have frequently been struck by how much of my discussion of the practices I have been observing also applies to the practices I am immersed in. The project of researching and writing a doctoral thesis has mirrored the NPGs' project of developing a Neighbourhood Plan in many ways. I have told stories in particular ways, drawing on particular theoretical and methodological traditions which have contoured and guided my investigations. My thesis has taken a particular material form, conforming to and thus reproducing the evaluative framework established by the *academe*. All of us are involved in iterative loops of meaning-making, assembling evidence from experience and inscriptions that begin to suggest the threads of stories to us - plausible theories about how things are, and why, and how they could be; weaving those threads together in patterns that simultaneously construct and stabilise those stories as already-existing; and as the stories stabilise, returning to the field with more direction, seeking to produce more evidence that will support and/or challenge our stories. We are both crafting representations that we hope will tell persuasive stories about how things are, how they got there, and how they could be. We are both working out what can count as evidence, and why, and how best to represent that. Both our stories are performed and performative, they make and work relations in particular ways. They are each just one possible simplification of the messy complexity that confronts us, directing their audience's attention, bringing some things to presence and making others absent (Law and Mol, 2002; Law, 2004).

Our stories and processes have similarities, but we also have differences. Both sets of stories are generalisations, but my story hopefully also unsettles generalisations by promoting affective engagement and drawing attention to the contingent and the

particular (Winthereik and Verran, 2012) – precisely the effect that the NPGs were trying to avoid. The evaluative framework in which I am working has also allowed me to make what I believe is a faithful description of the reality experienced by the participants. The evaluative framework in which the NPGs are working has enabled them to produce faithful descriptions of other realities.

We also have in common a degree of liminality (Beech, 2011). Both of us have a variety of very different audiences: communities of practice and evaluative frameworks in and for which our stories have to be persuasive. The NPGs are addressing the Examiner, the LPA, the neighbourhood residents, local landowners and potential developers. I am addressing STS scholars, planning scholars, sociologists, geographers, and beyond the academy hope to speak to planners, consultants, local councils and community groups. We are liminal in more immediate, personal, visceral ways as well. The NPGs' shifting subjectivities occupy conflicting positions 'in', 'of', and 'apart from' the neighbourhood. They effectively fall into categories of both expert and not-expert. I have been a participant, observer and analyst, holding these roles together while also keeping them sufficiently apart. I have been both a member and not a member of the NPGs, straddling practice and research, academically straddling different disciplines. And this follows my working pattern for the ten years before this research commenced, doing the work that got me interested in the potential of Neighbourhood Planning in the first place, where I also worked in liminal spaces: between bureaucrats and activists, officials and community groups, experts and amateurs, centre and periphery, national and local, professionals and volunteers, rules and passion, affect and cognition. I have been a liminal actor, like the NPGs combining in my own body those worlds that I was bridging. I have often felt that to

the experts I was an amateur, and to the amateurs I was an expert, and so on across these categories: that I represented the Other to the other. I have brought passion and affect into the realms of rules and cognition, a logic of care into the spaces of instrumental reasoning, often to be met with responses ranging from dismissal to bewilderment. And I have done the opposite, brought instrumentality to care, rules and cognition to passion and affect, and met with similar responses. But sometimes, just sometimes, something breaks through, opens up. Something travels, even if in the act of travelling it is transformed. I hope that this thesis is one of those times.

Bibliography

- Abram, S. A. 2000. Planning the Public: Some Comments on Empirical Problems for Planning Theory. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 19(4), 351-357.
- Adler, P. A. & Adler, P. 1987. *Membership Roles in Field Research*. Newbury Park : Sage.
- Agnew, J. A. 2011. Space and Place. In: AGNEW, J. A. & LIVINGSTONE, D. N. (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*. London: Sage.
- Ahmed, S. 2004. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Aitken, M. 2009. Wind Power Planning Controversies and the Construction of 'Expert' and 'Lay' Knowledges. *Science as Culture*, 18(1), 47-64.
- Allen, C. & Crookes, L. 2009. Fables of the Reconstruction: A Phenomenology of 'Place Shaping' in the North of England. *The Town Planning Review*, 80(4/5), 455-480.
- Allmendinger, P. & Haughton, G. 2012. Post- Political Spatial Planning in England: A Crisis of Consensus? *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 37(1), 89-103.
- Angrosino, M. V. 2007. *Doing Ethnographic and Observational Research*. London : Sage.
- Arnstein, S. 1969. A Ladder of Citizen Participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), 216-224.
- Arthur, W. B. 1994. *Increasing Returns and Path Dependence in the Economy*. Michigan : University of Michigan Press.

Bibliography

- Atkinson, P., Amanda, Delamont, S., Lofland, J. & Lofland, L. 2007. *Handbook of Ethnography*. London : Sage.
- Bailey, N. 2010. Understanding Community Empowerment in Urban Regeneration and Planning in England: Putting Policy and Practice in Context. *Planning Practice & Research*, 25(3), 317-332.
- Bailey, N. 2015. Housing at the Neighbourhood Level: A Review of the Initial Approaches to Neighbourhood Development Plans under the Localism Act 2011 in England. *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability*, 10(1) 1-14.
- Bailey, N. & Pill, M. 2015. Can the State Empower Communities through Localism? An Evaluation of Recent Approaches to Neighbourhood Governance in England. *Environment and planning C*, 33(2), 289-304.
- Baker, M., Coaffee, J. & Sherriff, G. 2007. Achieving Successful Participation in the New Uk Spatial Planning System. *Planning Practice & Research*, 22(1), 79-93.
- Bal, R. & Mastboom, F. 2007. Engaging with Technologies in Practice: Travelling the Northwest Passage. *Science as Culture*, 16(3), 253-266.
- Barad, K. 2003. Posthuman Performativity: toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28(3), 801 - 831.
- Javid, S. 2016. Decision Letter on Application Made by Keith Langmead Ltd for Land to the South of Ford Lane, East of North End Road, Yapton. Appeal Ref: APP/C3810/A/14/2228260. London: DCLG.
- Javid, S. 2017a. Decision Letter on Application Made by Gleeson Developments Ltd for Land Parcel at London Road, Hassocks, West Sussex. Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/W/14/2226987. London: DCLG.

Bibliography

- Javid, S. 2017b. Decision Letter on Application Made by Bellway Homes, Bellcross Co Ltd & Fosbern Manufacturing Ltd for Land West of Castlemilk, Moreton Road, Buckingham MK18 1YA, Appeal Ref: APP/J0405/V/16/3151297. London: DCLG.
- Baum, H. 2015. Planning with Half a Mind: Why Planners Resist Emotion. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 1-19.
- Beck, U. 1992. *Risk Society : Towards a New Modernity*. London; Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Beech, N. 2011. Liminality and the Practices of Identity Reconstruction. *Human Relations*, 64(2), 285-302.
- Blackman-Woods, R. 2018. Planning Should Be About Designing Places That People Want to Live and Work In. [Online] <https://labour.org.uk/press/planning-designing-places-people-want-live-work-roberta-blackman-woods/>: The Labour Party [Accessed 16.11.18].
- Blok, A. & Farias, I. 2016. *Urban Cosmopolitics : Agencements, Assemblies, Atmospheres*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bloor, D. 1976. *Knowledge and Social Imagery*. London ; Boston : Routledge & K. Paul.
- Bond, S. 2011. Negotiating a Democratic Ethos: Moving Beyond the Agonistic - Communicative Divide. *Planning Theory*, 10(2), 161-186.
- Bradley, Q. 2015. The Political Identities of Neighbourhood Planning in England. *Space and Polity*, 19(2), 97-109.
- Bradley, Q. 2017a. A Passion for Place: The Emotional Identifications and Empowerment of Neighbourhood Planning. *In: BROWNILL, S. &*

- BRADLEY, Q. (eds.) *Localism and Neighbourhood Planning: Power to the People?* Bristol: Policy Press.
- Bradley, Q. 2017b. Neighbourhood Planning and the Impact of Place Identity on Housing Development in England. *Planning Theory and Practice*, 18(2), 1-16.
- Bradley, Q. 2017c. Neighbourhoods, Communities and the Local Scale. *In:* BROWNILL, S. & BRADLEY, Q. (eds.) *Localism and Neighbourhood Planning: Power to the People?* Bristol: Policy Press.
- Bradley, Q. 2018a. Neighbourhood Planning and the Production of Spatial Knowledge. *The Town Planning Review*, 89(1), 23-42.
- Bradley, Q. 2018b. The Use of Direct Democracy to Decide Housing Site Allocations in English Neighbourhoods. [Online] http://criticalplace.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/The-use-of-direct-democracy-to-decide-housing-site-allocations-in-English-neighbourhoods_final_full.pdf: Leeds-Beckett University.
- Bradley, Q. & Brownill, S. 2017a. Reflections on Neighbourhood Planning: Towards a Progressive Localism. *In:* BROWNILL, S. & BRADLEY, Q. (eds.) *Localism and Neighbourhood Planning: Power to the People?* Bristol: Policy Press.
- Bradley, Q. & Brownill, S. 2017b. Voices from the Neighbourhood: Stories from the Participants in Neighbourhood Plans and the Professionals Working with Them. *In:* BROWNILL, S. & BRADLEY, Q. (eds.) *Localism and Neighbourhood Planning: Power to the People?* Bristol: Policy Press.
- Bradley, Q., Burnett, A. & Sparling, W. 2017. Neighbourhood Planning and the Spatial Practices of Localism. *In:* BROWNILL, S. & BRADLEY, Q. (eds.) *Localism and Neighbourhood Planning: Power to the People?* Bristol: Policy Press.

Bibliography

- Bradley, Q. & Sparling, W. 2016. The Impact of Neighbourhood Planning and Localism on House-Building in England. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 34(1), 106-118.
- Brownill, S. 2016. Assembling Localism: Practices of Assemblage and Building The 'Big Society' in Oxfordshire, England *In: RYDIN, Y. & TATE, L. (eds.) Actor Networks of Planning: Exploring the Influence of Actor Network Theory.* London ; New York: Routledge.
- Brownill, S. 2017a. Assembling Neighbourhoods: Topologies of Power and the Reshaping of Planning. *In: BROWNILL, S. & BRADLEY, Q. (eds.) Localism and Neighbourhood Planning: Power to the People?* Bristol: Policy Press.
- Brownill, S. 2017b. Neighbourhood Planning and the Purposes and Practices of Localism. *In: BROWNILL, S. & BRADLEY, Q. (eds.) Localism and Neighbourhood Planning: Power to the People?* Bristol : Policy Press.
- Brownill, S. & Bradley, Q. 2017. *Localism and Neighbourhood Planning: Power to the People?* Bristol: Policy Press.
- Brownill, S. & Carpenter, J. 2007. Increasing Participation in Planning: Emergent Experiences of the Reformed Planning System in England. *Planning Practice & Research*, 22(4), 619-634.
- Brownill, S. & Parker, G. 2010a. Same as It Ever Was? Reflections on a Practitioner Roundtable on Participation in England. *Planning Practice & Research*, 25(3), 409-415.
- Brownill, S. & Parker, G. 2010b. Why Bother with Good Works? The Relevance of Public Participation(S) in Planning in a Post-Collaborative Era. *Planning Practice & Research*, 25(3), 275-282.

Bibliography

- Bulkens, M., Minca, C. & Muzaini, H. 2014. Storytelling as Method in Spatial Planning. *European Planning Studies*, 23(11), 2310-2326.
- Burningham, K., Barnett, J. & Walker, G. 2015. An Array of Deficits: Unpacking Nimby Discourses in Wind Energy Developers' Conceptualizations of Their Local Opponents. *An International Journal*, 28(3), 246-260.
- Burns, L. & Yuille, A. 2018. *Where Next for Neighbourhood Plans: Can They Withstand the External Pressures?* London: National Association of Local Councils.
- Bødker, S., Dindler, C. & Iversen, O. 2017. Tying Knots: Participatory Infrastructuring at Work. *The Journal of Collaborative Computing and Work Practices*, 26(1), 245-273.
- Calhoun, C. J. 1992. *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press.
- Callon, M. 1999. Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation: Domestication of the Scallops and the Fishermen of Saint Brieuc Bay. In: BIAGIOLI, M. (ed.) *The Science Studies Reader*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Callon, M. 2009. *Acting in an Uncertain World : An Essay on Technical Democracy*. Cambridge, Mass. ; London : MIT Press.
- Callon, M. & Law, J. 2005. On Qualculation, Agency, and Otherness. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 23(5), 717-733.
- Callon, M. & Muniesa, F. 2005. Peripheral Vision: Economic Markets as Calculative Collective Devices. *Organization Studies*, 26(8), 1229-1250.
- Callon, M. & Rabeharisoa, V. 2008. The Growing Engagement of Emergent Concerned Groups in Political and Economic Life: Lessons from the French Association of Neuromuscular Disease Patients. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 33(2), 230-261.

Bibliography

- Cameron, W. B. 1963. *Informal Sociology: A Casual Introduction to Sociological Thinking*. New York: Random House.
- Casey, E. S. 2001. Between Geography and Philosophy: What Does It Mean to Be in the Place-World? *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 91(4), 683-693.
- Cass, N. 2006. Participatory-Deliberative Engagement: A Literature Review. *Beyond Nimbyism: a multidisciplinary investigation of public engagement with renewable energy technologies* Manchester: School of Environment and Development, Manchester University
- Cass, N. & Walker, G. 2009. Emotion and Rationality: The Characterisation and Evaluation of Opposition to Renewable Energy Projects. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 2(1), 62-69.
- Chetwyn, D. 2013. *Neighbourhood Plans: Roadmap Guide*. London: Locality.
- Chilvers, J. & Kearnes, M. 2016. *Remaking Participation: Science, Environment and Emergent Publics*, Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY. : Routledge
- Church, A., Fish, R., Haines-Young, R., Mourato, S., Tratalos, J., Stapleton, L., Willis, C., Coates, P., Gibbons, S., Leyshon, C., Potschin, M., Ravenscroft, N., Sanchis-Guarner, R., Winter, M. & Kenter, J. 2014. *UK National Ecosystem Assessment Follow-On. Work Package Report 5: Cultural Ecosystem Services and Indicators*. UK: UNEP-WCMC.
- Civic Voice 2015. *Collaborative Planning for All* [Online]
http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/uploads/files/Collaborative_planning_1.pdf:
Civic Voice [Accessed 02.08.2016].

Bibliography

- Clarke, N. & Cochrane, A. 2013. Geographies and Politics of Localism: The Localism of the United Kingdom's Coalition Government. *Political Geography*, 34, 10-23.
- CLG Select Committee 2014. *Operation of the National Planning Policy Framework*. HC 190. London: The Stationery Office Ltd.
- Code, L. 2015. Care, Concern and Advocacy: Is There a Place for Epistemic Responsibility. *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly*, 1(1).
- Colomb, C. 2017. Participation and Conflict in the Formation of Neighbourhood Areas and Forums in 'Super-Diverse' Cities. In: BROWNILL, S. & BRADLEY, Q. (eds.) *Localism and Neighbourhood Planning: Power to the People?* Bristol : Policy Press.
- Connelly, S. 2010. Constructing Legitimacy in the New Community Governance. *Urban Studies*, 48(5), 929-946.
- Connelly, S. 2015. The Long March to Collaborative Democracy and Open Source Planning: Public Participation in English Local Governance. *Emerging Directions in Decentralized and Participatory Planning: Implications for Theory, Practice and Roles of the Planner*. Unpublished: Institute of Rural Management.
- Connelly, S., Richardson, T. & Miles, T. 2006. Situated Legitimacy: Deliberative Arenas and the New Rural Governance. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 22(3), 267-277.
- Cooke, B. & Kothari, U. (eds.) 2001. *Participation: The New Tyranny?* London ; New York: Zed Books.
- CPRE 2014. *Community Control or Countryside Chaos? The Effect of the National Planning Policy Framework Two Years On*. London: CPRE.

Bibliography

- Criado, T. S. & Estalella, A. 2018. Experimental Collaborations. *In*: CRIADO, T. S. & ESTALELLA, A. (eds.) *Experimental Collaborations: Ethnography through Fieldwork Devices*. New York ; Oxford: Berghahn.
- Crow, G. & Mah, A. 2011. *Conceptualisations and Meanings of Community: The Theory and Operationalization of a Contested Concept*.
- [Online] <https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/project-reports-and-reviews/connected-communities/conceptualisations-and-meanings-of-community-the-theory-and-operationalization-of-a-contested-concept/>: AHRC Connected Communities [Accessed 12.10.18].
- Curti, G. H., Aitken, S. C., Bosco, F. J. & Goerisch, D. D. 2011. For Not Limiting Emotional and Affectual Geographies: A Collective Critique of Steve Pile's 'Emotions and Affect in Recent Human Geography'. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 36(4), 590-594.
- Daston, L. 2007. *Objectivity*. New York, N.Y. : Zone Books.
- David, P. A. 1985. Clio and the Economics of Qwerty. *The American Economic Review*, 75(2), 332-337.
- Davies, A. 2001a. What Silence Knows. *Environmental values*, 10(1), 77-102.
- Davies, A. R. 2001b. Hidden or Hiding? Public Perceptions of Participation in the Planning System. *The Town Planning Review*, 72(2), 193-216.
- Davies, J. undated. Evidence Based Planning and Monitoring. [Online] <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/5923/John-Davies.pdf>: RTPi [Accessed 15.03.19]
- Davoudi, S. 2006. Evidence- Based Planning: Rhetoric and Reality. *disP – The Planning Review*, 165(2) 14-24

Bibliography

- Davoudi, S. 2012. The Legacy of Positivism and the Emergence of Interpretive Tradition in Spatial Planning. *Regional Studies*, 46(4), 429-441.
- Davoudi, S. 2015. Planning as Practice of Knowing. *Planning Theory*, 14(3), 316-331.
- Davoudi, S. 2018. Policy and Practice Spatial Imaginaries: Tyrannies or Transformations? *The Town Planning Review*, 89(2), 97-124.
- Davoudi, S. & Cowie, P. 2013. Are English Neighbourhood Forums Democratically Legitimate? *Planning Theory & Practice*, 14(4), 562-566.
- Davoudi, S. & Madanipour, A. 2015. *Reconsidering Localism*. Hoboken : Taylor and Francis.
- Dawney, L. 2011. The Motor of Being: A Response to Steve Pile's ' Emotions and Affect in Recent Human Geography'. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 36(4), 599-602.
- DCLG 2010. *Planning Power from Town Hall and Whitehall to Local People*. London: DCLG.
- DCLG 2012a. *National Planning Policy Framework*. London: DCLG.
- DCLG 2012b. *Neighbourhood Planning*. [Online]
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/710924/Neighbourhood_planning_archived.pdf: DCLG [Accessed 03.03.19].
- DCLG 2013. *You've Got the Power: A Quick and Simple Guide to Community Rights*. London: DCLG.
- DCLG 2014a. *National Planning Practice Guidance – Neighbourhood Planning* [Online]. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2>: DCLG [Accessed 15.03.2019]

Bibliography

- DCLG 2014b. *National Planning Practice Guidance – Housing and Economic Needs Assessment* [Online]. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>: DCLG [Accessed 15.03.2019]
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. 2008. *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*. Los Angeles, Calif. : Sage Publications.
- Devine-Wright, P. 2015. Local Attachments and Identities. *Progress in Human Geography*, 39(4), 527-530.
- Devine-Wright, P. & Clayton, S. 2010. Introduction to the Special Issue: Place, Identity and Environmental Behaviour. *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 30(3), 267-270
- Devine-Wright, P. 2009. Rethinking Nimbyism: The Role of Place Attachment and Place Identity in Explaining Place-Protective Action. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 19(6), 426-441.
- Dowling, J. 2017. Decision Letter on Application Made for Land Adjacent to 80 Long Chilton Road, Long Crendon, Buckinghamshire. Appeal Ref: APP/J0405/W/16/3142524. Bristol: Planning Inspectorate.
- Downey, G. L. & Dumit, J. 1997. *Cyborgs & Citadels : Anthropological Interventions in Emerging Sciences and Technologies*: Santa Fe, N.M. : School of American Research Press.
- Downey, G. L. & Lucena, J. C. 1997. Engineering Selves: Hiring in to a Contested Field of Education. In: DOWNEY, G. L. & DUMIT, J. (eds.) *Cyborgs and Citadels*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.
- Duff, C. 2010. On the Role of Affect and Practice in the Production of Place. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 28(5), 881-895.

Bibliography

- Dugdale, A. 1999. Materiality: Juggling Sameness and Difference. *The Sociological Review*, 47(1_suppl), 113-135.
- Easthope, L. & Mort, M. 2014. Technologies of Recovery: Plans, Practices and Entangled Politics in Disaster. *The Sociological Review*, 62(1_suppl), 135-158.
- Eden, S. 2017. *Environmental Publics*. London ; New York: Routledge.
- Exeter St James Forum 2013. *Exeter St James Neighbourhood Plan*. Exeter: Exeter St James Forum.
- Farias, I. & Bender, T. 2011. *Urban Assemblages : How Actor-Network Theory Changes Urban Studies*. London : Routledge.
- Featherstone, D., Ince, A., Mackinnon, D., Strauss, K. & Cumbers, A. 2012. Progressive Localism and the Construction of Political Alternatives. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 37(2), 177-182.
- Field, M. & Layard, A. 2017. Locating Community-Led Housing within Neighbourhood Plans as a Response to England's Housing Needs. *Public Money & Management*, 37(2), 105-112.
- Fiorino, D. 1990a. Citizen Participation and Environmental Risk - a Survey of Institutional Mechanisms. *Science Technology & Human Values*, 15(2), 226-243.
- Fischer, F. & Forester, J. 1993. *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis And Planning*. Durham ; London: Duke University Press.
- Flick, U. 2014. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage
- Fortier, A.-M. 2000. *Migrant Belongings : Memory, Space, Identity*. Oxford : Berg.
- Foster, J. 1997. *Valuing Nature? : Ethics, Economics and the Environment*. London ; New York : Routledge.

Bibliography

- Foucault, M. 1977. *Discipline and Punish : The Birth of the Prison*. London : Allen Lane.
- Foucault, M. 1980. *Power/Knowledge : Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York : Pantheon Books.
- Freeman, R. 2017. Care, Policy, Knowledge: Translating between Worlds. *The Sociological Review*, 65(2_suppl), 193-200.
- Frewer, L., Lassen, J., Kettlitz, B., Scholderer, J., Beekman, V. & Berdal, K. 2004. Societal Aspects of Genetically Modified Foods. *Food and Chemical Toxicology*, 42(7), 1181-1193.
- Galis, V. & Lee, F. 2014. A Sociology of Treason. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 39(1), 154-179.
- Gallent, N. & Robinson, S. 2013. *Neighbourhood Planning: Communities, Networks and Governance*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Geertz, C. 2005. Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight. *Daedalus*, 134(4), 56-86.
- Gieryn, T. F. 1995. Boundaries of Science. In: JASANOFF, S., MARKLE, G. E., PETERSEN, J. C. & PINCH, T. (eds.) *Handbook of Science and Technology Studies*. Revised ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Gill, N., Singleton, V. & Waterton, C. 2017. The Politics of Policy Practices. *The Sociological Review*, 65(2_suppl), 3-19.
- Goffman, E. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, N.Y. : Doubleday.
- Goffman, E. 1968. *Stigma : Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Jarmondsworth : Penguin.

Bibliography

- Goodchild, B. & Hammond, C. 2013. Planning and Urban Regeneration since 2010: A Recipe for Conflict and Dispute? *People, Place and Policy*, 7(2), 82-90.
- Green Balance, Leigh Day & Co, Popham, J. & Purdue, M. 2002. *Third Party Rights of Appeal in Planning*. London : CPRE
- Gregg, M. & Seigworth, G. J. 2010. *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham, NC : Duke University Press.
- Gusterson, H. 1998. *Nuclear Rites : A Weapons Laboratory at the End of the Cold War*. Berkeley, Calif. : Univ. of California Press.
- Habermas, J. 1996. *Between Facts and Norms : Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press.
- Hacking, I. 1999. *The Social Construction of What?* Cambridge, Mass : Harvard University Press.
- Hage, M., Leroy, P. & Petersen, A. C. 2010. Stakeholder Participation in Environmental Knowledge Production. *Futures*, 42(3), 254-264.
- Hall, S. 1996. Who Needs Identity? In: HALL, S. & DU GAY, P. (eds.) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London : Sage.
- Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. 2007. *Ethnography : Principles in Practice*. London : Routledge.
- Hansard 2011. H.C. Localism Bill: Vol 521, Col 629, 17th January. London.
- Hansard 2016. H.C.W.S. Neighbourhood Planning: Written Statement 346, 12th December. London.
- Hansard 2017a. H.C. Local Housing Need: Vol 628, Col 1010, 14th September. London.
- Hansard 2017b. H.C. Neighbourhood Planning, Vol 626, Col 1144, 4th July. London.

Bibliography

- Haraway, D. 1988. Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575-599.
- Haraway, D. 1997. *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.Femaleman_Meets_Oncomouse*. London ; New York : Routledge.
- Haraway, D. 2016. *Staying with the Trouble : Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Haraway, D. J. 1989. *Primate Visions : Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. New York : Routledge.
- Haraway, D. J. 1991. *Simians, Cyborgs and Women : The Reinvention of Nature*. London : Free Association Books.
- Haraway, D. J. 2003. *The Companion Species Manifesto : Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*. Chicago, Ill. : Prickly Paradigm Press.
- Harding, S. G. 1986. *The Science Question in Feminism*. Milton Keynes : Open University Press.
- Harding, S. G. 2008. *Sciences from Below: Feminisms, Postcolonialities, and Modernities*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hastings, A. & Matthews, P. 2015. Bourdieu and the Big Society: Empowering The Powerful in Public Service Provision? *Policy & Politics*, 42(4), 545-60.
- Haughton, G. & Allmendinger, P. 2013. Spatial Planning and the New Localism. *Planning Practice & Research*, 28(1), 1-5.
- Healey, P. 1997. *Collaborative Planning : Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*. Basingstoke ; London: Macmillan.
- Hernandez, B., Hidalgo, M. C., Salazar-Laplace, M. E. & Hess, S. 2007. Place Attachment and Place Identity in Natives and Non-Natives. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 27(4), 310-319.

Bibliography

- Hess, D. 2001. Ethnography and the Development of Science and Technology Studies. *In: ATKINSON, P., COFFEY, A., DELAMONT, S., LOFLAND, J. & LOFLAND, L. (eds.) Handbook of Ethnography.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hildyard, N., Hegde, P., Wolvekamp, P. & Reddy, S. 2001. Pluralism, Participation, and Power: Joint Forest Management in India. *In: COOKE, B. & KOTHARI, U. (eds.) Participation: The New Tyranny?* London & New York: Zed Books.
- Hill, Z. 2017. Appeal Decision Letter for Land at West Street, Coggeshall, CO6 1NS, Appeal Ref: APP/Z1510/W/16/3160474. Bristol: The Planning Inspectorate.
- Hoch, C. 2006. Emotions and Planning. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 7(4), 367-382.
- Holland, A. 1997. The Foundations of Environmental Decision-Making. *International Journal of Environment and Pollution*, 7(4), 483-496.
- Holland, A. & O'Neill, J. 1996. The Integrity of Nature over Time. *Thingmount Working Paper Series*, Dept. of Philosophy, Lancaster University.
- House of Commons 2011. The Localism Act. London: House of Commons.
- Huxley, V. 2000. The Limits to Communicative Planning. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 19(4), 369-377.
- Inch, A. 2015. Ordinary Citizens and the Political Cultures of Planning: In Search of the Subject of a New Democratic Ethos. *Planning Theory*, 14(4), 404-424.
- Ingold, T. 2000. *The Perception of the Environment : Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill.* London ; New York : Routledge.
- Ingold, T. & Vergunst, J. L. 2008. *Ways of Walking : Ethnography and Practice on Foot.* Aldershot : Ashgate.
- Innes, J. E. & Booher, D. E. 2000. Collaborative Dialogue as a Policy Making Strategy. *IURD Working Paper Series.*

Bibliography

- Innes, J. E. & Booher, D. E. 2004. Reframing Public Participation: Strategies for the 21st Century. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 5(4), 419-436.
- Insole, P. & Piccini, A. 2013. Your Place or Mine? Crowdsourced Planning, Moving Image Archives and Community Archaeology. *Archäologische Informationen*, 36, 31-43.
- Jasanoff, S. 1990. *The Fifth Branch : Science Advisers as Policymakers*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Jasanoff, S. 2003. Technologies of Humility: Citizen Participation in Governing Science. *Minerva*, 41(3), 223-244.
- Jasanoff, S. 2004a. Ordering Knowledge, Ordering Society. In: JASANOFF, S. (ed.) *States of Knowledge: The Co-Production of Science and Social Order*. London ; New York : Routledge.
- Jasanoff, S. 2004b. *States of Knowledge : The Co-Production of Science and Social Order*. London ; New York : Routledge.
- Jasanoff, S. 2004c. The Idiom of Co-Production. In: JASANOFF, S. (ed.) *States of Knowledge: The Co-Production of Science and Social Order*. London ; New York : Routledge.
- Jasanoff, S. & Kim, S.-H. 2015. *Dreamscapes of Modernity: Sociotechnical Imaginaries and the Fabrication of Power*. Chicago : University of Chicago Press.
- Jensen, C. B. 2007. Sorting Attachments: Usefulness of STS in Healthcare Practice and Policy. *Science as Culture*, 16(3), 237-251.
- Johnstone, P. & Stirling, A. 2015. Comparing Nuclear Power Trajectories Ingermany and the UK: From 'Regimes' to 'Democracies' in Sociotechnical Transitions and Discontinuities. *IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc*.

Bibliography

- Jones, P., Layard, A., Speed, C. & Lorne, C. 2013. Maplocal: Use of Smartphones for Crowdsourced Planning. *Using ICT, social media and mobile technologies to foster self-organisation in urban and neighbourhood governance*: TU Delft, 17.05.13.
- Jones, P., Layard, A., Speed, C. & Lorne, C. 2015. Maplocal: Use of Smartphones for Crowdsourced planning. *Planning Practice & Research*, 30(3), 322-336.
- Jöns, H. 2011. Centre of Calculation. In: AGNEW, J. & LIVINGSTONE, D. N. (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*. London: Sage.
- King, V. 2011. *The Localism Bill - Power to the People?* [Online].
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-15636272>: BBC News [Accessed 29.08.17].
- Kisby, B. 2010. The Big Society: Power to the People? *Political Quarterly*, 81(4), 484-491.
- Knez, I. 2005. Attachment and Identity as Related to a Place and Its Perceived Climate. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 25(2), 207-218.
- Knorr-Cetina, K. 1981. *The Manufacture of Knowledge : An Essay on the Constructivist and Contextual Nature of Science*. Oxford ; New York : Pergamon Press.
- Labaree, R. 2002. The Risk of 'Going Observationalist': Negotiating the Hidden Dilemmas of Being an Insider Participant Observer. *Qualitative research*, 2(1), 97-122.
- Lambert, C. 2006. Community Strategies and Spatial Planning in England: The Challenges of Integration. *Planning Practice & Research*, 21(2), 245-255.

Bibliography

- Lane, S. N., Odoni, N., Landstrom, C., Whatmore, S. J., Ward, N. & Bradley, S. 2011. Doing Flood Risk Science Differently: An Experiment in Radical Scientific Method. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 36(1), 15-22.
- Lang, Mrs Justice (DBE) 2017a. Bewley Homes Ltd and Waverley Borough Council [2017] EWHC 1776 (Admin). High Court of Justice, Queen's Bench Division, Planning Court.
- Lang, Mrs Justice (DBE) 2017b. Keith Langmead Ltd and (1) Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, (2) Arun District Council [2017 EWHC 788 (Admin). High Court of Justice, Queen's Bench Division, Planning Court.
- Latour, B. 1979. *Laboratory Life : The Social Construction of Scientific Facts*. Beverly Hills : Sage Publications.
- Latour, B. 1984. The Powers of Association. *The Sociological Review*, 32(1_suppl), 264-280.
- Latour, B. 1987. *Science in Action : How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society*. Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press.
- Latour, B. 1993. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Hemel Hempstead : Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Latour, B. 1995. The 'Pedofil' of Boa Vista: A Photo-Philosophical Montage. *Common Knowledge*, 4(1), 145-187.
- Latour, B. 1999. *Pandora's Hope : Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*. Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press.
- Latour, B. 2004a. *Politics of Nature : How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*. Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press.
- Latour, B. 2004b. Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern. *Critical Inquiry*, 30(2), 225-248.

Bibliography

- Latour, B. 2005. *Reassembling the Social : An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*.
Oxford : Oxford University Press.
- Latour, B. & Woolgar, S. 1979. *Laboratory Life : The Social Construction of Scientific
Facts*. Beverly Hills : Sage Publications.
- Laurent, B. 2011. Technologies of Democracy: Experiments and Demonstrations.
Science and Engineering Ethics, 17(4), 649-666.
- Law, J. 2002. Objects and Spaces. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 19(5-6), 91-105.
- Law, J. 2004. *After Method : Mess in Social Science Research*. London : Routledge.
- Law, J. 2008a. Actor-Network Theory and Material Semiotics. In: TURNER, B. S.
(ed.) *The new Blackwell Companion to Social Theory*. 3rd edition. Oxford:
Blackwell.
- Law, J. 2008b. On Sociology and STS. *The Sociological Review*, 56(4), 623-649.
- Law, J. & Mol, A. 2001. Situating Technoscience: An Inquiry into Spatialities.
Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 19(5), 609-621.
- Law, J. & Mol, A. 2002. *Complexities : Social Studies of Knowledge Practices*.
Durham: Duke University Press.
- Law, J. & Singleton, V. 2000. Performing Technology's Stories: On Social
Constructivism, Performance, and Performativity. *Technology and Culture*,
41(4), 765-775.
- Law, J. & Singleton, V. 2014. Ant, Multiplicity and Policy. *Critical Policy Studies*,
8(4), 379-396.
- Lawler, S. 2008. *Identity : Sociological Perspectives*. Cambridge, UK : Polity Press.
- Layard, A., Milling, J. & Wakeford, T. 2013a. *Creative Participation in Place-
Making*. Swindon: AHRC.

Bibliography

- Layard, A., Painter, J., Pande, R., Ramsden, H. & Fyfe, H. 2013b. *Localism, Narrative and Myth*. Swindon: AHRC.
- Legacy, C. 2017. Is There a Crisis of Participatory Planning? *Planning Theory*, 16(4), 425-442.
- Leino, H. & Peltomaa, J. 2012. Situated Knowledge – Situated Legitimacy: Consequences of Citizen Participation in Local Environmental Governance. *Policy and Society*, 31(2), 159-168.
- Levitas, R. 2012. The Just's Umbrella: Austerity and the Big Society in Coalition Policy and Beyond. *Critical Social Policy*, 32(3), 320-342.
- Lewicka, M. 2011. Place Attachment: How Far Have We Come in the Last 40 Years? *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 31(3), 207-230.
- Lezaun, J. & Soneryd, L. 2007. Consulting Citizens: Technologies of Elicitation and the Mobility of Publics. *Public Understanding of Science*, 16(3), 279-297.
- Lieto, L. & Beauregard, R. A. 2016. *Planning for a Material World*. London ; New York: Routledge.
- Locality 2017. *Neighbourhood Planning* [Online]
<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/about/neighbourhood-planning/>: Locality.
[Accessed 21/08 2017].
- Lofland, J. 2006. *Analyzing Social Settings : A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*. Australia : Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Lord, A., Mair, M., Sturzaker, J. & Jones, P. 2017. 'The Planners' Dream Goes Wrong?' Questioning Citizen-Centred Planning. *Local Government Studies*, 43(3), 344-363.

Bibliography

- Lord, A. & Tewdwr-Jones, M. 2014. Is Planning “Under Attack”? Chronicling the Deregulation of Urban and Environmental Planning in England. *European Planning Studies*, 22(2), 345-361.
- Lovbrand, E. 2011. Co- Producing European Climate Science and Policy: A Cautionary Note on the Making of Useful Knowledge. *Science and Public Policy*, 38(3), 225-236.
- Lowndes, V. & Pratchett, L. 2012. Local Governance under the Coalition Government: Austerity, Localism and the Big Society. *Local government studies*, 38(1), 21-40.
- Ludwig, C. & Ludwig, G. 2014. Empty Gestures? A Review of the Discourses of ‘Localism’ from the Practitioner’s Perspective. *Local Economy: The Journal of the Local Economy Policy Unit*, 29(3), 245-256.
- Mace, A. 2013. Delivering Local Plans: Recognising the Bounded Interests of Local Planners within Spatial Planning. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 31(6), 1133-1146.
- Macnaghten, P. & Urry, J. 2001. *Bodies of Nature*. London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage Publications.
- Mance, H. 2016. Britain Has Had Enough of Experts, Says Gove. [Online] <https://www.ft.com/content/3be49734-29cb-11e6-83e4-abc22d5d108c>: Financial Times online, June 3rd 2016. [Accessed 15.03.19]
- Manuel, J., Vigar, G., Bartindale, T. & Comber, R. *Participatory Media: Creating Spaces for Storytelling in Neighbourhood Planning*. CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, 2017 Denver, Colorado. ACM, 1688-1701.

Bibliography

- Manzo, L. C. 2005. For Better or Worse: Exploring Multiple Dimensions of Place Meaning. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 25(1), 67-86.
- Markussen, R. & Olesen, F. 2007. Rhetorical Authority in Sts: Reflections on a Study of It Implementation at a Hospital Ward. *Science as Culture*, 16(3), 267-279.
- Marres, N. 2005. Issues Spark a Public into Being: A Key but Often Forgotten Point of the Lippmann-Dewey Debate. In: LATOUR, B. & WEIBEL, P. (eds.) *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Marres, N. 2012. *Material Participation : Technology, the Environment and Everyday Publics*. Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York : Palgrave Macmillan.
- Marres, N. & Lezaun, J. 2011. Materials and Devices of the Public: An Introduction. *Economy and Society*, 40(4), 489-509.
- Marris, C. & Rose, N. 2010. Open Engagement: Exploring Public Participation in the Biosciences. *PLoS Biology*, 8(11), e1000549.
- Martin, A., Viseu, A. & Myers, N. 2015. The Politics of Care in Technoscience. *Social Studies of Science*, 45(5), 625-641.
- Massey, D. & Thrift, N. 2003. The Passion of Place. In: JOHNSTON, R. & WILLIAMS, M. (eds.) *A Century of British Geography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Massumi, B. 2002. *Parables for the Virtual : Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham, NC : Duke University Press.
- Matthews, P., Bramley, G. & Hastings, A. 2015. Homo Economicus in a Big Society: Understanding Middle-Class Activism and Nimbyism Towards New Housing Developments. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 32(1), 54-72.

- McDonnell, L. 2017. Planning Update: Work in Progress. [Online]
<http://www.planninglawblog.com/work-in-progress>: Property Law Journal
[Accessed 15.03.18].
- McKee, K. 2014. An Introduction to the Special Issue – the Big Society, Localism and
Housing Policy: Recasting State–Citizen Relations in an Age of Austerity.
Housing, Theory and Society, 32(1).1-8.
- Mcneil, M., Arribas-Ayllon, M., Haran, J., Mackenzie, A. & Tutton, R. 2017.
Conceptualizing Imaginaries of Science, Technology and Society. *In*: FELT,
U., FOUCHÉ, R., MILLER, C. A., SMITH-DOERR, L. (eds.) *The Handbook
of Science and Technology Studies*. Cambridge, MA; London, England: MIT
Press.
- Mcneil, M. & Roberts, C. 2011. Feminist Science and Technology Studies. *In*:
BUIKEMA, R., GRIFFIN, G. & LYKKE, N. (eds.) *Theories and
Methodologies in Postgraduate Feminist Research: Researching Differently*.
London : Routledge.
- Mesman, J. 2007. Disturbing Observations as a Basis for Collaborative Research.
Science as Culture, 16(3), 281-295.
- Metzger, J. 2011. Strange Spaces: A Rationale for Bringing Art and Artists into the
Planning Process. *Planning Theory*, 10(3), 213-238.
- Metzger, J. 2014a. Spatial Planning and/as Caring for More-Than-Human Place.
Environment and Planning A, 46(5), 1001-1011.
- Metzger, J. 2014b. The Subject of Place: Staying with the Trouble. *In*: HAAS, T. &
OLSSON, K. (eds.) *Emergent Urbanism: Urban Planning & Design in Times
of Structural and Systemic Change*. Aldershot : Ashgate.

Bibliography

- Millstone, E., Stirling, A. & Glover, D. 2015. Regulating Genetic Engineering the Limits and Politics of Knowledge. *Issues in Science and Technology*, 31(4), 23-26.
- Mol, A. 1999. Ontological Politics. A Word and Some Questions. *The Sociological Review* 47(S1) 74-89
- Mol, A. 2002a. *The Body Multiple : Ontology in Medical Practice*. Durham, N.C. ; London : Duke University Press.
- Mol, A. 2010. Actor-Network Theory: Sensitive Terms and Enduring Tensions. *Koln. Z. Soziol. Sozialpsych.*, 253-269.
- Moser, I. 2008. Making Alzheimer's Disease Matter. Enacting, Interfering and Doing Politics of Nature. *Geoforum*, 39(1), 98-110.
- Mouffe, C. 2005. *On the Political*. London : Routledge.
- Mulligan, M. 2015. On Ambivalence and Hope in the Restless Search for Community: How to Work with the Idea of Community in the Global Age. *Sociology*, 49(2), 340-16.
- Murphy, E. & Dingwall, R. 2007. The Ethics of Ethnography. In: ATKINSON, P., COFFEY, A., DELAMONT, S., LOFLAND, J. & LOFLAND, L. (eds.) *Handbook of Ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Murphy, M. 2015. Unsettling Care: Troubling Transnational Itineraries of Care in Feminist Health Practices. *Social Studies of Science*, 45(5), 717-737.
- Natarajan, L. 2017. Socio-Spatial Learning: A Case Study of Community Knowledge in Participatory Spatial Planning. *Progress in Planning*, 111, 1-23.
- Newman, J. 2012. *Working the Spaces of Power: Activism, Neoliberalism and Gendered Labour*, London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Bibliography

- Newman, J. 2014. Landscapes of Antagonism: Local Governance, Neoliberalism and Austerity. *Urban Studies*, 51(15), 3290-3305.
- NPIERS 2018. Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service: Guidance to Service Users and Examiners.
[Online] <https://www.rics.org/globalassets/rics-website/media/upholding-professional-standards/regulation/drs/drs-services/npiers-planning-guidance-to-service-users-and-examiners-rics.pdf>: NPIERS.
- Ockwell, D. & Rydin, Y. 2006. Conflicting Discourses of Knowledge: Understanding the Policy Adoption of Pro-Burning Knowledge Claims in Cape York Peninsula, Australia. *Environmental Politics*, 15(3), 379-398.
- ODPM 2004. *Community Involvement in Planning: The Government's Objectives*. London: HMSO.
- National Audit Office 2019. *Planning for New Homes*. London: House of Commons.
- Orme, J. 2010. Why Are Some Campaigners Calling the Localism Bill a Nimby's Charter? [Online] <https://www.independent.co.uk/property/house-and-home/why-are-some-campaigners-calling-the-localism-bill-a-nimbys-charter-2162630.html>: The Independent 17.12.10 [Accessed 23.01.17].
- Painter, J., Dominelli, L., Macleod, G., Orton, A. & Pande, R. 2011. Connecting Localism and Community Empowerment: Research Review and Critical Synthesis for the AHRC Connected Communities Programme. *Connected Communities*. [Online] <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/project-reports-and-reviews/connected-communities/connecting-localism-and-community-empowerment/>: Durham University [Accessed 15.04.18].

Bibliography

- Parker, G. 2017. The Uneven Geographies of Neighbourhood Planning in England. *In*: BROWNILL, S. & BRADLEY, Q. (eds.) *Localism and Neighbourhood Planning: Power to the People?* Bristol : Policy Press.
- Parker, G., Lynn, T. & Wargent, M. 2015. Sticking to the Script? The Co-Production of Neighbourhood Planning in England. *The Town Planning Review*, 86(5), 519-536.
- Parker, G., Lynn, T. & Wargent, M. 2017. Contestation and Conservatism in Neighbourhood Planning: Reconciling Agonism and Collaboration? *Planning Theory & Practice*, 18(3), 446-465.
- Parker, G., Lynn, T., Wargent, M. & Locality 2014. *User Experience of Neighbourhood Planning in England*. London: Locality.
- Parker, G., Salter, K. & Hickman, H. 2016. Caution: Examinations in Progress. The Operation of Neighbourhood Development Plan Operations. *Town and Country Planning*, December, 516-522.
- Parker, G. & Street, E. 2015. Planning at the Neighbourhood Scale: Localism, Dialogic Politics, and the Modulation of Community Action. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 33(4), 794-810.
- Perkins, D. D. & Manzo, L. C. 2006. Finding Common Ground: The Importance of Place Attachment to Community Participation and Planning. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 20(4), 335-350.
- Petts, J. & Brooks, C. 2006. Expert Conceptualisations of the Role of Lay Knowledge in Environmental Decisionmaking: Challenges for Deliberative Democracy. *Environment and Planning A*, 38(6), 1045-1059.

Bibliography

- Pickles, E. 2013. New Step for Localism as Every Regional Plan Has Gone. [Online] <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-step-for-localism-as-every-regional-plan-has-gone>: DCLG [Accessed 18.03.19].
- Pile, S. 2010. Emotions and Affect in Recent Human Geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 35(1), 5-20.
- Planning Advisory Service 2013. *Neighbourhood Planning: A Guide for Councillors* [Online] <https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/pas-topics/neighbourhood-plans/neighbourhood-planning-guide-councillors>: LGA [Accessed 01.08.16].
- Planning Aid undated. *Material Planning Considerations* [Online] <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/686895/Material-Planning-Considerations.pdf>: Planning Aid [Accessed 17.07.17].
- Planning Resource 2017. *Map: Neighbourhood Plan Applications* [Online] <http://www.planningresource.co.uk/article/1212813/map-neighbourhood-plan-applications>: Haymarket Publishing. [Accessed 19.09.17].
- Porter, L., Sandercock, L., Umemoto, K., Bates, L. K., Zapata, M. A., Kondo, M. C., Zitcer, A., Lake, R. W., Fonza, A., Sletto, B. & Erfan, A. 2012. What's Love Got to Do with It? Illuminations on Loving Attachment in Planning. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 13(4), 593-627.
- Potter, J. 1996. *Representing Reality : Discourse, Rhetoric and Social Construction*. London ; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Puig de la Bellacasa, M. 2011. Matters of Care in Technoscience: Assembling Neglected Things. *Social studies of science*, 41(1), 85-106.
- Puig de la Bellacasa, M. 2012. ' Nothing Comes without Its World': Thinking with Care. *The Sociological Review*, 60(2), 197-216.

Bibliography

- Puig de la Bellacasa, M. 2017. *Matters of Care : Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds*. Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press.
- Raco, M., Street, E. & Freire-Trigo, S. 2015a. The New Localism, Anti- Political Development Machines, and the Role of Planning Consultants: Lessons from London's South Bank. *Territory, Politics, Governance* 4(2) 216-240.
- Raynsford, N. 2018. Raynsford Review of Planning Final Report Published.
[Online] <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/news/press-release-raynsford-review-of-planning-to-be-launched-on-20-november-2018>: TCPA [Accessed 21.11.18].
- Reed, M. S. 2008. Stakeholder Participation for Environmental Management: A Literature Review. *Biological Conservation*, 141(10), 2417-2431.
- Rittel, H. & Webber, M. 1973. Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning. *Integrating Knowledge and Practice to Advance Human Dignity*, 4(2), 155-169.
- Rock, P. 2007. Symbolic Interactionism and Ethnography. In: ATKINSON, P. (ed.) *Sage Handbook of Ethnography*. London: Sage.
- Roosth, S. & Silbey, S. 2009. Science and Technology Studies: From Controversies to Posthumanist Social Theory. In: TURNER, B. S. (ed.) *The New Blackwell Companion to Social Theory*. Singapore: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- Rose, N. 1996. The Death of the Social? Refiguring the Territory of Government. *Economy and Society*, 25(3), 327-356.
- Rose, N. S. 1999. *Powers of Freedom : Reframing Political Thought*. Cambridge, UK ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press.
- Rozee, L. 2014b. A New Vision for Planning – There Must Be a Better Way? *Planning Theory & Practice*, 15(1), 1-15.
- Rydin, Y. 2007. Re-Examining the Role of Knowledge within Planning Theory. *Planning Theory*, 6(1), 52-68.

Bibliography

- Rydin, Y. & Natarajan, L. 2016. The Materiality of Public Participation: The Case of Community Consultation on Spatial Planning for North Northamptonshire, England. *Local Environment*, 21(10), 1243-1251.
- Rydin, Y., Natarajan, L., Lee, M. & Lock, S. 2018. Black-Boxing the Evidence: Planning Regulation and Major Renewable Energy Infrastructure Projects in England and Wales. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 19(2), 218-234.
- Rydin, Y. & Pennington, M. 2000. Public Participation and Local Environmental Planning: The Collective Action Problem and the Potential of Social Capital. *Local Environment*, 5(2), 153-169.
- Rydin, Y. & Tate, L. E. 2016. *Actor Networks of Planning: Exploring the Influence of Actor Network Theory*. Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, N.Y. : Routledge.
- Sagoe, C. 2016. One Tool Amongst Many: Considering the Political Potential of Neighbourhood Planning for the Greater Carpenters Neighbourhood, London. *Architecture_MPS*, 9(3), 1-20.
- Salter, K. 2017. *Neighbourhood Plan Examinations: Why They Need to Be Tough* [Online] <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/briefing-room/rtpi-blog/neighbourhood-plan-examinations-why-they-need-to-be-tough/>: RTPi [Accessed 02.11.18].
- Samuels, I. 2012. Limits to Localism. *Focus*, 9(1), 41-42.
- Sandercock, L. 2003. Out of the Closet: The Importance of Stories and Storytelling in Planning Practice. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 4(1), 11-28.
- Sandercock, L. & Attili, G. 2010. *Multimedia Explorations in Urban Policy and Planning*. Heidelberg ; London ; New York: Springer.
- Seale, C. 1999. Quality in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 5(4), 465-478.
- Shapin, S. 1984. Pump and Circumstance: Robert Boyle's Literary Technology. *Social Studies of Science*, 14(4), 481-520.

Bibliography

- Shapin, S. & Schaffer, S. 1985. *Leviathan and the Air-Pump : Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life*. Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press.
- Shove, E. 2012. *The Dynamics of Social Practice : Everyday Life and How It Changes*. London: Sage.
- Sibley-Esposito, C. 2014. Not out of the Woods Yet: Spatial Planning (De)Regulation under the Coalition Government. *Observatoire de la société britannique*, 15, 189-214.
- Singleton, V. & Law, J. 2013. Ant and Politics: Working in and on the World. *Qualitative Sociology*, 36(4), 485-502.
- Singleton, V. & Mee, S. 2017. Critical Compassion: Affect, Discretion and Policy–Care Relations. *The Sociological Review*, 65(2_suppl), 130-149.
- Singleton, V. & Michael, M. 1993. Actor-Networks and Ambivalence: General Practitioners in the UK Cervical Screening Programme. *Social Studies of Science*, 23(2), 227-264.
- Sismondo, S. 2008. Science and Technology Studies and an Engaged Program. *In*: HACKETT, E. J., AMSTERDAMSKA, O., LYNCH, M. E. & WAJCMAN, J. (eds.) *The Handbook of Science and Technology Studies*. 3rd ed. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Skeffington, A. 1969. *People and Planning: Report of the Skeffington Committee on Public Participation in Planning*. London: HMSO.
- Smith, D. E. 1987. *The Everyday World as Problematic : A Feminist Sociology*, Boston : Northeastern University Press.
- Smith, J., Tyszcuk, R., Lewis, K., Day, R., Goodbody, A., Whyte, N., Zdrahal, Z., Smith, B. & Udall, J. 2016. *Stories of Change*. [Online] <https://storiesofchange.ac.uk/>: AHRC [Accessed on 03/12/18].

Bibliography

- Smith, M. 2009. *Emotion, Place and Culture*. Farnham : Ashgate.
- Soja, E. W. 1989. *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. London ; New York : Verso.
- Somerville, P. 2016. *Understanding Community: Politics, Policy and Practice*. Bristol : Policy Press.
- Sorensen, A. & Sagaris, L. 2010. From Participation to the Right to the City: Democratic Place Management at the Neighbourhood Scale in Comparative Perspective. *Planning Practice & Research*, 25(3), 297-316.
- Star, S. L. 1990. Power, Technology and the Phenomenology of Conventions: On Being Allergic to Onions. *The Sociological Review*, 38(1_suppl), 26-56.
- Stenmark, M. 1997. What Is Scientism? *Religious Studies*, 33(1), 15-32.
- Stirling, A. 2006. Analysis, Participation and Power: Justification and Closure in Participatory Multi-Criteria Analysis. *Land Use Policy*, 23(1), 95-107.
- Stirling, A. 2008. "Opening up" and "Closing Down": Power, Participation, and Pluralism in the Social Appraisal of Technology. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 33(2), 262-294.
- Stirling, A. 2014. Transforming Power: Social Science and the Politics of Energy Choices. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 1(C), 83-95.
- Stirling, A. 2015. Power, Truth and Progress : Towards Knowledge Democracies in Europe. In: WILSDON, J. & DOUBLEDAY, R. (eds.) *Future Directions for Scientific Advice in Europe*. Cambridge : Centre for Science and Policy.
- Stirling, A. 2016. Knowing Doing Governance: Realizing Heterodyne Democracies. In: VOß, J.-P. & FREEMAN, R. (eds.) *Knowing Governance: The Epistemic Construction of Political Order*. London : Palgrave-Macmillan.

Bibliography

- Stirrat, R. 1996. The New Orthodoxy and Old Truths: Participation, Empowerment and Other Buzzwords. In: BASTIAN, S. & BASTIAN, N. (eds.) *Assessing Participation: A Debate from South Asia*. Delhi : Konark Publishers.
- Strathern, M. 1996b. Cutting the Network. (Stopping the Flow of Money in Melanesian Intermarriages). *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 2(3), 517-535.
- Strong, D. 1994. Disclosive Discourse, Ecology, and Technology. (Discussion Papers). *Environmental Ethics*, 16(1) 89-102.
- Sturzaker, J. 2011. Can Community Empowerment Reduce Opposition to Housing? Evidence from Rural England. *Planning Practice & Research*, 26(5), 555-570.
- Sturzaker, J. & Gordon, M. 2017. Democratic Tensions in Decentralised Planning – Rhetoric, Legislation and Reality in England. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 35(7), 1324-1339.
- Sturzaker, J. & Shaw, D. 2015. Localism in Practice: Lessons from a Pioneer Neighbourhood Plan in England. *The Town Planning Review*, 86(5), 587-609.
- Suchman, L. 2000. Organizing Alignment: A Case of Bridge-Building. *Organization*, 7(2), 311-327.
- Suchman, L. 2012. Configuration. In: LURY, C. & WAKEFORD, N. (eds.) *Inventive Methods: The Happening of the Social*. New York : Routledge.
- Suchman, L. A. 2007. *Human-Machine Reconfigurations : Plans and Situated Actions*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Swaine, J. 2017. Donald Trump's Team Defends 'Alternative Facts' after Widespread Protests. [Online] <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/22/donald-trump-kellyanne-conway-inauguration-alternative-facts>: The Guardian, 23.01.17 [Accessed 07.02.18].

Bibliography

- Swyngedouw, E. 2009. The Antinomies of the Postpolitical City: In Search of a Democratic Politics of Environmental Production. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 33(3), 601-620.
- Swyngedouw, E. 2010. Apocalypse Forever?: Post-Political Populism and the Spectre of Climate Change. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 27(2-3), 213-232.
- Symon, G. & Pritchard, K. 2015. Performing the Responsive and Committed Employee through the Sociomaterial Mangle of Connection. *Organization Studies*, 36(2), 241.
- Taylor, C. 2004. *Modern Social Imaginaries*. Durham, N.C. : Duke University Press.
- TCPA 2017a. The Raynsford Review of Planning - Provocation Paper 2: People and Planning. [Online]
<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=8a028329-fb39-431e-a994-2b0a25eeb62b>: TCPA [Accessed 14.07.18].
- TCPA 2017b. The Raynsford Review of Planning: Creating a Blueprint for a New Planning System: Background Paper 2: The Rise and Fall of Town Planning. [Online] <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=fffe8fd5-734f-489d-bd9e-d4e211a91b0b>: TCPA [Accessed 14.07.18].
- Tewdwr-Jones, M. 1998. Rural Government and Community Participation: The Planning Role of Community Councils. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 14(1), 51-62.
- The Conservative Party 2010. Open Source Planning: Policy Green Paper No.14. London: The Conservative Party.
- Thiele, L. & Young, M. 2016. Practical Judgment, Narrative Experience and Wicked Problems. *Theoria*, 63(148), 35.
- Thrift, N. 2004. Intensities of Feeling: Towards a Spatial Politics of Affect. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 86(1), 57-78.

Bibliography

- Thrift, N. 2009. Understanding the Affective Spaces of Political Performance. *In:* SMITH, M., DAVIDSON, J., CAMERON, L. & BONDI, L. (eds.) *Emotion, Place and Culture*. Farnham : Ashgate.
- Thrift, N. J. 2008. *Non-Representational Theory : Space, Politics, Affect*. London : Routledge.
- Throgmorton, J. 1996. *Planning as Persuasive Storytelling: The Rhetorical Construction of Chicago's Electric Future*. Chicago, Ill. : Chicago University Press.
- Throgmorton, J. 2003. Planning as Persuasive Storytelling in a Global-Scale Web of Relationships. *Planning Theory*, 2(2), 125-151.
- Traweek, S. 1988. *Beamtimes and Lifetimes : The World of High Energy Physicists*. Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press.
- Tsing, A. L. 2005. *Friction : An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press.
- Tsouvalis, J. 2016. Latour's Object-Orientated Politics for a Post- Political Age. *Global Discourse*, 6(1-2), 26-39.
- Tsouvalis, J. & Waterton, C. 2012. Building ' Participation' Upon Critique: The Loweswater Care Project, Cumbria, UK. *Environmental Modelling and Software*, 36, 111-121.
- Tuan, Y.-F. 1975. Place: An Experiential Perspective. *Geographical Review*, 65(2), 151-165.
- Urry, J. 2004. The 'System' of Automobility. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 21(4-5), 25-40.
- Urry, J. & Macnaghten, P. 1998. *Contested Natures*. London : Sage Publications.

Bibliography

- Van Hulst, M. 2012. Storytelling, a Model of and a Model for Planning. *Planning Theory*, 11(3), 299-318.
- Verran, H. 1998. Re- Imagining Land Ownership in Australia. *Postcolonial Studies*, 1(2), 237-254.
- Verran, H. 2001. *Science and an African Logic*. Chicago : University of Chicago Press.
- Vidal, T., Berroeta, H., Di Masso, A., Valera, S. & Pero, M. 2013. Place Attachment, Place Identity, Sense of Community, and Local Civic Participation in an Urban Renewal Context. *Estudios De Psicologia*, 34(3), 275-286.
- Vigar, G., Gunn, S. & Brooks, E. 2017. Governing Our Neighbours: Participation and Conflict in Neighbourhood Planning. *Town Planning Review*, 88(4), 423-442.
- Vikkelsø, S. 2007. Description as Intervention: Engagement and Resistance in Actor-Network Analyses. *Science as culture*, 16(3), 297-309.
- Voß, J.-P. 2016. Reflexively Engaging with Technologies of Participation: Constructive Assessment for Public Participation Methods. In: CHILVERS, J. & KEARNES, M. (eds.) *Remaking Participation : Science, Environment and Emergent Publics*. London: Routledge.
- Walker, G., Cass, N., Burningham, K. & Barnett, J. 2010. Renewable Energy and Sociotechnical Change: Imagined Subjectivities of the Public & and Their Implications. *Environment and planning A*, 42(4), 931-947.
- Wargent, M. & Parker, G. 2018. Re-Imagining Neighbourhood Governance: The Future of Neighbourhood Planning in England. *The Town Planning Review*, 89(4), 379-402.

Bibliography

- Waterton, C., Maberly, S. C., Tsouvalis, J., Watson, N., Winfield, I. J. & Norton, L. R. 2015. Committing to Place: The Potential of Open Collaborations for Trusted Environmental Governance. *PLoS Biology* 13(3), e1002081.
- Waterton, C. & Wynne, B. 1999. Can Focus Groups Access Community Views? In: BARBOUR, R. S. & KITZINGER, J. (eds.) *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*. London ; Thousand Oaks ; New Delhi: Sage.
- Watson-Verran, H. & Turnbull, D. 1995. Science and Other Indigenous Knowledge Systems. In: JASANOFF, S. & MARKLE, G. E., PETERSEN, JAMES C. PINCH, TREVOR (eds.) *Handbook of Science and Technology Studies*. Revised ed. Thousand Oaks, CA : Sage.
- Welsh, I. & Wynne, B. 2013. Science, Scientism and Imaginaries of Publics in the UK: Passive Objects, Incipient Threats. *Science as Culture*, 22(4), 540-566.
- Wenger, E. 1998. *Communities of Practice : Learning, Meaning, and Identity*, Cambridge, UK ; New York, N.Y. : Cambridge University Press.
- Wilcox, D. 1994. *Community Participation and Empowerment: Putting Theory into Practice*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Williams, A., Goodwin, M. & Cloke, P. 2014. Neoliberalism, Big Society, and Progressive Localism. *Environment and Planning A*, 46(12), 2798-2815.
- Wills, J. 2016. Emerging Geographies of English Localism: The Case of Neighbourhood Planning. *Political Geography*, 53, 43-53.
- Wilsdon, J. 2004. *See-through Science : Why Public Engagement Needs to Move Upstream*. London : Demos.
- Winthereik, B. R. & Verran, H. 2012. Ethnographic Stories as Generalizations That Intervene. *Science Studies*, 25(1), 37-51.

Bibliography

- Wittmer, H., Rauschmayer, F. & Klauer, B. 2006. How to Select Instruments for the Resolution of Environmental Conflicts? *Land Use Policy*, 23(1), 1-9.
- Wolsink, M. 2006. Invalid Theory Impedes Our Understanding: A Critique on the Persistence of the Language of Nimby. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 31(1), 85-91.
- Woolgar, S. 1988. *Science, the Very Idea*, Chichester, Sussex ; London ; New York : Ellis Horwood ; Tavistock Publications.
- Wylie, S. A., Jalbert, K., Dosemagen, S. & Ratto, M. 2014. Institutions for Civic Technoscience: How Critical Making Is Transforming Environmental Research. *The Information Society*, 30(2), 116-126.
- Wynne, B. 1982. *Rationality and Ritual : The Windscale Inquiry and Nuclear Decisions in Britain*. Chalfont St Giles, Bucks, England : British Society for the History of Science.
- Wynne, B. 1991. Knowledges in Context. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 16(1), 111-21.
- Wynne, B. 1992. Misunderstood Misunderstanding: Social Identities and Public Uptake of Science. *Public Understanding of Science*, 1(3), 281-304.
- Wynne, B. 1993. Public Uptake of Science: A Case for Institutional Reflexivity. *Public understanding of science*, 2(4), 321-337.
- Wynne, B. 1996. May the Sheep Safely Graze? a Reflexive View of the Expert-Lay Knowledge Divide. In: SZERSZYNSKI, B., LASH, S. & WYNNE, B. (eds.) *Risk, Environment and Modernity: Towards a New Ecology*. London : Sage.
- Wynne, B. 2002. Risk and Environment as Legitimatory Discourses of Technology: Reflexivity inside Out? *Current sociology*, 50(3), 459-477.

Bibliography

- Wynne, B. 2007. Public Participation in Science and Technology: Performing and Obscuring a Political Conceptual Category Mistake. *East Asian Science, Technology and Society*, 1(1), 99-110.
- Yearley, S. 1992. Green Ambivalence About Science - Legal-Rational Authority and the Scientific Legitimation of a Social-Movement. *British Journal Of Sociology*, 43(4), 511-532.
- Yeh, E. 2016. 'How Can Experience of Local Residents Be "Knowledge"?' Challenges in Interdisciplinary Climate Change Research. *Area*, 48(1), 34-40.
- Young, C. & Burcher, J. C. 2014. Neighbourhood Planning. [Online] <https://www.no5.com/cms/documents/CY%20and%20JCB.pdf>: No 5 Chambers [Accessed 06.04.16].
- Young, K., Ashby, D., Boaz, A. & Grayson, L. 2002. Social Science and the Evidence-Based Policy Movement. *Social Policy and Society*, 1(3), 215-224.
- Zuiderent-Jerak, T. 2007. Preventing Implementation: Exploring Interventions with Standardization in Healthcare. *Science as Culture*, 16(3), 311-329.
- Zuiderent-Jerak, T. & Jensen, C. 2007. Unpacking ' Intervention' in Science and Technology Studies. *Science as culture*, 16(3), 227-235.

Appendix 1: Project Information Sheet and Consent Form

Sociology

LANCASTER
UNIVERSITY



Research Project Information Sheet

Project title: Affective planning for environmental change: participation and innovation in neighbourhoods, catchments and natural areas

This research project is part of the PhD degree programme that I am currently undertaking at Lancaster University. It is funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (www.esrc.ac.uk) and supported by the Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs>).

Purpose of the project

Greater public involvement in making decisions about the way the places that they live and work change is increasingly recognised as important. The present Government has introduced a number of initiatives intended to increase participation in planning for environmental change, including Neighbourhood Planning, the Catchment-Based Approach, Local Nature Partnerships, and Nature Improvement Areas.

The project will be centred on an ethnographic study of a group developing a Neighbourhood Plan, is, following a group through the process of developing the plan as it happens in 'real-world' settings, in order to provide a detailed, in-depth description of what takes place from an "insider's" point of view. It will involve participation in meetings, workshops, consultation events, examining public consultation responses, and other activities as agreed with the group. It may also involve interviews and observation with people involved in other initiatives.

It will focus in particular on the ways that people's sense of place and local knowledge and valuing of place and environment are brought to bear in the process of making a Neighbourhood Plan. These are the things that often matter most to people about their environment, but they are very difficult to measure or quantify, and so have often been ignored in more traditional decision-making processes. It will also explore how these ways of knowing and valuing a place relate to more technical or 'expert' knowledge; and examine what gets included in the Plan and the evidence base and what gets excluded, and how and why this happens.

The results of the project will form the basis for recommendations for the future support and delivery of related initiatives.

What is involved in participating?

I will observe participants in activities connected with making a Plan, and will engage in informal conversations and interviews. I may record meetings, conversations, interviews etc on an audio recording device. If any participant is not comfortable with this, I will simply make notes by hand. You can tell me not to record at any time. Observation and informal conversations will take place while you are already engaged in the business of developing a Plan – they should not take up any additional time. Interviews would be optional and in addition to this, and, if you choose to agree to one or more interviews, they would be conducted at a time and place that is convenient to you.

If you do agree to be interviewed, you are free to refuse to answer any of the questions; to withdraw from the interview at any point before or during the interview; or to ask me to delete records of the interview. If you ask me to do so, I will delete any information that I hold about you or that you have

given to me; you can also withdraw your data from the project entirely at any time up to six months after the research is concluded.

Benefits and risks of participation

The benefits of participation will primarily be to the users of the research findings. However, as part of my research I may, if appropriate, be able to assist the group with some of the tasks required in the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan, from the mundane (eg distributing questionnaires) to the more specialised. I have nine years' experience in working with charities and community groups in the planning system, eg the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

I do not foresee any risks to your participation in this project. All participation is entirely voluntary.

Protecting anonymity, privacy and confidentiality

Audio recording files, transcribed text files, and the audio recording device will be stored securely: audio files and transcribed text files will be stored in a password protected laptop and the recording device will be stored in a locked drawer in a university office at the Department of Sociology.

My laptop will be encrypted. The audio recorder cannot be encrypted but identifiable data (including recordings of participants' voices) will be deleted from the recorder as quickly as possible, eg when it has been transferred to my encrypted laptop) and in the meantime the recorder will be stored securely.

A copy of your interview transcript (where applicable) will be provided, free of charge, on request. If you wish, you may provide additional information, clarification or interpretations within 2 months from the time of the interview.

All contributions to the data will be anonymised. Anonymising means deleting or disguising all information that can render a person identifiable to an outsider. However, it is possible that participants and their data will be identifiable to other participants and to people closely familiar with the organisation, the process and the area, and so total and complete guarantees can never be provided.

Your name and contact details will be held separately from any interview recording and notes and it will be impossible to associate the two. Six months after the end of the project I will delete or destroy all records in my possession containing personal information. However, I intend to keep anonymised research records for future research purposes. No personal and private information you share with me, including your participation in this study, will be shared with anyone else UNLESS it involves unlawful activity or the safeguarding of a vulnerable person, in which case it is my legal duty to report it to the police.

End uses of the information provided

The information you provide will be combined with that of other participants and analysed for the purposes of this project. The findings of the research will be written up as part of my PhD thesis; for policy makers; and for other organisations interested in this work. The findings may be published, and they may also be used for teaching and research training. The data will be stored, securely, for a minimum of ten years. The written work may include direct quotations from the interviews, but individuals will never be named. Please feel free to ask me any further questions you may have about the project. You can also advise me of anything else you would like me to do to protect your privacy.

Name and contact details of researcher

Name: Andy Yuille
Email: a.yuille1@lancaster.ac.uk
Phone number: 07951 612 056
Postal address: B114, Department of Sociology, Bowland North, Lancaster University, LA1 4YT

Name and contact details of researcher's supervisors

Name: Dr Claire Waterton
Email: c.waterton@lancaster.ac.uk
Phone number: 01524 593 322
Postal address: B147, Department of Sociology, Bowland North, Lancaster University, LA1 4YT

Name: Dr Vicki Singleton
Email: d.singleton@lancaster.ac.uk
Phone number: 01524 592 499
Postal address: B131, Department of Sociology, Bowland North, Lancaster University, LA1 4YT

Name and contact details of Head of Department

Name: Dr Bronisław Izerszynski
Email: bron@lancaster.ac.uk
Phone number: 01524 594176
Postal address: Department of Sociology, Bowland North, Lancaster University, LA1 4YT

Any questions or problems?

I don't anticipate any problems arising from the conduct of this study. If any issues arise, it will probably be easiest to resolve them by discussing them with me in the first instance. If you have any further questions about the research, please contact one of my supervisors. And if you feel you have any cause for complaint or would like to raise any concerns about my behaviour or about the research undertaken, please contact my Head of Department. All our contact details are above.

Consent form: Affective planning for environmental change: participation and innovation in neighbourhoods, catchments and natural areas

Participant identification code:

	Please circle one response	
1) I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. My questions have been answered adequately.	Yes	No
2) I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without detriment.	Yes	No
3) I agree to the use of any anonymised information given by me in future published reports, articles or presentations by the researcher for the purposes of the study.	Yes	No
4) My words may be quoted provided that they are anonymised.	Yes	No
5) I agree to the archiving of anonymised data for future use by the researcher or by other researchers for purposes compatible with the purposes of this study.	Yes	No
6) I agree to take part in the above study.	Yes	No

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

One copy will be kept by the participant and the original to be kept in the file of the research team at: Department of Sociology, Lancaster University