Socio-spatial learning: A case study of community knowledge in participatory spatial planning

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A B S T R A C T

This monograph looks at experiences of communities with spatial planning and applies those empirics to an underexplored area of participatory theory. While issues of power and communication have been well examined this work rest on the argument that the associated production of knowledge needs to be better understood. Theories of engagement draw on issues of 'voice' and the means to achieving deeper democracy. Similarly, participatory planning theories frame the debate in terms of communicative processes or competing rationalities. Within that body of work, however knowledge is seen as an adjunct of power and there is little focus on the spatial particularity of knowledges. In particular there has not as yet been a thorough study of how understandings of space are produced in a spatial planning context that includes lay participants. This monograph starts to broach that gap, conceptualising a potential 'socio-spatial learning' where community engagement is framed as a collaborative learning arena within spatial planning. Through an English case study it unpacks the dynamics between different types of knowledge around spatial planning where there is lay participation. This draws on two years of embedded observation within a joint planning unit and a review of the North Northamptonshire Core Strategy of 2008, which culminated in substantial community engagement work early in 2011. Findings indicate that local knowledge has a distinctive spatiality and that there is a clear role for lay knowledge in the context of spatial strategy-making. It is hoped that this work can help in understanding the production of planning knowledge, help identify non-tokenist engagement of the public, and inform interactions between communities and policy makers.

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1. Chapter 1

1.1. Introduction

This monograph asks 'how does learning with communities reframe spatial knowledge?' It begins from the understanding that planning is a knowledge-based profession concerned with space and that claims about the value to planning of community engagement need to be related to spatial learning. It takes an in-depth look at the communication between planners and the public through a unique embedded study of the knowledge(s) within collaborative and participatory work. The focus of recent work in this field has been on the improvement of specific outcomes, the resolution of conflict and the search for consensus. This has contributed to current thinking where lay participation in planning is increasingly expected but engagement exercises are not related specifically to producing knowledge of space for decision-making.

Since the nature of any 'learning value' is yet to be articulated with any specificity, the value of community engagement to learning about space is uncertain. The possibility of a productive interface between lay and planning actors is either assumed or ignored, since community engagement in planning is justified on the grounds of human rights and dignity, and increasing amounts of planning resources are being targeted at community involvement. In any case the argument is consistently made that the involvement of lay actors ought to have an impact on planners' thinking. The central concern of this study is therefore how such 'non-tokenist' participation, where it exists, has learning value for understanding space.

The nexus of planning theory around collaboration and spatial planning is deeply concerned with the 'outcomes' of both participation and planning. Participation can be and often is justified on democratic principles alone; however planning has both political and spatial power or at very least spatial as well as political aspects. The empowerment value is fundamental to community engagement, and this author's view is that cynicism will remain so long as the knowledge value of community

engagement to planning is unclear. It is certainly an area that planning literature has not as yet considered in any depth. For these reasons, it is important to understand the effect of community knowledge on knowledge of space.

Planning knowledge appears as a theoretical construct within fields of vision about place, how these interact and how space is 'constructed'. As discussed in the following section, there is little focus on the learning potential within public participation, yet the implications for learning about space with communities is often alluded to. The argument put forward is that planning needs to more fully understand the interaction of different ways of understanding space and how different knowledges of space affect the production of spatial policies. To introduce this it is useful to briefly examine the work of the French philosopher Lefebvre, which continues to be a key reference in theorising on spatial planning (Holgersen, 2015; Pollock & Paddison, 2014) and social justice (Fainstein, 2010; Røe, 2014). In his seminal work, space is presented as a social product (Lefebvre, 1991) rather than a pre-existing ontological given, and therefore what constitutes 'space' is not fixed but fluid. This implies that there is no universal truth about space, only a series of occurrences where space and society mutually construct each other, affecting and producing each other. Consequently theories of society and space are presented as practically inseparable. To understand space then, Lefebvre suggests that we need to understand the ways it is constructed. Three ways are described: how it is perceived in daily life (spatial practices); as conceived by (e.g.) planners (representations of space); and lived space (spaces of representation) which is life "as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39). The importance of social production of shared understandings is a dominant theme in the more recent, relational approaches to spatial governance. As discussed below, it is cast as a vital component of spatial planning and social justice being either critically or normatively applied both to the substantive outcomes and to the processes of strategic spatial planning. Yet the existence of lay knowledge and the formative role of local communities' experiences in knowledges of space, that are so prominent in Lefebrivan analyses, have not been fully explored in planning theory. In response, the following chapters address the theoretical territory where lay knowledge and spatial governance converge, then present a unique English case study that unpacks the learning aspects of participatory contexts with and without communities. The lay knowledge of communities is examined as a facet of collaborative spatial planning.

2. Chapter 2

2.1. Participation and the uses of knowledge

Knowledge sits uncomfortably within planning theories of participation, from concerns around advocacy, through issues of equity, deliberation, collaboration, and continuing up to current reflections on forms and practice that might constitute a 'success'. As discussed here the focus of such work is on the close relationships within networks of power and on the effect of participation, in the form of deliberation, on institutions rather than on knowledge. A central concern is that this primarily characterises the general public as community groups differentiated by their relationships to dominant power structures. Concepts of control are strongly related to space, where dominant actors govern and manipulate a particular area, and knowledge is analysed as a means to disrupting and restabilising networks. Although this understanding has critical value, it has come to obscure spatial rationality and dominated work in the area to the exclusion of concerns around its cognitive purpose in decisions for

spatial strategy. Participatory planning is conceived as a form of social learning with the potential for knowledge development, but theorising mainly relates to the structure, system and actors involved and knowledge in participatory planning is as yet underexplored. It overlooks the power of spatial knowledge in relation to planning challenges such as housing shortages and spatial issues such as the relationship between public transit provision and patterns of development.

There is a powerful vision in current planning theory of participation as tool of liberation, in which space is a secondary consideration at best. Critical focus falls on the close relationships within networks of power (Booher & Innes, 2002; Innes & Booher, 2004; Miraftab, 2004) and the effects of participation on institutions (Backlund & Mantysalo, 2010; Rydin & Pennington, 2000). Early literature on participation focused on notions of 'depth' and presented participation in decision-making as a means to redistributing power within the existing social order. The relative emancipatory effect of participation was seen to depend on the depth of participation, which is classically depicted using the metaphor of a ladder. Arnstein's ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969) has been taken by many authors as the starting point for further theorising. It is based on eight progressive 'rungs' of participation (Citizen control, Delegated power, Partnership, Placation, Consultation, Informing, Therapy, Manipulation) along a sliding scale of depth categories (Non-participation, Tokenism, Citizen power) to demonstrate the degree to which power is transferred from process managers to those outside the process. Other ladders have since been produced and the continuing search for '21st century strategies' (Innes & Booher, 2004) now also considers the empowerment potential of new technologies such as online (Kingston, 2002; Kingston et al., 2000) or e-participation (Balla, 2012; Berry et al., 2011; Gençer & Oba, 2011). The bases of these evaluations are the extent to which individuals and different groups of people who are outside the decision-making processes are involved, and how their involvement can shape decisions. The assessment considers barriers to having an input to decisions. These are fundamental considerations, but they bracket out the spatial substance of deliberation.

The overarching rationale of participatory planning is to re-work conventions of social order. Drawing heavily on turn of the century foundations (Forester, 1999; Healey, 1997a; Sandercock, 1998), a collaborative mode of operation continues to be promoted (e.g. Innes & Booher, 2010) that does not assume that pre-set social structures apply to all actors. It is premised on redistributing power to less powerful actors by involving them in a new relational model of governing with a distinctive, egalitarian ideology. Governance is distinguished from government with all its connotations of fixed classes of governed and governing. It includes not just the state but also political and territorial communities in complex interactions between the state, the public realm and private spheres. This was a particular concern in the UK after the reforms of 2004, which put "heightened emphasis on stakeholder and community involvement" (Baker, Hincks, & Sherriff, 2010). Collaborative planning proponents embrace a strong role for the state, even if it sits within a framework of reduced meta-governance, or dispersed networks of power. As Healey puts it, "if we lose faith in our governance mechanisms, these conflicts will be resolved by the power of money and landownership" (Healey, 1997a). Participation is thus pitted against a neo-liberal agenda of reduced state intervention overall and seen as an alternative to laissez-faire forms. Critiques typically surround Marxist theory drawing heavily on Harvey (1973) and Castells (1972). Elwood (2002) and Sandercock (2004) for instance argue that participatory processes can be corrupted and easily aligned either with regressive policies of capital accumulation or the obscured retention of centralised control, or both. Fainstein

continues to emphasise the need to be aware of this potential 'dark side' of planning (Fainstein, 2014).

Despite concerns about the nature of the new social order that might arise, 'meaningful' participation is still seen as a potential means to liberating less powerful social actors and providing a new way to empower communities. This draws on the original frameworks of collaborative governance (mentioned above) and on the deliberative modes of policy making (Dryzek, 1990, 2002; Gastil & Levine, 2005), where 'communicative action' opens up and provides a point for direct dialogue between policy makers and wider society. Civic dialogue is understood as reconstructing place identities and social identities, and thereby liberating communities from unwanted traditions and unconsciously or unwillingly adopted structures. Current work now tends to explore the social effects of individualisation (Middlemiss, 2014), and the mining of cultural imaginaries (Qian, Qian, & Zhu, 2012). These draw on sociological thinking that assumes existing institutions to be founded on knowledges that reify traditional hierarchies and exclude new knowledges if they are incompatible with memories of the existing knowledge, a process characterised by Douglas as a 'filtering process' (Douglas, 1987). Systems of government that are traditionally clouded in 'obscurity', where their true meanings are hidden, and 'abstract systems' (Giddens, 1984) have thus became central to considerations of participatory planning. The original critiques of communicative and collaborative theory have served to reinforce a focus on power and its misuse (Flyvbjerg, 1998; Forester, 1999; Yiftachel, 1998), and fed into post-political theorising (Oosterlynck & Swyngedouw, 2010; Raco & Lin, 2012; Swyngedouw, 2009). Such works have their roots in the sociological quest to interpret and bring systems to light using the stories within cultures (Beauregard, 2003; Throgmorton, 2003) and the mission of breaking down through protest (Miller, 2003) the obscure ideologies which support unwanted systems. They seek to navigate the complexities of existing systems through communicative action and public participation, and thus theorising around participation has come to focus on developing understandings of systems. The learning associated with participation is therefore seen as an exercise in reworking power over existing narratives. Learning about space within collaborations is understood as an underlying facet and focused on a fundamental connection between knowledge and power. Yet knowledge and power remain distinct entities within these critiques, and the search for meaningful participation continues (Brownill & Parker, 2010).

2.2. Networks and knowledge production

The new participatory vision of governance relies on knowledge building networks that embrace diverse voices (Sager, 2003). The intended discourse is a disruptive one created by a multiplicity of actors with a variety of values, and it is premised on shared learning within networks. The associated characterisation is that institutions are insufficiently adapted to dynamic realities of "the relational webs or networks in which we live our lives" (Healey, 1997a). As well as disrupting the very system of power distribution, new voices might address the erosion of personal and institutional identities. It draws on organisational learning theory, particularly the work of Schön whose earlier work had set out how "the anchors of personal identity are everywhere being eroded" (Schön, 1973, p. 22). He examined 'destabilising' social trends, focusing on thirty-year trends in the USA with increases in sectional dissatisfaction and awareness of inequity as well as a new generational wave of political thinking, which was pitted against economic policy drivers and the centralised state. Paradoxically, the disruptive participatory approach, based on new actors and values, could lend a type of stability or at least means to continuity

for institutions. This speaks to a need to build intellectual capital as well as introduce reflexivity in practice (Schön, 1983).

As Healey points out (Healey, 2008) and Holden demonstrates (Holden, 2008), participation in planning, and civic dialogue particularly, is presented by pragmatist thinkers as a means to social learning. This has become bound up, in participatory theories, with the notion of institutions embracing personal identities and values through communities of practice (see for instance Wenger, 2000). It suggests a learning process intended to reconstitute values of actors and re-examine traditional histories behind the networks of power in such a way that they resonate with current experiences. The knowledge involved with that is value-related and contingent on being embedded in context. In contrast to the paradigm of the natural sciences where knowledge is normative, predictive and proved by experiment, the test of this type of knowledge is accuracy and validity. In German the distinction is Geisteswissenschaft rather than Naturwissenschaft (see Flyvbjerg, 2001). It is created within networks and produced within communities of practice and as such actors are said to produce knowledge in communities or 'groups' of learning and to produce planning policy collaboratively. This means that social learning groups would be opened up to previously excluded actors. The premise of such knowledge production is a connection to this 'site of production' and the relational power of the actors. This interpretation generally persists (e.g. Hudalah, Winarso, & Woltjer, 2010), although there are some challenges over the connection between spatial and relational proximity (Amin & Roberts, 2008).

Networks for meaningful dialogue are therefore intended to establish new control over potential 'instability' and encourage reworking of new values and identities. With the new more fluid conceptualisation of social order and the revealing of 'hidden power structures', it was no long enough to propose re-stabilising by e.g. reforming and implementing new policies. To do so would perpetuate the practices of the centre-periphery system. Recent studies of radical actors and emergent processes (Holden & Scerri, 2014; Quick & Feldman, 2011; Tironi, 2015) continue to support such reasoning. The key argument is that government needs to be a perpetual 'learning agent' with continually evolving self-awareness. This follows the logic of communicative theories that casts planning as an arena for social learning. Sandercock nicely summarises the new role for planning; "...to resolve certain apparent antimonies: The demand for security in situations of uncertainty and anguish which threaten the security of the self; The demand for conviction, and with it the requirement that beliefs and values be recognized as ways of looking at the world; Engagement with others with ultimate reliance on the self recognized as the internalization of others" (Sandercock, 1998, p. 237). This is the arena for what can be described as a new 'discursive democracy' (Dryzek, 1990, 2002; Delli Carpini, Cook, & Jacobs, 2004). Since no actor or group of actors hold central position each actor is peripheral to a greater or lesser degree and newcomers may be less central but can move towards the centre of the deliberations. An important aspect of this is the relationship between difference and equity within participatory encounters (as expounded for instance by Watson, 2006; Beebeejaun, 2006).

Theories of 'situated learning' theory have three key interlinked considerations: communities of practice; the boundaries between actors involved in shared practice areas; and the way in which identities are shaped by participation. Situated learning in planning is mostly explored with regards to the boundaries between actors, but knowledge itself is not so well explored. The literature on participatory planning is pervaded with considerations of density or thickness of networks, connected through shared understanding of meaning. Analyses of the layers of meaning constructed about 'things', hark back to Foucault (Foucault, 1970) and Latour (Latour, 1993). Laurian for instance

says, "the legitimacy of modern and abstract institutions depends on social trust because citizens need to trust institutions without understanding their inner functioning" (Laurian, 2009, p. 375). This presents the purposes of social learning as tapping into the type of communal trust and spontaneous coordination typically found in social networks (Ostrom, 1990) without controlling or co-opting them. There appears to be agreement that the shape of the sphere of planning and legitimacy of the identity of planning authorities are being reworked and that the related knowledge can be taken to be contextual and emergent. However, the specificities of the production of knowledge for planning and the effects on the knowledge in planning are unclear.

According to (Giddens, 1984), this changing institutional world needs to make recognise the existence of networks of inter-dependencies and work across the diversity of civil society. That framework of participatory governance contains many dimensions of public policy decision-making and civil society is itself "subject to multiple meanings" (Lovan, Murray, & Shaffer, 2004). Negotia-tion and facilitation replace rigid authority since government and non-government are co-dependent with no single entity in sole charge. Instead of having a central authority, the world of policy is made up of multiple, overlapping networks, with networks rather than individual actors at the heart of policy making. Those who participate can bring their issues to bear in shaping the new social and institutional identities as well as the policies themselves. All actors including planners also bring their own values to the table and all values are subject to scrutiny. In this 'social learning' context, rationalities of the governing parties are reconstituted in light of lay participation. These points suggest that the role of collaborative knowledge production is to serve the needs of governance, rather than for any substantive purposes of planning, and thus easily appears 'tokenist'. There is no specific insight into spatial governance, spatial rationalities or planning knowledge. It is argued that conceptual or 'double loop' learning can occur, with internalisation of others' values and the consequent adjustment of rationalities, but the focus of any such change is the network of governance rather than spatial rationalities. This means that questions remain around public participation in spatial planning: how spatial planning rationalities might be reframed; and how this relates to planning content and associated spatial policy issues.

Most proponents of participatory planning describe 'good' conditions for praxis while accepting that, they are unlikely to be met fully. The reason for this somewhat gloomy starting point is that, as per Habermas' 'ideal speech' rules, these conditions are consciously unreal. Authors have studied and debated the requirements for civic dialogue (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006; Gastil & Levine, 2005; Lowndes, Pratchett, & Stoker, 2006), and sought to better understand the circumstances under which meaningful communication can happen. Communicative planning clearly requires depth of access to power, width of social networks, and high levels of trust in the planner's role in order to have meaningful communication with the public (Olsson & Hysing, 2012; Tayebi, 2013) and other non-governmental actors (Deng et al., 2015; Faludi, 2012). It is argued that participation is undermined because the necessary trust in the system is lacking and that participation should be built on trust within the network. This includes mutual trust between the actors of a network, trust or buy-in to the process, and each actor's trust or confidence in their own ability to meaningfully contribute. This echoes Senecah's trinity of voice (Senecah, 2004) where there is equality of access, civic standing, and influence over environmental decisions. Such ambitions tend towards a search for consensus between place-based groups and harmonious human relations with the natural world (Carbaugh & Cerulli, 2013; Milstein et al., 2011). Whether or not those are the goals of the participatory process, its legitimacy will hinge on perceived corruption or otherwise of the process. In anticipation of

limited or lack of power sharing, authors focus on representation of society and societal groups (Van Der Heijden & Ten Heuvelhof, 2012). This type of 'representativeness' differs greatly from statistical and or political representation. Presented instead as a type of 'network design', it aims to structure network participation according to values or issues, with the caveat that the network should remain open to unanticipated contributors (Eden, Donald-son, & Walker, 2006). Concerns around material, physical abilities to participate persist, although new potential for outreach is perceived in new media and internet technology, which are increasingly common channels for example through online mapping (Carton & Thissen, 2009) and social networking capabilities (Rantanen & Kahila, 2009). Communicative and cognitive issues are equally critical as demonstrate in a recent UK example, where lay actors find the world of "policy-communities" too complex and therefore unresponsive (Gallent & Robinson, 2012). These types of issues add to an argument for inverting assumed notions of authority, echoing the premise of challenging traditional hierarchies. Thus processes (for compari-son of modes see Cornwall, 2008) should depend on upward momentum from grass-roots (Lane & McDonald, 2005; Weinstein, 2009) rather than be constructed as top-down invited spaces with "governable subjects and governable spaces" (Roy, 2009).

The quality of communicative plan-making is determined by its capacity both to mediate interests and have momentum for policy making by producing knowledge for planning. It is said to simultaneously affect relationships and the strength of the collaborative network (Rydin, 2007). Some authors directly address the performance of the network in terms of its impact on political knowledge building. Nyseth for example (Nyseth, 2008) argues for careful scrutiny of policies to prevent any threat to representative democracy and other authors suggest the introduc-tion of meta-governance by elected politicians to steer and control participatory practice (e.g. Sørensen & Torfing, 2007). Even the theorising around communicative planning is conceived specifi-cally as a force to action (Campbell, 2012; Sager, 2009).

To sum up, in planning theory knowledge within participatory processes is bound up with securing communicative networks and the potential for social learning, much as these represent a significant challenge. It is clear that there exists not just a singular knowledge but multiple knowledges (Rydin, 2007) but the possible roles of communities' lay or local knowledges, beyond represen-tation of existing social and place identities, is unclear. Individuals' values and subjective views of the world, lifestyle choices, preferences and local experiential knowledge of the environment are mainly related to institutional renewal or cultural identity, and only occasionally a practical role is envisaged in terms of the conception or management of projects (Corburn, 2007; Goldman, 2003). In short, a variety of knowledge claims exist in relation to place identity yet the search for the specificity of what can be learned through public participation in planning and the relationship of communicative action to the particular institutions that govern space is both theoretically challenged and incomplete.

2.3. Spatial planning and spatial knowledges

Participation is a highly context-dependent phenomenon in that it is always *in* something, and here participation is not just in a network of diverse voices, but forms part of the highly dynamic nexus of participation in spatial planning. The world of planning practice has taken the notion of spatial planning as the hallmark of a new trend and particularly in Europe, the profession has used the expression to signal new purposes and intended future directions (RTPI, 2001). Globally too the term seems to be understood as a new and improved practice form, replacing out-dated and heavily criticised forms of practice with new, more socially equitable

planning (UN-Habitat, 2010). The term 'spatial planning' is used in a diverse range of ways, and the notion is complex, contested in the world of theory and practiced in multiple ways (Adams, 2008; ECTP-CEU, 2013) all of which makes it hard to offer a unified definition. As discussed here, commentators have defined it by what it is not and contrasted it with previous modes of practice rather than any expected norm. However there are several strong interwoven themes and meta-discourses pervading spatial planning literature about integrative forces around policy, function and scale. In light of these, spatial planning is characterised here as strategy-making that is based on knowledge of interactions between people and space, and of trends and patterns in the use of space.

Integrative spatial planning is partly premised on the idea that policy making was previously fractured into policy silos and should be more holistic. The literature on spatial planning portrays twentieth century planning as rigidly structured around isolated policy areas (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012; Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 2006; Tewdwr-Jones, 2012). The rationale of that so-called 'silo' approach to policy making is criticised for failing to produce beneficial outcomes. For example Haughton et al. link the problems in Leeds, England to the economic focus of the City Region Strategy (Haughton et al., 2010). The authors describe the results saying, "the poor are being moved around the city to make way for new residential spaces close to the city centre" (Haughton et al., 2010, p. 162) and arguing that in this way local communities were disintegrating. By contrast, spatial planning is said to integrate a range of policy sectors and their agendas (Albrechts, 2004). The unique identity of individual elements is not of interest to planning in itself, but rather each is seen from the perspective of how it interacts with the others. No hierarchy of the importance of individual policy sectors is intended by spatial planning theory, but rather holistic spatial policies are underpinned by broad or cross-cutting social objectives such as quality of life for local communities. Davoudi and Strange for instance highlight how such cross-cutting objectives have been socially constructed through the European socio-democratic traditions, welfare principles and the consequent promotion of social and cultural diversity (Davoudi & Strange, 2009 citing Esping-Andersen, 1990).

There is a strong rationality of integrating policy domains within spatial planning, but not without concerns about the balance of policy areas. Critiques of spatial planning focus on the continuing power of structures of capital and on the dominance of the economic policy domain, particularly neoliberal ones (Olesen, 2013) whether or not they are bound up with growth or "non-market criteria" (While, Jonas, & Gibbs, 2004). Thriving capitalist economies are still an objective for spatial planning but their dominance in the strategic agenda has been explicitly challenged. Authors pay close attention to the influences on planning policy development from different sectors and the possible re-homogenising effect of overarching guiding principles that could dominate a spatial strategy. Allmendinger and Haughton argue that sustainability could be such a positive integrating force for policy, characterising it as "a central-government interpretation of sustainable development which emphasises it as a way of addressing simultaneously economic, social, environmental, and resource-efficiency objectives" (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2007, p. 1492). More commonly spatial planning literature focuses on concerns about how economic issues might dominate other policy areas implying that planning may be threatened by not having its own policy boundary. These concerns lie behind the call for further investigation around the scope of planning and sector 'porosity' (Amin, 2004).

With its 'broad policy' approach to governing physical space, spatial planning is seen to take an integrated view of functions across space. Rather than simply assuming that administrative or political boundaries are appropriate, it seeks to determine functional coherence, for instance across multiple levels of governance (Faludi, 2012). Just as policy segmentation is said to be remote from the realities of daily life, so 'single area approaches' are said to overlook functional realities of space. In doing so, they are said to be failing to understand patterns in land use that are constantly changing and have wider social contingencies (Healey, 1997b). The effects of piecemeal approaches which lack 'strategic vision' include the inappropriate positioning of service provision in human settlements, which leads to increased risk from natural disasters (Pelling, 2007). By contrast, spatial planning would look strategically at how space is used. As Healey (1997a, 1997b) describes it, spatial planning is an active force towards "patterns of land use" rather than isolated or specific functions. The integrated pattern approach is grounded in notions of functional efficiency through coordinating spatial impacts (Harris & Hooper, 2004), especially in the context of socio-economic divisions. Zhu (2010) makes the case that patterns of use must be recognised in dealing with very high and increasing population densities in cities. For example in Jakarta the struggling economy and weak planning powers resulted in fragmented parcels of informal development in the centre of town, and this subsequently encouraged isolated private developments in the suburbs. "As a result, a social divide is created between the poor city and the rich suburbs, while other economic inefficiencies and environmental costs reduce the liveability and sustainability of urban life" (Zhu, 2010, p. 278). So, a normative picture of 'planning for functionally integrated spaces' appears, where spatial planning is the point of policy coalescence for addressing economic, transport, and other 'functions' of an area and managing the distribution of social impacts across space.

Complexities of scale are inherent in the integrative rationality of spatial planning and present political concerns. There are strong post-political critiques around enabling foreclosure of the political in suggesting consensus on large scale neo-liberal development decisions (e.g. Swyngedouw, Moulaert, & Rodriguez, 2002). There is also a perceived risk around having the 'wrong' scale of governance for a particular area of policy. For example Pugalis (Pugalis, 2009) argues that regeneration is being incorrectly treated as a subset of national economic thinking and therefore local regeneration needs are being overshadowed by national priorities of economic competitiveness with the end result that the areas most in need of investment are not specifically targeted by the policies but only allocated a 'trickle down effect'. Theorists examine the moves as a relationally networked form of governance, looking at local, regional, national and supra-national actors in contest over space. Allen for instance (Allen et al., 1998) says that the global political context is intrinsically linked to the rise of the regions, which are increasingly competing within international markets. Whatever meanings are attributed to the various configurations, scalar and administrative complexities are an accepted part of spatial planning. As Amin puts it, planning is undertaken across a "topology marked by overlapping near-far relations and organisational connections that are not reducible to scalar spaces" (Amin, 2002, p. 386). The national identities and relative positions of the different actors are part of this complexity whether local, regional, national, supra-national, global or other scalar configuration. Most queries have been around how wider geographic areas can be spatially coherent or legitimate (Waterhout, 2008) as the locus of planning authorities. The 'Localist' manifestation of planning in England (TSO, 2011) is testament to the wave of challenges around expanding scales of spatial planning, as it removed regional planning strategies and took instead the local scale as an intrinsically legitimate scale of strategy-making empowering a new neighbourhood scale of planning with some statutory powers.

Irrespective of the scale of operation of strategy-making there are some epistemological implications of moving beyond a rational comprehensive approach (Healey, 1997b; Adams, 2008). From what has already been established, spatial plans are expected to provide an overarching strategic framework for different types of policy and functions, by networks of actors at 'appropriate' scales. As Jones neatly describes it "space is frequently being imagined as a product of networks and relations, in contrast to an older topography in which territoriality was dominant" (Jones, 2009). This suggests a highly dynamic field of contextual and social knowledge, which is contingent on where and when it is situated and who is involved in creating it (Upton, 2012). The places spatial planning seeks to manage are continually made and re-made, and therefore cannot be understood through universal principles (Popper, 1963) experiment or theory testing. Spatial planning theory recognises this and emphasises that there is no single static 'Big Atom', saying e.g. "the globe we live on with its man-made environment ruled by complex socio-cultural, economical, and political effects, are confronted with the ability of mankind to adapt its behaviour and to invent new technologies" (Kohlschretzenmayr, Keiner, & Nussbaumer, 2004). The human construction of place presents a relentless state of disagreement, where learning is expected to happen and different voices should contribute to shared visions of space. Gunder and Hillier highlight this underlying tension saying that it stretches planning to the point where it is 'everything and nothing' (Gunder & Hillier, 2009). For the present enquiry, it brings two key areas of uncertainty. Firstly, there is a potentially infinite basket of spatial knowledges that is expected to somehow contribute to a spatial vision. Secondly, coalescence in spatial planning might somehow resolve multiple knowledges into a type of co-owned knowledge.

Spatial planning needs to encompass knowledge that can interpolate between multiple complex interactions within development. To give a more practical demonstration of the knowledge sought for spatial planning, planners trying to understanding 'urban sprawl' must look beyond the sprawl itself and towards associated human values. They need knowledge of behavioural patterns and the choices associated with them (e.g. car use and house location), as well as an appreciation of the underlying values and what might affect them (Hopkins, 2001). Values are seen as demonstrating the deeper workings of complex systems of society and space. This implies that spatial planning knowledge relates to the ways in which development is embedded in human lives, rather than seeing development as an entity. Flyvbjerg broaches this issue arguing for phronesis (the somewhat forgotten of Aristotle's three intellectual virtues), where "practical rationality and judgment evolve and operate primarily by virtue of deep-going case experiences" (Flyvbjerg, 2001). This offers a new approach to planning knowledge based on a search for context-sensitive learning. In practical terms, the integrative aspects of spatial planning imply that the knowledge required for any spatial plan will involve a diverse group of 'stakeholders' and that spatial plans should be created with the participation of a wide community of interests. It requires planners to unpack the social meaning behind spatial patterns, rather than the material values associated with site-specific, one-off decisions. This suggests that spatial planning might be a nexus of 'social learning' about space, and requires an investigation of lay participation in strategic spatial planning.

3. Chapter 3

3.1. Socio-spatial learning as a research approach

As set out in Section 2 participatory and spatial planning theories both rely on the spatiality of knowledge and social learning. Where critiques centre on planning processes and economic power imbalances, the implications are only discussed as forms of dominion over knowledges and the spatial power of learning through participatory processes are bracketed out. This unexplored aspect is referred to here as 'socio-spatial learning', drawing on the term 'social learning' (as explained in the previous chapter) and combining that with planning's distinguishing epistemic feature – a concern for understanding space. Collaboration in planning theory has provided three focus areas: communicative processes; dealing with conflict; and relative power positions of actors. Socio-spatial learning offers a fourth area, which is particularly relevant to community engagement. Concepts of social learning overarch the notion, which rests on the relational and communicative aspects of knowledge established by participatory planning and spatial planning. It takes a relational approach to social order, where society is understood to be 'plural', and processes of planning should be open to varied stakeholders. It is therefore proposed that socio-spatial learning occurs within spatial planning networks – those that include local communities in a meaningful way. Such 'non-tokenist' lay participation in policy making is a means for spatial planners to learn but, more importantly here, it implies a product that relates to space. As such, knowledge is a factor of community empowerment, when lay knowledge reworks planning knowledge in an arena of conceptual learning about space in public participation.

Simply put, 'socio-spatial learning' rests on the premise that spatial planning knowledge is reworked or reframed upon community engagement. The current challenge is to establish its existence, and so a configuration of non-tokenist participation that holds promise for the production of knowledge for spatial planning is provided here. Six areas are understood from participatory and spatial planning theories. (1) Learning primarily concerns the (re)constitution of values within a group. Therefore perspectives on major issues, such as overarching policy directions or politically contested choices, are critical and changes in outlook may signal when conceptual learning has occurred. (2) Actors and scales are also a central pillar since the scalar nature of networks and individual actors will have a bearing on the communication. Additionally the spatial configuration of relationships and actors' scalar priorities will contain 'spatial values'. (3) Community engagement is a point of focus, and entails participatory process, artefacts and culture. (4) Planning evidence may comprise a variety of rationalities and approaches to establishing knowledge, and derive directly from stakeholders, and local communities. (5) The subjects of communication between actors or 'shared planning subjects' must be distinguished from key planning issues or modes of communication. They are the practical points which spark or shape dialogue and enable collaboration. They may be literal rather than symbolic but, if supported by a common language and communicative artefacts, may also convey values and thus enable social learning. (6) Finally, it is understood that a range of policy domains may be involved and co-ordinated as components of spatial policy. Different perspectives on policy areas and their relationship with spatial policy are therefore the final element of socio-spatial learning.

To explore these six elements, given the abstract and contested nature of the subject matter, this research grounds the work in substantial empirics. It uses an embedded case study to explore the existence of the phenomenon through a detailed picture of the dimensions of socio-spatial learning. A case study was purposively selected that could give a full picture of the phenomenon of interest. This method is said to enable exploration of a phenomenon, with detailed and layered data (e.g. Yin, 2009). Proximity to the case was critical as participant observation would allow for in-depth, in situ observation. However, for this study an embedded position would provide the essential perspective from within the community of practice. Frames of actors would be tacit and only

brought to light through personal experience of the lived context of their practice. Likewise, in order to be aware of learning it was necessary to be part of it, rather than passively observing it or scrutinising materials from a distance. By experiencing the context directly it is possible to more accurately interpret references within case materials.

A complete and potentially successful programme of work was needed with some form of dialogue between planners and lay participants. The sampling criteria thus included coverage of all six parts of the socio-spatial conceptual framework and feasibility in terms of timing and location and access for embedding. Other potential cases included English core strategies and 'visioning' processes in the London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Ealing, as well as Chelmsford, and the revision of the National Concept Plan of Singapore,[1] but the North Northamptonshire case was selected as the best fit to the sampling criteria and since it offered a more spatially complex instance of planning (see below) and potentially the richest seam of data. Embedding involved attending and contributing to debates, events and meetings. The researcher was building data that included planning and participation materials together with embedded field notes and records of personal reflections.

While this type of personally involved research position allows 'whole person' investigation has it methodological challenges. It challenges orthodoxies of subjectivity (Kouritzin et al., 2009) and embraces the impossibility of full objectivity, instead aiming for maximum accuracy through rigour in process with added validation through triangulation of sources. In order to overcome potential subjectivity, triangulation was recommended (e.g. Hakim, 1987) and achieved through the use of multiple, varied data sources as follows. All case interactions were recorded, every iteration of drafting was brought into the dataset; and all data was recorded in multiple ways through the researcher's working notes, field notes, photographs, videos. A variety of perspectives was ensured within this as data gathered included planning materials notes, recorded meetings, working conversations and reflections in emails produced by others from within the authority and outside of it, and conversations and reflections from the community actors, and community organisers. Qualitative software (Atlas-TI) was used to manage, track and catalogue all the material, subjecting each day of work to post-fieldwork reflections. Each stage of data was analysed against the conceptual framework, and reduced to produce the findings, which are published for the first time here with the hope of on-going deliberation as part of the investigation.

The case selected was the Review of the 2008 Core Spatial Strategy for North Northamptonshire, which set out the direction of development and is the primary statutory planning document for the area. The 2008 'core strategy' was a strategic spatial plan and covered the period up to 2021. It would guide the more detailed policies of four contiguous local authority areas in Northamptonshire, England; the Borough Councils areas of Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering, and Wellingborough (see Fig. 1). In practical terms, the embedded case comprised the review work between mid-2009 and mid-2011 and the public participation in that. A cross-borough planning authority, the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (JPU), was established in 2004 to re-develop the strategic vision for North Northamptonshire. The sub-region of Northamptonshire is located at the centre of some of England's major transport links. In 2009 when the review began, the core strategy was required to be in line with the Regional Spatial Strategy for the wider region, i.e. the 'Milton

Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy'. While a further version of the core strategy has been published for further consultation (www.nnjpu.org.uk), there are multiple other factors in its production, thus it is the communicative action within the participatory encounters that provides insight into learning with communities and lay knowledge.

The following chapters examine separate stages of the review (shown in Fig. 2), to distinguish the aspects of learning with and without the public. At the first stage, 'setting up the review' from May to June 2009, the basic premises and conditions of the review were established. The second stage, 'learning with collaborators' from July 2009 to March 2010, precedes community engagement and covers the intensive collaborative work of professionals who were reviewing the core strategy. The most critical part of the research was the third stage, from April 2010 to June 2011, where there was substantial direct face-to-face, planner-community dialogue as part of the North Northamptonshire Core Strategy Review. The following chapter very briefly summarises the development of the planning knowledge base for the core strategy review (Stages 1 and 2) to give a point of comparison for learning with communities, then addresses the public participation (Stage 3) to examine the learning effects of lay knowledge.

4. Chapter 4

4.1. Introduction to the case

Knowledge is seen as a factor of empowerment within participatory planning, whether collaborative planning or public participation and, as set out in the preceding chapters, this assumes that lay knowledge can rework planning knowledge. The case study produced a rich seam of data giving insight into local knowledge, planning knowledge and the dynamics of social learning when communities participated in deliberations on spatial planning in their sub-region. As related in the following sections, learning with communities and with professional collaborators was examined for lessons around reframing and knowledge production. Across the period of review for the North Northamptonshire Core Strategy, which included significant public engagement exercises with three separate 'stages'. The first two, both preceding community engagement, are presented together and provide a point of comparison for the public participation, as follows.

4.2. Learning within collaborative planning

4.2.1. Context and data

The Review of the 2008 Core Spatial Strategy for North Northamptonshire aimed to revise a 20-year spatial strategy for the contiguous local authority areas of four boroughs in England. The research case comprises all of the review work between mid-2009 and mid-2011. During those two years several intensive periods of planning activities were organised by a cross-borough planning authority called the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (JPU), centring on Collaborative Workshops with professional stakeholders and advisers. An important particularity of this case is the prevailing culture of community engagement in North Northamptonshire. However, the exact premises for community engagement were evolving and preparatory work was underway. This section considers the professional collaborators and communities are examined in the next section.

The professional collaborators involved during the review were as follows. The JPU or 'joint planning unit' comprised the planners who worked on a permanent basis on all aspects of producing a core strategy for North Northamptonshire. Together they formed the core actor and nexus of daily work on the review. The Council

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[1] The major revision of the National Concept Plan at the time was seeking public deliberation through increased focus groups and feedback sessions, but in the event these offered low levels of face-to-face time and the extremely tightly managed process did not allow for sufficient embedding.

Fig. 1. The Northamptonshire region, and local authorities within it. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right
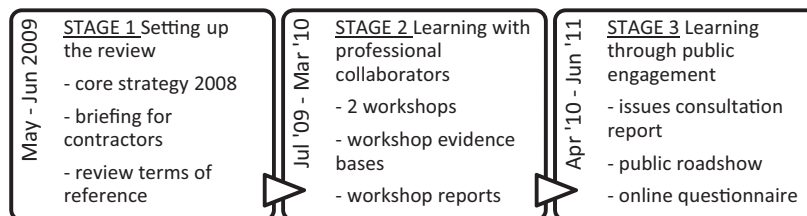

Fig. 2. Stages in the core strategy review, with key events and materials.

Members represented the local boroughs as elected members from local authorities and Northamptonshire. They would provide funding and support to the JPU, sit on the review steering group and act as the decision making committee. The JPU and Council Members were joined by Technical Stakeholders, who were representatives of local and regional bodies, including public, private and third sector organisations as well as councils. These people would participate in technical exercises and help source data. Advisory Collaborators from regional and national organisations also took part in the technical exercises and decision-making committees. They would work very closely with the JPU to provide independent advice throughout the review and occasionally also technical assistance. External Influences is the final group

considered here, and comprises central government, and those in the national professional planning organisations and regional media. Their representations on planning in general and specific plans for the local area fed into the review.

Between July 2009 and March 2010, there were two workshops. Collaborators focused on the strategic issues for the sub-region in the first workshop, and considered the spatial options in the second. The planners were working towards community engagement, which would be conducted in early 2011. The purpose of this exercise was explicitly for the planners to learn together with policy stakeholders and it formed part of the review of the core strategy. This was a period of intensive collaborative work of professionals who were reviewing the core strategy, and the
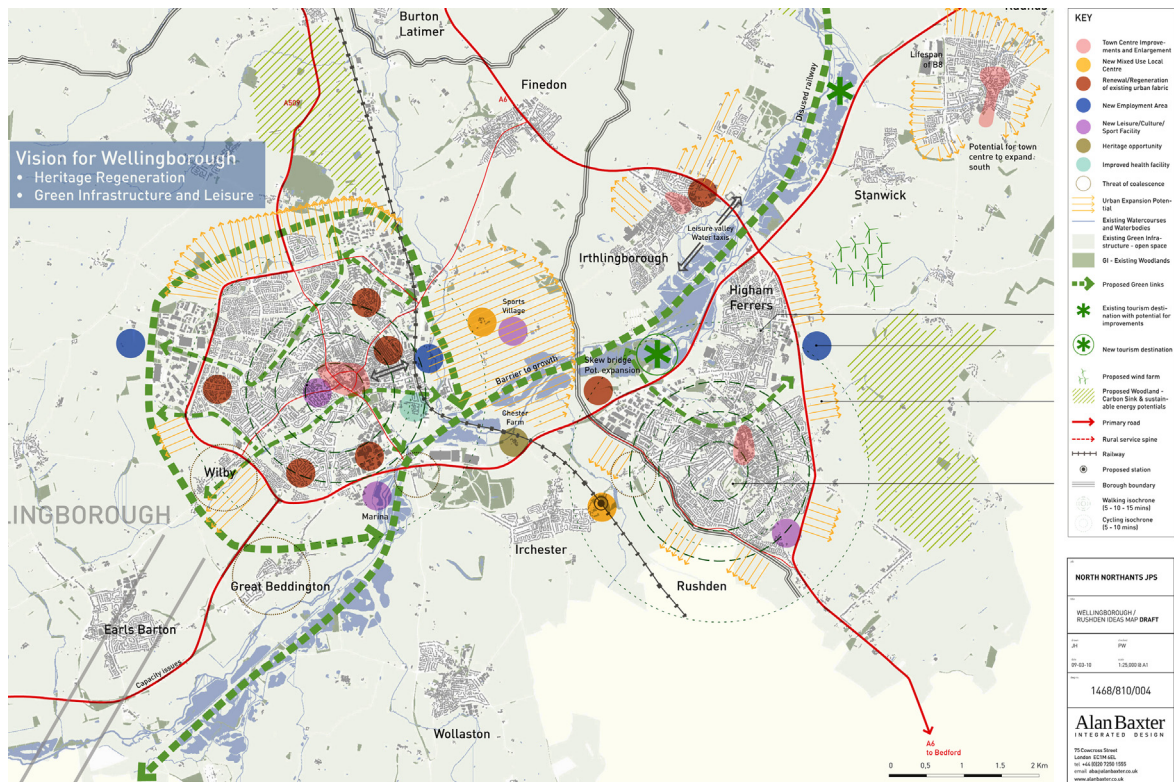
Fig. 3. Ideas map for Wellingborough, draft produced by Alan Baxter Ltd. © Crown Copyright and database right 2015, Ordnance Survey 0100055322

embedded position of the researcher allowed the processes to be very closely observed. The following analysis of that data provides a point of comparison for learning with local communities. It focuses on the learning context and pulls out how planners and others learned as well as difficulties experienced in moving towards a new strategy. While other analyses have a central focus on the substantive issues here they are considered as one factor in learning for spatial planning.

4.2.2. Learning with professional collaborators

The planners and their collaborators were interacting in a particular the context, the context of the core strategy review. Generating new ideas was critical in achieving 'review' rather than reproducing the old strategy and for that reason the constant nurturing of different collaborations was a high priority. Collaborators had different means of producing and communicating ideas, so embedding new knowledge, getting it to take root, was important. Through joint working, strategy would be produced, but also briefs for further collaborations.

A type of knowledge culture existed where relationships provided a basis for shared learning. Physical presence was important for relationship building, but knowledge also needed to be framed as relevant to regional strategy. For instance the 'localisation' option came to an impasse and was interpreted as 'fragmenting'. Discussions attempted to build the ideas behind the agenda of 'localism' into the group thinking and there was no representative of that policy to deliberate or help frame it for the group. By contrast other policies were explicitly brought into the conversations and mapped out in ideas maps (see Fig. 3) to help articulate them as a potential strategy for the region.

The relational construction of knowledge fuelled a stream of meetings and the notion of sharing knowledge underpinned the multiple workshops. It also strengthened the brief for outreach to the local 'North Northamptonshire community' as a collaborator. Familiarity with the sub-region of North Northamptonshire was

critical for the planning work but 'local general knowledge' was also important as a means to relationship building. While process knowledge brought people into the task at hand and analytic devices dissected relationships local knowledge brought warmth and a sense of authenticity and commitment to interactions. This was about knowing the area 'as a local resident', or a general qualitative appreciation of life in the area and what it was like 'from the inside'. It touched on explicit practical details such as inconveniences in daily routines such as traffic pinch points that caused congestion, and involved fluency in 'hot' topics such as conspicuous buildings in a settlement. The collaborators emphasised in their work that they needed to understand the "locally specific issues that need to be addressed as critical to that community" (Team Outcomes Report Options Development Workshop, 2009, p. 3). They established relationships through local general knowledge and technical knowledge, and they bonded through a common modus operandi. Local general knowledge evoked lay knowledge prior to formal community engagement and distinguished potential 'outsiders', i.e. a-scalar or operating at too 'high' a scale.

There was, however, a tension between relating to the whole area and to local areas. Different goals were associated with different scales, for example local interests or sub-regional agendas. Local authority collaborators had particular difficulty and demonstrated conflicting affiliations. In principle they were working on a sub-regional project when they were involved in the review but were also thinking about potential externalities for their localities. For example, when discussing the merits and demerits of growth in the sub-region their arguments frequently centred on a discourse of "false growth" (Researcher Field Notes, Workshop 1 23–25 September 2009), which related to the nature of growth within local areas and the validity of the drivers of growth more generally. The scale of institutional operations did not necessarily determine the scale of their members' insight, and by the second workshops planners and collaborators stopped

fulfilling their scalar roles. Local actors saw national and sub-regional synergies, and regional and national actors highlighted local impacts. Regional actors would reference issues for the wider than sub-regional area. For example, funding was seen in conceptual terms of 'supply and demand' and as part of the general era of "difficult times ahead with funding 30–40% cut in budgets" (Review Team Record of Options Development Workshop 2, 2010, p. 2). Collaborators were effectively disassociating themselves with the scalar identity of their institutions, and presenting as partners to the JPU, in order to learn together for strategy.

Turning to the perceived role of the community, the review process was conceived in part as a means to improved community engagement, which would try to bridge a gap between the core strategy and local residents. The JPU continued to assert that in fact the "technical workshops would be part of a wider process of local engagement" (Review Team Outcomes Report Place Shaping Workshop, p. 3). More practically the review team had specified from the start that "workshop1 output needs to be set of questions to ask wider community" (Researcher Field Notes, Steering Group Meeting July 2009, p. 2). It appeared at first that the review team were hoping to glean specific, almost technical, information from the community. Indeed, community engagement operations were initially determined by considering the pertinent questions and possible public reactions to particular policy directions. Actors made reference to public comments from previous core strategy consultation and recounted anecdotes from other studies to substantiate those points. As the collaborative group conceptualised it, the work would consider the likely "community effects" (researcher notes, passim) of the strategy on residents of North Northamptonshire. Understanding these impacts was seen as a way to learn the 'real' value of strategy.

In preparation for the review, there were ideas about important cohorts of the community. People were encouraged to 'get their agendas on the table', which meant being clear and open about issues of the people they represented. Elected representatives for each of the four local authority districts attended the workshops and made strong statements about their constituents' views. Developing an understanding of the relevant community was difficult as it was a notional future population. In constructing a vision of the theoretical community the policy would serve, they mainly looked at the present structure of the population. Facts and statistics were disseminated, and visually represented. For instance, the variety of the sizes of settlements was considered important, as "settlement populations range from 20 to 9000" in the rural areas (Review Team Outcomes Report Place Shaping Workshop 2009, p. 14). Even projections of the future population size were primarily derived from the present trends. Conversations and other more informal feedback from workshop exercises also informed the picture that was emerging. Workshop discussions frequently, involuntarily turned to discussing communities. Information about local people's 'lifestyles' and 'what the community wants' were points of great interest. Many anecdotes from local professional and personal experiences were shared.

4.2.3. Learning for spatial planning

Here we consider the input from collaborators to rework the core strategy during the workshops. The initial aim was to identify the most important issues and potential directions of change for North Northamptonshire at the first workshop, which was held over three days in September 2009 at the Holiday Inn in Corby. Output from this 'Understanding Places' workshop was reported formally as a series of issues to take forward to the second 'Place Shaping' workshop, another three-day workshop, held at the Holiday Inn, Kettering in March 2010. From October 2009 onwards the JPU was trying to define possible elements of 'spatial options'.

Policies in the Core Spatial Strategy, 2008
Policy 1 Strengthening the Network of Settlements
Policy 2 Connecting North Northamptonshire with Surrounding Areas
Policy 3 Connecting the Urban Core
Policy 4 Enhancing Local Connections
Policy 5 Green Infrastructure
Policy 6 Infrastructure Delivery and Developer Contributions
Policy 7 Delivering Housing
Policy 8 Delivering Economic Prosperity
Policy 9 Distribution & Location of Development
Policy 10 Distribution of Housing
Policy 11 Distribution of Jobs
Policy 12 Distribution of Retail Development
Policy 13 General Sustainable Development Principles
Policy 14 Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Construction
Policy 15 Sustainable Housing Provision
Policy 16 Sustainable Urban Extensions
Policy 17 Gypsies and Travellers

Fig. 4. seventeen policies of the core strategy 2008.

These would be drawn together into sub-regional scenarios and fleshed out with substantial detail. Four skeleton options built at the first workshop were put forward for consideration and used to produce more detailed draft options at the second workshop. A further two options emerged during the second workshop. At the end of the workshops, four of the six options were selected. These would be taken forward and further reworked with community input.

4.2.3.1. *Subject matter.* The core strategy is a highly wrought document, which covers many cross-cutting issues and provides a set of seventeen policies built around them (Fig. 4). These policies give insight as to seven shared planning subjects that manifested themselves in the policy thinking, as follows. The first shared planning subject was 'economic prosperity', and in the core strategy this was mostly connected with increasing the provision of local employment and capitalising on natural assets. This was said to be important in view of the growth targets, which implied a larger than natural increase in the size of the local population. Large amounts of out-commuting might turn the area into a dormitory town, relying on external prosperity with lower 'self-sufficiency' and economic prosperity therefore involved facilitating a vibrant, mixed job offer within the sub-region itself. The core strategy made land available for 'higher value' sectors and took particular note of the categories B1 (offices), B2 (manufacturing) and B8 (warehousing and distribution), and encouraged local skill development.

The second subject of 'viable urban centres' guided much of the strategy with the aim of sub-regional coherence and that the sub-region could compete in the wider region for business and retail investment. Development was therefore to be directed towards having three well-functioning and attractive core towns with good urban fabric and high levels of services, that didn't undermine but complimented each other. Another associated issue was creating a 'strong network of urban centres' to disperse urban development across the core towns.

The third subject was 'improved connectivity', internally and externally to North Northamptonshire. The pattern of settlements and connections between them was critical to achieving the aims of promoting a strong internal market of jobs and sufficient services for an increased population. The sustainability of the current road network was therefore an important associated issue and there was to be an increased choice of types of transport to services and jobs. Investment was needed in local passenger rail

and road routes and in wider ones, which could not be directly tackled by the strategy.

'Ensuring adequate housing' was the fourth planning subject. Adequate housing involved greater numbers and sustainability, which meant a mix of types, sizes and tenures, including the provision of 'lifetime homes', good architectural and urban design, and energy efficiency. Affordability was also an issue, especially in rural areas. The strategy would encourage the upgrading of housing stock and allow self-build opportunities, as well as promoting 'appropriate densities'. Housing distribution would follow the pattern of any increase in prosperity, with most development in the larger settlements.

Fifthly, 'green infrastructure' was an important planning subject in itself. The idea was to maintain a network of public and privately owned environmental assets. The strategy also supported the green-link role of sub-regional corridors and promoted the use of open spaces for leisure and other social uses.

The sixth planning subject was 'improved infrastructure'. Increased population and activities required extra infrastructure and services. There was a very wide definition of 'infrastructure issues'. 'Local infrastructure' included utilities, public amenities, open space, public transport and affordable housing, while 'strategic infrastructure' included wider transport, higher order community facilities and utilities (i.e. hospitals rather than clinics, higher education rather than schools etc.), as well as transport, economic development and green infrastructure. Social infrastructure would also need to be provided along the same phasing as other developments such as jobs and homes.

Climate change and its associated energy considerations constituted the final shared planning subject 'climate change and energy'. 'Sustainability rhetoric' expanded to community needs but the main definition of sustainability was distinctly 'Brundtland', i.e. not compromising future generations. Renewable sources of energy would be encouraged particularly with local supply, recycling provisions were specified, and eco-building assessment levels were raised.[2] Housing and transport policies were largely influenced by these. A 'modal shift' away from cars and encouraging sustainable modes of transport were given a lot of emphasis. In the same vein, having much of the new build housing in Sustainable Urban Extensions would allow environmental construction standards to be controlled.

The seven planning subjects described above were clearly associated with contemporary challenges and the policy objectives they implied. No objective was set in stone, and each decision would be contingent on current state of affairs, such as policy context and economic climate. The collaborators would need to re-adjust their focus over the period of the core strategy review as they considered the current issues. Each of these planning subjects overlaid another and any change would need to make sense across them all.

4.2.3.2. Policy domains. In participatory theories, planning spans many different domains, which feed into a 'holistic' spatial policy. In the workshops, the domains appear to contain strong internal 'driving logics' such as health promotion or economic progress. Their purposes were not directly linked to spatial considerations but the internal logic of those domains could serve as justification in spatial discussions more easily than those of other domains. Most policy domains (employment, economy, ecology, environment, heritage, health, housing, industry, etc.) affected planners' thinking about the use of space and physical resources, and some even became part of spatial policy. Culture, health and transport fed easily into a few other policy areas providing new ideas and or

spatial insight to an issue. By contrast environmental and economic domains were very broad, touching on most issues and dominating the overall approach to strategy. The economic domain tended to divert from physical spatiality. The environmental domain was frequently referenced in order to add weight to ideas emanating from other domains. These domains overlapped and thus knowledge was introduced from one domain into another, although the overlaps tended to require more explicit explanation in order to be useful in strategy-making. The environmental and economic domains provided knowledge for each option being built. However, this did not necessarily help the group understand the value of an option to the sub-region, only as a relative trade off for local authority areas or environmental goal.

Planners and their collaborators used abstracted terminologies from different policy domains, and abstracted conceptual views of space. In these situations, terminologies lost the contextual knowledge that would normally accompany them within their originating policy domains. So, for example transport knowledge directed thinking towards large structural issues and conceptualised patterns. These were lacking policy detail from the originating domain and did not include a sense of lived experience. Knowledge of local values helped to substantiate discussions and knowledge of local experience helped to debate the impacts of policy. To continue with the example of transport, 'choice of transport' indicated provision of different multiple types of transport, rather than a detailed look at the nature of transport choices, such as the routes taken by passengers. The abstracted discussions were sometimes made more concrete. A good example was the discussion of the business logistics corridors along the A14 and A45. These routes provided an opportunity for the strategic distribution industry, which was growing in the sub-region. As discussed earlier the strategic distribution industry was a major issue and therefore associated with jobs potential and local concerns about the aesthetics of warehousing. It could not simply be seen as a transport network but had to be understood as a 'lived space' with historical and local layers of meaning.

4.2.3.3. Evidence. The starting point for planning evidence was the information used to explain the policies in the adopted core strategy. This came in many forms, such as statistical information, models, maps, targets, opinions, advisory statements, guidance and even general information such as train timetables. Spatial policies cited various sources for the evidence, including: central government policy and guidance documents; advice and maps from other authorities; data projections and scenario modelling; as well as datasets and research findings. The core strategy had to fit with other strategies, mainly nationally determined regional targets in the Regional Spatial Strategies and local strategies' priorities and so these were prominent. It also drew on multiple datasets, which gave more opportunity for relating to collaborators but also had serious technical limitations. It created a variety of data formats within subject matter, which required multiple computations in order to be applicable to the core strategy. For example, regional growth targets for the area from the government's regional strategy were given in household size, whereas demographic modelling from Northampton County Council gave estimates (Northamptonshire Demographic Model v2.0: 2004-based Population Projections 2006) of what the target would probably mean for population figures and settlement patterns. Such data issues resulted in gaps in understanding for some of the most central concerns. The 'housing-jobs balance' was particularly problematic, as the core strategy notes; "monitoring this relationship is complicated, not least because of the poor availability of relevant data" (NNJPU Core Strategy 2008, p. 74). Working together for a joint evidence base would be a large part of the review work.

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[2] BREEAM rating of at least 'very good' for non-residential and CHS code levels from 4 upwards for residential.
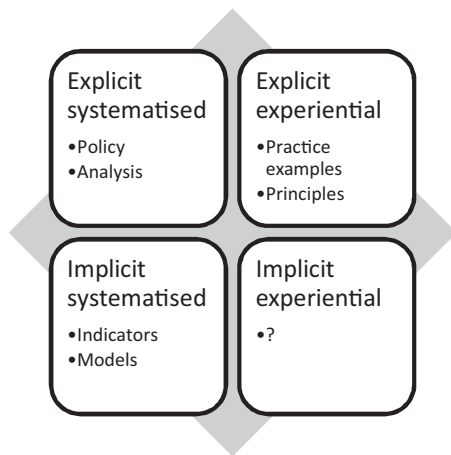
Fig. 5. Knowledge forms in collaborative spatial planning 'evidence'.

In the collaborative workshops formalised knowledge continued to be important to strategy building. Evidence was initially conceived as 'all forms of documented proof', that could established a joint rationale. This evidence-based joint rationale is where the collaborative group shared a position and is characterised as being built on knowledge that was sub-regionally relevant, explicit and systematised. The review team's "store of knowledge", to borrow Healey's term (Healey, 1997a), was made available through: a set of briefing notes on previous work that had been created by collaborators; ideas maps from the four local authorities prominently displaying areas of interest for different types of development in their areas; and various other sub-regional data and maps at an 'information corner'. Such hard data i.e. facts and figures, were useful but never on their own; and softer data such as policies and advice were needed to interpret codified information and build scenarios. 'Softer' data such as example policies or descriptive accounts for instance of earlier development experiences were considered useful evidence that a course of action might be worthwhile. For example, 'evidence' of transport options drew on ideas about the end-user experiences, or where rapid train systems and comprehensive ticketing could be effective. Implicit knowledge was always made spatially explicit with maps and these visual materials were helpful in discussing the impacts of different strategies For instance, focusing development on one area, either north or south North Northamptonshire, positive and negative aspects of changes were enlarged and therefore more obvious. For example, the potential agglomeration and loss of rural space stood out more vividly. The implicit experiential forms of knowledge were absent (Fig. 5).

4.2.3.4. Major issues. Major issues signify points of conflict between actors. They include the stated goals of the review, and other high profile or political issues. As such, these major issues were deeply important to the key actors; they could produce controversial outcomes and had the potential to dominate the planning agenda. These could cause political difficulties amongst the collaborators and they were well embedded within the core strategy, albeit implicitly. Five major issues were opened up for debate and deliberation with professional collaborators: growth; agglomeration; warehousing; green living; and self-sufficiency.

The collaborators were in effect discussing their aspirations for the area and bringing their own specialist knowledge and perspectives to bear on the thinking of the planners. However, there were some areas where strongly rooted values were more important which is demonstrated in the development of the green agenda. There were difficulties in understanding how to operationalise a 'modal shift' from cars to 'greener' transport options

and some doubts were raised about whether an 'eco-town' was a realistic option. Collaborators asserted that the new financial commitments, behavioural change and infrastructure work required were too onerous. This gave rise to some hesitations around the green living agenda, which was still frequently referred to as an 'aspiration', however it seemed that the low level of operational knowledge was overcome by the traction of green values. Even in the most high impact scenario they still placed the "emphasis on areas to protect" (Review Team Outcomes Report Options Development Workshop 2010, p. 38).

The collaborators insisted that their decisions were independent of external political motivations or targets. In retrospect, the growth targets were about to be removed by the new Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government, but the planners made no such assumption. Instead they were attempting to understand the different scenarios that would be useful to spatial coordination across the boroughs whatever the eventual future planning system. This established the idea that they were learning about what level of growth would be internally or contextually 'rational'. In fact the discussions touched on relational and technical aspects, producing an attitude of 'contextual rationality' that helped build trust between the collaborators and common ground for their discussions.

Further learning was a key theme in the conversations particularly around growth. Hesitation in expressing a view on the option was often expressed as 'needing more data' for better confidence. Even within the smaller rural and LA workshops the participants felt that finer granularity was needed, and knowledge of relationships at the smaller scale would be needed for a decision. For example they said that more work would be necessary "in order to understand which villages may form 'clusters' and to inform a bottom up picture of demand" (Review Team Kettering Visioning Session Report 2010, p. 9). This type of debate was left hanging and did not help to clarify the options.

4.3. Learning with communities

4.3.1. Context and data

Embedded research involved the researcher working within public deliberations. Soon after the installation of the new coalition government, the Joint Planning Unit (JPU) began preparation for community engagement focused on issues and possible directions for options. The data provided at this stage continued to include diverse materials from working documentation from the planning team and reflective field records, but now also the records and notes of the deliberative encounters. All quotations from the community are taken from the researcher's own field notes, and have been anonymised by removing potential identifiers and occasionally excluding references to the venue of participation. It should be noted however that all respondents were very positive about engaging in the work, and gave verbal consent to have their comments recorded.

The main strand of community engagement was a 'Road Show' held across the sub-region at a travelling stall manned by the JPU Representatives and designed for all members of the public to participate. Initial work targeting younger people had identified 'next generation issues' and these were also fed into the road show. An 'Issues Report' and a set of questions were used in various formats and available online. People at the road show had their feedback recorded on the stall posters to stimulate further discussions and there was a 'postcards from the future competition' for children.

The research used the geographical spread of the participative work as a proxy for spatial diversity. The community engagement activities sought to reach public participants from towns where development was proposed, market towns, and centres that served

villages, these settlements were spread across the sub-region. This maximised the scope of settlements affected by the core strategy in different ways. The road show visited busy public spaces in the twelve largest settlements across the sub-region, between 23rd February and 17th March 2011. Each event was well attended and the team engaged in conversations with people throughout the sessions at each site, to a great extent these were young adults with young children and older people. Additionally, around 100 responses to the questionnaire and 200 entries for the 'postcards from the future competition' were returned. Clearly participants did not create a statistically representative sample of the population of North Northamptonshire; in particular the response was strongly biased towards older generations in the questionnaire (almost exclusively over 35 years old) and the road show is likely to have excluded those with mobility or transport issues. However, the recruitment was authentic since the research did not shape it and it provided a strong a qualitative sample to explore possible variety in learning, given the wide scope of community members who were engaged. This gave a rich and robust seam of data to study the live phenomenon of learning with the community.

4.3.2. 'The Community' as a collaborative actor

'The Community' represents a distinct set of lay actors and, as discussed earlier, planning approaches must recognise its plurality. So, we begin this chapter by asking 'What constitutes the community?' and draw on the North Northamptonshire case to provide insight. The core strategy review processes propose a North Northamptonshire community, yet North Northampton-shire exists almost uniquely as a construct for planning (as unit of geography and the life within it). In this section the community is analysed as a collaborative actor, focusing on understandings of community from the perspective of planners and local population as manifest within the participatory processes. This provides a starting point for unpacking the associated community knowl-edges, which is tackled in the following section.

The design of community engagement had some similarities to the design of the collaborative workshops. In designing the outreach to the public, the team spoke at its earliest meetings of allowing iterations of input from wider communities. They sought to encourage participation by removing practical barriers to public involvement through the roadshow design. Discussion was encouraged face-to-face and through an 'issues and options' document designed for the public reflection, providing non-technical explanations of the rationales being considered, for instance "self reliance – making sure more choices are available locally so people do not need to travel far for jobs, goods and services and the area becomes more prosperous." (NNJPU Consultation Briefing document 'Have your say on how our places should be planned', 2011, p. 4), and visualisations of spatial development such as maps showing permissioned urban exten-sions.

There are also some practical similarities between the mode of engaging and other collaborators. Professionals and the wider public were sought out by the Joint Planning Unit (JPU), presented with planning issues, and asked to provide responses within a defined space of time. For both lay and professional collaborators, the type of participation was always controlled by planners in that they determined the subject matter, venues and timings.

The JPU intended to use input from the community together with input from other collaborators, but while the approach and mode of involvement might be equated with the involvement of the other actors, the community arguably had less preparation for the exercise. This meant that they had a steeper learning curve about spatial planning activities and required introductions to the purpose and subject matter, which the planning team provided

with through maps and descriptions. Unlike many of the other collaborators, the JPU, Councils, contractors etc., they had had no previous contact with the JPU. They were also involved slightly later than others, albeit for logistical reasons.

Conceptually, the community differs from other actors in several ways. The community is distinct from the other North Northamptonshire planning collaborators since its main role is 'client of the plan'. It is also distinguished by being lay rather than professionally involved in governance, and as such it has no formal obligations towards the planning process and could if it wished remain on the whole outside the process. It is impacted by the plan or consequent development and can act as an agent for or against implementation, or not act at all. When taken to be the end-user the community is a diffuse stake-holding entity, by definition not institutionalised or existing in a pre-defined group. Yet only those people currently living in the sub-region can participate, as engagement cannot practically include others who might be considered end-users such as the next generation or future waves of inward migration.

So the actor commonly referred to as 'local stakeholders' or 'the community' is not a collective unit. In this case study, that point was demonstrated by the challenge of conceptualising and identifying people who could be said to represent the sub-regional community. The North Northamptonshire 'Community' was nominally sub-regional but practically speaking it consisted of actors from the most subsidiary scale. Through the participatory processes, the JPU increasingly saw the community as a range of individual and sub-groups. At earlier stages, the community was sometimes taken to represent the planning area of North North-amptonshire, but by this stage the community was firmly identified as sub-local, i.e. they were categorised by their settlement. In this way they were ensuring confidence that, as far as possible, at least each village and town had been given the opportunity to take part.

It appeared that people did relate to social groupings, for instance where planners identified an occupation, age group or civil organisation people. In those instances they were asked to help reach out others in that group with JPU 'business cards' containing their web addresses and other contact details. Community actors said they were keen to help with this 'snowball sampling' method, and collected bundles of work packs to distribute. Others sent contacts to the road show stands or directed them to the online questionnaire, as evidenced by the clusters of residents identified as living in the same small village. Only a few instances of discarded materials were found, suggesting that there were some satisficing respondents, in Simon's terms (Simon, 1978) where people wish to provide the least information needed, and are not actually engaging with the material, in contrast to the many people who engaged in conversation and were genuinely interested to discuss their own group interests. Explicit and formal social groups such as community organisations were represented, as demonstrated by a local church representa-tive who said "the cost of renting halls is too much we need multi-functional facilities which are currently minimal".

Turning to the spatial groupings, each participant in the core strategy review purportedly represented their settlement yet there were many differences within and between settlements in terms of identity, and conflicts in opinions abounded, as demonstrated for example by the feedback around retail and transport in Burton Latimer. Some people felt their bus services were "good quality" and others felt they were "overfull" and "unreliable"; some people felt there were "enough shops here to bring people from out of town" and others say they "need a broader range of shops". However, community understandings of their spatial connections with each other were more diverse. Some people presented their comments as typical of their smaller community, e.g. business

owners' concerns about the effect on trade of higher numbers of people who were "not permanent residents". Some felt that their 'type' of employment gave them particular insight, e.g. a lorry driver who said it was commonly recognised by his colleagues that "the A14 needs widening". These shared perspectives presented new community groupings, but tacitly so and without it being recorded as such within the participatory exercise.

Having examined the community itself this section considers community engagement as collaborative work, asking 'What is the nature of collaborative work with the community?' This compares the involvement of the community in spatial planning with the learning experiences of the other actors and tensions expected by earlier studies of participation.

To begin with the issue of trust, the roadshow was intended to produce a wide ranging discussion about local issues but there was some uncertainty about the feasibility of such dialogue with the community, which to a large extent related to possible previous negative experiences of engagement. Indeed, comments were made at the road show about poor interactions with planning bodies, e.g. "planning permission given for [medium scale residential development] no information about what is happening and nothing has been built", and disillusionment with developments over the years, e.g. "infrastructure services and employment have lagged far behind and there does not appear to be any plan to redress the imbalance". The fear was that such experiences might compromise open dialogue or divert focus of discussions, yet poor experiences did not prevent participation. On the contrary, they often focused thinking on the plan and ideas for spatial strategy, for instance in reaction to Northamptonshire's 'North Londonshire' campaign to attract commuters to London, they said "We should attract new people from all over not just London. We don't like North Londonshire!"

There was a low level of process knowledge amongst the community, validating the concerns discussed in Section 2 about the obscurity of policy communities. The planning system and authorities were not familiar to the community actors. Overwhelmingly, participants were not previously aware of the JPU at all and frequently dialogue began with an introduction of what constituted the sub-region 'North Northamptonshire' and the role of the JPU. Planning authorities were often conflated with other bodies and for example referred to as 'the council' or 'politicians'. Participants often asked if they could have lower taxes. Planners in the JPU had anticipated low awareness of plan-making practice though they had not assumed that this would discourage people from participating. Instead, their concerns centred on the community's understanding of strategic frames, and how to get past a purely local view. In the event, low knowledge of the purpose and approach of the core strategy was either easily overcome or did not act as a barrier to the discussions, and development issues, whether local or regional, were brought into discussions with the community.

People from the local community were able to discuss strategic approaches to growth as well as expressing particular concerns about localities. They recommended for instance "grow existing settlements more rather than trying to create new settlements" and "keeping [smaller settlement] as a small town with no more houses". Some community participants requested detailed communication or feedback on particular issues, for instance one person stated that they were looking for "assurance that no houses or shops are to be built on surrounding land". Others were hesitant about their input saying e.g. "I'm not qualified" and asking what the planners thought should happen. Participants engaged in discussions of strategic issues as well as more site-specific matters. They talked about very local matters such as needing "more facilities at [housing estate]", but also debated conceptualised abstract, long-term sub-regional effects. For example people:

talked about improving the sub-regional economy, calling for "better jobs and we need to be more resilient to changes to the economy"; related to wider impacts of policies, for instance transport policy effects where the "bypass has improved towns"; and provided insights into local transport flows, such as "[a central street] is dreadful for car parking - causes blockages".

Whilst the community engaged with strategic concepts, their language and communication around such issues were diverse. Planners often used maps to avoid jargon, but often needed to interpret them or provide explanations anyway. Some planning terms such as 'brownfield' or 'regeneration' were used fairly frequently and naturally by participants. Often community actors spoke about planning strategy directly, for instance saying "I don't want out-of-town shopping". Other times lay views went through a type of 'translation' from 'lay expression' into 'planner speak'. For example, "town would benefit from more focus and less 'Tesco' development" was taken to mean less out-of-town development, and 'doing something slowly' to mean that phasing would be required. Planners noted these and other more specific points for the record but they used their own terminology, for example "Neighbourhood Plans should be progressed at Rural Service Centre level" and "S106 agreements need to reflect the needs of [local area]".

4.3.3. Spatial knowledge and the community

This section considers the four remaining aspects of the 'socio-spatial learning' framework, which are shared planning subjects, policy domains, evidence, and major issues. It asks "Is the community contributing to conceptual learning specifically about space and if so how?" As already set out, face-to-face discussions at the road show surrounded qualitative and descriptive commentary and the community provided a 'lived' account of issues. Community collaborators contributed distinctive input that can be characterised as having social detail and local area specificity. The learning effects of these aspects are examined for the four topics in turn.

4.3.3.1. Shared planning subjects.
Firstly, we consider the 'shared planning subjects' found during professional collaboration, which were: adequate housing; improved connectivity; economic prosperity; viable urban centres; green infrastructure; improved infrastructure; and climate change and energy. Before the public participation stage, planners had developed a strong agreement with their collaborators about needing to learn more from the community and that they would do so through the Issues Consultation. At the public participation stage, the community responded to the set of 'shared planning subjects' and contributed to the deliberations on spatial strategy in the following ways.

Community actors engaged with all of the shared planning subjects. Their feedback included strategic approaches to, and local concerns for each subject. For example, people voiced a variety of opinions on the housing stock and supply in their local areas. Some suggested that development should focus on the types of need that were found in their local area, and incorporate "a range of housing, not too high density, housing for local people". Others said that there should be "more affordable housing", wanted "no more housing" or only upgrades with "regeneration of older housing estates" in view of the concerns in their locality. By contrast, some people took a more strategic view of the approach to housing and the impacts of development, and said for example that they were "in favour of housing development as long as green spaces are protected" or they needed "rural affordable housing" across the region.

Responses from the community gave a great deal of specific detail on the topics, particularly transport and retail. For example, discussions of the road network included issues of speeding,

parking, junctions, flows, pinch points, petrol stations, lighting and signage. Detail was mostly explanatory, for example brand names were given to demonstrate the difficulties experienced locally and indicate the retail functions that were missing. People explained the type of high street they wanted, such as "M&S and more up-market shops" or where "[there are] no electrical shops or pc shops, Tecso is coming this will be good". The level of detail related strongly to concepts of quality of life. They also included some very creative and unusual suggestions for development, for instance the idea of cultivating a vineyard.

Some of the details provided by the community were extremely personal, often emotional and sometimes sensual. On first reading they could appear irrelevant to strategy, certainly contrasted to those that the planners gave. For example, some people were extremely annoyed with traffic vibrations on a particular road. However, these details were very closely related to the strategy and planners were easily able to 'read' them. In this instance the vibrations highlighted where current strategy was not working; the route was causing noise problems for old housing stock, and resulted in rat-running, or cut-through driving on minor roads, by larger vehicles and highlighted the pressure on major arteries. Again this demonstrated how the community drew heavily on place quality issues, but did so in relation to 'lived space'. The commentary brought a different perspective on the patterns and new insights, and in the example just given by looking at the functioning and impacts of road networks at ground level.

The amount of detail, given by lay actors, suggested the community produced a much more rounded picture than the other collaborators. For instance, they were able to flesh out subject matter such as policing issues, and cover drug problems and other local criminal activities. As one resident explained "[the area] is now dangerous with … vandalism and anti-social behaviour". Community contributions provided details of a greater range of 'lived experience' than had been possible previously. As noted in previous chapters, safety was a subject in the core strategy, but had been hard to build into mapping work. Through community knowledge of criminality in their own areas, a picture of patterns of crime could be created. This picture could be more relevant than other data on crime as it focused on space and how crime was affecting the quality of places.

Community knowledge provided a ground-level layer of detail that was previously missing. Local people easily identified what they considered to be local assets. Local heritage buildings and countryside areas were frequently noted. Such assets were seen as worth preserving per se, but they were also valued as a foundation for development. Some were described as underused, e.g. where JPU was exhorted to "make more use of [historical hall and theatre] for community facilities". Knowledge of community infrastructure linked local detail with public policy. Services and facilities such as the post-office, school, library, green and even bus routes were marked out as valuable. Notes from stands at three different small towns all stated "keep the library". Finer grain and more commonplace aspects of the towns and countryside, such as "[the local green] and other space (including Pocket Parks[3])"or the bus routes "Rushden Rider and Higham Hopper" were picked out by the community for their value and potential in future development. In identifying these assets a different type of spatial pattern was brought to the fore. Each instance in itself was site-specific but together they built upwards, from smaller scales and more scattered assets, to create a sub-regional picture of assets. That wider picture was less focused on economic value and gave specificity to issues of community infrastructure and green infrastructure that had previously been missing.

End-user experience was a basis for identifying negative patterns across the sub-region and for explaining them. Descriptive detail singled out priority areas and patterns of concern. Some difficulties were not pattern-oriented and dealt with site-specific items of poor service, such as a sports ground that needed "astroturf and expansion". Other difficulties were repeatedly found in different areas across the sub-region and these sketched out a particular pattern of experience. Parking for instance was frequently cited as a major difficulty, where for instance "all of [name of street] is dreadful for car parking and causes blockages". This caused problems including barriers to precincts and services such as "access to [local area's] medical centre". A large amount of the discussions were around missing services, and they appeared to pin-point where local people simply wished to see new dentists, supermarkets, swimming pools and so on. This pointed up missing Higher Order Functions (HOF) and the consequent spatial imbalances, such as "schools and doctors to keep pace with housing" and "not enough shops. [Town] is a nicer place but [other core town] is pulling custom away". Such personal insights showed what caused particular difficulties or linked particular activities, for example "Milton Keynes, Peterborough and Bedford for shops … goes to London to visit relatives … Grand kids come to visit and enjoy going to the railway museum … daughter … uses the [local] library". This type of information was recorded to help consider what might change patterns, and in this case visits to family members encourage use of local facilities and lack of competitive retail results in spending outside the sub-region. Thus as they negotiated what subject matter communities also considered relevant, the planners grew increasingly confident about some of the strategic priorities. It helped to get a material handle on causal dynamics of spatial patterns, although a picture had to be built up to a wider scale translated those patterns and brought complementary knowledge, particularly on social infrastructure.

4.3.3.2. Policy domains. Next, this analysis of community input to spatial planning focuses on how community knowledges relate to policy domains. It revisits the notion of 'integrative force' where the rationales of different policy areas support or challenge particular spatial policies. Dialogues took a people-centred view on space, situating issues in daily life. For example, where planners had discussed the need to bring in higher skilled employment, the community would talk about the insufficiency of earnings from current sources of employment. This made certain elements of policy more prominent including: the costs of transport; specific demands from policing; difficulties in parking; sites of low road safety for pedestrians; missing parts of cycling routes; places with poor cleanliness; and relative ease (or otherwise) of recycling options. It also showed where impacts of one policy area crossed over into another. For example, where planners had (rightly) considered how the difficulties in developing an evening economy were likely to be related to poor public transport, explanations from local people showed how safety also played a part, since some people were not using buses because they felt vulnerable to criminal activity on them. Whereas the economic and transport policy areas overlapped, crime was also linked to them. Likewise, affordable housing was linked to the brain drain, since it was needed "for first time buyers"; school bus routes were connected to traffic and parking difficulties; and bus routes were 'not right' because they were not linked to sites of affordable housing. The community actors were not necessarily the first to make these connections, but they provided a good deal of substantiation for them using a rationale that was tacitly related to a broader notion of 'quality of life' or 'personal opportunities', rather than any particular domain logic. It also seemed that this type of knowledge could help counter the abstraction of domain rationales, as they were shared between professionals (as described above).

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[3] Supported by Northamptonshire County Council, see www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/pocketparks.

As well as revisiting policy linkages the community subjected them to more fine-grained and multi-directional considerations. Lay knowledge contained multiple inter-connections between policy domains. When local people focused on the reasons behind their shopping habits, they talked about personal experiences and linked retail to several areas, including:

- health – "foot pains and particular joints which are at risk of damage because of the low level of the road compared to the pavement near the disabled bay";
- community – "I wait for my trips to Oxfordshire [i.e. where friends live] and spend my money there."; and
- crime – "I won't come to the centre after dark or the car park at [supermarket], a man was stabbed in the lifts".

In effect, the style of community contributions tended to relate to several policy domains. Their knowledge embraced multiple subjects simultaneously, and could therefore offer more rounded justifications for or against policy directions than had been previously possible adding to the planning knowledge. Employment related issues were shown in more depth and complexity, linking different policy domains. Site-specific comments tended to link employment and design, for example where one resident said there should be "more job provision… with provision of small starter units" or where another highlighted how "large offices that deal with large organisations were a problem for smaller organisations". The effects of commuting on transit networks, and the effects of different industries on local roads were seen with much more complexity. Commuting problems were linked for example to the use of "employment agencies [….which] use people willy-nilly", "[poor] evening and weekend bus services, especially in the industrial areas […] factory workers also have to use cars".

4.3.3.3. Evidence. The third area of this part of the case analysis is evidence for planning and this section briefly considers how 'community evidence' differs from the evidence brought to bear by professional collaborators (as discussed above) and the implications of this. Public engagement itself was considered to be an important 'evidence requirement' by the planners, and the process was presented as such. This visible support for community engagement, and the way in which community actors gave feedback, suggested an acceptance of the community's role as a 'source of evidence'. There were many instances where comments were presented as 'known fact' without qualification or quantification. People said for example, "any development in the area will put great pressure on road, parking, doctors' surgeries and schools". The different forms and purposes of evidence are considered. Quantitative evidence had been used by planners in the previous stages but was absent from the community feedback, but there were several other forms, as follows. The feedback gathered and documented from dialogues with the community drew heavily on personal experiences. People's comments were peppered with details from their own lives and those of others. Much of this detail was explanatory, however, the experiential detail served as a type of evidence, and presented in justification of their views. In this way, community actors asserted that this was knowledge not opinions, backed up by fact and to be taken as reality by the planners. Personal detail was used to explain the value of particular assets. People said for example, the "library is the lifeline if the library shut I wouldn't come to [small town] for anything" and "the lakes are nice and quiet and good for walking, I have my school sponsored walk there". Details were also used to explain a position towards policy, for instance the strategic distribution industry was discussed saying, "no more warehousing on rural land [around a particular area site] for goodness sake. I

have sons who left higher education unable to get sufficient job training to work anywhere else here."

Time was a recurrent theme within the community evidence, particularly amongst the older generations. Change over time, or the lack of change, was given as a reason for their concerns. Community actors would say, for instance 'when I was young'; 'when I first came here' and so on, but not merely to recount an anecdote. For instance, several community actors were against growth because previous growth had not been worked in past times. One long term resident said "many new residents have been attracted to these areas but I have not noticed any improvements to infrastructure…", and another from a small town said it "was a large village when we first moved here 25 years ago we had many open spaces our own police station, petrol station, butchers, bakers, grocers, dairy, dentist, building society…the town has lost its soul.". This form of longitudinal evidence was also used directly to discuss more strategic subject matter, for example where someone said, "I have seen no evidence of [whether villages could work together] since I moved here 12 years ago." Community actors clearly drew on a stock of experiential knowledge built-up over time about the impact of development on the area, and considered it useful evidence for the planners.

In addition to experiential knowledge, community actors often relied on comparisons, which could demonstrate a point of view about the local context. For instance, comparisons were drawn with nearby places, to demonstrate what was missing in a local area. The success of other towns was frequently cited especially, but not only, the recent development of Corby town centre. This was presented as evidence that the place in question could benefit from similar regeneration, buildings and facilities. People would also draw on knowledge of places outside the sub-region, as a source of evidence of what might work. For example, someone felt that investment in buses could be a game changing strategy, and noted "I saw buses in USA with cycle racks, front and rear".

One of the most commonly anticipated benefits of public participation was broader range of perspectives, and indeed community actors did input from across a wide range of perspectives. However, the conceptual framework did not anticipate the extent to which local people's personal perspectives provided an underpinning for evidence. For community actors, personal details substantiated what constituted poor quality or highly valued aspects of the local place. They explained how change would impact the area and made references to their own history and drew comparisons with other places to support their points of view.

4.3.3.4. Major issues. The final area of the present analysis is the impact of community engagement on the major issues of the strategy, in terms of learning and knowledge. 'Scale and location of growth' continued to be the most dominant topic as compared to proximity of settlements, warehousing, green-living and self-sufficiency. These five major issues are discussed in turn below.

Growth was seen by planners as a way to promote economic success, but it still entailed political and practical difficulties. While specifying the scale and location would be a crucial 'review outcome', the sites and figures proved difficult to pin down. Implicit knowledge was very significant in the community input to the discussions about growth, irrespective of whether they were for or against growth. Some community actors felt that aiming to increase natural growth was a threat to social capital and resource distribution. A typical comment associated with that view was that the area could become a dormitory settlement populated by commuters, who were seen as people "who don't have time to get involved in community activities". They argued that the plan should firstly aim to "get everything right for the number of people who are currently in the area before we start thinking about more

housing". Others saw a larger population as a way to increase economic vibrancy, saying for example that an "increased population [is] needed for [towns]'s future to stop stagnation" or suggesting ways to attract new populations for instance by positioning the sub-region as a central hub with investment in commuter routes "from Peterborough to East Anglia and Wellingborough to Milton Keynes".

Communities attributed meaning to the numbers behind the scale of growth for the sub-region, partly because in deliberating the impacts of different types of growth they assumed specific locations of growth. While the language used to discuss growth was not emotional, there was an emotive tone as views were expressed with conviction and a sense of personal importance. The were concerns about the effect of physical quality of local settlements, sometime due to a fear of losing the 'character' of the existing settlements other times around a fear of stasis and ageing village populations. One person said for example, that "the countryside needs to change, and cannot be frozen in time". These conversations tapped into emotional logic, where people appeared 'invested' in what already existed. By contrast, the community also deliberated strategic points about location of growth, such as the need for housing dispersal, e.g. "across [small town]". They addressed the importance of contingencies of employment and infrastructure improvements, e.g. saying the areas was "too busy and roads aren't good enough". Local residents had a strong sense of where new developments might go and conversations repeatedly called on site specific and personal factors rather than strategic logic. People talked for example about not having growth "on people's doorsteps" and making sure there were affordable homes. Where other collaborators had shown particular sensitivities about discussing locating growth, the community immersed the conversations in knowledge around more local concerns.

Moving onto proximity of settlements, the 'spatial options' had been particularly driven by the desire to avoid agglomeration between the core towns and this was explained to members of the community verbally and with documentation. People from the core towns appeared either to be less concerned by the issue of agglomeration itself or not to have previously considered it. However, when planners broached the subject they tended to argue against it on principle feeling it could even "destroy village life". These discussions of proximity were limited to a known smaller area or 'neighbourhood' type of scale, albeit with contingent knowledge about its place and position within a wider area (see earlier discussion). Here, the planners' introduction of the topic to the communities may have had an influence on the discussions. By contrast, the issue of the strategic distribution industry resonated with local residents, who were familiar with the ideas about notionally unsightly and employment rich 'warehousing' associated with it. Negative sentiments expressed at the road show were similar to those found at previous stages, for example where they said that "the size and the look of [warehousing site] is bad and the location is very inappropriate". A few people had ideas about how to make the industry more efficient, e.g. placing warehouses near a railway. However, most responses were not accepting of the industry per se and only favoured the most remote locations, i.e. near road intersections far from settlements or even outside the sub-region. Despite this aversion to warehousing, the community emphasised that the strategic distribution industry was a source of employment locally. On probing for how such employment might be protected, they called on local knowledge and listed (for example) not putting warehousing on high ground, open countryside or on floodplains. It was also stated that there were many unused warehouses that had been built in the area. This reinforced the strategic view that had been discussed in professional collaborations and provided potential new routes to developing warehousing options.

On the green-living agenda, the community related well to the goal of carbon reduction but had heated discussions around its causes. Some people expressed the belief that climate change could not be controlled, for example saying that "climate change is caused by the sun, not manmade activity". Community actors appeared to strongly agree with the planners, that the surrounding countryside was an important local asset. They frequently made statements in support of strategies that could protect it, such as "try and prevent too much expansion into the countryside". They also expressed strong agreement that there should be easier access to the countryside in their daily lives, and gave details about where there were difficulties. As well as voicing support for these aspects of green living, they suggested how to realise it. One actor, for instance, made the case for how to "get people out of cars-safer routes to schools, policing outside schools", another said that green space should be more welcoming/safer to use". Others again pointed up gaps in the 'chain' of green living, citing the practical barriers such as: lack of "recycling facilities or collection system"; a "greenway route" for cyclists and pedestrians; and having services within walking distance. They were in effect filling in gaps in planners' knowledge of the details for this issue.

And finally, on self-sufficiency community views on the matter were seen in statements that touched on the relationship of their locality to wider areas. These could reach outside the sub-region, for instance where "[a small specialist shop] closing down is a big blow... they used to bring trade to the area from Bedford, Kettering and Northampton". Discussions mainly centred on smaller scale issues typically "transport for young and old people so they can get to services e.g. Doctors, Dentist, Cinema, etc." or how "closer competition [of service provision] would threaten what is already here". People in rural villages did not focus on local jobs, but saw more and better employment opportunities as vital. This type of feedback was contained within other answers, and was presented as self-evident or matter of fact, but it had learning value and in this case validated the self-sufficiency agenda.

Overall, feedback from community actors could support or challenge the prevailing position on the each of the major issues in the spatial plan, although it was not as straight forward as posing a counterpoint that represented a 'community position'. The diversity of opinions did not provide a way to challenge the idea of seeking to increase the population of the sub-region. The 'professional' topic of agglomeration was seen as highly conceptual and hard to relate to, whereas the 'well known' issues of logistics and 'green living' easily became topics of joint learning and discussions of options. Self-sufficiency was not directly broached but could be read through other feedback, which provided scope for learning, as well as understanding multiple views about major issues. The detailed, experiential knowledge brought specificity to certain areas and had explanatory power in others. Rather than seeking to aggregate or otherwise reduce the input of the community, the planners were able to engage with the full details from these new collaborators. While the new input from communities could to some degree indicate support for (or challenge to) a particular strategic direction on a major issue, it much more usefully provided statements of points of view that contained detailed local knowledge that could to build up confidence (or otherwise) in strategy, which had been lacking at earlier stages.

5. Chapter 5

5.1. Introduction

This chapter assesses the findings from the case study, comparing the different understandings of space and spatial strategy within planners' collaborations with professional and lay

actors, as they deliberated spatial options. It considers the relational, cognitive and communicative aspects around the knowledges found in the professional and lay collaborations (i.e. community engagement). The case study applied the same analytic frame to professional collaborative work and public participation. These separate analyses of lay and professional collaborations are first compared across the 'socio-spatial learning' framework then synthesised. The learning dynamics are drawn out reflecting on different spatial rationalities and reframing of planning knowledge.

5.2. Comparing knowledges within collaborations

To begin with the topic of actors, there was a strong connection between being able to learn together and developing the identity of or relationship between these actors. Within professional collaborations local knowledge and process knowledge were important for building trust and forming a basis for joint learning around shared concerns. For communities, trust-building was more closely related to processes and institutions. The levels of confidence amongst local people about the 'appropriateness' of their involvement was a basic requirement for exchange with planners, and it appears that visible support for this role from either a local or national authority is extremely helpful. Low knowledge of planning process (excluding that of how to participate) was not a barrier to communication with local people, but low confidence threatened to be. Some of this hesitancy was bound up with a sense that planning issues and language were obscure and planners responded to that by taking on a type of translation role, by clarifying diagrams and recording lay commentary in the terminology of the professional collaborations.

Across professionals and lay collaborations there was a continual search for ideas of other collaborators who could be brought in. As professionals expanded their thinking about who could help in their deliberations they often spoke of other professionals but consistently stated that they needed to speak to and learn from the local public. Planners and their professional collaborators agreed that they needed to learn from the community to understand about particular issues and possible policy impacts e.g. growth areas. However there was a diversity of understandings in the professional collaboration with local communities, and a multiplicity of community understandings of their own localities.

This case provided a particularly pro-active example of collaborative actors, with planners talking face-to-face to communities in early stages of revision of a sub-regional strategy in a plan-led system that had specifically promoted a public oriented approach. Nonetheless it uncovered complexities as well as specificities of learning with local communities. There appears to be a distinctive means of learning for spatial planners in collaboration with professional and lay actors. Where policy stakeholders and those providing technical assistance display their local knowledge it encourages sharing and learning, whereas for communities that level of local knowledge is assumed. Despite this tacit acceptance of community expertise in terms of local knowledge, it seems that ongoing support, encouragement and validation of that are essential to learning with communities. There is an unacknowledged complexity inherent in collaborating with local people that relates to scale, where many different scales and configurations of communities are produced, though they are not recorded as such. This complexity relates to the function (policy making) rather than the scale of planning, since it can be found in dialogue with communities about either local levels or wider scales.

In creating spatial strategy, professional collaborations produced evidence that was visibly manifest and spatially represented generally with maps. By contrast communities' evidence was encoded and rooted in their lived experiences within a locality. Typically local people would make this explicit and demonstrate validity, as the basis of providing evidence, through personal and historical detail. The implicit and experiential aspects were lost in the recording processes, as they were brought to light in languages or personal ways that were not in keeping with professional modus operandi.

Regarding policy domains, there was substantive cross policy knowledge communicated within the different types of collaborations, both lay and professional. Planners and professional collaborators had built some linkages between spatial strategies and other non-spatial policy domains. In speaking with policy stakeholders who worked in those policy areas, such as health services and other social services, planners could draw directly on the logic of those other domains. The recording processes was inadequate for further transferring this knowledge, as it did not capture contextual explanatory detail that would be needed to communicate the validity or meaning of policy connections that had been constructed. In lay collaborations, the detail provided by local communities allowed further cross-over between policy domains. However, once again these exchanges were abstracted to record only what had been learned and lost the 'fleshy detail' that had been the vehicle for understanding and learning together.

Some subjects in the core strategy had been hard to build into mapping work, which was attributed to low levels of local knowledge. Professional commentary on safety (for example) provided some amount of local knowledge but this was considered to be an inadequate substitute for input from local communities. The same difficulties were experienced in trying to fully explore other subjects, particularly community infrastructure, but with less reflection on how community input might help. In the event public participation was extremely valuable adding a depth and range of detail previously unavailable in the subject areas. The pictures that were co-created tended to be less focused on economic value and gave the specificity to issues of community infrastructure and green infrastructure. Occasionally planners and professional collaborators were conscious that this type of input had been missing in their deliberations, and other times it was implicit where social evaluations drew on constructs like liveability.

Regarding 'major issues', for professional collaborations the presence of actors was important in explaining perspectives and creating arguments. The same was true for community actors yet the process was more onerous as they were more dispersed and diverse. In professional collaborations, strong values could override low technical or process knowledge however, as in other areas, detailed experiential knowledge was essential as it carried explanatory power. Such 'local knowledge' was missing that was a source of tension in the collaborative group and became a barrier to learning for spatial strategy. Again collaboration with the community was extremely valuable source of learning, since input from lay actors drew heavily on values and was based on experiential knowledge, typically backed up with rich detail, emotive persuasive interaction emphasising personal investment in aspects of the locality. Even though the community perspective tended towards 'neighbourhood' concerns, it provided different perspectives and ways of thinking about development that helped reflect on the strategic issues.

5.3. Reflections on learning dynamics

5.3.1. Knowledge in spatial strategy-making

Conceptual work outlined in Section 2 has suggested that community engagement may have the potential to be a socio-spatial learning area and that there might be a dynamic between
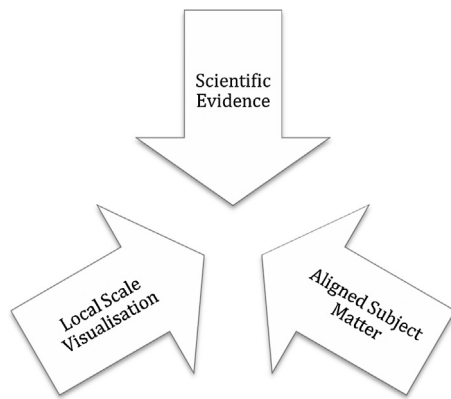
Scientific
Evidence

Local Scale
Visualisation

Aligned Subject
Matter

Fig. 6. Forces of a narrowing dynamic.

knowledge in communities and knowledge in planning. The analysis of knowledge in this case study, has sought to understand the specificities of such learning and the dynamics associated with it. The original assumption was that community engagement would not be an all-encompassing education but one that could strengthen spatial understandings. As outlined in the previous section, lay communities and others who participate in the collaborative learning processes have distinct characteristics and are associated with different ways of understanding space. Following the summary of findings from the different type of collaborations above, this section synthesises lessons from the different parts of the socio-spatial learning framework to allow reflections on their coherence. In order to understand the impact of community engagement, the knowledge and learning prior to the participation of lay actors is considered first.

The study shows that when issues and options for the sub-region were being examined by planners and their formal collaborators, 'narrowing' occurred in three ways (shown in Fig. 6). Firstly, the group of formal collaborators tended to draw on very particular types of evidence. The goal of establishing a sound evidence-base, which was jointly agreed, reworked and used, bounded what was acceptable as evidence. It could include documented information and material, which were necessarily explicit and systematised forms of data, and therefore tended towards 'harder' types of information. Softer data was also included but was always expressed as formal policy, professional advice or information that could be mapped.

The second aspect of the 'narrowing' dynamic was the tendency of the planning authority (JPU) and its collaborators to focus on aligning subject matter. This meant that evidence had to be centred on particular topics and communities of interest, and had to have sub-regional relevance for North Northamptonshire. The subject matter of the existing strategy and the population of the sub-region were necessarily the starting point of all of the review work. Acknowledged relationships and contingencies, such as scales of interest and neighbouring actors, helped determine the relevance of data. Harder data appeared to carry more weight if it could be used in discussions of more than one topic area. Repeated references to a particular source of evidence across different subject areas reinforced the sense of its validity and the validity of knowledge associated with it.

Thirdly, 'narrowing' occurred where particular scales were targeted, especially where local areas were the focus of argumentation. There was an easy and natural connection with the smaller scales, even though the detail of the fine grain was often lacking, and a 'local general' type of knowledge was therefore critical. By contrast creative effort was required to create visions for the whole area whether or not data was available. The joint-planning unit and its collaborators found it much easier to focus on borough areas

than on the wider regional scale. In addition, such local general knowledge bonded people within the group.

It appeared that a 'narrowing' dynamic was connected to the way in which decisions could be articulated as group and justified outside the group. The alignment of subjects and recognition of the smaller scales were important in crystallising decisions within the group and reaching internal agreement on what the decision entailed. But this was fuelled by the need to have a high level of confidence in being able to convincingly communicate those decisions to a wider professional audience. The acceptability of certain types of legitimisation was also crucial to the revised core strategy being able to pass independent examination.

Even before reaching agreement within the group about changes or how to present them to the wider world, the planners needed to stimulate 'creative thinking'. This involved broader knowledge and a different type of evidence. The group was exploring possibilities and so they had to draw on experiences beyond what existed within the group. They were developing new strategy, which also required creativity. New ideas needed to be 'constructed' by the group rather than adopted from an evidence-base.

Abstracted concepts and scientific data were not effective at initiating changes to strategic approaches. Although these were useful for describing existing quantitative trends, they were not sufficient on their own to suggest new policy directions. Planners used softer data such as policies and advice to interpret codified information and build sub-regional scenarios. Softer information was also effective at stimulating new ideas. As new ideas emerged they also needed to be made more concrete. They were thought through in practical terms, and mapped out as 'scenarios' for the sub-region as a whole. Such sub-regional pictures were considered especially well substantiated when they could be 'fleshed out' by rich details of daily life. It seemed that planners needed experiential and specific knowledge about the communities involved, in order to support their understanding of places. This suggested that community engagement could be a valuable source of 'evidence' about the nature of 'the North Northamptonshire community', and about particular topics of local relevance.

Constructing an area wide logic while accounting for diverse local perspectives produced a creative tension between local knowledge and whole scenarios. There was a constant need to move between the wider and local scales. Visual materials were helpful in fleshing out sub-regional scenarios, but discussions could come to an impasse if detailed knowledge of the local area was felt to be missing. In particular, the fine grained patterns of local activity were essential to understanding the implications for each area.

The evidence culture of the group and the requirements of policy making were also in tension with each other. Lived space of communities and concrete physical details were essential to the review work, yet planners would need to legitimise their decisions mainly in terms of abstracted knowledge and conceived space. This was troubling, since it would be important to achieve levels of confidence in the knowledge behind any new strategy offered as output from the review. The role of local knowledge was critical and its function for 'creative futures thinking' was informally and explicitly recognised but it did not sit comfortably with formal aspects of practice.

5.3.2. Reflections on the (re)framing power of spatial rationalities

Having looked at the learning dynamic of spatial strategy making this section draws conclusions about the value of public participation for understanding space. It considers the reframing of spatial knowledge where communities are engaged, and remarks on the implications. Local knowledge was explicitly sought by planners through dialogue with local people, at the 'community

engagement' stage of the core strategy review. The embedded study revealed a possible role for 'local knowledge' in the production of planning knowledge. The 'spatiality' of local knowledge, and the force of different rationalities in co-constructing knowledge for spatial planning, are of particular interest.

The embedded work on local engagement demonstrated that community actors represented a range of residents' voices and brought a distinct type of knowledge into the learning arena. Local knowledge emanated from the community when local people assumed the attitude of 'collaborative actor' and were advising with a good level of confidence. The full strategic options could be discussed directly with the community, and were not simply a matter that could only be comprehended by professionals. On the other hand, the community was more focused on lived space compared to other actors, and had expertise in 'local knowledge'. Characteristically, this knowledge was local in the sense that it was embedded and created in a particular context, with direct understandings of lived space. It was also local in the sense that it was focused on a locality, and that place was generally but not exclusively a locality of residence. This is distinct from the 'local general knowledge' of the professional actors, which derived from a broader familiarity with North Northamptonshire and was more akin to reflective interpretations of spatial practice.

Community actors tended to have a 'local space approach' to development, which was centred on small group identities. This approach is often characterised as NIMBY-ist or taking a simplistic view of space through the lens of self-interest, however, the empirical evidence in this case study suggested that local knowledge was not restricted to such a narrow rationale. Although 'the North Northamptonshire community' ostensibly consisted of current residents dealing with their own local issues at the neighbourhood scale, community knowledge pertained to complex, networked communities, densely constituted place identities and larger scale needs.

Local knowledge took a fine-grained view of space and had specific focal points, but it also had flexibility around the precise definition of scale. Places seemed to be defined by their proximity to amenities and surrounding social processes. In local knowledge, places were not presented as static or located at one fixed place, rather the community gave a sense of a specific site that was currently and continually constructed through diverse, evolving activities and experiences.

Communities were multiple and their 'local places' were not simplistic backyards but constructed around the lives of local people, within which an undefined number of connections existed. Each local place was related to a range of other places, through

community activities that took place there and therefore there was no single isolated 'local scale entity'. Local communities also discussed the value of facilities and functions at the wider scale, such as large facilities or regional infrastructure.

The literature around community engagement suggested a similar picture of local knowledge, but that picture gains extra significance through this study where local knowledge is shown to have specific learning potential within the context of spatial planning. As depicted in Fig. 7, there was a tension between the creativity needed for options and the justification of them. Futures thinking rested on predictive knowledge whereas 'lived space' knowledge comes from place experience, and these are produced in very different ways. Experiential knowledge is historical and often informal, even tacit, whereas predictive knowledge is about future events and always formal and explicit. Moreover, experiential knowledge is based on reasoning through observation of patterns whereas predictive knowledge is based on reasoning through extension of established principles. For instance, the steps in logic behind experiential knowledge might be: I experience difficulties buying a house; the high street is crowded; this locality needs more housing and retail. The contrasting logic from predictive knowledge would be: the region is growing; this town area is in the region; this town will grow. It appeared that spatial planning needed both types of reasoning, and that planners embraced both experiential and predictive rationalities in creative thinking stages and for justifying options as they deliberated possible strategies. It is important to note however that such learning was lost in later stages as they moved towards documenting the justification of options and formal statements on decisions.

Knowledge of communities was constructed differently by lay people and by planners. Planning documents presented communities as either sub-regional or based on a town. In both of these rationalities, the community was seen to have opportunities within the sub-region, and was primarily defined through top down predictions. By contrast, lay people defined the community through activities or opportunities at a smaller scale. They approached places in a 'fluent' way, with confidence and plenty of detail about observed patterns, and always related them to local networks of people and activities. This was very different to the abstracted communities and conceived places constructed by the planning collaborators, yet able to intersect with it and reshape it.

The knowledge observed in community engagement appeared to be 'broadening'. That is to say that it broadened out the planners 'evidence culture' with layers of human detail. It provided a counter-balance to the planners' tendency towards abstracted or
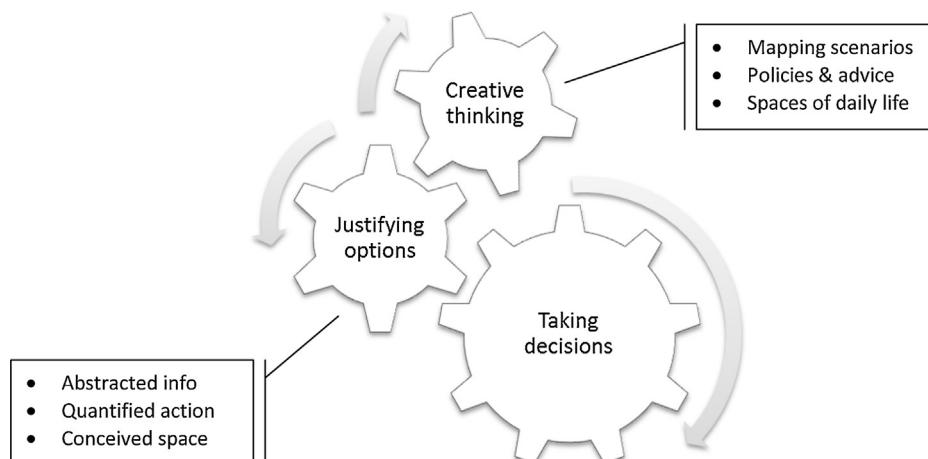

Fig. 7. Dynamics of 'Creative thinking', 'Justifying options' and 'Taking decisions'.

conceptual space. This was because lay knowledge was, in itself, more strongly associated with the physical realities and priorities of local life. As the planners were learning with communities, they gained an appreciation of: holistic social facts that connected policy domains; causal details of spatial patterns that supported or challenged strategic priorities; current urban issues that were spatially partial but could be aggregated; and practical understandings of place dependencies. These can be described in a little more detail as follows.

Since local knowledge was also experiential and causal, it offered a more rounded justification for strategies. Residents tended to embrace a rationale that related to quality of life, and would mainly express ideas in practical embodied terms. By situating problems in daily life, the community brought out how impacts of one policy area crossed over into another. This countered the silos of professional domain rationales and demonstrated the human importance of where domains overlapped. For example, the difficulties experienced on a particular transport route were given importance when discussed with someone who was a care-giver for an elderly relative. As well as highlighting areas where policy domains overlapped, the community was able to identify those overlaps that were 'holistically' important to a local context rather than important to a single policy domain. Collaborative planners were receptive to this 'holistic' logic and accepted the accompanying 'social facts'.

Community actors tended to give detailed descriptions of everyday experiences and much of their knowledge was extremely personal but it also contained a strong causality that had the potential to contribute to planning knowledge. Knowledge from communities pertained to the complex identities of local places and community actors as described above, and contained explanations of spatial patterns, i.e. where certain activities took place and why. This showed which elements of the local area people relied on, and how these elements hung together as a 'place' on which people depended. As planners learned about places and place issues from communities, they were reflecting on their own understanding of 'important' parts of the urban fabric. For instance, one rationale of the core strategy was to create a green network and communities identified green spaces of local value, which could be integrated into the strategy with good explanation of their social worth. Likewise some policies, e.g. expanding transport routes in and around an area, were challenged when community actors did not find them useful.

Regarding urban issues and policy responses, local knowledge dealt with small parts of the region. The learning process therefore involved integrating local evidence and knowledge of smaller scale elements. In local knowledge, phenomena of urban change were mostly constructed through an evaluation of their impact (whether physical or social) on the smallest scale or local places. By contrast, spatial planning knowledge of urban change was closely related to impacts seen at a larger scale. Planners' thinking tended to be driven by communicative logic and the need to negotiate, therefore local impacts were part of a set of trade-offs. While local knowledge was always spatially partial, strategic knowledge was always locally vacuous. The implication is that local knowledge needs to be aggregated for real a picture of regional impact, and the regional picture needs to be described more fully with the accumulated local knowledge.

Similarly, local knowledge of place-based interdependencies causally linked smaller and wider scales, but not as widely, geographically speaking, as spatial planning knowledge did. Interdependencies that connected parts of the urban infrastructure were evident to all actors. Community actors tended to see only one or two points on the smaller scale, and mostly perceived them through social processes and communicated about them in terms of quality of life. By contrast, planners considered social impacts across a wider space and in terms of urban processes. In order to relate to local knowledge of interdependencies, planners had to 'translate' the lay input. For example the smaller scale view could be interpreted as a sign of the relative importance of links between places, or pieced together into a larger picture of how parts of the area worked together as a single, functional unit.

These reflections suggest that the local knowledges of communities have strong reframing power for spatial planning, being policy-holistic, multi-dimensional and experiential in nature. As demonstrated in this case, the institutions of planning that seek out learning with communities for spatial strategy-making can rework their thinking about the identity of their collaborative groups and develop their understanding of space in several ways as a direct result of including local knowledge. It is clear that holistic social details support joined-up policy thinking and that very local, site-specific issues contain explanatory power for inter-scalar connections. Lived space has strong learning value in that it counters abstraction and sheds light on priorities and assets, likewise local knowledge helps explain spatial interdependencies. The challenge lies in relating the different spatial knowledges and communicating with an appreciation of the different approaches to validity and accuracy. These conclusions suggest that there is a need for greater awareness in planning of the potential for socio-spatial learning in the arena of public participation, and increased attention to its internalisation within the longer-term memories of planning institutions. Recognising the value of lay input in this way, may also foster ongoing communicative processes, by enabling public scrutiny and deliberation over scalar legitimacy, and help to build trust in deliberative processes over the longer term.

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