

From the Margins to the Centre and Back

Trajectories of Regeneration in Two Marginal  
English Coalfields

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This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy at the University of Wales, Cardiff

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## **Abstract**

Regeneration is a ubiquitous feature of the contemporary British state. Research, despite devoting much time to exploration of outcomes and effects, so far has neglected the mechanisms of the process itself. This thesis addresses this by charting developments in two marginal English coalfields over a period of 25 years. The coalfields provide a convenient site for the investigation of regeneration as they offer multiple critical sites and exhibit in particularly acute forms the effects of changing relationships between the central and the local state and thus exemplify the wider relationships between the state, the market and the locality.

The choice of the coalfields in North West Leicestershire and East Kent as case studies was informed by their position in the coal mining industry at the beginning of the period of its major restructuring, the then recent evaluation on the recovery of the coalfields (Beatty et al., 2005) and their location in relation to national “identity” projects (e.g. the National Forest). The thesis employs the extended case method as outlined by Burawoy. On the basis of extensive archive research of local government documentation, semi-structured interviews with policy makers and civil society actors and a 6-month observation period in the Kent coalfield an understanding of regeneration as a multi-dimensional social process is delineated.

Through the use of Bourdieu’s notion of the field and different forms of capital (1984, 1986) the thesis offers an examination of regeneration as a sequence of contests in the economic, social and symbolic repositioning of localities in the social space. The combination of Bourdieu’s and Burawoy’s concepts allows exploring the systematicity of the regeneration process through the lens of place. It thus provides a framework for the analysis the spatially and temporally contingent outcomes of (1) processes of legitimisation, (2) the production of specific sets of social relations and (3) the operation of symbolic power in the context of different regeneration regimes.

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## Abbreviations

ADC	Association of District Councils
BC	British Coal
BCE	British Coal Enterprise
BRT	Betteshanger Regeneration Team
CCC	Coalfields Communities Campaign
CEDO	Chief Economic Development Officer
Cttee	Committee
CTF	Coalfields Task Force
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DDC	Dover District Council
DLG	Derelict Land Grant
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DoE	Department of Environment
EDC	Economic Development Committee
EP	English Partnerships
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
KCC	Kent County Council
LCC	Leicestershire County Council
L & M Cttee	Libraries and Museums Committee
NCB	National Coal Board
NCP	National Coalfields Programme
NWL	North West Leicestershire
NWLAMD	North West Leicestershire Area of Mining Decline
NWLDC	North West Leicestershire District Council
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
P & R Cttee	Policy & Resources Committee
RDA	Regional Development Agency
RDC	Rural Development Commission
SEEDA	South East of England Development Agency
SRF	Snowdown Regeneration Forum
T & M Cttee	Tourism and Marketing Committee

## **Chapter 1 - Introduction or What is Regeneration?**

*It's all things to all people, isn't it? (Lauren, voluntary sector representative, Kent)*

*'Cause if you regenerate something, don't you, isn't it something that's changed and you put it back to how it was? Is that what – do you think, is that what regeneration is or is it just to change and re-invent something? (Dave, community activist, Kent)*

*It's giving people back some hope for the future which, which they, you know, at one point didn't have. (Simon, former Chief Economic Development Officer, North West Leicestershire)*

*Needs academics, academics like you to sort out philosophical questions like that. (Mark, former Chief Economic Development Officer, North West Leicestershire)*

The thesis sets out to examine the mutual relationships between locality and regeneration and it reveals how regeneration itself needs to be questioned and deconstructed. The opening quotes from my research participants illustrate that it is a contested concept with multiple meanings. It addresses questions of change, the past, present and future for a variety of stakeholders. As much as it is a process in and of place, it is also a process in and of time. Throughout the thesis different dimensions of this complex and multilayered concept will be discussed.

The thesis takes the mining areas of North West Leicestershire and Kent as the focus of the investigation. Based on data drawn from extensive archive research, qualitative interviewing and a 6-month observation period, the thesis offers a long-term perspective on strategies of transformation and their political, social and symbolic manifestations. The following provides a rationale for the thesis, an introduction into the theoretical and methodological ideas which are crosscutting the remaining chapters and a short outline of the overall structure and argument of the thesis.

### **1.1. Rationale or Why the Coalfields?**

This research is part of the growing body of literature concerned with regeneration. This has become a dominant political and academic interest before a background of

ongoing processes of global economic and state restructuring. Industrial decline has been a common feature in the recent experience of Western liberal democracies. The British coalfields are then one among many stories of deindustrialisation. At the same time, the Audit Commission concluded that 'England's former coalfields are a story of renewal and growth' (2008: 5) in their evaluation of progress in coalfield regeneration. Despite this glowing assessment of restructuring, these places are often still associated with decline, deprivation and disaffection. Although much attention in the literature has been focused on inner city decline the coalfields offer the unique intersection of post-industrial urban and rural issues. They provide a convenient site for the investigation of regeneration as they exhibit multiple critical issues. This includes, in particularly acute forms, the effects of changing relationships between the central and the local state. Thus, they exemplify the wider relationships between the state, the market and the locality. The combination of a multitude of social disadvantages and a politicised identification as distinct discursive spaces justified the examination of socio-economic transformation in two marginal coalfields for this PhD thesis.

Coalfield regeneration research has largely focused on the social costs of deindustrialisation. The result is that there has been extensive discussion of the coalfields as they were and to a limited degree of the coalfields as they are but not how they arrived there. In addition to that, focus has been predominantly on the economically or symbolically central coalfields of Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire and South Wales (e.g. Bennett et al., 2000, Bowes, 2003, Rees and Stroud, 2004, Turner, 2000, Waddington et al., 2001, Waddington, 2003). In contrast to these earlier studies, this thesis is concerned with the marginal coalfields of North West Leicestershire and Kent. Although the Kent miners were renowned for the militancy in union politics neither of the coalfields featured prominently in the popular imagination of the mining industry. In the most recent study on economic recovery (Beatty et al., 2005) they were identified as successful in achieving a replacement of jobs lost as a consequence of colliery closure (with results of 100% and 66% respectively). The choice of the case studies was also informed by their position in the coal mining industry at the beginning of the period of its major restructuring, and their location in relation to national 'identity' projects (e.g. the National Forest). The statistics on employment and economic performance might support the Audit Commission's evaluation (cf.

Beatty et al., 2005), however, the reputation and perception of some mining areas seems resilient to change. The question therefore is: Does social and symbolic repositioning follow economic transformation? Do the coalfields remain coalfields? Do miners remain miners?

The central question of the thesis is how to understand the process of regeneration. As a result of the comparative element of the research design, the thesis offers an examination of the specificity of place and the meaning of locality in the experience and process of restructuring. Research, despite devoting much time to exploration of outcomes and effects, so far has neglected the mechanisms of the process itself, in particular (1) the processes of legitimisation, (2) the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion of actors, (3) the construction of places in the context of different regeneration regimes. The research therefore deals with the tensions arising out of places being at the centre and the margins of political agendas. It outlines how transformation or its failure emerged as a result of the way local priorities are brought on to the national agenda and vice versa. In examining the coalfields' different processes of change it investigates issues as they unfold and thus clarifies the ways in which the interplay between local and national consensus lies at the heart of contemporary processes of restructuring. The result is that place matters and it needs more attention.

The formulation of the research questions was also shaped by my own theoretical and cultural trajectory which led me to writing this thesis. I grew up in Germany, more precisely a small village in a rather remote corner of East Germany, close to the Czech border. The fall of the Wall in 1989 suddenly and profoundly changed the way the world was organised for me. The changes were clear in their practical manifestation, so over the summer holidays our curriculum changed from raising us to be good socialist citizens to being productive citizens of a Western liberal democracy characterised by Germany's own brand of a social market economy. At the time, the switch from one ideology to its opposite seemed seamless, also because ideological debates did not seem to be of high priority to 12-year-olds comparing their newly acquired Walkmen. Only the move to the UK really brought tensions to the fore which had seemed resolved or at least not questioned. So when I started to identify myself as (militantly) East German, rather than German, I also started to wonder how

could I actually do so when East Germany had firmly been consigned to the (not so good) old days. How could I see something with such obvious negative associations (at least in Western historiography) as a *positive* reference point? There were parallels here with the treatment of mining as on the one hand a dangerous and dirty occupation but simultaneously a source of pride. This combined with my long-standing interest in mining as 'a way of life' and thus specific cultural phenomenon. How did other cultural groups experience and react to socio-economic transformation? What impact did it have on their perception and representation of themselves? Eventually I realised that the question how regeneration actually works as a political, social and symbolic process needed to be asked first before I could embark on understanding its effects. The final research questions therefore emerged to be: What is regeneration and how does it work as a process? How are social relations in regeneration characterised, ordered and experienced? What are the underlying assumptions, discourses and vocabularies in the process?

## **1.2. The Focus of the Study**

In writing this thesis I have relied and touched on a wide range of debates and literature. So some drawing of boundaries seems appropriate here. I have benefited from the literature on the social costs of closure, the effects on employment and unemployment patterns, e.g. Fieldhouse & Hollywood (1999) or studies by Beatty et al. on hidden unemployment (1996, 1997, 2005) and the effect this worklessness has on the individual and personal networks (Strangleman, 2001, Parry, 2003). This thesis, however, is not an addition to this body of work. It reflects on the experience of the restructuring but does not set out to evaluate or assess its outcomes. The analysis inevitably investigates narratives of success and failure but it does not aim to measure the objective or quantifiable success and failure of revitalisation programmes and local authority efforts. It does aim to understand the frameworks in which success and failure are articulated.

Issues of exclusion are identified and debated; these are firmly related to the governance processes involved in restructuring. The thesis concentrates on those who are nominally included groups and queries how their accounts are nevertheless infiltrated with discourses of exclusion. It is looking at the ways in which a locality is

transformed in terms of legitimisation, actual organisation, implementation and narrative construction of policies. It therefore uses strategies of economic transformation as a way into understanding assumptions underlying different modes of changing the place of a region or locality in the (national) spatial division of labour and the economy.

The thesis can be located within the context of locality studies. It looks at localities and their trajectories through socio-economic change and also draws on the long-standing tradition of community studies in sociology (see special issues of the *Sociological Review* (2005) or *International Journal of Sociological Research Methodology* (2008) for detailed discussions). It takes the specific conditions in two areas as a starting point for the wider examination of theoretical and methodological issues in the study of regeneration. It is thus also aware of the long debate about the supposed homogeneity of mining communities (e.g. Bulmer, 1975, Gilbert, 1995). Mining communities have been the focus for community studies before, see the seminal *Coal is our Life* (Dennis et al., 1969). Given that they have been portrayed (in academic as well as popular literature) as a particular ideal of community, a study concerned with the impact of external socio-economic forces on mining areas cannot neglect the community aspect of it. Another rationale for including discussions of 'community' in the study is the idea that regeneration frequently comprises cultural change in the context of the creation of uniqueness to achieve regional, national and even global competitiveness. This means a deliberate attempt to create a collective identity which could either be a continuation of the former identity or its opposite. The driving force behind such attempts, however, might not always be the community itself but local authorities and regional or national institutions. In this way, it is no longer a collective identity for a group that is constructed but the emphasis is on place-making rather than 'group making.' Regeneration is the creation of spaces and places – not only in the sense of constructing entities and the respective boundaries but providing content for these imagined boundaries as well. This means that 'identity work' and its transformation are integral aspects of regeneration.

### **1.3. Theory and Method**

This thesis sets out to examine assumptions underlying regeneration and their manifestation in regeneration regimes, strategies, implementation mechanisms and representations. Its theoretical framework and methodological approach is based on and inspired by Burawoy's investigation of the politics of and in production (1985) and his extended case method (1991, 1998). Regeneration is therefore regarded as a production process at the intersection of the state and the market: it is a 'creative' policy practice with the aim of maintaining the existing (capitalist) accumulation regime through the production of regenerated sites, communities, individuals. This starting point then also positions regeneration as part and parcel of state restructuring (cf. Swyngedouw, 1996) and requires an examination of the power struggles that manifest themselves at the different levels of the restructuring process: local vs. central or internal vs. external. It arrives at a conceptualisation of the process as being shaped by politics of regeneration and politics in regeneration which thus aims to uncover the political, economic and ideological dimensions at work. This allows seeing socio-economic transformation as spatially and temporally contingent, i.e. regeneration as a process as well as a product is 'socially determined by particular social groups and/or interests in specific places and time periods' (Pike et al., 2006: 24/25). The interplay between these groups and interests then becomes the focus of the investigation. The thesis will therefore look at the changes in the global regime of production (politics of regeneration) and the local regime of production (politics in regeneration). Particular attention is paid to the interdependence of external and internal forces in any kind of process.

Burawoy argues that the 'capitalist mode of production is not just the production of things but simultaneously the production of social relations and of *ideas about social relations*, a lived experience or ideology of those relations' (1985: 36, emphasis in original). The aim of the thesis is therefore to show the multidimensionality of restructuring trajectories. Local and global contests over the distribution of power or the division of the social world rely and focus on the mobilisation and acquisition of resources. This is where this approach is enhanced through reliance on and use of Bourdieu's concepts of fields and different forms of capital (1986). He argues that economic processes are socially rooted and



because the social world is present in its entirety in every economic action, we have to equip ourselves with instruments of knowledge which, far from bracketing out the multifunctionality of practices, enable us to construct historical models capable of accounting, with rigour and parsimony, for economic action and institutions as they present themselves to empirical observation (Bourdieu, 2005: 3).

Therefore, given that regeneration has economic, social and symbolic effects and is stimulated by the bureaucratic field (cf. Bourdieu, 2005), the thesis is based on an argument which sees the process as a consequence of and manifested in the overlapping of separate social spheres: bureaucracy, civil society and cultural representations. The thesis takes both Burawoy's (1985) and Bourdieu's ideas (1986) on the multi-dimensionality of production processes and the social sphere respectively as a starting point and applies these in the context of coalfield regeneration. Despite their different foci these theoretical sources share a commitment to an understanding of the structural forces as well as the potential for agency encountering those forces. This will be elaborated and discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

As a consequence of the conceptual framework of regeneration I adopted and developed the focus of the thesis is placed on dealing with the changing relations between state agencies. This means investigating the meaning of a shift from notions of government to governance in the policy area of coalfield regeneration. The thesis charts developments in two case study areas over a period of 25 years. Given this time span, the two case studies were used in series rather than in parallel to illuminate different stages in the regeneration process. The study thus addresses the gap in the theorisation of local-central relations in regeneration and focuses on the 'institutional thickness' of arguably less state-managed regions (in contrast to influential studies by e.g. Hudson, 2000, Beynon et al., 1994) whose focus is on the North East as an exemplary state-managed region). As a result, two very detailed case studies of localities in transition emerged from the fieldwork stage of the PhD.

#### **1.4. *The Structure of the Thesis***

Regeneration as a concept and practice has enjoyed a lasting salience in academic and policy discourses in recent decades (Furbey, 1999). There is no short way to define

and delimit it. It has emerged as a multi-layered process. During the course of the research, however, I felt it necessary to condense the meaning of the term to one dimension at a time to be able to deal with its multiple facets. These became the guiding statements during my engagement with the data:

Regeneration is economic, social and symbolic repositioning.

Regeneration is future trading.

Regeneration is enactment of trust.

Regeneration is imaginative anticipation.

These shortcuts in approaching different dimensions of regeneration are taken up in the structure of the thesis. The following chapter will introduce the main theoretical concepts which have shaped the thesis and elaborate in more detail on the theoretical framework introduced above. It brings together approaches to the state, production and the social space and their relevance in the discussion of regeneration. The methods employed in the examination of the case studies are described in Chapter 3. It details the rationale behind the extended case method and the importance of the comparative approach for its application in the thesis. Regeneration as a policy practice has undergone dramatic changes and has been characterised by heterogeneous approaches: from a preoccupation with dereliction and property development to holistic approaches to social and community development. The different phases of state restructuring in the last decades have also led to different regeneration regimes in terms of the institutional, economic and political conditions under which responses to socio-economic transformation are pursued. The changes in policies and the context for the formation of policy are discussed in Chapter 4. One recurring element in these regeneration regimes, however, has been the emphasis on employment creation and the reproduction of labour. Although there have been varying degrees of emphasis on this particular aspect, it has remained one of the main driving forces behind local, regional and national regeneration strategies in the UK.

The following chapter, Chapter 5, provides the background to the case studies. It introduces the two localities in detail, giving an overview over their history, economic, political and cultural characteristics. Chapter 6 analyses how the above mentioned emphasis on employment creation in both policy and theory leaves gaps in

understanding regeneration. The concern with the content of strategies and their implementation has left little room for examining the way strategies come about, how they are legitimised and negotiated, especially in terms of the insertion of the local into the national. The chapter thus presents a classification of regeneration trajectories as result of different legitimisation processes and their preference for particular versions of the future. The thesis then brings together narratives of policy makers and local government officers and their understanding of successful regeneration and the views of those representing the community in the regeneration process in Chapter 7. This highlights the different frameworks of understanding the aims and outcomes of regeneration, e.g. the policy makers' narratives of success and inclusion, and points to a deep schism between policy and experience, especially in the community representatives' narratives of loss, hopelessness and exclusion. The effect of such narratives in social relations is examined with reference to developing an understanding of the enactment of trust. Finally, the experience of exclusion and powerlessness is also repeated on a symbolic level in the way that both the communities and the regeneration processes are represented – be that in the images used in the policies or the material representations in forms of memorials/ statues and the built environment. This is elaborated in Chapter 8. Chapter 9 aims to draw together the different dimensions singled out in the previous chapters, offering a synthesis of the different aspects that have been investigated, in a model of regeneration. This concluding chapter thus provides a summary of findings and presents their insights for future research and policy practice.

## **Chapter 2 - Theoretical Starting Points – Preparing the Ground**

*To understand the logic of this bureaucratically constructed and controlled market, we have to describe the genesis of the rules and regulations that define its operation; in other words, we have to write the social history of the closed field in which, with different purposes in view and different weapons to hand, members of the higher civil service (...), and representatives of private interests (...) confront each other. (Bourdieu, 2005: 92)*

### **2.1. Introduction**

#### **2.1.1. Starting Points**

This chapter lays the theoretical ground for the formulation of questions for the research process. It has the modest aim to develop and outline the concepts which have been helpful in the understanding of the empirical data collected in two years of field work. As such it is as much testament to the theoretical journey I made throughout the PhD as it is the examination and critique of potentially useful theoretical frameworks and my adaptation and transformation of them for my analytical purposes. There is no ready-made theory of regeneration as such even though there are a variety of concepts to address individual questions occurring within restructuring.

I started out seeing regeneration as a process of and within the state; it was a political practice. This led to an engagement with questions of state restructuring, rescaling and governance. The overriding concern with economic revitalisation, which is constructed as the root cause of regeneration activities emphasised the link between the state and the economy and linked the study closely with approaches influenced by Marxian political economy. My emphasis on the interplay of production and politics in places formerly characterised by production but deprived of their productive status meant a close engagement with Burawoy (1985) whose ideas on the politics of and in production proved a fruitful starting point. Although Burawoy continually highlights the fact that production processes comprise the economic, the political and the ideological dimension, his productivist bias seemed to neglect the symbolic dimension. This was remedied by drawing on Bourdieu's (1986) concepts of fields as well as different forms of capital and their legitimisation. This seemed particularly

useful in the search for a more powerful conceptualisation of regeneration as a multi-dimensional process. The chapter will shortly touch on shortcomings of the existing regeneration literature and then go on to discuss different perspectives on the state, resources and capitals which provided the guidance for the empirical research. It is intended to be a clarification and selective review preparing the ground for later discussions.

The chapter thus addresses the overarching research question of the thesis: ‘what is regeneration and how does it work’. In doing so it aims to move away from a focus on the social effects of and responses to closure and evaluations of policies towards a critique of a process of seemingly managed change. Rather than see regeneration as merely a national policy with local outcomes it considers it as a production process characterised by a sequence of power struggles over legitimacy, resources and meaning. It is thus regarded to be multi-dimensional in character, spanning several disparate but interlinked social spheres. The chapter therefore proceeds from political economy to sociology to arrive at a political economy of sociology (Burawoy, 2008a).

### **2.1.2. Regeneration as Process of Production**

There are different levels to the interpretation and understanding of regeneration as a production process. Metaphorically, regeneration, as Furbey (1999) elaborates, has many different meanings. It has theological, biological, psychological and political connotations. A common element has been the moment or process of transformation. In its political and policy meaning, the emphasis seems to be on the managed transformation – it is not an organic, self-directed, ‘natural’ process of change; it is engineered and manufactured and guided in its trajectories and outcomes. Whether the trajectories and outcomes are, in fact, predictable and ‘engineered’ is a different matter. The objective is the management of change, i.e. turning economic decline into productive change. If we see the production process similar to that – as the managed transformation of resources into a finished product, then the metaphor of production is applicable to the study of restructuring and regeneration. This then opens up avenues for the use of concepts and theories concerned with production processes.

At the same time, we need to see restructuring as a process of space and place creation, or as Zukin (1991: 29) says: ‘it socially reorganizes space and time, reformulates economic roles, and revalues cultures of production and consumption.’ Production is then linked to the construction and institutionalisation of regions and localities as spatial units (cf. Paasi, 2002, Hudson, 2005). Production of places also means (re)production of social relations. For the regeneration of localities, this can also mean the creation and maintenance of socially, economically and politically cohesive units, or in the current government terminology ‘active communities’. This community building can then be likened to ‘a collective project for, or wager on, the future of the [community] unit, that is on its capacity to resist break-up and dispersal’ (Bourdieu, 2005: 20). This, however, also draws attention to the fact that the sole objective is not the production of objects as such but the (re)production of subject positions and relations within an economic, social and symbolic system of relations.

On a material level, restructuring means the transformation of means of production (land, capital and labour) with the aim of securing use and surplus value. Regeneration is a productive process in the sense that it does comprise activities of a clearly productive character, i.e. the physical aspects of restructuring manifest in the reclamation of sites, the provision of infrastructure and services. There is also a notable amount of symbolic production in the sense of image creation, place-marketing and promotion. Thus, localities and regions have become “‘products” that can be sold on the market and that will attract tourists, skilled professionals and capital’ (Paasi, 2002: 137). In addition to that, this process of the (re)production of capitalist accumulation seems to follow the laws of capital in that it underlies the same rules as the system it intends to revive. The distribution of public capital to achieve this reproduction is a case in point. There seems to be a consensus that the current mechanism for allocating funding can be understood in relation to notions of the market:

A regime for bidding [sic] for funds is a quasimarket<sup>1</sup> because it replaces the allocation of resources on a formula basis with one where the government agency invites organizations to submit bids and chooses the winner

accordingly, ensuring that the most “fit” win. (...) The market is enforced by the central agency that scrutinizes the bids for service quality, making the agency the main guarantor of competition. (John and Ward, 2005: 72)

The literature on regeneration has therefore routinely employed the language of production but has so far failed to apply the theories of production to the subject. This thesis aims to address this omission.

### **2.1.3. Regeneration in the Literature**

The following is not aimed to be a comprehensive overview of the existing literature on coalfield regeneration rather it is using representative studies to highlight the opportunities for substantial contribution to the literature so far. There are a number of trends in the research on old industrial regions. There is an established body of work on deindustrialisation, especially in the North American context, (e.g. Cowie & Heathcott, 2002, High, 2003, Linkon & Russo, 2003) and the effects and processes of closure in old industrial regions (e.g. Pike, 2005, Henderson & Shutt, 2004, Pike & Tomaney, 2009). Deindustrialization has been accepted as a complex process that cannot be confined to emblematic places or a particular time period but that needs to be seen as showing varying causes, timing and consequences. Chapain and Murie (2008) summarise the two main foci of the research on closures as 1, looking at the process itself with emphasis on multi-plant closures and 2, the impacts on the local economy and labour markets. They also highlight the need for long-term perspectives in the examination of closures, an issue that has received equally little attention in the literature on restructuring.

In general, there has been a strong emphasis on policy analysis and policy evaluation and little emphasis on theoretical model building. This has also been replicated in the research on coalfield regeneration. There is a rich evaluative and monitoring literature (e.g. CTF, 1998, CCC, 1999, ODPM, 2003, DCLG, 2007, Audit Commission, 2008). The Coalfields Research Programme conducted by Beynon and Hudson (1999) is a case in point and provides a good starting point. The programme examines different dimensions of decline and restructuring, i.e. representations, partnerships and local politics, housing and health. It does, however, also state that model building and

theorization are not the overriding objective but that different instances of working and living through socio-economic transformation are being explicated. This adds to the preoccupation with what happens rather than how things occur. Where there has been an emphasis on conceptualization, studies of urban and rural change have largely been located in the debates on social and economic restructuring. In this way, they have engaged in discussions about the transition to Post-Fordism with strong links to regulation theory (Cloke & Goodwin, 1992).

There have also been studies of aspects of culture and identity as consequence of closure and socio-economic transformation in the coalfields. Prominent examples are Warwick & Littlejohn's (1992) analysis of Yorkshire mining communities and Dicks' (2000) examination of heritage in the South Wales Valleys in the context of consumption and heritage-led regeneration agendas. While the first focuses on the possibilities for maintaining cultural distinctiveness based on an extinct economic practice, the latter discusses the issues involved in actively employing this 'otherness' in a marketable form. Both touch on the specificity of place as an element in processes of change.

This can be linked to a longer-standing tradition of locality studies (cf. Rees et al., 1985, Cooke, 1989, Harloe et al., 1990, Massey, 1991a, Jackson, 1991) of which investigations situated in the coalfields are one element. In the case of mining areas, this is often developed out of an interest in issues of work organisation and employment structures and the location of the locality in national or global systems of production. Beynon and Hudson can be cited here as proponents of such an approach. Their research is based on a long-standing engagement with the industrial areas of the North East and South Wales and their economic and social trajectories from inception to restructuring (e.g. Beynon et al., 1991, Beynon et al., 1994, Beynon & Austrin, 1994, Hudson, 2000). These studies focus on state-managed areas which showcase a particular brand of carboniferous capitalism in places which were economically, socially and politically built around locally dominant industries such as steel, chemicals or coal. These are also the symbolically (and often economically) central industrial regions – the proverbial 'North.' State-managed here means that the localities are characterised by a tripartite relationship between capital, labour and the state in which the state is dominant also through its involvement in nationalised



industries. There is therefore a conspicuous lack of attention to the coalfields which are situated in areas which are not dominated by nationalised sectors of manufacturing. This also offers the opportunity to depart from a class-based focus on economic restructuring to a consideration of the political aspects of the process. It is no longer the interplay between labour, capital and the state that determines the politics of place (as capital in the cases studied here was never such a unified and coherent entity) but the relations between state and civil society. This does not mean that class as a category and basis of action is neglected. Hudson himself (2005: 582) argues that a Marxian political economy approach alone is not sufficient for understanding the ‘mechanisms, “messy practices”, and emergent effects through which capitalist economies are performed and (un)intentionally (re)produced.’ He thus suggests using evolutionary and institutional as well as state theory and concepts of governance to uncover the processes at work in the ‘production of “old industrial regions”.’ In this, he does remain focused on the trajectory of the regional economy but also offers an engagement with legitimating practices. The following exploration aims to provide useful concepts to deal with questions concerning the local and the central state’s attempts at legitimising their respective interventions and how this is played out in the actual local trajectories on a political, social and cultural or symbolic level.

## **2.2. *Questions of State – Jessop’s Political Economy***

Regeneration as one embodiment of local and regional development has increasingly become an accepted function of local and national governments (cf. Pike et al., 2006). It is by nature an interventionist activity (cf. Roberts, 2000). Beynon et al. (1994) also claim that responses to uneven development and regional economic inequalities are part of the politics of states to secure the legitimacy for their own actions. In this sense, restructuring is a practice of the state and it is possible to identify a politics of regeneration. This notion coupled with the claim that it is an element of the restructuring of the state naturally leads to an engagement with different approaches to understanding the state and its actions. I will particularly concentrate on Bob Jessop’s political economy approach to the state.

The thesis starts from the assumption that the economy is socially embedded and socially regularized which also means that economic norms are products of a particular time and place – economic relations are historically variable in spatial and temporal dimensions (Jessop, 2002). This highlights the need to integrate both history and geography into the investigation of regeneration. Swyngedouw (1996) maintains that urban and regional restructuring processes are used as the triggers and platforms for the rescaling of the national state. Jessop defines the state as an ‘ensemble of socially embedded, socially regularized and strategically selective institutions, organisations, social forces and activities which are organised around making collectively binding decisions for an imagined political community’ (2002: 6). His conceptualisation of the economy runs along parallel lines; the difference between the state and the economy is in the selection of institutions, organisations and social forces which are acting and their collective aim which, in the case of the economy, is the expanded reproduction of capital as a social relation. There seems to be an underlying existing institutional infrastructure which is assembled in different ways to achieve different functions as part of the reproduction of society. This set of institutions has undergone significant changes in the last decades, which will be elaborated in Chapter 4.

Among the key features of the capitalist state, as Jessop sees it, are

- the ‘institutional separation between the market economy, the sovereign state and a public sphere (civil society) located beyond the market and state;
- a political rationality distinct from the market logic of profit and loss;
- the key role of official discourse in the exercise of state power;
- the articulation of state and hegemonic projects by public and private intellectuals which define the national/ national-popular interest;
- the importance of knowledge as basis of the state’s capacities (2002: 38/ 39).

His approach to the state is ‘strategic-relational’, considering the state as a social relation. The argument is that state power ‘reflects the prevailing balance of forces’ (2002: 40) and ‘can only ever be the forces acting in and through its internal structures, representational frameworks, and modes of intervention’ (Jones, 2008: 383). The emphasis is then on the interaction of forces within and beyond the state.

This also means that the politics shaping mechanisms of redistribution and welfare (under which regional assistance or programmes to respond to economic decline could be subsumed) are influenced by economic factors as well as the ‘nature of the state and its articulation to civil society’ (2002: 149). Jones (2008) criticises the primacy of the political and economic over relational constructions of identity in this approach. In this context, it is also important to mention Jessop’s and Burawoy’s commitment to a Gramscian notion of hegemony in their approaches to political economy. Hegemony is achieved and sustained through projects which integrate, realign or redefine the interests of the subordinate classes with a view towards the dominant classes (cf. Hammer, 2003). Hegemonic projects then aim at an integration of interests of different classes in contrast to state projects which are merely concerned with the internal functioning of the state (Jessop, 1990).

Jessop (2002) locates his discussion of the state in the context of the shift from Fordism to Post-Fordism. The changes of the state from the welfare state to the ‘glocal’ entrepreneurial state (Harvey, 1989), the Schumpeterian workfare state (Jessop, 1993) and the new authoritarian state (Swyngedouw, 1996) have been extensively discussed. Therefore, questions of governance, governing beyond-the-state and the ‘re-scaling’ of the state have become integral elements in the literature on restructuring (Swyngedouw, 2005, Pike & Tomaney, 2009). Rescaling, according to Jessop (2002), is a consequence of the crisis of the Keynesian Welfare State in which the national was the primary scale for political and economic activity. One consequence of this is also that competition now does not only occur between economic actors but, as competition is now also linked to extra-economic factors, between spaces and places which are being represented by political entities. So it is argued that ‘an important distinguishing feature of post-Fordism, (...) is the increasing significance of the reflexive pursuit of entrepreneurial strategies by non-economic actors’ (Jessop, 2002: 188). This is important in the context of this thesis as the focus is on the interaction between the state and civil society rather than the state and economic actors. In the new political economy, however, no particular scale has become privileged yet instead new processes of the emergence of new scales, spaces, places and horizons of action are still ongoing. There are recurring scalar transformations where one scale transcends into new scales and creates its own legacies and forms with places ‘extending’, ‘opening up’ or ‘shrinking.’ Jessop also

claims that the new scalar organisation will bring with it new mechanisms to coordinate and link these scales which will increase institutional thickness. In this vein, one aspect of the developments discussed in this thesis is the enhancement of local government with local governance in the last decades. Swyngedouw (1996: 1499) posits that this shift in the forms of governance ‘takes place through the formation of new elite coalitions on the one hand and the systemic exclusion or further disempowerment of politically and/or economically weaker social groups on the other.’

Urban regime theory provides one starting point for such an investigation of the rise of new coalitions on a local scale. As DiGaetano and Strom (2003: 357) summarise, the political economy approach to urban politics is

premised on the notion that urban politics is a product of the division of labour between state and market in city affairs, urban political economy attempts to explain how interaction of government power and private resources constrain or condition urban political decision making.

This approach is thus useful when considering the impact of market forces on the organisation of the national and local state during its restructuring as well as aspects of the local economic structure such as landownership in the process of regeneration. Given that the thesis is based on an acknowledgement of restructuring as political as much as an economic process, this requires an interest in its governing mechanisms, e.g. the formation and maintenance of coalitions pursuing a revitalisation agenda. The concern with the conditions under which particular kinds of governing coalitions develop, transform and consolidate to the degree of becoming hegemonic is seen as the focus of urban regime theory (Lauria, 1997a). This approach thus emphasises the multiple forms institutional structures can take in mediating social, political and economic transformation (Jayne, 2003).

Lauria (1997b) admits that urban regime theory has certain weaknesses, especially in attempts to apply it outside the US context where it was developed, but also argues that regulation theory could provide the basis for a re-evaluation if not remedy for some of its problems. He stresses that this will direct attention to emerging

institutional arrangements and the ways in which they are tied to mechanisms of consensus building and social regulation. Urban regime theory struggles with issues of scale. It has underrepresented the connections between local agents and their institutional context. Local restructuring therefore needs to be situated in the context of a national and global transition from a Fordist to a Post-Fordist mode of capital accumulation. On a national scale, this is then a study of the relationship between economic and social change and the interaction between production and social reproduction (Byrne, 2000). Regulation theory and its application to problems of socio-economic and political transformation (e.g. Jessop and Sum, 2005, Goodwin and Painter, 1996, Lauria, 1997) could thus help to investigate how extra-economic forces, such as networks of social, cultural and political institutions and practices, support the reproduction of capitalism in stabilized ways (Bakshi et al., 1995, Lipietz, 1988), and might provide inspiration as to the understanding of the social practices in regeneration.

Where urban regime theory has been criticised for too much emphasis on the local to the extent of neglecting interdependencies with extra-local forces, regulation theory has in turn been criticised for a lack of attention to spatially and temporally specific variations in practices (Lauria, 1997b). Restructuring and socio-economic transformation are not only local processes but embedded in national and increasingly global processes. It is therefore possible and necessary to locate the examination on different levels of investigation – in a broad sense and especially within the scope of this thesis - the national, the regional and the local level.<sup>2</sup> Although regulation theory has been focussing on national modes of regulation, in the context of the thesis the regional and the local are of equal if not greater importance and especially so the interdependence between the different spatial scales. Peck argues that the effects of regulatory institutions are regionally and locally specific and dependent on contingent local conditions:

We can therefore think in terms of “rooted regulation”: even though most regions face similar regulatory dilemmas, the nature of the institutional response to these will tend to be regionally idiosyncratic. Different regions may

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<sup>2</sup> See Coe et al. (2004) for a re-conceptualisation of regional development which aims at ‘globalizing’ regional development. Paying detailed attention to the insertion of the local and national into the global is beyond the scope of this thesis.

attempt different regulatory “experiments”, while national (and for that matter, international) experiments will take different forms in different places. (...) Indeed, an appreciation of the role of spatial unevenness becomes a precondition for understanding the meaning and significance of regulatory experiments themselves. (1994: 167)

Regeneration is the historically grown successor to local economic policy and community development and as such located at the juncture of the local and the national state – power struggles are therefore not only located on a local or central level but also between these levels. In this process and as part of these struggles over political and economic and symbolic resources, institutions and organisations, that are fixed temporarily and that create benefits for modern capitalism, are constantly emerging and shifting following dominant discourses and policies. This highlights fluidity and ongoing transformation rather than continuity.

The recourse to urban regime theory also draws attention to another element in thinking about restructuring – its inevitable link to place and space. This is particularly the case with regard to the coalfields which are situated uniquely between the urban and the rural.

While the old coalfield districts share much with the rural areas (isolation, low level of amenity and so on) they also differ from them in the density of their populations. In these and other ways they resemble many of the housing estates which ring the major urban centres. (Bennett, Beynon, Hudson, 2000: 2)

Economic geographers have therefore argued that a geographical political economy can provide a useful framework for the interpretation and analysis of changes in governance and the responses to economic restructuring (Pike & Tomaney, 2009). The spatial nature of political as well as economic processes must be placed centre-stage especially in the analysis of socio-economic change where place and space, be it administrative, economic or imagined matter (cf. Massey, 1995, Jayne, 2003). This also draws attention to relational notions of space which highlight the discontinuous and discursive nature of places rejecting assumptions of boundedness or fixedness in time (Allen et al., 1998).

The engagement with literature on the state and state forms highlights the importance of the following elements in the thesis' theoretical framework for regeneration:

- The state acts as facilitator of the reproduction of the economy.
- Governing coalitions are essential in restructuring.
- Factors influencing regeneration need to be located on several axes: local vs. extra-local forces, forces within and beyond the state.

Hudson (2005) expressly advocates the inclusion of institutionalist approaches and debates on governance. In addition, the representational and discursive dimension of repositioning and rescaling must not be neglected. As Jayne (2003: 972) criticises, a political and economic bias (as he sees it in urban regime theory) neglects the 'discursive knowledges and rationalities that inform and affect urban political and social practices.' The existing literature therefore needs to be extended to include the symbolic aspects, the multiple layers of meaning to then arrive at a cultural political economy (Jessop, 2004) of restructuring and rescaling. As a result, focus in this thesis has been directed to *processes* and the importance of localised conditions of production, constellations of social forces and meaning systems of everyday life (cf. Jayne, 2003, Goodwin & Painter, 1996, Macleod & Goodwin, 1999). Other than a cultural political economy, however, sociological concepts, especially those of Pierre Bourdieu can contribute to an understanding of the reproduction of existing power relations. This will be elaborated in the next section.

### **2.3. Questions of Capital – Bourdieu's Sociology**

The social world is accumulated history, and if it is not to be reduced to a discontinuous series of instantaneous mechanical equilibria between agents who are treated as interchangeable particles, one must reintroduce into it the notion of capital and with it, accumulation and all its effects. (Bourdieu, 1986: 241)

Bourdieu's works provide the burgeoning sociologist with a system of theoretical tools which are designed to examine "practical activity", that is production of things, *but not just material things, cultural things too*' (Burawoy, 2008a: 10, emphasis in original). This is a logical continuation from some of the issues that Marxian political economy attempts to explain and understand. Burawoy (2008a) summarises Marx's interests as being concerned with the historical progression of the organisation of the economy or different modes of production. Following on from that, the above highlighted how Jessop is interested in the historical succession of different political fields, in the sense of the changing organisation of the state in response to changing economic circumstances. Bourdieu, however, is interested in the co-existence of various fields. His notion of capital is then field-specific and, in particular, raises questions about the capacity of conversion from one form of capital into another.

Bourdieu's theoretical (re)construction of the social world is based on the idea of an objective space in which individuals or groups are situated according to different criteria (Schwingel, 1993). For Bourdieu, then, 'sociology presents itself as *social topology*' (1985: 723, emphasis in original). His method allows the differentiation of analytical levels/ spheres of action which are intrinsically linked in reality. This is invaluable for the approach to be put forward in this thesis. Therefore, there needs to be a short introduction to the concepts of field, *habitus* and capital here.

### **2.3.1. The Notion of the Field**

Bourdieu's concept of the field is helpful in the understanding of regeneration because it allows an investigation of the 'specific forms and combinations of capital and value as well as specific institutions and institutional mechanisms' (Thompson, 1991: 25) which characterise a field. Social space is a multi-dimensional space organised along the principles of differentiation and distribution, and individuals or groups are defined by their relative positions in this space. The notion of the social space then resembles a snapshot, a view of the positions of actors at a particular point in time. The social world is constituted in a multitude of coexisting but not mutually reducible fields. Schwingel (1993) explains that there is an analytical distinction between social space and field in the sense that the analysis of the field emphasises



the development of power relations through time whereas the social space is a snapshot of the state of the distribution of power at one particular point in time. Fields are then characterised by the contests over the field specific capital between different agents.

In this thesis, I apply Bourdieu's ideas to regeneration as a field of practice. This means that it is possible to analyse the field's specific institutions, its own professionals and the interaction between them, even its own academic literature, and particularly its own principles of production, evaluation and exchange of the capital(s) at stake. Although Bourdieu emphasises the autonomy of certain fields (e.g. the cultural field), fields are coexisting and in this co-existence overlap and cannot be seen as wholly separate. The focus is then on an examination of

the ways in which they are structured and linked while rigorously avoiding the tendency to reduce one field to another, or to treat everything as if it were a mere epiphenomenon of the economy. (Thompson, 1991: 25)

The thesis therefore sets out to regard regeneration as a field of practice which emerges out of the overlap of the bureaucratic, the civil society and the representational field.

The notion of the bureaucratic field facilitates an analysis of the differences between different political actors which occupy similar structural positions (e.g. all local authorities, all regional development agencies) but are still united and set against each other through 'objective relations of complementarity-in-rivalry' (Bourdieu, 2005). The actors of the field are the plethora of institutions of the local state, non-departmental public bodies (quangos) as well as third sector organisations concerned with providing services to (local) residents. The landscape of regional economic development is critically discussed by Boland (2007) and Lagendijk & Cornford (2000). The competition between different political programmes and issues is here, however, not directed towards the citizen as consumer but towards the central state and its dominant institutions. Action programmes, policy documents or lobbying material are then the instruments of perception and expression used in the attempts to gain access to the field. This is also facilitated by the close interaction between policy

and theory which is criticised by Lovering (1999).<sup>3</sup> For, as Bourdieu (1991c: 172, original emphasis) explains, there is only a ‘finite space of discourses capable of being produced or reproduced within the limits of the political *problematic*, understood as a space of stances, effectively adopted within the field – i.e. stances that are socio-logically possible given the laws that determine entry to the field.’ If we see regeneration as a field emerging out of the political field and overlapping with other social spheres, then we need to examine the restrictions on access to the field and the effect this has on what is thinkable and sayable in the field. This is as much a result of the forces outside the field as the distribution of access and the capacity of entrance to the field. Bourdieu, in his discussion of the capacity to enter the field concentrates on cultural and political instruments of communication but does not elaborate on the constraints arising out of the local social organisation within any given class of actors. This is especially important for those actors who enter the field of regeneration as representatives of civil society and thus as non-politicians. This is a result of their success in competing for the relevant resources in the particular field (cf. Hinde & Dixon, 2007). This notion of resources is explicated in Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of different forms of capital.

### 2.3.2. Forms of Capital: Economic, Social, Cultural, and Symbolic

Bourdieu has emphasised the importance of capital and the historical trajectories of its accumulation for understanding of the social world (1986). The impact of accumulated relations and heredity has been acknowledged in locality studies and uneven development but without recourse to Bourdieu’s theories (e.g. Beynon et al, 1994, Massey, 1995). The following aims to show the contribution employing Bourdieu’s ideas can make to an analysis of localities’ trajectories through restructuring.

The starting point is the social space or the field and the assumption that individual agents are located in it according to the volume of capitals they possess, the structure

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<sup>3</sup> Bourdieu himself offers a critique of the relationship between the state and academia, in particular sociology, when he argues that ‘it is in the realm of symbolic production that the grip of the state is felt most powerfully. State bureaucracies and their representatives are great producers of “social problems” that social science does little more than ratify whenever it takes them over as “sociological” problems’ (1994: 2).

of these capitals and the trajectory of their capital accumulation (Schwingel, 1993). Capital occurs in different forms: economic (e.g. money, wealth, property rights), cultural (educational qualifications), social (connections and relationships), symbolic (other forms of capital legitimised) (Bourdieu, 1986). Khodyakov (2007: 118) summarises Bourdieu's concept of social capital as 'resources people obtain through their personal networks', such as social support or financial assistance (economic capital). There are at least two important issues in this synthesis: one is the idea of networks, the idea of social exchange as the basis of capital accumulation and deployment; the other is the idea that capital is a variable, something that, in the policy sense, can be 'stocked.' Capital is thus means of location, an identifier, but it also possesses an active component – power. This is applicable to all forms of capital. The argument here, however, is that Bourdieu's ideas form a starting point from which to extend the discussion – seeing capital as 'process of its creation, development and maintenance' rather than a 'variable with different levels of strength' (cf. Khodyakov, 2007: 124). Conceptualising capital as process allows the integration of a temporal dimension.

Warwick & Littlejohn (1992), in their study of Yorkshire mining communities after colliery closure, 'liberated' the notion of cultural capital. They introduce a spatial dimension by defining it as 'collection of *local* skills, community networks, social values, shared prestige and status rankings' (1992: 15, my emphasis). Although this is a beneficial extension of Bourdieu's concept, the authors treat the local cultural capital as dominant in the places they study. Here, a discussion of domination would have been helpful given that Bourdieu's notion of dominant relates to the dominant class and domination is an integral element of the experience of mining communities as the dominated in shaping the local cultural (and social) capital. In contrast, Warwick's and Littlejohn's 'dominant' often enough simply equals 'prevalent.' Davies (2007), in contrast to that, uses the concept for a critical evaluation of community opportunities in the new 'network orthodoxy' of participative governance mechanisms.

An important element of the notion of capitals is their convertibility between fields. So, cultural capital can be converted into economic capital in the economic field or vice versa. As one of the basic arguments of the thesis is that regeneration is an

emerging field from the overlap of the political sphere, civil society and the field of representations, emphasis in the analysis of the restructuring process is placed on questions of convertibility. Can economic capital be transformed into social or cultural capital or vice versa? Can the lack of economic capital, which is seen to be a trigger in the response of the state, be transformed into a different form of capital? These will be questions which need to be asked to understand the regeneration process.

Following on from this, this thesis is based on the idea that regeneration does not only look at the position of individuals in the social space but the transformation of places and regions. This was addressed above with recourse to Jessop (2002) who argues that places are represented as agents by political actors. If we accept regions and localities as agents, then we can also discuss their positioning in the social space based upon their accumulation and mobilisation of different forms of capital. Bourdieu himself discusses the relations of places and capital and the effect on the social world by positing that

the capital city is (...) the site of capital, that is, the site in physical space where the positive roles of all the fields are concentrated along with most of the agents occupying these dominant positions; which means that the capital cannot be adequately analysed except in relation to the provinces (and provincialness), which is nothing other than being deprived (in entirely relative terms) of the capital and capital (1999: 9).

This argument provides an interesting starting point for the discussion of the position of localities in a wider social (economic, symbolic) system of places, that is, in the social space of places. As much as the centre cannot be thought without the provinces, the margins cannot be thought without the centre. This relationship is dynamic as much as it is politically and socially regulated. The process of repositioning of localities in the social space is then a process of the mobilisation and accumulation of different forms of capital which determine the place of localities or regions in the socio-political space. The process is then as much about the absolute positioning as the *relative* positioning of localities with a view towards the centre and towards other provinces. This is applicable to regions as social actors as well as individual political

actors when it is considered that the logic of the political (or indeed, any) field makes utterances and ‘positions’ relational, that means ‘they make sense only in relation to other utterances issued from other positions in the same field’ (Thompson, 1991: 27). Relative repositioning is then also a competition of sorts in which more than capital is at stake. ‘The definition of the legitimate means and stakes of the struggle is in fact one of the stakes of the struggle’ (Bourdieu, 1984: 246). Schwingel (1993) summarises that competition concerns material resources as much as symbolic resources and attempts to ‘conserve or subvert the principles of classification’ (Bourdieu, 1984: 249).

### **2.3.3. Symbolic Power and the Misrecognition of Domination**

Bourdieu (1990) defines symbolic power as the power of constructing reality which in turn is based on the employment of symbols as instruments of social integration. It is invisible and can only be exercised with the complicity of the dominated. It is thus based on misrecognition, in contrast to Gramsci’s notion of hegemony which is based on consent. Symbolic power (as much as symbolic capital) depends on the existence of a social audience. Symbols then enable a consensus on the meaning of the social world in their function as tools of knowledge and communication. At the same time, the struggle over these symbolic systems is a manifestation of the struggles between different social groups:

The different classes and class fractions are engaged in a symbolic struggle properly speaking, one aimed at imposing the definition of the social world that is best suited to their interests. The field of ideological stances thus reproduces in transfigured form the field of social positions. (Bourdieu, 1991b: 168)

Bourdieu dismisses any opportunity for the dominated to become conscious of subordination; it is purely a question of *habitus*, embodied perceptions and appreciations (Burawoy, 2008b). He also implies the state in the maintenance of domination by granting it the monopoly over symbolic violence as much as over physical violence.

Symbolic power is essential when considering the process of transformation in which agents seek to form and transform visions of the locality to be regenerated through the production of narratives and the enactment of those narratives and representations. This means they are continually engaged in a ‘labour of representation’ (cf. Thompson, 1991). Bourdieu’s argument, however, is that symbolic capital and symbolic power are not about words alone but refer to material social relations. Thus, only those who actually possess symbolic power can resort to the power of words, names and language. Others need more material manifestations, especially in the case of resistance and dissent, both within and without established institutions and mechanisms. This is particularly evident in the institutions of collaborative governance where the spheres of bureaucracy, civil society and cultural representations overlap and the different versions of the social world are represented, enacted and negotiated.

In the case of regeneration, the contest over imagined pasts and futures then represents the conflicts between different social groups in the process and the process becomes the site of struggle over different visions of the *local* social world. At the same time, the struggle over the discursive identity of the area brings to light the ‘ways in which spaces and places are re-represented [to] bring about certain changes of socio-spatial relations and prevent others’ (Richardson & Jenson, 2003, quoted in Oakley, 2007: 282).

In summary, the following elements of Bourdieu’s work are important for the theoretical basis of the thesis:

- Agents are positioned in fields according to their acquired capital and the structure of this stock of capital.
- Repositioning in this system of social (socio-spatial) relations occurs via the mobilisation of capitals and the conversion of one form of capital into another.
- Thus, capital needs to be seen as a process rather than a fixed variable.

Even though Bourdieu’s high level theories have found their application or rather taken their genesis from localised empirical studies, there is no strong theorization of the local and local-central relations in Bourdieu’s writings. There is an

acknowledgement that ‘one cannot conceive the relationship between the ‘national’ and the ‘local’, the ‘centre’ and the ‘periphery’ as a relationship between a universal rule and its particular application, between conception and execution’ (Bourdieu, 2005: 126) but this is not taken further in the analysis and conceptualisation of the different forms of capital. For the appreciation of the local and the groundedness of social relations in the everyday reality, therefore, an engagement with Burawoy’s ideas on power and its reproduction in production processes is necessary.

#### **2.4. Questions of Production – Burawoy’s Politics of/ in Production**

Burawoy’s starting point (1985) for an analysis of the production and labour process is the assumption of the institutional separation of ownership and control. This mirrors the separation of the relations in production from the relations of production. This, in turn, facilitates the lack of transparency of the relations of production so that labour/ the workers consent in their own exploitation. For Burawoy, there are then always economic, political and ideological processes ‘at work’ in any production process. He argues that the ‘capitalist mode of production is not just the production of things but simultaneously the production of social relations and *ideas about social relations*, a lived experience or ideology of those relations’ (1985: 36, emphasis in original). Workers therefore produce things as much as their own means of existence and, in this they are subject to the political regime of production (Burawoy, 1998). These dimensions cannot be separated from one another. For the purposes of this thesis, production is therefore a process that is multidimensional in character overlapping the economic, social and symbolic spheres.

For Burawoy looking at changes in the production process and characterising them would mean focusing ‘on the emergence of particular ideological and political structures at the point of production that serve to obscure and secure surplus by organising consent on the shop floor, displacing struggles and thus guaranteeing the reproduction of the relations *in production*’ (1985: 49, emphasis in original). He also argues that the production process cannot be reduced to the labour process. ‘It also includes political apparatuses which reproduce those relations [in production]’ (ibid: 122). Burawoy’s approach therefore demands attention to the interplay between

micro- and macro-politics, i.e. the relationship between the politics of production, the political apparatuses shaping those politics and state politics and state apparatuses. If we were to transfer this to an examination of regeneration, this would mean that we need to focus on the mechanisms of producing consent to the reproduction of the capitalist accumulation regime and the corresponding social relations. Burawoy continues in his argument that it cannot be denied that the capitalist organisation of the labour process then imposes 'limits on the form of the corresponding relations of production' (1985: 51). At the same time, the relations *of* production shape the relations *in* production; they are inter-dependent. As much as workers as individual agents reproduce themselves through their participation in the system of production, localities if seen as economic or political agents then are similarly active in the production of a global or national system of the (re)production of places.

As discussed above, regulation theory is concerned with reproduction and stabilisation but does not seem to analyse the potential for conflict extensively. If we accept that regeneration aims at the revitalisation of capitalist accumulation and this is linked to the production and reproduction of a particular set of social relations then approaches concerned with the production process, such as Burawoy's, might be useful. He argues that production only becomes reproduction under a particular structure of power (1998: 18) and thus pays attention to issues of conflict and consent within production processes. Therefore it is essential to question and delineate the regime of power in the regeneration process. Burawoy's argument is centred on the notion of politics outside state politics. Although regeneration has been identified as a political practice and is therefore part of state politics, an adaptation of the distinction between politics of [production] politics and politics in [production] politics is nevertheless useful as a framework for analysing power struggles as a result of internal differentiation in the state apparatus. It is also possible to see this distinction in Jessop's discussion of state power on the basis of Poulantzas' concept of state power as 'form-determined condensation of the balance of political forces operating within and beyond the state' (2002: 6).

According to Burawoy's explication of power in reproduction (1998), the different arenas of power struggles (local/ internal vs. global/ external) in the process are instrumental in shaping locally and temporally specific outcomes. This means that



questions of power distribution are as important at the local level and within the process (for the local actors/ individuals) as they are on the global level or in the wider social and political structure. The first conflict might be influenced by personal considerations whereas the second might be determined by concepts of effective capital accumulation and competitiveness. Resources are distributed between actors for particular outcomes. In addition, the interplay between the national/ global and the local level is as important in shaping outcomes as the struggles on each level themselves. The local process of regeneration cannot be seen separate from a, the politics of regeneration generally and b, its outcomes on the local level. Although not all three have to be considered/ examined to the same extent, one cannot be analysed and described without the others.

My reading of Burawoy also led to crystallising a number of points which led the fieldwork as well as the formulation of the theoretical understanding of the data:

- Production processes are multidimensional.
- Politics of production and the politics in production are interdependent.
- Regeneration therefore must be seen as a multidimensional process which is located at the intersection of local and extra-local (political, economic, ideological) forces.

This is illustrated in the following diagram.

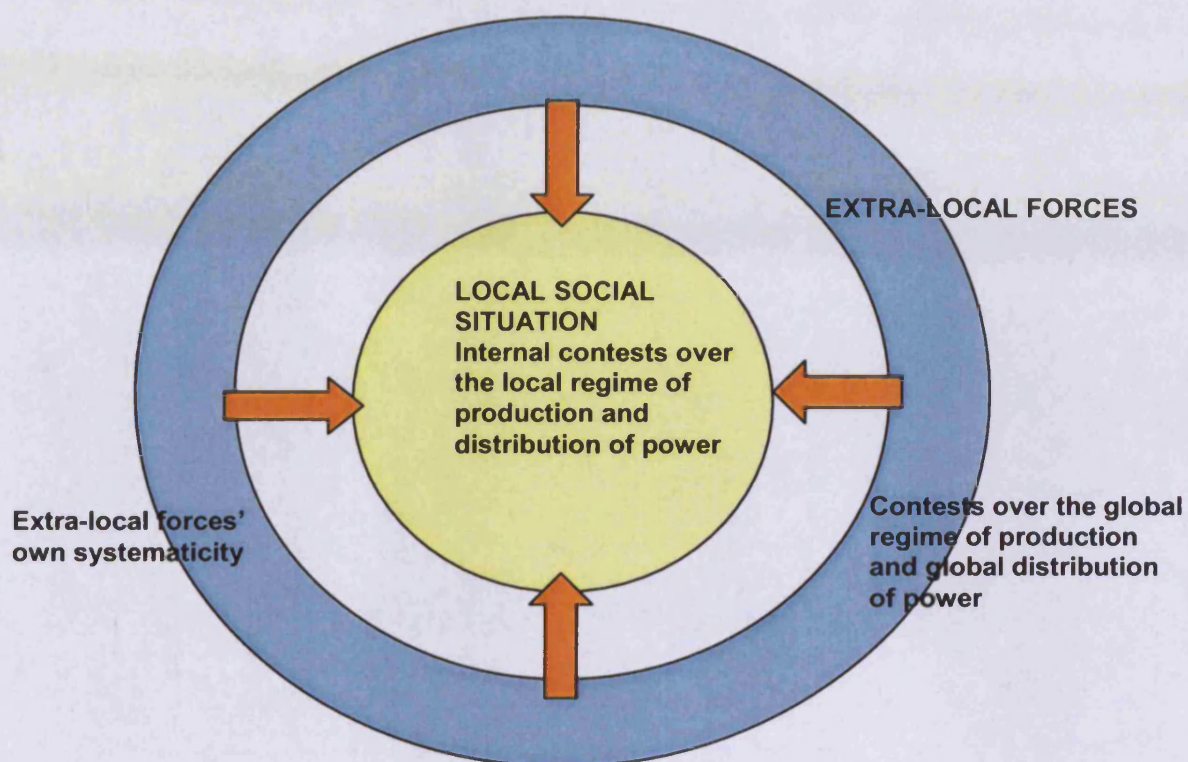


Figure 2.1: Regeneration as a multi-dimensional process

In the regeneration process, however, which is dealing with the transformation and continuity of the relations in and of production, the effect of existing social relations (as result of a now obsolete production regime) cannot be underestimated. In combination with changing political structures they, in turn, can impose limits on the mode of production. Therefore, as the basis of Burawoy’s argument remains wedded to production, concepts and approaches which can deal with the relations between different social actors as result of previous production regimes need to be introduced.

## 2.5. Conclusion

In summary, the introduction of the concepts above can show how a study of regeneration can benefit from their synthesis. Marxian Political Economy needs Bourdieu’s pre-occupation with symbolic domination and the analytical separation of the economic, social, cultural and symbolic dimensions of the social sphere without privileging the economic. This is particularly clear if it is accepted that the ‘neo-liberal revolution,’ of which restructuring is an integral part, is a symbolic, economic

and social revolution (Grenfell, 2004), then restructuring itself needs to be seen as comprising symbolic, economic and social dimensions. Bourdieu's elaboration of the operation of power needs Political Economy because through the concept of hegemony and the hegemonic project the dominated are given the power and awareness to 'perceive and appreciate the nature of their own subordination,' an aspect Bourdieu neglects (Burawoy, 2008a: 5). Both of these abstract visions of the world need Burawoy's project of bringing the macro to the micro and back.

So starting with theories of state restructuring and the reproduction of social relations and domination, this thesis is an investigation of the interaction of different dimensions of the social world on different spatial scales. It aims to connect 'the present to the past in anticipation of the future' (Burawoy, 1998: 5), linking the local to the extra-local in different ways. This applies to the interaction between state levels (central vs. local), between state and civil society (political vs. non-political) and between the micro-events and macro theory. My conceptualisation of regeneration understands it as product and process of state power. It is based on the assumption that state power is the result of the balance of forces operating within the state apparatus and in wider society. In this sense, regeneration can be seen as an outcome of power relations between political forces within the process (politics in regeneration) and political and other forces outside of the regeneration process as such but determining it (politics of regeneration).

## **Chapter 3 - Theory as Method – The Research Process**

*Because the social world is present in its entirety in every economic action, we have to equip ourselves with instruments of knowledge which, far from bracketing out the multidimensionality of practices, enable us to construct historical models capable of accounting with rigour and parsimony, for economic actions and institutions as they present themselves to empirical observation. (Bourdieu, 2005: 3, original emphasis)*

### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter describes the research process for the thesis as it evolved through its consecutive stages. The thesis is an exploration of restructuring as a multi-level process with economic, social, cultural and symbolic dimensions. The previous chapter has investigated abstract notions and ideas providing the basis for the research process and for conceptualisations of the regeneration process. This chapter, in contrast to this, aims to infuse the so far rather intangible research project with the story of the research rather than elaborate on the theorization behind it. This does not mean that theory and methodology are neglected. On the contrary, they form the centre piece of the journey. After all, in my account, the development of the theoretical framework out of the engagement with the empirical data and the literature became the core of the research. This is especially the case as the methodology that was followed was Burawoy's extended case method (1991, 1998). As with all stories, certain story telling elements will be familiar – the quest, the overcoming of obstacles (real and theoretical) and the heroes (also real and theoretical) – but at the same time, the how of the story telling is as important to its message and understanding as the what (Riessman, 1990, Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

In the following, therefore, the progression from research questions to data collection, analysis and discussion is located in the personal and theoretical context of the thesis as a project overall. The chapter follows a roughly chronological structure which might highlight the less than linear progression the research process can sometimes take.

### 3.1.1. Research Questions and Research Design

I came to the PhD project with an interest in the mutual influence of culture and identity on economic and social restructuring. The initial list of research questions therefore focussed on issues of cultural memory, the process and objects of regeneration and the assumptions underlying regeneration policies:

1. *The collective memory*: How are the colliery closure and the ensuing changes in the mining communities remembered? How has the representation of the particular mining communities changed since the closure of the colliery? How much is mining culture perceived and accepted as part of the local heritage by residents and policy makers?
2. *The process and objects of regeneration*: How has regeneration worked in the particular communities? How has the process been experienced by the residents and the agents of regeneration? What is the outcome of regeneration? What are the *modi operandi* of the regeneration partnerships? How were they formed? How are they sustained? How important are established networks (union, former social institutions of the mining industry) in the process?
3. *The assumptions underlying regeneration policies*: What are the underlying discourses and vocabularies in regeneration? Which role do concepts such as class and gender play? How do discourses relate to actual groups of people? How important a factor is culture and identity? Does successful regeneration result in identity change?

In the months following the drafting of this list and the first foray into the coalfield regeneration literature (e.g. Turner, 1993, 1994, 1997, Bennett et al., 2000, Strangleman, 1999, Hudson, 1994, 2000, Waddington et al., 2001) the list would invariably be condensed to two overarching questions:

1. **What is regeneration?**
2. **How does it work?**

These became the guiding principles should moments of uncertainty concerning the focus of the thesis appear – which they did, regularly. It was clear that an investigation of coalfield regeneration in general would not yield any explanation for the differential experiences and outcomes of regeneration in the mining areas that had

been documented in the literature and recent government reports (e.g. Beatty et al., 2005, ODPM, 2003, DCLG, 2007). Consequently, case studies needed to be selected. The literature on coalfield regeneration was characterised by a strong emphasis on the economically central coalfields of Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire and the symbolically central coalfields of South Wales and the North East. Smaller coalfields did not figure prominently despite their apparent success in the regeneration efforts and the impact of closures (Beatty et al., 2005, DCLG, 2007). In addition to this, my previous research at the University of Nottingham had led me to a close engagement with the North West Leicestershire coalfield centred on Coalville. Its marginality in terms of contribution to the national coal production output as much as in the popular imaginary geography of the coalfield seemed to provide a good basis for a case study. It was also undergoing a significant transformation through reforestation and the establishment of the National Forest. My research work for the National Forest and their project on the history of land use in the area drew my attention to the importance of mining but its subsequent ‘airbrushing’ in the new history of the National Forest which seemed to present woodlands and rurality as the overriding characteristic of the area. The Leicestershire coalfield was thus actively being re-imagined. Here was the link between identity and regeneration I wanted to investigate.

Then I became aware of the oral history project on the Kent coalfield which was being launched by Dover District Council at the time. The Coalfield Heritage Initiative Kent (CHIK) project seemed to indicate a re-discovery of the industrial roots for the area. Further engagement with the situation in East Kent showed the Kent Coalfield Regeneration Programme instigated and implemented by SEEDA. There was a clear acknowledgement of the coalfield, something which struck me as extraordinary as hardly any other Regional Development Agency (RDA) was openly labelling their former mining areas as the coalfield. Here was another marginal coalfield, again both economically and symbolically<sup>4</sup>- and even geographically – which was undergoing a transformation. But here restructuring seemed to be clearly rooted in the mining identity. This then led to the addition of a third guiding question

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<sup>4</sup> Throughout my PhD, whenever I introduced my topic to anyone outside of Kent (and often enough to people living in Kent), I invariably got the same response: ‘I didn’t even know there were mines in Kent.’

to the condensed list of research issues: **What impact does marginality have on the regeneration process?**

The selection of the case studies naturally led to questions of comparison and comparability and this was the moment when I first engaged with Michael Burawoy's writings on the extended case method (1991, 1998).

### **3.2. Selection of Case Studies and the Extended Case Method**

The extended case method is a useful methodological device in that it allows the examination of a single case in depth and with the use of this single case the extension of existing theory. The methodology was developed at the Manchester School of Social Anthropology with Gluckman and Van Velsen as its main proponents. The general aim of the method is situating the individual case in as much richness of detail as possible with the wider social fields that structure the processes unfolding within that case (Sullivan, 2002). This also involves a multi-level analysis geared at investigating the ways in which multiple nested layers of ecological context structure social action. The approach allows the investigation of local phenomena and 'extending' them to a higher theoretical level. The concept is derived from a model of science which stresses reflexivity and multiple dialogues to explain empirical phenomena.

The starting point for the method is the specificity of each case (Burawoy, 1991, Sullivan, 2002), the abnormality with a view to the theory or the 'ideal case'. The social situation in question is constituted as anomalous with regard to some pre-existing theory (that is, an existing body of generalisations), which is then reconstructed. In this sense, it is necessary to 'situate a given case in the widest relevant social field for the understanding of that case' (Sullivan, 2002: 265). The importance of the single case lies in what it tells us about society as a whole rather than about the population of similar cases and the world in which it is embedded. The aim is therefore to examine the unfolding of historically contingent processes and not the discovery of invariant laws. Explanations for particular outcomes are sought. This emphasises the importance of a multi-level analysis of regeneration processes (in this

case), i.e. the analysis of local developments in the context of regional, national and global economic and political, social and economic structures.

Using the extended case method it is then possible to use single cases to reconstruct theory – it might thus be argued that one case is enough, that two cases simply show different gaps in the same theory and it is a sequential procedure rather than a comparison – but I argue that the comparative level brings another dimension in the analysis of interaction between different levels of analysis and different levels of the theory. Although Burawoy (1991) states that the method involves the comparison of similar phenomena with a view to explaining the differences, it is also possible to argue for dealing with dissimilar cases, even if the question of similarity and difference is primarily one of classification.

Even though my selected cases were similar on a number of criteria, the first weeks of living in Leicester and analysing the Census data on employment and labour markets quickly showed that there might be more differences than envisaged. Their geographical position in England shows the centre – periphery dichotomy. North West Leicestershire is advantageously located in the Midlands whereas the Kent Coalfield is situated in East Kent, surrounded by water on three sides. The closure programme in Leicestershire was protracted over a period of eight years (1983 – 1991) while Kent's collieries closed within three years of each other (1986 – 1989). North West Leicestershire's regeneration programme seemed completed while East Kent's was still ongoing.

The pitfalls of comparing objects which are not like-for-like became visible. The fact that comparing cases which seem non-comparable will show differences would not be seen as extraordinary, cases which are fundamentally different will inevitably show different characteristics and different outcomes even if subjected to similar processes. There is a danger of an essentialist argument here in that differences are seen and accepted as trans-historical and not the product of contingent processes. The argument for non-comparability is not only based on the question of category: everything is comparable if the category in which it is compared is chosen carefully enough – but on the question of the object and level of analysis: instead of comparing phenomena on one level in their entirety, it is a multi-level analysis and the comparison is centred



on the interactions taking place between different levels. As Jessop et al. (2008) point out, even though this might be an argument focused on locales and locally specific outcomes of wider processes, the danger of one-dimensionalism and place-centrism needs to be avoided and interactions between different entry and exit points of analysis need to be taken into account and addressed.

When two case studies are used, it is therefore tempting to compare them to each other across a number of characteristics and establish similarities and differences and potentially, in the extreme, non-comparability, i.e. the existence of differences because of different social, political, economic circumstances. The benefit of the method, however, should be to establish the comparison between the cases and the 'ideal case' not between each other. This would then throw up the gaps in the theory in the first instance but also establish linkages across non-comparable cases. It would show how one case is implicated in the other (just as Massey, 2008, argues that one place is implicated in another, or Burawoy, 1998, highlighted how different processes of Zambianisation were linked) as the sources of differences are traced to external forces. This would show how each case works in connection with other cases (Burawoy, 1991). The two case studies were chosen on the grounds of their illustration of the dichotomy between the centre and the periphery and the (re)production of marginalisation. Both coalfields are deemed rural rather than urban (e.g. parts of South Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire). Both cases are located either at the margins or the centre on different levels of the coalfield regeneration process. The fact that the localities found themselves at different points in the regeneration process thus actually helped the project of conceptualisation and theorization. It highlighted the potential departures in the process, the critical junctures and drew attention to factors such as the interplay between local and central forces under different spatial and temporal conditions.

The method also takes as its point of departure gaps in the existing literature and theory which are then addressed through the study of the specific case. The basis of the method is to take the social situation as the point of empirical examination and using given general concepts and laws about states, economies, legal orders etc. to understand 'how those micro situations are shaped by wider structures' (Burawoy, 1991).

So let's start with a theory and a case that can (legitimately) be located within this field and its specificity or abnormality. There is a search for the unexpected in the analysis of the particular case. The obvious starting points for a theorization of coalfield regeneration were the literature on industrial and plant closures (Pike, 2005, Pike & Tomaney, 2009), the North American literature on deindustrialisation (High, 2003, Linkon & Russo, 2002, Cowie & Heathcott, 2003), British concern with coalfield decline (Waddington et al., 2001, Turner, 1997) and coalfield regeneration (Bennett et al, 2000, Hudson, 1994, 2000).

Consequently, the questions that needed to be asked were: What is coalfield regeneration and how can abnormalities be identified? The field was 'established' (on a national level) with the formation of the CTF and the publication of its report in 1998. This legitimised the specificity of the coalfields in comparison to other areas undergoing structural change and made them visible on a national level. The 'unique combination of joblessness and isolation' was then seen as the 'typical' coalfield story of decline. In this sense NWL is anomalous. By 1998, there was no above average problem of joblessness, employment had been created and unemployment had fallen, even economic activity rates were rising again. Similarly, the issue of isolation had been addressed through earlier measures of investment into infrastructure (A42(M)). To a certain extent similar policy instruments had been available in other coalfields as well (see Oatley, 1998, DCLG, 2007). The question is therefore what makes NWL different and how can the differences be explained?

In contrast to that, Kent appears like the ideal case of what was reported in the 1998 report. It is the typical coalfield in terms of isolation, even to the degree that it had been constructed as the 'forgotten coalfield', so not only geographically isolated but also politically and symbolically marginalised. This construction also draws attention to the fact that other coalfields had not been forgotten but that policies had been implemented. So there again might be an underlying contradiction in the existing literature.

The thesis also draws on concepts from the literature on urban regimes and growth coalitions as well as on social movement literature. In this way, the individual cases

will serve to enlighten existing concepts in other fields and serve to fill the gaps in the literature on coalfield regeneration. Burawoy's own ideas dealing with the politics of production (1985) are employed in this study to shed new light on the understanding of regeneration processes. The use of the concept of production regimes helps to clarify the operation of regimes of regeneration which is conceptualised as the reproduction of the forces of production (labour, capital and land) at different historical, spatial and political junctures. Thus, the particular focus of the extensive case method on uncovering the operation of power – be that power in a negative and subjecting sense or power in a positive and creative sense – is then crucial in the analysis and understanding of coalfield regeneration. Assumptions and perceptions of power and the operation of power are subjected to analysis.

### **3.3. *Research Design and Methods***

Having chosen the case study areas for the research project I wanted to build a profile of them for closer investigation. I needed to find out more about the local context. Apart from engaging with the local history literature (Griffin, 1981, 1988, 1989, Pitt, 1979) and the documentation in the local archives this also meant engaging with the quantitative evidence for the socio-economic transformation of the coalfield. The best starting point for this seemed to be the data from the National Census 1981, 1991 and 2001. The Census became my hiding place whenever reading and writing did not seem to produce anything helpful for understanding the processes that went on in the localities.

I started looking at the data for employment, economic activity and the composition of the labour force in different sectors. Ideas from Favereau et al. (1991) on the segmentation of labour markets seemed to be particularly useful at the time. Results of the engagement with the Census can be seen in Chapter 5 in the detailed description of the two case study areas.

The Census, however, was not without its idiosyncrasies. Comparison over time was difficult as the data collected in different decades changed. Classifications changed, administrative boundaries changed and definitions of the economically active

population shifted over time. The ‘Linking Censuses through Time’ (LCT) project seemed to provide some answers for the comparison 1981 – 1991 but did not include 2001. Apart from these issues, engagement with the Census also highlighted the problem of administrative boundaries as basis for analysis, especially with regard to employment and industrial communities. As Peck (1994) describes, labour and therefore labour regulation are ‘locally embedded.’ This was particularly the case for mining communities – one of the reasons for their distinctiveness:

The production and reproduction of labour-power is dependent upon the supportive effects of certain key social institutions (family structures, schools, recreational organizations, and the like) and, as a consequence, requires a substantial degree of stability. The result of this is a ‘fabric of distinctive, lasting ‘communities’ and ‘cultures’ woven into the landscape of labour. (Storper and Walker, 1983: 7)

This raises both issues of ‘locality’ and ‘community’. This thesis does not aim to be a community study. Community studies have a long-standing tradition in sociology and anthropology with Dennis et al.’s study of Ashton, a Yorkshire mining community (1959, 1969 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) being a seminal piece. There has been renewed interest in community studies but this thesis was not written with this in mind. Community, even though it might have been taken as a starting point in its form of the category ‘mining community’, became contentious through the course of the research. It became something that needed explaining rather than something that explained. Community is a movable feast, as is regeneration. It was understood as a dynamic process, which changed over time and was implemented in different ways. Jones (2003) describes this maintenance of ‘community’ through a reconfiguration of the social relations within it in her study of a Welsh former mining community. There is regular recourse and discussion of the concept of community, which is a result of the pervasive emphasis on the ‘community’ in regeneration policies (see Rees & Stroud, 2004) , especially in the latest incarnation as ‘active communities’ as an element of a neo-liberal discourse of responsabilised citizens (Home Office Communications Directorate, 2003). As a result, an analysis of ‘ways in which a locality may be claimed by its residents to constitute a community and the processes of constructing

community identities' (Davies, 2003) seems appropriate. Similar to the use of theory, the concept of 'community' became part of the method.

Similarly, 'locality' became a contested term. The concept of the local is contentious, especially when viewed in the context of globalisation theory and the interrelationship between the local and the global. Chapter 4 will detail that and how the state and its institutions have undergone a process of restructuring and more specifically a process of 'rescaling' (see Swyngedouw, 1996, Jessop, 2002). The fact that scale is increasingly understood to be socially constructed adds to material and conceptual uncertainties (see Marston, 2000). As Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst explain, the 'local' needs to be unpacked and deconstructed. They offer five distinct ways of doing that:

firstly the local as context, secondly the local as the 'particular' in opposition to the global 'universal'; thirdly the local as historical residue, fourthly the local as hub in a network and fifthly the locality as bounded construction. (2005: 4)

There seems to be a circular argument, however with the local nature of 'context' as unclear as the 'local' itself following Appadurai's (1996) proposition that 'localities are not contexts, but that contexts define the boundaries of localities' (Savage et al., 2005: 4). If we accept that localities are characterised by particular social relations, then this also means that the character of the social structure varies over space. As Giddens argues:

In class society, spatial division is a major feature of class differentiation. In a fairly crude but nevertheless sociologically significant, sense, classes tend to be regionally concentrated. One can easily instance the contrasts between the north and south of England, or west and east Scotland, to make the point. Such spatial differentiations always have to be regarded as time-space formations in terms of social theory. Thus one of the important features of the spatial differentiation of class is the sedimentation of divergent regional 'class cultures' over time: class cultures which today, of course, are partly dissolved by new modes of transcending time-space distances. (Giddens, 1979, quoted in Rees, 1985: 3)

This highlighted the benefits and importance of locality studies for my research approach. Beynon et al. (1994: 197) had called for an engagement with localities in processes of socio-economic transformation. They argued that ‘we need to know more about the rule which govern the process of cultural transformation out of which [Teesside, in this case] is reconstructed as a place.’ The objective would be to reveal the local and individual ways of making sense of a rapidly changing world. So we have come full circle to locate coalfield regeneration in discussions of uneven development, the spatial division of labour and the usefulness of considering place and space as important elements (if not agents) in processes of socio-economic transformation. This underlines one of the thesis’ central claims, i.e. that regeneration creates spaces and places and therefore regeneration can be regarded as a locality producing context – a production process, so to speak.

As much as the extended case method provided the basis for the overall methodological and theoretical approach, it also necessitated particular methods in the overall research design. Burawoy’s method has a strong affinity with ethnography: participant observation as well as ethnographic interviewing. Having identified the obstacles in researching localities, however, it became clearer and clearer that the socio-historical context of the areas and the regeneration process needed investigating. This required the application of historical methods in the pursuit of sociological analysis. The research plan which was designed on the basis of these considerations therefore involved

- (1) extended archive research of the local authority documentation
- (2) semi-structured and ethnographic interviewing in both localities and
- (3) a period of observation in Kent.

### **3.3.1. Archive Research and Document Analysis**

As I returned to the questions of what regeneration was and how it worked time and time again, the next question arising from those was how regeneration actually started. The literature seemed to be referring to the Coalfields Task Force in most cases and otherwise detailed the available policy instruments at any particular point in time. This was also due to the fact that most coalfield regeneration evaluation studies

only deal with the post-1998 period (e.g. DCLG, 2007, Audit Commission, 2008. SQW, 2007). This did not seem to capture the particular local circumstances. Close reading of local authority documentation became necessary.

The document analysis was conducted on the local authority records covering the regeneration activities in Leicestershire and Kent from 1979 until 1994. This was the start of the Single Regeneration Budget funding era and the regeneration discourse was by then well established locally and nationally, or so it was expected. This decision was also based on the available time resources and scope of the thesis. In both cases, this meant negotiating access to the records which were still kept at the local authorities themselves. Only a smaller part of the documents was kept at the County Record Offices. Access was therefore dependent on office and desk space as well as the generous co-operation of the local authority officers and administrative staff. I was allowed to sit and read the minute books with the team responsible for the recording and archiving of the Council and Committee minutes. In the event, it turned out that working in the offices of the local authorities provided me with an insight into the areas and local government reorganisation processes. This ranged from remarks about the use of consultants in regeneration activities, the expected outcomes of local elections ('Aylesham always votes Labour.') to the credibility of prospective interviewing partners ('He will tell you he's battled unemployment in the district single-handedly').

The documents themselves, however posed different problems. Similar to Fincham, Scourfield and Langer (2007) who argue that documentary data can be seen as multi-modal despite the fact that documents constitute only one medium, I would say that the documentary data encountered in this study also represented different modes, even within the limited 'genre' of local authority documentation. The files comprised reports, memoranda between local authority officers, grey literature as well as the more mundane local council minutes of meetings and planning permissions. In this context, the actual files of the relevant departments in contrast to the reports and minutes especially prepared for meetings were of immense interest. Unfortunately, the files were not as readily accessible as the reports and minutes and in the case of Dover District Council had been destroyed in a recent 'clearing' session. Nevertheless, the data which was accessible still afforded the elicitation of multiple perspectives on

regeneration activities and different constructions of the same event. This was, of course, enhanced by the interview data which similarly provided a different light on these phenomena.

Apart from the sheer volume of the documentation (for NWLDC alone, the minute books I consulted comprised 40 volumes of up to 600 pages each), the shape of the data needed critical attention. The documents were often the (condensed) written account of discussions and therefore needed to be examined concerning the gaps evident in them. In the cases of minutes and notes of meetings, the authors/ writers of these, who in most instances would not have been senior officials or local politicians but junior employees of the local authorities, have a powerful position in terms of the production of the documents. This was poignantly illustrated in the comparison of my fieldnotes of meetings I had attended with the actual minutes that were circulated or published.<sup>5</sup>

Data analysis was an iterative process in which there was a constant moving backward and forward between the data and the analytical concepts. During the first analysis especially of the documents in NWL, patterns and themes emerged from the reading which were then linked back to the existing theories on coalfield regeneration, in particular questions of coalition building in local economic development. This highlighted the gaps in the literature on economic development and regeneration in terms of questions of legitimisation and the insertion of the local scale into the national. Jessop (2002) refers to processes of state rescaling in the transition process from Fordism to post-Fordism and the opportunities for the enhanced roles of local and regional government. This seems to be generally acknowledged. The local authority documents, however, highlighted the interplay between local and central forces in the transition process or rather the struggles over the distribution of power and functions between different state scales. I detected the importance of the issue of legitimisation (i.e. the beginning of the regeneration process as political project) and

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<sup>5</sup> A note on referencing: Record keeping for local authority documentation varied over the case study areas. While the minutes in North West Leicestershire were bound in paginated minute books, other records both in Kent and Leicestershire were kept in files or ringbinders, identifiable by the name of the committee and the date. To maintain a coherent citation system, I have therefore identified the consulted documents by the name of the committee and the date of the meeting in question. Where the document quoted was circulated more widely I have given the institution and the date of its publication.



its potential impact on the following stages in the course of regeneration. As a result, I coded the documents thematically according to (overlapping) sequential stages discernible in the day-to-day operation of the relevant local authority departments. This covered legitimisation, formation of actors, negotiation of strategy content and funding as relatively crude codes. The text extracts were stored in an Excel table with a sheet for each code and fields for the source, the quote itself and the initial analysis. This allowed extensive preliminary analysis with a view towards model building and conceptualisation.

Further rounds of analysis were conducted as a result of the data collection in Kent. Despite the differences in the process which were clear following the first coding according to the set of codes relating to consecutive stages, overarching similarities in the case studies remained. These were all documents produced by the local authorities in their efforts to react to and pursue economic restructuring. As a result comparable assumptions underlying economic development recurred in the selected documents. Coding and analysis to follow up these issues also meant a re-engagement with Bourdieu's literature on capitals and fields. The result was that the mobilisation of different forms of capital was an essential element in the process. This, however, also required an extension of Bourdieu's concept of capital from a rather one-dimensional understanding (notwithstanding the social, economic, cultural and symbolic forms) of capital as recognised resources. The analysis showed the multidimensionality in terms of the dichotomies: public – private, local – central, positive – negative. For instance, this was useful in accounting for the acquisition of different forms of capital for regions as social actors (competitors) in international beauty contests as much as international 'ugly sister' contests. To a certain degree, there are also similarities in this view to Jessop's (2002) understanding of three material and discursive divisions in contemporary capitalist society: private – public, market – state, national space – external environment.

Bourdieu argues that there is a fundamental link between actions and interests and that 'practices never cease to comply with an economic logic' (1990: 122) even if this cannot be narrowly defined as economic. This is also seen as a heuristic principle which means that researchers are encouraged to 'elucidate the specific interests at stake in the practices and conflicts which take place in particular fields' (Thompson,

1991: 16). In this case, regeneration is not only considered a (political) process but also a socio-cultural field in the sense that the result of regeneration is not only a transformed economic structure but also a ‘cultural product’ – regeneration is both the site for and the product of ‘cultural’ (encompassing social, economic and political) (re)production. Given the nature of regeneration as a field of cultural production, understanding the interests which are at stake here, the field of regeneration needs to be seen and constructed in relation to the fields of the economy and politics – this again supports the basic assumption of the concept of politics in and of regeneration, i.e. the overlapping of the different fields at different levels and the importance of the interaction between them. The proximity of the field of regeneration to both politics and the economy, even in its supposedly more disinterested form of community development, highlights the importance of understanding (economic) interests. This is clear when Thompson (1991: 16) argues that ‘what interests are, that is, what they amount to in any particular instance of action or struggle, can be determined only through a careful empirical or historical inquiry into the distinctive properties of the fields concerned.’ This justifies the approach taken in this thesis which employs both methods of historical enquiry through archival research and document analysis as well as interviewing and observation for the collection of empirical data. As mentioned before, the methodological approach necessitated an oscillation between the data and theory or in other words between the field and the desk. While I was engaging with Bourdieu, I therefore also needed to experience the field. This, as much as the battle with theory, was characterised by obstacles as well as serendipity.

### **3.3.2. Physical and Social Access**

As straight forward as negotiation of access to the documentation was, even if it was dispersed, negotiating interviews was fraught with more constraints and external factors. The research design included a prolonged fieldwork period with observations and ethnographic interviews in Kent as the regeneration activities there are in progress whereas the process in the Leicestershire coalfield has been deemed complete. As a result, negotiating access seemed to exhibit significantly different traits in the two case study areas. Interviews concerning the regeneration of the Leicestershire coalfield were focused on policy makers, local authority members and representatives of the community and voluntary sector involved in the regeneration activities in the

area. Contact was established with the relevant local authorities and here a snowballing technique was useful with one respondent suggesting others who would be able to provide information and data. In addition to that, the preliminary document analysis had highlighted a number of individuals involved in the preparation of key documents and strategies. The fact that regeneration was considered complete in the area and the economic development team at NWLDC had been disbanded and former members dispersed meant that search for respondents was determined by luck in finding persons who had moved into other geographical and professional areas.

In Kent, access negotiations formed an integral part of the fieldwork experience and already provided some insights into the structure of the field in the locality. My attention had been drawn to the fact that relations in the coalfield, especially around the topic of regeneration were tense and characterised by fragmentation. This was pointed out by an academic colleague with links to the coalfield as well as submissions to the Select Committee on the Regeneration of Coalfield Communities (ODPM, 2003). Access negotiations would therefore, I had been told, be difficult. It would require political insights into the fragmentations to know who to mention in relation to whom. In the end, there were moments of serendipity: chance meetings on trains brought me contacts with representatives of community development work in the area and even with other academic work on the locality. Furthermore, I made contact with the community development worker of the local authority who was able to put me in touch with and introduce me to a number of important community representatives in one of the communities and also the community group whose meetings I attended throughout for a period of seven months. This seemed much less fraught with difficulty than had been suggested. An interesting aspect of this was, however, that the community development officer was both a resident of one of the communities and also a family member of one of the former leading NUM representatives at one of the collieries. The family as a whole was and has remained active in community matters, be that as representatives on a number of liaison groups, the parish council or working for the local authorities. It remained the case, however, that I was frequently reminded of the different factions in the coalfield and the more or less cordial relations between their representatives and the potential minefield I was entering.

In both case study areas I spent a prolonged time for the purpose of the research. Living in Leicester to have easy access to archive records and living in Canterbury for proximity to the Kent former mining communities proved both enriching for the research and socially isolating. I had weighed up the advantages and disadvantages of rented accommodation in Canterbury or the coalfield communities. It turned out, however, accommodation for rent in these areas was difficult to find and Canterbury proved a good basis for archive research in Maidstone and Dover as well as within easy (cycling) distance of the mining communities. The fact that Canterbury was a better location for both interview and archive research highlights one of the problems of rural coalfields or rural areas in general: the provision of public transport. Access which is purely reliant on public transport can be very limited. Living in close proximity to the coalfield villages was very useful in Kent as meetings were arranged or cancelled sometimes at rather short notice, an element which has only become more poignant since my departure from Kent and reliance on public transport and therefore longer notice for travel arrangements. With the months, people in one of the mining communities in particular became accustomed to seeing me on the bike and even started to joke about my 'obvious' lack of fitness compared to them or expressed concern over my cycling country lanes late in the evenings. These people became my primary social contact for the six months I was in the field which led to a strong attachment to the area and its concerns and a very protracted exit.

I had been introduced to a community group which was dealing with issues of heritage around one of the colliery sites which still needed reclaiming. This seemed like a fortuitous choice given my interest in the importance of the mining identity in the process of regeneration. Although the initial ideas on research design had also included the possibility of focus groups in the communities, the observation of community group meetings seemed more fruitful. I was able to study naturally occurring conversations in group settings which were geared towards the research topic but would also inevitably veer off course and highlight underlying social relations, assumptions and tensions. Community group meetings would usually take place once a month in the community centre for the village. In the early phase of formalising the group and its status meetings were more regularly and also in a phase of heightened activity in preparing a response to a planning application submitted by the Regional Development Agency. The meetings would be attended by between 6

and 9 people. Four of the 7 core members of the group were former miners, all in their late 50s - early 60s, one member was a former civil servant who had retired to the area and another a local resident with a keen interest in local history. Unfortunately, the one female core member who was also a vociferous and much respected local politician died during my stay in the area. Another female who frequently attended meetings was a supporter (rather than member) of the group, mainly in her role as Kent County Councillor.

### 3.3.3. Interviewing

The interviews conducted were semi-structured qualitative interviews, the longest interviews stretched to almost three hours, the shortest half an hour<sup>6</sup>. The sample of people interviewed comprised both elite and non-elite participants, including MPs, local authority Councillors, (former) local authority officers, and representatives of the voluntary and community sector. Interviews were conducted in a number of different places, predominantly the respondents' offices, when they were contacted and interviewed in their official positions or the respondents' homes when they were community representatives. Other popular choices by the interviewees were also places of and for the community, e.g. the former Welfare Club or, in Aylesham, the café of the Aylesham Community and Workshop Trust and Aylesham House, the parish council offices and the official meeting place for the community group I was observing. These were deemed to be important institutions for the community; especially the Workshop Trust was seen as a source of pride. Interestingly enough, even the Conservative District Councillor I interviewed, who was not a councillor for Aylesham, Aylesham being a Labour stronghold, chose the café for the meeting. On the one hand, this was testament to the fact that this was the only café facility in Aylesham at that point in time (another small café has since been opened in the market square, part of the Neighbourhood Project) but also, I felt, to the fact that different groupings want to 'own' part of the success of 'The Project.' This particular interviewee was insistent on the importance of coalfield regeneration to the District Council, with him being the representative on what was then the Coalfields

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<sup>6</sup> An interview guide is provided in the Appendix. The guide covers the main themes of the interview with questions that I regularly asked. The order varied from interview to interview even if I tried to touch on each of the themes mentioned in the guide.

Communities Campaign (in June 2007 it merged with Steel Action to become the Alliance). All in all, I conducted 36 interviews (11 for NWL, 23 for Kent, two with representatives of national organisations).

There have been a number of articles and books on elite interviewing which discuss the topic of interviewing respondents who apparently are in a position of power, or in a position of raised social stature be that relative to the average citizen in society or relative to the researcher (Stephens, 2007). Stephens (2007) refers to the dominance of discussions of endemic differences between the interviewer and the researcher in methodological analyses of elite interviewing and cites Aldridge (1993) who emphasises an awareness of both commonalities and divergences between the researcher and the interviewees. 'Elite status is considered a product of localized social negotiation, and not a stable social hierarchy. Thus, an understanding by participants and interviewer of the cultural positioning of each other, both in difference and similarity, facilitates a better interview' (Stephens, 2007: 207).

Aldridge (1993:105) claims that 'occupational prestige is not given but negotiated. To gain access and secure co-operation, to achieve rapport, to gather sensitive information – all rely on the successful negotiation of the prestige relationship between the researcher and informant.' There are a number of issues that are addressed in this statement and which need further examination. As mentioned above, the literature has developed on questions of a difference in social status in interview situations and how to deal with these or ideally overcome these in the building of rapport. If, as suggested by both Stephens (2007) and Aldridge (1993), social status and prestige is locally and contextually or interactionally produced, then why is this seen as the determining factor on the interview situation? The prestige relationship could also be seen as working in the different direction with the researcher being in the prestigious position sitting opposite a participant who belongs to a vulnerable group in society or simply is of a lower perceived social status. In both cases, this accepts the interviewing situation as inherently hierarchical. It is also seen as consensus that this is not an acceptable situation but one which must be remedied. Equality in the interviewing situation seems to be of utmost importance, be that through feminist approaches which emphasise empowerment and giving voice to the interviewees or approaches stressing the interview as a co-construction achieved

through the interaction of interviewee and researcher or in the least, the establishment of rapport (Mason, 1996, 2002, Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). Following Aldridge (1993) it is the 'successful' negotiation of the prestige relationship which grants access, co-operation and in the end information. But what then is a successful negotiation? Is it the upholding of hierarchies with the result of the interviewee feeling in a superior position? Or is it the illusion of equality between ostentatiously unequal people. In a number of interviews, those deemed to be in a power position themselves completely undermined the idea of them being an elite because the stories they were telling were accounts of their lack of power. So I argue that an analysis of the construction of the interviewee persona/ identity is one level of the analysis and preconceived 'elite' status might not actually help this. In these cases, the analysis of turn-taking investigating the construction of unequal power positions in the interview will provide a better understanding of the interview situation and the respondent's understanding of their situation in the social sphere.

For all the talk about empowerment, commonalities and divergences, equality in the interviewing situation might be an illusion. People come to the interview with different agendas, which in an ideal case are complementary – one coming to tell, the other coming to ask and to listen. That this should, in an ideal world, be agreeable and comfortable and not harmful to either of them is probably what makes an interview successful, but status and the prestige relationship are then not the only determining factors for that. The extended interviews in some cases might be seen as just such a successful meeting of agendas or, from another perspective, a manifestation of rapport.

In the literature (Aldridge, 1993, Stephens, 2007, Atkinson et al., 2003), the establishment of rapport is seen as a quality criterion for the interview, the observation or fieldwork experience. The actual building of rapport is seen to be taking place at the beginning of the conversation to provide a basis for the research interview and to guarantee the elicitation of data. In the cases in the research process this connection usually manifested itself through an extension of the conversation beyond the interview aide memoire and resulting in talks about every-day topics after the interview questions seemed to have been answered satisfactorily. Satisfaction in this sense could again be an element of rapport as ideally both sides to the interview

had experienced the interview as an agreeable and comfortable space. In some instances, the interviewees specifically expressed that they saw this extension as their benefit of the interview, to be able to talk to someone outside their usual environments and learn something new.

Is rapport then a useful methodological category or variable to describe and assess interview situations? The idea that an affinity with the respondent guarantees their cooperation in a way fruitful for the researcher from my perspective reduces the participant, the interviewee, to a container of information which just needs to be opened in the right way - through the right negotiation of status and prestige perhaps - for it to spill its contents. As Mason (2002) argues, the interview needs to be seen as a moment of construction or reconstruction of knowledge rather than a process of excavation. The co-constructionist view of the interview, therefore, should bring to the fore the interview situation as equally valuable data – the performance of the interview, the work that is being carried out in the interview through verbal as well as non-verbal contributions from both sides.

#### **3.3.4. A question of/ for ethics?**

When it comes to assessing the nature of the interview, equality is then not the most applicable concept – but perceived similarity which establishes ‘rapport’. In a number of cases, mainly during the fieldwork in Kent, the fact that I had been born in the German Democratic Republic and had had the opportunity of experiencing ‘real existing socialism’ helped to build a strong rapport with the informants. This was not based on concurrent political views but on the fact that as miners and union members, a number of these people, had either visited the former Communist states of the East bloc or had developed an interest in them. In addition to that, during the miners’ strike of 1984/85, which in Kent was a topic often brought up during or after the interviews, the NUM and the Women Support Groups had received financial support from groups from both West and East Germany. On one level, then, my personal identity as an East German (rather than German) had a particular impact on the building of relationships.



On another level, however, my identity as researcher in the sense of searching for information also affected the conversations. This leads us back to Aldridge (1993) and his emphasis on perceived similarities such as sets of aims and objectives between the researcher and the participant for successful research. It also, however, brings up the question of taking sides in research. As the interview data showed, regeneration, among others, has a clear knowledge/ information dimension. Differential access to and distribution of knowledge was seen as a manifestation of the unequal power relations in the regeneration process and thus an instrument in the inclusion or exclusion of residents or other relevant actors. This was then also transferred to the interview situation where the open sharing of information with me as the researcher was seen to redress the balance – especially from the view of community activists. As Douglas explained to me:

To be inclusive you gotta share things. I'm gonna share things with you, we're on the same side. It's like negotiation, it's gotta be – but they don't want you, 'cause they don't want you to have this information. There's another saying about information: In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king. See?  
(Douglas, local community activist, 29 March 2007)

This, however, also constructed me as partisan, no longer as the objective and neutral outsider that my role as researcher prescribed. The only way to counteract this, I found, was a constant reminder of my position as researcher, not activist, but nevertheless someone who would listen to concerns from all the different sides in the process. These instances, however, also highlighted the idea that an important level of analysis in the research process is the examination of the construction of the researcher – participant relationship.

From another perspective, the interviewee's emphasis on their ability to give evidence and information, their construction of themselves as experts (or their apologies for their perceived lack of expertise) can be expected as part of the interview situation. It demands that the roles of interviewer and interviewee are acted out and performed. This involves asking questions and a striving for 'enlightenment' on the part of the researcher. On the part of the respondent this means giving answers and thus showing expertise to justify and fulfil the ascribed role. Identity work is therefore an integral

part of every interview situation. When interviews were extended over what seemed to be the core reason for the conversation, this was also indicated in a shift in identity work on the part of respondents. The interview analysis therefore also took conversation analytical approaches and concepts into account to detect these shifts in identity constructions.

The issue of taking sides also brings other questions into view. The research project was approved by the Ethics Committee of the School of Social Sciences. It was carried out with the wellbeing of the respondents as a priority. The ethical approval process, however, left some gaps in my experience of the process. As the vulnerability of the interviewees is assessed, their mother tongue is taken into account. This does not apply to the researcher. The problem, however, is not language. My language skills are more than adequate for the task of conversing with native speakers but at times, language skills alone did not suffice to interpret the situation correctly. At its best, this meant moments of unexpected humour, at its worst it meant missing important cues in the interviews or documents which I only discovered through discussions with British colleagues.<sup>7</sup> So for instance, I took ‘Brookside’ to be the correct name for the new estate built in Aylesham in the 1980s. The reference to a popular TV show was explained to me later but then made clear the divisions between insiders and outsiders as perceived by those who identified strongly with Aylesham as a unique community. Similarly, references to White Cliffs Country, I predominantly interpreted as references to the natural environment. Only through the comments of a colleague was I made aware of the associations with WWII themes and symbols, something that, of course, the authors of local authority documents did not deem necessary to explain.

Whereas language and cultural differences not necessarily have detrimental effects, the research process can still be as emotionally challenging for the researcher as for the respondents. For me, this meant a very long exit from the field in Kent. Despite

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<sup>7</sup> An example for humorous misinterpretations was a moment in an interview with a senior local authority officer who had told me of his 28 years of service and in the middle of the interview talked about promotion activities for the National Forest which also included the casting of the mascot ‘Woody Tree’. He said that interviewing for Woody Tree was one of the highlights of the job and I, keen on showing interest in the process, asked whether he got the position. My respondent, after a moment of laughter or possibly incredulity, explained that he was actually selecting candidates for the job rather than being a candidate.

strong attempts at remaining objective, the experience of communities struggling for a voice in the regeneration process did not leave me unaffected. There is not enough scope in this thesis, unfortunately, to give the emotional and often painful journeys of the individuals enough space. The focus is on the interplay between local and extra-local forces, in this sense, the insertion of the individual in their locality into the mechanisms and structures designed by extra-local institutions. The personal effect on this was not lost on me, especially when attending meetings where representatives of different institutions clashed in their agendas and capacities to influence the situation. The lack of power became palpable for me, especially as I was supposed to remain objective, unobtrusive, outside – powerless, in a sense. It is here where ethical considerations need to cover the researcher as well otherwise the ethical approval process could be unmasked as primarily protecting the powerful institutions, i.e. universities, rather than the individuals implicated in carrying out the research.

The question of reflexivity which is thus raised here is an integral part of the research process. Reflexivity can offer a way of understanding the research setting and the respondents in it through the acknowledgment and examination of the researcher's own position in it (Steier, 1991). The concept has many meanings but can be used to 'acknowledge that the methods we use to describe the world are – to some degree – constitutive of the realities they describe' (Atkinson et al, 2003: 147). The presence of the researcher has an impact on the research setting and the interview situation but not necessarily in arbitrary ways. This became clear regularly in the discussion with respondents and became part of the analytical process.

Another issue in the protection of the participants of the research is the question of anonymity. Individual respondents are granted anonymity and in the text they will only appear with pseudonyms. Often enough, however, the institutions they are associated with are identified. Similarly, I have not changed the names of the mining villages involved. This was a conscious decision, especially after the fieldwork experience in Kent. The names of the villages and the collieries are important to the residents; they are imbued with symbolic meaning. Contests over the processes of naming even have material effects as in the case of Aylesham – seemingly the most vociferous of the communities in the area. An anecdote was related to me where the name of the village cemetery had been changed to Barham Downs cemetery. The

residents interpreted this as a nod towards Canterbury and a potential new clientele. The result was that people kept going to the cemetery, taking the new signs down and putting 'Aylesham' back in its place. The authorities had to react in what is described as a battle of wills:

Katie: And, in the end, we won, the sign went back up, Aylesham cemetery.  
*(laughs)*

Dave: Just to give you an example of how people outside, they, you know, when you're dead, you're dead, but they wouldn't want to be buried in Aylesham. Barham Downs is quite nice, it sounds nice because it's rolling, rolling hills of Barham Downs but not Aylesham. (community activists, 22 May 2007)

This extract shows then an assertion of Aylesham's identity and the importance of place – a named place for the identification of the community, especially one that sees itself in conflict with 'outsiders.' If I had changed the names of the collieries and villages, the residents would again have been faced with what they have repeatedly called airbrushing, even if my intention had been protection. I therefore decided that the names had to stay to give the community members the voice they were looking for.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.3.5. Modes of Analysis

As mentioned above with regard to document analysis, the data collected from interviews and observation of meetings were subjected to several stages of analysis. In the first instance, the interviews were transcribed and analysed thematically. Qualitative analysis software (NVivo) was used for this which allowed easy and efficient access to coded extracts over a number of documents. I also added the observation field-notes to this body of data. The thematic coding developed in the document analysis was applied to the data. This way of coding was particularly useful for a comparison of themes and issues over the whole corpus of interviews and

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<sup>8</sup> The collieries in Kent, as it is a very small coalfield with only three working collieries in 1981, would have been identifiable by those with only a limited understanding of British mining even if I had changed their names.

observations. It enabled me to understand similarities and differences of the regeneration process at comparable stages over its course. Although this seemed to support the ideas on legitimisation and the relationship between forces on different scales which had emerged from the documents, overall there seemed to be a disjuncture between the themes of the documents and the themes raised in the interviews. The comparison of interview data across the case studies highlighted the gaps focusing solely on questions of legitimisation would leave. The particular local and situational concerns of the interview or specific meeting I attended needed new codes and new modes of analysis.

There were several elements to the disjuncture between documents and interviews. First of all, when looking at the start of most interviews with community activists, the question of expertise in the sense of being in a position to construct authoritative narratives and accounts in an interview was a regular topic. A number of interviewees, especially those involved in the regeneration process in the capacity of representative of a particular social group (called ‘stakeholders’ by the Regional Development Agency), prefaced their interviews with remarks about their own perceived lack of objectivity. Their experiences were often negative if not ‘traumatic’ and personally painful and thus they believed their views to be partial and advised caution from me. Tim is representative of this when he says: ‘The experience over the last 12 – 18 months has been quite traumatic. So when you get comments from me you have to watch that I have not become a bit jaundiced.’ The interview situation offered the chance of bringing the private experience to the public sphere; accounts could then be constructed as testimonies. Hardly any of the ‘official’ representatives questioned their narratives in a similar way. Their accounts were presented as authoritative – in their construction and their language and in most cases in the use of visual or documentary evidence that was produced during the interview. As I mentioned before, these interviews mainly took place in the respondents’ own offices, emphasising the ‘official’ nature of the situation and therefore helping the construction of the validity and truth-value of the information given.

So I re-visited some of the interviews to conduct a multi-dimensional analysis, taking into account questions of identity work through turn-taking and membership categorisation analysis. For this, I created new documents in a Word processing

programme which allowed several columns of the analysis and attention to the exact moment and context of specific utterances. This then emphasised the different subject positions constructed as part of the interviewing situation (cf. Collins, 1998, Järvinen, 2000). At the same time, recognising and acknowledging the different subject positions taken also facilitated an understanding of the interview data as such and in particular the interpretative frameworks that were brought to the interview.

Second, topics that were regularly occurring in the interviews were loss, displacement, disappointment. In conjunction with these topics, interviewees created accounts which provided explanations and thus also apportioned responsibilities and blame. This is where the benefits of narrative approaches to analysis came to the fore. Especially in the interview with Douglas, which resembled a monologue more than an exchange, his way of structuring and building a narrative provided invaluable insight into the assumptions underlying the framing of regeneration from a community activist's perspective. In this case, the quest for meaning in the interview was magically made easier with the help of several layers of analysis. This strategy was then applied to a limited number of other interviews from the Kent data collection. Time constraints and the focus of the thesis prohibited this for the whole set of interviews.

Similarly, the data collected in field-notes from the observation of meetings and telephone conversations, chance conversations, attendance at public events over six months in Kent and over another period of six months when I tried to stay in the field despite having left it physically, underwent thorough analysis. Again, thematic coding following the codes which had emerged both from the documents and the interviews started the process and soon led to focusing on the topic of mobilisation of different forms of capital in interaction and the articulation of power hierarchies in the overlap of civil society and bureaucratic field in most cases. In the end, the analysis of the documents and especially the interviews with local authority officials seemed to emphasise a particular aspect of the regeneration process – that of negotiating the need for and the content of regeneration policies as part of the bureaucratic field. This is detailed in Chapter 6 which draws attention to the 'practical mastery of the logic of the immanent necessity of the game which is gained through experience of the game' (Lamaison & Bourdieu, 1986: 111) evident in the data. Similarly, the analysis of the

interviews and field-notes emphasised the way subject positions and the corresponding interpretative frameworks shape the experience and understanding of the process of transformation. This, together with the need for identification – verbally as well as visually – formed the basis of the discussions in Chapters 7 and 8. The recourse to modes of analysis derived from narrative analysis and conversation analysis is not detailed in these discussions but was a necessary preliminary step for a fruitful thematic coding of the data. The large volume of data posed a problem in representation. Given the amount of data collected only a fraction of it appears in this thesis. Extracts were selected on the basis of illustrating evocatively a widely held opinion by those interviewed or a particularly dissenting view. This is indicated in the discussion.

### ***3.4. Conclusion – The myth of the good interview, the perfect research method, the truth?***

As mentioned above, the parallel engagement with theory and data required the layering of analysis over analysis to arrive at appropriate extensions to the theory used as starting point for the investigation. This undermined any ideas of ‘successful’ interviews as successful became relative to the focus of analysis. Not all interviews were equally fruitful for all modes of analysis and thus for all research questions. This drew attention to the importance of the research question as instrument of guidance in research design, data collection and especially analysis. To a certain degree, however, the question should be allowed whether it can be overlooked that there is always a part of ex-post rationalisation in social science research. Justification of methods and modes of analysis can only be completed with the collected data as research would not be necessary were the answers already obvious before the questions have been properly posed and deconstructed. This leads to the question of knowledge production as result of research.

In the end, no matter from what angle it has been approached, data collection is seen as exactly that - collection, harvesting of data, raw materials to be analysed or pressed into shape by the knowing researcher. The research process, however, cannot and should not produce this omniscient social scientist whose knowledge is superior and

more informed than that of the participants. The research process and the use of different research methods are about the uncovering of different knowledges and also their appreciation. In the course of this process of uncovering, unveiling and exhibiting I must also take into account my own preconceptions and blinkers. Pahl describes this with respect to his early research as follows:

Heavily influenced by notions of some kind of working-class project, which was part of the sociological zeitgeist, experience-distant analytical concepts not only kept me from understanding the reality of change in a purportedly working-class village, but also led me to withdraw from considering more seriously middle-class subjectivities to which I was more experience-near. A sceptical critic might argue that it was the wearing of experience-distant sociological blinkers that led to the context-specific interpretations of the 1960s. A more sympathetic commentator might argue that sociology can develop only with a critical sociology of knowledge at its core. (Pahl, 2005: 634)

Similarly, my blinkers have been both, experience-near through the identification as an individual herself shaped through ‘traumatic’ socio-economic and socio-cultural transformation and experience-distant through the constant engagement with abstract analytical concepts. Different identifications and subjectivities in both the observation and analysis processes have therefore influenced the interpretations in the following chapters but at the same time have enabled the uncovering of the different ways in which economic, social, cultural and especially symbolic capital and power work through these accounts. This shaping and reshaping of blinkers was then necessary for the fruitful engagement with the data and the practice of a reflexive social science as advocated by Michael Burawoy (1998).



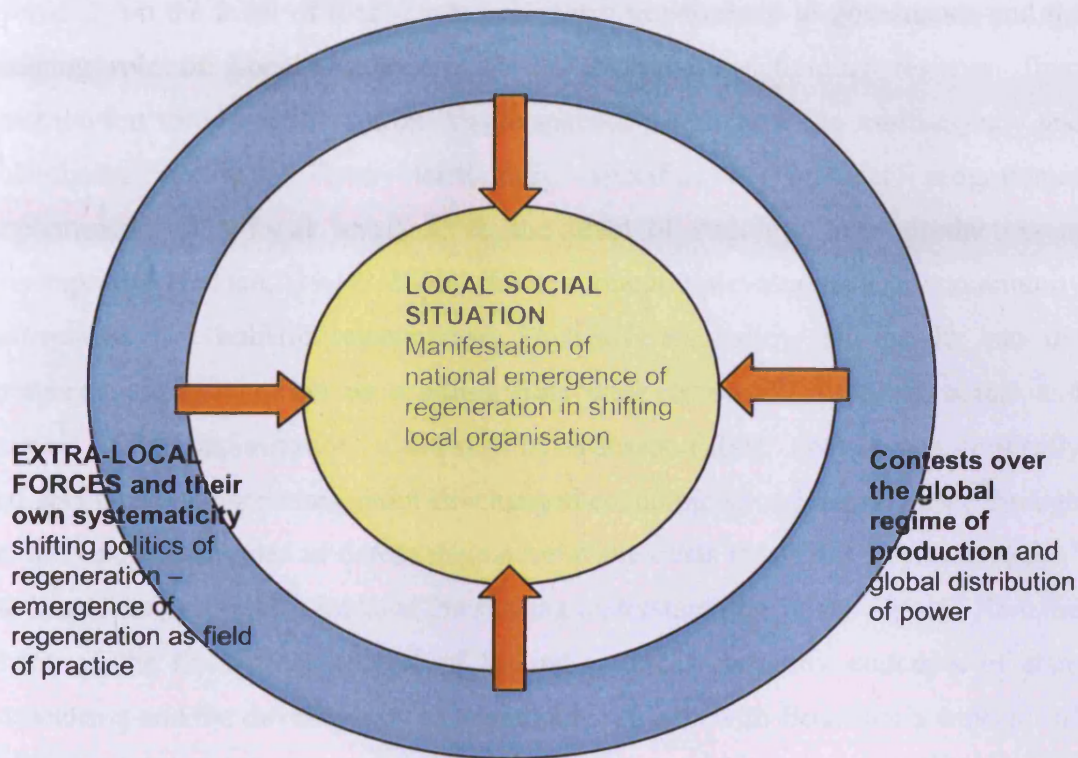
## **Chapter 4 - The National Context – Shifting Ground for Coalfield Regeneration**

*Regeneration policy is the culmination of undertakings 'as realized, at a particular moment, in a certain number of institutions (regulations, specialist bodies, procedures of financial assistance etc.), as the provisional objectivization of a particular state of the structural relation of force between the different agents or institutions concerned that are acting to maintain or transform the status quo in this regard.'* (Bourdieu, 2005: 93/94)

### **4.1. Introduction**

State intervention in the economy is a ubiquitous characteristic of the capitalist state. These interventions can be influenced by ideologies, social movements, the interplay between civil society and the state as well as the economy. Jessop (2002: 26) argues that capitalism is structurally coupled to other systems and the life world. Thus the development of the 'capitalist (market) economy is closely tied to non-economic factors. It never follows a purely economic logic.' This chapter reviews the policies dealing with coalfield decline and regeneration in Britain since the early 1980s. The argument here is that regeneration becomes both a manifestation and a result of the new state emerging out of restructuring. Coalfield regeneration is thus located at the juncture of national and local policies as well as the juncture of economic and political developments. A review of regeneration policies therefore necessitates a look at economic policies, more specifically the particular policies of coalfield de-industrialisation, as well as economic development approaches and local government policies, e.g. the restructuring of the local and the national state, adopted throughout the last decades. The following is then an exploration of changing local-central relations with particular focus on developments on the national scale. In this sense, the chapter operates as a review as much as an application of current thinking on state restructuring.

In terms of the theoretical framework of the thesis presented in the theoretical chapter, this chapter is dealing with the logic and systematicity of extra-local forces and the contests over the global, i.e. non-local, regime of production of regeneration. The effects of these contests delimit the space of practices for local actors and forces.



**Figure 4.1: Locating the discussion in the thesis: The politics of production**

The chapter will give an overview over developments in the national industry with their particular local repercussions (these will also be examined in detail for the case studies in Chapter 5). Although it has been argued that coalfield regeneration did not become a national issue before the advent of the Labour Government in 1997 there have been policy developments which arguably had a strong coalfield focus or at least coalfield impact (see DCLG, 2007). The chapter therefore discusses relevant policy instruments available in the restructuring of the coalfields from the early 1980s to the late 1990s/ early 2000s. Several phases have been identified in the literature, e.g. Oatley (1998) describes a phase of entrepreneurialism from 1979 – 1991 and an emphasis on competitive policies from 1991 onwards. A further shift in the conception and execution of regeneration has been acknowledged with the arrival of the Labour government in 1997 (e.g. Furbey, 1999, Morgan, 2002) with the increasing importance of partnerships, governance and joined-up approaches. The dominant actors in the field, however, have remained the same under differing constellations of the distribution of power: local and central agencies of the state, the private sector and the voluntary or community sector. The chapter therefore draws attention to the changing distribution of power between different agents in the context of the shift from economic development to regeneration. This process is multi-

layered: 1, on the level of local-central relations: government to governance and the changing role of Local Authorities 2, on the level of funding regimes: from redistribution to competition, from single-sponsor programmes to multi-agency and multi-funder projects, from territorially specific to national programmes (implemented on a local level) 3, on the level of strategy: from production to consumption (Hudson, 1994, 2000), from economic development to community participation and holistic regeneration. This will also allow an insight into the emergence of regeneration as a policy field with its own institutions, actors and practices. The transformation of the state is, as Jessop (2002: 124) argues, ‘critically mediated through discourses about the changed economic situation and hence through the outcome of struggles to define the nature of the crisis in/ of the Keynesian state.’ The chapter therefore also looks at the shifting understandings of the ‘crisis.’ Here the benefit of the theoretical project of linking political economy concepts of state restructuring and the development of hegemonic projects with Bourdieu’s concepts of the field and the mobilisation of different forms of capital becomes clear. This chapter is thus the first step in the exploration of the multi-dimensional nature of the regeneration process.

## ***4.2. From Planning and Regional Policy to Local Economic Development: 1979 – 1991***

### **4.2.1. The British Mining Industry in the 1980s**

The mining areas of the UK do not only occupy a special place in the field of regeneration but are of general significance to the national as well as regional and local cultures. To understand the salience of mining as a reference point for local identity and the highly emotional and emotive responses to regeneration policies it is necessary to locate the attempts at restructuring in relation to the changes in the national mining industry. This will enable the identification of factors in the local communities’ and policy makers’ interpretative frameworks in the contests over regeneration.

While the coal industry seemed to look secure at the beginning of the 1980s with proven workable reserves, new technologies for more efficient production as well as

consumption of coal and a relative improvement on the world coal market (Hall, 1981), the decade saw the relentless downsizing of the industry . A shift in the global market which saw an increase of mainly opencast produced coal from both developed (USA, Australia, South Africa) and developing countries (e.g. Colombia, Indonesia and Venezuela, China) and the growing importance of other energy sources such as gas or nuclear power meant a dramatic drop in the price of coal. A result of this was a diminution of the coal industry with the closure of 119 pits between 1985 and 1992 and the fall in the number of miners from 171,000 to 44,000. These numbers fell even further with the Conservative government's 1992 closure programme (Waddington et al., 2001). It has been argued before, however, that the restructuring of the coal industry was not only a result of economic factors but of 'political strategy based on historical antagonisms' (Waddington et al., 2001: 13, see also Turner, 1997, Winterton and Winterton, 1993).

The literature on unionism in the British coal industry (cf. Taylor, 2003, 2005) has repeatedly stated that the relationship between the National Union of Mineworkers and the government of the day was an uneasy one. The Conservative government's stance during a strike in the steel industry in 1980 left the steel union defeated. This paved the way for wholesale redundancies in the sector and seemed to signal to the miners a far less conciliatory approach to industrial relations in their industry, too. Although the government backed down over the prospect of a national strike over pit closures in 1981, industrial conflict seemed more and more inevitable.

For the industry was seen by the Conservative Government as epitomising the post-war settlement – the series of compromises between capital, Government and trades unions that the Thatcherite project both (rightly or wrongly) identified as the prime cause of the UK's economic decline, and also set out to break, irrevocably if possible. The coal mining regions were seen as amongst the last remaining bastions of support for labourism and the collectivist values of social democracy. In this sense, restructuring the coal industry was vital to the Thatcherite political project, undertaken as much for its ideological effects as for its economic benefits. (Hudson and Sadler, 1990: 435/6)

With the appointment of Ian MacGregor to the chairmanship of the National Coal Board in 1983 and the growing militant tendencies in the NUM, epitomised by Arthur Scargill's election as union president in 1982, the signals were set for conflict. It finally erupted over the NCB's announcement of the closure of 20 collieries, starting with Cortonwood Colliery, in March 1984. In contrast to earlier strikes, the leadership and the miners themselves have always maintained that this was not a strike over wages but one over the future of the industry and its communities. Although the closures of collieries have been a part of the 'natural' life cycle of an industry relying on exploitable and extractable resources, the conditions under which such closures occurred prompted different responses. During the closure programmes of the 1950s and 60s, in most parts of the country alternative jobs were available in a thriving economy (for an account of the industry at the time see Ashworth, 1986) which was in stark contrast to the situation in the 1980s. A general downturn in the economy and especially in the producing/ manufacturing sector which would otherwise have offered options for manual workers meant that pit closures seemed to signal the beginning of a spiral of decline for mining communities. The response to this threat was the year long miners' strike of 1984/85 (for accounts see e.g. Beynon, 1985, Samuel, Bloomfield and Boanas, 1986, Seddon, 1986). In the minds of the miners the Thatcher government's policy in 1984/85 has become known as an act of revenge by the government for the defeat inflicted on the Heath government in 1974.

The strike was characterised by a profound social polarisation for all those involved. Although the stoppage was called a national strike, it was called on the basis of area ballots, not on the basis of a national ballot. This created a situation in which the union itself was divided, with the Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire areas voting against strike action and thus a majority of miners in those areas continuing to work throughout the strike. This conflict extended to the communities through the presence of police forces protecting those miners who returned to work turning villages into battle zones as much as through media representations of miners as violent thugs. This reached an infamous climax in the portrayal of the confrontations at the Orgreave Coking Plant in July 1984. The efforts of the union and women's support groups in the affected areas were not enough to stop more and more men returning to work, especially during the winter months. The strike was officially called off and a return

to work organised for 5 March 1985. The Kent miners, however, remained on strike for another week to achieve concessions to those miners dismissed during the conflict. The strike has achieved a mythical status, especially in miners' conceptions of themselves. Although it is generally seen as the symbol of the breakdown of consensus and the loss of union power, it has also been regarded as the union's last stand.<sup>9</sup> It has come to be known as the 'last English civil war' (Ferguson, 2004, *When Britain went to war*, 2004) as a result of its scenes of violence and the enduring divisions within the union, with the formation of a breakaway union (Union of Democratic Mineworkers) in 1985, the communities and the country as a whole. The defeat of the miners was followed by a deterioration in employment relations in the industry, with management asserting 'the right to manage' more strongly than before. It also paved the way for a downscaling of production and a concerted closure programme with more than 50 collieries closing alone in 1985/86.

#### 4.2.2. The Thatcherite Political Project

On the one hand, the difficulties the mining industry was facing were indicative of the changing global economic conditions. On the other hand, the determined rundown of the industry seemed to be part of the new political climate on the arrival of the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher. Concomitant with this new political ideology seemed to be a lack of political will or possibly the political capacity and knowledge to recognise and deal with the problems emerging in the wake of economic restructuring. The period following major economic crises in the 1970s has been described as the crisis of Fordism which required new mechanisms:

Governments first responded to economic difficulties by following traditional formulas that entailed maintaining or increasing entitlements and expenditure in an effort to fight recession and unemployment and mitigate their social consequences. After a decade of 'fumbling', government after government regardless of political color embarked on new policies that often involved reigning in the increase in expenditure and increasing revenue. (Huber & Stephens, 2001, quoted in Jessop, 2002: 91)

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<sup>9</sup> There is also an argument that sees the NUM as representative of all unions and thus the defeat of the miners becomes a defeat of the labour movement as such.

The general political objectives at the time were therefore lowering public spending and the commitment to ‘rolling back the state’, mainly in financial, less so in actual regulatory terms. The 1980s are inextricably linked with Thatcherism. Although Hall (1988, see also Hall & Jaques, 1983) claimed that Thatcherism exhibited a multitude of different threads, there are undoubtedly various tendencies which were facilitated, supported and actively actualised through the period of the Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher. These seemingly political changes, however, cannot be seen without considering the global economic context. The ideological programme was characterised by an emphasis on privatisation and the involvement of the private sector in the provision of services (Robson, 1994) as well as supposed deregulation, which however also meant a loss of control for local authorities. Efficiency and effectiveness were important objectives in the restructuring of the state under Thatcher. The accent on value for money spawned an audit culture which placed emphasis on measurable and countable outputs (Robson, 1994). The 1980s have been described as the heyday of liberal free-market capitalism (Allen et al., 1998). The period was also characterised by increasing inequalities and spatial hierarchies between regions and localities in the UK. Industrial decline manifest in the closure and relocation of industrial plants resulted in ‘*localised* economic and social crises’ in industrial regions (Beynon, et al., 1994: 4, my emphasis). Urry (1990: 187) enumerates some of these socio-economic tendencies which during the 1970s and 1980s seemed to have heightened local differences and their symbolization:

- increased ability of large companies to subdivide their operations and locate different activities within different local labour markets;
- the breaking up of previously rather coherent regional economies,
- the growth of interregional differences, and the localizing of the previous *regional* policy;
- the enduring significance of symbols of place and location in much of the mass media;
- resurgence, in some places, of local politics, partly because of a revived commitment to decentralization and partly because of the very attack of local government autonomy in the 1980s

Allen et al. (1998: 2) argue that the emerging neo-liberal economic order also created a particular imaginary (economic) geography which positioned some regions as the heartlands of neo-liberal triumph (e.g. South East of England) and others as places of perennial decline. Thus, regions like the North East and South Wales had become associated with persistent degeneration and deprivation, ‘mired in corporatism and weighed down by labourism, trade unions and sunset industries’. In the official discourse, their problems were linked to low productivity, lack of competitiveness and a record of low levels of industrial investment (Beynon et al., 1994). Crises, where they occurred during the 1980s, and that was not the case everywhere, were thus spatially and symbolically contained within the industrial heartlands.

During the 1980s, the emergence of a Post-Fordist, neo-liberal state then meant the surfacing of a new constellation of forces. The Post-Fordist economy and its translation into a particular state form cannot be seen as complete at that point in time (or any point in time) because ‘struggles to define that economy as an imagined object of regulation and to formulate appropriate accumulation strategies and modes of regulation are themselves co-constitutive forces in the eventual emergence of Post-Fordism’ (Jessop, 2002: 103). The policy instruments that were developed in and through these struggles and shaped regeneration through the 1980s will now be discussed.

### **4.2.3. Policy Instruments**

‘Urban policy mirrors the dominant social conventions and political forces of the day’ (Roberts, 2000: 16).

Roberts’ statement might as easily be applied to the coalfields as to urban regeneration. Economic development has been an integral part of state functions over the decades. Restructuring was instigated in the face of decline in industries such as coal, steel, shipbuilding or textiles (Waddington et al., 2001) long before their final demise. Those regions whose economic structure was heavily based on these industries, which thus exhibited their own brand of ‘carboniferous capitalism’ (cf. Hudson, 1994), have been experiencing industrial restructuring and state intervention for over 70 years. This started with the introduction of regional policy by way of the



Special Areas legislation in Britain in 1934 (Morgan, 1985). On the whole, there have been similar objectives in economic development and regeneration attempts which include the physical and environmental improvement of the coalfields, e.g. through reclamation or infrastructure improvements, the creation of employment opportunities and the development of local community capacity (cf. Waddington et al., 2001, Oatley, 1998).

### ***Regional Policy and Assisted Areas in the 1980s***

Local authorities, as the Audit Commission (2008) argues, seemed to be overwhelmed by the wholesale decline of the coal industry. The importance of external funds and financial assistance was therefore universally acknowledged. The first port of call in the situation was arguably central government in the shape of national assistance to the regions. With the advent of the Conservative government in 1979, however, regional policy changed radically. It had focused on the redistribution of manufacturing investment from the buoyant regions to the less buoyant regions through regional development grants and the Industrial Development Certificate controls (Morgan, 2006). Although expenditure on regional policy had already been in decline since 1976, the new government under Margaret Thatcher also reduced the assisted area coverage from 45% to 27% of the working population in 1982. The 1983 White Paper on Regional Industrial Development (DTI, 1983) seemed to address the overdependence on supporting mobile manufacturing investment and a neglect of the service sector with the suggestion of new regulations. These included a 'more cost-effective deployment of regional aid' reflected in the dramatic cut to expenditure, from £917m in 1982/83 to £643m in 1983/84 (Morgan, 1985: 571). Other important elements to the new regional policy were a redrawing of the Assisted Area map and an emphasis on more selective rather than automatic assistance for those areas included in the map. The White Paper also introduced more national support schemes which represented a shift from territorially specific policies of industrial development to a national industrial strategy (Morgan, 1985). Another, at the time striking, objective of the White Paper was the strategy of correcting spatial imbalances by a change in the actions of organised labour (and other institutions), e.g. the removal of national wage deals, in reflection of the 'market value' of labour in particular localities:

Imbalances between areas in employment opportunities should in principle be corrected by the natural adjustment of labour markets. In the first place, this should be through lower wages ... than comparable work commands elsewhere... The Government believes that wage bargaining must become more responsive to the circumstances of the individual enterprise, including its location. ... Natural adjustment can also occur through people moving from areas of persistently high unemployment to areas where unemployment prospects are better. (DTI, 1983: paras 9-11)

This emphasis on the market as the correction mechanism for economic inequality between the regions was an important aspect of the neo-liberal agenda of the Conservative government. The problem was seen as a problem of market operation not of the market mechanism. The solution therefore was to improve the market as such (cf. MacLeod, 1998). This was also reflected in the introduction of privatisation policies and employment legislation to curb union power to achieve a greater flexibility of labour markets. So the reduction of state funding was paralleled by an increase in state intervention through legislation (Morgan, 1985). At the same time, however, the White Paper stressed the importance of the local authorities in 'creating a climate conducive to enterprise' (Morgan, 1985: 574) which meant a reduction in the burdens on local business and the inclusion of the private sector in local enterprise agencies. This effectively prescribed a rather passive role for the local authorities, 'fiercely contested by Labour-controlled authorities, so much so that it forms part of a constitutional crisis between central and local government' (Morgan, 1985: 574).

Up until 1989, regional policy was based on the designation of different categories of assistance (Assisted Areas, Special Development Areas, and Intermediate Areas) which would then automatically mean a certain amount of funding for regional development. The criteria for assistance as put forward in the 1984 Regional White Paper were average unemployment rates, long term unemployment, industrial profile and the occurrence of structural decline, peripherality, dereliction, and the potential for growth. At the time, there was only one step in the process of acquiring funding through the regional development route, i.e. the designation as Assisted Area. This would ideally be based on 'factual' (quantitative) evidence of need according to the criteria above. This would also mean transparency in the decision concerning

designations. As discussions following the Widdicombe Report showed, the actual weighting of the criteria mentioned above was not clear.

When the last review of the (Assisted Area) map was undertaken the Government gave greatest weight to relative unemployment and long term unemployment rates, although other factors such as those outlined above were given appropriate attention. (...) However, it is of prime importance that the selection procedure is undertaken in public rather than behind closed doors. With this in mind the Association (of District Councils) considers the criteria and relative weighting to be used in any future review should be made public. (ADC, 1989)

As this extract shows, seemingly objective criteria are here uncovered as a site of construction and political contention. Need is thus a social and political construct and requires legitimisation. The application of codes and classifications of ‘need’ is criticised for its lack of transparency which might be explained by it being based on unarticulated conventions.<sup>10</sup> The shifts in focus in regional policy are indicative of the overall political ideology at the time. These tendencies, i.e. ostensible downscaling of the (central) state, stress on entrepreneurship and the capacity of the market and the private sector to address economic inequalities are reproduced in other policy developments at the time. They also find their expression in the changing local-central relations throughout the decade.

### ***From Planning to Local Economic Development***

The decade was characterised by mounting tensions between local and central government, especially as result of Thatcher’s government’s insistence on the free market ideology (Henderson et al., 2007). Central government regarded local government as inefficient and the Widdicombe Report of 1986 highlighted the intensification of local politics and increased politicisation of local councils. This led to the introduction of a number of regulations through successive Local Government

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<sup>10</sup> The French approach of Economics of Conventions examines the formulation of interpretations in situations of uncertainty on the basis of conventions (see Diaz-Bone, 2006, Jagd, 2007). It takes Bourdieu’s concepts as starting point for a sociology of economics/ economic practices. Especially Boltanski & Thevenot (1999) have developed an approach which analyses regimes of justification for action. The issue of indicators of need and thus the discursive construction of ‘crisis’ is taken up again in Chapter 6 where it is shown how the contested nature of classification(s) can have an impact on regeneration trajectories.

and Housing Acts in 1986, 1988 and 1989. Given the increasingly acrimonious relationship between different scales of the state, mobilisation of support in the form of resources (be they economic, social or symbolic) was difficult for a number of authorities. Power was redistributed also through the creation of national policy instruments which had clear impact on the role and control of local authorities in their administrative territories, especially their planning powers. In addition to this tendency, the role of local authorities changed from one of 'being providers to becoming "facilitator" of the delivery of local services' (Robson, 1994: 218). This change in emphasis also brought with it a cut in local authority resource allocations.

The 1980s did not seem to be the coalfields' decade in terms of national assistance. National restructuring policy focus was firmly placed on cities. Cities were regarded to be assets in the global competition for labour, investment and consumers. The role of local authorities in economic development through their planning powers was firmly established by the 1980s and current orthodoxy was diversification through the provision of sites, industrial estates and advance units which could also be beneficially linked to derelict land reclamation (Beynon et al., 1994). The objective was to attract inward investment for the diversification of the economic structure. Policy therefore seemed more oriented towards those with (economic) capital inside and outside the particular places rather than those living in these places. Several urban policy instruments were introduced during the 1980s which were supposed to simplify the planning procedures to facilitate business location in deprived areas but also meant a loss of local authority control over the planning process (Thornley, 1991).

One innovation in the neo-liberal state approach to restructuring was the introduction of Enterprise Zones in the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980. These zones offered simplified planning regulations, thus reducing local authority power. Other incentives included rate relief for ten years, maximum capital allowances and exemption from development land tax (Thornley, 1991). The objective was business and industrial development, the plans for which would be agreed between the developers and the Secretary of State for the Environment and elaborated with the Department of Environment. Despite the appearance of support for the freedom of enterprise, this approach actually increased central state involvement in local economies. It was tantamount to subsidies or at least financial support to private

capital while at the same time removing regulations beneficial to labour (especially through the employment legislation in 1982, 1984) (Turner, 1993). The practice of enterprise zones, although not formally acknowledged to be part of regional or urban policy, has shown them as a 'more *discretionary* form of territorial policy' (Morgan, 1985: 575, emphasis in original) and as such theoretically against the move away from territorially specific support. In addition to these criticisms, local councils were aware that the Enterprise Zone status, although it might attract business interest, might not actually bring the desired benefits. As North West Leicestershire District Council discussed

there were doubts as to the effectiveness of becoming an enterprise zone in relation to the creation of new jobs. It was considered that it could encourage firms from neighbouring authorities to move over the District boundary into NWL bringing their labour force with them, and which would not be of benefit to this District. (NWLDC, Council Meeting, 24 April 1982)

These doubts over employment creation have been substantiated through empirical studies and evaluation reports (e.g. Turner, 1995).

### ***Entrepreneurship***

The enterprise zone approach was born out of a concern with increasing inward investment, or in other words, the attraction of exogenous resources. The 1980s, however, were also characterised by an increased emphasis on the stimulation of endogenous resources through the facilitation of an enterprise culture. This meant support for fostering entrepreneurship in small and medium enterprises even if their impact in dealing with large-scale redundancies was accepted to be limited. Human capacities of entrepreneurialism and innovation were seen as key in economic development. This went hand-in-hand with a shift in development theories towards a greater emphasis on creativity and human capital. This was translated into urban and regional policies strengthening the 'capitalist ethic' through resources from state agencies such as the local authorities, Chambers of Commerce or institutions specifically set up to deal with sectoral decline, such as British Steel (Industry) or British Coal (Enterprise) (Turner, 1993).

Although specific coalfield regeneration measures were limited, there was one institution geared towards dealing with the local consequences of colliery closures. In 1984, NCB Enterprise (later renamed British Coal Enterprise (BCE)) was established with the objective of job creation in direct response to mining decline. It was specifically involved in business funding, provision of workshop space for small businesses and the retraining of redundant mineworkers (British Coal Enterprise, 1996). As with all agencies geared towards job creation and economic restructuring, its claims concerning its impact have been criticised as contentious and exaggerated (Turner, 1993, 1994). In the two case study areas, BCE seems to have been a marginal contributor to regeneration activities according to the local authority documentation:

The Midlands Region has been comparatively ill-served by the BCE loan scheme. The Midlands received the least amount of the BCE funding of any Region except the South East, where BCE operations are marginal. The Midlands secured 10% of BCE funding during the period to March 1988. (NWLAMD, 05 September 1988)

Not only was the funding allocation low in comparison to the other coalfields in Britain, a CCC report on the impact of BCE on job creation also posited that the number of jobs created in the East Midlands and Kent was the lowest in the country despite the fact that job loss in the East Midlands was the second highest in the period 1982 – 87 (NWLDC, 08 June 1988). It has to be taken into account that the Midlands Region comprised the smaller coalfields of Leicestershire and Warwickshire as well as the central coalfields in Nottinghamshire and North Derbyshire. Given that the effect of BCE support and its translation into new jobs have been contested (where BCE estimated the creation of 100,000 jobs, Fothergill & Guy (1994) calculated 16,000 jobs created, see Waddington et al., 1991) the contribution of BCE activity in the coalfield areas is difficult to measure.

#### ***Derelict Land Grant – Property-led regeneration***

During the 1980s, approaches to regional and urban policy were dominated by supply-side rather than demand creating arguments. This led to an emphasis on property development, in some areas carried out by the Urban Development

Corporations and funded by grant regimes such as the City Grant and Derelict Land Grant. As Robson (1994: 217) argues this ‘has left a legacy of new buildings in many of the commercially-attractive parts of central cities but little tangible benefit to many of the deprived populations often living in close proximity to such areas.’ The existence of Derelict Land Grant, however, could also be seen as one way of coalfield regeneration by proxy and in adherence with the contemporary political climate. The coalfields had to deal with a legacy of large contaminated and derelict sites which, until the early part of the decade and before the drive for break-even and rationalisation in the then National Coal Board, had often been offloaded to the local authorities for a nominal sum. The Coal Industry Act of (1981), however, set the target of break-even for the industry by 1984. This increased the importance of rationalisation within the industry and also the importance of good financial results in the departments of the National Coal Board not directly related to mining operations but the running of subsidiary operations, such as the Estates section. Land and derelict sites suddenly gained in value and British Coal aimed to ‘maximise the property interest’ which also meant that at times ‘they were quite difficult to deal with’ (William, former Chief Economic Development Officer (CEDO), NWLDC, 5 May 2008). This funding situation was also confirmed by a former senior civil servant who was responsible for administering DLG in the Midlands:

HD: Were there any other sources that people could have tapped into apart from DLG?

Henry: No. Not that I know of and I’m pretty certain, there weren’t. The only other way would have been money from the colliery itself because quite often people who had collieries got planning permission maybe fifty years ago to just keep on excavating, mining, opencasting, whichever it is, for coal, and then they could walk away and do nothing. Planning permissions that were gained later, they have restoration conditions on. You can excavate for coal but when you finish, you return it to a green status. So whatever the colliery was, the National Coal Board or a private enterprise call it would have to fund that themselves. But there was no other government money; there was only derelict land grant. (23 July 2007)

The importance of Derelict Land Grant fits well into the regeneration focus at the time which was site-specific and predominantly geared towards property development and physical reclamation. This emphasis was again an expression of the ongoing contests over the organisation of the central state and its relation to the economic sphere. The articulation of the wage form within the current accumulation regime, Jessop (2002) claims, had changed, so that wages were seen as costs of production (and thus deterrent to investment) as opposed to a source of demand. Job creation would therefore be achieved through the manipulation of the supply side, i.e. the availability of land (another means of production).

Turner (1993, 1994) argued, coalfield regeneration was not accepted on the national political agenda until the 1990s. Even though restructuring as result of mining decline was desired, state involvement in this process was not the preferred option. This can be linked to the fact that British Coal at the time was pursuing an extensive closure campaign. Accepting the potentially negative consequences of colliery closures would have undermined the campaign and its apparent benefits to the tax payer. It would have meant legitimising a discourse which was emphasising the social costs of closures which were arguably higher than the savings achieved in the industry. It would also have meant accepting that British Coal Enterprise with its limited budget alone would not have been able to offset local closures. In her study of restructuring in four Norwegian mining towns Dale argues that ‘the state’s response to these problems the mining communities were facing in the 1980s and 1990s also seems to be driven by strong *normative* or moral obligations’ (Dale, 2002: 12, emphasis in original). In contrast to Norway, the state in the UK was ostentatiously withdrawing from regional policy with the aim of ensuring equality across the regions during the 1980s and early 1990s through a scaling down of subsidies and regional policy based on the centralisation of planning and economic development powers. Deregulation and privatisation as part of the neo-liberal economics were then justified through a rhetoric which had moved from the achievement of equality through state involvement to equality through competition. Although it is probably fair to say that there was an acknowledgement of the state’s obligation to support struggling communities, the form this should take was contentious in that the local authorities at the time were seen as hindrance to a levelling of differences between different localities as result of their active involvement when this would be achieved more



efficiently by the market (according to the government's ideology). As a result, at the beginning of the 1980s, legitimisation of coalfield regeneration was confined to the local level, which however also meant that at later stages in the process, legitimisation for the local regeneration discourse needed to be sought at the national level, albeit adapted to other discourses. When the coalfield regeneration agenda became legitimate on the national level, this opened different avenues for the regeneration process in the affected areas.

In conclusion, then it can be said that local authorities faced with the social and economic consequences of mining decline had to contend with a conspicuous lack of a national macro-economic and planning policy throughout the 1980s. Crises, worthy of intervention, were considered to be in the inner cities. Central state intervention there also served the political purpose of diminishing (Labour-ruled) local authority control (Beynon et al., 1994). Restructuring was supposed to be achieved through the free operation of markets and private capital which would be attracted and fostered through the nurturing of an enterprise culture and a supply-side property-led top-down approach to physical reclamation (Barnekov, Boyle and Rich, 1989). Local authorities also had to react to an increasing loss of control over the planning process in areas designated as enterprise zones and simplified planning zones (1991) with their contribution to local economic development only recognised through the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Tensions with central government seemed ubiquitous when planning powers were reduced and factors in planning considerations were narrowly circumscribed and this was finally coupled with decreasing financial resources from the centre. As a result, regeneration efforts, especially in the coalfields were either lacking and thus exacerbating and solidifying existing social problems or localised and market-led and thus property- and business-oriented. Community needs were conspicuous by their absence as a factor in the restructuring policies of the period.

### **4.3. *The competitive years 1991 - 97***

For the mining industry, the 1980s had been a period of unmitigated downsizing and deteriorating employment relations. Although there were no official strikes, there

were recurring conflicts in management's new drive to impose the 'right to manage.' This was particularly evident in discussions about the 6-day working week. So, not only had the strike to save collieries been lost but more and more rights that had been won over the course of the century were being eroded. This was carried over into the 1990s. The blow came with a closure announcement in October 1992. The announcement, interestingly, sparked a national outcry. Support for the miners and opposition against the prospect of 30,000 job losses in the already depleted mining communities was generated over a broad social spectrum, especially also in the middle classes who 'appeared to feel more strongly than the miners themselves' (Heseltine, 2000: 439). The opposition was met with hastily assembled Select Committee Inquiries which produced a White Paper (DTI, 1993) and suggested not only 'market-testing' rather than outright closure for a number of collieries but also a financial package of £75m to support training, counselling and job-search programmes. Twenty-one of the collieries earmarked for closure were to go through a Government review which still could not avert closure. Eventually, closures were accepted by workers whose opposition was weakened by enhanced redundancy offers which were threatened to be withdrawn in the case of continued resistance to closure (Waddington et al., 2001). The closure programme also involved financial support for the acquisition of sites and premises and opportunities for the designation of Enterprise Zones and Assisted Areas in the coalfields. This package of support for mining areas could be seen as the beginning of a coalfield specific economic development programme funded by the central state.

Privatisation in 1994 was seen as the ultimate end to the 'political power of the National Union of Mineworkers' (Parkinson, 1992: 280). The decline of the industry with the closure of more than 140 collieries and the loss of 200 000 jobs between the early 1980s and 1993 left a challenging legacy for the state, collective organisations and individuals in the affected areas. It must also be considered in the context of the crisis of Fordism and the increasing failure of the Keynesian Welfare State to deal with the structural contradictions of Fordism (cf. Jessop, 2002).

### **4.3.1. The competition State**

By 1990/ 91, the neo-liberal framework had been established as a mode of government. The priorities of the state had become competition and competitiveness and this meant that ‘strategies intended to create, restructure or reinforce – as far as [was] economically and politically feasible to do so – the competitive advantage of its territory, population, built environment, social institutions and economic agents’ (Jessop, 2002: 96) were pursued. Increasingly, both theory and practice recognised that factors that were considered extra-economic were of economic importance (Pike et al, 2006). Regeneration strategies therefore needed to address issues such as knowledge assets, opportunities for collective learning or amenities and the quality of life in the locality for the attraction of investment which were seen as important elements in local, regional and national competitiveness (Amin & Thrift, 1995, Storper, 1997, Florida, 2002). There were therefore two developments impacting on restructuring activities in and for the coalfields. By the late 1980s an awareness of issues in the former mining areas had started to grow which was then exacerbated as a result of the public reaction to the Heseltine closures. In addition to that, the ideology of competitiveness had become entrenched and from 1990/91 onwards was increasingly translated into public policies.

### **4.3.2. Policy Instruments**

#### ***Rural Development Areas – The Rural Coalfields***

The Rural Development Commission was entrusted with supporting the economic and community development of rural areas until its absorption into the Countryside Agency in 1999. In 1990, both as a result of a change in focus for the Rural Development Commission (RDC) and continued lobbying, an acknowledgement of the special problems of rural coalfields had been achieved. Then the North West Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield and the North Nottinghamshire & North Derbyshire coalfield were granted status as Rural Coalfield Areas. This fell short of the official Rural Development Areas status but still enabled some Rural Development Commission funding and was particularly important in granting an official ‘label’ and an official recognition of their particular needs.

The dominant instrument for rural regeneration included the Rural Development Programme and Rural Action. The Rural Development Programme was based on the

designation of the areas in greatest economic and social need as Rural Development Areas. The map of these areas was redrawn in 1990 and 1993/94. The indicators which were taken into account for the designation of the RDAs were unemployment, economic activity rates, population structure and housing conditions, prospective job losses as well as accessibility to services (Beatty and Fothergill, 1997). The redrawing of the map in 1994 resulted in the designation of rural development areas which comprised most of the uplands of northern England, most of the far South West, the border country with Wales and some of the more remote parts of lowland Eastern England, some pockets on the South Coast in Essex, Kent (this also meant that the former Kent coalfield was designated as RDA) and Sussex as well as a number of industrial areas in South Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire. The last group covers what can be termed as the rural coalfields (categorised as 'Northern Industrial'). Beatty & Fothergill (1997) demonstrate that the industrial areas which had been designated as Rural Development Areas show a degree of homogeneity in their economic developments, in terms of unemployment and migration figures, which is quite distinct from the other Rural Development Areas. They experienced out-commuting, fall in economic activity rates and decline in male employment to a degree not matched by the other areas. The range of figures in terms of unemployment rates, from 4.0 to 16.7% in January 1995, show that Rural Development Areas were rather heterogeneous in their characteristics which is belied by the common 'objective' criteria for their designation. On average, the unemployment rate in RDAs was consistently below the national average. In January 1996 this was 9.8% for RDAs in comparison to 11.2% for England as a whole (Beatty & Fothergill, 1997). The Rural Development Commission thus became the vehicle for the beginning of a centrally approved coalfield regeneration programme even if it was not acknowledged as such. This must be seen in the context of the colliery closure programme in 1992 which sparked protest as well as an acknowledgement of the social consequences of the closures. The de-industrialised areas of the coalfields would then be classed as rural on the basis of a lack of industry rather than their isolation given that some coalfields lie close to major cities (e.g. South Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire).

***Challenge Funding: City Challenge, Rural Challenge and Single Regeneration Budget***

As mentioned before, the competition state is characterised by an extension of the logic of competitiveness to political and other extra-economic fields. The objective is also to ‘rescale and re-articulate [the state’s] activities and to develop new forms of government and governance to address the emerging problems of the state as well as market failure’ (Jessop, 2002: 123). Under the Conservative government at the end of the 1980s, therefore, redistributive activities of the state underwent a reorganisation. An allocation system based on formulas which would grant automatic assistance once the label/ designation had been awarded was replaced by competitive bidding. The fostering of competition between places (cities or rural localities) was an objective in the process. The approach was based on the assumption that there is a spatial hierarchy, i.e. a hierarchy of world regions or global cities in the context of globalisation and globally mobile capital or even a hierarchy of regions in the national context as Allen et al.’s (1998) imaginary geography posits. Place marketing and raising the economic, social, cultural and especially symbolic capital of an area, in the sense of improved competitiveness of local business and extra-economic factors, would then lead to a (upward) shift in this hierarchy (cf. Oatley, 1998). This highlights again the link to Bourdieu’s notion of actors positioning themselves in the social space (or in the overlap of the bureaucratic and economic sphere) in relation to other actors in the same field as was discussed in Chapter 2. Another notion was that competitive bidding would raise the quality of bids, increase social efficiency (John et al., 2004; John and Ward, 2005) and deliver value for money.

The mechanism of competition was articulated in the initiatives and programmes such as City Challenge (1991), Rural Challenge (1994) and the Single Regeneration Budget (1994 – 1999).<sup>11</sup> In addition to that, the Competitiveness White Papers (1994, 1995, 1996) also applied the discourse and objectives of competitiveness to cities and regions. For the coalfields this meant that national funding streams were available to deal with regeneration issues – still not specifically targeted at mining-related problems but generally at social and economic deprivation. These avenues were exploited by some local authorities in the coalfields even if it meant a particular effort

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<sup>11</sup> Oatley (1998: 12-13) offers a list of competitive bidding initiatives introduced between 1991 and 1996.

at place-marketing and ‘re-packaging’ the locality. So, for instance, the Dearne Valley partnership, a co-operation of Barnsley Metropolitan District Council, Rotherham and Doncaster councils, was successful in the City Challenge competition. The area covered by the bid covered a number of small towns stretched over about 10 square miles rather than the conventional inner city area more likely to be expected bidding for urban funds.<sup>12</sup> In a similar vein, other coalfield authorities exploited the ‘rural avenues’ which had opened up through the designation of Rural Development Areas and thus the construction of the coalfields within a rural regeneration discourse. Consequently three projects out of 11 funded through the Rural Challenge Fund were located in former mining areas.<sup>13</sup>

From 1993 onwards, a number of funding streams for separate policy instruments in urban and regional policy were bundled into one fund: the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). The announcement of the merging of 20 separate funding programmes from five departments in November 1993 meant that ‘resource allocation, for the first time, spanned the policy division between urban and regional issues’ (Mawson et al., 1995: 2). The objectives among others were eliminating regional assistance as well as the first stage of the competition process – the competition for labels. As the promotion and encouragement of partnerships (e.g. public-private, cross-border or cross-departmental partnerships) was another strong impetus for the bundling of funding streams, a proportion of the funds was not ringfenced for specific purposes. The effect of less ringfenced money was supposed to be a better reflection of local priorities in renewal policies. ‘In place of a monolithic Whitehall-dominated view of what is important, different regions and different localities can reflect what is (or is seen to be) important to them’ (Robson, 1994: 220). This emphasis on the local as well as the need for cross-departmental co-operation in the bids was expected to enhance and enable multi-agency partnerships. Although responsibility about regeneration decisions was supposedly devolved to the local level, the Local

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<sup>12</sup> See Chandler (1998) for an exploration of the differential experience of City Challenge within South Yorkshire

<sup>13</sup> ‘Pumping life back into the coalfield’, Nottinghamshire (1995-8) included restoring an old pumping station into a multi-use complex providing jobs, training and a visitor attraction near the former mining villages of Boughton and Ollerton; ‘Sustaining the heartbeat in our community’, Stainforth, nr Doncaster (1996-99) aimed to regenerate the commercial centre of a former coal-mining community providing a rural technology centre, a community resource and opportunity centre, workshop units, sports and leisure facilities and establishing a youth council, and the ‘Heart of the National Forest’, Leicestershire

Authority Associations criticised the ‘regional gloss’ on national criteria in the first round of the SRB (Mawson et al., 1995). Ringfencing was introduced later into the SRB bidding process when criteria suggested that, e.g. at least 20% of the funds were supposed to go into rural regeneration in the 1999 bidding round (Osborne et al., 2002). Similarly, respondents in the interviews suggested that Round5 was a coalfield-focused round specifically encouraging applications from the coalfields. This was possibly a reaction to criticism that SRB was mainly catering for the regeneration of urban areas. The local dimension of SRB and the uncertainty of the SRB goals in the contrast between catering for need and capitalising on economic development potential meant that an opportunity for strategic vision was missed in the development of the policy (Robson, 1994). Hall and Mawson (1999: 9) similarly criticise the lack of a policy framework for the competitive bidding process which could lead to regeneration initiatives being resource- rather than strategy-led and taking ‘place in a vacuum.’

Despite the pronounced ideology of the free market and a commitment to ‘rolling back the state’, the policy instruments developed and implemented during the ‘competitive period’ show a dedication to state intervention by the Conservative government. This meant establishing state-run bodies (non-departmental public bodies) acting as the model of the competitive spirit. Business and localities continued to receive state support to survive in the competitive arena of the ‘free’ market. Although Robson (1994) envisaged that the structure of the SRB bidding process meant a switch back to the strong involvement of local authorities the evidence suggests different. After their marginalisation during the 1980s, the role given to them through the new procedures, however, he deemed could be too powerful with local authorities usurping the bid writing process and thus leaving little scope for other local stakeholders and the development of genuine partnerships. The results differed across different regions. In some areas, SRB funds did marginalise existing civil society or private organisations. In the case of Dover District, one interviewee remarked that

I think the issue with SRB money is that it was very much held on to by Dover District Council. They employed their own staff to administer it, which was unusual when, I mean, our sister organisation in Shepway, they have a very

sort of free and easy relationship with Shepway local authority, and in fact the voluntary sector was very much involved in consultation and also delivery of some projects, SRB money was given to them to deliver. But here in Dover that didn't happen, it was kept very much under local authority control. They set up their own teams, almost as a rival to the voluntary sector, and as a result of that it is quite difficult to comment on what went on because, certainly our organisation was excluded from all of that. So we worked on the periphery of that, it's only now that SRB money is running out that people are calling us back in again because the service isn't there. (Lauren, voluntary sector representative, 29 May 2007)

In this particular instance then, the mechanisms for the mobilisation of economic capital in the newly emerging field of regeneration then meant a jeopardising of working relationships, in other words, the maintenance of social capital.

In other areas, the drive for partnerships brought in new partners into governance arrangements, especially the private sector, and thus potentially restricted local authority agenda setting opportunities (Oatley, 1998). The competitive challenge funding model was even applied to local authority funding in the Capital Challenge (1996). Local authorities more and more became conduits through which funds would be channelled to the benefit of the private sector. Evaluations of the system of competitive bidding have been contentious. Brennan et al.'s study (1998) showed that SRB funds seem to have reached those areas scoring highest on their measures for deprivation. In contrast to that, John et al. (2004) demonstrate support for a number of critical voices. They argue that the process can be a waste of resources, wedded to short-termism, fail to reach the communities most in need and ultimately did not address the government's strategic objectives. Better presented bids were more likely to be successful – 'the triumph of packaging over content' (2004: 425).

### ***European funding – RECHAR***

In addition to national policy instruments, by the late 1980s, the lobbying activities of the Coalfields Communities Campaign (CCC), which had so far proved unsuccessful with the national government (Bennett et al., 2000), led to the establishment of specific European regional assistance to coalfield areas. The CCC had been



established in 1985 as a lobbying group for local authorities in the mining areas. Objectives were raising awareness for the issues in the renewal of the coalfields and also, at the time, the promotion of the industry itself. Before the establishment of RECHAR in 1990, European funding through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) acted, especially during the 1980s, 'as a substitute for, rather than a supplement to, central government expenditure' (Morgan, 1985: 573).

Despite its obvious advantages, there are problems with European funding and RECHAR in particular. The allocation of the funds also required additionality as well as leverage (Osborne et al., 2002) which particularly in the early years of European funding towards the coalfields through the RECHAR initiative meant problems for the coalfield areas. Eligibility was difficult to achieve given the complex nature of criteria, e.g. unemployment rates on the basis of Travel to Work areas, loss of 1000 mining jobs since 1 January 1984 (Waddington et al, 2001), or existing eligibility under ERDF criteria. Another issue was the Conservative government's failure to deliver the necessary additional funds for European assistance to be released (Turner, 1997). It has been estimated that 'between 1989 and 1993 £1billion-worth of European funding earmarked for UK mining areas was 'frozen' (Fothergill, 1995 quoted in Waddington et al., 2001: 171). At the same time the importance of European funds for the coalfield areas is apparent given the absence of a national programme geared towards the coalfields. In addition, a lack of strategic direction and coherence was seen to be a result of the project-based funding of the programme.

### ***English Partnerships***

By 1993, a regeneration field with particular emphasis on the coalfields began to emerge. The Heseltine package provided for redundancy payments, support to Training and Enterprise Councils and also to English Estates. This organisation was succeeded by English Partnerships (EP) as the government's roving development corporation. In addition to funding specifically geared towards mining areas it also continued the allocation of resources from the Derelict Land Grant. By 1996 this had evolved further and there were the beginnings of a National Coalfield Programme as one interviewee, a former civil servant from EP explained:

Henry: Well, the National Coalfield Programme was really only, the land reclamation fund was getting more sophisticated. And it was only being, I mean, initially it wasn't just for collieries but it became clear that 90% of the applicants were for collieries. So it was set up internally, in English Partnerships, to have a coalfield community programme because that was how everything was going, towards coalfields. So, it was really market driven.

HD: Ah, ok. So it didn't necessarily have something to do with Labour coming in?

Henry: No, no, it was just, it was how it evolved. (...) I mean, Labour might see it different. Politicians might say, we started this coalfields programme and they did, but it would have started anyway. (23 July 2007)

Interestingly, the respondent here emphasises the market-nature of the development rather than the changes in the political atmosphere and the acceptance of coalfield issues on the political agenda. Although representatives from the Alliance (formerly CCC) would agree with the fact that the National Coalfield Programme was started by the Major government, they would attribute it to the recognition, and thus legitimacy, the discourse around coalfield regeneration gained after 1992/93.

#### **4.4. From 1997 onwards: The arrival of Labour and a national coalfield agenda**

The British mining industry was privatised in 1994 and with the last round of closures had diminished in importance nationally and increasingly locally. Working collieries were no longer part of a local and sub-regional industrial culture but became more and more singular phenomena. In October 1997 following Labour's election victory, the new Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, set up a Coalfields Task Force to 'develop a specific and comprehensive programme of action to assist communities which had been affected by pit closures and job losses' (CTF, 1998: 5). As Jessop (2002) explains, transformation is essentially facilitated through discourses and struggles over the meaning of crises in the state. This step showed that the longstanding struggles over problematic issues in the mining areas had matured and reached a

consensus. The coalfields' unique disadvantages were recognised and coalfield regeneration gained legitimacy as government practice – on the national as well as on the local level. Although it has been acknowledged that a plethora of policy instruments existed (see also DCLG, 2007 for a comprehensive list which, however, still fails to acknowledge the impact of the Rural Development Commission), these concentrated on the physical environment and thus only dealt with one particular characteristic of the coalfield issues. By the late 1990s, the multi-dimensionality of problems facing the coalfields, including health, education and crime as well as dereliction, was acknowledged (see also DTLR, 2001).

#### **4.4.1. Policy Instruments**

##### ***Coalfield Programmes***

The response to the task force report was the continuation of the National Coalfield Programme (NCP) of £354 million investment over the next three years. This financial package was supposed to serve as a 'recompense for the abrupt run-down of the industry and its knock-on effect on local communities' (Waddington et al., 2001: 22). A 10-year programme to address disadvantage in the coalfields was supposedly kick-started with this package (Bennett et al., 2000). In the course of the programme a number of funding bodies with specific coalfield priorities were set up: e.g. the Coalfield Regeneration Trust (CRT), the Coalfields Enterprise Fund (CEF) and joint ventures such as network space. The anticipated lifetime spending of the NCP is likely to be £647m, the CRT has awarded grants of £78.8m and the CEF has a fund of £10m (DCLG, 2007). In addition to these funds, the Coal Health Compensation Scheme was established. It is not a regeneration programme but awards compensation for vibration white finger and respiratory diseases to individuals. In this function it has provided a significant amount of funds (£2.3bn up to 2007 in England) to ex-miners (DCLG, 2007).

The recognition of coalfield issues did not only mean the mobilisation of economic capital but also meant a reconfiguration of the institutional landscape in coalfield regeneration. This also meant a new way of working for organisations such as the CCC which had been an important pressure group. Jill, a representative from the

organisation explained their role and the implied social relations in regeneration politics in the 1980s and early 1990s as providing:

A lot of campaigning materials, a lot of press releases and you know working in this sort of quite combative relationship with the Conservative government.

This changed significantly with the arrival of Labour:

And I think it's significant because I was taken on as a press/ media person and I've never done it because once Labour came into power and you got the Coalfields Task Force we very much had a, we became sort of the organisation that you would talk to about coalfields and had *gained a certain legitimacy* within certain departments of government. (my emphasis)

The opening of doors in government then also meant a change in working practices both as result of and as active continuation of a mobilisation of social, cultural and symbolic capital.

Jill: So you get a shift were we tend to do, we don't do a lot of press releases now, we don't do a lot of mass meetings and our relationship with government tends to be much more subtle and often as an insider, in some departments, DCLG being the classic one but to a certain extent DTI which has become DEBERR as well. So it's talking with civil servants or talking with ministers.

Daniel: (...) once the door started opening into government departments then it became, became, to some extent it felt to be somewhat superfluous to simply be campaigning and criticising the government for, for its lack of commitment because really there was an increased commitment there and the role of the CCC was, became more to encourage the government rather than to slag it off essentially and as a result led to a better relationship

(Jill and Daniel, Alliance representatives, 26 April 2008)

The acceptance of the CCC as a valid contributor to the regeneration agenda seems to imply a stronger impact for local authorities. Their role, however, was going to change again under the new ideology of the regions and regionalism promoted by the New Labour government.

***Regionalisation – Participative Governance and the ‘Community Turn’***

Under the Conservatives and in parallel to the establishment of the SRB another trend had developed. Four of the main spending departments (Environment, Trade and Industry, Employment and Transport) were drawn together in the Integrated Regional Offices. In addition to that, with the launch of the SRB, Government Offices for the Regions had been established. This can be seen as the early beginnings of a regionalist tendency in regeneration policies, to be continued and expanded under Labour. The new regionalism as it was expressed at the policy level meant a commitment to the region as main economic driver and therefore also the scale for the implementation of economic development policies (Lovering, 1999). This led to the establishment of Regional Development Agencies, non-departmental public bodies or quangos. Their remit is the development and execution of regional economic strategies (Bennett et al., 2000). They were also responsible for the administering of the Rural Development Programme<sup>14</sup> and the Single Regeneration Budget (Single Programming from 2001). This is also testament to the importance awarded to economic development as part of the regeneration agenda. The RDAs became the delivery organisations for English Partnerships, especially in the coalfield areas and under the NCP. A representative of SEEDA explained the working relationship between the RDAs and EP to me:

So, we basically act as the delivery agency for the, for the reclamation of the sites on the ground and the community renewal. So those two, those two things go in parallel. So there is the approval at a national government level to fund the programme which is then broken down into the individual parts of the country. (Carl, SEEDA representative, 23 February 2007)

Carl emphasises the parallel working of equal partners in this regeneration approach – the scales he invokes, however, are the national and the regional. On the lower levels of the state, the restructuring of the state also had reverberations. The notion of partnerships, already developed during the 1990s and promoted through the Single Regeneration Budget guidelines was continued under New Labour. This development

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<sup>14</sup> The Chairman of the RDC, Lord Shuttleworth, resigned in protest at the government's plans to subsume the RDC under the new RDAs in 1999.

needs to be seen in the context of the changing role of the state and the local authorities in particular and the increasing emphasis on governance rather than government. This again highlights the importance of Bourdieu's concept of the field as discussed in the earlier chapter. Changing institutional conditions lead to a shift in the positioning of different actors in the field and therefore the value of their forms of capital. The community's social and cultural capital has now increased in value, or rather; its convertibility into economic capital (funding resources) has improved significantly. This in turn influences their position within the field. These partnerships are expected to lead to broader support for area regeneration, leverage of resources from a number of sectors, promote social inclusion and a co-ordinated approach to area regeneration (Osborne et al., 2002). The inclusion of the 'community' is a core element in such regeneration partnerships and although it has become a mainstream concept in public policy, the actual implementation has remained far from ideal (Warburton, 1998).

Although recent governments have made an attempt to highlight the originality of the partnership approach, the concept has been around for decades. Robson (1994) describes how the partnership approach of the 1970s which included partnerships between central and local government was superseded by an approach which focused on the involvement of the private sector in partnerships in the 1980s. Trends which seem to have developed in the 1980s are still recognisable, at least to a certain degree, today: an emphasis on capital rather than revenue expenditure which supports the establishment of attractive community facilities but actually disadvantages the day-to-day running of the small community projects by the community and voluntary sector. The concept of partnership is not new; their composition is prone to change with changes in ideology and consequently funding regimes. Thus, multi-agency approaches and partnerships of local actors – if successfully developed – can lead to the achievement of local improvements. The continuous development in regeneration approaches over the decades has resulted in a

patchwork of varying European and national policy initiatives and funding regimes, which invariably require applicants to put together a number of partners for any one bid and to include a number of different funding sources. Such regeneration partnerships have increasingly become predicated upon community involvement as a prerequisite for receiving funds. (Osborne et al., 2002: 1086)

The reconfiguration of the institutional landscape and repositioning of actors in the practice of regeneration has also been accompanied by a change in objectives and objects. The inclusion of partners outside of the bureaucratic field, i.e. the private sector and civil society, would inevitably mean a realignment of aims for regeneration partnerships. This is also an expression of the fact that the crisis and the effects of economic restructuring have been recognised to be social and cultural as well as economic. The dominance of property development as response to industrial decline during the 1980s failed to prevent further deprivation and the exacerbation of existing problems in pockets of poverty. The Audit Commission (2008) claims that the neglect of the social dimension actually exacerbated problems in particular localities. This means that a holistic attitude has supposedly been adopted and economic development is now coupled with social and community development (DETR, 1997, MacLennan, 1999, ODPM, 2003).

In recent years then, developments under the Conservative governments have been turned around. Local authorities have been given more responsibility in the social aspects of regeneration through their community development strategies. Similarly, during the 1980s and 1990s, with policies' emphasis on the market mechanisms, community involvement was marginalised and if it was achieved then mainly through involving voluntary organisations as service providers (Osborne et al., 2002). The latest 'community turn' sees successful regeneration firmly based on the achievement of active communities (Home Office Communication Directorate, 2003). At the same time, the debate around responsibilised communities has a strong element of the 'blaming the victim' discourse already prevalent in the urban policies of the 1980s and 1990s (Hastings, 1999).

The notion of social capital as a determining factor in successful restructuring has become part of the UK policy discourse under New Labour. Hibbitt et al. (2001) delineate the increasing influence of the concept in policy thinking, e.g. through the Commission for Social Justice and the Social Exclusion Unit. Social capital is here understood as connections, partnerships, networks of trust and following Putnam (1995) seen as precondition for economic development. Mutuality in relationships is the driving force for innovation, enterprise and initiative (Home Office

Communication Directorate, 2003). Kearns (2003) argues that the shift in emphasis from poverty to social exclusion under New Labour has facilitated the emergence of social capital as means to an end in social policies. Its supposedly beneficial role is manifest in the prominence given to partnership and network arrangements in the delivery of projects dealing with socio-economic change as promoted in the guidelines for the Single Regeneration Budget and the European Structural Fund programmes. Social capital therefore does not only have a 'social' dimension but also clearly an economic one as it has become essential in the pursuit of resources under changing funding regimes. It also has a geographical dimension as the manifestation of social capital is often seen in the seemingly universally attractive notion of community which

nestles comfortably in the heart of all political ideologies and mobilises sentiment and approval in most commentaries on the social processes of renewal and regeneration. (...) 'Community' has become the methodology for seeking resolution to seemingly intractable social and economic difficulties in defined geographical areas. (Adamson et al., 2001: 10)

The assumption is that regeneration on the one hand rests on the existence of a strong social infrastructure and consequently potential for collaborative action. On the other, such a strengthening of the social infrastructure is the desired outcome of effective regeneration, e.g. 'where communities enjoy a social infrastructure which is conducive to the kinds of collaborative action which permit the fulfilment of shared goals, this is an invaluable resource in developing effective regeneration strategies' (Rees and Stroud, 2004: 22). This links to the question of embeddedness (Mendez, 2005, Granovetter, 1985) as a useful theoretical construct as it has been repeatedly suggested that the disembedding of work relationships from the social context has led to a weakening of the social infrastructure. This in turn contributes to less effective regeneration strategies through a lack of community involvement. In addition to that, a lack of social capital and thus the abilities to demand more provision and programmes from the authorities could exacerbate the situation. It is noted that regeneration activities have become less specific towards the coalfields and less concerned with employment loss than with a reconstruction of social infrastructure. This means shifting the focus of regeneration from the revitalisation of a mode of



capital accumulation to the creation or consolidation of a particular mode of social regulation. 'Perhaps more than anything else, effective regeneration strategy is about the generating of sustainable networks of social relations into which people can be firmly integrated' (Rees and Stroud, 2004: 41).

In a more critical reading this emphasis on community involvement could be interpreted as introducing criteria for legitimating participation of particular groups in regeneration activities (cf. Raco, 2003). Such social institutions need to be 'conducive' to a particular way of working together and need to be supporting 'shared goals', the shareholders of which are not specified. Consequently, groups or individuals which do not meet these standards can legitimately be excluded from the regeneration process. Legitimacy as social process therefore is an important concept when discussing regeneration efforts (cf. Bourdieu, 1989). The above outline of the increasing emphasis on governance has also highlighted the shift from a pre-occupation with the relationship between state and capital to the relationship between state and civil society which is the focus of the thesis.

#### **4.5. *Regeneration as an emerging field of practice***

This section aims to show impact of the shifting politics of regeneration production outlined above on the local institutional context of regeneration; that is the local organisation of the state. This means that regeneration emerged as a field of practice with its own institutions and logic of action as result of the contests over the distribution of power between central and local actors. This is not only supposed to be a re-telling of the historical elements just outlined but draw attention to the increasing marketisation of regeneration within local authorities. This means in particular the development of a professional and market-driven approach and the development of a regional service class (Lovering, 1999, Boland, 2007). It thus shows one dimension of the interaction between the local and global forces shaping regeneration regimes. Hambleton (1998) suggests a development from the bureaucracy of the 1970s via the urban managerialism of the 1980s to empowerment strategies from the 1990s onwards. The suggested trajectory also links with Bourdieu's discussion of the political field and the position of professionals in it. He claims that



In politics as in art, the dispossession of the majority of the people is a correlate, or even a consequence, of the concentration of the specifically political means of production in the hands of professionals, who can enter into the distinctive political game with some chance of success only on condition that they possess a specific competence. (1991c: 175/6)

The importance of the issue of professionalism/ professionalisation became clear in the interviews in NWL as well as the documents in Kent. This meant a more flexible, 'business-like' attitude towards regeneration. Where regeneration is seen specifically as economic development, i.e. in NWL, a business-like approach was deemed particularly crucial. In my interviews with Chief Economic Development Officers it was clear that 'regeneration' had a strong economic orientation with the attraction of business as its main priority. Jessop (2002) also argues that, even where such a hierarchy has not been openly expressed, social policy has increasingly become subordinate to economic policy. The story is not only one of changing policy priorities but also of changing institutional conditions. Economic development as part of the planning function of the local authorities was the core meaning of regeneration at the beginning of the period under discussion (early 1980s) but the emphasis shifted to community development as the main responsibility of local authorities with Regional Development Agencies taking over their role in economic development. This parallels the shift in policy as well as academic thinking from an emphasis on inner cities to regions and back to city-regions similar to the ostensible shift from local to central, regional and back to local responsibility and accountability, only that centralising tendencies, in particular with regard to financial control have not lessened (Jenkins, 2006).

Economic development shifted from an activity which was part of the planning functions to a recognised formal function for local authorities. As is evident from the KCC documentation:

There are a number of reasons why a higher profile for economic development is desirable at this time. There is an increasing emphasis, both nationally and locally, on promoting small businesses, assisting industrial and commercial developments and job creation. Local government is becoming increasingly actively involved in this

field, and it is apparent that the County Council has an important role to play in the County in bridging the divide between the public and private sectors (...) (KCC, P&R Cttee, 2 July 1987)

This is not to say that economic development had not been taking place but, especially with growing central state involvement and consequently legal recognition, it became formalised as a separate function. This formalisation of economic development has meant a delineation of what was accepted in terms of the involvement of local authorities. It was also accompanied by growing professionalisation in the ranks of the local authority officers dealing with the issue.

The Economic Development 'scene' changes rapidly. Not only does it work within general macro-economic trends which have much greater impact than anything that can be achieved locally, but legislation, government policy and the financial resources available form a constantly shifting ground upon which to work. More so than even most other local authority activities. There is always the danger that what is appropriate today will not be so tomorrow. Councils must therefore be constantly alert and flexible enough both to change policies when required and to take advantage of new opportunities. (NWLDC, EDC, 23 April 1985)

The extract above points to the fact that the shifting regeneration approaches are a response to changing economic developments – changing market forces. The idea is that several activities were elevated to economic development activities over the course of the years if not even seen as the panacea to structural change, especially tourism (place-marketing) became an integral part of economic development as inevitable move towards the service economy.

Today however 'tourism is trendy!' Every local authority, area, group is climbing aboard the band-wagon, some perhaps without direction or need – but purely because it is fashionable. As tourism is now recognised as economically strategic, it has become professional in its approach and its organisations should therefore exist to efficiently achieve the objectives. Co-operation between local authorities and other agencies both public and private is therefore to be expected and encouraged. (DDC, 1987, para 1.19)

What is here described for tourism was easily applicable for the whole of economic development, even if different local authorities saw different priorities. In most cases, a two-pronged approach of re-industrialisation and tourism development was followed (to differing degrees). The important message in this extract is the emphasis on the professional character of tourism promotion (and economic development by extension) and the need for co-operation or partnership in its pursuit. It is also interesting to note the reference to tourism promotion because of fashion rather than need. Interestingly, William, a former Chief Economic Development Officer at NWLDC, recounted the influence of knowledge exchange between authorities involved in economic development through the Federation of Industrial Development Authorities (FIDA). This promoted certain economic development fashions as, he described, Councillors would visit other localities and inspect regeneration projects and consequently without necessarily considering the suitability and transferability of local solutions decide ‘they thought they wanted one [regeneration project], they’d have one of them.’ Again, this can be applied to regeneration generally which has become a local authority function all over the country irrespective of need as result of de-industrialisation. As discussed earlier, however, need is a socially constructed and politically legitimised concept in the context of regeneration.

Going back further, go back further, go back another ten years and you probably only had 20 local authorities in the country that saw themselves as having any economic development function, and half of those it would have only been an inward investment function. So, you know, it's been part of a much more gradual process over a period of time of local authorities getting involved in local economic development. (...) Now, you know, just about everyone in the country is going to say, oh yeah, we've got an inward investment, you know, function and something. Economic development is part of the local strategy. (Mark, former NWLDC CEDO, 18 June 2007)

As the extract above shows, the establishment of regeneration as a field in its own right, as distinct from existing ‘traditional’ and traditionally formalised functions of local authorities brought with it certain institutional requirements and resources and procedures of working. Professionalisation in this sense meant a greater orientation towards private sector working practices and also a greater involvement of and with the private sector. Greater co-operation between the public and the private sector

would blur the boundaries between the old and new and enables a new institutional landscape which would be characterised by partnerships between organisations beyond established administrative boundaries. These partnerships would be a step forward from economic development and promotion which had been pursued by local, isolated and fragmented agencies (KCC, EDAT, 23 March 1987). Economic, political and social spaces would be more fluid as consequence of restructuring and the ultimate aim of reacting to market (as well as political) forces – they would be spaces of marketing logic not defined by local boundaries (DDC, 1987, para.1.19). This thought will be taken up again in Chapter 8 which focuses on the importance of the creation of spaces and the positioning of places in a symbolic structure. In addition to the increasing importance of partnerships, the introduction of privatisation legislation, including Compulsory Competitive Tendering, as another manifestation of the re-appraisal of the role of local authorities also drove their professionalisation and marketisation. A more commercial approach needed to be adopted which meant the production of business plans for different services, ‘incorporating objectives, market or client identification and a strategy to meet the goals set’ (DDC, T&M Cttee, 23 May 1989).

On a local level, before the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, there were no particular economic development powers prescribed for Local Authorities and they saw their remit mainly within the confines of their statutory planning obligations (or rights). The regeneration professional then became a curious mix of planners and economic development officers and as William emphasised: ‘You can’t underestimate where officers sit and their background. (...) That was their background [property development/ planning/ recreation] and expertise and that’s what they enjoyed doing’ (5 May 2008). This links very closely with Bourdieu’s discussions about the development of the political field and the positions of individual actors as expressed through their *habitus* within it (1991c).

Another consequence of the emergence of the regeneration field as an accepted political and policy practice is the institutionalisation of procedures and mechanisms. As Mark, another former CEDO, explained, the changes in institutional capacities and roles are reflected in the increased number of actors in the field:

Yeah, and maybe you find, because it's sort of, you know, the bidding culture for economic regeneration projects is so broad now, there are so many people doing it. Then it was only those that really bothered that got the money and support.

He explains here that it is not only the number of actors in the field that has changed. This has also had effects on the manner in which regeneration is implemented:

Yeah, there is more, there is certainly more players. Yeah, and the process is very different. ... It's, you know, have I addressed various things within the appraisal process. Does the appraisal process come up with all the right answers? Have I ticked all the right boxes? And have I measured all of the outputs? And what's being bought is, it's funny, you know, what's being bought is a series of outputs rather than a project. Maybe better, I don't know. There's a lot more bureaucracy involved in that. (Mark, former CEDO, NWLDC, 18 June 2007)

The change in the culture of regeneration, that is, in the mobilisation of different skills and attitudes was also described by Henry, a former senior civil servant with English Partnerships. He questions here how much of the transformation can be attributed to processes of institutionalisation and the emergence and consolidation of the organisations as such and how much is the effect of political (or administrative) leadership.

I think it's a little bit to do with the institution, the change of emphasis because you get a new Chief, you start a new organisation up and a new Chief Executive comes in and he wants to do things that everybody says oh, our Chief Executive thought of this and then want to do further things. But I think it was also the change of these organisations, but I think it was also the change of culture.

Although his account of changes in regeneration practice is almost devoid of references to particular policies, he goes on to mention the 'new thinking', the new ideology of holistic and joined-up regeneration.

And people thought about regeneration a lot more. When I came into regeneration, all regeneration was, was regeneration of the site. But the new thinking came, why are we just doing that and that is probably only 20% of the global regeneration now. And everybody who was involved in it, you used to think that your part was the most important but it wasn't. Everything was equally important and had to equally fit in with each other. (Henry, former senior civil servant at English Partnerships, 23 July 2007)

In this sense, then national policy agendas and changes in the organisation of and contests between extra-local forces have an influence on the local organisation of practices and relationships. Marinetto (2003) argues that policy initiatives and institutional reforms have regularly been used for the promotion of particular behaviours and lifestyles. The Thatcherite project is a case in point as the 'market-style reforms of the public sector were intended to make public sector actors think and behave as if operating with private sector services' (Walsh, 1995: 30-31 quoted in Marinetto, 2003: 631). If we accept the privatisation and marketisation of the public sector as integral part of the changes in the public sphere at the time, then a blurring of the private and public sector is understandable. The public sector in the sense of a public social sphere developed along similar lines as the private sector. In this sense, an analytical distinction between public and private forms of capital (both in relation to civil society and private business) becomes helpful and necessary to discuss logics of action based on the distribution and mobilisation of these different forms of capital. Similarly, the proliferation of partnerships and the importance of the inclusion of the private as well as the community and voluntary sector into governance mechanisms can be seen as a manifestation of the blurring of the public and the private. Beynon et al. (1999: 5) illustrate this with an extract from their data on partnerships in coalfield regeneration in four British coal field areas. Partnerships mean a fruitful combination of the public and private

where with a partnership of private and public money and the community working it together, they can provide basic facilities that otherwise the private sector wouldn't supply and the public sector can't afford to supply anymore ... it's a whole new area and it is opening up with academic writing about it and with a change of policy in government as well (representatives of Wales Co-operative Development)

This emergence of new relationships between different actors in the social sphere, new ways of exchanging resources and evaluating these supports the idea that regeneration has developed into a field of practice of its own.

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

Economic and community development policies have undergone a series of changes in the last decades. This overview has demonstrated some of these tendencies: from property development and physical reclamation to a holistic approach integrating economic, social and environmental considerations and back, to a limited degree. The central and local state's role in the process has changed as non-state actors have come to the fore through the increased emphasis on public-private partnerships. The efficiency and 'democracy' of these, however, has continued to be contentious. One criticism has often remained: the sheer number of funding streams, agendas and agencies has often proved confusing rather than helpful. Robson's (1994) assessment of the plethora of 'policy instruments across a range of authorities, the multiplicity of new agencies and the shifting policy goals [which] all created an uncertain context' during the 1980s, still holds true for the later decades (Harris et al., 2004, ODPM, 2003, DCLG, 2007). The recent evaluation of coalfield regeneration for the DCLG (2007) has shown that national regeneration agencies struggled with the development of strategic capacity in the sense of developing the resources and skills (i.e. social and cultural capital) necessary. If the claim of a lack of strategic vision can be levelled at the policy makers nationally, it should not be surprising if one of the key variables facilitating local economic development; i.e. that of strategic vision, has not been prevalent at the local level either. It is even more remarkable if it does happen at all.

Local regeneration policies are influenced by national agendas – not only the regeneration agenda but also central agendas of state organisation and thus the relationship between the local and the national state in general (Robson, 1994). Therefore, increased funding for urban or coalfield renewal was counterbalanced by general cuts in local authority expenditure, resources and control. As the allocation of regeneration funding shifted to the regional level through the Regional Development Agencies and the Government Offices for the Regions, economic regeneration is of



higher importance to these institutions than community involvement (Osborne et al., 2002, cf. Jessop, 2002). The dominant position of the regional agencies also means a weaker position for the local authorities, which have to maintain and negotiate multiple relationships to retain influence and position. The role of central government, despite a change in shape and form, remains pervasive. Changes in the mechanisms of intervention from tax incentives to indirect influence through non-governmental public bodies and their agenda setting have not diminished the role of national actors. Although initiatives may appear to originate and be focused on different geographical scales, national agendas are still decisive (Waddington et al., 2001, Furbey, 1999). At the same time, this indirect influence offers the opportunity for conflict between the priorities on the national and the local level, between a pre-occupation with capital and an orientation towards civil society. The issue is one of difference between the creation of spaces for capital (especially through supply-side policies) and the maintenance of place for residents. As Beynon et al. (1994: 5) describe the distinction: 'Locations that for capital are a (temporary) space for profitable production are for workers, their families and friends, places in which to live; places in which they have considerable individual and cultural investment.'

This provides a fitting link for the continued engagement with theory. It highlights the multi-dimensionality of capitals in a field of practice: private economic capital in contrast to private (civil society) social and cultural capital. These are weighed and legitimated through the rules of the regeneration field which are decidedly influenced and determined by the state and its representatives as agents in the field. This perspective allows an investigation of the operation of symbolic power with regard to socio-economic transformation by examining 'how, in different markets and fields, institutionalized mechanisms have emerged which tend to fix the value accorded to different products, to allocate these products differentially and to inculcate a belief in their value' (Thompson, 1991: 24). Symbolic power, i.e. the state's power to construct reality, is here the power to construct the practice and reality of regeneration. This chapter has delineated the mechanisms that have emerged governing allocation of the means of production (economic, social and symbolic resources) for the regeneration product and the social relations between its 'producers'. This has highlighted changing priorities or values ascribed to regeneration outcomes (from a sole emphasis on property-led regeneration to the appreciation of holistic approaches) and thus

changing positions of the producers of those outcomes. It also needs to be investigated through which process different forms and foci of regeneration have been ascribed value, i.e. declaring them valuable and more valuable so than other potential regeneration products and trajectories. The economic value of regeneration is hardly in question; however, the value that is ascribed to particular results is hotly contested. The outline above has also shown the necessary shift from a sole focus on the relationship between state and capital to an inclusion of the relationship between state and civil society. This highlights the impact of state restructuring under post-Fordist conditions where ‘the institutional compromise for advanced capitalism is characterised by a movement from national government and interventionist economic policy making towards reflective structures of governance involving an “associationalism” between the state, economic actors and civil society stakeholders’ (Jones, 2002: 1185). The following chapter will therefore introduce the case studies to describe the background for the implementation and insertion of national policies, rules and agendas into local affairs.

## **Chapter 5 – The Place(s) of Mining - Marginality in Context**

### **5.1. Introduction**

The following chapter gives an introduction to the specificity of the North West Leicestershire and Kent coalfields. This means outlining the results of the intersection of particular historical, economic, political and social conditions. The distinctiveness of the mining communities in both Kent and North West Leicestershire needs to be seen in relation to their location within their region and their location within the British coal mining industry. The chapter therefore attempts to locate these places in the context of what has long been seen as the homogeneous occupational culture of coal mining. This requires a short historical outline of the development in the industry in each area, the local political, economic and social structure as well as a rough overview of developments since colliery closure.

In 1998, the Coalfields Task Force described the English mining regions as unique places:

There is nowhere else like the coalfields. ... what makes the coalfields special is the context in which this decline has taken place. They have a unique combination of concentrated joblessness, physical isolation, poor infrastructure and severe health problems. (CTF 1998: 7, para 1.1., 1.2)

The uniqueness of these coal mining communities in Britain had not only been observed in times of closure but also during their heyday (Bulmer, 1975). This assumed homogeneity which was mainly based on the particular organisation of employment in the industry and the associated institutions has been criticised in the sociological and historical literature (e.g. Gilbert, 1995, Ackers, 1996, Benson, 1989) and this thesis is not re-iterating this line of argument but some elements will be used to highlight similarities and differences between the two case studies. Both areas are marginal coalfields in terms of their contribution to the overall output of the coal industry, between 1 and 3% of the national output. They were administratively linked through their inclusion in the South Midlands area of the National Coal Board ‘but politically and industrially “miles apart”’ (Park, 1999:2). They are similar with

respect to their location in close proximity to affluent localities in a predominantly rural area. They are, however, also exhibiting other characteristics of marginality which will be discussed in the following chapter.

## 5.2. The coal mining industry in North West Leicestershire and Kent

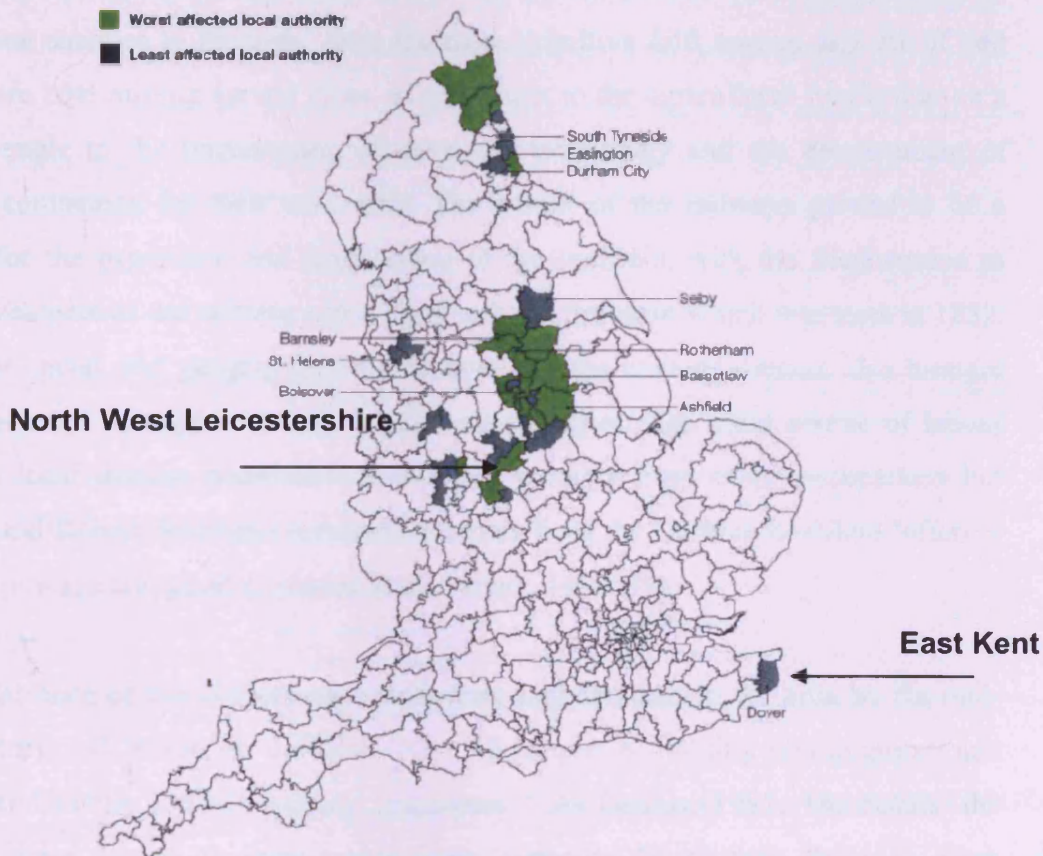


Figure 5.1 The location of the coalfields in England, source: Audit Commission (2008)

### 5.2.1. Developing the coalfield

#### *North West Leicestershire*

The coalfield is located to the North West of the city of Leicester, with Coalville and Ashby-de-la-Zouch as the urban settlements. Mining had been part of the economic structure in North West Leicestershire for centuries. Earliest references date back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and it is assumed that coal was being mined in the main areas of the coalfield by the late medieval period (Griffin, 1981, Baker, 1983). Up to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the exploration and exploitation of the coalfield was mainly driven by the

local landed gentry and lesser local landowners. Some investment also came from merchants, industrialists and professionals and by the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century investors in the coalfield did not only come from a variety of social but also geographical backgrounds. Such early coal mining activity was also due to a significant part of the coalfield being exposed, so mining could be operated at relatively shallow depths. By the beginning of the Victorian period, the Leicestershire coalfield was one of the older British coalfields (Griffin, 1981) and had been producing substantial amounts of coal. The actual process of mining had also undergone changes in the area: from the more primitive drift mining and use of bell pits where coal mining served more as an adjunct to the agricultural production on a landed estate to the introduction of advanced technology and the development of mining companies for their own sake. The advent of the railways proved to be a trigger for the expansion and exploitation of the coalfield, with the Stephenson as both developers of the railway and a local colliery, Snibston which was sunk in 1832. Different social and geographical backgrounds to the colliery owners also brought about different management and recruitment strategies. The main source of labour was the local mining population as well as workers from other occupations but George and Robert Stephenson recruited miners from the Durham coalfield ‘offering free rail passage and good accommodation’ (Park, 1999: 79).

The occurrence of the colliery-cum-landowner had declined in the area by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and leases for collieries were taken over by mining entrepreneurs and private and public limited liability companies.<sup>15</sup> As Griffin (1981: 18) details, the reserves were leased at rates which were generally lower than those in other coalfields. The majority of mining partnerships originated in the area and comprised local businessmen as well as mining engineers

Migration into the coalfield occurred in two phases, in the Victorian period of the main expansion of the coalfield and in the early period of major colliery closures in

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<sup>15</sup> Earl Ferrers leased the mineral reserves on his estate at Staunton Harold and Lount from the 1830s, Bagworth and Ibstock collieries were sunk by the landowners, Lord Maynard and William Thirly respectively but sold to different mining company owners by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The Earls of Moira and Lord Donington ran collieries in South Derbyshire and at Moira until Lord Donington’s death in 1895 when they were taken over by a private limited liability company. Bretby colliery continued to be worked by the landowner Lord Chesterfield into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, an exception to the rule of the increasing importance of partnerships and limited liability companies.

the late 1950s and early 1960s. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Coalville had developed from a town based on the mining and trading of coal to a manufacturing town with a range of economic opportunities and mining as one of a number of industries. So even though, in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the town and the area showed traits characteristic of mining dominated communities, e.g. housing and social facilities being provided by the colliery companies to ensure employee loyalty, the growing importance of the textile and hosiery industry in the wider area resulted in a more heterogeneous industrial and thus social and political structure. These industries, however, were mainly offering employment opportunities for women. Similar to other coalfields or mono-industrial areas, alternative employers providing opportunities for men were discouraged (cf. Beynon et al., 1994 and Hudson, 1989 for the North East).

On 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1947, Vesting Day, there were 8 working collieries in Leicestershire, producing 3.3m tons which amounted to 2% of the national output. With the acquisition of the landholdings as well as the collieries of the colliery companies<sup>16</sup> on vesting day the National Coal Board became one of the largest landowners in the area. In 1945, the coalfield was described as ‘the district with the highest output per man shift, lowest costs, highest wages and the highest profits in preceding years’ (Nationalisation Valuation Board in Tookey, 2001: 498). Throughout the 1950s, output per manshift remained highest in Leicestershire, in national comparison, as did the amount of profit per ton. As a consequence, the miners of Leicestershire received the highest wages in the industry (Park, 1999).

### *Kent*

Character of the coalfield: Situate as it is in one of the loveliest of English Counties, the Kent Coalfield has characteristics of its own and its further development gives rise to considerations which are at once physical, economic and social. The Coalfield has the great advantage of being distant only 65 miles from London and close to the ports of Southern England. At the same time, the underlying Coal Measures lie deep and are not easily exploited; regard is necessary to amenities of an agricultural area favoured by London

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<sup>16</sup> There is a more complex story here: some colliery companies (nationally) were large landowners because a, land would be needed to extend the surface buildings and b, this was the ‘cheapest way of dealing with claims for subsidence’ (Ashworth, 1986: 23) which meant that some colliery companies owned farmland as well as colliery land.

holidaymakers, and there are problems involved in the recruitment of miners and in the provision of employment for their families. (Ministry of Fuel and Power, 1945: 4)

The Kent coalfield covers an area of 190 square miles which includes coal seams under the sea, with Ramsgate as a boundary in the north and Sturry, near Canterbury as a boundary in the West. It extends under the sea and it is assumed that it is structurally if not actually linked with the Pas de Calais Coalfield. Its development was first considered in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with the earliest borings in the 1890s. The discovery of coal was almost a side product of early attempts to build a tunnel across the Channel. When the government halted the Channel construction to consider the military implications of a connection to Continental Europe in 1882, the Channel Tunnel Co. instigated borings to explore Kent's geology and discovered iron ore and coal (Ministry of Fuel and Power, 1945, Park, 1999). In 1896 the Kent Coalfields Syndicate was established and the mineral rights were bought from the Channel Tunnel Co. so a colliery could be started on the old tunnel workings. Shakespeare Colliery was the first colliery to be sunk in 1896. Although more than 45 test bores were conducted between 1896 and 1921 and ten collieries were started, only a constant stream of investment kept the development of the Kent coalfield going as the geological conditions made commercial or profitable production of coal a difficult enterprise. 'Mushroom companies, formed to exploit the newly discovered riches, sprang up and withered overnight; their history is complicated and a long series of ill-advised ventures created a strong prejudice against the Coalfield' (Ministry of Fuel and Power (MFP), 1945: 5). Only from 1912 did coal mining become commercially viable at Snowdown Colliery.<sup>17</sup>

In contrast to the overall national trend production in the coalfield (as with the Dukeries in Nottingham) grew throughout the 1920s (MFP, 1945). The development was stimulated by a Treasury guarantee for most of its investment, but the amount of coal produced was negligible in the national context. The Kent contribution to coal output did not exceed 1% up to nationalisation (Supple, 1987). Recruitment was one

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<sup>17</sup> Snowdown Colliery was sunk in 1907 by Arthur Burr; it was closed in the early 1920s but reopened by Pearson & Dorman Long Ltd. In 1924, Betteshanger was sunk in the early 1920s by Pearson & Dorman Long. Tilmanstone was operated by Tilmanstone (Kent) Collieries Ltd. and Chislet by Chislet Colliery Ltd.

of the major issues in the establishment of the coalfield. The Kent collieries found it difficult to employ local, green labour which had been unacquainted with the mines and as such imported labour from the longer established coalfields around the country. In an analysis of the origins of unemployment books for the 1920 – 1936 period, Thomas (1937) highlights patterns of migration. He points to the fact that the Kent coalfield had the highest rate of absorption of migrant labour into the South East region<sup>18</sup> as a result of the expansion of the mining operations. The highest proportion of incomers came from the areas hardest hit by the depression – the North East (40%) and Wales (26%). Migration from the Midlands, the North West and Scotland is significantly lower. This does not only reflect the location of the existing British coalfields but also the regional differences in the performance of the coalfields. While South Wales and the North East suffered in their production and employment records especially in the period up to 1929, both being export fields, production and employment in the Midlands and Yorkshire actually increased (Supple, 1987). In this way, the coalfield was consolidated in the 1930s.

In addition to the particular migration trajectories to the coalfield in general, there were also particular settlement and recruitment patterns within the coalfield. These were consequences of the configuration of ownership with colliery owners ‘importing’ labour from their established bases. Chislet was owned by a subsidiary of Powell Duffryn and the majority of the workforce therefore came from Wales giving Chislet the name ‘The Welsh pit’. The majority of Tilmanstone miners were recruited from Somerset, the Forest of Dean and North Wales. Betteshanger and Snowdown miners came from the North East and Yorkshire as their owners, Pearson and Dorman Long originated from Middlesbrough (Pitt, 1979). An important element in the migration patterns to the Kent coalfield and the telling of stories about them is the migrants’ alleged militancy. This was especially applicable to Betteshanger which was sunk in 1924 and therefore in the following years attracted those miners who had been blacklisted as a result of strike action in other coalfields around the country. In the area, it was also known as the ‘Bolshie’ pit and its reputation for worker militancy

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<sup>18</sup> In 1932, 17.7% of exchanged unemployment books had originated outside the region; this rose to 18.8% in 1936. This compares to an absorption rate of 4.8% and 5.9% respectively for the region as a whole (Thomas, 1937: 334).



was strengthened when the mineworkers went on strike over wage demands during the Second World War.

In the coalfield development process, colliery companies played a pivotal role in supplying housing in those areas where large new pits were being developed during the 1920s, e.g. the Dukeries and Kent (Gilbert, 1992, Supple, 1987). This occurred out of necessity rather than any other reason as the need for labour also meant a need for their accommodation as council housing would not be readily available. So when Pearson & Dorman Long bought Snowdown Colliery in 1924 they also started the construction of Aylesham as a model village to house 650 families. By 1945, ca. 70% of the 5000-6000 strong workforce were living in mining villages which had been provided directly or indirectly by the respective colliery companies at a distance from the collieries between ¼ of a mile to 3 miles (MFP, 1945).

It was determined that the houses required for the working of each pit should be concentrated in a separate area within a reasonable distance of the pit they were designed to serve, on a site selected with a view so far as possible, to preserving the amenities of the surrounding country, avoiding the construction of costly new roads and affording the best possible facilities for the provision of public services. (Archibald and Abercrombie, 1928: 51 in Park, 1999: 223)

As a result of this policy the Kent coalfield is characterised by settlements which were constructed with the sole purpose of serving a colliery, adjacent to but socially separate from affluent farming villages and hamlets and isolated in a predominantly rural area.

### **5.2.2. The Place of the Union**

#### *North West Leicestershire*

Union organisation in the Leicestershire coalfield was characterised by recurring conflicts in opinion between the rank-and-file and the union officials as well as by a mixed attitude towards industrial action. The Leicestershire coalfield lacked any long history of political activism (Tookey, 2001); it was distinct in the moderate approach of its unions, a good employment record and high wages. The militancy record of the coalfield is mixed, it being solid and supportive of the national unions in some major

strikes and lockouts, e.g. 1912, 1921, 1972 and 1974 but it also had high numbers of working miners during the 1926 lockout. In some cases, the solidarity among the miners was also facilitated by the support from the management and colliery owners who valued the tradition of good owner/worker relations higher than potentially longer-term conflict (Park, 1999). The conflict in 1926 saw strikebreaking in the area and Park cites an argument which he uses again in the context of the 1984/85 miners' strike: the lack of a cohesive community culture (1999:123). The mixed attitude towards strikes has also been related back to the 'pecuniary nature of Leicester miners' who, as Park (1999: 95) argues, were willing to strike on matters of principle rather than a belief in the working-class consciousness. This was especially the case in the strikes of the 1970s which were centred on wage demands. Even though, in 1972, only 37% of the NUM members in the Leicestershire area had voted for the strike (Griffin, 1981: 158), there was no strike breaking. In 1974, the percentage supporting the strike call had gone up to 61.6% (Griffin, 1981: 181) which was still the lowest out of the coalfields and significantly below the overall result of 81% supporting the strike nationally. This display of militancy was, according to Park (1999), a direct result of the introduction of the National Power Loading Agreement in 1966 which had had a negative effect on wages in the area even if it meant a single national wage structure for the industry. In general, then, the Leicestershire miners had a reputation for moderate union traditions and high productivity in a profitable coalfield, with Bagworth and Ellistown colliery outperforming the other NWL collieries at the beginning of the 1980s (Griffin, 1989).

The ambivalent nature of Leicestershire's militancy was again visible in the 1984/85 miners' strike when only a minority of men, the Dirty Thirty, went on strike in the area while the rest of the workforce continued to work throughout the strike. The area strike ballot on 19<sup>th</sup> March had been lost, with 89.3% voting to continue working (Griffin, 1989). Thirty miners at Bagworth, seven at Ellistown, and individual miners at South Leicester and Whitwick joined the strike, 'the smallest striking minority in any coalfield who "live up to 35 miles apart, isolated from each other and ostracised in their own villages"' (Griffin, 1989: 230). After the strike, the new Union of Democratic Mineworkers was successful at recruiting members at individual pits but a vote in the Leicestershire area to separate from the NUM was lost.

***Kent***

If high wages were seen as an important element in the Leicestershire miners' militancy, this was not the same case in Kent. Interestingly, the Kent miners together with the Leicestershire miners were among the highest paid in the coal industry (Ashworth, 1986). This, however, resulted out of different circumstances. Union organisation in Kent effectively started with the opening of the pits, with the Kent Miners' Association showing a strong presence at Snowdown already in 1915. Whereas accounts of the Leicestershire coalfield mention the alienation of the Leicestershire miners from the national union organisation, descriptions of the Kent coalfield also dwell on the divisions between the different collieries. There does not seem to be a unified Kent coalfield but four Kent collieries with their specific conditions of ownership, labour relations and social relations. Differences between the collieries in terms of militancy were apparent already in the early years of their operation, e.g. a sizable majority of miners at Snowdown, quite against the image of Kent miners as being militant, broke the strike of 1926 (Park, 1999). In the following years, there continued to be differences between the collieries, which also sprung from the particular recruitment conditions in the coalfield.

In contrast to the lack of support for the 1984/85 strike in the North West Leicestershire area, Kent miners supported the strike ferociously. The Kent collieries had a reputation of militancy which was based on the foundation myths of the coalfields which was allegedly made up from blacklisted miners in other coalfields and also the harsh working conditions encountered in the particularly deep and wet pits of the area. Snowdown Colliery had acquired the nickname 'Dante's Inferno' by the miners and was regarded as one of the worst pits to work in Britain. There was, however, a small back to work movement, most disappointingly for some union representatives, at Betteshanger led by Peter McGibbon. A number of men had been dismissed throughout the strike and in contrast to the national executive decision to end the strike on 5 March 1985 and return to work, Kent miners actually continued on strike for another week, picketing and thus exacerbating conflicts which had surfaced throughout the strike. The experience of these twelve months, victimisation, defeat as well as the community effort still resonate in the mining communities in Kent and have become an important part of the collective identity.

### 5.3. Places of Production

#### 5.3.1. The local economic structure 1981 - 1991

##### *North West Leicestershire*

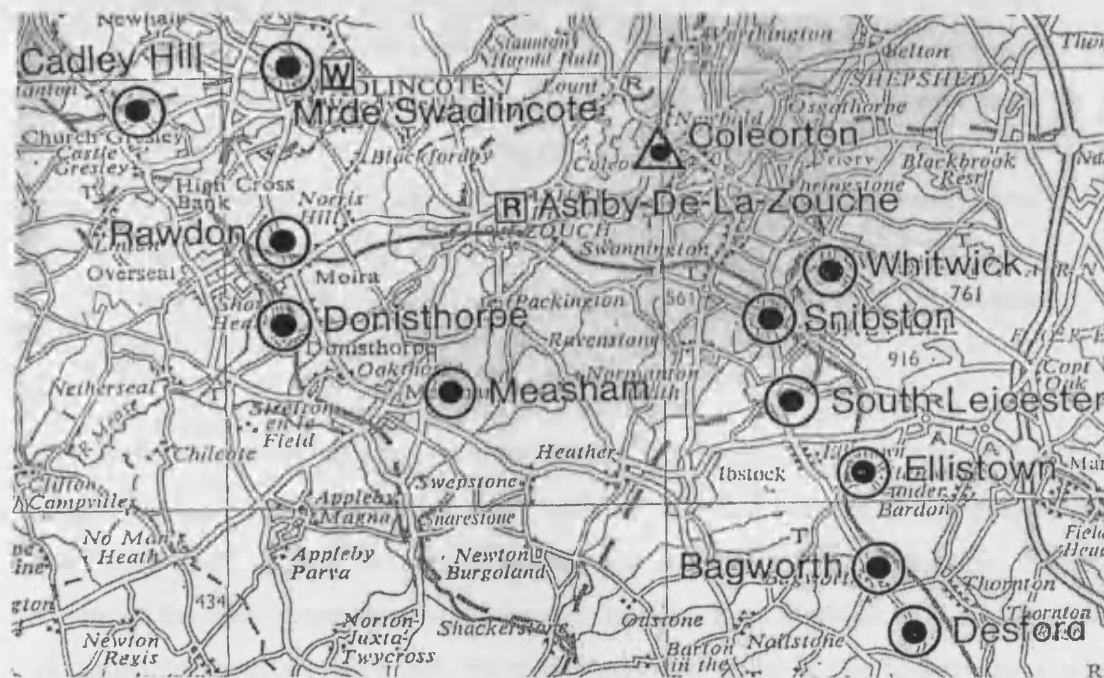


Figure 5.2 The collieries of North West Leicestershire and South Derbyshire, source: *Colliery Guardian* (1983)

Even if it was one of the marginal coalfields in Britain - its 6 collieries<sup>19</sup> producing c. three million tonnes of the 108m tonnes produced nationally in 1981/82 - in terms of employment the coal industry was central for NWL. In 1981, 26.5% of male employment was in the Energy and Water sector, most of which was in the local collieries. In some communities around Coalville, the proportion of men working in the mines even rose to 40% (BSHF, 1990). The only sector employing more people in NWL was manufacturing (34%). The service industry was underrepresented and the number of women working in the district was the lowest in Leicestershire (58% economic activity rate).<sup>20</sup> In Leicestershire as a whole, the service sector was also underrepresented (26% of working-age population) with manufacturing predominant, for both the male and the female labour force. The composition of the labour market for women in NWL was largely similar to that of the county as a whole although manufacturing was of higher importance in NWL.

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<sup>19</sup> Bagworth, Desford, Ellistown, Snibston, South Leicester, Whitwick, see Appendix for site histories

<sup>20</sup> This refers to the economic activity rate of women between the age of 16 and 65 based on the Census 1981 data.

In the early 70s, there would have been perhaps a dozen, late 60s, there would have been at least 12 deep mines which, the typical figures were something about a thousand jobs, predominantly men, directly employed not counting indirect employment in engineering or fuel or the corner shop or whatever or the usual multiplier that takes place. So it was the largest single employer in NWL and SD, the adjacent constituencies, but it wasn't the majority employer. There were, it was always the case that there were sizable other industries, textiles, boot and shoe, engineering, things of that kind, some of which still hang on today although textiles and footwear have largely gone. (Interview with local MP, 05 January 07)

The labour market in the district could be described as buoyant with an unemployment rate below the county and the national average in contrast to other coalfields (DCLG, 2007). The socio-economic characteristics of Coalville, the urban centre of the area, were largely comparable to the UK as a whole with a higher share of skilled manual workers and fewer professionals than in the country as a whole (BSHF, 1990). The following graph shows the sectoral structure of the labour market in NWL.

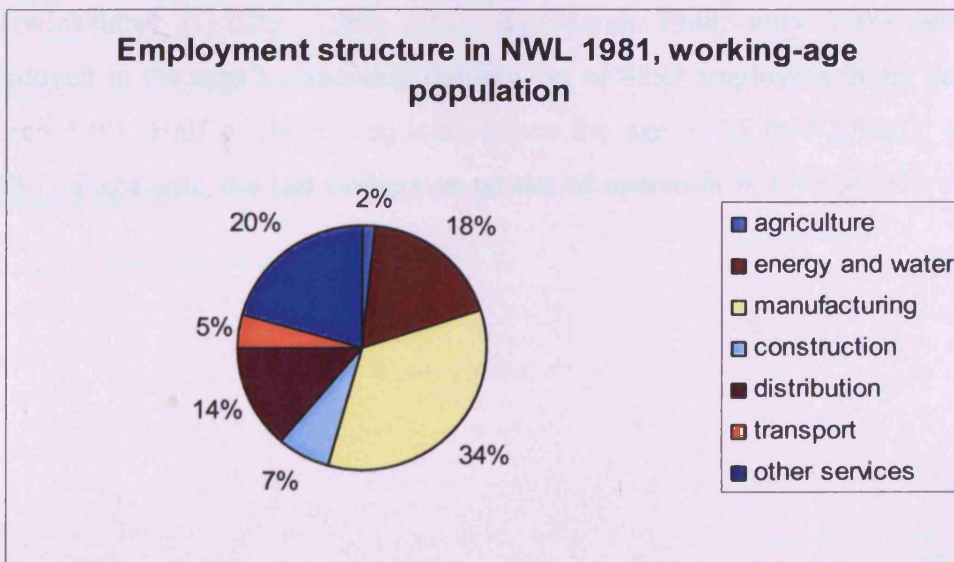


Figure 5.3 Composition of the labour market in NWL

The final rundown of the coalfield had been announced in 1979 in the context of an application for planning permission for a new super-colliery in North East

Leicestershire. The reserves of the North West Leicestershire and South Derbyshire coalfield were expected to be exhausted within the next 10 – 15 years and, in an effort to fulfil the expansion laid out in the *Plan for Coal* (NCB, 1974), a new colliery was necessary. The NCB remained uncertain concerning the expected time scale of the closures, projecting them to occur between 1987 and 1989. The Snibston group (Snibston, Whitwick and South Leicester collieries) was scheduled to be exhausted by 1987 plus or minus 30 months. The most optimistic forecast predicted the release of the sites for 1990. ‘At the other extreme, if the *near-unthinkable* happens and everything goes wrong at all three pits, then on the NCB’s own official forecast the whole of the Snibston site could be abandoned and available for some other use before the end of 1985’ (LCC, Libraries and Museums Cttee, 4 March 1983). Eventually, closures took place less planned and faster than anticipated with the majority of collieries closed by 1987. Coal production at Snibston colliery ceased in August 1983. Desford colliery closed in February 1984 with only 100 men remaining for salvage for a short period afterwards. The collieries of South Leicester and Whitwick were merged in 1985 and closed by the end of 1986. Similarly, Bagworth and Ellistown merged in 1986. As long as there were collieries open, transfer remained an option and so between April 1982 and June 1986, 1694 men had been transferred within the South Midlands area (Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Warwickshire) (Griffin, 1989: 323). By March 1988, only 1063 people were employed in the area’s remaining colliery out of 4293 employees in six collieries in March 1981. Half of these men were below the age of 35 (NWLAMD, 14 March, 1989). Bagworth, the last colliery to go out of operation in Leicestershire closed in 1991.

*Kent*

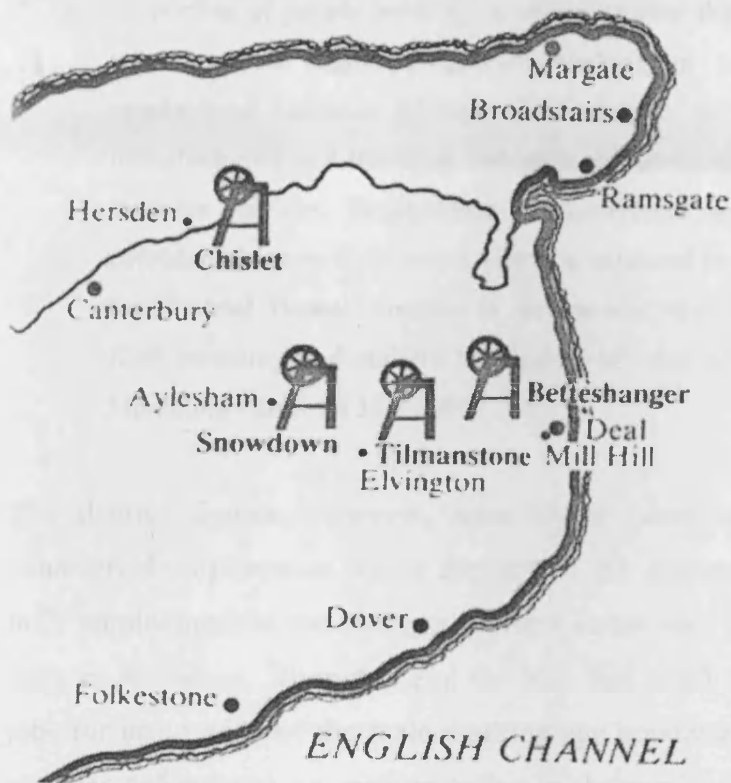


Figure 5.4 The Kent coalfield, taken from Pitt (1979)

Even before the closure of the collieries, in 1981, mining was more of an isolated occurrence in terms of industrial employment in East Kent. In comparison to the UK or to North West Leicestershire, mining and manufacturing were underrepresented in Dover District. Although there were major manufacturing employers such as Hornby in Thanet or Pfizer's in Sandwich the dominant industries in East Kent were the ferries and the ports in Dover. This made services and transport the dominating sectors employing more than half of the working age population.

There were no links to bigger factories in the close vicinity for the collieries in Kent; apart from Betteshanger coal, the markets for the coal lay outside the district. The coal produced at Betteshanger was delivered to the local power station at Richborough which was closed in 1996. Kent coal also showed a high content of dirt and was sold in regional markets, more than 45% to industry, mainly cement and papermaking (Ashworth, 1986: 19). The situation was described as follows in 1989:

Employment in the area is dominated by the service sector, with a lower proportion of people working in manufacturing than in the UK economy as a whole and a higher proportion working in service industries. Overall employment has been falling – between 1981 and 1984 there were losses in manufacturing and transport and gains in distribution, hotels and catering and business services. Employment in port-related activities, which has shown considerable growth in recent years, is expected to decline with the impact of the Channel Tunnel. Tourism is seen as one way of helping to boost the East Kent economy and counter the decline of other sectors. (DDC, Tourism and Marketing Cttee, 04 July 1989)

The district figures, however, need to be taken with caution. They belie the considerable differences within the district. So although for the district as a whole, male employment in the energy and water sector only stood at 12%, for communities such as Aylesham, Elvington and the Mill Hill ward in Deal, the industry provided jobs for up to 45% of the male working age population. It is also possible to see a stronger dependence on manufacturing in the rural wards and more employment in services in the urban wards. In particular towns, e.g. Canterbury and Dover, employment in the service sector even rose to between 78% and 83% (KCC, 1985). The town of Deal and the surrounding area (which includes at least the wards servicing Betteshanger colliery) is unrepresentative for Kent in its employment structure but shows similarities to Leicestershire in the sense that mining and primary industries are particularly important, providing employment for 30% of the workforce (in contrast to an average for Kent of 4.1%), and the service sector being underrepresented (55.9% of employment in comparison to the Kent average of 66.3% or particular service clusters mentioned above). It was therefore described as having a small and isolated labour market relying on coal and related industries (KCC, 1985). Similarly, the district figures show that employment for women was concentrated in sectors associated with the seaside economy, i.e. transport, distribution and services (tourism). In the rural coalfield wards, however, a considerable proportion (up to 46% in both Aylesham and Eythorne wards) of women worked in manufacturing. The result was that some communities, such as Aylesham and Elvington were almost wholly dependent on the mining industry for employment. Therefore, the more



specialised industrial structure of the Kent coalfield made the area much more vulnerable to dislocation (cf. High, 2003).

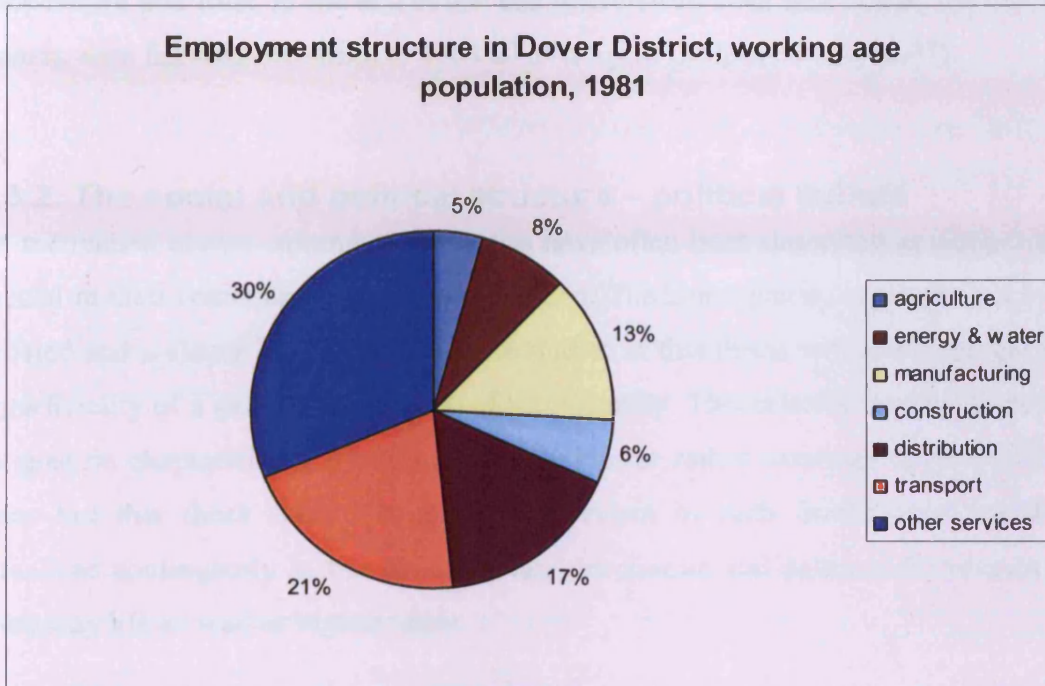


Figure 5.5 Labour market structure, Dover District, 1981

While there were worries after the strike, the closure process in Kent was less anticipated than in Leicestershire, and here there were no official announcements long in advance. Snowdown had been on the official ‘hit list’ which had sparked the 1981 strike in the industry. This hit list had also served as evidence of the National Coal Board’s intentions in the framing of the 1984/85 industrial action against colliery closures. Eventually, Tilmanstone was the first colliery to close in 1986. The closure was unopposed by the workforce, which was probably a result of the offered redundancy packages (and possibly the threat of their withdrawal should the workforce insist on the colliery review procedure). This was similarly the case at Snowdown which was closed in 1987. At Betteshanger, there was stronger workforce opposition, which also still provides ground for division between the collieries, and there were discussions of a take-over either by the workforce themselves or a management buy-out team. The closure narratives in themselves are interesting as they provide the framing for the processes in the area since closure and therefore a starting point to understanding the narratives of regeneration. Respondents, especially former miners, continued to talk about the colliery closures in the context of betrayal

and attack. Consequently, policy makers or representatives of public agencies often remarked on antagonistic attitudes towards agencies of the state and the lack of cooperation and trust, to the extent that one interviewee even said that he felt that the miners were fighting the strike of 1984 all over again (Ralph, 30 May 2007).

### **5.3.2. The social and political structure – political culture**

As mentioned above, mining communities have often been described as distinct and special in their social and political organisation. The homogeneity argument has been debated and a closer look at the two case studies in this thesis will also highlight the superficiality of a general assumption of homogeneity. This is not to say that there are no specific characteristics of mining communities or rather communities in coalfield areas but that these surface to a different extent in each locality and are then actualised contingently in the social, cultural, economic and political dimensions of every-day life as well as regeneration.

The different development trajectories of the two coalfield areas have had a profound effect on the social organisation in these locales.<sup>21</sup> Mining as an industry grew gradually over the centuries in Leicestershire with the major phase of expansion in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The industry developed alongside other industries facilitating the development and growth of a local working class, a tradition of unionisation and collective organisation. It also, however, ensured that the experience of the miners was not a singular and unique one but embedded in a local industrial culture. So even though the pervasiveness of an industrial working-class culture facilitated the integration of miners into a perceived cohesive collective identity, Park argues that ‘the geographical contiguity of Leicestershire mining communities such as Ellistown, Hugglescote and Whitwick with the largely non-mining town of Coalville’ (Park, 1999: 188) would lead to a ‘dilution’ of miners’ specific cultural and class identity.

In Kent, the ad-hoc development of the collieries ‘in the middle of a pre-industrial society [where] farming, fishing and the holiday trade were the economic mainstay of the area’ meant not only a lack of an available workforce but also that the industrial

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<sup>21</sup> See Beynon & Austrin (1994) Beynon et al. (1994), Gilbert (1992), Waller (1983) for similar accounts in other coalfields or mono-industrial settlements.

worker was almost unknown, except as a day tripper on a seasonal spree in Margate' (Pitt, 1979: 22).

From the beginning of the operation of the coalfield the policy of recruiting experienced miners from other coalfields created a gap between the existing population and the newcomers. The resulting 'communities' (Elvington, Mill Hill in Deal and Aylesham) were relatively closed and isolated from the rest of the residents in the area. The occurrence of high unionisation rates in the mining settlements seems to have been in direct contrast to unionisation in the surrounding area, e.g. Thanet (Pickvance, 1990) and as such the mining settlements were culturally distinct from the rest of the districts they were located in, especially so for Chislet in the Canterbury City Council administrative area. As Pitt (1979) argues, this social isolation strengthened the experience of insularity in the communities and also their identification with their own clearly demarcated community. A respondent described the specificity of his mining community as follows:

Aylesham from a sociological point of view is unique. There is not another self-contained community like this in the South of England, south of the Midlands, there is not. There are smaller hamlets but basically they are not self-contained or sustainable like Aylesham. Aylesham had the economy of the mine, it was, it was purely built for the mine. We had an infrastructure around education, we had a secondary school, two primary schools and we had all the additional institutions like GPs, shops, chemists, post office, all the things that make a community sustainable – we had all that, we had all that. And then we had the social relationships that mark a mining community from all others. And a mining community, the reason why it's unique is the relationship between employment, the organisation of work, i.e. the union, the trade unions, the family, family is very important, the extended family and then the community. It's all interlinked in a network.' (Douglas, community activist, 29 March 07)

There are therefore similarities discernible in the development of the Kent coalfield and the Dukeries coalfield in Nottinghamshire, a formerly rural area dominated by large landowners. Divisions not only occurred between the 'indigenous' residents of Kent or the Dukeries and the miners but also within the miners themselves. The

description Waller (1983) gives of the early years in this particular Nottinghamshire coalfield could easily be applied to Kent as well:

A very high rate of labour circulation and an unusually complete local domination by the coal companies meant that miners did not become as homogeneous a body socially or politically as might be expected. For many years their lives were disrupted by inadequate services, poor educational arrangements, a lack of employment for female labour, and villages resembling private building sites rather than established mining communities. (Waller, 1983: 224)

The miners in Nottinghamshire were not a homogeneous social and political body: they had migrated to the newly opening coalfield from other mining areas and brought different mining traditions which needed to be adapted in the face of new working (geological) conditions. In Kent, the fact that the mining population almost wholly comprised migrants from other areas of the UK, who developed a strong affinity to the particular village and colliery they settled in, also resulted in fragmentation if not parochialism and a strong commitment to place as a pervasive element of the local culture and local politics. Similar accounts have been given for the Durham mining villages in the 1920s (see Barron, 2006); as Sid Chaplin describes it: 'The village was the real concrete thing and it meant something and one clung to it ... One was hardly aware of the villages next door. There was a tremendous sense of insularity' (1978: 62). The three settlements which were specifically created for the miners in Dover District, Mill Hill in Deal, Elvington and Aylesham, have distinct identities which are linked to the collieries and their 'foundation myths,' i.e. the narratives of the collieries' and thus the communities' inception. This was explained to me on several occasions:

Lauren: (...) there's this very passionate identity with these local communities. Ehm in Aylesham, I don't know whether you know for example Eythorne and Elvington. There is a sort of physical, geographical boundary almost, there's a dip, Elvington is at one end and Eythorne is at the other and this is a big dip and they don't share facilities even though they are in the same parish. It's that sort of thing. It's, it's identity, it's almost tribal at times (*laughs*). (...)

HD: Yes, I mean, when I went to the Betteshanger [Country Park] opening, I was quite amazed (...) I didn't see anyone else from Aylesham there.

Lauren: No, no, it's – that's it. It's a different mining community. It was a different pit, even, wasn't it? Because Betteshanger obviously, didn't serve, people from those villages didn't work at Betteshanger. So they have, there's a community of interest but there's no real loyalty to Betteshanger. Whereas if you were looking at the Tilmanstone site, they'd be passionate about that or if you go to Aylesham and Nonington, they're looking at the Snowdown site and passionate about it. (voluntary sector representative, 29 May 07)

This extract shows that the idea of a 'coalfield' as a coherent economic, social and cultural space is not applicable in Kent. Beynon et al. (1994) tell a similar story about the historical development of Teesside. There is a coherent geological mass of coal underneath a society which is divided not only into the mining communities (represented by Elvington, the mining village for Tilmanstone colliery) and the non-mining communities (represented by Eythorne, an affluent village whose inhabitants are more likely to be professionals) but also between the mining communities. As a result, the theme of isolation was recurring throughout the interviews with residents:

Dave: We are still isolated in our own little groups; there is nothing that brings us all together. (...) Now and again we bump into one or two people but there is nothing organised to keep us close. We wasn't that close anyway (*laughs*). With respect, I mean.

Katie: There used to be an annual (...) Kent Miners' Gala.

Dave: Years ago, when they would all get together. There was a lot of rivalry between the pits: who was the best, the best pit. (...) I still see some of them now and again but there is nothing that brings everybody sort of close together. (community activists, 22 May 07)

There are different mining communities but there is no community of miners.

Apart from the development of a distinct local and community identity, the development processes of the coalfield also left a more material mark on the areas. As the Leicestershire coalfield had, by the advent of nationalisation, developed into a highly mechanised and corporatised coalfield, nationalisation as well as closure and regeneration 50 years later had a different impact. In Leicestershire, the National Coal Board/ British Coal was one of the major landowners in the area. The colliery sites were in its possession together with a number of sites which had potential value as opencast sites. As coal mining had a long tradition in Leicestershire and some collieries had gone out of production before the 1980s, former colliery sites might have been exchanged between the Council and the NCB before. There was a tradition of returning the former spoil tips and/ or colliery sites for a nominal sum which also meant that reclamation and restoration were largely Council functions. In Kent, however, there was no such tradition with only 4 collieries operating and only one closing before the major period of restructuring. In addition, the question of landownership was not as uniform as in Leicestershire: Tilmanstone was owned by NCB/ BC, Betteshanger by Lord Northbourne and Snowdown by the Plumtre Estate. These landownership issues had a profound effect in the era of restructuring as they facilitated or inhibited access to the sites for the regeneration agencies.

Despite all these differences in the two areas, the organisation of work and the social institutions associated with the colliery were essentially similar in all mining areas. As a result of the closed shop policy in the mining industry, unionisation was an integral part of mining culture and of the everyday experience of miners and the communities, in Kent as well as in Leicestershire. They were automatically part of a large collective organisation. Most leisure facilities had been provided by the industry's organisations, i.e. the union or the Coal Industry Welfare Organisation leaving problems of succession and funding in both areas.

In North West Leicestershire as well as the Kent coalfield the political effect of the mining industry can be seen in a traditional preference for Labour. So residents in both areas are faced with the fact that the coalfield wards with a tendency towards the Labour Party are situated in counties with a tendency towards the Conservative party. In Kent, this is even more exacerbated in that, although the rural coalfield wards are Labour dominated, the wider district has been mainly Conservative controlled. Labour

controlled the District for a 4-year period (1995-1999) which was preceded by a Liberal Democrat - Labour Alliance. In the case of Leicestershire, North West Leicestershire District Council has been traditionally Labour controlled. Kent County Council is Conservative led, with only one term without Conservative control (1993 – 1997) in the 120-year history of the County which fortuitously coincided with the Labour control of Dover District Council. Especially since the introduction of the Cabinet system on Dover District Council in 2001, it could be argued that the coalfield interests have been marginalised in representational terms. This configuration of the local political field had profound influences on individual actors' capacity to act, an issue that is also taken up in discussions of local strategic capacity in the following chapter (cf. Gissendanner, 2004). Economic development struggles on a political level, therefore, are mainly fought through the planning system which is the District Council's main (if not only) opportunity to intervene in the economic fortunes of the area, especially since the major economic development function for the region was delegated to the Regional Development Agency, SEEDA, in 1999.

## **5.4. *The aftermath of closure***

### **5.4.1. Developments in the local labour markets**

Recent economic indicators for East Kent and North West Leicestershire both present a positive view on the areas' response to economic restructuring (DCLG, 2007). Both areas show employment adjustment in the sense that the employment rate lies higher than the national average at 77% for East Kent and 80% for NWL respectively. Changes in the labour markets in both cases occurred along similar lines. The general picture is one of employment in mining for men being replaced by one or two other sectors, rising female economic activity rates and only limited increase in unemployment. The following section then illustrates how events in NWL and East Kent are, to a certain degree, exemplary of wider changes in the UK economy. At the same time, this showcases how purely economic indicators can mask underlying social and political differences in place-specific regeneration.

By 1991, the year the last colliery in Leicestershire closed, the manufacturing sector had lost in importance county-wide as had the mining sector as a result of colliery

closures. The district of North West Leicestershire had shown below county average unemployment rates by the 1980s. In line with the national but in contrast to the county trend, unemployment rates rose until late 1986 and stayed above the average for the rest of the decade. Nevertheless, at their peak, the figures show a mere 2.1% increase.<sup>22</sup> Given that most coalfields traditionally had a male unemployment rate above the respective regional and national averages such a slight increase over the county average does not in itself indicate a failure of the local labour market (Beatty and Fothergill, 1996). This again is not uncommon; national patterns of unemployment seem to remain stable despite major job losses. This phenomenon of the discouraged worker effect has been acknowledged nationally (Fieldhouse & Hollywood, 1999): especially older men opt for a withdrawal from the labour market in response to a lack of opportunities and as part of a strategy to maximise household income. Sickness benefits at the time were higher than unemployment benefits. The figures show that the rise in economic inactivity in NWL is significantly above the Leicestershire average especially for the 55-59 age group, 25% of the male population withdrew from the labour market, amounting to c. 2000 men. Early retirement had been one of the favoured options for the reduction of unemployment in NWL, by all actors concerned (the NCB, the unions and the local authorities): ‘Mr McSporrán of the NUM Power Group, explained that union cooperation had been made possible, particularly due to the early retirement and early redundancy schemes, and he felt that an extension of the redundancy scheme to say fifty-year-olds by 1987 might be particularly helpful’ (NWLAMD, 11 June 1982). Similarly, male economic activity fell in Dover District (13% in the 55-59 age group and 17% in the 60-65 age group) although the fall in economic activity was not as pronounced as it was in NWL.

<sup>22</sup> Based on data from the Leicestershire County Council documentation (quarterly unemployment bulletins from 1983 – 1990), unemployment rises from 9% in January 1983 to 11.1% in September 1986 and then fall steadily.



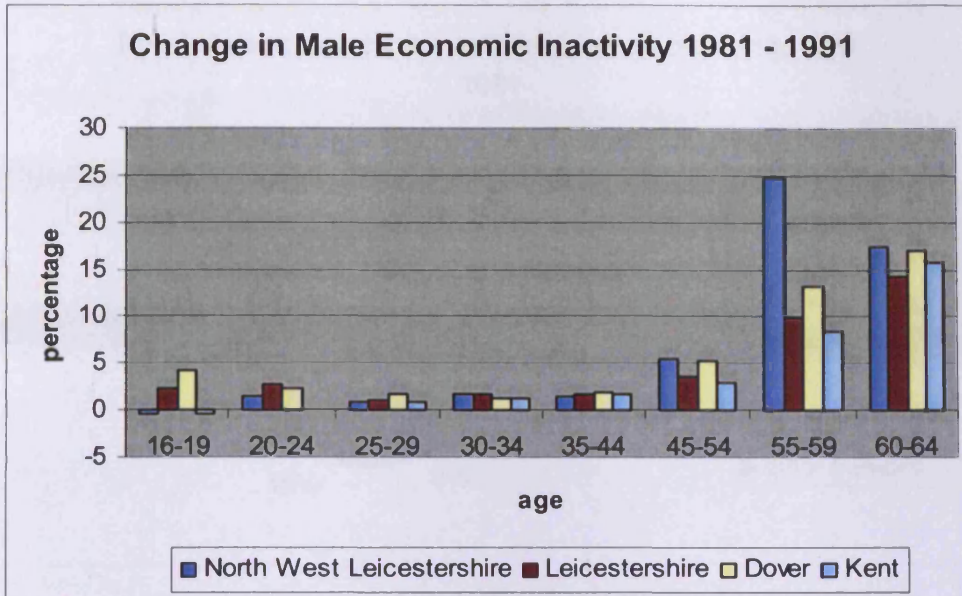
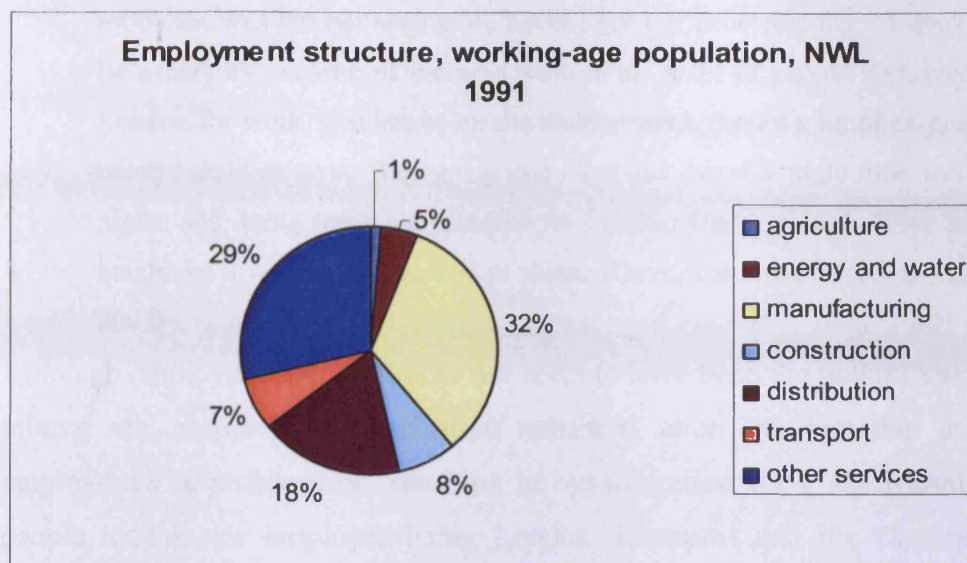


Figure 5.6 Change in male economic inactivity 1981 - 1991

Evidence from the 2001 Census also suggests that this development was only temporary and can be linked to the colliery closures. Economic activity rose again in the older age groups. Female employment was generally expanding, with female economic activity rates rising throughout the two coalfields and the UK. The general rise in women in employment was also achieved through a rise in women’s part-time employment, which might be due to the fact that the majority of jobs created occurred in the service sector which tends to provide part-time and low-paid employment.

The structural adjustment of the labour market between 1981 and 1991 occurred along strongly gendered lines in both areas. The census figures for 1991 show the unsurprising decline of male employment in mining. In Leicestershire, as there was still the prospect of the North East Leicestershire development, employment continues in the sector but the average age declines, with the majority of men employed being below 45 years old. This supports the evidence of older men taking early retirement and the notion of the protection of the skilled workforce (Favereau et al., 1991).



**Figure 5.7** Local economic structure, NWL, 1991

In both areas, opportunities for men in the mining industry seem to be replaced (in the overall composition of the sectoral structure) by one or two other sectors. In NWL, this was the manufacturing sector. Although it declined as a proportion of the local economy, there was a 4% growth in the number of jobs for men in this sector. Admittedly, with a thorough re-organisation of the local economy, the figures need to be taken with caution – relative changes might mask the fluctuations in the absolute figures. In NWL, there is an absolute decline in the number of jobs in the sector but interestingly, for the whole district, manufacturing is the only sector showing a small increase in the number of older men employed. In both districts, employment opportunities for women in manufacturing declined. In Kent, there are significant increases in the service sector. The percentages mask a rise in employment in construction which can be linked to the construction of the Channel Tunnel at the time. The respondents remarked on these changes in the interviews.

Interestingly, Dave here mentions the fact that unemployment was not the biggest problem after the closure of the collieries.

Yeah, there's not a lot of unemployment about. People did get up and go and find work. I mean, just after the pit shut that was when the Channel Tunnel opened, so a good many miners I knew went and worked there. So, all that, given that, and after that they'd developed more skills and then, if people wanna work, they'll find work. It's not like some of the more northern towns where there was several pits and they shut and they're really into destitute and

problems. But I'm not saying we haven't got our problems but – I don't know [whether] it's because of the area we live in. A lot of people do travel up to London for work, you know, on the underground, there's a lot of ex-miners or miners' children now. They go up every day and travel at night time, mainly on nights and doing track maintenance on London Underground. There must be hundreds, a couple of hundred of them. (Dave, community activist, 22 May 2007)

Although employment as such does not seem to have been the major issue in the post-mining era, respondents have often remarked upon the fact that lack of local employment is problematic, resulting in out-migration for a significant number of people, one major employer being London Transport and the Underground. The following figure illustrates the changes in the local labour market.

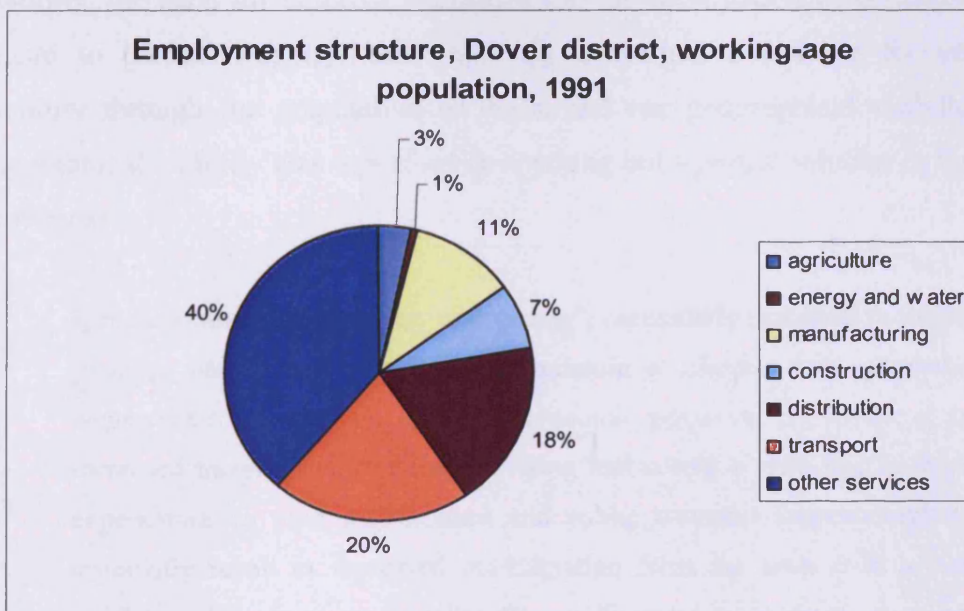


Figure 5.8 Employment structure, Dover district, 1991

Consequently, the local economic structure in East Kent has shifted towards the two 'transport hubs' in the area, Dover and the ports and London and the transport companies in the capital. This has meant a steady increase in out-commuting. In North West Leicestershire, economic restructuring has led to a diversification of the industrial base. As mining has all but disappeared, the remnants of the industry are visible in opencasting operations in the area. In general, however, it has been succeeded by distribution and the service sector as important sectors of employment.

### 5.4.2. A short narrative of regeneration

#### *North West Leicestershire*

Following the announcement of the closure of the coalfield in 1979, on invitation by the Leicestershire County Council (LCC), representatives of the LCC, North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) met to discuss the problems potentially arising from the expected colliery closures by the end of the decade. The meeting was a consequence of the ‘shared concern of the County Council and the District Council[s] over the spectre of unemployment in North West Leicestershire when the coalmines are closed’ (NWLAMD, 17 March 1980). Proposals for action were drawn up and comprised (in the order suggested) the attraction of manufacturing and service industry, the provision of industrial land, the improvement of the road network, encouraging labour mobility, the need for external assistance and the reclamation of derelict land. With regard to labour mobility, this explicitly concerned a striving for occupational mobility through the acquisition of skills and not geographical mobility. Greater geographical mobility was described as anything but a partial solution to the County’s problems:

It reduces and dissipates the ‘community’, particularly resulting in the loss of younger people and *fails to help maintain a lifestyle built around local employment*; it relies on uncertain economic prospects elsewhere; it causes increased travel costs (at a time of rising fuel costs); it may lead to increased expenditure on road maintenance and public transport support; and it may eventually result in increased out-migration from the area. *It is a solution resulting often from an inability or unwillingness to intervene in economic development.* (NWLDC, Planning and Development Cttee, 23 April 1980, my emphasis)

This extract underlines the policy of local authority intervention rather than the reliance on market mechanisms. In its emphasis on pre-emptive measures, the approach of the LCC differed from the approach followed nationally even if the gist of the suggested policies, e.g. the promotion of the area and the provision of land for business were fairly ‘traditional’ (Turner, 1993). From the beginning of the discussions on regeneration, a three-cornered strategy of economic, social and

environmental improvements was agreed as the Programme of Action. Even if early emphasis had been put on the attraction of heavy industry (NWLAMD, 17 March 1980), from 1982 onwards, the local authorities in NWL had come to the conclusion that not all jobs lost through the colliery closures were likely to be replaced by jobs in the manufacturing sector. The growth of existing industries as well as the growth of service sector industries, especially tourism, was necessary (NWLAMD, 20 January 1982). Tourism was seen as a booming industry and ‘a more robust source of employment than many parts of the manufacturing industry’ (NWLDC, whole Council, 10 May 1982) which was perceived to be in recession.

A potential focus for tourism growth was seen to be industrial heritage which was increasingly used in similar projects all over the country. As part of a county-wide consultation process concerning the future of the Leicestershire Museums, Art Galleries and Records Service, NWLDC put forward the request that the County Council establish an industrial history museum for NWL. As this request not only coincided with the need for a new site for the Museum of Technology project but also with the regeneration needs of the area this suggestion and the prospect of one of the former colliery sites as tourist attraction was received enthusiastically by LCC members (LCC, Libraries & Museums Cttee, 02 July 1982). The tourist potential of the area was seen in its central location within easy reach of major population centres (Birmingham, Nottingham, Derby, and Leicester) and the generally attractive pre-industrial landscape if one neglected the obvious problems of derelict land and opencasting. The Snibston site was favoured by the Director of Museums for its historical significance, i.e. the existence of the original shafts sunk by George Stephenson in 1833. On the LCC level, cross-party agreement (especially from Labour and the Liberal Democrats) was augmented by officer support. The site was purchased by the local authority in 1983 and developed into Snibston Discovery Park.



**Figure 5.9 Snibston Discovery Park**

In addition to a number of small-scale projects with a view towards creating tourist attractions and managed workspaces (e.g. Springboard Centre, Coalville), the main attention in North West Leicestershire was geared towards providing industrial estates. This meant reclamation of the colliery sites, which often involved delicate negotiations with British Coal as the landowners and the planning authorities. The local authorities would aim to buy the site to be able to reclaim it with Derelict Land Grant as local authorities were entitled to 100% of the costs in contrast to private developers which would only receive 80%. As a result a number of high-quality industrial estates were created on restored brownfield sites within the coalfield area (e.g. Whitwick Business Park, Hermitage Industrial Estate, Bath Yard). The success of the re-industrialisation strategy depended not only on the quality of the provided sites but also on their accessibility. Thus, the decision to develop the road network around Coalville as well as the regional road network, i.e. the A42/ M42 link between the East and the West Midlands, was instrumental in (re)locating Coalville and North West Leicestershire on the industrial map and central to the distribution industry, with warehouses springing up on the those industrial estates planned and developed during the 1980s and 1990s. Over the course of the regeneration programme, therefore, most colliery sites have been redeveloped towards mixed end uses – ‘a cocktail’ of redevelopments. These include industrial estates and business parks (on the sites of

former South Leicester, Whitwick, Ellistown collieries), housing (Donisthorpe, Snibston), office use (Rawdon) as well as recreational and leisure use (Snibston as Snibston Discovery Park, Rawdon as the Heart of the National Forest Visitor Centre Conkers). The developments at Snibston and Rawdon have been part of a strategy to diversify the economic base in North West Leicestershire towards tourism.

According to local authority officers and members, the biggest success in the repositioning of North West Leicestershire was the designation of the area as the National Forest. The local authorities reacted very quickly and efficiently to this suggestion which was first mooted by the Countryside Commission in 1987. The objective was to create a forest based on existing ancient woodlands in the Midlands. Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire County Councils as well as the District Councils of North West Leicestershire, South Derbyshire and East Staffordshire prepared a bid for the designation of a 200sqm area spanning the three counties/districts as the National Forest.



Figure 5.10 The National Forest area, source: National Forest Company

By 1991, the decision had been made in their favour and the formerly least wooded area in Britain, nestling between the ancient woodlands of Needwood (in the west) and Charnwood (in the east) won the right to be reforested as the National Forest.<sup>23</sup>

The local MP describes the economic impact of this decision:

So those scarred landscapes are being quite rapidly transformed by the restoration work of the National Forest. So that's been good both, it's produced jobs in that restoration, it's produced jobs in the people coming here for short breaks but much more important it's been a big plus for firms being attracted to move here or to expand here. That's the second positive aspect which has helped regeneration achieve what has been achieved from that bleak abyss over which we were looking in the early 1980s to where we sit today with levels of unemployment extraordinarily low. (Interview with local MP, 5 January 2007)

The designation of the area as part of the (new) National Forest strengthened its profile in terms of tourism and business location. It enabled the local authorities (and other private landowners) to convert former colliery sites, especially spoil tips, into woodland with the financial support from the National Forest Company. This also meant that a regeneration strategy which up to that point had been implemented on a site-by-site basis received a focus and a coherent objective. Mark, former NWLDC CEDO, said:

You could see that it almost fitted in with this package that had been happening. You know, it was a regeneration area, there was money going into restoration, and the National Forest came along and this suddenly made sense of all the different things, there were several other things that were happening. There was something you could kind of glue it together with and it'd give it a long-term vision and strategy which otherwise it was, yeah, almost the area was becoming a bit more dormitory for the bigger cities around. Dormitory and big-scale distribution. (18 June 2007)

This illustrates that the National Forest designation was instrumental in shaping the regeneration strategy in the area towards a 'ruralisation' strategy with the creation of a

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<sup>23</sup> For a detailed overview of the development of the National Forest see Cloke et al. (1996), Sheail, (1997, 1998), Kitchen et al. (2006).



working forest which would facilitate the transformation of NWL from a place of production to one of consumption.

### ***Kent***

In contrast to NWL where site reclamation had preceded the advent of the National Coalfields Programme and the Coalfields Task Force, the Kent sites were included into English Partnership's National Coalfields Programme in 1999 after persistent lobbying from the Coalfields Communities Campaign. The Kent mining communities 'felt isolated and ignored in the national context' (ODPM, 2003: Ev 74) and a 'legacy of mistrust and a tendency for the Kent communities to conclude that their views are often misrepresented by those administering the National Programme' developed. In its memorandum to the ODPM, the South East of England Development Agency stressed their achievements in the establishment of community forum groups to ensure community participation in the regeneration proposals.

Tilmanstone colliery closed in 1989; the site remained in the ownership of the Coal Authority until it was transferred into the NCP in 1999.



**Figure 5.11 Pike Road Industrial Estate**

Development of the site is complete; it is used as industrial estate (Pike Road Industrial Estate) with Geest Foods as main company and employer. Although it is claimed that 400 new jobs were created, respondents in the area repeatedly pointed out that the company had simply moved to Pike Road from another site in the area, calling the number of jobs actually created into doubt. The problem of relocation and thus displacement of so-called newly created jobs has been discussed by Turner (1993) and Hudson (2000). The memoranda to the ODPM (2003) and the recent assessment for SEEDA (SQW, 2007) stress that the development of the Tilmanstone site was economically successful but the documents also note the lack of community consultation.



**Figure 5.12 Pike Road Industrial Estate**

Betteshanger colliery closed in 1989; similar to Tilmanstone, the site remained in the ownership of the Coal Authority until its transfer to the EP National Coalfields Programme in 1999. The Site lay derelict until SEEDA acquired it in 2000 when plans for redevelopment started. Plans for the site have included a business park (on the former colliery site) and a country park on the former spoil tip. Fowlmead Country Park was opened in May 2007 after some delay in the completion of the servicing of the site. Problems remain on the site as the access road towards the business park has not been adopted by the County's Highways Authority and therefore remains closed at present. With a lack of access to the business park, there is a lack of interest from the private sector in investing in the site. Furthermore there are conflicts about the provision of community facilities both in conjunction with the

cycling track which has been opened in the Country Park and the existing Miners' Welfare Club adjacent to the former colliery site.



Figure 5.13 SEEDA Masterplan for Betteshanger Colliery Site, own amendments

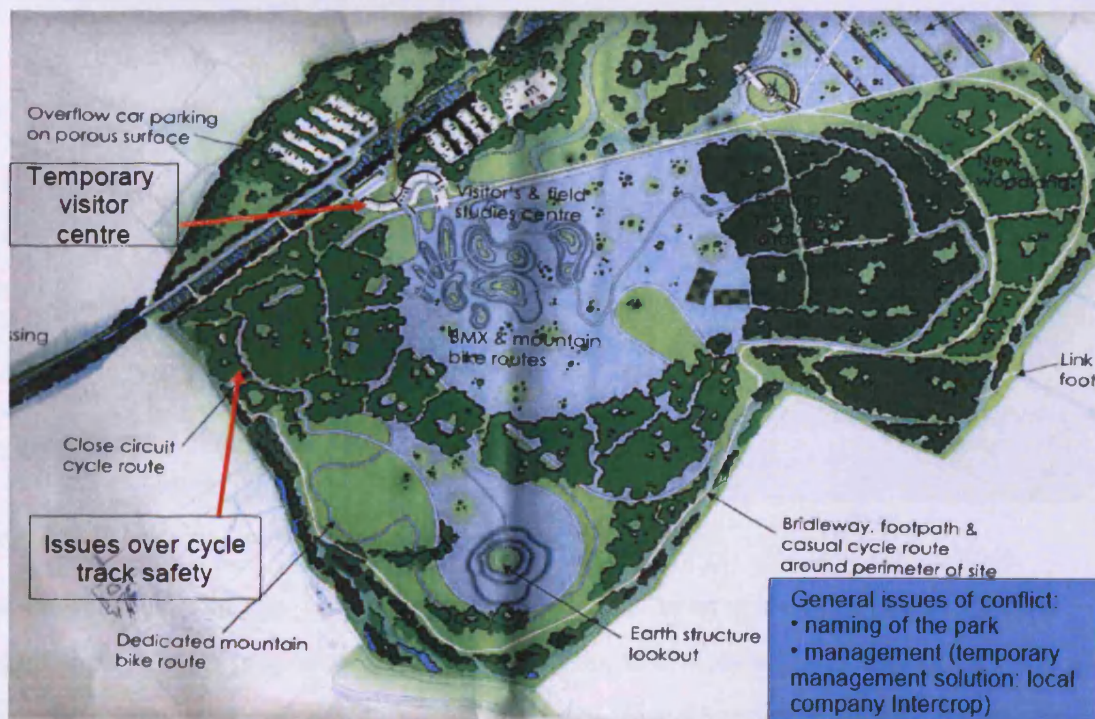


Figure 5.14 SEEDA Masterplan for Betteshanger Colliery, site of the former spoil tip, own amendments

The Betteshanger Regeneration Team was formed in 2002 on the initiative of SEEDA and aims to act as a point of focus between the funding bodies for the regeneration project, SEEDA and English Partnerships, and the local community together with other interested groups. The Memorandum by the Dover District Council to the ODPM (2003: Ev 128) mentions obstacles to the success of the regeneration project as ‘the trustees of the miners welfare who seek to gain control of the project are willing to let the project fail rather than yield control of their establishment.’

Snowdown colliery closed in 1988 and the lease of the site remained in the ownership of the Coal Authority until its transfer to the EP National Coalfields Programme in 1999. It has remained derelict (April 2009). An element in the protracted negotiations around the site has been the fact that ownership of the site has remained with a private landowner.



**Figure 5.15** Snowdown Colliery site, derelict buildings

The latest developments concerning the site have seen a withdrawal of English Partnerships from a proposed provision of an industrial estate and a country park. From the perspective of SEEDA, this required the demolition of the remaining colliery buildings on the site. This sparked community protest exacerbating the already existing disillusionment with the establishment and the regeneration process.

This will also be subject of more elaboration in Chapter 7. There are currently no further plans for the redevelopment of the site. Aylesham has also been proposed for expansion by at least 1000 new homes. The village expansion has been repeatedly suggested since the late 1980s, development was scheduled to start in 2008. First changes in the centre of the village have occurred but economic downturn has again seen plans for the expansion being put on hold. Other projects in Aylesham include the development of new workshop facilities providing incubation space for start-up businesses and the conversion of the former secondary school into Aylesham and Community Workshop Trust which offers training and conference facilities. This is also an example of a successful community-led regeneration project in the area. Kent County Council admits that regeneration in Aylesham might have ‘suffered from too many loosely connected initiatives’ (ODPM, 2003a: Ev 175).

The dominance of the colliery organisation in the villages’ social life posed a problem with the closure of the industry when some of the facilities could no longer be sustained. These facilities had been supported by an automatic levy on miners’ wages which, naturally, disappeared with the closure of the collieries. This meant that the powerful, collective organisation which had sustained community life was no longer there and responsibility for community cohesion then rested on individuals’ shoulders.

Katie: The miners' union organised an awful lot of things and it was, the Welfare club which was like the colliery club was like a central point for a lot of events.

HD: And that's gone now?

Katie: It's still there but it's not the same, is it.

Dave: It doesn't function same as - we've still got the band, the miners' colliery band, the miners' choir, football, to some extent rugby, bowls, the only one that's gone is the gardeners association. And there are the golf society. Everything, you know, sort of traditional miners' things was up there and it was all organised but it's left to individuals and small committees to do it rather than a whole pit organisation. And every miner that worked there

would pay a set [amount], a couple of pound a week towards the upkeep whereas all has to be done voluntary or other, people have to pay to use the equipment now whereas before the kit was all provided for. (22 May 2007)

This sense of being surrounded by a collective organisation based on the colliery was also an integral part of the community identity, to the degree that the community was identified with the colliery as has been discussed above. The following chapters will take up some of the events of these regeneration narratives and look at them in more detail as exemplary cases for the different stages of the regeneration process.

### **5.5. Conclusion**

Discussions of mining communities have often emphasised similarities across mining communities in Britain. This assumed homogeneity was epitomised by a particular employment organisation which was dominated by the colliery. This homogeneity has been acknowledged as myth with regard to the economic differences of geology, productivity, and the labour process (e.g. Benson, 1980, Greasley, 1995, Fine, 1990). One aspect which needed more attention, however, is the ‘embeddedness’ of the mining industry in the local economic structure. Economically speaking then, although there are similarities in the importance of mining in male employment for Kent and Leicestershire on a quantitative level, the integration of the collieries in the local economy was quite different. The industry in NWL was one element in a generally ‘industrial’ setting. In contrast to this, mining was an isolated industrial occurrence in an agricultural area in Kent. This also fostered social integration or distinctiveness respectively. From a geographic perspective, there are further differences. The coalfield in North West Leicestershire and South Derbyshire centred around Coalville, a town which served a number of collieries with a number of smaller villages which were dominated by the mining industry as the major employer. In contrast to the central position of the urban centre of Coalville, mining communities or estates which had been specifically built to provide labour for the collieries and were isolated in Kent. The doily as a metaphor for the spatial characteristics of Kent (Allen et al., 1998) with deep penetration of mining industry, culture and politics on a limited geographical scale seems appropriate. These ‘hot spots’ had the capacity to become black spots in a variety of meanings in the

regeneration process. In NWL, the socially and spatially pervasive nature of mining facilitated the prioritisation of the coalfield issues politically. This dimension of marginalisation in the local economic, political and social landscape is therefore an important element in the make up of the regeneration experience.

The economic and spatial variations had a social impact – as Massey (1995) has forcefully argued – the spatial is social and the social is spatial. Places are the product of temporarily and partially coherent constructions and intersections of social relations (cf. Cloke & Goodwin, 1992, Massey, 1991b). The position and make-up of the local authorities in the case study areas is a consequence of different variables. It is not sufficient to take into account the local spatial and economic embeddedness, the position of each locality in the wider (national) social space in relation to different social spheres needs to be considered as well. For local marginality is not always reproduced on a national scale. The experience of marginalisation within their local economy and culture for the Kent miners was counteracted by their central position within the national union. The militant unionism of the Kent miners in a predominantly Conservative district and County thus created a tension that is absent in the NWL coalfield. Here moderate unionism met a similarly consensual local political situation, under the hegemony of the Labour controlled local council. The local embeddedness for the NWL miners, interestingly enough, however, manifested itself in a distinct feeling of being outsiders in the national union and industry. Park (1999: 180) argues that ‘Leicestershire’s sense of a long history of apartness or otherness resulted in its miners feeling forgotten, or worse, deliberately ignored by their big brothers in areas such as Yorkshire and South Wales.’ Differences in political strategies or the formation of political coalitions to tackle economic problems, are not only the result of differences in local economic interests but also the consequence of established or emerging processes of political mobilization and organisation which are based on ‘prevailing ideologies, party apparatuses and institutions’ (Pickvance, 1990: 184). This highlights again the necessity to look at the intersection of the local and the extra-local scale in different social spheres and in determining any locality’s position in the social space and the ‘system of representations’ (Allen et al, 1998: 10).

Marginality then has different dimensions and places are constructed with reference to these which re-affirms the truism that mining places are not homogeneous: North West Leicestershire is geographically central; industry and mining were central in its economic structure but as an area it was marginal to coal production. Labour was central socially but Leicestershire miners were marginal in the union and thus mining was marginal to the local collective industrial self. The East Kent coalfield was geographically and economically marginal. Miners were socially isolated locally but at the same time central and dominant in their communities. They were central to the union and thus the union was central to their local collective identity. These are the starting points for coalfield regeneration – or rather the struggles over the economic, social and symbolic repositioning of place. The ways in which this impacts on regeneration trajectories is analysed in the following chapters.

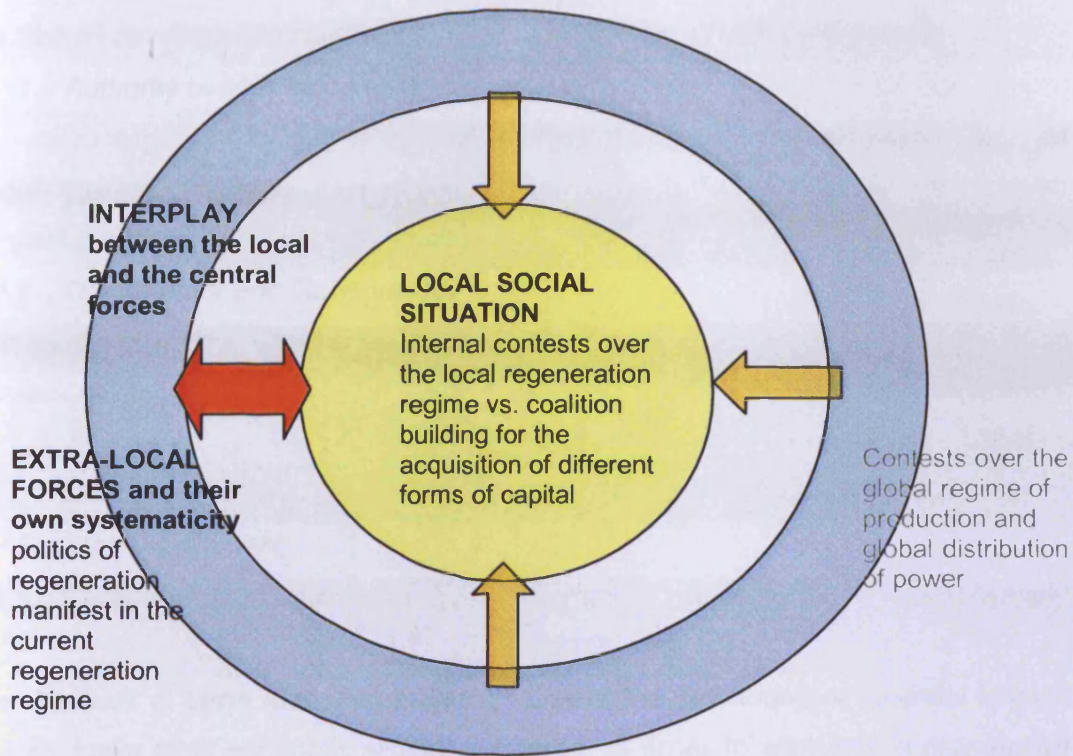


## **Chapter 6 - Regeneration Trajectories – Trading Futures**

*The national economy, national funding and local geography have all influenced what has been achieved in each [coalfield] area. But council action is important and some have done better with the hand they have been dealt with than others. (Audit Commission, 2008: 6)*

### **6.1. Introduction**

This chapter deals with the local regeneration processes in NWL and Kent. It addresses the question of how the local trajectory of regeneration was shaped by the particular local social, institutional and economic situation and the resulting constellation of forces throughout the process. Particular emphasis is placed on the interaction between the local and central state agencies and policies. In relation to the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 2, this chapter is concerned with the examination of the interplay between the local and the national politics of production. The chapter moves forward from Jessop's (2002) argument explored earlier that restructuring is a response to a 'crisis' which is constructed through discourse in its scope and scale. The following is therefore an exploration of how this manifests itself locally under varying spatial and temporal circumstances. It also builds on the idea that such restructuring is linked to the emergence of new scales of action which are actualised in new institutional mechanisms. This is where the argument links up again with Bourdieu and the formation of regeneration as a local policy practice. It thus primarily investigates the changing subject positions in the bureaucratic field which lead to the emergence of the field of regeneration and its specific institutional mechanisms. The chapter is therefore concerned with the negotiation of the 'game' of regeneration and the particular local navigation of its rules by the individual as well as collective representatives of the localities in question.



**Figure 6.1 location of chapter in the theoretical framework: focus on local – extra-local interplay**

The table below provides the basis for a reminder of the material rather than theoretical starting point for this chapter. The situation on the ground is as follows: in NWL, closures were announced clearly through the NCB in 1979 whereas in Kent rumours of closure circulated for a number of years (since 1981); they were finally confirmed one by one from 1985 onwards. In a political climate which was characterised by the preparations for and later reverberations of the miners’ strike there was no designated national coalfield closure response. The policy landscape was dominated by what Pike et al. (2006) would classify as ‘traditional.’ The table below outlines the changes in local and regional development which have taken place over the last decades in what is seen as a shift from traditional development policies to ones involving local and regional development. This development is presented as a response to the failure of ‘traditional top-down policies, together with the challenges generated by globalisation’ (Pike et al., 2006: 16). Their characterisation of the ‘new’ local and regional development focuses on three aspects: authority over development, governance and strategy content. The analysis takes this as an opening for the discussion of local strategies in the wider framework of national development policies.

Traditional development policies	Local and regional development
<i>1. Authority over development</i>	
Top-down approach in which decisions about the areas where intervention is needed are taken in the national centre	Promotion of development in all territories with the initiative often coming from below
<i>2. Government and Governance</i>	
Managed by the national central administration	Decentralised, vertical co-operation between different tiers of government and horizontal cooperation between public and private bodies
<i>3. Strategy Content</i>	
Sectoral approach to development	Territorial approach to development (locality, <i>milieu</i> )
Development of large industrial projects, that will foster other economic activity	Use of the development potential of each area, in order to stimulate a progressive adjustment of the local economic system to the changing economic environment
Financial support, incentives and subsidies as the main factor of attraction of economic activity	Provision of key conditions for the development of economic activity

**Figure 6.2 From traditional development policies to local economic development, adapted from Pike et al.**

While it is clear that there has been a shift of policies, especially in terms of strategy content and governance mechanisms, the conceptualisation offered in this model is problematic. For example it presents actors on a local scale passive in ‘traditional’ policies. It also neglects both, questions of legitimisation and the nature of the interaction between national political developments, and local social conditions determining decisions over regeneration, governance and strategies.

This chapter addresses this gap by discussing the social process by which coalfield regeneration gains legitimacy in the two case study areas. The argument of the chapter starts from the assessment made in Chapter 4 and also by the Audit Commission (2008) that regeneration policy has been dominated by a discourse of employment creation and economic revitalisation. The recognition of an economic crisis was based on seemingly objective indicators of economic performance. The following discussion

shows how different levels of the state use indicators which can be conflicting and consequently impact on the official identification of the 'crisis.' Thus, the local authorities' positioning of the area as 'deserving' had to be achieved in synergy with central priorities and criteria. Moreover, these factors become all the more important given the marginal nature of a, the coalfield problems in general and b, the case study areas as coalfields. Therefore, the construction of the areas in relation to other potentially competing localities was essential in the development of local regeneration strategies. The chapter details the ways in which this negotiation process impacts on local regeneration strategies in terms of content and the actors involved. This continuous (re)positioning in relation to the dominant priorities then requires the acquisition and mobilisation of social, cultural and symbolic capital by the actors involved in the pursuit of economic capital for the affected localities. In the following, empirical data drawn from local authority documentation from the case study areas is enhanced with interview data which provides the basis for a development of the theoretical concepts introduced in Chapter 2.

## **6.2. *Legitimising coalfield regeneration***

Socio-economic change occurs in the context of intersecting political developments. One dominant political objective is the maintenance of economic health and specifically economic growth. During the years of structural change, the coalfields along with other old industrial regions were prime examples of ailing local and regional economies. Their restructuring has to be seen as manifestation of competing ideological struggles concerning economic and social theories and their translation into economic policies. The following details some of the conflicts and contests over meaning on the local and the national level and especially in the interaction between these, emerging in part as a result of these policies.

The legitimacy of coalfield regeneration is seen as a social process. In line with approaches in social psychology and organisation studies, it is understood as fundamentally a problem in the social construction of reality (Johnson et al., 2006) This, on the one hand, links with Bourdieu's ideas on contests over the (di-)vision of the social world and on the other with neo-Gramscian state theory's emphasis on the

discursive construction of regulatory practices (cf. Jayne, 2003). In a review of literature on legitimacy, Johnson et al. (2006: 54) delineate a number of stages in the legitimisation process: innovation, local validation, diffusion and general validation. Following an engagement with the empirical data, this conceptualisation has been adapted in this thesis for the process of coalfield regeneration. A recurring characteristic in the process is the interaction of several levels of action as Berger et al. draw attention to the fact that this is a process

by which cultural accounts from a larger social framework in which a social entity is nested are construed to explain and support the existence of that social entity, whether that entity be a group, a structure of inequality, a position of authority, or a social practice (1998: 380).

There are, therefore, two levels of analysis in the discussion of legitimisation: the object of legitimisation, i.e. the local situation of action and the framework of rules, values and norms at a broader societal level. The chapter thus explores how coalfield regeneration as a local practice fitted into the central ideologies and frameworks for redistributive state intervention. Here the legitimisation process comprises three elements: the development of a discourse of regeneration which provides the interpretative framework, the recognition of this discourse locally and nationally, and the capacity to act within the field itself. The starting point for regeneration is thus the result of a complex interplay of justification, recognition and political legitimisation occurring both at the local and the national level. The conditions, under which it proceeds, however, have changed fundamentally over the last 25 years. The following details this change over time on the basis of the empirical data from NWL and Kent.

### **6.2.1. Justification – Discourse formation**

Under the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher, ostensibly, the objective was a reduction of state intervention, the encouragement and support for the free operation of markets. The irony of the state interfering in the economy to achieve its state-free working therefore was a careful discursive construction. As a consequence the justification of state intervention became linked to the use of indicators employed

in a similar way by the different agencies involved. During the 1980s, structural change was seen as an economic, not necessarily a social phenomenon. This shaped the choice of indicators and the categories through which change would be interpreted. In this, it was hoped that a local and/or national consensus concerning the development of a regeneration discourse could be established. However, as Astleithner and his colleagues have pointed out, these 'indicators and related criteria become a site of struggle between actors as each seeks to use indicators to legitimise their particular view' (Astleithner et al., 2004: 21).

The documents produced by the local authorities in the case study areas reflect this process and the attempts made to construct the areas as deserving of state intervention. In both areas, first signs of colliery closures were acknowledged and taken as impetus for an assessment of their potential effects on the local economy. Already at this stage, however, differences in the reaction to the situation become clear. In both cases, the local authorities faced the problem of responding to imminent mining decline in formerly prosperous and seemingly economically healthy areas. An early report by the Director of Planning and Transportation at Leicestershire County Council (DoPT) (NWLDC, Planning & Development Cttee, 23 April 1980), described the North West Leicestershire/ South Derbyshire coalfield as an area dependent on employment in the collieries (25% of the male workforce) and the manufacturing industry with seven firms accounting for half of the manufacturing employment in the area. Low unemployment rates had apparently been sustained through out-commuting up to that point. This was especially true of Coalville which was presented as a jobless town relying on employment opportunities in nearby localities. According to the DoPT, new jobs had been created, albeit at a slow rate and predominantly for female labour. Here we have an area with a narrow economic base but with a dynamic and young population and strong male workforce. An area that would be transformed by the decline of mining into one characterised by high levels of unemployment 'with nearly 10% of the total, and 14% of the male workforce, out of a job' (NWLDC, Planning & Development Cttee, 23 April 1980), together with a substantial increase in out-commuting and out-migration especially by the young. This would create an ageing population and an increase in social problems especially those of re-adjustment; 'foremost among these are boredom and the loss of self-esteem among males caused by reliance upon income from wives or the state' (ibid.). In economic

terms, this would mean a reduction in spending power in the area and the subsequent loss of further employment in trade and services and eventually an increasing financial burden on the local authorities which would be met with increases in rates. In short, quality of life in the area would be significantly diminished.

The report provided the basis for the interpretative framework of the local authorities in NWL. The construction of the likely outcomes of mining decline offers an insight into the economic but also the cultural and social profile of the area. The text highlighted the importance of local employment for men for the social (and presumably political) fabric of this part of Leicestershire. The case for action was based on future prospects of ‘high rates of unemployment on such a large scale [...] unprecedented in the recent history of this County’ (ibid.). The report built an argument where the loss of the industry was not only an individual problem (unemployment) but a collective problem when unemployment led to a chain of social responses - out-migration, ageing population, loss in revenue for the public sector – that impacted on resources and created a higher burden for public funds. The local MP acknowledged that the economic and social effects of the pit closures were considered for a wider geographical area and not just as isolated occurrences within a number of communities.

And at that time, there was real concern because the pits were just about starting to close and, and it was quite easy to see the sort jobs that would be disappearing over the next what was thought to be teens of years. And there were predictions, fairly bleak predictions about levels of unemployment and decay and ill health and all that goes with it, commercial impact on the town, not just Coalville but the towns and villages which lie around, Ashby and Swadlincote in Derbyshire and so on. (interview with local MP, 5 January 2007)

The aim of the local authority argument was to show that the investment of public funds at this point was considerably more efficient (and potentially lower) than reaction to widespread unemployment later or refusal to intervene. This scenario was used to justify placing the economic regeneration of the NWL area as a ‘priority requirement in the economic development policies throughout the county’ (NWLDC, Planning & Development Cttee, 23 April 1980). It was on this rhetorical base that the

politicians in NWL developed the legitimacy of an interventionist strategy. The process was quite different in Kent.

In contrast to this extensive scenario of social and economic disruption, the local authorities in Kent seemed more reluctant to imagine the impact of impending mining decline. Although the documents stated that ‘change in the Kent coalfield has been anticipated for some time’ (KCC, Planning and Transportation Cttee, 17 Sep 1985), there was no developed account of the potential effects of the colliery closures. Redundancies had been announced by the NCB and economic and environmental effects were expected but even in 1985, the ‘industry’s contribution to the local economy i.e. beyond the NCB payroll’ (ibid.) was not wholly understood and in need of investigation. The impact of the contraction was expected to be concentrated in the coalfield villages. Thus, in contrast to the anticipated district-wide impact in North West Leicestershire, in Kent the problem was already formulated as a localised issue.

Local authority intervention in the local economy *was* still seen as necessary. However, this was not presented as a response to issues within the mining industry. The mining communities were situated within North East Kent which ‘has experienced particular hardship during the recent economic recession’, an area of ‘relatively high unemployment and weak economic prospects’ (KCC, 1985, para 2.2). Local authority action was justified on grounds of rising unemployment but the causal link with mining was absent. While in the Leicestershire documents the link between the number of jobs lost and high unemployment rates was made explicit from the outset, the pre-closure documents in Kent only mentioned the reduction in manpower but did not link this to an expected rise in unemployment. It was the location of the mining communities in an already structurally weak area that was used as justification for local authority involvement. In addition to the inherent structural weakness of the East Kent economy, there were also the anticipated threats to local employment as result of the Channel Tunnel (Kent County Council, 1987). In this sense, it was not the specific problem of mining decline which triggered potential intervention from the local authorities but the exacerbation of existing economic problems in the area.



### 6.2.2. Recognition - Eligibility

As has been stated above, legitimisation could not be initiated solely on the formation of a discourse, this discourse needed recognition or, as Bourdieu (1991: 188) has said: 'A mere "current of ideas" becomes a political movement only when the ideas being put forward are recognized outside the circle of professionals.' State intervention was justified in response to an economic crisis; but a crisis needed to be recognised as such on the basis of economic indicators, in particular measures of unemployment. In North West Leicestershire, the local authorities' argument about the future level of unemployment was undermined by the National Coal Board. In contrast to local authority predictions it presented a redundancy policy reflecting its concern 'to protect its skilled workforce' (NWLAMD, 20 November 1980). This was a result of planned labour demand at the new mine at Asfordby in the North East of the County, for which planning consent was granted in 1983. Consequently, closures went ahead but a representative of the NCB claimed that 'it was hoped greatly to reduce the number of miners who would be out of a job once the pits closed and the main aim was to provide a high quality, young workforce which would be available for work at Asfordby' (NWLAMD, 20 November 1980). Downsizing of the workforce would be achieved by so-called 'natural wastage', the euphemism for early retirement and voluntary redundancies for miners aged 55 and over. Recruitment would be curtailed. According to the NCB, there would be an immediate effect on the rates of youth unemployment. In spite of this, the NCB maintained that the situation would not pose great difficulties for the local economy in NWL because most miners ostensibly could remain in employment by transferring to other local collieries.

The conflict between the NCB and local authority views on unemployment needed to be resolved and the DoPT demonstrates this negotiation of the different discourses in the first review of the regeneration strategy in 1985:

The unemployment rate in the area has risen since August 1982 from 6% to about 12%. It has to be said however that although this rise is significant it does not reflect the loss of almost 50% of mining jobs over the same period. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, much of the labour shed has been in the form of early

retirement. Secondly the NCB has been very successful in reorganising its labour force by transferring men to pits outside the area, notably to Warwickshire and Derbyshire. There have as a consequence been very few enforced redundancies. Since 1982 the NCB has taken on only a handful of new juvenile recruits, and the rise in the level of unemployment almost certainly reflects this constriction in mining job vacancies which have been the areas [sic] major source of employment. (NWLAMD, 3 April 1985)

In this account both constructions of unemployment as used by the dominant actors in the area, the local authorities and the NCB, are employed. The report affirms the problem of rising unemployment to the predicted level which necessitates public intervention. It also takes up the NCB's assertion that only a few men would be forced into unemployment and concentrates on youth unemployment. Thus, the conflicting ways of talking about unemployment as the main indicator of the need for economic development are reconciled. This allowed the continuing use of the discourse of future levels of unemployment to justify action, even when the statistical evidence, seemingly, did not support the early predictions of an unemployment crisis.

With continuing colliery closures throughout the 1980s, further redundancies were expected and could possibly not be carried out without unemployment. The capacity for transfers had been exhausted and 'there ha[d] been some resistance from the men themselves to the policy' (NWLAMD, 3 April 1985). In addition to these difficulties, the local authorities predicted an increase in the number of young people entering the labour market in the following years. 'For these reasons, the task facing the local authorities is as daunting now as it was two and a half years ago' (NWLAMD, 3 April 1985). A local 'discourse coalition' seems to have been established by 1985: the Council had created an effective organisation, a reasonable revenue budget, and the motivation of Members and Officers to do something about the problem of unemployment in the area (NWLDC, EDC, 29 Jan 1985).

Once justification for local government involvement in the local economy was established within a particular discourse of regeneration, this justification also became instrumental in the recognition of a problem on both the local and the national level. In my argument, regeneration is understood to be the response to a crisis. It is seen as

restructuring through local economic development and thus the revitalisation of a particular accumulation regime. This also means that the crisis needs to be perceived as one. This was clearly the case in North West Leicestershire, however, the local authority response to the colliery closures in Kent, in contrast, was one of acknowledgement and acceptance rather than concern. There was no economic crisis, so to speak. Although no collieries remained open in Kent, references to the plans for use of the colliery sites after closure were limited in the County Council and District Council documents. Economic development did play a role in Dover, also as response to an anticipated decline in jobs for men; this, however, was not the decline in the mining industry but in the ports. Where references were made to the colliery sites it was in the context of them contributing to the need for employment as result of job losses in the port area. So for instance as result of the closure of Snowdown colliery the site was effectively derelict and suggestions were considered on how to put it to good use. Paul Verrill, a Kent County Councillor remarked: ‘If I was put in the position of saying what should happen then I would hope heavy large industry could be encouraged onto the site thus creating much needed jobs to match the loss caused by the Channel Tunnel’(KCC, Feasibility Study Snowdown Colliery, 11 Dec 1987). This makes clear that the economic disaster the local authority was anticipating was not connected to the coal mines but to the Channel Tunnel and the potential demise of the docks and associated industries. It was stipulated that c. 6000 new jobs needed to be created (DDC, 1987). So by 1987, especially as a result of the Kent Impact Study (KCC, 1987), a consensus had been achieved locally that there needed to be local government intervention to improve and maintain the economic health of East Kent. The study, however, also offered solutions which centred on Ashford as a growth hub and thus, achieved both, the identification of a potential crisis and its potential solution, which resulted in a lessened sense of urgency for direct intervention in the former mining communities and the surrounding areas in East Kent. Nevertheless, an impending economic crisis had been identified and recognised locally.

So we'd been banging on the table at County Council for some recognition. Our view was that the funding was all being spilled into the leafy suburbs of Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells. And it was, it absolutely was. And it wasn't until the late 80s that they at least paid lip service, perhaps a bit more to the fact that we needed extra help and they set up something called East Kent Task Force. (local MP, 13 July 2007)

Even in circumstances where the local conflict of discourses could be resolved, there were still potential differences between the interpretative frameworks for justification of state intervention on the national level. Pickvance argues that ‘the success of a council’s activity in support of the local economy depends on the context of state activity and market forces within which it operates’ (1990: 172). As detailed above, the local discourse in North West Leicestershire centred on future levels of unemployment of unprecedented heights and scale. Political action nationally, however, was only triggered when *existing* levels of unemployment rose significantly higher than the national average. While, therefore, local authorities argued on the grounds of a relative deterioration of the economic situation compared to the area’s earlier performance, the government based recognition of need for assistance on the relative position of the area in comparison to other areas. The positioning process always takes place in relation to others. For both case study areas this meant a positioning in relation to other coalfields, highlighting their marginality in the mining industry, and other areas in need of regeneration as result of economic restructuring. In the case of NWL, the coalfield gained a position of priority on a ‘local’, i.e. County, level whereas marginality was reproduced even on this level for the Kent mining communities.

In terms of the positioning effort, similarity in the use of indicators was necessary to achieve the recognition of the problems of the area. The local authorities in NWL accepted that this might be difficult as the current unemployment levels were satisfactory and better than the national average (NWLAMD, 23 May 1980, 5 November 1982). ‘No existing policies are aimed at mitigating the effects of predictable increases in unemployment before they arise. (...) Nowhere can financial assistance be obtained before the redundancies actually occur, even though they are inevitable’ (NWLDC, full Council, 10 May 1982). Similar sentiments are expressed in Beynon et al.’s (1994) study of Teesside.<sup>24</sup> Contemporary packages for regional

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<sup>24</sup> Beynon et al (1994: 119) quote the Head of Cleveland County Council’s Research and Intelligence Unit who comments on the anticipated problems in the manufacturing sector in the 1980s. He also emphasises the need for recognition of the future problems by the central government institutions: ‘The problem we’ve got is that we’ve been the forerunner of changes in manufacturing, and I don’t think society generally and the national scene has caught up with the fact that this is going to be happening in the rest of manufacturing. Until the country comes to terms with that, we’ll not have

assistance were not geared towards preparatory action but short-term, ad-hoc measures (Turner, 1993). Thus justification of regeneration could only occur *ex post*, not *ex ante*. The lack of recognition of the extent of the problem is illustrated in this letter from Giles Shaw, MP to Adam Butler MP in May 1983:

finally, the Council's employment predictions seem unduly pessimistic: the report certainly ignores the positive features of the British economy which should alleviate future unemployment in all areas. The report shows that Coalville has a smaller proportion of its employment in services and a larger proportion in manufacturing than the average for GB. But since early 1981 Britain's manufacturing competitiveness has improved by about 20% compared to her major trading partners, and continued moderation in wage claims and higher productivity would undoubtedly increase employment in the manufacturing industry. (NWLDC, 5 May 1983)

This letter also shows the government's preferred route of economic development at that point in time, i.e. re-industrialisation and an emphasis on the manufacturing sector. The trait that had been identified as a weakness by the local authorities, i.e. the narrow economic base and an overdependence on manufacturing, is suggested as the solution to employment issues related to restructuring.

In summary, in North West Leicestershire the negotiation of discourses on the local level paved the way for recognising the area's problems by the dominant local actors. While this served to create a powerful local coalition, the logic of the national justificatory frameworks meant that recognition on that level was not forthcoming. At this stage, failure to achieve legitimisation on the national level was not a consequence of NWL's marginality as a coalfield. In the 1980s a coalfield regeneration discourse had not been accepted onto the national agenda (Turner, 1993). The failure of NWL to impose its strategy nationally related to conflicting ways of justification. This also meant that the lack of recognition by central government as a deserving area, i.e. on the symbolic level, prohibited eligibility on an economic (funding) level and legitimisation on an institutional level.

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the resources to tackle our problems.' He also clearly posits a link between the recognition of the problem or the crisis and the development of (institutional, social or economic) resources to address it.

Similarly, in Kent, once there had been a local consensus on the need for intervention as a result of the anticipated negative effects of the Channel Tunnel, there were still conflicts over the recognition of these effects for the creation of a coalition with national agencies:

The impact of the Channel Tunnel has been the subject of much debate and continues to be so, both the possible loss of jobs and the extent of the permanent job gains from Channel Tunnel induced activity. Opinion outside the South East clearly sees the Tunnel as a job-producing investment in an already prosperous South East, and does not recognise that there is a considerable existing employment problem in North and East Kent or the likely consequences of the Tunnel. The Government view seems to be that the effects will be broadly neutral, or even slightly beneficial in the long term, but that it is up to Kent Local Authorities to take advantage of a significant opportunity for economic growth.

Kent's case has been to emphasise that the East Kent economy has inherent weaknesses which will be exacerbated by a reversal of its one growth sector, the ports. In this situation it is unlikely that significant economic benefits will accrue to Kent without positive effort by both central and local government especially in the areas "behind the terminal. (KCC, P & R Cttee, 24 April, 1986)

The extract shows the difficulties the local authorities faced in their quest for legitimisation of a regeneration and economic development agenda. The South East is seen as prosperous and the pockets of unemployment and structurally weak areas are not recognised, not on a regional level and not outside the South East, on the national level. In keeping with the earlier argument that the important criterion in recognition is the relative deprivation of an area in the national framework, it is here clearly stated that the South East as a whole is seen as relatively prosperous compared to other areas of the UK and therefore less deserving of assistance. Even if the government admitted that intervention was necessary for the full realisation of the economic benefits of the Channel Tunnel, this seeming comparative affluence prevented central government involvement. This sentiment of a lack of attention to the coalfield at all was reiterated in the recent evaluation of regeneration, even for the post-1998 era (DCLG, 2007: 73). There it was reported that:

Mainstream regeneration services and strategies are neither aligned nor focused on the coalfields wards. Policy documents seldom mention coalfields and contain no specific coalfields area targets. Deprivation is tackled per se, not on the basis of the coalfield area.

East Kent and NWL were therefore both in a similar structural position. The expected crisis was not recognised as a crisis on the part of the national actors. In a context of intended reduced state intervention, central involvement was not possible. Local coalitions admitted the need for action to safeguard positive economic effects of imminent structural change, but this was then only possible on the local level and not in co-operation between different state levels. The difference remained that the NWL coalition had formed around mining decline while Kent's was characterised by the priority awarded to the impacts of the Channel Tunnel construction.

Both cases illustrate the difficulties in the legitimisation process, especially once a local consensus is established and then needs to be transferred to the national level. As Pickvance (1990: 181) has described with the example of Thanet, both areas were 'poorly placed in relation to state policies. This is partly because [they] fell outside the traditional types of "deserving" locality, such as the "inner city" or the "depressed peripheral region."' He also argues that political pressure on central government by local lobbyists can make a difference in according the status of a 'deserving' locality through designation in one of the available programmes of regional assistance (e.g. Assisted Area, Rural Development Area, Urban Programme etc) as the criteria for designation are 'sufficiently numerous and subjective' (Pickvance, 1990). In the case of the East Kent mining communities, the lack of lobbying seemed to follow an established pattern, a legacy of the mining industry and the conflict with local political elites. Katie, a community activist, put it in this way:

It's like we're in this Kent area and we're forgotten because that, the political leaders here didn't have the motivation and like I said didn't get out and get this money. (22 May 2007)

Dave elaborates by way of comparison with other mining areas and thus highlights the issue of the position of the coalfield in relation to others:

Dave: you have to think of the political area we're in. If you look at probably Leicester or where my parents were, where my dad is now, Barnsley, all the area there is Labour-controlled, socialist idea rather than this capitalist dogma: if it don't pay we're not having it. But here, we're administrated, apart from the actual Parish Council, Dover District Council, Kent County Council, the whole of Kent is all run by Conservatives, so that they haven't got this, and they're the ones that could get the money to regenerate the mining areas, but it wasn't in their heads to do something like that because they never had the, like, the inspiration or the motivation to do it.

He went on to reflect that in Kent:

everything we wanted we had to do it ourselves. But when the pit was here, like the welfare ground and all the sports facilities were all provided by ourselves. It's never Dover District Council or the old Eastry Rural Council. We always had to do it, everything, ourselves. (Dave, community activist, 22 May 07)

These accounts reveal the problem of legitimisation stemming from a lack of lobbying; it also draws attention to other issues in the mining communities. These are, however, outside of the economic regeneration discourse – the emphasis is on facilities and community infrastructure which was provided by the industry. The dominance of the National Coal Board in the communities also resulted in a different political culture, an isolation from existing political structures. The mining communities were not dependent on the local authorities for the provision of leisure and social facilities as other settlements might have been. Both the union and the mining industry provided for the communities. As Park (1999:321) describes it: 'Pit and parish not only co-existed geographically, they were inter-dependent'. On the one hand, this might have meant that political representation in the local authorities was not of the same importance. On the other hand, mining decline is then not exclusively experienced as the loss of employment but as loss of community structure, focus and facilities. This draws attention to the fact that, certainly in relation to mining, narrowly defined regeneration as economic development does not address the full extent of socio-economic transformation and structural change. The discussion above has centred on (un)employment indicators as justification for regeneration activities



by (local) government. This is based on a conception of regeneration as economic development and economic restructuring. This is justifiable if the contemporary view of regeneration is considered which was also criticised by the Audit Commission's report (2008). It does, however, leave out the social and cultural effects of socio-economic transformation which necessitate state action and shape the experience of regeneration as will be discussed in the following chapter.

This problem of mobilisation has been taken up in the literature on governance (cf. Coulson & Ferrario, 2007, Gissendanner, 2004, MacLeod, 2004) where the role of leadership is particularly highlighted. The importance of the local leader and local agency must not be overstated. The relationship between local and national political culture, especially in the context of deteriorating local-central relations during the 1980s, needs to be considered, too, in assessing individuals' capacity to introduce any problem of economic decline to the political agenda. An analysis of local authorities' trajectories then must not neglect the differential political objectives derived from 'the whole of their social history and, in particular, the evolution within each of them of the relations of force between the different categories of [officers and members] who, when they have power, can sacrifice the [authority's] interests to the satisfaction of their interests within the [local authority]' (cf. Bourdieu, 2005: 70).

Following Gissendanner's argument it might be possible to say that Kent's 'political culture did not provide the kinds of resources for redefining economic development' as in North West Leicestershire (2004: 69). Although there was a governance coalition, i.e. a coalition of partners within local government which had the potential to generate and manage resources, they were concentrating on different issues, i.e. the turning of Dover into an international tourist destination and the challenges of the Channel Tunnel construction rather than the closure of the coalfield. The economic effects of colliery closures were deemed to be cushioned by the construction of the Tunnel which would offer employment. It has been argued that 'high party competition made the task of generating support from the state government more difficult' (Gissendanner, 2004: 69). This can be demonstrated in the case of Kent where there is strong competition between Labour and the Conservatives in traditionally Conservative Kent, while Dover and the coalfield wards are Labour dominated. Interviewees who were active in local government during the 1980s and

1990s and also members of the Labour Party emphasised the fact that concerted action in the coalfields only began in the short period of Labour dominance on Dover District Council (1995 – 1999). Interestingly, this also coincided with the introduction of the Single Regeneration Budget under the Conservative national government. It could therefore be seen as a combination of availability of financial resources on the national level and stronger governing and even strategic capacity at the level of local government.

### **6.2.3. Institutionalisation – Developing Capacity**

The third aspect of legitimisation as conceptualised in this thesis is the availability of the means to act for the local and national (state) actors. This includes economic resources as well as social, institutional and cultural resources. A particular institutional infrastructure needs to be in place for the build-up of meaningful strategies, partnerships and eventually implementation of strategies (cf. Coulson & Ferrario, 2007). This is also discussed in the literature on institutional thickness (e.g. Amin & Thrift, 1994, 1995, MacLeod & Goodwin, 1999). Institutional structures alone, however, are insufficient if the financial resources, the links between officers and politicians and the skills for the task at hand are not available. As regeneration developed as a local authority function during the 1980s this meant the creation of committee structures and posts as well as the acquisition of skills on a local level which had not been associated with local government before.

In both case study areas ‘central government ha[d] not been convinced that the problems of the mining area [were] of the same scale and intensity as some other parts of the country’ (NWLAMD, 3 December 1987), therefore the responsibility for action remained with the local authorities. In contrast to Pike et al.’s (2006) clear-cut juxtaposition of traditional development policies and local economic development efforts, local authority action was a result of the lack of intervention from the national state. In both areas the relevant early documents seem to provide a blue-print for regeneration which addresses the issue of institutional structures, e.g. in Kent it was stated that ‘1, the active co-operation of all local agencies and bodies involved 2, confidence in the project and schemes by investors and operators 3, support of

community and political groups 4, a dynamic and professional approach' (DDC, 1987: 1) were necessary. Similar to this, the LCC officers highlighted the question of changing institutional structures and practices.

Whether this [economic restructuring] can be done by redefining the County Council's existing economic development programme or whether this will require additional resources cannot yet be determined and will rest at least as much on the willingness of Central government, the European Parliament and other bodies to recognise the problems of the area, as upon the LCC's own intentions. The role which the District Councils of NWL and Hinckley and Bosworth seek to play in the future economic development of the area will be equally important factors in the overall economic development programme required and this County Council's contribution to it. (NWLDC, Planning and Development Cttee, 23 May 1980)

Economic restructuring was seen as a new if not additional function to the traditional local government responsibilities. Adapting the institutional roles and functions to this new situation depended on the structural position of the local authorities in relation to other public bodies on local, regional and national levels. As part of the solution to the impending crisis, the early report by the LCC Director of Planning and Transportation emphasised the need for action by public and private organisations: 'It is important however that such action is co-ordinated and directed towards identified community aspirations. Such direction can only come from the elected local authorities serving the area' (NWLDC, P&D Cttee, 23 May 1980). In both cases, the idea was to establish cross-border committees or organisations which would deal with the special issues of economic restructuring. Setting up committees alone, however, was not sufficient. How could regeneration be incorporated into the Councils' legitimised roles? The empirical evidence suggests that the economic development role emerged out of the traditional services of the local authorities.

Before the Local Government and Housing Act 1990, economic development functions of local government had not been formally recognised by central government. In an environment where executive functions were more and more centralised, attempts at the extension of local authority functions was not welcome by

Whitehall. The local authorities in NWL tried to carve their economic development role out of their customary role, using 'Other Services' allocations for the purpose but these means were constrained. In discussions with MPs, the NWL local authorities and the County Council emphasised the 'shortage of "other services" allocations because of the fact that there was no allowance in national calculations for economic development or employment initiatives' (NWLAMD, 9 September 1983) and campaigned for special allocations and more flexibility in the use of funds. They highlighted the difference between generally increased public spending and investment into specific capital projects. The response from the government up until 1989/90 was a concession on specific projects but continuing rejection of an overall economic development power (NWLAMD, 19 December 1983).

One way of dealing with the constraints arising out of a lack of a formal regeneration function is redefining regeneration. The documentary evidence shows that 'traditional' services could be redefined as regeneration services. The NWLDC defined the major objective in their review of the first years as making Coalville, the population centre in the area, a more pleasant and attractive place to live in, the improvement and continued provision of traditional services, e.g. the provision of leisure, agency or sewerage services, went a long way in achieving this aim. 'The provision of the Hermitage Leisure Centre, the new Inner Relief Road and proposed school replacements and improvements are examples where the local authorities' traditional functions can add to economic regeneration activity' (NWLDC, EDC, 23 April 1985). In a limited number of areas this role could be extended to include, e.g. financial assistance to industry, environmental improvements and property advice (ibid.). Other than purely economic areas, e.g. culture, education, environment, became increasingly relevant to a holistic process of economic development, especially in terms of future investment (Cochrane, 1990). Contrastingly, investment which had already occurred in these areas could legitimately be claimed as regeneration activity and the proof of confidence in the area and thus used as political capital. In this sense, economic collapse did not seem to necessitate a complete re-orientation of existing structures and practices but a focus on customary functions which would, however, be concentrated in the urban 'centre' most affected by the economic restructuring.

Another approach using traditional powers was the emphasis on the local planning authority. Especially the District Council saw their prime responsibility in terms of industrial development in their planning functions. In contrast to that, central government pressed for a restriction of local planning powers through e.g. Simplified Planning Zones and Enterprise Zones. While, national government strategy rested on the offer of financial incentives, NWL local authorities followed a ‘traditional’ approach with the provision of the necessary infrastructure (e.g. industrial estates, managed workspaces) and promotion of the area for the attraction of investment (Cochrane, 1990). Given that local authorities depended on capital allocations from central government they increasingly had to work within constraints set by the centre. The DC concluded that spare capital was unlikely to be available and ‘someone else must be persuaded to do these things [large-scale development of industry, acquisition and servicing of land] and the Council’s efforts should be directed to this end’ (NWLDC, EDC, 29 January 1985). In the pursuit of this aim, it was necessary to position the area in the nationally dominant discourses. This could be achieved by constructing an identity for the area within the justificatory frameworks employed in the respective discourse. As one of the former NWLDC Chief Economic Development Officers said, the argument for funding would be made on the basis of the relevant indicators:.

HD: One of the things that I hear is that at the time everybody thought there would be massive unemployment? I mean did this happen?

Mark: If you were filling in forms to get grants and trying to build business parks and things, then you’d sort of, you’d make that case. (18 June 2007)

As part of the development of institutional capacity and thus the institutionalisation of regeneration as local authority responsibility, the authorities in both areas adapted their organisation. The Industrial Development Committee was changed to Economic Development Committee (NWL) and similarly the Tourism and Marketing Committee became the Economic Development and Tourism Committee (Dover) which implied a wider remit in both cases and represented the commitment to a two-pronged regeneration strategy comprising re-industrialisation and tourism. This will be elaborated in a later section of this chapter.

To reiterate then, a discourse around expected mass unemployment was constructed in NWL and this was taken up by a ‘discourse’ coalition or political coalition across party divides. As the local MP emphasised:

And very few of those very bleak predictions actually came about because it inspired, it is galvanized, if that’s the right word, those with some power and resources and influence to act, to head off what the bleakest predictions were tending to flag up. (Interview with local MP, NWL, 5 January 2007)

The successful building of a coalition which is prepared to further a particular cause is thus dependent on unity of purpose. The social, economic, cultural and symbolic capital mobilised through such a coalition was then instrumental in achieving economic regeneration addressing those issues that had been legitimised through their construction in the relevant discourses. In Kent, such a unity of purpose with regard to the problems in the coalfield communities was not achieved. The following section will detail the consequences of the more or less successful establishment of a regeneration coalition in the case study areas.

### **6.3. *Regeneration Trajectories***

The following section examines the local regeneration strategies negotiated under different regimes of regeneration as characterised by the legitimisation processes detailed above. The analysis shows that there are four possible constellations as result of efforts to gain legitimacy for coalfield regeneration. These are characterised by the spatial scale on which coalitions are formed as much as the national policy framework. The following matrix illustrates this argument.

Level of legitimisation		National level	
		No specific coalfield programme	Specific coalfield programme
Local level	No consensus	Local champions, local civil society	non-local, regional and central state agencies
	Consensus	Local authorities and local civil society	Local, regional and central state agencies

Figure 6.3 Actors in the regeneration field as result of legitimisation processes

The national politics of regeneration ultimately determine the access of different actors to the regeneration field and thus delimit the variety of coalitions that can be formed. This in turn influences the regeneration strategies which can be formulated. As actors and their positions in the bureaucratic field change over time legitimacy becomes spatially and temporally contingent. The legitimisation phase of the coalfield regeneration project is followed by if not intertwined with a phase of strategy negotiation. Regeneration strategies, especially economic strategies, are influenced by the dominant economic and social theories as well as constrained by the current relevant policies. Therefore, there are a number of ‘simple truths’ (or accepted assumptions) at the basis of regeneration, e.g. the importance of the availability of production factors for economic growth. This includes labour, capital and natural resources as well as infrastructure and knowledge. The provision and the importance of each of these production factors and thus the particular character of economic regeneration strategies, however, is the result of ideological and political contests – the consequences of the politics of regeneration and in regeneration. The following sections detail the particular regeneration regime as result of the constellation of actors and distribution of power in the regeneration field. The structure is largely chronological, dealing with each regeneration regime and its particular manifestation in the two case study areas in turn. In this section I am concentrating on the

significant developments; specific projects will only be detailed in so far they are advancing the argument. Each project has its own story and narrative but the scope of the thesis does not allow detailing individual cases within the case study areas to a large extent.

### 6.3.1. The power of local champions

Level of legitimisation		National level	
		No specific coalfield programme	Specific coalfield programme
Local level	No consensus	<i>Local champions and local civil society</i>	Non-local, regional and central state agencies
	Consensus	Local authorities and local civil society	Local, regional and central state agencies

Figure 6.6.4 Regeneration Trajectories: Local civil society

This section is concerned with situations in which neither the local nor the national state agencies recognised the ‘crisis of the coalfields.’ The discussion above showed that a local political consensus had been formed on both District and County level in Leicestershire. This was not the case in the East Kent coalfield. The section of the chapter consequently focuses strongly on the early regeneration efforts or lack thereof in the Kent coalfield. It is predominantly concerned with the period of 1985 to 1994. It thus draws attention to the importance of early action in response to structural economic change to prevent social problems from becoming deeply ingrained (Audit Commission, 2008). This period has so far been neglected in the evaluation of coalfield regeneration (with the exception of Turner (1993) and Hudson (2000)).



As detailed in the section above, the consensus in terms of economic development which developed in Kent was focused on the negative employment effects of the Channel Tunnel. This combined with a general concern over the economic future of the formerly industrial North of Kent and a general downturn in the fortunes of the coastal cities. Thus, even though there was no coalfield specific regeneration discourse, there were efforts to narrow the gap between the affluent West of Kent and the less affluent East and North. Economic development from the perspective of the Kent authorities was best pursued via the traditional routes of local and structural plans. There were, however, also efforts at co-operation between different authorities. A number of joint committees and organisations were set up, such as the East Kent Joint Development Committee. This, as other attempts, however, floundered when one or another of the co-operating agencies decided to withdraw (DDC, Tourism and Marketing Cttee, 29 Oct 1991). This again highlights the problems of fragmentation and parochialism which seem to be one of the debilitating factors in the regeneration of East Kent.

The repeated failure of a number of institutions geared towards economic development in East Kent and the lack of visible progress, seemed to signal a lack of concern on the part of the authorities to the communities. For some residents, however, this was not just seen as neglect but as continued ‘attack’ on the mining community. Colliery closures in the Kent coalfield seem to have been followed by the loss of other local services (education, health care) and local settlement policies. Alexandra explains how the local council’s policies exacerbated the existing problems:

Alexandra: There [are] still high levels of social deprivation as a consequence of not the mining but the policies that followed after the mining. So they did not suddenly build a load of council houses down in Eythorne.

Joe: They sold them off.

Alexandra: Yeah, they sold them off. But they did keep them here and did not put any difficult families from Dover into Eythorne because there were no houses to put them but they did, they felt this was a depressed community so

we just put all the problems together. So in that sense, the social consequences of the closure of the colliery were made worse by the District Council's policies. And then it wasn't till ten years later when there was regeneration money which was spent in the area but which didn't, it improved the whole area. (Alexandra and Joe, community activists, 5 September 2007)

A similar experience was recounted to me from residents in another mining community. Following the closure of the colliery in 1987, in 1992, the village's secondary school came under threat of closure. The residents organised to stop the closure of the school but were unsuccessful. This was seen as a major defeat and was mentioned in every interview I conducted with residents of Aylesham, the officers at the District Council, the Councillors at both District and County Council and the local MP. In the history of the village the school closure was a major break – a caesura in the self-sufficiency and the self-perception of the community but also, in the understanding of some, a continuation of the social and economic attacks that the village had had to endure on account of it being a mining community and therefore outside of 'acceptable' Kent society:

Just take Aylesham for an example and it isn't only Aylesham but, you know, having lost the mine which was the main source of employment, to then lose the secondary school was a big kick to the community who felt that it was almost saying you're unemployed, you're not actually fit to educate your own children. We're gonna bus your children here, there and everywhere. (Lauren, voluntary sector representative, 29 May 2007)

The closure of the secondary school was followed by a period of vandalism to the school and seemingly collective loss of faith in the future of the community. As we have seen in the mining areas of Kent there was a tradition of local engagement in issues concerning the community and the provision of services and amenities for the community. The particular forms of amenity and service provision are the results of two characteristics: the social dominance of the mining industry and its embeddedness in the community over and above the working day, and the fact that the social construction of mining settlements has historically been very much based around a discourse of community. Here the community defines itself in contrast to, if not opposition to, the rest of Kent society and this is manifest in recurring conflicts over

provision of services. This was also confirmed by a representative of the local voluntary sector:

I think, the characters and the personalities involved in the voluntary sector in the mining communities are very strong characters, which is a good thing. They are, almost sort of are ready for a fight before you even start and that might be a fight to survive or a fight to put something on that someone can't do or whatever, so I think, the individuals and the characters are very strong willed. But I wouldn't have said that the actual need of what they are doing is stronger than anywhere else, but it's certainly that key people come to the fore far more readily, I think, in the mining areas than in the rest of Dover. (Lauren, voluntary sector representative, 29 May 07)

This was especially in the case of Aylesham where the local readiness to fight was put to the test and one of the most successful local regeneration projects was established as a bottom-up initiative. Faced with lack of concrete initiatives on the part of the local authorities, an individual, a local champion, suggested the conversion and refurbishment of the school buildings to local benefit.

Malcolm was an electrician in the pits, and, and then he was the leader of the Labour Group on the Council when we were in opposition, DDC, and then he came out of the Council and when he was out of the Council but I was still in he came along and lobbied the Labour Group on his plan for Aylesham. And effectively he said, remember, the Tories were running the government, effectively he said, we've never had anything off Tory District Council, we've never had anything from Tory County Council and we never get anything from Mrs Thatcher in London, so unless we do things ourselves, this village is gonna die on its feet. Correct analysis at the time. And he came, he came forward with a business plan, to convert the old high school into what it is now. (local MP, interview 13 July 07)

All of the extracts above mention and emphasise repeatedly the existing conflicts between the social actors in the area: the state authorities and the communities themselves. The conflicts are presented as largely class based with the former miners as representatives of labour on one side and the state authorities (in particular the Regional Development Agency from 1999 onwards) as representatives of capital on

the other. The discourse of ‘us vs them’ is regularly occurring. Therefore, the lack of political consensus within the local authorities was seen as a continuation of power struggles between the ‘miners’ and Conservative Kent as well as miners and Conservative politics on a national level. This was then translated into a lack of local prioritisation and channelling of funds into the affected areas. As the representative of the Regional Development Agency admitted:

I think it was there was certainly a lack of co-ordination, a lack of resourcing. (...) And it was only, that funding was only available through the national programme for SEEDA to spend here. And that wasn't available before 1998, really.

Carl goes on to talk about the repercussions of a policy on non-intervention.

So that was a real issue and even when we started doing our work, and we started talking to these communities, they wouldn't believe that we would do something because they had had so many years of dereliction. (RDA, representative, 23 February 2007)

Carl here acknowledges that the lack of action on the part of the authorities did not only have material economic and environmental effects in terms of continued dereliction. It also had social effects. Relationships with the authorities were difficult to establish as trust in the institutions had weakened in communities which had felt under threat for years. This affected the potential for coalition building and particularly the basis for collaborative governance under later regeneration regimes. This is elaborated in the following chapter.

## 6.3.2. Local authorities in action

Level of legitimisation		National level	
		No specific coalfield programme	Specific coalfield programme
Local level	No consensus	Local champions and local civil society	non-local, regional and central state agencies
	Consensus	<i>Local authorities and local civil society</i>	Local, regional and central state agencies

Figure 6.5 Regeneration Trajectories: The local state

This section of the chapter deals with the possibilities of regeneration which emerge from a negotiated consensus on a local level without the political recognition and legitimisation on the national level. It also concentrates predominantly on the period from 1981 to 1994. As detailed above, a local political consensus on the level of the local authorities had been arrived at in the case of the NWL coalfield. The potential problems of the area had been recognised and accepted as priorities on the local political agenda. On the national level, however, NWL was marginalised in two ways: on the one hand as coalfield, given that there was no coalfield regeneration agenda at the time, on the other hand as an area in industrial decline with comparatively low unemployment rates or only projected rather than existing unemployment. Employment indicators could not be used to receive national funding assistance. As a result the only external assistance received during the 1980s was Derelict Land Clearance Grant. Interestingly, the effects of mining closure were recognised as worthy of financial support – large derelict sites – but not their cause of existence.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> This strategy of marginalising coalfield identity seems to have been successful with obtaining National Forest status as well – the effects of mining on the land, not on employment and social structures, are used as arguments in the bid for National Forest status.

The importance of DLG was substantiated by all the local authority respondents from NWL. The local authorities were thus able to use an existing financial support programme. Even though it was not specifically geared towards mining areas by marginalising the coalfield identity as such and adapting to the accepted and dominant discourse, they were thus able to access funds. This also linked in with the preferred approach to regeneration at the time: property development. The funds that were accessible to NWL were clearly linked to land and land development which would ultimately (in the eyes of the government) lead to employment creation. This, however, in turn facilitated the particular role of British Coal in the area due to their position as a major landowner. Instead of including British Coal into a strategic partnership, the local authorities in NWL were in a position to negotiate their involvement in regeneration and their preferred outcomes on a site by site basis. Mark, former Chief Economic Development Officer in NWL, explained the advantages of the government's Derelict Land Grant scheme for the acquisition of colliery sites.

HD: How did – as far as I know, at the time, British Coal was quite a major landowner – how did, you know, co-operation with them work? Were they quite willing to dispose of the land?

Mark: Yeah.

HD: Yeah?

Mark: Well, yeah, yeah, I mean, there was very close working with British Coal. Willing to dispose? Well, they had, they had their eye to commercial value. I suppose what made the difference was the government's derelict land grant programme. The, you know, the Derelict Land Grant were very willing to fund the restoration of derelict mine sites. Derelict mine sites aren't really worth anything. So British Coal were happy to offload their responsibility and government was happy through the local authority to pay for infrastructure. So that, you know, that's what sort of worked. Yeah, when you look at it, most of the mine sites went to the local authorities. (18 June 2007)

The local authorities, as result of limited financial resources, were under pressure to co-operate with British Coal on planning matters, e.g. in the case of Whitwick Colliery site by granting planning permission for retail purposes on part of the site in contrast to local shopping policies, both to gain access to the land and to be able to receive Derelict Land Grant from central government to carry out necessary infrastructure works for the industrial use of the sites.

The political framework had undergone some changes by the end of the 1980s and even though there still was no formal coalfield regeneration programme, the Rural Development Commission (RDC) started to recognise the particular problems of rural coalfields. In 1990, the label of the Rural Coalfield Area was introduced in addition to the existing Rural Development Areas<sup>26</sup> and in 1994 with the review of Rural Development Areas a larger number of former coalfields were granted assistance under the Rural Development Commission's (RDC) remit. The RDC found itself in the position of implementing stopgap measures in its catering for the coalfield areas as this was a major adaptation of its remit or rather the criteria for funding. Although the basis of RDA designation ostensibly was above average unemployment and characteristics of a 'rural area in greatest social and economic need' (which had led to rejection of an application by the NWL area in 1985), an examination of unemployment rates (Beatty and Forthergill, 1997) showed that the average rate of recorded unemployment was below the national average with considerable diversity among Rural Development Areas (ranging from 4% – 16.7% in January 1996). The changed national attitudes meant that despite the earlier rejection, NWL now effectively received an invitation to bid for designation as Rural Development Area as Mark explained:

[W]e had the agencies like Rural Development Commission coming to us saying have you got any projects? Are we rural? Oh yes, you're rural. Oh right, we're rural. It sort of worked that way. It is not an area that thought of itself as being rural until it realised that being rural was a good idea. I mean, and it's funny though because that's moved full circle now. If you came back now,

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<sup>26</sup> This designation was only applied to two areas: the North West Leicestershire/ South Derbyshire coalfield and the North Nottinghamshire/ North Derbyshire area.

government doesn't particularly support rural, you know, rural wouldn't press any buttons, would it? (former NWLDC CEDO, 18 June 2007)

This supports the argument that local adaptation strategies as much as local 'funding identities' are inevitably constructed in but also constrained by the context of national policies. Despite the funding opportunities the rural priority area (later Rural Coalfield Partnership) offered, boundaries needed to be drawn according to the remit of the RDC which meant an exclusion of the urban centre, Coalville.

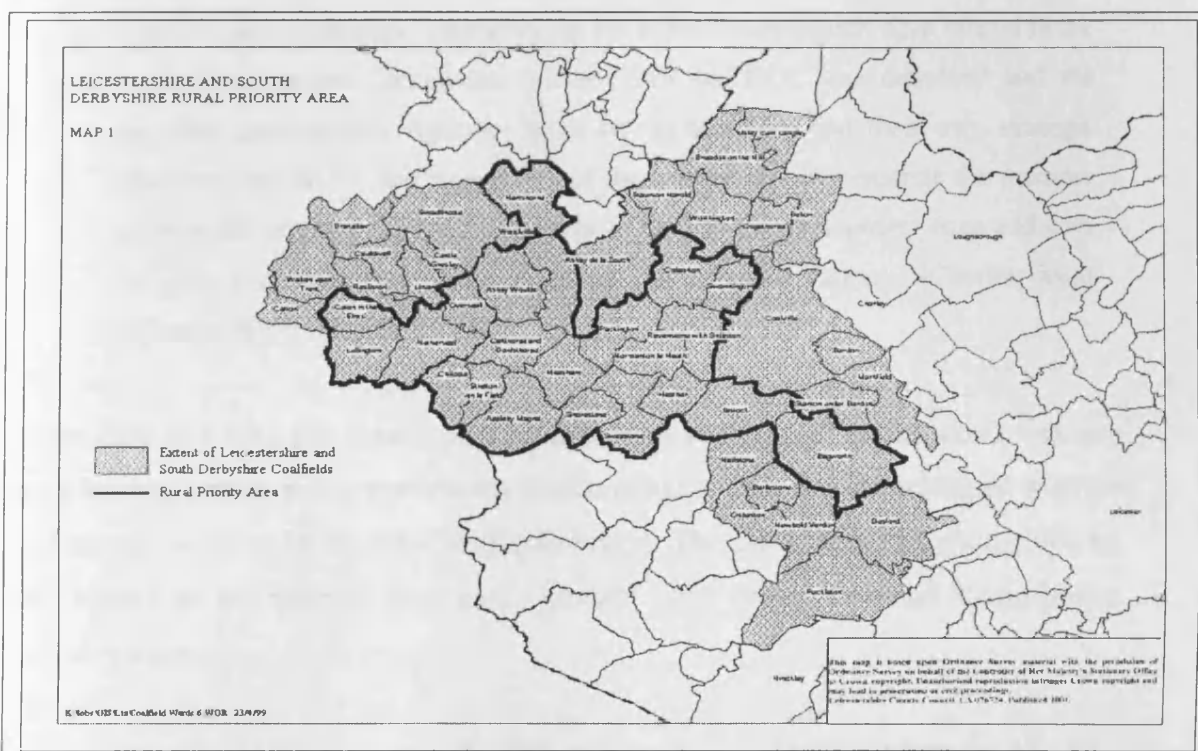


Figure 6.6 Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Rural Priority Area, source Leicestershire County Council, officer correspondence

In an era of increasing centralisation of state power, e.g. through the establishment of institutions which would reduce local authority planning powers and growing pressure on local authority spending, the lack of central government involvement in NWL had allowed for a particularly local-authority driven agenda. Reliance on government grants, however, would grow during the 1990s and this meant that seeking national (financial) assistance remained a necessary element in economic development strategies, and that local actors had to legitimise their need for regeneration funding continually. The latter could only be achieved by positioning the coalfield area in the dominant (hegemonic) discourses and constructing the area within those. Adapting the spatial scale of the coalfield as well as the regeneration agenda was a necessary



strategy for maximising the available funding resources, even if this meant repackaging existing regeneration schemes ‘for the funding regime of the moment’ (John and Ward, 2005). Local authority officers involved in regeneration activities in NWL explained this in the following way:

In partnership with the other, all the districts that were involved they submitted a bid and kept lobbying continually because as I say, they worked as a partnership in the 80s with only their own funding and in fact, ... ‘cause what happened is originally all the strategic objectives for the Rural Development Area related to the Rural Development Commission but in 1999 the RDC was dissolved and the Regional Development Agencies were set up and they had their own strategic objectives and so we had to ensure that the, ensure and demonstrate the linkages between the original aims and objectives of the Rural Development Area and with the aims and objectives of the Regional Development Agency. (Charles, local authority officer, 12 February 07)

In the case of NWL, this meant, pushing forward a strategy of ‘ruralisation’, focusing on a funding stream with a particularly rural emphasis. This was strengthened with the bid for the location of the New Midlands Forest. The result was that recognition by one agency on the national level easily brought about recognition and legitimisation by other agencies:

There wouldn’t have been a Rural Development Area if it hadn’t been for the coal – in other areas (they received) Rural Development Area (status) because of isolation ... it was just a clever way to get a tag, to suck in more funding, to convince the RDC. ... Tagging them (areas) helps with sucking in funding, there is a domino effect both at the strategic level and ‘at the coalface’, the project level, funding organisations will sit on the fence and wait and see who is going to fund it – once one agency approves it, others will follow. (Charles, local authority officer, 12 February 07)

At the same time, emphasis on the rural character of the area also meant turning away from a reindustrialisation strategy and the exclusion of parts of the coalfield, especially the urban centres such as Coalville. Although NWL was not successfully established as ‘coalfield’ it was successful in lobbying for designations which were clearly based on the *former* existence of the mining industry. In this sense, the local

authorities did not use employment-related indicators but ‘impact’-related indicators to achieve recognition, i.e. the post-industrial nature of the area which could be interpreted according to context as the prevalence of derelict land or rurality. The documentation of the council confirms that ‘the application for rural development status was based on the mining closures and not the rural nature of the area’ (NWLAMD, 5 April 1984).

The important factor also was an established consensus built around a strong coalition at the local level from the beginning of the regeneration process:

There was a very effective partnership across the political divide. There was no great political debate whether between ourselves and the Conservatives or the Liberals. So there has been cross-party co-operation which I think was crucial. ... So assembling a coalition of those sorts of groups from the voluntary sector, from the private sector, from the public sector was one of the keys to success. As I said, no one, in general there was no attempt to make politics of the problems that were faced in this area.’ (local MP, 05 January 07)

As Harding argues, ‘governing coalitions must be fashioned among those actors who have access to, and the power to deliver, the resources (financial, physical, human, political) of key public and private institutions’ (1994: 361). From an institutional perspective the political-economic conditions limited the range of potential regeneration actors and brought about a particularly local-authority driven partnership. Project-based co-operation with British Coal proved less successful due to an imbalance in the resources open to the different actors. This regeneration partnership, which worked also across administrative borders, however was successful in adapting to changing regeneration politics and practices through a ‘ruralisation’ strategy which meant emphasising the rural character of the area as well as actively creating a rural space. With the introduction of Single Regeneration Budget (1995) and the designation of Rural Development Area status (1994), external resources could be sought on a programme basis rather than a project basis which essentially strengthened the existing partnership. Variable, but not necessarily temporary, geometries of networks between institutions can therefore be seen as key success factor in the regeneration efforts of NWL.

Another consequence of these continuing partnerships was the exclusion of groups that had not been initiated into the partnership from an early point in the process, in this case, the private sector. Although the area has been described as using ‘urban regeneration practices in a rural setting’ (local authority officer), this cannot be substantiated if this is assessed on the basis of the prevalence of private-public partnerships (Rydin, 1998). The one constant and successful coalition has been between local authorities while private sector actors remain on the margins. If ‘new urban governance’ is seen as a renaissance of local government through finding new roles and new relationships with other actors, then this could be true. In this sense, Davies’ (2004: 572) analysis of regeneration partnerships which concludes that ‘formal organisation and hierarchies remain more significant in the local politics of collaboration’ than private-public sector relationships is applicable to the North West Leicestershire coalfield as well.

The Audit Commission (2008) criticised the local authorities’ approach in the early phase of regeneration as lacking vision and being piecemeal. This was not the case in NWL. Even though actions, here too, were driven by national funding priorities, the co-operation between different tiers of local government had enabled early strategic work. Consequently, a local vision based on public intervention existed from the announcement of the closures. This was adjusted to funding and allowed the local coalition seeking for national funding to present itself when national funding was seeking a local coalition as in the case of the Single Regeneration Budget, the Rural Development Commission and the National Forest plans, ‘a government project wanting a home’ (Mark, 18 June 2007). This will be examined further in the next section.

### 6.3.3. Partners on a local and a national scale

Level of legitimisation		National level	
		No specific coalfield programme	Specific coalfield programme
Local level	No consensus	Local champions and local civil society	non-local, regional and central state agencies
	Consensus	Local state agencies and local civil society	<b>Local, regional and central state agencies</b>

Figure 6.7 Regeneration Trajectories: The local and the central state

From the late 1980s onwards the local authorities in NWL were able to draw on strategies which had been put in place over the preceding years which also meant that they were able to benefit from new policy directions on a national level. These policy shifts meant that the particular problems of the coalfields became more and more acknowledged. As Nicholas, a senior officer at Leicestershire County Council explained:

[I]t takes a long time to get the policies in place but having done that, that led to us being in a nice position to respond with lots of good justification, and good policies pre-prepared, if you like, to deal with that – which we were doing anyway before the Forest came along as an idea. (2 February 2007)

He emphasises the importance of justification, he is thus referring to the idea of linking the problems of the area with the available policies and taking advantage of new initiatives. As mentioned above, the cross-border partnerships which had been built during the early years of the regeneration effort proved essential for national programmes which emphasised the importance of collaborative working between

different actors. This is also the period where the ruralisation strategy brought the biggest benefits to the area. It allowed for the rural villages to be included in the newly introduced Rural Coalfield Areas, a national initiative to deal with the effects of coalfield closure in former industrial areas. This was done on 'invitation' by the Rural Development Commission as was reported in the local authority documentation:

The RDC ... have indicated that they feel that although the Woulds is not a designated RDA it is suffering from a number of economic and social problems characteristic of rural deprivation. They therefore feel that it may be possible to make out an argument for the Woulds area to be treated as a special case and have suggested that a formal approach for assistance should be presented. (NWLDC, EDC, 14 March 1989)

The interviews and documents referring to that period paint a picture of secure funding streams and implementation work rather than continuing struggles over the allocation of assistance. The success in obtaining one designation, in this case the label of Rural Coalfield Priority Area, paved the way for obtaining further assistance. Although the amount of money which was channelled into the area through the RDC was not of a large scale, it enabled the authorities for to apply for other funds; 'the actual funding itself was relatively small, it was just that catalytic effect of it bringing in other funding' (Charles, LCC officer, 12 Feb 2007). This was a result of the mechanism of match funding. The RDC designation was then also augmented by the success in obtaining RECHAR funding for the NWL coalfield area.

The other major success in this period of action in NWL was the designation of the National Forest. This, again, seemed to be a culmination of efforts which had gone on before. The partnership working between the Councils allowed a quick reaction to the suggestions of a new National Forest in the Midlands by the Countryside Commission (1987) which also fitted into the wider programme of environmental improvement which had been an essential part of the regeneration initiative in the district. The local authorities were even successful in winning the Rural Challenge bid in 1990/91 for part of the projects which would be completed for the National Forest.

This taken together with the continuing availability of Derelict Land Grant meant a period of relatively secure external financial assistance. This also facilitated the consolidation of existing partnerships. As Charles, a LCC officer described the process to me:

HD: And the Coalfield Regeneration Partnership has this come out of this Joint Group?

Charles: Yes, yes. It's a gradual progression. It started off as a loose sort of linkages between the various local authorities who got together to see whether they could, because they obviously had some funding themselves, but the idea was that by working together they could achieve more, you know, pooling resources and so on and applying for funding and so on. But once they got the Rural Development status and then they started successful with the European funding, and then ehm SRB funding, the partnership became stronger and more focussed and, and has sort of blossomed really from then on and then it carried right on, right through to 2004 when it was superseded by the Local Strategic Partnerships. (12 February 2007)

This period in NWL was then characterised by developing a corporate, joined-up approach between different local authority services and levels and the implementation of strategies which had been developed over a number of years. Part of this consolidation work still remained the fostering of relations with national funding schemes which also meant a continued redrawing of boundaries around the areas of need, thus the constant redefinition of economic and social spaces. Similarly, this period was also characterised by an increasing professionalisation and, as the Audit Commission (2008) described, the onset of a mainstreamed approach to regeneration. This meant the different funding streams were combined together from a number of different sources to achieve common goals across a range of partner organisations. The institutions which were set up at this point in the district were quite pioneering in their approach. In the assessment of the Audit Commission, only few have reached this stage in the regeneration process to date. The fact that NWL arrived at this place already in the early 1990s was a major achievement and testament to the strategic efforts that went into building up a pro-active approach.

Another element of this period is the onset of a profound policy change. As discussed in Chapter 4 regeneration came to be seen as a holistic process which needed to include social and community development as well as economic revitalisation. This holistic approach was supposed to be manifested in the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) which brought together a number of funding streams (Oatley, 1998). This also meant that the regeneration field was opened to a greater number of players and distribution mechanisms were characterised by competition rather than seemingly objective indicators. For Mark, former CEDO in NWL, the developments in the practice of regeneration also meant that the process had changed from one where projects or programmes were assessed to one where ‘what’s being bought is a series of outputs rather than a project.’ He here emphasises the market-nature of the regeneration process with funding agencies essentially buying the regeneration product, which, in his opinion, seemed to be a number of measurable outputs rather than outcomes.

Although the Kent documentation shows the existence of the same instruments in terms of potential policies which could have been applied up to the introduction of the SRB, the results were negligible. Similar to Leicestershire, plans were made for a Tourism Development Action Plan, which concentrated on Dover and the White Cliffs Country theme. Security of funding for Kent only seemed to arrive with the introduction of the Single Regeneration Budget in 1994.

6.3.4. Regeneration from above – The central state in the regions

Level of legitimisation		National level	
		No specific coalfield programme	Specific coalfield programme
Local level	No consensus	local champions and local civil society	<b><i>Non-local, regional and central state agencies</i></b>
	Consensus	local state agencies and local civil society	Local, regional and central state agencies

Figure 6.8 Regeneration Trajectories: The central state in the regions

By the advent of the Coalfield Task Force and the National Coalfield Programme, the problems of the Kent coalfield communities had been recognised and acknowledged on the local authority level. There was potentially a more successful local strategic coalition for the implementation of coalfield regeneration. The Coalfields Task Force report, however, recommended to central government that the responsibility for large-scale reclamation of existing derelict colliery sites was given to English Partnerships, the successor to English Estates and the administrator of the Derelict Land Grant Programme. Apart from the introduction of the Coalfields Task Force and the National Coalfields Programme as result of this, the New Labour government also established Regional Development Agencies (RDA). These were the manifestation of a new direction in economic development theories and practices with particular impacts on governance – regionalism (Lovering, 1999, Boland, 2007). This saw the region as the driving force in economic growth and renewal. The new institutions also became instrumental in the implementation of a number of regeneration funding streams. The Rural Development Commission was subsumed into the RDAs’ remit as was the administration of the SRB. In the coalfields, the RDAs also became the delivery partners for English Partnerships for the sites included in the National



Coalfield Programme. Their remit is focused on economic revitalisation which left the task of social and community development with the local authorities. This mechanism for funding allocation meant that the local authorities themselves would not be accountable or responsible for the expenditure. Although RDAs still need to build positive relations with local authorities due to their planning powers, the recent emphasis on community participation also necessitates the building of a different kind of local consensus – that with the local residents and those affected by the change in their vicinity.

This section concentrates on the experience of the Kent coalfield communities as interviews in NWL confirmed that the action programme there had hardly benefited from the National Coalfield Programme. Although English Partnerships was involved in some of the projects under the umbrella of the National Forest, the majority of programmes were implemented using funding as part of the designation as Rural Coalfield Partnership and the SRB. The latest developments in coalfield regeneration, i.e. the Coalfield Regeneration Trust and the National Coalfield Programme are of little relevance in NWL. As Charles explained to me:

Technically the NWL coalfield area can still apply to the Coalfield Regeneration Trust for funding but they don't really get much money because most agencies now regard the coalfield, the issues within the coalfield priority area being largely addressed. I mean lots of people would argue that there are still underlying issues but essentially the, the coalfield status is gone now. .... So essentially the coalfield status finished in 2004. (LCC officer, 12 February 2007)

This assessment highlights how a seemingly objective geologically based coalfield first became a politico-economic and then a symbolic category in the course of restructuring. A coalfield is something that is linked to particular economic indicators (e.g. percentage of employment in mining, ODPM, 2003b) and their recognition as relevant in the dominant funding regimes and not necessarily linked to 'mining' characteristics. There are still opportunities via the Coalfield Regeneration Trust but as the obvious problems of economic, environmental and social deprivation seem to have been addressed, this funding is less likely to be obtained. The 'coalfields' as a national category still exist but in relation to other recognised (i.e. deprived) former

mining areas, NWL is no longer seen as one. The label therefore is not only one that is spatially expressed in the politico-economic context but it is also a temporal (if not temporary) one. The coalfields are temporary economic spaces which are being transformed into new economic spaces and NWL has completed this journey, ‘this turnaround of vision – from an area you avoid to an area you’re attracted to’ (Nicholas, LCC officer, 2 February 2007).

For the Kent coalfield communities, the thrust of reclamation and revitalisation activities came in the wake of the Coalfields Task Force. Although SEEDA have combined all the colliery sites together under the Kent Coalfield Programme, implementation of the actual projects occurred on a site-by-site basis with the overarching aim of raising East Kent’s economic performance in relation to West Kent from 70% to 85% (Carl, SEEDA Rep, 23 February 2007). The approach to the site reclamation has therefore been heavily influenced by expectations of job creation also because the funding for the projects was secured on the basis of the number of jobs that could potentially be created on each site. The situation is then one in which the national funding is seeking to build a local coalition to achieve transformation. As mentioned in the latest evaluation (DCLG, 2007), however, there seem to be problems of embedding coalfield regeneration into the mainstream local activities. At the same time, the national programmes have undoubtedly added to the regeneration activities in the area.

This can be exemplified with a view towards collaborative governance mechanisms. The necessary coalition building with the community has proved difficult as was indicated in Carl’s admission above that there were issues of trust in the area in the institutions in the area (this is elaborated in the following chapter). This was confirmed in all the interviews with community activists during the fieldwork period. While there could be an argument around the constitution of social relations as result of the existing political culture and the legacy of the mining industry, Joe and Alexandra here also make a case for the organisation of the process as essential in the shaping of relations between different regeneration actors.

Alexandra: [T]hey just don’t listen. What they want is not what the community wants.

Joe: They're a quango. They're an unelected body and they see things through other people's eyes. (5 September 2007).

The funding regime also has implications for bottom-up and voluntary sector initiatives in the communities. The funding structure suggested by the CTF saw community projects also supported by the Coalfield Regeneration Trust. The interviews highlighted that the current regulations emphasised short-term arrangements which were counter-productive for a sustainable transformation of negative social conditions. They encouraged the development of 'grant-junkies', community projects which only survived from grant to grant which was regularly discussed by the community development and voluntary sector representatives. As Alexandra and Joe point out, the mismatch between objectives of different institutions was also felt in the running of community projects:

Alexandra: It's basically money that's been allocated for the coalfield, for redevelopment and it comes up in different groups, different government bodies. They kind of reform themselves and they have different priorities and sometimes there's money through the lotteries as well. (...) I think it's very difficult. At the macro-level, at government level you set out these very broad objectives

Joe: That's right.

Alexandra: By the time it gets down to the community it is really quite, it's very difficult at, at the level of say a group of miners in a club and all their families, to match between this level and this level. (5 September 2007)

Alexandra and Joe here clearly emphasise the problem of conflicting indicators and objectives in the regeneration process. This fundamentally relates to the different stakeholders' understanding of regeneration and the meaning of change through the process. This issue returns in the following chapters. The processes of change and repositioning which are enacted on the level of the locality and through the local authorities are here reproduced on a smaller scale, in the context of individual villages and community groups. The community activists show a high level of understanding of the funding landscape as well as the necessity of positioning

themselves (or their ‘project’) in the relevant discourses. This is also affected and perpetuated in the ways regeneration itself has emerged as a field of production in its own right.

#### **6.4. Conclusion**

In summary, regeneration on a local level is located at the juncture of the market and the state. Local authorities perceived and recognised the need for a reaction to macroeconomic trends which would manifest itself in sectoral decline and anticipated or actual employment changes. Growing national emphasis on the promotion and support of particular economic activities as well as other regions’ or local authorities’ increased role in local economic development also facilitated an expansion of regeneration activities to all local authorities, even irrespective of (constructed) need but as a ‘fashionable’ development.

The authorities in Kent show remarkably similar ideas and strategies to those in NWL. The same idea of prioritisation (of North East Kent) exists but the failures remain. There are two aspects to this in the comparison to NWL. In NWL, importantly, there exists an idea of a *coherent* coalfield which requires prioritisation. Strategies are developed on the basis of the coalfield as an area, a sub-region of the County, not on the basis of sites. The marginalisation of the coalfield by submerging it into a wider area is a critical factor in the failures in Kent and the ‘repair’ work being done through the SEEDA programme, i.e. by constructing a Kent coalfield programme (which remains site-based) is not enough. It might, however, also be the fact that there is no coalfield as definable area as such and SEEDA’s programme is unable to ‘construct’ it. On an economic level it is regional cohesiveness that is lacking, which also applies to the political, cultural and symbolic level. All of these factors together translate into problems of legitimisation, both politically for the local authorities and therefore discursively (symbolically) in the national context which again leads to lack of national political legitimisation.

Regeneration as demonstrated in the cases above has been dominated by economic indicators be that in terms of the legitimisation of regeneration activity in the first

place or in terms of the activities and measures taken. The assumptions underlying such economically driven measures would then inevitably be associated with economic theories of local and regional development. Interestingly enough, especially in the case of North West Leicestershire, the documentary and interview data show that the local authorities in the area were truly pioneering in their approach to local regeneration as their rationales foreshadow later theoretical and policy debates. Cheshire and Gordon argued in 1998 (p. 342) that:

The lesson for local policy makers would seem to be: nurture the successful firms already present. Given the evidence presented as to why firms become mobile, one of the easiest and most effective ways of doing this is likely to be by pursuing policies which ensure a ready supply of reasonably cheap premises. Where policy does aim at mobile investment, qualities-based (as distinct from price-based) strategies are more likely to provide gains for local territorial agencies of the communities they represent.

NWL's action plans, regeneration and economic strategies already make these points in 1985 (NWLDC, EDC, 29 January 1985). Similarly, Richard Florida's (2002) much hailed emphasis on amenities for the attraction of the mobile creative class was envisaged as integral part of the regeneration strategy in NWL by 1985 through the emphasis on making the area, in particular Coalville, a more attractive place to live in. Emphasis in the strategy was first on the quality of life and second on the provision of workspace and employment generating activities. This might be a result of the traditional role of local authorities as an emphasis and pre-occupation with quality of life remained firmly within the established institutional boundaries of local authorities. This would mean that over the course of two decades, traditional local authority functions have been elevated to economic development functions and thus also been transferred to new institutions which have sprung up in the wake of socio-economic transformation.

The above discussion has focused on a conceptualisation of regeneration as a field which emerged from an overlap of the economy and politics. The extract here highlights the interdependencies between economics and politics but in contrast to the earlier characterisation of a predominantly political process, this opens up the opportunity for conceptualising regeneration as located in different markets: a global

market whose macro-economic trends determine the local in ways beyond local control, and a national or more local market which also comprises public investment. The resultant recommendation is a flexibilisation of local authorities – more akin to businesses operating in the context of global market trends than to the traditional local authority. Growing local authority involvement also meant an increasing recognition and expectation of local authorities as actors in the economic and business structure – as employers, contractors, advisors – and thus ultimately economic actors responding to the market (NWLDC, P & R Cttee, 14 March 1990). Here, however, the market is not one based on the exchange of or competition for goods. It is purely seen as a market for public and private investment and activity. The conclusion is that there is a demand for a local authority role in economic development and regeneration. Local authorities are effectively offering a service which the market has not been able to provide otherwise. Their insertion into national agendas, however, remains a critical factor in the local actors' positioning in the regeneration field. The impact state restructuring and thus the reconfiguration of the political field has on regeneration trajectories is powerfully illustrated by the differential position of local authorities in the process in the two case study areas over time. Strategic authority over the process lay with the local authorities in NWL but in Kent has been transferred to the Regional Development Agency as a result of the mobilisation of national economic resources. The restraint in attempts at renegotiating this position in Kent is on the one hand testament to the local political culture and the priority coalfield issues take, on the other hand, it exemplifies the general shift in the function and role of local authorities under the regionalisation agenda.

As the chapter has demonstrated, the shift in regeneration strategies, is more complex than elaborated by Pike et al. (2006) . The question of legitimisation and authority over decisions of regeneration and development has been neglected in this model but is of utmost importance in the understanding and explanation of contingent local regeneration trajectories. This leads to a final conceptualisation of the way legitimisation processes shape local regeneration strategies and constitute regeneration regimes:

Level of legitimisation		National level	
		No specific coalfield programme	Specific coalfield programme
Local level	No consensus coalition	No "legitimate" regeneration → Opportunities for local champions and community initiatives	Central (regional) regeneration agenda carried by non-local agencies → imposition of non-local agencies
	Consensus coalition	Local-authority dominated/driven regeneration → local-authority based partnerships	Local-central partnerships carried by national and local funding → Regeneration as project of elected representatives

Figure 6.9 Regeneration Trajectories: Synthesis

The discussion has also highlighted that the developments hailed as new and a response to 'failed' traditional approaches are not necessarily new nor can they be clearly separated from them but have overlapped those and been discussed and implemented on a local level since the early 1980s. The position of the case study areas at the margins of both the policy and the academic agendas in their treatment of socio-economic transformation in old industrial regions, however, might provide an explanation for this oversight. Being marginal both allowed for freedom and innovation in local authority responses and exacerbated the dependence on national policies when local initiatives failed to materialise. The above classification of regeneration trajectories then gives full attention to aspects of local socio-cultural identity expressed in political cultures and coalition building. It also details processes of legitimacy in the context of political structures and agency (cf. Jayne, 2003). The model suggested here takes up the work by Goodwin & Painter (1996) which discusses specific localised conditions of production and the configuration of local social forces and cultural practices (cf. Jayne, 2003) and adds the dimension of the interdependence between local and national political projects. It highlights the multidimensionality of restructuring processes in the ways that governing and strategic capacities are developed. These are the result of local actors' successful positioning in the regeneration field and the subsequent acquisition and validation of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital. The following chapter will examine

the effects of these mechanisms of positioning on local actors. In this, it is aimed to uncover the social relations that are constituted through the changing conditions of entry to the (local) field of regeneration.



## Chapter 7 – Stories of Change - Stories of Trust

*I set out a philosophy of civil renewal, together with an agenda for action. At its heart is a vision of strong, active, and empowered communities – increasingly capable of doing things for themselves, defining the problems they face and then tackling them together.*

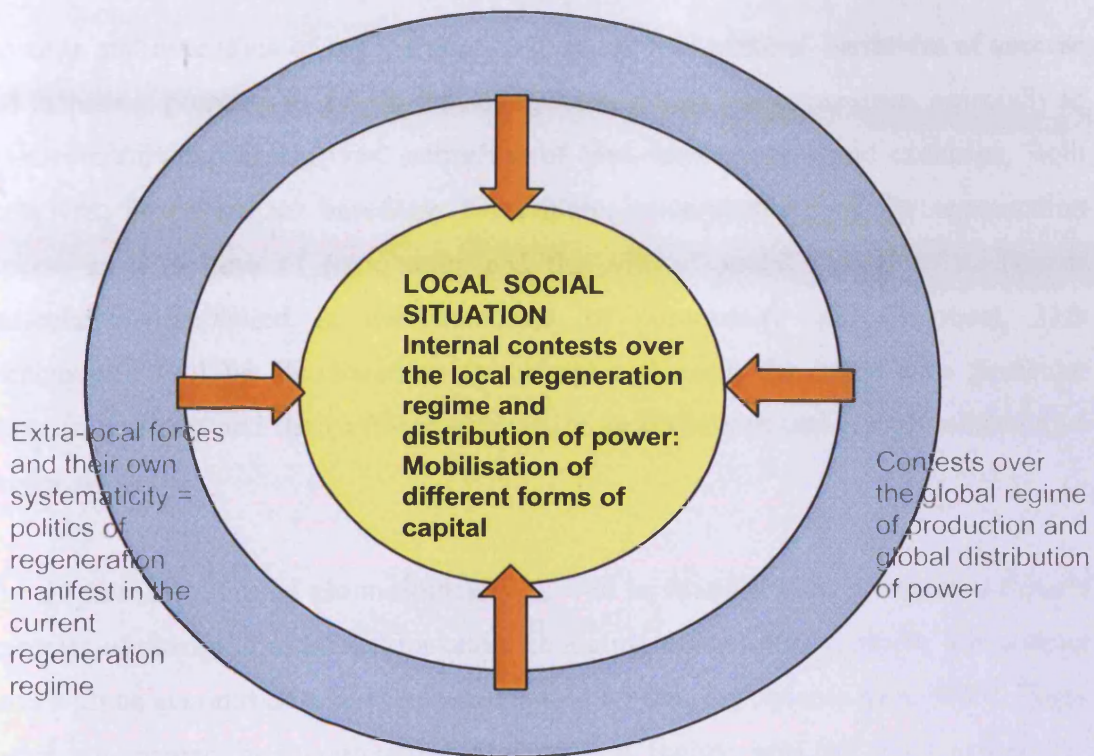
*(David Blunkett, former UK Home Secretary, 11 December 2003)*

*They don't know what they're talking about; they got no idea of the values of community. They're anti-community and they do things to undermine the fabric of a community (...) it's difficult to say to somebody that doesn't understand this sort of values what the values are. It's like talking a different language. There's no connectivity. You can't connect, it's impossible.*

*(Douglas, community activist, Kent, 22 March 2007)*

### 7.1. Introduction

The focus of this chapter lies on the ways in which the national framework for implementation of policies is translated in the field of local civil society and the points of overlap with both the bureaucratic and the representational field. This means focusing on the configuration of the social space in terms of the relationship between institutions, and individuals together with the resulting practices of regeneration as well as ways of making sense of these practices. The implementation of the economic imperative in current policies, i.e. in the politics of regeneration also depends on collaboration and citizen engagement, in other words, the mobilisation of social capital. The inclusion of non-political actors is then manifest in the specific relationships between the representatives of entrepreneurial state organisations and local authorities on the one hand and community organisations and residents on the other. The locally contingent outcome of this situation in terms of consensus or conflict, collaboration and trust or lack thereof is investigated in this chapter. In terms of the theoretical framework, it is therefore concerned with the politics *in* regeneration.



**Figure 7.1** Locating the chapter in the theoretical framework: focus on politics *in* regeneration

Bourdieu’s notion of the field and different forms of capital (introduced in Chapter 2) enhanced the understanding of regeneration as a political production process. Analysing the politics in regeneration then means uncovering the struggles over the mobilisation and distribution of different forms of capital in a given locality. Mobilisation is as much outcome as part of the process itself. It is necessary for the repositioning of the locality which is to be regenerated in the social space for restructuring is essentially a reconfiguration and re-cognition of the ‘capital stock’ of a locality. These struggles are the focus of the following discussion.

This chapter deals with individual experiences and individual ways of making sense of the socio-economic changes in the case study areas. The data is prominently drawn from interviews and observation in the mining communities of East Kent as regeneration there is still an everyday phenomenon, if not everyday frustration. The chapter demonstrates that these individual stories have recurring elements amounting to patterns in the ways people tell stories about regeneration. It brings narratives of policy makers and local government officers and, ultimately, their understanding of successful regeneration together with the views of those representing the community in the regeneration process. This highlights the different frameworks of understanding

the aims and outcomes of regeneration, e.g. the policy makers' narratives of success and inclusion, pointing to a deep schism between policy and experience, especially in the community representatives' narratives of loss, hopelessness and exclusion. Both narratives, however, are based on a particular understanding of the regeneration process as a process of (ex)change and the role of social capital in it. This is particularly manifested in the enactment of community and (mis)trust. This phenomenon will be illustrated in this chapter through the story of a particular community group and their efforts at inclusion into the mechanisms of collaborative governance.

The chapter is structured chronologically as well as thematically. It strives to present examples of changing relationships under changing regeneration regimes. The chapter starts with an account of stories of success told by the respondents from NWL. These stories are located in the prevalent regeneration regime and the local authorities' efforts at raising external financial resources. Success is here presented as profitable positioning in the contest over economic capital and in relation to the objectives of the early phase of coalfield regeneration, which are employment creation and derelict land reclamation. This is followed by an examination of the subsequent shift towards community issues and their specific manifestation in the regeneration process in Kent. It focuses here on the effects of the arrival of non-local agencies and their attempts at mobilising consent through participation. Particular emphasis will be placed on the meaning of community in both policy and residents' discourses, its mobilisation in the sense of getting people involved and its enactment through partnerships and community forums.

## ***7.2. The Entrepreneurial Years: Stories of Co-operation and Success?***

The early activities of planning for and responding to colliery closures in North West Leicestershire were dominated by efforts to carve out a regeneration strategy in a context of national reluctance to accept coalfield regeneration as priority onto the policy agenda. The major thrust of strategic development therefore occurred under a regeneration regime that, on a national level, placed specific emphasis on job creation,

the creation of an entrepreneurial spirit and property development but not community engagement.

As outlined in the previous chapter, this led to the formation of a local regeneration coalition between the local authorities. Close working relationships developed between the officers of different authorities and Mark, former NWL CEDO, recalls that:

[T]here was a more formal, there was a formal working group and there was a member working group, but, yeah, it worked, you know, very closely, yeah but it was that the County had said we are going to do something with North West Leicestershire, so yeah, I spent a lot of time in and out of County Hall, yeah, you wouldn't need to go to reception at County Hall, you'd walk straight in, you knew who you were going to, you knew where people were and you were part of the same team, really. (18 June 2007)

He here emphasises the sense of familiarity that developed for him working in authorities that were nominally separate but joined up for the particular purpose of regeneration. The relationships at officer level were replicated at member-level and the cross-party consensus was a recurring feature in the accounts from all NWL respondents. Stories of regeneration in NWL are therefore also predominantly stories of co-operation and the building of consensus (see also Chapter 6). This serves to highlight that the so-called new development of governance arrangements and partnerships since the New Labour government is not as new as often claimed (Robson, 1994).

The network of relationships that developed between the different actors were instrumental in negotiating the contests over economic capital in the newly developing field of regeneration, 'a bit of a newism' (William, former NWLDC CEDO) at the time. In the tales of the quest for revitalisation, the acquisition of funds from both public and private sources was seen as one of the major tasks on the journey. There are conflicting accounts in the data about the availability of funds, ranging from economic resources never being a real 'stumbling block' (Mark, former NWL CEDO) to the lack of money to solve problems (Simon). Interestingly enough,

Mark preceded Simon as Chief Development Officer and was working through the years without a national coalfield programme.

Social and professional networks and the necessary skills became essential for dealing with both the new ‘rules of the game’ in the bureaucratic field and the new relationships with the private sector. Simon, former NWLDC CEDO, emphasised how the professional *habitus* needed to be adapted for

in economic development you have to be very flexible and respond to things that come along because you are liaising with business, you have to act like a business and not like a typical local authority which is seen as bureaucratic and slow and never does anything. (04 July 2007)

Similarly, Mark spoke about the development of relationships with the civil servants in his quest for financial assistance. Interaction with the government agencies allocating funds was direct and therefore the bidding process was influenced by the personal relationships between the professionals:

My process was: did I know the civil servant at the government office? Did I get on with him? Did he trust me? He was going to give me, you know, £1.5m, did he trust me that if I did that we were gonna deliver, you know, and he was going to, you know, tick his boxes. (Mark, former NWLDC CEDO, 18 June 2007)

Acquisition of central government funding under a regeneration regime that had not been fully formalised, especially not with regard to coalfields, then, was therefore not only dependent on the wider structures of policy agendas but also on the individuals’ abilities to forge relationships and thus mobilise social and cultural capital.

These successes in gaining trust and funding seem to have become manifest in the area’s performance. NWL has been described as example of successful regeneration and best practice (DCLG, 2007). Statistically speaking, NWL has been identified as one of the areas which have fully recovered from the job loss through colliery closures (Beatty et al., 2005). This was re-iterated in the interviews where the lack of

unemployment played an important role in the assessment of regeneration. Simon, former Chief Economic Development Officer at NWL District Council, here employs a view of regeneration which accords well with the current discourse.

HD: Ah ok, and the main criteria for saying that the work's finished or regeneration is no longer a priority are unemployment?

Simon: Unemployment, as I say was about 1.4%, economic performance was very high. In terms of derelict land, very little derelict land left to reclaim all the coal mines have been sorted out and you know, new houses being built in Measham and Moira, Ashby Woulds. So if you like, the market, the free market has taken over the further development of the economy because it's got back to such a stage where businesses are happy to invest, housing developers are happy to put new houses in. People are happy to move now. (former NWLDC Chief Economic Development Officer (CEDO), 04 July 2007)

The account touches on aspects which have been identified as the core components of restructuring - physical, economic and social - (Audit Commission, 2008) and highlights the progress that has been made in these areas. These were the priorities set in the regeneration action plans in NWL already from 1981 onwards. As a result of the action by the local authorities, investment is coming into the area in the form of houses, businesses and people. State involvement is no longer necessary as the 'free market' is determining economic development now. Although Simon goes on to discuss the rising house prices and the potential negative effects this has for the local (working class) population, it is dismissed as a serious failure in the transformation process. This was also re-iterated in an interview with the local MP. He similarly saw rising house prices and new residents moving into the area as the 'usual' social side-effects of what he calls a 'textbook regeneration,' the desired economic restructuring of the district.

There was therefore a consensus in the interviews that the regeneration programme as such had been successful in the transformation of the area. External funding streams have stopped and as priority in the county policies had moved elsewhere the regeneration teams in the local authorities had been disbanded by 2004. In both cases, it was emphasised that this was a result of co-operation between agencies. The

designation of the area as the National Forest has been cited by all respondents as the biggest success in the regeneration of the area and is exemplary for the process overall. The bid was a cross-county collaboration between District and County Councils<sup>27</sup> and involved a cross-party consensus. This was essential for a national initiative seeking a place for its implementation.

The collaborative spirit that was praised in all the interviews in Leicestershire, however, leaves out one element. Co-operation was wholly on a professional level, either between ‘professional’ politicians or between economic development professionals. Collaboration until the mid-1990s and the advent of SRB funding, only needed to be between the state agencies. There was involvement of the Local Council for Voluntary Services but extensive community engagement was not on the agenda. As Simon recalls, when the inclusion of the ‘community’ became an item for funding applications:

[W]hen we were doing RECHAR, we were putting all the bids together and we needed the community involvement. There were these miners' welfares all around, I think, some of them still exist. But I went to one in Coalville, it's like a working men's club, and went into this place and it was packed with men and they were all ex-miners and, and I'd never seen so many but they were all like hidden, they were all in this work, and obviously talking about the old days, but they were like this completely forgotten part of society. A bit like with Fothergill's work on the hidden unemployment, these are just like, there's this whole mining community in Coalville, they were just not seen anywhere. They were all old people, a lot of them were not able to work because of health, emphysema and stuff like that, problems but they were all in and no-one was looking after them. I mean, not health-wise but from a community point of view. (former NWLDC, CEDO, 04 July 2007)

The community of miners seemed hidden from view, it had not played part of the policy and regeneration agenda at all. The account he gives here reminds of a shadow world to the successful transformation of the area. As a result, despite all the stories of

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<sup>27</sup> The participating local authorities were: North West Leicestershire District Council, South Derbyshire District Council, East Staffordshire District Council, Leicestershire County Council and Derbyshire County Council.

economic success, respondents admitted that social deprivation remained on the agenda, especially in the urban areas of the district.

Similar to that, although respondents in Kent also acknowledged the lack of unemployment and the visible environmental changes, in line with the results of the Audit Commission (2008: 28), ‘the key unfinished business of coalfield regeneration is to deal with the complex range of social issues that continue to affect these communities.’ As Lauren, a representative of an active voluntary sector organisation in the district described it:

The regeneration side, most of what you see in terms of regeneration at the moment is around, for example the Pike Road Industrial Estate, the transformation of a site. But again, although it has brought in some jobs, I don't think a local community particularly sees that as something worth having when in fact in their daily lives they are still struggling and living in somewhere that they don't want to be and haven't got the transport, haven't got the GP, all those sort of main services, they're still struggling to cope with the, the, the scarcity there. (Lauren, voluntary sector rep, 29 May 2007)

This extract highlights that employment opportunities were not seen as the problem in the interviews with residents. They complained about the lack of services and amenities. The regeneration agenda, however, has mainly been geared towards job creation while the needs of the area and the communities were left unexplored (Audit Commission, 2008). As argued in Chapter 6, in the process of legitimising coalfield regeneration, the problem in the coalfield areas is constructed according to the reigning funding regime. With the arrival of the Single Regeneration Budget and the Coalfield Regeneration Trust a stronger community focus became apparent and issues of community development were addressed. This also required the forging of relationships outside of the bureaucratic field. The accounts of success under a regeneration regime which prioritises relationships between state agencies mask underlying problems of social exclusion and neglect of community needs. Success is then mainly success in manoeuvring the field of regeneration, in being able to play the ‘game’ and ‘winning’ the struggles over economic capital.



### **7.3. *Joining Up: Renewal through Active Communities***

#### **7.3.1. Notions of Social Capital and Participation**

As briefly discussed in Chapters 4 and 6, with the advent of ‘partnership working’ in the regeneration repertoire, social and community needs have also found their way onto the agenda. The current British government’s idea of a modern society is based on the notion of the active citizen and active communities. The envisaged modernisation of local government and public services therefore requires inclusive and participatory practices in the political process (Cabinet Office, 1999). This shift from government to governance (Marinetti, 2003) is concomitant with and dependent on the mobilisation of individuals and what is commonly referred to as community in the policy discourse: active citizens build active communities. The practical effects of this neo-liberal ideology can specifically be seen in urban and rural restructuring processes (Ghose, 2005) as they are both a result and a manifestation of socio-economic transformation as well as emerging political practices. They have therefore been pursued in the context of an ideology which emphasises local participation and local responsibility. In this process, community is seen both as a resource and an objective. The current focus on responsible (‘responsibilised’, cf. Lister, 2003) citizens and communities in the delivery of governance has led to an emphasis on partnership working and inclusive networks in the implementation of area-specific policies. Davies (2007) describes this as the current network ‘orthodoxy’ in UK policy studies.

Ghose (2005) points out that there have been a very limited number of studies of the impact of neo-liberal revitalization policies on a local level both in the US and the UK. Although a literature on the study of partnerships in delivering policies is slowly developing in the UK (e.g. Hibbitt et al., 2001, Glendinning et al., 2002, Dhillon, 2007), emphasis has been on successful and achieving partnerships (with the exception of Lumby and Morrison, 2006). The effectiveness of participation as a tool in combating economic inequality through area-based regeneration programmes remains questionable. Although participation and active citizenship have been hailed as pathways for empowerment there has been growing concern and criticism of such claims. Deprivation might be a localised problem but the causes are multifaceted and

often reach beyond the local area (Adamson et al., 2001, Duggan, 1999). Perrons & Skyers (2003: 265) argue that ‘in practice, recognition, participation and empowerment are largely discursive, and yet have displaced questions of power differences and structural economic inequalities that often lie at the heart of various forms of disadvantage from the agenda.’ Similarly, Raco (2003) has emphasised the primarily instrumental nature of community mobilisation and the rise of ‘community.’ Power inequalities remain in the layout of collaborative governance mechanisms as communities are supposed to work in partnership with quasigovernmental and state agencies which retain power over the distribution of resources. It is therefore necessary to examine how local participatory processes link into wider structures of power, which has so far been limited (Hibbitt et al., 2001).

Despite criticisms, partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sector have come to be seen as panacea for addressing issues of economic and social deprivation (cf. Dhillon, 2007) and community engagement has become an essential tool in the policy makers’ toolkit. Programmes of economic and social development are supposedly legitimised and facilitated through local involvement. As Raco (2003: 241) emphasises, however, this is a two-way process: community groups give legitimacy to regeneration programmes and regeneration programmes give legitimacy to community groups as ‘community involvement is discursively structured in and through notions of “responsible” and “irresponsible” participation.’ Only ‘deserving’ community groups can contribute to policy implementation and are thus considered legitimate partners or as a Regional Development Agency (RDA) representative in the case study said: ‘We have to work with [other] people who are not worried about the past but are prepared to look forward into the future.’ This is also based on the fact that policy used to construct disadvantaged communities as the problem, pathological and lacking social capital failing to acknowledge existing associative traditions (Adamson et al., 2001). The social pathology or blaming-the-victim discourse has also been examined by Massey (1995) and Hastings (1998, 1999). The argument of the discourse is that the disadvantaged are to blame for their situation and therefore transformation is achievable through a change in character and behaviour. Communities are therefore responsible for and responsabilised in their own transformation. This is indicative of the government discourse which establishes the ethos of ‘something-for-something – of rights and responsibilities’ (Home Office

Communication Directorate, 2003: 2). The provision of services and achievement of local revitalisation is thus established as a contractual relationship between active citizens, communities and the enabling state.

An important element in this analysis is the recurring appearance of notions of ‘community’ even though it is one of the most contentious concepts in the sociological literature (see Davies, 2003, Pahl, 2005, Phillipson and Thompson, 2008). A consensus has emerged in the literature that community as a concept needs explaining in any analysis rather than being able to provide the explanation for social practices (Alleyne, 2002, Neal and Walters, 2008). The importance of the material aspect of community, i.e. the actual social relations and groupings (or what the policy discourse terms social capital), is highlighted in addition to the symbolic aspects of community as repository of meaning. The actual social relations are then often associated with ideas of solidarity, trust and the manifestation of feelings of belonging. Trust is a recurring topic in examinations of social capital, community, and partnerships. Its employment in these contexts is particularly important for the analysis of narratives of change in an ex-mining area but detailed investigation has so far been limited and therefore warrants attention with reference to issues of reciprocity and control (Möllering, 2005, Molm et al., 2007).

### **7.3.2. The (Re)Construction of Community**

This section is primarily based on the fieldwork experience in the East Kent coalfield. From the interview analysis particular patterns emerged in the narratives about regeneration which respondents told me and each other, which were not in accordance with the official presentation of the transformation process in the area as an example of good practice (DCLG, 2007, SQW, 2007). In some cases, these accounts turned into a particular form of ‘regeneration of narratives’ themselves.<sup>28</sup> As much as the process of transformation is a political issue it is presented as part of a re-making discourse (Furbey, 1999). It is, after all, a process of the re-creation (rebirth) of a

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<sup>28</sup> I looked for patterns of such a retelling in other narratives of change and the most apt which seemed to come to hand were narratives of illness experience (e.g. Frank, 1993) and narratives of displacement as result of political, economic and social circumstances (e.g. Loizos, 1971, Marris, 1986).

space, an area, a community and the individuals themselves. This re-making, however, is experienced and narrated differently by those experiencing or managing it. Representatives of the state agencies (local authority officers, members and representatives of the RDAs) tended to give a chronological narrative, addressing the main policy issues and invariably describing the success stories of the area which were often couched in economic terms, most importantly the lack of unemployment and the acquisition of funds. For the residents and community activists, the interviews, however, often turned into a different telling of the 'official' story, frequently one of emotional investment and disappointment, a personal journey and therefore in itself a narrative of change. Regeneration was seen as desirable or inevitable restructuring of the social order, depending on the respondent, and this is where narratives of loss, displacement and failure dominated the residents' interviews. In this sense, stories of the process by those in charge of it often became accounts apportioning blame for missed 'targets' or a perceived lack of progress. In contrast to the literature which sees 'community' and social capital as a key precondition for successful transformation, the interviews here suggested a less clear cut interpretation. In the accounts of representatives of the local regeneration agencies, social transformation seemed to be difficult to achieve as a result of the existing social structure and the mechanisms for its reproduction present in the mining communities. These communities were regularly constructed as traditional, backward-looking and obsolete, diametrically opposite to contemporary, modern society. Contrary to the generally positive associations of networks of social relationships, existence of solidarity and trust, there is no positive understanding here of the community. Mining communities are seen as 'tribal' (Lauren, voluntary sector representative, 29 May 2007), pre-modern, archaic social structures:

The trouble with mining communities is they are very insular. And they don't mix village to village. They might socialise shall we say, for breeding purposes. But that's about it. They're not drinking partners, there's always competition, there's always mistrust. (Adam, former DDC local authority officer, 14 August 2007)

In this extract, Adam, who is a representative of the local authority in the area, constructs the traditional mining community as insular, antagonistic, and distrustful. The community as such together with the social order within it, however, are

replicated and maintained because younger generations are socialised into the 'traditional' world view. The social networks are close-knit: youngsters do not move away and the community itself is insular and not permeable to outside influences. These mechanisms mean that a now irrelevant social order is reproduced and (forcefully) maintained. Even if Adam's depiction here is particularly evocative of a specific view of mining communities, the sentiments were repeated in interviews with other representatives of the local authorities in East Kent, officers and members alike, although importantly, these were not the local council members for the mining communities but adjacent constituencies. The story on the part of the Kent authorities thus tends to centre on the construction of the mining communities as distinct and socially isolated from the surrounding areas. Adam goes on to describe the barriers to renewal and transformation in the mining communities:

And in some cases it's not until the, the old 1970s, 80s lot die, naturally die off that - those towns they won't move forward until that happens because they're constantly being held back by the old, by the elders of the village saying you can't do that because in 1984 we did this and we fight for that right and we're not going to give that right up blah blah blah. And it's a load of tosh in today's standard. But because they are such an insular community, [it] doesn't go out anywhere, [it] always stays in, and they can't lose it and it's not that many young people move away from mining villages because again, they're very close knit families, they tend to stay in large groups. So, it's just like a never-ending circle of good, bad and everything else and it doesn't dissipate. So that's why it was quite difficult for the SRB to get in there and do things that were meaningful without it looking like government money trying to bribe them to keep quiet. (Adam, former DDC community development worker, 14/08/07)

The two extracts from Adam's account together demonstrate how mining communities are seen as inherently negative towards outsiders, towards change and therefore difficult to regenerate meaningfully. The mining industry brought with it a particular set of social relations which are upheld even if the lack of the economic dominance of the colliery no longer necessitates them. A change in the social organisation and especially the vicious circle of isolation would therefore be beneficial and the objective of public funding. Adam, however, is aware of the problem that regeneration is seen as a continuation of the class war, that state

investment can be interpreted as bribery, 'to keep quiet.' This inhibits meaningful regeneration.

One of the mechanisms regularly invoked to justify the maintenance of existing social structures is the experience of the miners' strike of 1984/85. This was a particularly bitter industrial dispute with the objective of preventing colliery closures and the 'death of communities.' The strike was ultimately unsuccessful with a rapid rundown of the industry from 1985 onwards and is therefore especially important in the mining communities' narratives of themselves. It is exemplary for the antagonistic relations in the mining industry and society as a whole. A change in the hard-fought for social conditions would be seen as a devaluation of the 1984/85 strike and any other strike for that matter and the sacrifices that were made on the part of the miners during their struggles. The recurring reference to the strike is constructed as a barrier to regeneration, or in Adam's words, 'a load of tosh in today's standards.' He here criticises the basis of the union activists turned community representatives and questions their competence to face critical situations (cf. Boltanski & Thevenot, 1999). Therefore, the mining community's need for the cultural memory of the strike as mechanism of maintaining a kind of social unity and thus one of its most enduring 'founding myths' make it impenetrable to change.

The extracts above illustrate a view of regeneration and the communities which were targeted in the process when speaking to representatives of the official regeneration agencies. The communities themselves are pathologised, it is not only their existing social capital in relationships and networks which is not legitimate and cannot be employed in the transformation process, the revitalization agenda also rejects their cultural capital in the sense of attitudes and beliefs. This story, however, was countered in the accounts of the community representatives. In their view, blame was clearly located with the representatives of the state. As Douglas suggested, what was described as transformation was actually a continuation of the social conditions and relations created and experienced in the mining industry:

You got to go back to the strike of 1984/85, really, 'cause I think that's the starting point, '85, '84/85. It was evident then that they wanted to close the colliery. And the whole issue of the closure, regeneration, the rundown are very much tied in

together; they're part of a process that started in '84. (...) And it was evident that the, there was a political attack, but there was also a social and an economic attack on the people. It was like an act of revenge for past misdeeds where the perception was that to have this new society in Britain, then they had to sort of defeat the miners in the strike. (Douglas, community activist, 29 March 2007)

As he perceives the process of regeneration, this is a continued attack on the values of the mining community. This is a result of the fact that 'they', who remain 'faceless' for Douglas throughout the interview, do neither value nor understand the particular features of the mining community: He goes on to say that '[t]hey don't know what they're talking about, they got no idea of the values of community. They're anti-community and they do things to undermine the fabric of a community.' Regeneration here is not an assertion of community and a building up of social capital but a conscious attack on the social infrastructure. The maintenance of a sustainable community infrastructure is thus again tied to a particular understanding of the mining community but as being outside of the mainstream and thus the hegemonic notions of community. It is likely that Douglas' understanding assumes too much homogeneity and downplays conflict within the community.

The opposing extracts above show that there are different representations of social relations: 'two forms of community in the mind; the imagined community of the past and the constructed or perceived community of deprivation in the present' (Pahl, 2005: 633). The discursive construction of community thus becomes a site of struggle. A particular understanding and kind of community is presented as negative social capital in the transformation process and this is enacted in the mechanisms of collaborative governance of the revitalization programme. Following Bourdieu, struggle is inevitable here as communication and discourse are always distorted as they are always structured by the *habitus* (Davies, 2007, Crossley, 2004). This will be illustrated in the next section. In these situations of negotiation, co-operation or communication, however, it is not only the past and the present which are at stake but primarily the future of community.

### 7.3.3. Collaborative Governance: Enacting (Mis)Trust

#### *Mobilisation*

The extracts above highlight a recurring theme in the interviews: the issue of trust between different actors in the process. In their initial assessment of the area and the challenges for the regeneration process, the RDA had become aware of the fact that the mining communities felt their views misrepresented and that a legacy of mistrust had developed (ODPM, 2003). As a result and in keeping with the 'active communities' agenda, community liaison groups built on the partnership principle were suggested to remedy the situation. This was also a lesson learned from the first involvement of the RDA in development in the Kent coalfield. Reclamation of Tilmanstone colliery had been completed without much involvement of the community in 1999/2000 and communication then had been focused on the Parish Council. Consequently, Betteshanger Regeneration Team (BRT) was set up in 2000. This comprised mainly representatives of the Parish Council but also residents representing potential future user groups and members of the communities affected. This nevertheless created tension and the perception of exclusion as neither County nor District Councillors were invited as a representative of KCC remarked:

Now I was a District Councillor when Labour got in and I've had concerns about how they set up the neighbourhood boards or forums as they called them. It wasn't very democratically based I don't believe, personally, a, I was excluded, I wasn't invited to join yet I am elected with the District Council. When I was a County Councillor, I was elected two years ago, I wasn't invited to participate. So the way they drew the team together has given me cause for concern. (Kent County Councillor, 26 March 2007)

Therefore, in response to questions raised about the representative nature of the BRT in the Coalfield Investment Zone Working Group at Dover District Council, Snowdown Regeneration Forum was set up with representation from the District Councillors, the Parish Councillors and publicly elected community representatives. The importance given to community liaison groups by the RDA seems to indicate commitment to co-operation. It suggests pursuing objectives in line with residents and those affected by the socio-economic transformation rather than those managing the process. It opens up a platform or arena for the views of 'the community.' Community



has been shown to be contentious between the different actors around the table. Both of these opposing constructions of community nevertheless assume a high degree of homogeneity and downplay differences between residents. At the same time, perceived homogeneity of vision is essential for understanding patterns of participation and interaction. Mobilisation for and involvement in liaison groups is intricately connected with and determined by the imagined communities of past, present and future.

In the case of East Kent, this has led to different results depending on the existing social organisation in the affected communities as well as their access to the process. ‘Community views’ are represented by community champions, a core of people, who have traditionally been active in processes involving the village/locality which was especially the case in Aylesham. This could be former union officials, activists from the women’s support group during the strike or long-standing local authority members. Therefore, even if Douglas’ opinion of the continuation of the class war cited earlier might not be the most representative view in the village, he is one of the regulars on the liaison committees and therefore his voice is heard in this context. Consequently, ideal of the past community (in the interviews often associated with solidarity and close social relations) is seemingly hegemonic and most frequently represented on the liaison groups. This then means that representatives of other agencies are confronted with it and single this particular understanding out as pervasive and at the same time detrimental to the regeneration process. Francis and Smith (1980: 162) described similar processes with reference to the South Wales coalfield: ‘It is not the existence of a mythical, monolithic ‘Little Moscow’ that is important so much as the attempt made to formulate, and act out, an alternative world-view that could organise existing tendencies to reject a received culture by giving them power.’ In this case, it is not necessary that there is one homogeneous mining community but the remaining structures of this old social organisation still influence the transformation process. This, however, also means an exclusion of other interests in the locality. Where previous conflicts had left the community of miners in the locality divided, this fragmentation also influenced the formation of potential partnerships and effectively led to a lack of representation of former miners in those forums, the prominent example being Betteshanger. This was repeatedly emphasised by Tim:

As long as you got your act together, as long as you go with a united, you know, policy, they [regeneration agencies] have to react to you. But if they can perceive that these are just disparate groups, you know, they're just busy with their own little internecine and battles, you know, and that's what's happened at Betteshanger, well, they don't have to take notice of anyone. (community activist, 26 June 2007)

Participation here depends on unity of purpose within the community. A common understanding of the process and the desired outcomes is necessary for recognition as part of the process. In the policy discourses, the situation in Betteshanger would be described as pathological – a lack of social capital, but a lack of the residents' own making. This statement, however, also highlights the power position of the regeneration agencies as the opening up of a dialogue continues to rest with 'them.' One of the mechanisms to counteract exclusion of interests on the basis of 'lack of mining concern' was SEEDA's strategy to focus on the imagined community of the future rather than the past and thus an emphasis on potential 'user groups' which was the strategy adopted for one of the sites. It has to be emphasised at this point that such liaison groups are site-specific and do not interact across regeneration projects which further strengthens perceived isolation and parochialism.

### ***The Objectives of Partnership***

Another of the pitfalls discernible in the transformation process became clear in the interviews: the objectives for the liaison groups were perceived differently by different actors.

And the idea of Katie and others being on a committee is to try and get at least some control of where they're going and what they're going to do about it. They don't always listen, you don't always get what you, you know, but that's helping, you know. (Dave, community activist, 22 May 07)

[I]t's very important that the community understands the process of managing change because, you know, people generally, particularly perhaps, away from urban areas, they don't like change necessarily and you have to, you have to

prepare them for change really and particularly if they can't control change. (RDA representative, 23 February 2007)

Community members and residents saw these institutions as a genuine way of gaining control of the process: they fulfilled their responsibilities to be able to claim their rights, the right to their community, according to the neo-liberal discourse. Tim's account of the lack of input in the process in Betteshanger was not only motivated by the acceptance of the pathologising discourse concerning the mining community as a barrier in itself ('We're responsible for what happened.') but also by the deep belief that 'if we'd have picked it up and run with it, things, in my opinion, could have been a lot different.' Engagement, if organised coherently and within the set parameters, will be, and has to be, efficacious.

The view on the side of the RDA was different: these groups were platforms for communication to and, to a limited degree for, those who are effectively powerless in the transformation process. There was no assumption of reciprocity, of rights for responsibilities. The RDA was just managing the process of change; it was not in control of it and therefore not in a position to grant any rights. In this sense, the partnership approach, as collaborative as it might have seemed, remained an imposition to veil the fact that economic and social inequality is structural. These quotes also illustrate what Davies (2007: 780) describes in relation to his study of regeneration partnerships in Dundee and Hall which showed that 'public managers and community activists have contrasting common-sense understandings of partnership which, being unspoken, cannot be articulated or deliberated.' This does not only extend to the notion of the partnership but the attitude towards it might be an indication of different objectives for the process overall. Lumby and Morrison (2006) describe that the understanding and commitment to partnerships can vary across different actors depending on their commitment to the common objectives of the partnership. Therefore, the partnership is the enactment of the struggle over the meaning of community which was illustrated above by presenting the conflicting narratives. It was not only a struggle over the meaning of community but a conflict over the outcome of regeneration – if we consider 'community' – the regenerated future community in the mind – as the outcome of transformation. The distinction was one between potential or actually perceived loss and displacement as result of

inevitable and uncontrolled change from the view of the community representatives or a discourse of creative destruction. Regularly, the idealised community of the past, of close relations and solidarity was to be the outcome of regeneration (especially in the interviews in Aylesham). As a result of exclusionary processes, however, despite expectations and promises of participation, there was a feeling of disillusionment repeated in most interviews with community activists, a sense of inevitability and powerlessness (cf. High, 2003) interspersed with hopes for ‘creative destruction.’ The line that was re-iterated in every interview was an acceptance of missed opportunities but also of ‘waiting to see, you know, what can, what can come out of this mess’ (Tim, community activist, 26 June 2007). As mentioned above, this creative destruction, especially with a view towards social order had initially been envisaged by policy makers:

The image is very much one of, of historically of that [mining industry and its connotations of ‘hereditary’ employment patterns]. So it's, it's, it's very much, you know, industrial dereliction. It's everything that was, if you like, bad about the past. So you have to, you have to kind of manoeuvre away from this and *demolish and create*, you know, this and young, a younger approach to it really. And I think it's a hearts and minds thing really, you can do all the, the physical renewal but you need to, people need to, you need to take people with you on the journey, if you like. (Carl, RDA Rep, 23 February 2007, my emphasis)

These extracts also highlight the different constructions of actors in the process. Both, Tim and Carl, accept the position of power for the Regional Development Agency. While the community activist also seems to exhibit some signs of ‘realism’ acknowledging faulty communication and lack of understanding on the part of ‘them’, the RDA representative positions the community as unwilling to co-operate in the way they would like. This lack of adaptability to inevitable change is constructed as inherent to the community, a result of its rural location and implied lack of progressiveness. It is interesting to note that the RDA representative is aware of the power dynamics in this situation of profound socio-economic change but does not fully realise the potential impact of the community’s vulnerability in the process on the formation of relationships between the actors of the state and the community.

This leads the discussion to the issue of trust in collaborative governance. As Möllering (2006) argues the building of trust between actors requires the trustor to suspend their feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty and take a ‘leap of faith.’ Both respondents see the liaison group as a way to gain control over the process of change or at least managing change and both admit the shortcomings of the process. For both this means an investment, offering an exchange but neither of them acknowledges the other’s offer, neither realises the reciprocity of the encounter, be that materially or symbolically. For a further analysis of trust, it is useful to refer to Möllering’s conceptualisation of the trust/control duality perspective, ‘which entails that trust and control each assume the existence of the other, refer to each other and create each other but remain irreducible to each other’ (2005: 284). Although the issue of trust building has been taken up in research on partnerships (Hibbitt et al., 2001, Lumby and Morrison, 2006, Dhillon, 2007), the concept of trust itself has rarely been deconstructed and examined further. Dhillon (2007) stops at a discussion of the importance of trust in partnership working and acknowledges the heterogeneous nature of trust but fails to go into any further detail. Similarly, Hibbitt et al. (2001) discuss different forms of trust, e.g. between individuals or organisations and generalised trust but ultimately concentrate on interpersonal relationships and risk missing the structural conditions for generalised trust. In addition, these studies do not consider the persistence of a lack of trust. In general, the existence of a climate of mistrust has been acknowledged in areas which have experienced profound decline, deprivation and social exclusion. In the context of negative experiences with state agencies ‘residents feel that involvement (in local regeneration projects) is futile because there is little precedent or prior evidence of success and lack of hope and despair represents a major barrier to involvement’ (Hibbitt et al. 2001: 153). Given that the RDA had identified a problem of lack of trust in the area already relatively early on in the regeneration process (ODPM, 2003), it seems astonishing that the relevant authorities did not manage to change this legacy but rather exacerbated it according to community activists:

HD: How have you found [the RDA] in this whole regeneration thing? Were they, you know, were they easy to work with or?

Katie: They seemed to be at first, didn't they, but then, I don't know, it, I think, I feel like we had a lot of false promises.

HD: Is this why you at the beginning said there's a lot of distrust around?

Dave: Yeah, there is because they, at the start of the committee, they wanted - it was their idea first to set up a committee of local parishes on this regeneration committee, so that people's feelings could be heard. Then they heard them but they haven't listened or done anything. It's like you're saying, oh, we wanna know how you feel, you tell them how you feel and it's unanimous or a majority view, then they'll go back and do what they want anyway. And then they say well, we did listen to you but we didn't think it was a good idea. (Dave and Katie, community activists, 22 May 2007)

They've gotta keep their promise. They're not keeping their promise. And some of the funding has been found even for some of these other bits [reclamation of colliery site]. But I suspect that at the moment, I'm getting the feeling that, maybe, bye-bye. I can't help being so cynical because when you get hurt along the way and you see what goes on and the way they behave, you start to realise what you've really got your hands on. (Martin, representative of community liaison group, 14 June 2007)

While the literature (e.g. Ward and Coates, 2006) (and also Adam, the community development worker) posits that trust in interpersonal relationships grows over a long time and therefore long-term relationships would be necessary to build up trust, the extracts from the interviews show that the opposite was the case. The longer the regeneration discussions and negotiations went on and the relationship with the RDA and the site managers persisted, the more 'promises' that the community perceived to have been made at the outset seemed to be false. This context of broken promises has also been identified by Hibbitt et al. (2001) but not been further deconstructed. Here, Molm et al.'s (2007) discussion of reciprocity in the development of trust is useful and can add to the trust/control conceptualisation. The regeneration process is understood as an interaction of exchange and therefore criticisms of communities and their 'handout mentality' need to be seen critically. These criticisms were used in state agencies' representatives' accounts as justification for lack of 'progress' and to

undermine community complaints about broken promises. Reciprocity is a legitimate expectation in this situation, especially as it was set up to be ‘something-for-something.’

Ward and Coates (2006:284) pointed out that ‘mistrust could not be neatly levelled at a particular person, organisation, institution or system’ in their particular case study. They identified the issue as one of a lack of generalised trust. In contrast to this, in the interviews in Kent, the culprits were often clearly identified, in most cases the RDA as an institution and their site managers. ‘It is the impersonal nature of institutions that makes creation of institutional trust so difficult because it is more problematic to trust some abstract principles or anonymous others who do not express any feelings and emotions’ (Khodyakov, 2007: 123). Interaction necessarily occurs between individuals which does not mean that the position of individuals as representatives of an institution is forgotten, as illustrated by Martin, who especially pointed out in his interview that ‘I’m gonna use the word SEEDA rather than individuals.’ Therefore, it is also possible to argue that the identification of the site manager with the institution would fit into neat structural patterns: the site managers as representatives of the professional public manager class and the most powerful, non-accountable, state institution in the area are seen as suspicious. In this sense, questioning the person of the site manager can be seen as questioning the trustworthiness of the state and the reigning regeneration system. This also supports Ward and Coates’ (2006) argument that trust in a particular aspect of the state system (in their case health care) cannot be separated from trust in other aspects of this system, especially in the institution of the government.

Here, again, it is helpful to take recourse to Möllering’s (2005: 287) ideas on the trust/control duality. He argues that this duality is based on the ideas of embedded agency, which means that ‘actors are embedded *and* retain their agency’ (original emphasis). The influence of structure and agency is then taken into account when expectations of others are formed. Martin’s reference to the securing of funding signals his understanding of structural conditions which can constrain action. As in this case the structural conditions are favourable, i.e. funding has been secured, his expectation of the institution’s exit demonstrates his inability to suspend his doubt based on the interpretation of earlier negative experiences which ultimately means he is no longer

able to uphold positive expectations or, in Möllering's words, trust. The broken promise is a broken contract over the rights of residents in this case. This does, however, also highlight the fact that the institutions involved are constrained by structural conditions and the empowerment discourse hides the fact that only a radical transformation of social and political conditions would enable a reciprocal return of rights for participation. This is illustrated in the following example of a community group in the regeneration process in Kent.

#### **7.3.4. The Case of the Heritage Group: A Culture of (Non)Communication**

##### *The Rise and Fall of the Heritage Group*

The following exploration of an individual case of a community group in the regeneration process is used to illustrate issues of mobilisation of local social and cultural capital under a particular regeneration regime. The Heritage Group Committee developed out of the Snowdown Regeneration Forum which was set up in 2001 as part of SEEDA's engagement with the reclamation and regeneration of the Snowdown colliery site. In 2006, SEEDA submitted the outline planning application for the site to Dover District Council. According to Dave who subsequently became active in the Heritage Group the application stated 'in the last paragraph' (fieldnotes, 13 September 2007) that all the buildings on the site would be demolished. This afterthought, however, provoked an outcry among a number of people on the Snowdown Regeneration Forum and the wider community, the majority of those dissenting seemingly ex-miners. As a result, a subcommittee of the Snowdown Regeneration Forum was set up to look into the potential of heritage related activities on the site.

This group which was now enthusiastically talking about saving the last remaining colliery buildings in Kent - apparently with SEEDA's approval - drew interest from the wider population, so residents of the adjacent villages joined the group. The group was actively supported by the community development worker, the representative of the voluntary sector in the area and a member of the County Council and so the subcommittee rapidly developed into a formal group standing alone from the SRF.



The group's activities quickly centred on securing funding and support for the production of a new feasibility study for the site which would highlight the potential for cultural, educational and heritage facilities. It was hoped that this would show the feasibility of saving the buildings rather than their demolition to make way for the industrial estate and heritage gardens which SEEDA's plans suggested. Consultants and experts were enlisted by the group and discussions were held to show the opportunity of linking other cultural projects, e.g. the Turner Centre in Margate and developments in Canterbury, with the potential uses of the Snowdown site. Lobbying activities included site visits with the local MP, petitions at local festivals, and even leafleting in the affected villages when SEEDA submitted a revised planning application in September 2007.

The underlying conflict between the work of the Heritage Group and SEEDA's efforts to secure planning permission came to the fore in September 2007. One week saw the completion of a preliminary feasibility study from the consultants with an alternative vision for the regeneration of the site and thus Aylesham, the deadline for (community) reactions to the planning application for the site and a meeting of the Snowdown Regeneration Forum after months of inactivity. Tensions between the members of the group started to surface in conversations accompanying the preparation of a response to the District Council as the basic consensus between the members of the group concerning their objectives seemed more and more fragile. The consultants' report to the Heritage Group suggested the creation of a sustainability museum which would incorporate a section on coal mining in the area but also other forms of energy. Other envisaged uses for the buildings were a performance centre and auditorium, workshops and a conference centre. The report was accepted unanimously and consequently the group decided, again unanimously, to oppose the planning application. The Snowdown Regeneration Forum meeting two days later was cathartic. The representative of SEEDA suggested that two members of the Forum were facing a conflict of interest due to their involvement in the Heritage Group and it was questioned whether they were representing the interests of the community or those of the Heritage Group in their capacity on the forum. The criticism was based on the fact that these two members now seemed to support saving the buildings when this might neither be the option favoured by the community nor in

the community's interest. The objective of the meeting was to come to a resolution on how to respond to the planning application by SEEDA, with the SEEDA representative pushing for the Forum's (written) support. The vote was unanimous in support of the plans, with one abstention. This meant that the same people who had two days earlier voted to reject the plans now had endorsed them. The Heritage Group met again the day after the SRF meeting and still, the letter of objection went ahead.

The Planning Department at Dover District Council endorsed the application by SEEDA and eventually, the Planning Committee approved it on 11 October 2007. A number of aborted meetings of the Heritage Group with the SEEDA representative exacerbated the fragile nature of the group's cohesion and questions over its purpose after the DDC decision and by March 2008, three members of the group had resigned in response to a suggested vote of no confidence by the secretary of the group. Despite the apparent weakening of the opposition to the site plans by SEEDA, the future of the site became increasingly uncertain over the next months. SEEDA argued that the costs added as a result of the English Heritage listing of two of the buildings in May 2007<sup>29</sup> and the delay in the progression of the project might be prohibitive and stop the transformation of the site into an industrial estate and country park altogether. English Partnerships finally announced its withdrawal from the Snowdown site in June 2008. The project of transforming the site had failed but new proposals for developing a project geared towards the creation of 300 – 400 new jobs in the confines of the village had been drawn up:

The proposals follow an assessment not to pursue a scheme at the nearby former Snowdown Colliery where constraints relating to site ownership, heritage and land use issues along with cost and value for money, made it unviable within the lifetime of the National Coalfields Programme. (English Partnerships news release 27 June 08)

By November 2008, only 18 months after my first involvement with the Heritage Group, both it and the Snowdown Regeneration Forum had been disbanded as there were no more official plans for the reclamation or regeneration of the Snowdown colliery site.

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<sup>29</sup> This had been instigated by the Industrial Buildings Preservation Trust.

### *Participation through Consent*

The rise and fall of the Heritage Group illustrate different aspects of participation and contests over social relations in the regeneration process. The current regeneration regime, as explained above, places emphasis on active citizens. This implies a potential for engagement and thus individual (or collective) efficacy – the promise of being able to change. In the respondents' interviews the formation of the group as such was already a success and a sign of local power.

Dave: 'Cause of that, but it's only because of that one building we looked at, oh that would look good for a Snowdown museum. 'cause it linked up with what we were doing in Aylesham Heritage, anyway. And that would just be part, a very small part, that's how we started, only a year ago. And now it's built up to this [suggestions in a feasibility study]. We're gonna have [an] operatic theatre

Katie: *laughs*

Dave: and all this and the big, the great big buildings were gonna be knocked down.

Dave illustrates the apparent power individual engagement can have. The attempt to save one building by one person can bring about new (collective) visions of the future for a former mining village.

Katie: Well, I think that's good.

Dave: You know, I'm quite happy. It was only me that said, look I like that.

Katie: That's regeneration. (community activists, interview 22 May 2007)

Regeneration for Katie is in the mobilisation of the imagination for beneficial transformation. Informal mobilisation is not sufficient as the desire of one man becomes a collective endeavour. This is then formalised in the mechanisms for participation facilitated by the regeneration agencies. The institutionalisation of community groups is therefore part of the regeneration process because the current

regeneration regime strives towards co-operation between the local, regional and national authorities and operates in a context of inclusiveness and responsible citizenship. Consequently, the question of being a legitimate institution within the process is a recurring issue in the proceedings and (self-)identification of groups as it determines subsequent opportunities for coalition building and therefore access to economic capital. Throughout the life of the Heritage Group, however, regular comments were made about their relationship with SEEDA as well as the nature of the group as such:

There is an interesting discussion about legitimacy going on later in the meeting. The local Councillor asks whether they [the Heritage Group] are acknowledged as body, as an 'organisation' by 'them' – 'they' are SEEDA. ... The SEEDA representative seems to acknowledge the group as a 'body', as a 'committee' – which according to Douglas creates problems for him. There is a short discussion of the genesis of the group as the Councillor continues to emphasise that they've only worked together as a group since December – and now they are a committee with minutes, meetings and as of yesterday a sub-committee (fundraising). (Fieldnotes, Meeting of the Heritage Group 26 April 07)<sup>30</sup>

Douglas says that 'we got to prove to them that we mean business.' To this a member of the group responds that the 'SEEDA Representative has been forced to take us much more seriously. We've gone from no buildings to 3 or 4 buildings saved. We're a force that he will have to contend with.' (Fieldnotes, Meeting of the Heritage Group 10 May 07)

Here, again, mobilisation of social capital is necessary to enter the struggles over the distribution of other resources. Being a legitimate part of the regeneration process is here seen in connection with recognition as a body (institutional identity), acting as a body (institutional/ procedural criteria) and the potential for conflict. SEEDA is here the organisation with power and this is the locus of recognition. Institutionalisation then also means the performance of 'institutional processes', i.e. minutes, meetings and committees with treasurers, secretaries and chairmen (in this case). Only as a formal organisation, rather than a collection of individuals, is participation in the

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<sup>30</sup> At the time these fieldnotes were taken I was unaware of the genesis of the HC and that this had developed out of a sub-committee from the 'officially recognised' liaison group.

process possible. Belief in the efficacy of institutionalised and collective action might also be the result of experiences of not being heard as individuals throughout the consultation process as was emphasised in the interviews. The institution also brings protection in the sense that a ‘professional’ organisation will be acknowledged in this regeneration process which is perceived to be dominated by professionals, the references to ‘meaning business’, being taken seriously and in interviews and later meetings recurring references to the power of professionals highlight this. The institution then becomes the site and the representation of resistance – a ‘challenge to currently hegemonic visions of collective life’ (Kohn, 2000 cited in Davies, 2007: 785), in this case the vision of another industrial estate on a former colliery site.

It is not enough to be an institution, institutional practices and objectives also need to be in conjunction with those of the leading agencies. Challenges to those objectives as illustrated in the Heritage Group example, however, endanger the process. Participation can only be participation if it is based on and facilitates consent. The local authorities’ representatives emphasise this need for co-operation in a structured way:

Bob: ‘Cause we can’t do everything for everyone. And I think, what’s been useful about the Coalfield Programmes, people realise that now. When I first went to my first meeting in Betteshanger, I was like given quite a tough time by some local people and quite rightly so. They were very, they felt very let down; they felt they were just forgotten about and [*laughing*] I got chucked in the lion’s den. But it was, ‘cause it gave me an opportunity to say to them don’t judge me on the past, judge me on the future and don’t just judge me, we gotta do this together.

....

Hayley: It was, ok, this has happened, you’ve done this to us. It was all, you know, but now that, that blame has sort of gone and people realise that they got to start working with agencies. (representatives of the local authority, 10 September 2007)

Engaging in the mechanisms for collaborative governance here also marks a departure from pathological community traits and a willingness to co-operate in the building of a future for the policy makers. At the same time, it is the institutionalisation process which masks the continuation of underlying power inequalities. This was forcefully illustrated in the meeting of the Snowdown Regeneration Forum in which the

community representatives' support for SEEDA's planning application was sought. Despite his lack of the procedural rights to bring in a motion, the SEEDA representative managed to prompt a vote with almost unanimous approval of the planning application. The results for the community and in the Heritage Group meant that:

The meeting in the afternoon was dominated by the events of the night before with one of the members who had been present at the SRF meeting being decidedly silent and the other contemplating his resignation. The voting record of both was defended on the grounds that opposition in the SRF meeting would have endangered the SRF and the regeneration project for the site as a whole. (Fieldnotes, Heritage Group meeting, 14 September 2007)

Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence (1991b) comes to mind in the face of these events. The representative of the state agency has the power of words and language – his speech act is efficacious and despite the 'fantasies of participation', the community representatives are reduced to agreeing with the proposals, they have to consent in their own subordination for a chance to maintain a nominal inclusion in the regeneration process through the liaison groups: 'violence is, so to speak, built into the institution' (Thompson, 1991: 24). It remains a vehicle for the mobilisation of local social capital for those in power. Collaborative partnerships are often partnerships not of politicians but of (volunteer) community representatives, local authority officers and representatives of the regional service class (regional development agencies) in the case of regeneration partnerships in Kent, i.e. 'non-politicians.' Regeneration thus ostensibly takes place in a politics-free sphere, that of civil society. It is this which brings Tim, a community activist in Betteshanger, to say that 'we have almost non-politicised ourselves, we have no political input.' But it is exactly through these institutions that politics are acted out, experienced and embodied, providing the cultural capital and *habitus* necessary for community representatives to participate efficaciously in these governance mechanisms. In this sense we are talking about symbolic violence because 'it is gentle, invisible, unrecognisable as such, chosen as much as undergone' (Bourdieu, 1990: 127).

These underlying inequalities do not always remain unrecognised but are criticised by the community representatives. Barry, a community activist in Aylesham, repeatedly

stressed how he felt ‘used’ and ‘discarded’ (08 July 2007) especially after the withdrawal of English Partnerships from the Snowdown site. This then led to re-iterations of accounts of loss, e.g. ‘now we’ve ended up with nothing again’ (28 June 07) which had been dominant in all community representatives’ narratives of the regeneration process. This is an illustration of the conflicts characterising social relations between actors in the regeneration field under an ostensibly ‘participative’ logic of action. Jill, representative of the Alliance described the dilemma for state agencies when talking about SEEDA as a positive example of local community involvement:

Highly intensive local consultation and involvement, [which is] not replicated around the country. Unfortunately, the residents don’t seem to appreciate that because you get people more involved and you build up their expectations. They actually want to have power then. I think SEEDA have, you know, created a monster of their own making. (Alliance representative, 26 April 2008)

The prospect of meaningful participation and influence for communities outside the election process is here called into question. At the same time, the efforts of community representatives must not be belittled. Their stories of thwarted expectations are stories of loss but at the same time stories of empowerment (cf. Zussman, 2004) as, despite the defeats and setbacks, the most recurring attitude seemed to be a desire to continue to fight, to get the best out of a bad situation.

Institutionalisation of community liaison groups and collaborative governance mechanisms can thus be seen as a particular manifestation of negotiation and a contractual relationship following the discourse of active communities and active citizens. It is part of the process of transformation because the current regeneration regime which strives towards co-operation between the local, regional and national authorities operates in a context of inclusiveness and responsible citizenship. Where responsible citizenship is invoked, however, there are also citizen and community rights. In this case, the question of legitimacy or responsible participation (Raco, 2003) becomes contentious. The representatives of the state agencies label the community as distrustful and uncooperative and therefore ‘irresponsible’ but neglect

to see that their own failure to accept the reciprocity of the collaborative set-up impacts on the formation of trust.

#### **7.4. Conclusions**

Regeneration in this thesis is understood as a process occurring in different but overlapping social fields. The areas of overlap are particularly acute in the institutional landscapes. This is where on both the institutional and personal level civil society and bureaucracy come together, communicate, co-operate or disagree, depart and despair. This is then also where the underlying assumptions, values and world views are translated into social relations and actions. The above emphasis on the institutionalisation process is interpreted as a general trust in the workings of institutions within the bureaucratic field and in its meeting with the sphere of civil society. The stories by community activists are then indicative of the limitations of the regeneration process and the underlying issues of social and economic inequalities. The policy of pathologising disadvantaged communities and the neglect of the ‘rights’ side of the responsibilities agenda undermines genuine attempts at collaborative governance. This chapter dealt with the contested nature of community mobilisation as part of the neo-liberal paradigm, with particular attention to the persistence of conflicts and mistrust in collaborative arrangements. The analysis here argues that, in contrast to a wholly positive understanding of community, ‘community’ can be seen both as a hindrance as well as a resource. Community becomes the site of discursive struggle which provides a starting point for the examination of underlying social processes. The discussion of contesting understandings of ‘community’ within one social setting has thrown up questions of social capital, the interplay of trust, reciprocity and control in social relations in the context of socio-economic transformation. A detailed analysis of the actor’s own interpretations of reality enabled an insight into how trust/ control is enacted through the example of institutionalisation processes in collaborative governance, a line of enquiry specifically suggested by Möllering (2005). The analysis indicates that conceptions of social capital also need to be able to deal with those relationships and networks which are not seen as beneficial to policy agendas focussed on the generation and fostering of ‘legitimate’ social capital. It also needs to be noted that it is not social capital alone which is necessary, cultural capital needs to be brought into the equation as well.



Community can be the site of discursive struggle – contesting constructions and interpretations in this case built the basis of mistrust and therefore recurring struggles, broken promises and narratives of loss in the telling of change in a post-mining area. If trust requires a leap of faith from imperfect bases built on reasons, institutions and processes (Möllering, 2006), then the task in the regeneration process is to communicate about and understand all involved actors' perception of these bases.

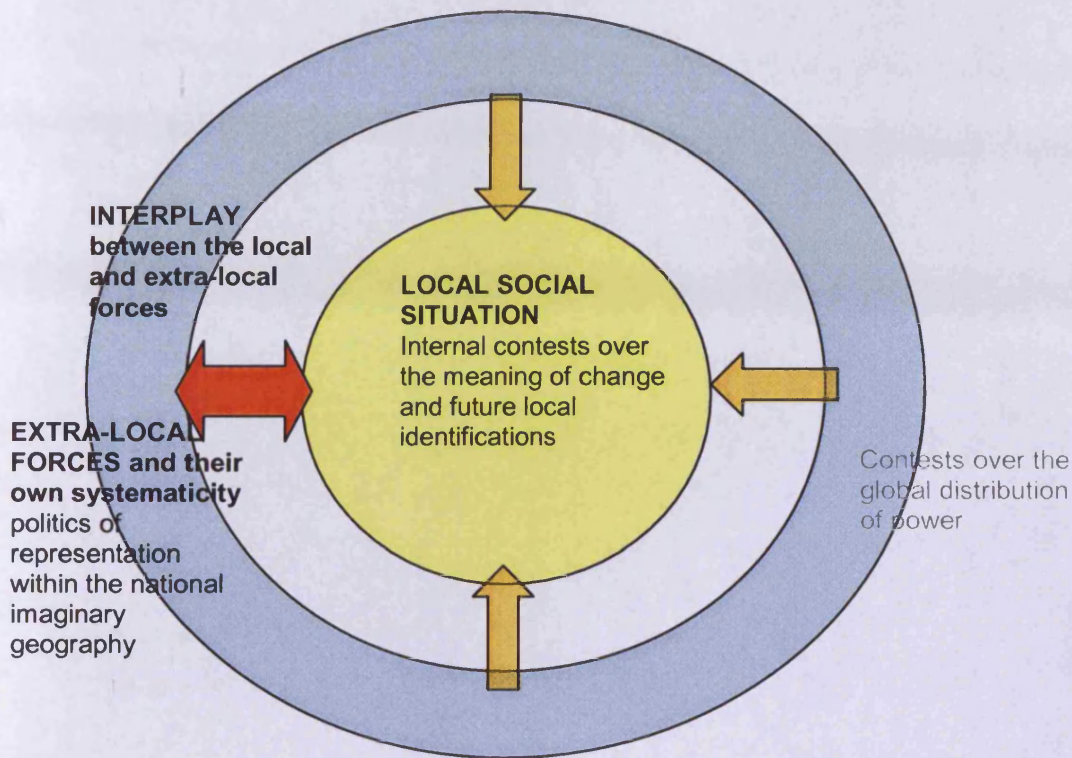
Through the analysis of the specific social relations between actors in the field of regeneration this chapter also delineated how the changing regeneration regimes are characterised by different struggles over resources and the negotiation of the 'rules of the game.' Where regeneration is an affair of the state in its different guises, i.e. a result of local authority partnerships and their relations with central funding agencies, interaction occurs between professionals and facilitates the emergence of a particular economic development *habitus* for those involved in it. In an environment of purportedly participative regeneration, interaction and conflicts occur between civil servants, politicians and community representatives. A regeneration regime which emphasises community involvement and responsibility but continues to favour economic considerations has to contend with conflicts arising out of a clash of objectives, values and visions of the social world. This is what lies beneath evaluations such as those by DCLG (2007) of the process in East Kent as one of successful joined-up working.

## **Chapter 8 - Regeneration as imaginative anticipation**

*The region and its frontiers (fines) are merely the dead trace of the act of authority which consists in circumscribing the country, the territory (...), in imposing the legitimate, known and recognized definition (...) of frontiers and territory – in short, the source of legitimate division of the social world. (Bourdieu, 1991a: 222)*

### **8.1. Introduction**

It has been maintained throughout this thesis that an investigation of the socio-historical conditions of the production of coalfield regeneration requires the reconstruction of the social spheres within which these processes occur. This chapter deals with the question of regeneration as symbolic repositioning, which means the relocation of localities in the wider system of representations (Allen et al., 1998). Such a change in subject positions within the field operates ‘within bounded spaces of opportunity’ (Cameron and Palan, 2004: 9). These constraints are a manifestation of local social relations as much as prevailing national or societal ideologies. As the opening quote by Bourdieu indicates, such a positioning and thus definition of localities is then also an act of authority, an act of power. This idea suggests an elaboration of how different representations and discourses are situated within the process of regeneration and in relation to the broader social space. In particular, the choice of symbols in the respective local regeneration strategies is an expression of the interaction between local systems of identification and national systems of representation. In relation to the theoretical approach running through this thesis, this chapter focuses on the interplay between local and extra-local forces on a symbolic level.



**Figure 8.1 Location in the theoretical framework: Focus on the interplay between national and local systems of representation**

Such a conceptualisation adds the discursive and cultural dimension to political economy approaches which privilege the economic to the detriment of symbolic aspects of restructuring (see Jessop, 2004 and Jones, 2008 for an argument for cultural political economy).

In the earlier chapters it has been elaborated how regeneration is located at the intersection of the spheres of the bureaucratic, civil society and the representational. They discussed the process of regeneration in terms of its mobilisation of social and economic capital. The previous chapter in particular dealt with the different understandings of community and the effects of this discursive struggle on the social relations in the process. The contesting constructions of imagined pasts, presents and futures were enacted in social relations in the institutions of collaborative governance which were then characterised by conflict and mistrust. This chapter focuses on the ways in which these pasts, presents and futures are represented and how the conflicts over these representations are enacted. The discussion here therefore extends the argument of a fundamental schism between policy makers' and residents' narratives about the meaning of change and locality as put forward in the previous chapter. The

process of regeneration as a political process of production lends itself to an analysis of the symbolic as it can be seen as a 'site in which agents seek to form and transform their visions of the world and thereby the world itself' and is therefore a 'site par excellence for an investigation of symbolic power' (Thompson, 1991: 26). When looking at the point of overlap between the field of civil society and the field of cultural representations it is the ways in which the community represents itself which give an insight into self-perception and thus the imagined pasts which are repeatedly mobilised in the process of socio-economic transformation. Similarly, the symbols and image(s) used by the policy makers tell something about the idea and the notion of the regeneration space or the imagined deprived community of the present. Of particular interest, however, are the imagined futures – the locus of symbolic regeneration and in the cases discussed here this is where the difference between a positive symbolic power and capital and negative symbolic capital or (perceived) symbolic violence lies: between ruralisation and de-industrialisation. This chapter therefore helps to understand the 'socially instituted limits of the ways of speaking, thinking and acting' (Thompson, 1991: 31) which are prevalent in the case study areas. It will investigate the strategic use of imagery and language for the pursuit of 'political' goals on the basis of documentary and interview data.

## **8.2. *The Iconography of Regeneration or The Meaning of Change***

The argument of this chapter is that regeneration is a process of repositioning an area on a symbolic level. This means that the area's role is redefined in relation to the wider regional and national symbolic sphere. Bourdieu argues that symbols need to be seen as instruments of social integration. 'As instruments of knowledge and communication, they make it possible for there to be a *consensus* on the meaning of the social world, a consensus which contributes fundamentally to the reproduction of the social order' (1991b: 166, emphasis in original) Thus, symbols in different forms, such as artistic representations, images, names, are of particular importance in the process of transformation. They contribute to the construction of a new or newly legitimised social order based on consensus which is the objective of transformation. This is a difficult and highly contested process which can also be seen in the debates

and actions around symbols – the organisation, production and differential value of symbols in the representational field. Such a (re)construction of the vision of the social world then underlies certain constraints. Cameron and Palan (2004: 9) support this when they argue that

The anticipation of the future, whether capitalized through stock markets by firms or whether it is used for political contestation and emerging political programmes, necessarily operates through narratives that themselves operate within bounded spaces of opportunity – we are all, this implies, forced to choose our future from a limited set of possibilities.

One of the central assumptions underlying the process of regeneration, especially in the allocation of public funding to areas ‘legitimately’ in need of investment is the notion of image as critical success factor in economic (social/ cultural) growth. In this thesis, image is understood with reference to symbolic capital following Bourdieu’s (1985, 1986) use of forms of capital for the determination of the position of social groups and individuals in the social sphere. As detailed in Chapter 2, I am using the term with reference to regions and localities as they have been positioned as actors/ agents in the regeneration process. In the regional competitiveness literature regions or cities (or whichever administrative entity is seen as the growth driving entity) are conceptualised as active competitors for resources such as capital and labour (Bristow, 2005, Kitson et al. 2004). Regeneration for all stakeholders involved means a reconfiguration of the meanings of spaces, places and the social relations that come with them.

The regeneration regimes discussed in Chapter 6 resulted in a limited number of acceptable regeneration agendas, which informed the respective regeneration strategies. In the case studies in this thesis, the local authorities in both localities emphasised the dual nature of their action programmes, i.e. re-industrialisation through building up an enterprise culture and consumption driven regeneration through tourism. It could be argued that, consequently, there is also a limited repertoire of symbols to draw on to achieve the anticipated repositioning in the imaginary economic geography. The refashioning of localities is geared at a number of distinct audiences which therefore also necessitates different sets of symbols. There

is the private sector investment market which, as marketing logic would suggest, requires the construction of the area as one brimming with opportunities to compete in (inter)national beauty contests. In contrast, recourse to traditional connotations of decline is necessary as part of a discourse of continuing need to secure public sector funding. If we only consider attempts at mobilising private (social or economic) capital then the discourses of change seemed to follow particular patterns: transformation as creative destruction and a bright new future or change, regeneration as return to a ‘golden,’ imagined past, or as obliteration and loss.

The emphasis on distinction in the promotion of regenerated places and spaces, paradoxically, leads to a tendency of the representation of regeneration to revert to similar arguments and images – a limited repertoire of renewal. The elements of this stock of symbols were not mutually exclusive but could be employed by different respondents in their narratives about their experiences in the same locality. The following is both an analysis of the range of signs and symbols used in the re-positioning discourses and an investigation into how such repositioning was perceived by the stakeholders in the respective areas.

### **8.3. *Imagined Futures***

#### **8.3.1. Entrepreneurialism, the construction of the developer’s gaze and the importance of the post-industrial environment**

The literature on regeneration has made much of the place-marketing aspect – the creation of a particular, sellable, identity for the attraction of investors. There has been a consensus that urban projects ‘symbolise a distinctive form of endeavour around the issue of capital accumulation’ (Oakley, 2007: 280) which also includes the transformation of social relations in the affected areas. There are different levels to the symbolic restructuring of the area: visual representations, the creation of a new local/urban landscape through the design of the built environment and the re-naming of sites in the former coalfields. Degen et al. (2008) emphasise the importance of the ‘new regime of signification’ (Jacobs, 1998, quoted in Degen et al., 2008: 1908) in urban regeneration which places urban design at the centre of economic development

strategies for local authorities position themselves as attractive locations for investment and tourism. Hubbard (1996: 1442, emphasis in original) argues that the urban landscape can be seen as a '*representation* of the process of urban regeneration' (emphasis in original) and examines how the urban landscape is an instrument in efforts to attract investment. Whereas the creation of 'flagship' projects has seemingly been a common element in urban regeneration efforts and urban entrepreneurialism (Hubbard, 1996), projects of the same 'spectacular' scale were inappropriate for the smaller county towns in the rural coalfields. The geography of these rural and extended areas makes a concentrated consumption-based development unlikely. Even if physical changes in the localities are therefore more dispersed these ideas are relevant for an examination of the changes in the coalfield areas under investigation.

Notions of visible change and the importance of primarily visual effects of transformation are recurring in the local authority documentation, relative to the size of the settlements, the sighting and design of a new supermarket is comparable to the effect a designed streetscape or shopping mall might have in bigger cities as part of the production of a 'city of surfaces' (Degen et al., 2008: 1908). The case of the reclamation of the Whitwick colliery site in Coalville, NWL illustrates the principle of 'visibility' and the creation of a particular gaze as part of the regeneration strategy in several ways. The site and its high quality reclamation was of importance because 'it is also perhaps the only chance this century of getting right the environment *in this visible sector of the town*' (my emphasis, NWLDC, Policy and Resources Cttee, 18 March 1987). Whitwick lying at the new by-pass was instrumental in providing the new, future-oriented image for the town. Any site adjacent to the by-pass would be seen by the local population and through traffic and ultimately be seen 'as the new face of Coalville' (NWLDC, Planning Cttee, 11 Feb 1987). As a result, the imminent opening of the relief road could be used as pressure on the decision concerning the 'eyesore.' The strategy, moreover, does not only operate at the material level but also at the symbolic level because 'a good quality development on the site will be a *visible statement of faith* in the town, the willingness of the community and business to invest in Coalville' (NWLDC, P & R Cttee, 18 March 1987). The suggestions of a supermarket for the site meant that retail and consumption were seen as the new economic role for Coalville, a departure from the production based local economy. The strategy in this case is thus exemplary of the paradigm of consumption-led

regeneration discussed similarly applied in larger cities such as Cardiff, Manchester or Birmingham. The document extracts highlight the local authorities' assumption of the symbolic value of a retail development in terms of improving image and publicity and therefore attracting more private investment. This illustrates the concept introduced in Chapter 2 concerning the underlying assumptions about the mobilisation of different forms of capital in the regeneration process – in this case, the mobilisation of private economic capital will legitimate the image of the town, thus raise its symbolic capital which will in turn raise economic capital further. As the local authorities were arguing, statistical evidence on employment (where Coalville was comparable to Exeter and better off than Plymouth) did not raise economic capital but the perception of prosperity would (NWLDC, P & R Cttee, 18 March 1987).

The importance of new representations and 'images' for the locality were accepted priorities in both case study areas. The local authority documentation shows this emphasis and especially the idea of creating a new space and a new product of the area as external stigmatisation had been entrenched. The previous chapters have highlighted the fact that the strategy in NWL prioritised making the area a better place to live to attract investors. Tourism was one instrument among others to entice industrial investors: 'Businessmen can be influenced other than by direct advertising and do not only read business publications. Some small expenditure on projecting the area as a tourist venue would be valuable in improving the image of the area' (NWLDC, Policy Committee, 14 Nov 1984). In contrast, in Dover tourism and the development of a tourism industry were seen as the panacea for the expected crisis from the beginning as the following extract shows.

The anticipated major economic changes in the District will require approximately 6000 jobs to be created, either directly or indirectly through new or alternative employment and tourism has been highlighted as the prime opportunity. (...) It is essential that the town of Dover be transformed from what is principally a Transit Ferry Port, to an international tourist destination of distinction. (DDC, 1987, para 1.2 – 1.3)



In both cases, however, the emphasis is on the creation of a destination, a place which has a purpose and is an end in itself rather than just a place through which resources move.

For the policy makers there seems to have been an appreciation of the fact that representations did not necessarily equal substance as the following quotes show: ‘New housing would give the town a more prosperous appearance which in itself would help attract industrial investment’ or ‘Towns which have secured new factory development appear to be prosperous. This appearance helps to attract more development’ (NWLDC, Planning and Development Committee, 22 June 1983). Image could be created out of representations and labels. Both areas strove to create new spaces in the sense of establishing new names and thus new identities. In the case of NWL this meant reconfiguring an image of dereliction and neglect as result of the decline of industry and the association with mining (e.g. Coalville). For the Kent coalfield the fact that it had not been perceived as ‘put on the map’ in industrial terms at all could have proved beneficial in any re-imaging campaign. Hubbard (1996: 1443) argues that programmes of image change are not only geared towards the external investors but at the same time are also an element in the “social control” logic, convincing local people as to the benevolence of entrepreneurial strategies’ and thus the desirability of the planned or anticipated future.

A recurring theme in the documentation on regeneration strategies was the emphasis on the creation of spaces (for capital) and places (for people) (cf. Beynon et al., 1994). Place-marketing has been acknowledged as integral to restructuring as it is seen as an instrument in the positioning of places in competition with other places for much needed resources (labour, investment). The transformation of a former industrial region into an investment product (in economic as well as human capital terms) requires not only a change in hard and soft infrastructure (hardware, software, see Benneworth et al., 2007 ) but also in its symbolic positioning. In the reasoning of the local authorities this also involved a move away from the existing administrative boundaries in the creation of those desirable places: ‘There can be no room for parochialism or fragmentation, local boundaries should be ignored and marketing logic should prevail’ (DDC, 1987, para 1.19). Spaces/ places are therefore discursively and socially, if not wholly economically, constructed in regeneration.

The difference here is between the construction of economic spaces mainly driven by the policy makers and the emphasis on socio-spatial homogeneity of place in the narratives of the residents.

In most regeneration efforts, following the ideology of consumption driven regeneration, restructuring meant the transformation of formerly industrial areas into tourist destinations. Especially during the 1980s and 1990s, tourism and consumption were seen as the panacea for economic development and was therefore included in most local strategies (cf. Hudson, 1994). To achieve this, the respective areas needed to be put ‘in front of the public gaze’ (NWLDC, Policy Cttee, 14 Nov 1984). Dicks (2003) argues that the attraction of visitors and shoppers for the generation of consumer demand was the underlying rationale. The aim was to increase the marketability of an area - it was agreed that this required the creation of a new (economic) space. This space needed an identity which meant boundaries, a name, a history and an image. As Breitbart & Stanton (2007: 112) show for the post-industrial cities of New England, this also meant a ‘reframing of narratives about these spaces.’ Such a tendency, however, was primarily geared towards outsiders and not the raising of the quality of life of existing residents (Miles, 2005, Dicks, 2003). Interestingly enough, though, the documents in both case study areas highlight how much the image campaigns are also addressed to the locals, so did Dover District Council emphasise that ‘the White Cliffs image should also be directed at the local population of the district to make them aware that tourism is one of the key opportunities and that the Council has a dynamic and positive service in Marketing and Tourism’ (DDC, Tourism and Marketing Cttee, 24 Nov 1987).

Reinvention, however, was not only an aspect of large-scale economic and business ‘flagship projects;’ it seemed to be an everyday necessity in the development of community projects. The funding regimes also saw community development inextricably linked with such a re-imaging. A recurring criticism of funding mechanisms was the fact that they are short-term and did not provide for revenue costs. This issue was mentioned by Alexandra, a community activist in one of the mining villages in Kent. She mentioned the mismatch in funding objectives (in terms of symbolic repositioning) and the communities’ needs by saying: ‘We don’t need somebody who’s going to reinvent the village which is what the projects want.’ She

illustrated this with an example. The simple maintenance of community facilities already was inevitably linked with a change in the reputation of the mining villages because these facilities needed to attract people from outside the village to be self-sufficient:

You can't get money for running costs or anything like that. 'Cause the hall was built because it said it was going to serve the whole area. Well, the rest of the villages won't come into Elvington 'cause we're a pit village.

She goes on to say that a transformation of the symbolic value of the village would therefore be necessary and part of the regeneration professional (in this case a community development worker) whose contract, however, is only funded on a short-term basis:

So part of this poor project worker's job is to re-invent the village [laughter] which is just ridiculous, I know, 'cause that would just take generations to change. (Alexandra, community activist, 5 September 2007)

In the local authorities' view, however, this image change was attainable. One way of achieving such a reframing which moves forward but uses the past as an asset was the strategy of tourism based on industrial heritage. This meant reconfiguring a place of production and work into one of consumption and leisure. As much as the remaining buildings, properties and iconic markers were still denoting the industrial past, they were also themselves denoting the transformed present (Prosek, 2006). As with the choice of mining statues to commemorate the idealised past, the setting up of industrial heritage attractions is also susceptible to present an edited version of the industrial past – 'heritage is the discriminating use of the past through the lens, and for the needs of the present, be they social or economic' (Pollock & Sharp, 2007: 1063). In NWL, the establishment of Snibston Discovery Park, even though it was not promoted as a pure mining museum but an interactive discovery centre, followed the notion of using the industrial resources as an asset. Similar ideas were mooted in Kent but did not come to fruition, neither in 1987/8 nor twenty years later (as the previous chapter showed).

The documentation from the NWL and Kent coalfield authorities showed similar strategies in the pursuit of the discursive repositioning of the areas if the emphasis was not placed on industrial heritage. In both cases, the authorities were aware that a tourism product needed to be created. In the case of the coalfields, this re-framing, ostensibly, seems to involve a transformation in the relationship of society with the physical environment, from the exploitation of the natural resources to its visual consumption. As Urry (1992: 7) points out ‘the heightened interest in the environment, both physical and built, partly stems from the fact that people, politicians, prospective employers are all concerned both to make places seem different from each other,’ and to make them consistent with particular contemporary images of environment and place, particularly those of nature. This is part of the argument claiming that specificity of place will enhance competitiveness in an economic situation where capital has become mobile (cf. Harvey, 1989). William, former Chief Economic Development Officer at NWLDC, described marketing and re-imagining as integral to the regeneration process in terms of the attraction of financial resources:

William: You’d do a bit of marketing promotion to attract industry in, do a bit of tourism promotion because you could see the sort of heritage value around both Snibston and some of the smaller sites there and the general countryside – Ivanhoe Country – I’m ashamed of that but there you go.

HD: Why are you ashamed of that?

William: It’s cheesy.

HD: I find it interesting how this place changes from the coalfield to Ivanhoe Country –

William: Well, that is kind of deliberate, isn’t it? It’s trying to change the image, the feel of the place. (former CEDO, NWLDC, 5 May 2008)

Here the countryside is seen as an important asset, one that can change the ‘feel’ of the place if properly used. For the Kent localities under the administrative umbrella at Dover District Council an emphasis on ‘natural resources’ meant the new tourism

image of ‘White Cliffs Country’ was being promoted. It was seen to reflect ‘a new stylish image, [which] is positive and allows for flexibility of use – whether heritage, international or domestic’ (DDC, Tourism and Marketing Cttee, 24 Nov 1987). This was later integrated into the theme of Kent as the ‘Garden of England.’ In this sense, similar to the position of culture in the development of the Thames Gateway as a regeneration and investment product the environment and especially, the countryside are ‘called upon both to improve the offer to potential investors [tourists], and to offer some measure of improvement to the quality of life in the region’ (Calcutt, 2008: 88). In NWL and Kent this emphasis on the natural environment also means a construction of the area as rural which required more effort in the case of NWL given that this had been a strongly industrialised district. Cloke and Thrift (1994) have argued that ‘the idea of the rural as a fixed location has faded.’ The ruralisation strategy in this case then makes use of the fluidity of the meaning of rurality in the sense that it aims to create a place reminiscent of an imagined (pre-industrialised) past – and thus uses the ‘village-in-the-mind’ as Pahl (2005) describes it.

At the same time, through the particular labels that were chosen for the newly constructed rural areas, there is a link to the imagery of national identity. The White Cliffs of Dover ‘as an icon of beleaguered Britain in the Second World War<sup>31</sup> is one way that new symbolism of value to a nation may be created’ (Doyle & Bennett, 2002:3). The particular nationalist connotations of White Cliffs Country theme, however, also brought to the fore certain underlying tensions in terms of the cultural position of miners in British culture but particularly local culture. Thus, in 1987/88, suggestions of mining museum on the Snowdown site were met with scepticism when viewed within the overall ‘Defence of the Realm’ themed tourism strategy because the miners at Betteshanger had gained national notoriety by going on strike during WWII. This highlights again the position of miners as ‘outsiders’ or ‘the Other’ in the local culture but also in the national imagination. In the case of NWL, the name of Ivanhoe Country also linked to romanticist ideas of English chivalry in medieval times. These re-imaginings can therefore also be interpreted as another way of placing the area in the centre of the national imagination rather than at the margins.

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<sup>31</sup> I am grateful to Rebecca Edwards for pointing this particular cultural reference out to me.

The foremost example for such a creation of space is the establishment of the National Forest in NWL, spanning parishes in NWL, South Derbyshire and East Staffordshire. In its scale and ambitions it is comparable to the flagship projects extensively discussed in the urban regeneration literature (e.g. Hubbard, 1996) as it aims to establish a new rural (and also business) landscape in a post-industrial area (cf. Cloke et al., 1996a, b). As such it is both the expression and the consequence of attempts to re-image the locality and, similar to urban regeneration and gentrification strategies, does not only address structural inequalities but also create new ones. The creation of the National Forest and the imaging work leading up to it can be seen as part of a wider ruralisation strategy in the district. As discussed in Chapter 6, the lack of a national coalfield regeneration programme necessitated approaching other agencies for funding and constructing the regeneration strategy in terms that would suit the agencies' (in this case the Rural Development Commission) objectives. Reversing the image of the industrial, derelict mining area was critical therefore for both public and private investors and this was based on the promotion of rural and nature imagery. Even though the local authority minutes did not provide visual evidence of the promotion campaign, the following quote illustrates the priorities the Council placed in the promotion literature: 'Production of good colour photographs of the area [has been] significantly hindered by the criteria of having a good clear sunny day with green fields and leaves on the trees' (NWLDC, EDC, 21 July 1987). As interviewees in NWL in most interviews confirmed, the rural parishes in the coalfield which benefited from designation as Rural Coalfield Area and the designation of the National Forest appeared more prosperous than the urban settlement of Coalville. The designation of the National Forest also provided the vision the strategy and the locality needed for a successful symbolic transformation. In this sense, it actively shaped the social relations in the sense of society-nature relations in the area. As Mark, former NWLDC CEDO explained, the local population did not have an environmental vision for the area as a result of a tradition of low environmental expectations. Therefore, the original regeneration vision was an industrial rather than a rural one.

### **8.3.2. Creative Destruction – Rise and Decline**

The place-marketing literature has discussed the importance that is afforded to the radical re-articulation of ‘the meaning of place and space in the post-industrial world’ (Miles, 2005: 913). One of the dominant visions in the debates on economic development is Schumpeter’s idea of ‘creative destruction’ which means that the old has to make way for the new which has been mentioned as a concept appropriated by the policy makers in Chapter 7. As High (2003: 7) argues, the rise and decline of entire regions or ‘the creation of new economic spaces and the destruction of old ones have been endemic to capitalism’ in this view. The decline of the dominant industry in an area then would open up opportunities for the creation of a new economic structure, this could open up ‘new horizons’ and ‘herald the dawn of a new era’ (NWLDC, Planning Cttee, 18 June 1986).

Place-making and image-creation in regeneration processes thus draw on a repertoire of images and symbols which is linked with a ‘bright new future’ discourse driving the transformation of the area. This is a recurring element in the local authority documentation on the regeneration and economic development activities. This is especially the case in the NWL documents. This new era is repeatedly constructed as a break with the past, a post-industrial identity which allows a new direction for the District, especially following the designation of the area as part of the National Forest:

[The regeneration strategy] identifies a bright new future for the local economy, building upon its heightened profile and the tremendous interest generated by recent overseas investment and improvement [in] infrastructure. (...) The recent decision to locate a major new National Forest in the area together with tourist promotion, improved hotel and conference facilities and the reclamation of derelict land for new industrial and recreational ventures herald a new era for the District economy. (...) These initiatives will mark the final stages in the transformation of the area from one of industrial dereliction and colliery closures to forward looking economy offering attractive job opportunities in an attractive environment and bringing with it a good quality of life. (NWLDC, 1991/92)

The District Council is here aware of the importance of presenting the area in a positive light and moving away from a discourse that is associating it strongly with de-industrialisation. The extract is emphasising investment in contrast to

disinvestment in the failing places of industrial decline (Russo & Linkon, 2003). The area is thriving and resourceful in its 'forward-looking' transformation. In the documents from Kent, this narrative is almost absent in relation to the mining communities – this can, however, also be explained by the fact that the coalfield is not constructed as the major problem. In contrast to that, however, a discourse which, in its effects, is very similar to the de-industrialisation discourse (Russo & Linkon, 2003) is discernible in the interview data: the pathologising of the mining community.

### **8.3.3. Transformation as Return – Imagined Pasts as Imagined Futures**

The meaning of change was highly contested in the interviews conducted in the case study areas. Although the general meaning of regeneration in the literature seems to be one of renewal and rebirth (Furbey, 1999), it must not be neglected that responses to structural economic decline do not always necessarily mean a complete rupture with the past, both in policy and community circles (cf. Garnier et al., 2004). As mentioned in earlier chapters, the notion of the active community contributing to the sustainability and maintenance of a locality has gained currency in policy circles (Home Office Communication Directorate, 2003). Communities, however, need to be brought into existence and maintained through social relations as much as through representations of themselves (cf. Hall & Robertson, 2001, Pollock & Sharp, 2007). In this context, Cohen's (1985) work on the symbolic construction of community is particularly important. He treats community as a mental construct where

the community as experienced by its members – does not consist in social structure or in the 'doing' of social behaviour. It inheres, rather in 'the thinking' about it. It is in this sense that we can speak of 'community' as a symbolic, rather than a structural, construct. In seeking to understand the phenomenon of 'community' we have to regard its constituent social relations as repositories of meaning for its members, not a set of mechanical linkages.' (1985: 98)

Interestingly enough, the way community is invoked in the interviews by those who are experiencing its transformation is through the social relations and the activities the ('imagined') mining community of the recent past provided. The argument, that can



be derived from the above extract, however, could be that the past community as it is imagined and the potential future community as it is envisaged delineate the community as it is perceived at present. Thus, the imaginary or discursive constructions of community have three temporal dimensions: the past, the present and the future. These different temporal identities and their mutual exclusivity for successful (social) regeneration have repeatedly been invoked by the representatives of the local authorities as discussed in the previous chapter. The argument there was that social relations need to change; communities need to move on.

Liepins (2000) argues that a singular focus on the meanings of community threatens to neglect the power relations involved in the (re)production of those symbols and meanings. ‘A presumption is left implicit, unless it is actively explored, that all people associated with a “community” have the necessary knowledge and capacity to recognise, critique and actively support (or resist) symbols and meanings within a “community”’ (Liepins, 2000: 26). This is particularly relevant when looking at the contests over the meaning of community in the post-mining present and struggles for identity in a period of transformation in Aylesham. Apart from the reclamation and prospective new uses of the Snowdown colliery site, the village is also undergoing an expansion programme. Although the building of (potentially) 1200 new houses in a village of currently 1800 households is financially and administratively separate from the site-based project, there is a clear link between these projects of transformation. The village then does not only have to deal with the aftermath of the rundown of the industry and industry-associated social institutions but also with a reconstitution of the residents. Dave explains his wishes for the future of the village:

we just want to stay like a community where everybody knows each other and works together (...) It was, it was just a part of this, this community.

He goes on to position Aylesham clearly as mining community and thus links it to popular connotations of such communities.

I think all mining communities are the same, aren't they? It's not just here but we want it to stay like [that]. Like I say we had a legal campaign to stop the village expanding, we lost but now it's expanding we still want to say right, well, we've

lost that argument but we still want to maintain that community spirit that was here before. (Dave, community activist, 22 May 2007)

His insistence on the identity of the village as part of the mining culture that was supposedly lost with the closure of the colliery can be read as a rejection of change. The reality, however, is that change has already set in, so his ideas of maintaining community spirit and remaining a ‘mining community’ are actually fantasies of returning to an idealised past. This is manifested in the village in the reaction to public art which had been installed as part of the regeneration effort in the locality. Two statues were erected outside the converted buildings of the secondary school whose closure marked a particularly traumatic period in the recent history of the village. The first statue to be installed was the Aylesham Phoenix dedicated to the miners of Kent, the second statue, only about 50 metres from the first is called ‘Payday at Snowdown Colliery’, a miner with two children, holding a miner’s lamp in front of a tub of coal.

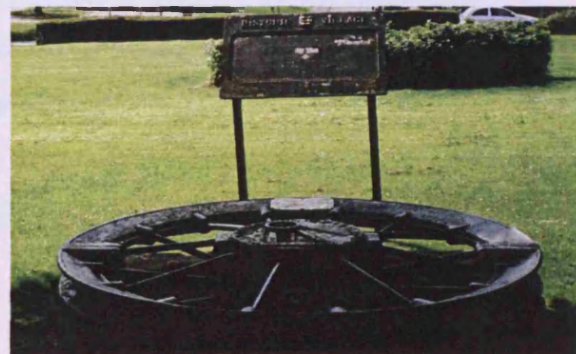
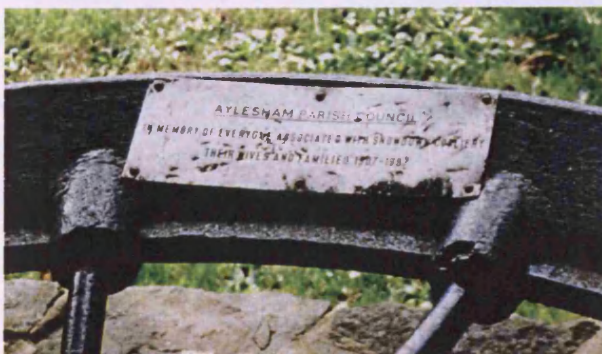


Figure 8.2 Aylesham Phoenix



**Figure 8.3 Payday at Snowdown Colliery,**  
In the background are the converted buildings of the Aylesham District and Community Workshop Trust (left) and the starter units of the Miners' Way Business Park (right)

There are conflicting reactions to these statues – whereas there seemed to be a general opinion of derision towards the phoenix statue, the second statue met with general approval. Another reminder of the mining past is located in the market square, a pulley wheel salvaged from the colliery site when the winding gear was demolished in 1987.



**Figure 8.4 Pulley Wheel in Aylesham Market Square**

The lack of contention in the reception of the very figurative representations of mining is probably not surprising given the idealisation of the mining past as an era of social cohesion, mutual support and ‘meaningful’ community life. In the interviews,

community activists regularly emphasised the focus the colliery organisation had given the village, be that through the organisation of the work itself or through the associated social institutions (as also discussed in Chapter 5). In addition to this, both of these statues were ‘produced’ by the members of the community. The pulley wheel was secured by a former Snowdown miner and the ‘Payday’ statue was designed and commissioned (with SEEDA funds) by the project manager (and local champion) at the Aylesham Community and District Workshop Trust (aka ‘The Project’). The emphasis in the erection of these two public art pieces then would have been on the celebration of the past rather than a welcoming of change. They are monuments rather than art works. This is certainly the case for the pulley wheel given that this is an actual artefact from the site of work which was erected within a short time of the closure of the colliery when no re-development plans had been suggested as yet. A similar argument can be made for the Payday statue as it was commissioned in reaction to the lack of acceptance towards the Phoenix statue, at least according to a number of the interviewees and conversations with residents as part of the observation period. The function of the artworks was therefore not seen as a means to ‘deal with the problems of unemployment and alienation (Department of National Heritage, 1993, cited in Hall & Robertson, 2001: 6) but as means to commemorate and affirm local civic identity. The sense of community is made visible through these monuments.

Most importantly, however, both statues focus on a particular element of the community which is not contested suggesting a particular social homogeneity and masking underlying conflicts and fragmentation in the aftermath of colliery closures. As Tim, a community activist here explains, however, the past is contested and assumptions of harmony among the miners are illusory. He talks here about the perception of the colliery closures as avoidable, as a question of individual (or collective) agency.

If he'd have done this, we'd never have lost the pit. What do you mean? We'd never have lost the pit? The bloody industry is gone. (*laughs*) And, you know, people - I often worry about historians because, you know, we're surmising what happened, you know, several hundred years ago, several thousand years ago, you

know, and within our own life time we can't seem to recall the truth of something that happened 10 years ago. (*laughs*) (Tim, community activist, 26 June 2007)

Tim undermines any claims that the industry could still exist and therefore a 'return' to mining is impossible. He recognises history and its representations as constructed. This also means that current conflicts over representations of the past are firmly rooted in the present and can shift again in the future. The past is constantly reinvented – contentiously so – and any representations of the past are therefore implicitly representations of the current balance of forces.

It has been claimed that public art can also serve a communicative function providing a physical or discursive focus for the community: 'The public discourse it is claimed such foci generate is argued to be an important dimension of the sustenance of viable, lively communities' (Swales, 1992 cited in Hall & Robertson, 2001: 12). Public discourse is thus seen to be generated through public art. In the case of the Kent coalfield, however, the public discourse that was created, as lively as it has been, has highlighted if not exacerbated existing fragmentation and competition between different communities in the area. As result of a heightened heritage discourse in parallel with the establishment of the Heritage Group (discussed in the previous chapter), some members of the community in Aylesham started the 'Move the Miner' campaign, which aimed at the repositioning of a popular statue, 'The Waiting Miner', then located at Dover Seafront. It is a monument to all miners in the Kent coalfield and consequently representatives in the mining communities to the collieries of Betteshanger, Tilmanstone and Snowdown claimed a stake in its positioning. The local authority, with a view to avoiding taking sides in this dispute, agreed to relocate the statue if the communities (or their representatives) could agree on a location.<sup>32</sup> The dispute over the statue among the mining representatives, that is the competition for its location, is reminiscent of the competition between the collieries when they were still working and to a certain degree reproduces the relations of mistrust which are associated with the mining past and therefore re-affirm local authority prejudices which were discussed in Chapter 7.

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<sup>32</sup> Interestingly enough, in 1996/7 the local authority had rejected to locate the statue in Dover's Market Square as it would not fit into the particular character of the Town Conservation Area or the Market Square. .

The discourses that were mobilised to make this decision centred on the issue of audience – who was going to see and appreciate the statue in the respective locations? The representatives for Snowdown/ Aylesham wanted the statue in their village, in the market place where it would be a reaffirmation of the community and their mining heritage, to be looked at mainly by the community, in their own ‘territory’. Its purpose would be self-reflection. The representatives for Betteshanger suggested positioning the statue on the roundabout between the two regenerated sites of the former Betteshanger colliery, at the entrance to the new Fowlmead Country Park. It would be seen mainly by passing traffic, and thus the ‘outsiders’ as well as the mining communities’ residents. The statue would be (re)presentation of the mining heritage for others (and the ‘self’). Despite these differences, the basic consensus remained: the statue should be moved. The current location, it was felt, was an insult or as Dave elaborated:

Why would I like it at Dover, it's facing the Channel so it's got its back to us, so there is disrespect, really.

He goes on to argue that the statue and its location are here seen as representative of the disrespectful treatment the miners felt they have received at the hand of the NCB as well as Kent society. It is seen as another element in what is felt to be a sustained ‘attack’ on the community.

So it's got its back to all, it's facing out, it's got its back to all us, and it's right next door to where the coal mine offices, management offices used to be in Dover and it's from them offices that they shut all the pits and sacked us all, so they've got this miner next to there which I, to some people it doesn't mean anything, but it means somewhat, it means somewhat to us. (Dave, community activist, 22 May 2007)

Dave here emphasises the meaning the statue has for him and possibly all Kent miners; the heated discussions about the location of the statue would support this. It is not only a representation of the mining communities; there is also a strong affective bond with it.

Relocation into the ‘Kent coalfield’, to a place with clearer links to the affected communities, however, would be the recognition of the miners as legitimate members of the local society and it would mark the area as a coherent entity – the Kent ‘coalfield.’ The techniques of visibility that are pursued by the mining communities are thus a reaction to their perception of themselves as distinct from the surrounding areas. They want to identify and be identifiable as mining communities even though this distinctness has, in the past, been constructed as a stigma by outsiders. As Bourdieu (1991a: 221) argues that ‘symbolic properties, even the most negative, can be used strategically according to the material but also the symbolic interests of their bearer.’ The disappearance of the industry would also mean a disappearance of the villages’ distinctness and their distinct identity. The statues and their high visibility would hinder any blending in but reaffirm the communities’ otherness. At the same time, their commemorative character also signals the impossibility of a return to the ‘glorious’ past. The fact that this is a glorious but also imagined past in its ‘coherence’, given the tradition of fragmentation and parochialism in the coalfield, is silenced.

#### **8.3.4. Symbolic Violence**

In contrast to the construction of the future in NWL which concentrated on the development of the rural idyll, re-imaging in Kent seems to be geared towards residents as much if not more so than towards investors. In the case of Kent, narratives of regeneration often seemed bleak and negative emphasising loss rather than positive change as has been explored in the previous chapter. It might be possible to link this to the breakdown of the tacit acknowledgement of symbolic power – the point at which symbolic power is no longer invisible but becomes overt force as a result of the experience of symbolic violence which is felt as physical and embodied violence and the refusal of complicity in the operation of symbolic power. As a result, therefore, overt force is met with overt resistance – on a symbolic as well as material level.

By way of illustration, we shall have a look at the mining community of Aylesham, Kent. On a symbolic level, there are two statues denoting different aspects of the village’s identity, one clearly future oriented and the other oriented to the past.

Dave: There's another one there, did you see further down, a stone statue. That's supposed to be a phoenix 'cause the school was finished and the phoenix, you know, rising out of the ashes and all that but that was just some=

Katie: They paid a fortune for that=

Dave: They paid a fortune for that=

Katie: And nobody understood what it was.

Dave: a sculpture, some pompous people just said there's a statue, the phoenix rising out of the ashes but that [it was] that confusing they had it the wrong way round for three months before they realised. It doesn't even look like a bird. (22 May 2007)

The phoenix as a representation of the transformation of the village is a modern, abstract piece of work whereas the miner and his children are more figurative in nature. It is, however, not possible to say that the underlying ideas of the representations of Aylesham are rejected.

The two statues also need to be seen in the context of their production. During my fieldwork in Kent, the topic of the statues came up repeatedly in conversation. The story I was told about the phoenix statue incorporated a number of elements of the discourse of betrayal which has been mentioned in Chapter 7. In this narrative, the idea for the statue was brought forward by one of the residents and entries from artists were requested. The artist who was awarded the contract, however, was described to me as a drunk who suggested to other entering artists that the residents of Aylesham wanted a modern art piece. This clearly seems to have been wrong given the negative reaction to the abstract nature of the statue. His entry, from the perspective of the villagers, most closely resembled a phoenix as the other suggestions put forward followed the 'recommendation' for conceptual art and thus found even less approval than the statue which was finally chosen. As it was told to me, this meant that the villagers were more or less forced to award the contract for the piece to the 'drunk' which was felt as a betrayal. Again, as was related to me in other contexts as well, the wishes of the residents had been taken but changed beyond recognition by those



responsible for their implementation. The story of the Phoenix statue is therefore in itself a representation of the experience of the regeneration process. The ideas of the population are invited but discarded or transformed by outsiders who use the mechanisms for implementation (i.e. the allocation of contracts, the planning process) to further their own interests. The community is left to deal with the consequences and to 'make the best of it.' There is even an allusion to the 'pompous people' who decided what would be a fitting statue. This links in with narratives of a sense of inferiority in comparison with the professionals in charge of the regeneration process in the area. These professionals seem to be knowledgeable and educated but eventually out of touch with the needs and wishes of the community which they are in charge of regenerating. In this sense, the phoenix statue is a constant reminder of the neglect of the residents' ideas and aspirations. It was supposed to be a celebration of transformation but eventually, the statue is a manifestation of the prevalence of other interests than the community's own. As the representatives at the local authority described it:

Hayley: [the community] didn't connect with it

Bob: yeah, that's a good way of putting it, yeah, you're right

Hayley: The understanding was it was a phoenix rising from the fire and it represented the community, exactly what they'd done but the community itself couldn't, couldn't connect at all. To them, what they wanted to see was a miner and his family

Bob: yeah.

Hayley: you know, that's recognition for what they'd done. I think it was probably a bit too arty for them

Bob: and again the issue was that people were saying: how much did that cost? Could that be spent better elsewhere. And I think the Trust themselves, even though, to be honest, it sometimes is hard to communicate and link with that, but they've learned from that by commissioning – is it the Miner's Payday or something like that – statue?

Hayley: The other one.

Bob: 'Cause that is something special.

Hayley: That's lovely.

Bob: Really, really nice. And I think that commemorates the way we're going into our future without forgetting our heritage. (local authority representatives, 10 September 2007)

In contrast to the Phoenix statue, the statue of the miner and his family (although the absence of the miner's wife is noteworthy) resonates with a particular understanding of the community.

Dave: But the miner and his family, it means something, the tub of coal, it means something to us. I understand about the phoenix rising from the ashes, I understand all that story and that but to look at that, it's just obscene, really, to pay all them thousands of pounds for a lump of – yeah. (community activist, 22 May 2007)

The respondent here constructs a 'community' in saying that this statue carries meaning for 'us', he assumes that there is homogeneous collective in which there is an active support for particular symbols. The statue evokes childhood memories which were recounted by interviewees of the special nature of pay day at the colliery. This was a day on which children would be allowed to accompany fathers to work to collect the wages – a mixing of work and leisure, but also a reminder of how much the colliery organisation dominated the social life of the village. The absence of the woman is indicative of the existing gender stereotypes which have been associated with mining communities – male dominated communities which are based on the support and reproduction of the social system by wives and daughters. Still, this idealised image of the mining organisation, hard work recognised by (more or less fair but comparatively high) wages, is the image that people like to be associated with. Interestingly, a number of elements in the statue are reminiscent of the 1940s/50s. The miner and his family are not taken from the most recent period of mining, as the

clothes and the tubs of coal in the statue indicate. Community image is here built on an imagined community of the past.

As those involved in the community development aspects of the regeneration programme saw it, however, connecting with the representations of a future community would also be an outcome of the regeneration process – a change in the attitudes and perceptions in the community would be accompanied by a change in the attitudes towards different representations:

Hayley: I think in years to come people will recognise it

Bob: Sure,

Hayley: the importance of that phoenix. I just think at that time -

Bob: It was too early,

Hayley: yeah, given some time

Bob: Yeah, if it was the other one first, the miner's payday first and then that one, perhaps then I think it might have – 'cause it went down like a lead balloon in certain aspects of the village ehm but what's really good about them – they've never been damaged which is good and people have taken ownership of them

This extract thus is illustrative of Bourdieu's (1991) argument about the contestations over symbolic representations mirroring the (material) conflicts in the social spheres over the vision of the social world. In this case, the fact that the community has taken ownership of both statues does hold the promise of a reconciliation of different views of the social world in the future.

The statues are one level on which the contesting visions of the social world are expressed. In both areas, Kent and North West Leicestershire, re-imaging campaigns also went hand in hand with re-naming. The importance of labels in the regeneration process and the emergence of different spaces can be seen in the changing names that the documentation in NWL showed: Ivanhoe Country, M42 Corridor, Heart of the

National Forest. In line with the strong efforts to reposition NWL and especially Coalville as destination for tourists as well as entrepreneurs, it was even suggested that the town's name be changed which was ultimately rejected (NWLAMD, 11 Aug 1982). As Oakley (2007) in her discussion of the renaming campaign for the Port Adelaide waterfront regeneration describes economic considerations often override community sentiment in such situations. In the case of Kent, the renaming of colliery sites or the regenerated spaces on the site of the former collieries was seen as an attack. Here 'discursively re-constructing the place through a new name has therefore been interpreted as fragmentation of the area into spaces of exclusivity and exclusion' (Oakley, 2007: 292). Joe, a community activist and former miner, felt that 'Kent County Council is out to obliterate the memory of the miner. They just want to forget mining.'

The fact that the issue of the names for the colliery sites recurred regularly in the discussions with the residents is then of no surprise. At the time of fieldwork, the topical case was that of the newly opened country park Fowlmead which was the reclaimed Betteshanger tip site. The name for the park had been subject to consultation but those with an affiliation to the former colliery felt left out of the process. It turned out that consultation had been conducted in the parishes adjoining to the site, i.e. Northbourne and Sholden. The majority of the inhabitants in those parishes, however, were not miners. The former employees at the pit lived on the Mill hill estate of Deal. They had not been included in the consultation. Although the Regional Development Agency emphasised participation and ownership for those affected by the changes to the site, ownership was a purely geographical notion, it was based on proximity rather than the emotional or affective attachment the former employees might have felt for the colliery site. High (2003) argues that the de-industrialisation process is often accompanied and dramatised through the toppling of the symbolic markers of the old regime. In the case of Kent, this toppling seems to have been re-enacted over and over – at least in the perception of the residents. Not only were the colliery buildings demolished at the closure of the colliery but more demolition was threatened, at least in Aylesham, and in addition to that, the symbolic markers, i.e. the names of the sites were replaced as well.

#### **8.4. Conclusion**

Regeneration is about imagining and imaging – these are the dominant ways of utilising images, labels, names and representations in the construction of past, present and future. Although the process ostensibly seems to address the future as it aims to construct new identities, social relations and opportunities for restructuring (and deprived) communities, it is deeply rooted in the past and implemented in the present. This can be particularly seen in the different reactions to attempts at re-imaging in the two case study areas. Differences in the case studies in terms of symbolic struggles can be linked back to the discussion of embeddedness of miners into the local culture. In NWL, mining was one of a number of industrial occupations, the local economic structure being dominated by manufacturing. Miners were not socially isolated; there are even reports in which miners are seen as the dominant social element. They were a vital social element in the locality. The regeneration strategy which was aimed at ruralisation to ameliorate the effects of de-industrialisation was a result of a cross-party coalition which involved the miners' representatives in their position on the local authorities. Furthermore, the decision concerning the application for the National Forest was supported by the population; support of the residents was actively sought and encouraged and was seen as a major success factor in securing the 'National Forest.'

Miners' interests were politically underrepresented in Kent, they felt socially and politically isolated, on a local as well as a national level – Kent as the forgotten coalfield. Visibility was an imperative. The conflicts over statues and names arose out of a determination of the local mining population to be seen – to redress the balance of years of perceived neglect and ostracism. Alland and Alland explain the importance of the symbolic for those who feel excluded from the instruments of power:

When a movement lacks political power to achieve its ends, even where there is minimal freedom of expression, it can still attempt to operate on the domain of symbols. By manipulating the symbolic order, it is possible to develop a counterverity that challenges official doctrine. Since the battle is fought only on the level of symbols, victory can be achieved through sustained and clever sources and access to the public. (1994: 101)

The obvious positioning of memorials to mining is then counteracting the perceived obliteration of the industry from the (dominant) local cultural memory. The ‘declassing’ of the countryside in NWL, which actually equals a ‘re-classing’ through rural gentrification is then also an act of the exercise of symbolic power, even more so as it is misrecognised as such. It remains invisible. The issue of gentrification of the rural areas and the out-pricing of the local population as social effects of a re-imagining, a new di-vision of the social world in the NWL coalfield is recognised but at the same time misrecognised as it is not diagnosed as a problem but ‘simply’ a side effect of *successful* regeneration and symbolic repositioning. Now, residents are happy with the changes (Simon, former NWLDC CEDO) and are proud to show their family round (Nicholas, LCC rep).

Regeneration is an identity project, it is as much a retelling and reconsideration of the past as it is a building of the (imagined) future. It has been argued that regeneration is often linked to turning economically and symbolically ‘empty’ or rather ‘illegitimate’ spaces into places, investing the abstract with social or economic meaning (cf. Hall & Robertson, 2001). The fact that technologies of making transformation visible are an integral part of the regeneration process (cf. Hall & Robertson, 2001) adds weight to the argument that the symbolic level is a necessary element in the analysis. Repositioning in this sense does not have to mean a break with the past and re-invention, it can also be a reconfiguration of relations with significant ‘others’, other economic or symbolic spaces. This is the result of putting localities in front of the public gaze; they are located on a symbolic, economic, social ‘map’, they are placed in relation to others and thus constructed as places. The result is that what can be imagined and represented is constrained by local and external forces and their manifestations and effects in social relations and institutional (bureaucratic) arrangements. The case studies have highlighted that conceptions of the future are always also conceptions of the past and vice versa. Understanding regeneration as a return to an idealised past means a recourse to locally embedded symbols and relations. This does not only mean a determined reaction against ‘outsiders’ it also silences dissenting views within the communities. At the same time, the use of universal symbols and globally recognisable images of corridors and bright new

futures links the locality with the global flow of production and consumption. This paradox is then enacted in the social relations in the process of regeneration.

## Chapter 9 – Synthesis – A Model of Regeneration

*The wide variation in the timing and trajectories of transitions, their discourses and legitimacy, their social bases and outcomes, also requires careful attention to their proximate material causes, the discursive framing of any perceived crisis in and/or of the welfare state, links to historically specific balances of forces in particular conjunctures, institutional mediations and strategic selectivities, and issues of sequencing. (Jessop, 2002: 142)*

### 9.1. Introduction

This chapter brings together the theoretical starting points outlined in Chapter 2 and the insights from the empirical chapters that followed to extend existing theories on state restructuring and forms of capital in connection with regeneration. It represents the synthesis of the different strands of the research project. The preceding discussions have resulted in the combination of approaches to socio-economic change which claims that:

*Regeneration is a multi-dimensional production process with the ultimate aim of repositioning places in the social space and the potential to reproduce or transform the existing di-vision of the social world.*

The process is located at the juncture of state and market in so far as the field of regeneration is characterised by a state-generated and state-dominated market over the allocation of public economic capital. It is a representation of the state upholding the ‘market regime’, i.e. the ‘relative subordination of an entire social order to the logic and reproduction requirements of capital accumulation’ (Jessop, 2002: 23). It is also one element in the restructuring of the state through the restructuring of the economy as well as the operating mechanisms of the state, e.g. complementing government with governance or internal reorganisation of agencies of the state.

The conceptualisation of regeneration presented here is derived from an engagement with and extension of concepts taken from Jessop (2002), Burawoy (1985, 1998) and Bourdieu (1986, 1991, 2005). The theoretical journey started with an understanding of regeneration as political production process. There are several dimensions to such an understanding. This has been followed throughout the preceding chapters in the focus



on the interdependence of local and extra-local forces, or as Jessop calls it – the balances of forces, in the project of restructuring. This chapter deals with different elements of transition as suggested by Jessop (2002): balances of forces, sequences and spatial selectivities. It presents a summary and potential implications of the thesis for both policy and theory.

## **9.2. *Balances of Forces***

### **9.2.1. Politics of Production**

The first dimension is that of regeneration as a site of the reproduction of a particular regime of (state) power - the ‘politics of politics.’ This focus required investigating the balance of forces within wider society, i.e. forces within the state and beyond the state (cf. Jessop, 2002). The second dimension deals with the politics in regeneration, i.e. with the power struggles within the state apparatuses and within the process, e.g. at the level of (area-based) strategies and projects. Bourdieu (1991) offers a similar approach in the insistence that political discourses and ideologies need to be studied in relation to the ‘constitution of the political field and the relation between this and the broader space of social positions and processes’ (Thompson, 1991: 28).

In the first instance, regeneration as site of power struggles represents the balance of power between particular political mechanisms and structures manifest in the current ‘regeneration regime.’ This is understood to be a particular type of political-economic organisation of the objectives and mechanisms of restructuring characterised by a specific combination of forces and means of the production of regeneration and social relations of production (cf. Hudson, 2000). This is manifest in patterns of the regional distribution of funds, preference for particular regeneration outcomes and modes of regeneration governance. An example of this is the shift from the entrepreneurial phase of restructuring to competitive bidding regimes or joined-up approaches discussed in Chapter 4. It can be seen to represent developments in the wider political and social context, i.e. a miniature version of the restructuring of the state under specific local conditions. The importance of the market economy and its mode of capital accumulation are accepted, and the desired outcome of regeneration is the reconfiguration of a range of markets, e.g. the labour, investment or housing markets

in the affected area. Reproduction of the system of production then means the acceptance of a hierarchy of places in a particular economic structure (cf. Massey, 1995). This is not only implicit in the existence of a regeneration agenda as this is based on a distinction between areas which are underperforming, underdeveloped, deprived and in need of regeneration and those which are regenerated, performing according to benchmarks and ‘normal.’ This situation is often represented as a result of the failure of the ‘market’. The idea of the functioning market based on competitiveness, however, brings with it spatial inequalities. Investigating the politics of production then means focussing on the conditions of existence of regeneration policy and its particular rules and norms as demonstrated in Chapters 4 and 6.

### **9.2.2. Politics in Production**

The research process showed that, in order to understand the social and economic transformation of an area, it is not enough to focus on the changed nature of the state, its changing institutions and political links with society, e.g. the increasing importance of market mechanisms. Notice must also be taken of the organisational context and sequence of the transformation and its local social, cultural and economic context, e.g. local economy, power balances and dominant institutions. Regeneration therefore ‘provides a good illustration of how the “regulatory process” can become an object of regulation in its own right’ (Goodwin and Painter, 1996, quoted in Jones and Ward, 2002: 476).

While examining the politics of production sheds light on the power struggles enabling (or hindering) a framework for coalfield regeneration, focussing on politics in production provides insight into the process itself and gives due consideration to individual agency. Thus, this second dimension focuses on regeneration as a productive process itself with the regenerated site/ community/ ‘object’ as its outcome. The regime of production of regeneration regulates the distribution of resources and possibly the division of labour by assigning responsibilities of planning, funding and implementation to particular actors. This is where Burawoy’s ideas on the production process and power struggles (1985, 1998) was linked with Bourdieu’s concepts of the field and different forms of capital (1986, 1989, 1991, 2005). Regeneration can be conceptualised as a field, in the sense that it is a separate social

sphere with its own institutions and specific laws (cf. Ferguson, 1998). It emerges out of the particular form the role of the bureaucratic field takes in the stimulation and maintenance of the economic field. This also thematizes the distribution of capital (economic, social, cultural and symbolic) between different actors in a specific 'social topography'. The regeneration field needs to be systematically reconstructed with a view towards the distinctive organisation of production and the relation to the broader social space. Most importantly, it draws attention to the position of and struggles between the individual or collective actors in the field in relation to each other. As Massey (1995) outlines, redevelopment can have different effects on the local level: reinforcing the current structural position of an area in the national context, transforming it or maintaining the current position but reconfiguring the local manifestations of inequality. For example an area showing unemployment rates traditionally higher than the national average could remain in this relative position despite potentially improving unemployment in absolute terms. Redevelopment might also lead to lower unemployment than the national average or unemployment remains fairly static but affects other groups in the area. This, to a certain extent, depends on the continuation of spatial inequalities as the focus is on changes in the relative structural position. This approach concentrates on the outcomes of restructuring in the sense of a reconfiguration of the volume of capital and its composition in the locality. A singular focus on the overall structure of the regeneration process tends to neglect the importance of individual agency.

### **9.3. *Issues of Sequencing***

Socio-economic transformation occurs over time, space and across several social spheres. The following sections are primarily an exploration of the process' own systematicity and its embeddedness in the wider political-economic context. The sequence presented here is one possible model for the analysis of regeneration. At all of the following stages, struggles over the distribution of resources are likely to occur. This applies to struggles for material as well as symbolic resources. They are characterised by their specific configuration of actors in the field, social relations between those and strategies of action. As a result, at all these levels there is a chance for the reproduction, undermining or reconfiguration of power structures. One aspect

present at all stages through the process is the tension between the extra-local and the local level. The politics of regeneration, i.e. the contests over the organisation of the regeneration field as such then have an influence on the particular social relations manifest at each stage. An important reminder: the model is an abstraction. The stages suggested here are not necessarily clear-cut and do not always proceed in the same order but give a general direction of the process. Stages overlap and activities at different stages are repeatedly carried out, e.g. in the sense that the composition of the major regeneration partnerships can change over time or be re-negotiated. Similarly, the mobilisation and acquisition of different forms of capital is a continual process due to changing regeneration regimes. The following sections elaborate on the particular issues pertinent at each stage and their relationship to the overall understanding and analysis of the process. This theoretical discussion is a direct result of the engagement with the data and theory.

**Extra - local Forces:**

The wider economic and political situation provides the framework for regeneration policy and discourse. This relates to international as well as national market and capital developments, employment trends and economic policies. There is recurring interaction between extra-local and local forces.

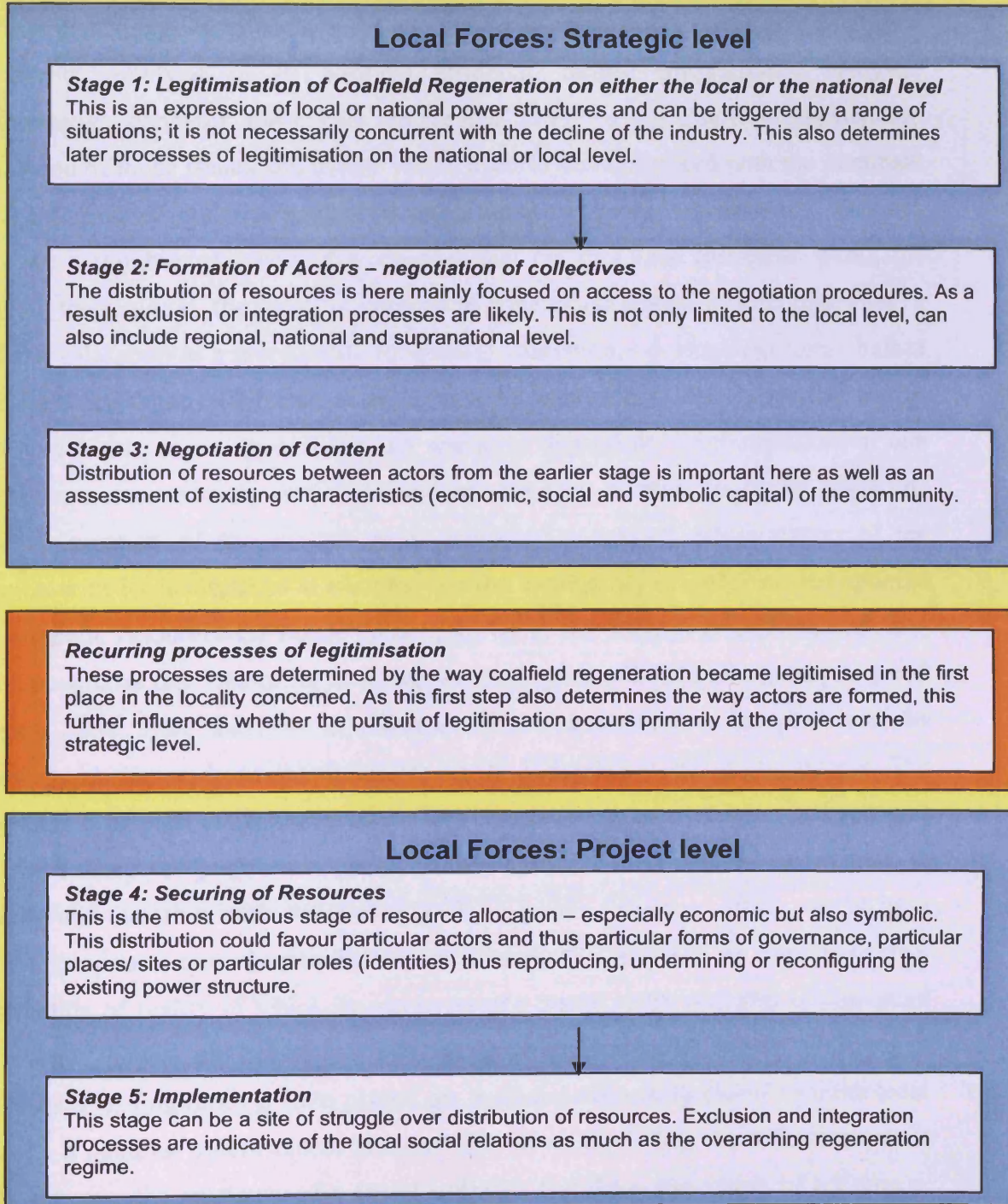


Figure 9.1 Sequence of Stages in the Regeneration Process

### 9.3.1. Stage 1: Legitimisation of Coalfield Regeneration

One of the main questions in the process of (coalfield) regeneration is concerned with the way it becomes a legitimate field for political (economic) action. Bourdieu explains that ‘the political field is the site in which, through the competition between the agents involved in it, political products, issues, programmes, analyses, commentaries, concepts and events are created’ (1991: 172). Coalfield regeneration then is one of those issues and events which need to be legitimised with the dominant and the dominated political and social actors for it to proceed successfully. This can occur on a number of levels: the supranational (in this case European level), the national, the regional, the local. In contrast to conceptualisations of legitimacy which see local validation as a prerequisite for general validation, i.e. local legitimacy before extra-local legitimacy (Johnson et al., 2006) the approach in this thesis has shown these two levels as interlinked but not mutually dependent. Legitimisation on one level does not necessarily determine legitimisation on another level, but given the principal position of the central state, achieving a mutual interpretation of the situation with its institutions is essential for the availability of political, institutional and symbolic resources for regeneration. Similar to the concept of path dependency, which postulates that ‘the order in which things happen affects the way they happen’ (Davies, 2004: 572), the level at which coalfield regeneration is accepted onto the policy agenda has an important influence on the following stages in the process. The determinism of path dependency needs to be regarded carefully and it is suggested that the concept of path contingency, which allows transformation to be seen as ongoing and iterative with different branching points (Hudson, 2005), might be a more appropriate one. Legitimisation is therefore a process of the ‘collective construction of reality in which the elements of a social order are seen as consonant with norms, values, and beliefs that individuals presume are widely held’ (Johnson et al., 2006: 55). Emphasis is here placed on multidimensionality (local vs extra-local forces) – a genuine ‘micro-macro process’ (Berger et al., 1998), the collective nature of the process, the existence of a social audience and the construction of consensus. This ‘requires a theory that explicitly conceptualizes relevant social factors at both the local level (...) and the level of encompassing social framework’ (Berger et al, 1998: 379).

The distinction between a local regeneration discourse and a national one is manifest in the different power relations it indicates. As Bourdieu argues:

The power of a discourse depends less on its intrinsic properties than on the mobilizing power it exercises – that is, at least to some extent, on the degree to which it is *recognized* by a numerous and powerful group that can recognize itself in it and whose interests it expresses (in a more or less transfigured and unrecognizable form). (1991c: 188, original emphasis)

Actors on the local or regional level are disadvantaged in comparison with those on the national level vis-à-vis the internationalised and nationally regulated economy (Dörre and Röttgr, 2005). National political-economic contexts establish the parameters for urban and local regime formation (DiGaetano and Klemanski, 1993). The particular political structural factors which are relevant at this stage are legal regulations which demarcate local authority responsibilities and areas of action as well as delineating criteria for the availability of financial and other resources (Gissendanner, 2004). Local government actors can only operate within these nationally (and sometimes supranationally) decided frameworks which therefore determine their capacity to act generally, i.e. to construct a legitimate cause for action as well as their ability to form coalitions with partners on other levels of government or in the private sector, as they delineate the ‘di-vision’ of the social world (cf. Bourdieu, 1991). It is, however, not only political structures which influence the legitimisation of the regeneration discourse and the governance process but also economic factors. Schmidt supports this by saying that

for the dynamics of change, we must be able to go beyond “politics as usual”, that is, beyond an understanding of the interplay of interests, institutions, and cultures that represent the background conditions to change, to explain how political actors create an interactive consensus for change, which necessarily can only come about through communication. (2001: 249)

Although in the case of coalfield regeneration the governance process would be expected to be started in response to an economic crisis event, this is not as straightforward. Jagd (2007) argues that situations require identification for economic action to take place. This identification, however, is inherently uncertain and

contested and therefore (economic) actors need to make an interpretative effort with others to determine the nature of the situation. This requires ‘social labour to interpret the situation, to mutually adopt interpretations, and to determine modes of agreement in common’ (Wagner, 1994 quoted in Jagd, 2007: 78). Economic factors can both act as a trigger and a constraint on the collective action. Often enough, national regulations on economic development involve political as well as economic indicators and criteria which need to be met. The interpretation of these criteria, however, is one arena of power struggles between local and national forces (Astleithner et al., 2004). Justification of action is constructed around the use of indicators, which need to be employed in a similar way for a local (or national) consensus concerning the development of a regeneration discourse. Gissendanner (2004: 50) argues that ‘local actors are especially sensitive to changes in economic structures, whether real or perceived.’ This means that local authorities interpret a situation of economic change as a crisis and thus a trigger for action while national agencies on the basis of the indicators constructed and used by the central state do not. Local authorities tend to view local economic indicators on an absolute basis whereas central agencies are more likely to view the same figures in a comparative perspective. So what is an absolute local deterioration in economic fortunes might still not be seen as such in relation to other localities in the same region or other regions. Here the position of the locality in the social space, i.e. in relation to other localities, is essential for the interpretation of the situation.

Economic problems must be converted by local actors into a politically mobilizing issue, calling for a general re-evaluation of the network’s goals. Whether a leader is able to create a salient issue out of economic decline depends on local political culture and local agency. (Gissendanner, 2004: 69)

This argument partly highlights the point that economic decline in itself is not enough to facilitate action in economic development; it needs to be used and constructed as potential for a new start or a call for action. Gissendanner’s point that this rests on the leader, the local political culture and local agency alone, however, seems to be too limited. Local political culture plays a part (and this was especially clear in the discussion of the data from Kent) but it is also the interplay between local and national political culture as well as local and national political and economic



discourses which impact on any individual's ability to turn economic crisis or rather a particular industrial sector's decline into a salient issue.

In summary, the politics of regeneration practice create a framework which enables and facilitates or hinders and forecloses coalitions and relationships between regeneration actors at different governmental levels. Politics in regeneration similarly enable or foreclose these coalitions. The regional economic development and regeneration process is a political process in the sense that power struggles over the meaning of economic, social and cultural capital determine the distribution mechanisms, strategies and outcomes. Depending on the level at which legitimisation takes place, coalitions of interest are formed in response to the funding sources available which facilitate or require the development of particular governance structures. In Chapter 6 this was illustrated by the following matrix. The illustration has been extended with a classification of the regeneration strategies which were described in detail in the earlier chapter. This directs attention to the process by which hegemony is produced and challenged. Although there is a strong emphasis on structural conditions in this model, agency is taken account of by accepting that the choice of strategies, even though they might be limited by structural conditions, is dependent on the interaction between individual and collective regeneration actors.

Level of legitimisation		National level	
		No specific coalfield programme	Specific coalfield programme
Local level	No consensus coalition	No 'legitimate' regeneration → <b>Neglect</b> → possibility of community initiatives → resistance or lock-in effect	Central (regional) regeneration agenda carried by non-local agencies → imposition of non-local agencies → <b>'Hegemonic project'</b> to achieve local coalition (with non-elected representatives)
	Consensus coalition	Local-authority dominated/driven regeneration → local-authority based partnerships → strategies of <b>adaptation</b> to achieve legitimacy on national level	Local-central partnerships carried by national and local funding → <b>Co-operation</b> → Regeneration as project of elected representatives

Figure 9.2 Regeneration Trajectories

This is not a static model, rather it takes into account changes in the structure of the state (as manifested through varying government and governance styles) over the last decades; it addresses the problem of the intersection of local and national agendas, and it leaves room for arguments of path-contingency in the social, economic and cultural conditions of creating national and local consensus. The resulting strategies are:

- **Neglect and Resistance:** The failure on the part of 'legitimate' political actors, both local and central, leads to either neglect of the coalfield issues and an exacerbation of problems (Audit Commission, 2008) or opens up avenues for bottom-up initiatives as response to a lack of action. Grabher (1993) and Hudson (2000) discuss the problem of cognitive and institutional lock-in with reference to strong institutional networks in old industrial regions. The reluctance with which the social and economic problems of the Kent mining communities were recognised, however, could also merit the label 'lock-in' in

the sense that established relationships of non-mining interests meant the reproduction of marginalisation of the coalfield.

- **Adaptation:** Local actors, predominantly local authorities, through their mutual interpretative effort arrive at a consensus coalition concerning the ‘crisis’ character of the situation brought on by mining decline. Their strategies are dominated by the need for external funding given the financial constraints for local authorities. The coalfield regeneration agenda is then dependent on non-coalfield specific programmes and therefore, once priority status is acknowledged locally, requires ‘embedding’ (DCLG, 2007) in or adapting to mainstream activities. In this situation the local coalition is in search of national funding while it is the national funding which is in search of a local coalition in the next strategy.
- **Hegemonic project:** Non-local agencies are imposed on the local situation as result of national agenda-setting. This also means that the existence of national economic, social and institutional resources needs to be complemented by a local consensus coalition. This is also a reflection of a changed understanding of regeneration as holistic measure. Regeneration regimes which operated without emphasis on consultation and with a sole view towards the market have to give way to hegemonic regimes based on a, consent to the primacy of regeneration as political objective and b, consent as primary operative mechanism (cf. Burawoy, 1985). The consent to nationally prescribed targets and procedures and thus regeneration as hegemony then arises out of mechanisms of collaborative governance involving non-political social groups.
- **Co-operation:** This is seen as the moment of joined-up approaches and thus the ideal solution to tackle issues of socio-economic transformation. As the DCLG report (2007) highlights, synergies and co-operation were not only necessary between different spatial scales of the state but also between different thematic agendas. In their evaluation sustained regeneration would only be achieved through the integration of coalfield and non-coalfield programmes.

It might be argued that the regional and the supranational/ European level need to be taken into account as well in this analysis. The capacity of supranational political actors to establish institutions and coalitions of interest on either of these levels of action, in particular, the local can be questioned. European policy makers can

facilitate the establishment of regeneration coalitions on the local level through the provision of funds but direct acts of ‘institutionalisation’ are not within their capacity. This was particularly clear in the 1980s when European funds were not accessible to local actors due to the lack of co-operation of the national government which was obliged to provide match funding. Similarly, actors on the regional level with a capacity to act (economically as well as institutionally) only appeared with New Labour’s change in policy towards the regions. Their capacity is mainly economic and institutionally dependent on central provision of funds. The attempts of such a regional agency to assemble a local coalition were discussed in Chapter 7. This strengthens the idea that legitimisation is not just concerned with the building of coalitions and the creation of consensus but that capacity to act (both institutionally and economically) is a necessary component.

The question of legitimacy in connection with local-central relations has been mentioned before (Harloe et al., 1990, DiGaetano and Strom, 2003) but it is rarely deconstructed into its component elements. Legitimacy is either conceived as consequence of successful election and thus sign of political mandate or the result of the distribution of local government functions within and without the local government organisation. In this sense, legitimacy is tied up with accountability. This is an important issue in restructuring, especially in those situations where national government sets up non-elected regional bodies which in their turn establish non-elected local bodies to establish a consensus around and carry out a particular regeneration programme. Legitimation in this thesis, however, is going beyond the idea of mere political mandate. It comprises the elements of interpretation or discourse formation, recognition, and access to the means necessary for the establishment of regeneration as a field of practice. These means are thus commensurate with different forms of capital, i.e. institutional, economic, social and symbolic resources. As Roberts (2000: 21) phrases it: ‘Creating these institutional structures requires the establishment of a central objective (or objectives) and the introduction of a means of mobilising collective effort in order to manage change in an orderly manner.’ Regeneration as a local policy practice is thus the consequence of a complex interplay of justification, recognition and political legitimisation.

### **9.3.2. Stage 2: Formation of Actors – the Governance Coalition**

As was suggested above, the approach in this thesis is that legitimisation trajectories can determine the assemblage and sustainability of consensus and thus governance coalitions. These emerge at the intersection of regeneration regimes and the specificity of place. In the context of coalfield regeneration, this meant that as long as there was a lack of acceptance of the need for specific coalfield regeneration, regeneration coalitions were unlikely to be formed at any other than the local (district and county) or sub-regional level. The exception is the Coalfields Communities Campaign which represented Local Authorities of coalfield areas on a national as well as European level. Regional and national actors became common in the later 1990s, especially after the publication of the Report by the Coalfields Task Force (CTF, 1998). Another factor at this stage was also the local actors' capacity for co-operation and consensus which could positively influence the quality of local and regional policies (Dörre and Röttger, 2005). In other words, where the local situation was characterised by antagonism between different organisations and/ or social groups (union, local authorities, other community groups), regeneration activities were restricted in scope (see Kent). This was manifest at the legitimisation stage as well as the stage of forming coalitions. Here again, it is possible to see a link to state projects with shifting responsibilities from local government to local governance. With recourse to Bourdieu's concepts, we need to look at the openness of the field of regeneration, i.e. the availability of access to those actors located outside of it but willing to participate. The developments towards governance could then be seen as an opening up of politics and political decision-making to non-politicians. At this point, however, ideas of symbolic violence come into play. Through mechanisms of 'inclusion' politicians can divest themselves of the labour of negotiation of different representations of the social world but at the same time delimit the framework for this negotiation. This delimiting, however, is not imposed by the local actors but by the national agents who are in a position to prescribe the rules of the political game. Therefore, as emphasised before, the positioning within central state discourses and regulatory frameworks has an effect on the building of coalitions as well as the negotiation of the meaning of restructuring. This is also expressed in the following statement: 'The production of ideas about the social world is always in fact subordinated to the logic of the conquest of power, which is the logic of the

mobilization of the greatest number' (Bourdieu, 1991: 181). Even if Bourdieu was here referring to the mobilization of citizens and the electoral mandate for politicians it is also applicable to the discussion of regeneration in this thesis – in this case it is the mobilisation of political actors (on local and central state levels) as well as the mobilisation of representatives of civil society – or in other words, local and central public and private social capital.

Current debates in governance studies and in particular the concepts of governance capacity and strategic capacity can be helpful in analysing the spatially contingent forms the struggles over the distribution of resources take. Whereas the concept of governance capacity is concerned with the capacity to act in the sense of generating and managing resources to govern (DiGaetano and Klemanski, 1993), strategic capacity 'taps into the process by which policies are made, implemented, evaluated and adjusted' (Gissendanner, 2004: 47).<sup>33</sup> Gissendanner (2004: 48) acknowledges the necessity for governance coalitions as 'coalitions of actors who control financial and political resources – also among governmental levels – and agree to pool them in common cause' for the emergence of governance capacity. Unfortunately, the formation of these coalitions is not accounted for in more detail in his analysis. Stone (2001) suggests that governance requires the unification of a governance coalition around a central, unifying purpose – which again is highlighting the point about mutual interpretative effort creating legitimacy but does not go further in analysing the different elements of achieving such a unified purpose. Pike (2007) also argues that social agency of individuals and organisations is integral to processes of restructuring. Similarly, the concept of embedding (cf. Granovetter, 1985, Mendez, 2005) can be adapted to state restructuring and its economic implications. If we see economic and state restructuring linked, especially in the form of regeneration, then embedding is part of a strategy of regeneration. Embedding (of economic relations) is achieved through the development of new forms of governance driven by the mobilisation of key actors (private or public). These new forms of governance can become a factor in an area's sustaining economic success even though Morris &

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<sup>33</sup> Gissendanner (2004) does not really elaborate on strategic capacity in his article. Although he introduces a number of criteria on the basis of which strategic capacity is evaluated, this is not extended in his analysis. In addition, innovation seems to be an important aspect linked to strategic capacity, which, however, he does not include in his criteria – a constant re-evaluation of policies and new policies seem to be aspects he more frequently cites than the ones he actually posited at the outset.

Williams (2008) argue that cross-border partnership working of local authorities is equally critical. The question of new forms of governance, however, is not only relevant in terms of economic regeneration and economic competitiveness – it is part and parcel of the regeneration process and the ability to establish new forms of governance, adapt older forms consensually is both objective and method in regeneration.

In summary, following on from Gissendanner (2004)<sup>34</sup> as well as DiGaetano and Strom (2003) critical factors for the successful establishment of governance capacity are:

- institutional structures which
- during a process of legitimisation of a particular cause as influenced by political and economic structures arrive
- at forming a governance coalition. This is then the prerequisite for the ability to generate and manage resources with the particular aim of regeneration.

All of these approaches can be enhanced by acknowledging the salience of place. In the abstract discussion of mechanisms of coalition formation the notion of place, in the sense of intersections of socio-spatial practices - needs to take centre stage. It is a reconfiguration of these intersections which is the ultimate outcome of restructuring.

### **9.3.3. Stage 3: Negotiation of Strategy Content**

Depending on the composition of regeneration actors, this is a stage where local or cross-level power struggles are fought. It also offers the opportunity to transform the local regime of regeneration production by allowing other than market economic objectives to inform the strategic content. The primacy of competition can therefore be undermined at this stage but this is dependent on the results of previous struggles at the stages of the formation of actors and legitimisation. Again, the starting point for the regeneration process indirectly influences which questions can be addressed here. Other than through legislative instruments it is difficult to launch nation-wide employment creation programmes while it is possible to establish local and regional

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<sup>34</sup> Gissendanner (2004) places more emphasis on individual agency and the ability of mayors or other political leaders to mobilise support.

physical reclamation action programmes. From Bourdieu's perspective 'the boundary between what is politically sayable and unsayable, thinkable and unthinkable, for a class of non-professionals is determined by the relation between the expressive interests of that class and the capacity which is secured by its position in the relations of cultural and thus political production' (1991: 172).

At the earlier stages, a locality's volume of capital was important in the positioning struggles in the field of regeneration. At this stage, the composition of the volume of capitals is likely to be instrumental in the formulation of strategy. It is here that struggles over the recognition of different forms of capital manifest themselves in the contests over visions of the future and thus the future di-vision of the social world. This stage is therefore about the convertibility of past labours, be they economic, social, cultural or symbolic, into future capitals.

Labour resources were an asset in (re)industrialisation strategies (Strangleman et al., 1999, Bowes, 2003). Cultural resources related to mining were employed in heritage, tourism and consumption oriented strategies. Especially in the 1980s, land was regarded an important resource. Land was available as colliery closures resulted in large derelict sites. At the same time property-led strategies geared towards providing industrial land and premises made formerly redundant sites potentially valuable. Local power struggles over regeneration strategies could then be influenced by the particular position British Coal had in the area, as a landowner, as employer as well as former provider of training and with the advent of British Coal Enterprise (BCE) also as provider of finance.<sup>35</sup> This draws attention to the interdependence between local and national level. Local regeneration strategies could be influenced by British Coal's national policies, especially with regard to the release of land and the striving for commercial returns on land as well as the funding policies of BCE.

In her study of restructuring in four Norwegian mining towns Dale (2002) discusses institutional elements, in a sense the local social and cultural resources, leading to

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<sup>35</sup> The issue of landownership is particularly important at this point as it has been shown to have a determining influence on the negotiation of strategy content for site-based regeneration projects. An example from the case study areas where landownership has had an enduring influence is the Snowdown Colliery site. The ownership by BC also had an influence on the negotiations for after-use of the Whitwick Colliery site.



particular outcomes of the transformation process. She stresses that economic life is both an instituted process and a socially embedded activity. Her analysis of transformation links events (ex-post) with institutions in the sense of ‘collectively held beliefs, values, mores and rules that condition or constrain individual action’ (Dale, 2002: 6) which are maintained through practices and routines. This way she can identify a regeneration strategy focusing on manufacturing rather than on services as a product of institutionalised patriarchy. This is the result of a need for ensuring labour market participation for men rather than the female labour force. As with other regeneration studies such an approach illuminates the outcomes of strategies but not necessarily the struggles over the mobilisation of different resources and practices which is possible if the forms of institutions Dale suggests are re-interpreted in the light of forms of capital and thus the mobilisation of social, cultural and symbolic resources.

#### **9.3.4. Recurring Processes of Legitimation**

Legitimation processes are influenced by the particular external and internal forces under which they take place. There is therefore a strong historical element in their occurrence which was elaborated in Chapter 6. As mentioned above, due to a lack of a specific coalfield regeneration programme during the 1980s, the local regeneration strategy most likely followed the trajectory of adaptation. This also meant that seeking national (financial) assistance was a necessary element in most strategies, and that local actors had to legitimise their need for regeneration funding continually. Localities therefore repeatedly needed to be positioned in the available funding frameworks which meant (re)drawing (symbolic) boundaries. Examples of such discourses were urban and rural development or derelict land reclamation. The success of such striving for national legitimacy therefore had a direct influence on the project specific funding processes. Other processes of legitimisation on the local level would be the result of national/ regional actors being introduced on the local level who would have to negotiate a situation of co-existence with existing (dominant) local organisations. In contrast, national legitimisation of the coalfield regeneration discourse would also have been concurrent with the provision of funding. Therefore, the actors formed as a result of this development - in East Kent it was the Regional Development Agencies which were given the responsibility for coalfield regeneration

– would face legitimacy questions on the local level. Whereas local actors' success was fuelled by the adaptability of their proposals, national/ regional actors might arguably have opted for making the regeneration discourse hegemonic in the affected area and subsuming local discourses under the regeneration agenda.

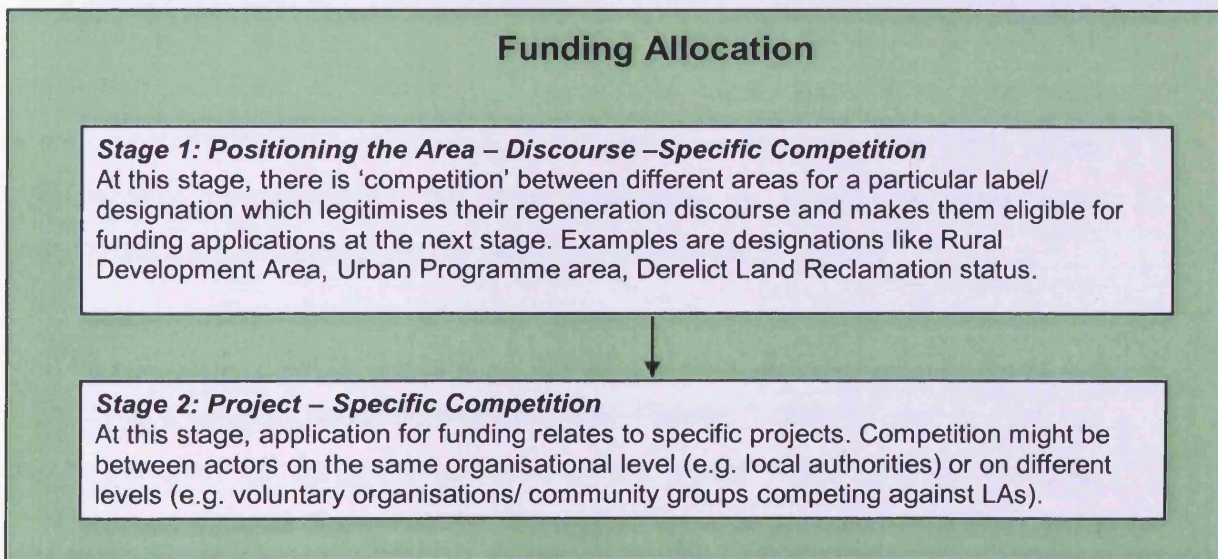
This adaptability can take several forms with regard to the private and public investment sources, e.g. constructing the area as rural (in the sense of absence of industry) to enter the discourse of rural deprivation and need and thus the political market for rural development funding. Similarly, presenting the area as 'new' and 'modern' in the sense of a deliberate break with the mining past was pursued by some local authorities for the attraction of private sector investment. The repositioning element of the regeneration process is thus a mutually generative act: social actors position a locality within a discourse which results in the redrawing and re-imaging of the area. The funding markets associated with different policy discourses therefore create new spaces. These new boundaries are more likely to be 'cultural' and 'social' than administrative. Examples are the Dearne Valley or the National Forest area. In this sense, regeneration is the creation of a new space (Massey, 1995, Garnier et al., 2004). In conjunction with this creation of new spaces the creation of new forms of governance of these spaces occurs, e.g. the creation of partnerships on a local authority level or with the inclusion of the private and the voluntary sector.

#### **9.3.5. Stage 4: Securing Financial Assistance**

At this stage the interaction between the extra-local forces and local forces in the local actors' insertion into the current regeneration regime becomes manifest in the allocation of economic resources. For the attraction of investment into a particular area (mainly for economic, but also environmental and social purposes), local authorities are faced with two potential sources: a public sector funding (quasi)market and a private sector funding market. The literature seems to have assumed one market for public and private investment whereas I would argue that these are two different markets with different criteria of distribution and successful competition for resources. Funding resources are distributed on these markets and between different competitors. Only those who are successful in positioning themselves on these (or either of these) markets will receive the investment necessary for 'regeneration'. The

political process of regeneration, understood here to be aimed at the revitalisation of a particular accumulation regime, is therefore itself governed by the rules of the same regime.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, before the launch of the Single Regeneration Budget, there were strands of funding, e.g. the Urban Programme, Urban Aid, Derelict Land Reclamation Grant, Rural Development assistance, in addition to regional policy. These all combined allocation based on political criteria and competition. At the first stage, the competition is for legitimacy, i.e. recognition expressed through labels or designations (symbolic capital). This refers to the administratively defined place. At the second stage competition would be for project-specific funds between the limited competitors who were deemed ‘eligible’ at the first stage (John and Ward, 2005).



**Figure 9.3 Funding allocation process**

The first stage is seen as a competition for symbolic capital, or according to Bourdieu’s (1989) definition, for ‘economic capital recognised.’ In contrast to Bourdieu, however, it could be argued that the designations and labels that are relevant at this stage in regeneration policy are more concerned with the recognition of the absence of economic, social or cultural capital legitimated by the dominant social groups which in itself is then turned into a resource. As such, this definition

indicators, as mentioned and illustrated above. If we held that an area is ‘recognised’ as an area in need of regeneration on the basis of the lack of economic capital (high unemployment rates, low spending power, low economic activity rates etc), then there would be no need for competition. This would also mean that allocation of funding operates on the premise of need. This, however, does not seem to be the case. Although it is possible to argue that the most deprived coalfields receive the highest amounts of funding (in this case SRB funding, see Brennan et al., 1998), coalfield areas received more than similarly deprived areas outside the coalfields. This symbolic capital does not only confer economic but also political powers onto those who possess it – but only because they are ‘legitimised’ by some higher power than themselves. This was especially illustrated in the proposals for the new economic development powers to be introduced following the Widdicombe Report (1986) (see chapter 4 and 6). Certain aspects of the new powers were supposed to be restricted to those local authorities where the area at the time enjoyed some form of priority status conferred by the government. The emphasis on relative difference then also provides another argument for the above focus on the different stages of selection and competition in terms of resources. It is not the label coalfield as such which determines eligibility for certain funds, it is the label in relation to other labels and the accompanying characteristics and their positioning in relation to other areas’ characteristics which determines the likelihood of successful funding.

Chapter 6 discussed the acquisition of symbolic capital in the sense of labels and eligibility as a result of legitimisation processes. Chapter 7 demonstrated that this can also be pertinent in the mobilisation of private social capital through particular narratives, and Chapter 8 showed that the representational element of the creation of private symbolic capital is as if not more important for the attraction of private rather than public economic capital. Here, the distinction between public (in the sense of state) capitals and private capitals (in the sense of either civil society or private business) becomes important. From the discussion above, public symbolic capital is then the recognition of a public interest in a particular locality through the granting of designations and labels. It is the recognition of past accumulated labour (cf. Bourdieu, 1986) or rather the negative effects of this past. Private symbolic capital is linked with the idea of reputation, ‘mindware’ or place-marketing (Aula and Harmaakopi, 2008, Benneworth et al., 2007) – concepts which have gained currency in the regional

competitiveness and economic development literature. Over the last decades, factors in addition to labour, capital and land have been identified in the pursuit of (regional) economic growth. Hospers (2004, see also Benneworth et al., 2007) argues that regional economic change is influenced by three factors: ‘hardware, software, mindware.’ This refers to the ‘visible and tangible aspects of a region’s economic structure’ (Benneworth et al., 2007: 2), the institutional landscape as well as the image of a region. In this sense, image is as much based on the past accumulated resources as the potential future ones.

### **9.3.6. Stage 5: Implementation**

The struggles over capitals and their mobilisation at this stage of the process are strongly determined by the dominant regeneration regime as this influences the kind of actors which gain entry to the field and thus to the struggle over the material resources. The material contests are likely to be manifest in the formation and maintenance or breakdown of social relations between different actors in the field. Chapter 7 discussed how these conflicts came to light in the different institutional settings for regeneration.

In the case of regeneration as a practice dominated by state agencies and their representatives, relationships and trust needed to be developed between professionals. In the context of collaborative governance, the different logics of action of the bureaucratic field and civil society conflicted in the enactment of differing interpretative frameworks. ‘Community’ as an objective, asset or self-perception became both barrier and facilitator. Trust remained the currency in this ‘game’ but was harder to establish. The thesis has highlighted how different frameworks of understanding of the aims and outcomes of regeneration point to a deep schism between policy and experience. The respondents’ narratives collided in particular in policy makers’ concern with the creation of spaces (economic and social) in contrast to the community representatives’ concern with the maintenance of place (i.e. the socio-spatial homogeneity of locality). As a result, collaborative institutions in the Kent coalfield were characterised by an equal mixture of mistrust and anticipation.

As interpretative frameworks remain unarticulated in official settings, the mobilisation of social, cultural and symbolic resources is hindered and the social relations in the situation are determined by symbolic domination – domination which is not recognized (e.g. Bourdieu, 1991, Burawoy, 2008a, b, Davies, 2007). Naming, deconstructing and reconciling these differences seems possible through more informal channels as, on the one hand, the interviews show and, on the other, an example from NWL where similar difficulties in a multi-agency/ multi-stakeholder setting occurred:

The forum itself was a fairly bitterly divided group when we set it up. We had mineral operators, we had the land owners, we had the public and we had the District and the local planning authorities and they just used to sit there and shout at each other at the beginning. Then slowly, we used to meet in the, or we still meet, actually, at the Moira Miners' Welfare and the key feature of that is that it's got a bar at one end. So after our meetings people would drink in their little groups and slowly these sort of broke up, continue to shout at each other but then they began to understand each other as individuals and then eventually started to talk to each other and begin to find way of working together. (Nicholas, LCC officer, 2 February 2007)

Reconciliation then depends on communication of agendas between individuals rather than structural oppositions. Such opportunities are again influenced by the specificity of place. Social and political marginalisation of groups is not conducive to the establishment of channels of communication which acknowledge different knowledges and dispositions in the process. Neglecting to acknowledge the different objectives of actors in the regeneration landscape will ultimately lead to experiences of exclusion and powerlessness as the empirical chapters have highlighted, especially for the case of Kent. This experience is also repeated on a symbolic level in the way that both the communities and the regeneration processes are represented – be that in the images used in the policies or the material representations in forms of memorials, statues and the built environment. This also draws attention to the limitations of collaborative governance in a restructuring agenda which is dominated by economic concerns but unable or unwilling to address the underlying social and economic inequalities.

#### **9.4. *A Place for the Coalfields: How the coalfields arrived in the South East***

The discussion above has looked at the sequential dimension of regeneration and its rootedness in place: regeneration as a place-bound process of production. Throughout the thesis, it has also been argued that this production process takes place in space. There is a spatial dimension to the symbolic and material struggles in regeneration. This was explored in the recurring emphasis on the interaction between local and extra-local forces. Local regeneration as a politico-economic process is therefore inextricably linked with state restructuring. In the last decades, different phases of state restructuring have led to different regeneration regimes in terms of the institutional, economic and political conditions under which regeneration is pursued. One unifying element in these regeneration regimes, however, has been the emphasis on the revitalisation of a particular accumulation regime and the reproduction of labour through employment creation. Although there have been varying degrees of emphasis on this particular aspect, it has remained the driving force behind local, regional and national regeneration strategies in the UK.

Previous studies show that the predominant focus on employment creation in both policy and theory leaves gaps in understanding the nature of regeneration (cf. Audit Commission, 2008). Although the material conditions of transition have been considered, its discursive framing has not been analysed in depth. The concern with the content of strategies and their implementation has thus left little room for examining the way strategies come about, how they are legitimised and negotiated, especially in terms of the insertion of the local into the national. This thesis has addressed these issues by looking at the accounts and narratives constructed around visions of the present and the future which are to be actualised through restructuring. Regeneration strategies thus need to offer futures which concur with current policy agendas, centrally (globally) promoted and facilitated forms of growth and strategies of competitiveness.

The particular form of regeneration executed and experienced in the NWL and Kent coalfields must then be located in the context of these policies of economic growth

and competitiveness. The competitiveness agenda as understood and implemented since the 1980s has favoured a particular kind of growth and restructuring, of which Allen et al. (1998) claim, the South East is the representative region. Local regeneration strategies therefore needed to echo national priorities and fit into the agenda so powerfully implemented by the South East as a region. In the absence of national priority for coalfield issues, regeneration then meant repositioning the coalfields within and in relation to the (symbolic) South East.

For North West Leicestershire this transformation is seemingly complete. This was an industrial district; its major town, Coalville, was aptly named for its *raison d'être*. The area is now known as the Heart of the National Forest. It is presented as a rural idyll of forests, fields and flowers. From the policy perspective there are enough grounds to describe what happened as a ruralisation strategy. Consecutive place-making and marketing strategies have provided the labels for the 'new' countryside: from Ivanhoe Country to the Heart of the National Forest. A significant amount of funding was drawn in through the acquisition of the appropriate label from the Rural Development Commission. The funding logic was based less on the 'obvious' rurality of the area than the availability of rural regeneration funding. Similarly, the attractiveness for businesses to move to the area, according to local politicians and policy makers, is based on the environmental assets - the National Forest, a forest in the making.

The result of such positioning, however, is not an actual ruralisation. Rural in the case of North West Leicestershire predominantly meant post-industrial, not isolated, or characterised by agriculture or large country estates but rather large derelict sites with no obvious purpose, little attractive housing and villages without any other economic base than mining. 25 years of regeneration have brought bypasses and the A42/ M42 to locate North West Leicestershire right in the middle of the map of the Midlands and the National Forest. They have also brought what might be called an urbanisation and gentrification of the countryside. House prices have risen, housing has been added, and local residents have experienced the struggle of keeping up with rising prices on low-skilled jobs in the variety of warehouses and distribution companies which have moved into the area. The area's demographic characteristics have changed: unemployment is low, but so remain skills and wage levels as substantiated



by several representatives of local government. Other socio-economic indicators, however, suggest a new affluence: increase in commuting of residents to service industry based jobs in the Midlands, increase in self-employment, the arrival of an entrepreneurial middle class. This is still located within a discourse of rurality – only that the characteristic traits of rurality have changed. One of the stories that can be told about North West Leicestershire's regeneration is therefore a story of how the coalfield became the imagined countryside and thus (selectively) affluent. NWL is then not only de-industrialised but re-imagined into a (working-) classless Arcadia. This masks the fact that the Forest's creation was based on the availability of derelict land and the prospect of continuing opencast mining. In this sense, ruralisation was a creative interpretation of the general, central state promoted strategy for increased competitiveness and growth based on services and consumption. NWL's success or what has been termed as success by those involved in its transformation has been linked to the fact that it was situated in the South (East), the growth region of the country in the 1980s. The BSHF study confirms this: 'Coalville, without major regional assistance programmes, has relied very much on being in the 'South' for its success in regeneration' (BSHF, 1990: 5). This becomes a comprehensible assessment if we do not take this positioning geographically but symbolically.

At the same time, the Kent coalfield which is geographically located in the South East, did not figure in the local or regional imaginary economic geography of the South East. The basis of its transformation was not seen in creating or maintaining a coherent sub-region which needed restructuring and needed to be positioned in relation to or rather in the middle of the South East. This was not possible on either a material or discursive level. Emphasis in East Kent was on the building of the Channel Tunnel and its consequences and the positioning of Kent in relation to Europe. The focus remained on Ashford and the corridor towards London which again marginalised the coastal areas and the former mining communities which were isolated within the wider social structure as well. Location, then, was a factor in the regeneration trajectory but not in the sense that might have been anticipated. Being a marginal area in the 'economically dominant' region of the UK, marginalised the Kent mining communities even more in relation to other disadvantaged areas in older industrial regions. East Kent had never arrived in the official imaginary geography of the UK as an industrial region. The area did not exist as a coherent spatial, political,

social or economic entity. Attempts at repositioning therefore remained incoherent and were dogged by the economic performance of the rest of the region.

Since the arrival of coalfield regeneration on the national agenda, the localities in the case studies examined here have undergone a repositioning of sorts – as the title of the thesis suggests – from the margins to the centre and back. Allen et al. (1998: 10) describe regional identities as ‘part of a system of representation which, among other positionings, refers to “core regions”, “peripheral regions”, “manufacturing regions”, “poor regions”, “high-tech regions” and the like.’ The two coalfields at the margins of the national industry but central on either a geographical or symbolic level, moved to the centre stage in the course of their regeneration strategies – both through labels and thus national recognition. In the case of NWL, this was the designation as part (or even heart) of the National Forest, for the Kent coalfield this was the eventual recognition as coalfield through the National Coalfields Programme and the Coalfields Task Force. This had differential outcomes for both. In terms of regeneration both started at the margins of national discourses and agendas, achieved priority, to be relegated back to the margins again – for different reasons. In NWL, the job is seen as done, regeneration is no longer an issue, the coalfield as a priority or as a social and economic unit no longer exists – it has been replaced by the National Forest. In Kent, the communities of East Kent similarly do not exist as a coalfield – a coherent spatial entity. Their concerns are contested and progress in restructuring is constrained through conflicts and mistrust between the different actors in the field. In addition to that, the major regeneration project in the South East is now the Thames Gateway. So the East Kent mining communities moved from a position of marginality in relation to the concerns over the Channel Tunnel to a position of marginality to the concerns over the Thames Gateway (cf. Hay et al., 2004). The experience of restructuring thus seems to be a continuation and reproduction of being at the periphery. As a result, contests over the visibility of the coalfield continue to recur – even if transposed to the level of cultural representations in the form of statues and the processes of naming the newly created spaces.

### **9.5. Coda**

This thesis is an examination of regeneration and the spatially and temporally contingent trajectories it can take. It is an attempt to understand regeneration as a productive process and investigate the assumptions and mechanisms that shape it as such. The thesis has taken two marginal English coalfields as its focus for an exploration of the interdependencies between the restructuring of the economy and the state and thus inevitably society. The purpose of the study has been to move towards an understanding of regeneration in a long-term perspective in areas that have been variously described as examples of successful transformation (Beatty et al., 2005, DCLG, 2007, SQW, 2007). It concentrates on the local experience but locates this in the wider national context. In fact, the insertion of the local into the national and vice versa has been the focus of the project in an attempt to use micro-level data to extend theory on the macro-level. It thus contributes to the growing literature on deindustrialisation and regeneration and aims to answer and raise questions concerning production and reproduction of social relations in capitalist society.

The guiding research questions were:

- 1, What is regeneration?
- 2, How does it work?

This meant an investigation into how regeneration is articulated (materially and discursively), acted out and experienced. This study departs from the majority of closure and regeneration studies. First, it is acknowledged that the closure of the coalfield is a disruptive event which called into question the mining communities' position in the social world. In this sense, the meaning of pit closures reverberates through the thesis. The focus, however, is on 'moving on', not only living with closure but actively dealing with it. Second, the primary focus is on the process of regeneration not on the outcomes although these two dimensions cannot be investigated in isolation: as much as the process shapes the outcomes, the outcomes shape the experience, perception and understanding of the process. Ex-post rationalisation is a recurring phenomenon in regeneration. The thesis develops a dual focus by looking at those who are actively orchestrating change (policy makers, politicians) and those who are recruited into the regeneration apparatus and are actively living it (community representatives and activists). It therefore brings

together different accounts of reconstruction in the attempt to restore the locality to a 'successful' economic and thus social unit.

An extension of existing theories on regeneration and the reproduction of capitalism is taken as the overarching theoretical outcome. This was achieved through the application of Burawoy's extended case method (1991, 1998). The thesis combines concepts and ideas from urban regime theory, uneven development and labour process theory to arrive at an extension of Bourdieu's concept of different forms of capital (1986). The method allowed investigating local regeneration trajectories in the context of the structural changes in regional, national and global economic and political forces. At the same time, the attention to interpretative frameworks of different agents gave voice to the individuals and their perception of themselves in the wider social structure. This prevented a de-contextualised look at small scale studies and provided the basis for a wider theoretical debate on economic and state restructuring. As Swyngedouw (1996: 1500) argues, regeneration is therefore 'not only a process of economic restructuring, but also, and perhaps foremost, an experiment to re-organise the political-institutional framework of planning and policy-making in general.'

This stance has been developed in this thesis to address the problem of seeing regeneration under an economistic bias, i.e. the mobilisation and acquisition of economic capital as the highest goal. Policy makers seemed to assume a straight forward relationship between the investment of public and private economic capital; linear progression from the investment of public economic capital to the acquisition of private economic capital. This is then perceived as a virtuous cycle as the existence of private economic capital would be self-perpetuating and lead to increased investment pouring into an area. This rather simplified notion does not do justice to the complexities of the regeneration process. The field of regeneration would then be defined on the basis of the availability of economic capital only. This leaves out a number of dimensions, dimensions which are more or less tacitly acknowledged in the document and interview data. Introducing Bourdieu's notion of capitals then takes advantage of what Savage, Warde and Devine (2005: 40) call the 'promise' of the concept: 'It is something of which there can be more or less (volume), and more or

less of different types (composition), which works in different ways in various fields, and which has varying potential for accumulation and convertibility.’

For the process of regeneration this means considering the following aspects:

- First, there is the issue of the multiplicity of capitals which are involved in the practice of regeneration, both as resources, that is ‘means of production,’ and as markers of distinction between different actors in the field.
- Second, there is the dimension of scale, i.e. the importance of the interplay between local and central forces.
- Third, in going beyond Bourdieu’s conception of capital, which concentrated on capital recognised by the dominant social group, the lack of a particular form of capital is here also recognised as a resource or focus point for the mobilisation of other forms of capital.
- Fourth, in a further extension of Bourdieu’s notion of capital as accumulated past labour, the temporal dimension is added so that the importance of anticipated returns can be included in the understanding of local assets.

By adding these elements to the understanding of regeneration, restructuring processes are recognised as multidimensional in their particular social spaces: local/central, public/ private, positive/ negative and changing through time (past, present and future). This multi-dimensionality is particularly articulated and visible in the recurring legitimisation processes throughout the course of the ‘project’ of restructuring. This project of transformation is itself governed by varying regeneration regimes as result of differential outcomes in the contests over legitimacy of coalfield regeneration. The connections between the different steps in the process are, as explained earlier, not structurally deterministic but spatially and temporally contingent. Similarly, agency of individuals is possible within the different fields, be that in the mutual interpretative effort in the identification of situations (that is as element of the mobilisation of private or public social capitals) or the production and reception of symbols as part of the mobilisation and generation of local and central symbolic capital.

Coalfield regeneration is thus the result of parallel and overlapping multi-level processes. At the same time that regeneration was emerging as a field of political (social and cultural) production, the coalfields in their role as actors in the field gained in standing, i.e. symbolic capital. The coalfields need to be understood as spatial entities, which in turn are politically delimited, represented by political actors. Their entry into the field of practice and competition for resources was also always a struggle over their own boundaries and legitimacy as political actors. The acquisition of symbolic capital in recognition of the lack of private economic capital ultimately mobilised central public social and economic capital to reposition the coalfields in the social space.

Such a view combines the ideas on legitimisation developed earlier in the chapter and the claim that regeneration needs to be understood in the context of separate but overlapping social spheres, i.e. the bureaucratic, civil society and the representational field. The focus is then on the convertibility of different forms of capital into a range of capitals, giving sufficient credit to social, cultural and symbolic capital. The concept of capital is here applied in its widest sense. By way of illustration, public symbolic capital thus first of all means that the ‘crisis’ is accepted as such and awarded priority. It comprises the recognition of need of a locality through the designation of the area under certain funding schemes and thus the application of a label. It also refers to the elusive ‘confidence’ that is sought after by local government in particular, which is manifest in the availability of external funding. And finally, image and reputation which are often seen as important elements in the attraction of footloose economic capital are included in this aspect as well.

The competition for resources is akin to offering, evaluating and trading of futures. Different capitals are mobilised all in the pursuit of new (di)visions of the social world. In the quest for the bright new future for *former* mining communities we thus encounter the actualisation of trust, both locally and nationally in institutions such as the state and the market, and anticipation. The inherent contradiction in regeneration, however, remains that it is based on promises whose fulfilment cannot be guaranteed. In its orientation to the future, it is a state of constant anticipation. Although it relies on trust and anticipation, the nature of its course – in the context of a neo-liberal Schumpeterian state which ‘promote[s] uneven regional development rather than

compensate[s] for it' (Jessop, 2002: 159) – means that there will be winners and losers, promises broken and promises kept. This inevitably affects the consecutive attempts at mobilisation of resources. This is nowhere more visible than in the schism between policy makers' stories of success and residents' stories of loss but also empowerment and hope.

Bourdieu's concepts and theoretical tools allow the incorporation of the past (past labours) into the 'stock' of capitals of particular localities. In the context of regeneration these concepts also need to incorporate the vision of the future. Legitimated futures represent as much part of the capital stock as recognised pasts. This temporal dimension is vitally important in the discussion of restructuring as movement towards the (anticipated) future positions in the social space, identified through the anticipated volumes of capital. This legitimated anticipation is what is ultimately converted into economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital for the actual act or process of (re)positioning.

Although the empirical chapters have necessarily focused on each of the fields coming together in regeneration in turn, the overall impact needs to be seen as a complex interplay of different logics of action of all of these. Even if the current trend towards alternative modes of governance relies on local agencies for their social and cultural resources, these need to be mobilised within local, national and global discursive frames linking to the state, the market and civil society respectively. Images of a future local society are dependent on and determined by the 'nature of the state and its articulation to civil society' (Jessop, 2002: 149). If this seems too structuralist in the first instance, then the personal narratives show the opportunities for individual agency through acts of defiance, resistance or genuine local initiatives. As much as regeneration is about the repositioning of localities in the system of material and symbolic differences, it is also about the (re)positioning of social groups and individuals in local and extra-local contexts.

Implications for policy that arise from such assessments are then manifold. The DCLG report (2007) argues that government policies to tackle socio-economic transformation and area-based renewal have progressed. Coalfield policies now need to be brought into line with these new arrangements which emphasise local and

regional devolution. This thesis has shown that this can only be successful if genuinely co-operative mechanisms can be developed. There is a need for proactive engagement with questions of restructuring. The case of NWL has shown its merits and the coalfield communities in Kent had to bear the brunt of a lack of it. This was also acknowledged by the Audit Commission (2008). In a policy/ politics context in which private-public partnerships (private meaning both business and civil society) are increasingly important, questions over their accountability, accessibility and authority need to be openly addressed and discussed. This may mean that communities are represented by their elected representatives at the higher levels of strategic partnerships and directly 'active' and 'responsibilised' citizens and communities are primarily included at the level of implementation. The essential feature is communication about objectives, responsibilities and resources. This then also addresses one of the major criticisms about regeneration as exclusionary practice. Mobilisation of different forms of capital means the acknowledgement of all dimensions of capital in any given social sphere and it means the potential for a reconfiguration of the social sphere through the distribution of power through information and knowledge. Knowledge, as has been widely accepted, is power but so far, in the regeneration process, it has been used as an instrument of domination. This has to change for restructuring to be the positive and creative process it has the potential to be. Boltanski & Thevenot (1999: 364) argue that 'if we want to take seriously the claims of actors when they denounce social injustice, criticize power relationships or unveil their foes' hidden motives, we must conceive of them as endowed with an ability to differentiate legitimate and illegitimate ways of rendering criticisms and justifications.' This program is not only applicable to academics but policy makers, politicians and community activists as well. Genuine co-operation and social transformation can only be achieved through an articulation and sharing of different perspectives on the social situation.

It's about knowledge, information. That's the most important thing in regeneration is information. (Douglas, community activist, 29 March 2007)

The thesis has been written in this vein with the aim of uncovering and recognising knowledges and resources which have not been recognised by official discourses before. Although this, to a certain degree, affirms the particular position of



'legitimate' knowledge, it also hopes to unmask the relations of domination implicit in it. I have tried to give a platform to those who are truly knowledgeable about the process of regeneration and I hope the platform is worthy of their contribution.

**Epilogue**

**Deep, unspeakable suffering may well be called a baptism, a regeneration, the initiation into a new state. (Ira Gershwin)**

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Minutes of the Policy & Resources, Planning & Transportation, and Economic Development Committees of Kent County Council, 1985 – 1994, located at Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone

Record keeping for local authority documentation varied over the case study areas. While the minutes in North West Leicestershire were bound in paginated minute books, other records both in Kent and Leicestershire were kept in files or ringbinders, identifiable by the name of the committee and the date. To maintain a coherent citation system, I have therefore identified the consulted documents by the name of the committee and the date of the meeting in question. Where the document quoted was circulated more widely I have given the institution and the date of its publication.

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## Chapter 10 Appendix

### A1 – Respondents

Area	Name	Function
NWL	David Taylor	MP
NWL	Lilian	Voluntary Sector Representative Leicestershire County Council Officer
NWL	Nicholas	NWLDC Council Member
NWL	Robert	Community Development Worker
NWL	Gary	Regional Development Agency
NWL	Ted	LCC Officer
NWL	Charles	Voluntary Sector Representative
NWL	Evelyn	NWLDC, former CEDO (1989 – 1995)
NWL	Mark	NWLDC, former CEDO (1995 – 2004)
NWL	Simon	NWLDC, former CEDO (1985 – 1989)
NWL	William	Community Development Worker
Kent	Hayley	Regional Development Agency
Kent	Carl	Community Activists
Kent	Harriet and Tom	Kent County Council
Kent	Mary	Community Activist
Kent	Douglas	Community Activists
Kent	Dave and Katie	Community Development Worker
Kent	Ben	Community Activist
Kent	Barry	Community Activist
Kent	Malcolm	DDC Council Member
Kent	Eve	Voluntary Sector Representative
Kent	Lauren	Community Activist
Kent	Sean	DDC Council Member
Kent	Walter	Community Activist
Kent	Martin	KCC
Kent	Larry	Local Historian
Kent	Lydia	Community Activist
Kent	Tim	MP
Kent	Gwyn Prosser	Community Activists
Kent	Ralph and Chris	Community Activist
Kent	Richard	Community Activists
Kent	Alexandra and Joe	Community Development Worker
Kent	Adam	Community Activist
Kent	Paul	Alliance representatives
National	Jill and Daniel	Former English Partnerships senior officer
National	Henry	

## **A2 – Participant Information**

### ***Participant Information Sheet: Regeneration of former mining communities***

I would like to invite you to participate in my research project on regeneration of former mining communities. The following will give you a short overview of what this means for you and the information you decide to give me. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Do not hesitate to talk about the study with other people.

#### ***Why am I doing this research?***

Although there have been some studies on coalfield regeneration, the particular area you live in has not been examined in close detail. A number of activities in the region are, however, described as particularly successful in comparison to other coalfield regions. I am also interested in this study because I come from an area in East Germany which is facing similar problems and I would like to understand how people in other places have dealt with the social and economic changes.

#### ***Who can take part?***

I am approaching people who have been active in the regeneration process in your area, either as members or officers of the local councils, representatives of important community groups or ongoing regeneration projects as well as relevant government agencies.

#### ***What would be involved?***

If you choose to participate I would like to discuss your views on the process of changes in the area. This would last between 1 and 1 ½ hours. I would like to talk to you about the following topics:

1. What are/ were the major changes in the area?
2. Who was involved in these developments? How did these developments take shape?
3. To what extent has the legacy of mining had an influence on regeneration in the area?

The interview will be audiotaped so that I have a record of what was said.

#### ***What will I do with the information?***

I will transcribe the interview and if you are interested I will give you a copy of the transcript. The transcript will only be read and used by me and not be used for any other purpose. The information from these discussions will be the basis of my PhD thesis which will be assessed in order for me to gain the PhD degree. The transcripts might also be used to write and publish articles in academic journals. You are welcome to see the final thesis and/ or a copy of the articles before they are published.

#### ***Will everything you say to me be kept private?***

You can say as little or as much as you wish. The transcript will be kept in a secure place. In the transcript the names of yourself as well as those people who you mention will be changed so you will not be identifiable.



***What if you change your mind about taking part?***

If you decide to take part then this is your voluntary decision, therefore you are also free to withdraw from the study at any point you wish, without giving a reason.

***Who am I?***

My name is Heike Döring and I am a PhD student at Cardiff University. I am supervised by two Senior Research Professors in the School of Social Sciences. The research has the approval of the School Research Ethics Committee and is jointly funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University. If you would be interested in taking part or have any questions concerning the research, feel free to contact me at Tel: 07742 614 925 or email: [DoringH@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:DoringH@cardiff.ac.uk). I would be happy to answer any questions and look forward to meeting you.

## **A3 – Interview Guide**

The interview guide was loosely structured around three areas of interest:

- 1, the process and objects of regeneration
- 2, the actors of regeneration
- 3, the meaning of regeneration and the coalfields

### **1, Briefing**

- Ethics
- Anonymity
- Recording and Transcript
- Option of withdrawal

### **2, The Interviewee**

- What is your role in the organisation?
- How long have you been with the organisation?
- In the case of community activists/ politicians: How did you get involved?

### **3, The Process and Objects of Regeneration**

- What happened since the colliery closures?
- What were the major milestones in terms of regeneration?

These questions should elicit a long response. The following questions can be asked if this is not the case. This would vary according to the role of the respondent. For policy makers and regeneration professionals these are relevant questions:

- How did the regeneration process start?
- Was there a strategy at the start? If so, how was it formulated? What were the drivers/ objectives? How was it taken forward? How was it implemented?
- What are successes/ failures? What would you do/ have done differently?

For community activists questions would centre on the objectives and the formation of the organisation they are representing as well as their ideas about the issues in the area.

### **4, The Actors of Regeneration**

- Which are the main agencies of regeneration in the area?
- How does co-operation work?
- Which are the main funding bodies? How can funding be obtained? What is the process of obtaining funding?
- How did your organisation become involved?

### **5, The Meaning of Regeneration and the Coalfield**

- What does/ has regeneration mean/meant in the area?
- Would you still consider the area a mining/ coalfield area? How does this become visible?
- Did the fact that this was a coalfield make any difference? If so, how?

### **6, Debriefing and Thanks**

