

Planning and the Public: Actor- Networks and the Plan-Making Process

Malcolm Alistair Andrew Tait

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SUMMARY

This study explores the development plan-making process in two local authorities, and focuses on the role different groups, including 'the public', play in this. This research aims to uncover the ways in which the practices of plan making are constructed through the work of actors and texts, and to trace how these actions reflect and constitute relations of power.

Plans have been viewed as modernist tools. However this conception has been criticised in work drawing on the writings of Habermas and Foucault, which will be critically assessed. Problems associated with these theories and a need to trace how actions and structures might be constituted led to adopting a theoretical framework drawing on actor-network theory. This theory has a radical view of structure, agency and power and forces attention onto how stabilities are constructed. The theoretical framework adopted draws on these concerns to trace how actors, entities and networks emerge through social actions. The research questions focus these concerns onto understanding how plans are written, who is important in this and how entities such as 'local authorities' and 'the public' are constructed.

Qualitative research was carried out in two cases, examining how the plans were written and focusing on how techniques of involving 'the public' were constructed. Case study descriptions trace how networks were built and how were important in mediating actions. In particular, the ways in which 'councils' 'officers', 'members', 'the public' and 'central government' are defined, form a focus.

Analysis of the two cases revealed significant similarities attributed to a 'central government' network. Differences arose in the ways in which 'council' networks composed different practices of plan-writing and how officers and members were defined. This study shows how texts and actors shape plan-making, and how certain practices of governance are constructed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

THE RESEARCH AREA

Plan-making is a central part of the planning process. Plans serve to codify how land-use development might happen and thus make statements about future action and collective intentions for pieces of land. Plan-making, although a key feature of planning activity, has been conceived in numerous ways, perhaps due to the variety of social relations in which plan-making has been carried out. The writing of development plans is therefore part of wider social processes and norms, and it is necessary to understand the social relations in which plan-making is embedded. Plans, and the work involved in their writing, might be seen not only to reflect social relations of power, but also to reproduce certain forms of social and political organisation. A study of how plans and planning work serve to reflect and reproduce certain relations of power will be a central concern of this research.

The involvement of the public in the making of plans has arisen as a significant feature of planning work over the last 30 years. The role which the public plays in shaping development plans varies enormously from place to place, and it might be contended that 'public participation' is a difficult concept to define. Public involvement is also a highly contested element of the British planning system, perhaps due to the variety of forms it might take and the many reasons for involving the public. Significantly, the participation of the public in planning decisions is a practice which, more than most, is open to political and ideological contest. However, within the literature on public participation, both practical and theoretical, there is little exploration of the ways in which conceptions about the public, their participation and the role of local government are formulated, and most importantly, used to serve specific purposes. Work to define 'the public' and how this might have implications for their action is not an area which has been greatly researched in planning literature. Instead of assessing the participation of pre-formed groups and entities, such as 'the public', 'local authorities', 'central

government' and 'planning officers' in plan-making, this study will focus on how these groups and entities are defined and enacted in particular situations.

As mentioned above, the writing of development plans reflects and enacts other social norms and activities. Of particular importance to the writing of plans is the wider context of changing central and local government relations and significant change in the organisation of local government. It is therefore difficult to view 'local government' as a completely stable entity. Instead it might be contended that change and in particular differing activities serve to constitute and re-constitute 'local government' in a number of ways. One of these activities which may help to constitute 'local government' or 'councils' in particular ways is plan writing. Such work not only reflects the relations of governance in which it is embedded, but may also be seen to re-produce these relations of governance. Within an even wider field of relations, plans and the writing of them may also be seen to reflect and play a part in re-producing the changing political and economic circumstances in which the planning system is constructed. A concern with the activities of plan-making must, therefore, take into account the wider set of relations in which the planning system is implicated.

AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

As a result, the main aim of this research is to understand how the practice of planning (especially as a state activity) is carried out and constructed. This will involve showing how groups and actors are formed in relation to a diverse set of practices and norms known as 'the planning system'. A central feature of this work will be to uncover how relations of power are enacted through the practices of different actors, groups and resources. From this, it may be possible to show which groups are enabled in a particular set of relations to carry out certain actions, and therefore uncover the actions of 'powerful' groups. From a theoretical perspective this research will aim to uncover the taken-for-granted norms, assumptions and practices which make up planning work. This will enable relations of power to be traced and may reveal how norms are re-produced or challenged by certain groups.

In order to enable such a study of relations of power it will be necessary to focus on a particular activity which is central to an understanding of planning practice. Plan-making, as described above, is a key aspect of planning; it embodies many characteristics which are seen as 'planning work', including the writing of policy statements to influence future land-use development and crucially the political and social work of gaining some collective agreement over these statements. In particular, a focus on 'consultation' may show how groups are formed and act in relation to a process of policy-making. This focus on consultation will not be constrained solely to an analysis of 'the public' and their activities in relation to versions of a plan. Instead, the research will analyse not only how groups are defined and act as 'consultees', but also show how groups such as 'council officers' and 'elected members' also work in relation to a plan. In this way, it is hoped to uncover how notions of 'council' work and work by 'non-council' groups are enacted. This will also show how divisions between a 'council' and those defined as outside 'the council' are constructed. This would seem to be a key aspect of how 'public involvement' is conceptualised.

PLANNING LITERATURE AND PLAN-WRITING

Planning has been conceived as a modernist activity, which stressed free democratic action and the application of scientific knowledge and rationality to human affairs (Healey, 1993b). Within this conception, the plan plays a key role "as a directive statement...in which it was assumed planning authorities exercised firm control over what development could take place and how, informed by scientific knowledge and consensus goals." (Healey, 1993a p.83) As such, the development plan might be viewed as a reflection of a particular set of social relations in which such activities were embedded. However, such a conception has been challenged on a number of fronts. Firstly, Marxist approaches have criticised notions that such things as 'consensus goals' might exist. Rather, the development plan may be seen as a tool utilised by the state to reproduce particular sets of capitalist relations. Such an analysis does show how the planning system might advance the rights of capital and private property interests (Ambrose, 1986); however, much analysis in this vein tends to underplay the particularities and contingencies of the practice of planning. Secondly, it might be

argued that such a modernist and scientific activity never truly existed and that such conceptions are over-simplistic (see Campbell and Marshall, 1998). Thirdly, and following from this, is a growing body of work which focuses on the shifting social relations and ambiguities of planning as a modernist enterprise. This has drawn much from attempts to re-conceptualise modernity and modern action, and has been linked to 'post-modern' and 'post-positivistic' thinking (see Beauregard, 1991). In relation to development plans, the focus might be seen to have shifted from a plan as logical set of proposals with some internal coherence to "a plan as part of a process of argumentation" (Healey, 1993a p.83 emphasis omitted).

Attempts to re-conceptualise plans as sites of communicative interaction have drawn heavily from the work of the German theorist Jürgen Habermas. Habermas' work has attempted to re-conceptualise modernity through an increased concern for language and communication as a means of increasing or decreasing public debate. This work has been drawn upon by a number of planning theorists (notably Patsy Healey and John Forester) to uncover the ways in which planning activity might preclude or promote an open debate about the values underlying the practice of planning. Such an approach has tended to view plan-making as a communicative activity embedded in diverse social relations. Different systems of meaning are seen to exist within a plan, some of which may tend to exclude other systems of meaning making such texts monologic rather than dialogic. Such analyses have therefore called for plan-writing to include numerous systems of meaning, which ultimately may increase the democratic accountability of the text and reinvigorate the public sphere. However, there are a number of criticisms which might be levelled at such an approach. Whilst it does seek to uncover the social relations in which a plan is embedded, such work does not focus on how language use constructs social relations and 'systems of meaning'. Instead 'systems of meaning' are seen to *exist* and act as particular forces within a text. This follows from Habermas' conception of language as communication of pre-existing meaning rather than language as the social creation of meaning. In this way, it is difficult for such an approach to trace the production and re-production of power relations. Furthermore, Habermas' conception of an idealised and universal form of communication makes it difficult to reconcile with the practical use of language we might observe in everyday situations.

An alternative strand in planning theory has criticised Habermas' approach (especially his conception of power) and drawn upon the writings of Michel Foucault. Such work focuses not on an attempt to identify the circumstances in which power relations (expressed through language) may be dissolved, but on social life as necessarily embedded within relations of power. These relations of power are related to discourses which constitute the subjects and practices which re-produce stable power relations. This approach treats language and material practices as constituting power and therefore views power as an *outcome* rather than as a commodity exercised by an agent. Work within the field of planning has attempted to trace the ways in which discourses are re-produced and the practices which are enabled by a certain discursive formation. In this way, the limited amount of Foucauldian analysis of plans has attempted to identify how plans might be seen as both enabled by systems of meaning and also serving to re-produce such systems of meaning (Boyer, 1983). Work has also concentrated on how the discourses articulated in plans constitute certain subject positions, constrain actions and create legitimacy (Tett and Wolfe, 1991, Allen, 1996). However, such approaches have been criticised for being relativist (especially by Habermas, 1987) and for providing no space for resisting pervasive relations of power (see Jessop, 1990 chap.8). More importantly, Foucault's treatment of discourses as objects tends to draw attention away from the practices and contexts by which discourses are formed and re-produced (Potter, 1996). As Law puts it: "When I read Foucault I do not usually take it that he is talking about process. Rather, my sense is that he is painting us pictures of the past." (1994 p.105) This makes it difficult for the processes by which discourses are built up and relations of power enacted to be traced with any great certainty.

THE THEORETICAL APPROACH OF THIS RESEARCH

The theoretical approaches to a study of planning outlined above all raise questions concerning how we might understand the detail of everyday actions and the regularities which we might observe in these. This points to the problem of conceptualising structure and agency within social theory. Attempts have been made to reconcile structures and agency in unified theory and have had to avoid 'adopting too voluntaristic or too deterministic a position' (Clegg, 1989 p.138). The problem can also be related to

tensions between micro and macro approaches to social study, of attempting to understand both specificity and regularity. Attempts, such as Giddens' 'structuration theory' have attempted to reconcile these two approaches, and its characteristics will be examined in Chapter Three. However, the theoretical approach adopted in this research will draw from the canon of writings known as 'Actor-network theory'.

Actor-network theory has its origins in studies of science and technology. It derived much of its initial form from a rejection of sociological studies of science which attempted to explain scientific and technological practice as imbued with social characteristics. Instead, actor-network theory aimed to describe scientific practice both from a scientific and sociological perspective, rather than reducing such practice to a set of social relations. From this approach rose a theory which attempted to elide dualities such as technological/social, non-human/human, micro/macro and importantly agency/structure, all dualities associated with a modernist rationality. Actor-network theory attempts to circumvent these dualities through an emphasis on connection and iteration. In this view, an actor only has agency due to its place in a set of relations, and a set of relations (or structure) might only be identified as the actions of actors aligned in that structure. Actor-network theory thus privileges a view of structure and durabilities as performed and constructed by actors who re-produce such stabilities. The planning system is thus not an object to be studied *per se*, but as a thing which is actively constructed through linkages between different entities and their actions. Such an approach has ontological implications, in that we should not look for 'natural' things in the world, but trace how they are defined in a set of relations. Things, such as 'development plans' are thus accomplishments which are made solid (and difficult to question) through actions (especially language use) of actors in sets of relations. This research attempts to trace the ways in which actors and resources (such as texts) re-produce stabilities, and how heterogeneous objects might be defined and aligned in particular network forms.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This theoretical approach implies that the researcher should not go out and identify pre-existing structures which shape action or follow agents with pre-formed powers. Instead, the researcher should attempt to uncover and unravel the relations which make up taken-for-granted norms, terms and actions. Such a task is the ‘opening of black boxes’ in actor-network terminology (see Callon and Latour, 1981). This research, therefore aims to uncover the sets of relations and activities which constitute the ‘taken-for-granted’, such as a ‘development plan’ or a ‘council’ and trace what actions are attributed to these heterogeneous objects.

Such a task implies a detailed, qualitative research approach which highlights processes and activities. In this way, it may be possible to identify actors and networks, examine the re-production of durable relations (for example through texts) and trace the success and failure of actors to co-ordinate a network. As part of this, showing how actors and resources use language will be an important part of identifying the assumptions embedded within development plans and the wider set of relations which they both re-produce and reflect. Texts might be seen to define objects of discourse and associate them in a particular way which re-produces certain sets of relations or de-stabilises them. Practically, this research will be conducted through two case studies which will reveal some of the sets of relations, actors and networks which shape the writing of plans. In particular, the definition of groups and activities at the earlier stages of plan-writing (up to the deposit stage) will be studied. It is hoped that these case studies will reveal both how ‘consultation strategies’ are formed and also the wider set of relations which surround work to write development plans in the British planning system.

CONTEXTUALISING THE RESEARCH APPROACH

Whilst plans can be seen as central to the planning process, there have been few attempts to theorise their importance in propagating relations of power. As Murdoch et al. put it, “the detailed analysis of these documents [plans] has remained a curiously neglected area of planning studies” (1999 p.191). Plan-making has been most frequently conceptualised as a technical activity serving ‘the public interest’, or as a

communicative activity carried out by certain established groups (such as developers and interest groups). However, very few studies have concentrated on how plan-making is a situated process in which groups are constituted within sets of power relations and simultaneously re-produce such relations. Furthermore, the resources (such as texts and human skills) which shape the making of plans have been largely ignored in the planning literature. This has tended to produce studies which conceive many entities and actions as unproblematic and thus fail to adequately overcome such problems as the structure/agency dualism.

There have been a limited number of studies which have focused on how norms in the planning system have been re-produced and how plan-making activities are constituted (see Boyer, 1983, Allen, 1996). These have concentrated largely on the discourses in which power relations are constituted and enacted. They have not fully engaged with the detailed work which serves to construct discourses or shows how these become effective (Flyvbjerg, 1996). Uncovering this detailed work is a central feature of actor-network theory, which aims to follow actors and describe how they act in empirical studies. Although actor-network theory originally concentrated its empirical work in the fields of science and technology, it has been applied in numerous fields such as medicine (Singleton and Michael, 1993, Prout, 1996), organisational studies (Lee and Hassard, 1999) and geography (Bingham, 1996, Bridge, 1997, Murdoch, 1998). There is a small, but growing, interest in applying actor-network theory to a study of planning. Work in this field has focused on minerals development (Murdoch and Marsden, 1995), Local Agenda 21 processes (Selman and Wragg, 1999) and urban regeneration (McGuirk, 2000). There has also been work by Murdoch et al (1999) drawing on actor-network theory for an analysis of plan-making in Buckinghamshire. This work has been the closest to this study in its concern to uncover the sets of relations surrounding plan-writing and the resources which impinge upon development plans.

The approach of this study is similar to Murdoch, Abram and Marsden's work (1999), but wishes to extend research further into the ways in which resources such as texts and their form shape the means by which groups and activities can be defined and represented. Detailed study of texts and their role as intermediaries in describing a

network is an area in which many actor-network studies have not greatly focused. It is hoped that such an approach will uncover some of the detailed ways in which the structure and organisation of texts can define objects and create networks of associations between these. The two case studies in this research will also allow comparisons to be made between two actor-network accounts. This is something which has rarely been carried out in actor-network studies. Through comparison it is hoped to identify similarities between the cases which may uncover actor-networks which connect the two cases, and from this we might impute some conclusions about relations of power and how they are extended through the British planning system. It is also hoped, as a research aim, through comparing the case study stories to assess the implications of using actor-network theory as a research framework.

STRUCTURE OF THIS THESIS

In order to position the theoretical and topical concerns of this research it will be necessary to initially outline some previous writings on plan-making and the social and political context of plans. Chapter Two will describe some of the dominant conceptions of plan-making, especially those relating it to a modernist rationality. These conceptions have more recently been criticised as sitting uneasily within contemporary society and have furthermore been viewed as counter-productive to the emergence of a democratic or just society. Much work in planning theory has drawn on the theories of Jürgen Habermas and Michel Foucault as a means of understanding contemporary social forms and to provide a way of establishing more democratic practices of planning. The features of these theories will be outlined, and a number of critical comments made on both their normative content and on the methodological consequences of carrying out research shaped by their writings.

The concern to understand social processes and avoid problems of determinist or voluntarist theories led to a need to identify a different theoretical perspective. This research will draw on actor-network theory to provide a way of understanding how certain stabilities in the world might emerge. The tenets of actor-network theory will be explained in Chapter Three, as will some attendant philosophical work concerning

ontology and the nature of texts. This will lead onto Chapter Four, which sets out the research questions for this study and details an analytical framework which will guide the analysis of the two case studies. The strategy which the research undertook, which drew on qualitative methodologies of observation, interviews and documentary analysis, will be outlined in Chapter Five. This chapter will also set out the reasons for choosing the case studies and set out some of the particularities of conducting fieldwork for this research.

The following two chapters contain the case study descriptions and analysis. These will deal with the ways in which entities such as ‘the Council’ and ‘officers’ were defined in each case. In particular, these case studies will describe the detailed ways in which networks were constructed and how notions of ‘the public’ were articulated in the practices surrounding plan-making. Chapter Eight will then identify some of the similarities and differences which could be identified from the two case studies. The use of two case studies (which is unusual in actor-network research) allows the ways in which similarities are built up to be described. A number of differences between the two cases will also be highlighted, especially those concerning the make-up of ‘Councils’ and how this might reflect certain networks operating in each case. The concluding chapter will concentrate in more detail on evaluating some of the advantages and disadvantages of studies drawing on actor-network theory. These will be drawn from my own experience of ‘using’ actor-network theory, as well as summarising problems which others have encountered. This chapter will conclude by outlining some avenues for future research and will provide a few final words to summarise this research and its main findings.

CHAPTER 2

PLANNING, PLANS AND MODERNITY

INTRODUCTION

Planning as an activity has often been viewed as modernist in nature, one in which rational control is exercised over particular spaces. As Healey puts it: “The planning tradition itself has generally been ‘trapped’ inside a modernist instrumental rationalism for many years” (1997 p.7). Planning has been seen to arise from an imperative to control future activity in the face of the dynamic and volatile nature of capitalism. As part of this, the plan emerged as a tool by which rational and scientific control could be exercised over spaces and places. The plan has therefore been seen as imbued with an instrumental rationality through the systematic ways in which it could relate means to ends. However, such a conception of planning and plans has been attacked from a number of positions. In particular, criticisms have been made of the consequences of these modernist practices. Modernist understandings of contemporary society have also been exposed as incapable of tracing the shifting nature of society and of planning as an activity. Social theory has thus started to question some of the assumptions of the modernist thinking, for example the place of the human subject in relation to wider social forms. However, such ‘post-modern’ thinking is diverse in its normative content and its theoretical concerns, and there are a number of ways of understanding planning and its relation to a ‘post-modern’ society.

This chapter will initially outline some of the inherited notions of planning as a modernist enterprise and the role of plans as part of a scientific and bureaucratic state activity. Numerous thinkers have produced critiques of modernity, and there will not be space here to deal with all such critical approaches. Instead, those theoretical positions which have been most widely drawn upon in the canon of planning theory will be assessed. In particular, the work of Jürgen Habermas and Michel Foucault will be appraised, especially for the ways in which their work deals with power, structure and agency, and how such theories might provide tools with which to understand the contemporary practice of planning. Such an account will be, necessarily, broad-brush,

but it is hoped to show the advantages and limitations of these theories in explaining the practice of planning within wider social relations.

PLANNING AS A MODERNIST ENDEAVOUR

PLANNING AS SCIENTIFIC METHOD

Planning has been commonly associated with modernism and Enlightenment rationality (Beauregard, 1991), which stressed free democratic action and the application of scientific knowledge and rationality to human affairs (Healey, 1993b). Enlightenment thought and practice can be seen as an attempt to reinstate the human subject as the driving force behind historical change against the background of feudal order. In this conception of society, action through rational means by individuals will lead to a coherent and just social order, one instituted in terms such as the 'public interest'. In this way, Enlightenment rationality sought to objectify many aspects of social interaction, through the "clear separation of facts from values" (Healey, 1992 p.9). As part of this, science became a clear means to improve society in a rational way. This objective became a central part of planning as a process; a way of improving society through rational and scientific planning. This can be seen as two separate forms of inquiry, firstly positivism or the "belief that policy interventions should be based on causal laws of society and verified by neutral empirical observation" (Dryzek, 1993 p.218). Secondly, through critical rationalism which attempts to corroborate theories through repeated attempts at falsification. Both methodologies attempt to "comprehend in rational thought the sensible "reflections" emanating from the real empirical world" (Soja, 1997 p.239). Such objectives have been used to justify scientific practice in the field of planning, and to provide a normative basis for such an endeavour. Planning, according to this model, should therefore concentrate on a rational and scientific approach to the allocation of land uses over space. Such an approach has distinctive consequences for the way in which society could be conceived. In particular, distinctions could be made between the human subject and the non-human object, whether it be forms of architecture or forms of social organisation (Lash, 1999). The modernist conception of planning as a rational scientific practice meant that debates on the values underlying planning practice were rarely articulated, and norms such as

distinctions between humans and nature, human subjects and societal objects were not questioned. Such a view of planning and planning practice therefore drew on wider conceptions of human agency and social progress, many of which were to be later challenged.

PLANNING AS BUREAUCRATIC ENDEAVOUR

A connected conception of the philosophical basis of planning and its links to modernism may be drawn from the perspective of planning as bureaucratic endeavour. One of the earliest conceptions of links between bureaucracy and modern society was formulated by Weber, who critically evaluated the potential for structures of domination to exist in capitalist economies. Weber identified systems of market rationalism (such as rational accounting) and systems of bureaucratic rationalism as central aspects of modern society. Through Weber's typification of bureaucratic activity he identified the most 'reliable' form of administration for the rational state. In this conception, social structure and human agency are fairly rigidly defined. Society becomes highly structured, with bureaucracy a key part of this structure. One of the essential qualities of the 'ideal' bureaucracy is "the impersonal capacity to subordinate the individual to the single-minded pursuit of organizational functions and goals" (Low, 1991 p.66). This means that the scope of human agency is strictly controlled by rigid structures. In some ways this has resonance with hierarchical features of local government, especially through the way in which the responsibilities of elected members and council officers have been defined (see, for example, Report of the Committee on Management of Local Government, 1967). However, the activity of planning and plan-making cannot be solely conceived as the work of a rational bureaucracy due to the contingent features of local government and the political nature of all planning work.

PLANS AS MODERNIST TOOLS

Plans have occupied many roles within planning practice, especially since planning has had numerous social purposes. However, it is possible to identify some of the ways in which plans have been the product of a modernist rationality. Firstly, we might see the plan as a visionary statement; a means by which a vision (possibly Utopian) for a city or

a region might be articulated. As Healey (1997) notes, such visions are not solely modernist, however they did become connected to modernist ideas of cities as functioning units which should be organised in particular ways. Plans provided a means to identify how a city should be organised, how land should be zoned and where certain forms of land-use were to be directed. Such concerns arose from modernist ideas of how to accommodate modern social forms in a rational and aesthetic manner in cities. Concerns such as these might be identified in the Garden City Movement both in the UK and the USA. Plans also expressed a desire to shape development on a comprehensive basis in cities, and as such they often identified physical development as a main factor in the organising of cities. Such a desire to comprehend 'the whole city' relates to a second modernist feature of plans; that of plans as scientifically-formulated statements. Work to write plans thus became a scientific process, where through rational and systematic means, problems were identified, analysed and solutions to these formulated. Plans thus expressed an instrumental rationality; a way of relating means to ends. This conceptualisation was dominant to some extent in the mid twentieth century through notions such as 'survey-analysis-plan'. A third modernist feature of plans relates to the institution of control over development. Plans thus became a bureaucratic tool, a means of regulating social processes in a systematic manner through the means of policies. The control of development by the state in a rational manner can be seen as enacted through such objects as plans. The way in which this was done has been seen to shift from the use of map and design-based plans to policy-based plans with their inherent bureaucratic character (Neuman, 1998). The bureaucratic nature of plans is still a strong feature of the current British planning system, and a number of authors have identified a shift towards an increasingly bureaucratic process-oriented system (Tewdwr-Jones, 1994).

A significant amount has been written on planning as a modernist activity. Such writings typify planning as imbued with an instrumental rationality which was expressed through scientific and bureaucratic processes. Such typifications, however, have a number of consequences. Firstly, they imply a uniformity to planning practice in that these modernist features can be viewed as influential on most forms of planning over the last 100 to 150 years. Such a view can be criticised as simplistic, in that

planning has exhibited numerous forms and expressed different value systems in its operation over the last century. In particular, the view that planning embodied a dominant scientific rationality has been criticised by Campbell and Marshall who write: “In the case of practice it [scientific rationality] entered the rhetoric of the profession but its direct influence was, we would contend, somewhat limited” (1998 p.8). Furthermore, features such as the bureaucratic work of planning have been seen to gain particular influence at particular times and wane during other periods. This leads onto a second point, that modernity was not, or is not, a stable and universal set of circumstances. Features which might have been associated with modernity, such as bureaucracy, have taken different forms over time and it is somewhat simplistic to conceive of modernity and planning having a uniform relationship. That modernity was not uniform might be indicated by the plurality of ‘post-modern’ theories which have been developed as critiques of modernism. Instead, it may be true that some features of modern society, such as scientific practice and instrumental rationality, have had important bearings on social life over the last two centuries, and have shaped practices such as planning and plan-making. As the next section will show, different conceptions of modernity and planning have been proposed and different critiques raised of modern society.

CRITICAL RESPONSES TO MODERNITY

As mentioned above, there have been many ways of conceiving modernity and planning. These have included perspectives drawing on Weber’s ideas of rational, control-oriented bureaucracies and Marxist analyses of the political economy of capitalism and the role of the state in this. Whilst not being an explicit focus of this account, it is necessary to briefly sketch out some of the Marxist views of modernity and planning in order to highlight an important conceptualisation of the place of planning within broad economic and social relations. Early Marxist writings conceived the state as operating in the long term interests of the bourgeoisie, that the state is “but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.” (Marx and Engels, 1996 p.7). However, Marx wrote no analysis of the state comparable to his economic analysis and therefore contradictory strands can be drawn out of Marx’s

writings (Swingewood, 2000). However, many Marxist studies of the planning system have tended to view planning as a state tool and enmeshed within capital relations (see Ambrose, 1986). Writers such as Miliband (1973,1978) and Müller and Neusüss (1979) have written of the links between state and capital, especially of state economic intervention as a means of supporting the capitalist system in the long run. For them, the welfare state is a regulatory form essential to the workings of the capitalist system. The position of planning as a state tool means that it serves to legitimate and advance capitalism, so that private property interests and capital accumulation are the priorities (even the *raison d'être*) of the planning system. As such, plans might be viewed as means of organising land-use in favour of capital accumulation. Such an analysis is convincing in describing the planning system's bias in favour of private development and large firms. However, such explanations can also have a tendency to become over-deterministic in describing all aspects of the planning system as a result of capitalist economic relations. This criticism starts to have more weight when applied to detailed studies of local decisions and individual action in the planning system. Over-deterministic theories tend to have little explanatory power when dealing with the complexity of micro-scale social process and action, which might be encountered when studying the practices of planning.

Marxist theories draw attention to issues of power and dominance of certain classes and ideologies. This issue is of key importance in conceptualising how political decisions are made and in analysing the structures of political representation which can be related to modernity. Certain political features might be related to modernity, for example the state as site of political decision-making and the penetration of state activity into most aspects of social life. The state thus became the means by which collective goods and services, such as housing and health services were provided. Linked to the rise of the state and capitalism was an expansion of the franchise, firstly to the bourgeoisie but later to universal suffrage. In most 'western' states this was related to a system of representative democracy. In this way, elected politicians were seen to make decisions based on their role as representing a particular constituency. Such a system was related to a bureaucracy which was seen to implement the decisions of politicians. Questions of participation necessarily arise from this political system. Criticisms have been made

from a number of ideological standpoints of the efficacy and reality of a completely representative democracy. Pluralists, such as Dahl (1961) have contended that decisions are made by numerous interest groups, and that action of these groups leads to well-informed decision making. Such an approach has been criticised as naïve in its conception of power and the ways in which certain issues are not raised by politicians/decision-makers (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962). From a different ideological tradition, criticisms have been made of representative democracy for the ways in which élites control decisions and decision-making arenas. Arising from both these viewpoints might be seen a need to involve wider sections of the population in decision-making. The pluralist viewpoint proposes that a wide section of interest groups should become influential, or at least have a voice in decision-making. Alternatively, theories of participative democracy propose “an ideal of democracy as involving active discussion and decision-making by citizens” (Young, 1996 p.484). Such criticisms of representative democracy were pertinent in the field of planning, and moves towards public participation in decisions on such things as development plans arose in the 1960s.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Whilst public participation is a key concept in this research, it is felt that a comprehensive review of all literature on this topic would fail to enlighten or advance the understanding of this research. In particular, activities defined as ‘public participation’ are seen as a focus from which wider social relations surrounding planning and what constitutes planning activity might be understood. As will be shown below, there is very little literature which unravels the particular social relations which surround ‘public participation strategies’ and in particular trace how such a term and associated practices are actively constituted in these social relations. In addition, the implications of various planning theories (especially communicative planning) for an understanding of ‘public participation’ will be addressed within their particular sections. This approach is drawn from a need in this research to problematise taken-for-granted concepts, which include ‘public participation’ and ‘the public’. It may not, therefore, be helpful to draw on a body of literature which does not explicitly question why ‘public participation’ may be different from, say, the participation of ‘elected members’ or

'council officers'. Instead, this research will aim to trace the wider circumstances in which groups or individuals might be constituted as actors within *specific* sets of social (and material) relations. This will involve work to identify the specific means by which actors are defined in particular relations which surround planning work, rather than analysing the contribution of 'the public' to the writing of a development plan.

Although the literature concerning 'public participation' generally does not uncover some of the taken-for-granted assumptions implicit within, this is not to say that the term 'public participation' is not contested. There are a variety of meanings of the term, however some have gained more widespread currency partly through being ingrained in documents such as legislature and government guidance. Public participation as a more mainstream concept in the British planning system can be traced back to the 1960s amid a backdrop of fairly rapid social and economic change and attempts by planners and politicians to respond to this. Problems with the 1947 planning system, and changing urban areas may be seen to have precipitated moves towards changing the role of the public in planning decisions. One element of this was a desire to introduce more social welfare provision into the planning system, along with more attention on the process of planning, rather than the product (plans, blueprints and so on). Changes such as these, and by the late 1960s disenchantment with the wholesale redevelopment of inner cities, have been seen to contribute to the introduction of 'public participation' as a concept within the planning system (see Damer and Hague, 1971 and Rydin, 1999 for a fuller explanation for the increasing interest in public participation). These were advanced through documents such as the Skeffington Report (1969) and articles such as 'A ladder of citizen participation' (Arnstein, 1969). Such responses might be viewed as a reaction against certain features of modernity embedded in, and reproduced by, planning practices. Various pieces of legislation have subsequently introduced 'public participation' as a stage in the plan-making process over the past 30 years. However, no legislation has delimited the scope or methods of involving the public with any degree of certainty.

Some planning theory literature has, however, used the term 'public participation' in an unproblematic way; for example Sillince (1986 p.40) has listed criticisms and

advantages of 'public participation' without recognising the multiplicity of concepts bound up in the phrase. Public participation may now be seen to be a concept with a broad set of meanings for those involved in the planning system. Use of the term is frequently related to conventional methods for allowing 'the public' some involvement within the planning process. There has been definition by central government of certain aspects of public participation, especially through those who should be statutorily consulted on development plans and planning applications. These are generally established groups, representing certain sectional interests in society, such as the housing industry and amenity protection groups (see Department of the Environment, 1992 Annex E). These methods of public involvement are often categorised in the literature according to the amount of power devolved to 'the public' (see Department of the Environment, 1994 for such a categorisation). Consequently, there may be some consensus as to what public participation may conventionally mean, as the many different techniques are often compared on a similar scale (such as Arnstein's ladder). Public participation thus becomes a spectrum of different approaches all reflecting a uniform view of power and empowerment in society. Within the planning literature there is little which explores the notions of empowerment implicit in Arnstein's ladder and reformulated in such things as guides to participation (Wilcox, 1994; but see Thomas, 1996).

Public participation thus tends towards some stability among conventional uses of the term, because it often brackets off the various social, economic and political reasons for involving the public in planning decisions. To view strategies of public involvement in a wider sense must be to recognise the importance of more long-running social changes and the relationship of local political practices, such as public participation, to these. Decentralisation of local government service provision and new forms of democratic structure may be seen to be related to changing wider economic, political and social processes. New strategies of public participation are part of this process. For example, the concept of sustainability has become more widely accepted and used; and through more concrete sets of ideas such as Local Agenda 21, new practices have arisen which might be seen to be changing the conceptualisation of 'public participation' as used in local authorities. The many different social relations which influence 'public

participation strategies' contribute to the contested nature of the concept. One aspect of this contested concept is its relation to established ways of working within planning. For example, the notion of involving 'the public' in planning decisions may conflict with notions of representative democracy also circulating within the planning system. The interrelation of the many contradictions and ambiguities within the planning system means that public participation is a contested term in what it means for those involved. However, some meanings are more dominant and these are rarely questioned within the planning literature. For example, there is little writing on the role of 'public participation' in legitimating processes of development or established systems of land-use control (see Thornley, 1977, however for a Marxist approach to public participation).

CRITICISING MODERNISM AND REFORMING MODERNITY

THE 'POST-MODERN CRISIS' FOR PLANNING

Institutionalising practices such as 'public participation' might be seen as a response to certain political and economic features of modernity embedded in planning systems. Such responses draw attention to the wider set of social relations which planning practices inhabit, and within planning theory literature there has, more recently, been some recognition of a shifting social relations and the complexity of contemporary society. This new body of work has been based around ideas of a shift from a modern to a post-modern society which recognises the ambiguous position of planning as a 'modernist enterprise' within the complexity of contemporary social forms. Writings on this 'crisis' for planning have tended to see post-war planning as the epitome of modernist rationality, and therefore that its position within a new form of post-modernism is essentially problematic. However, as expressed above, it is debatable as to the extent to which planning followed scientific, rational methods and so the clear contrasts made by some writers (such as Beauregard, 1991) may be over-simplistic in their analysis (see Campbell and Marshall, 1998). It is perhaps more helpful to see planning, not as a modernist totality, but as a set of changing responses and relations to wider social and economic changes. Some of these relations, for example in the 1950s, were more durable so that the making of 'panoptic' plans was more firmly entrenched

within a modernist rationality. The idea of a shift in rationality in society is, however, widely expressed and underlies many of the philosophical premises made in planning theory. 'Scientific planning' has been seen to have failed by a number of authors. Peter Marris and John Friedmann have both commented on the failure of modernism to dominate the third world, and have linked this to a rise in an oppositional culture linked to post-modern ideas (Beauregard, 1991).

However, attempts to understand this 'cultural transformation' have not been uniform or consistent, and post-modernism can only be understood through its diversity. Beth Moore Milroy (1991) has identified three main positions within post-modern thought. Firstly, there are those who see the problem with modernism, not as a failure of the basis of modern rationality, but as the excesses of the totalisation of modern ideas. For example, David Harvey and Jürgen Habermas both seek new ways of revitalising the incomplete project of modernity (Healey, 1993b). Secondly, there are those who view post-modernity as a new stage in capitalism, based on a different relation between capital and culture (Moore Milroy, 1991). Thirdly, there are a number of writers who see post-modernism as a complete shift in rationality, knowledge and understanding (ibid.). There are a number of common strands of thought, however, within these approaches. One of these is the criticism of scientific rationality. Enlightenment reasoning, seen as "logic coupled with scientifically constructed empirical knowledge" (Healey, 1993b p.235) has been criticised for its socially constructed biases, the way it creates facts (see Potter, 1996) and for its dominating and repressive power. Related to this, post-modern thought can be seen to be nondualistic in rejecting the separation between objectivity and subjectivity and antifoundationalist for turning away from universal theories, for example in the work of Lyotard (Potter, 1996). Post-modern ideas may also be recognised by their distancing from conventional beliefs and through their encouragement of plurality and difference (Moore Milroy, 1991 p.183).

The rise of 'post-modernity' has focused attention on language and communication within human culture and this has been reflected in planning theory. This can be seen for two major reasons. Firstly, through the work of philosophers such as Foucault and Derrida, conventional conceptions of language as a "smooth conduit, conveying readers

and hearers precisely the messages that writers and speakers intend” (Moore Milroy, 1991 p.186) have been uncovered as false. Instead, language is considered as a way in which truth and meaning is constructed and which supports or even creates hegemonic power structures. Attention to the language that we use can therefore show the power structures at use within a society and the ways in which ‘truths’ are constructed. Secondly, post-modernism has rejected universal theories, and has instead focused on the ways in which humans have created a sense of community through language. As Friedmann (1989 p.128) states: “The essence of communication is to begin with difference, with non-concordance searching for concordance or agreement”, and this idea fits in with post-modern concepts such as alterity as well as the theories of Habermas.

HABERMAS AND HIS INFLUENCE IN PLANNING THEORY

The work of Habermas might be positioned within debates on transformation from modern to post-modern society. Within this conception of change, the position of planning as a modernist enterprise has been questioned with relation to complex contemporary social forms. Habermas has written much on modernism and has especially criticised the scientific rationality dominant within modern societies. However, he has not embraced ideas of post-modernism and multiple rationalities. Instead, he has written of the need to reconstitute modernity on a more moral and ethical basis. Habermas’ critique of modernity centres on the dominance of instrumental rationality (of which post-war planning might be seen to be imbued) at the expense of the ‘lifeworld’ or the world of consciousness and communicative action (Lechte, 1994). However, Habermas does not believe that instrumental rationality is necessarily dominant; instead through resistance based on intersubjective forms of communication, the lifeworld can be protected and the “social pathology of an untamed instrumentalism” be rejected (Hoch, 1996 p.39). Within the lifeworld communication is seen as the most important activity, because it is through changes in communication that the structures of the lifeworld can be changed, and therefore the structures of society. Thus his other forms of reasoning (moral and emotive-aesthetic) can be reintegrated into public life.

Habermas points to communication as a key aspect of changing democratic practice, and this is portrayed as a central aspect of changing modern power relations. Therefore, his work would seem to point to a methodology based on the study of communication in accordance with his theory of communicative action. Intersubjective communication has been a central plank of 'collaborative planning' and has been the focus of much work in this field (Healey, 1992, 1993b; Forester, 1989, 1993). Habermas' ideas of communicative action are related to means by which instrumental rationality can be diminished. This conception of rationality is based on action, so that "rationality has less to do with the possession of knowledge than with how speaking and acting subjects *acquire and use knowledge*" (Habermas, 1984b p.8 emphasis in original). This focus on rationality as practically based, means that rationality can be assessed through a study of whether statements are valid through being True, Comprehensible, Right and Sincere. When statements contain all these four elements, then the Ideal Speech Situation is reached which means that there is "an unconstrained dialogue to which all speakers have equal access and in which only 'the force of better argument prevails'" (Outhwaite, 1994 p.40). The Ideal Speech Situation seems unlikely to be reached, however its possibility has to be assumed in order to test actual communication rather than being seen solely as a hypothetical situation. The Ideal Speech Situation can be contrasted with 'systematic distortion' of communication (see Habermas, 1984a) where strategic action by one or more of the participants means that only indirect understanding is possible. John Forester has applied this concept to the field of planning, to study the ways in which planners may 'shape attention' and use questions to move towards or away from the Ideal Speech Situation (1993). Linked to the concept of communication working towards intersubjective understanding is the idea that certain forms of rationality and knowledge need to be reinstated into public discourse. The way in which this may be carried out is through the validation of knowledge claims on a discursive basis. In this way the knowledge forms and their means of validation may be assessed within a practical study of planning (see Healey, 1992).

The work of Habermas has informed work in the field of planning at a number of levels. His ideas on communicative rationality and intersubjective discourse have been integrated into normative statements of how planning should operate and been used as a

basis for collaborative planning (see Healey, 1997 and Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger, 1998). Large claims have been made for this approach to planning, especially in its role of providing an integrating and coherent paradigm for planning theory (Innes, 1995). Habermas' writings have also informed more generic theories of planning as a communicative process which may be distorted through the play of political power (see Forester, 1989 and 1993). However, I want to concentrate on the detailed micro-level studies of planning practice and especially of plan-making which have drawn on ideas of communicative action. This will raise questions of drawing together micro and macro concepts within research and has a bearing on how we might conceive structure, agency and power in local settings.

HABERMASIAN ANALYSES OF PLANS AND PLAN-MAKING

A small number of studies have drawn on the work of Habermas to inform analyses of plans and plan-making processes. These have generally concentrated on communicative or argumentative characteristics of plans, and how they might be seen to embody different voices or interests. In this way, a plan might be analysed as imposing a dominant viewpoint or discourse on a group or it might be analysed as a means by which different interests can set out their goals and values and work to seek agreement upon these. Healey (1993a) draws on this conception to analyse three English plans. In particular, she sets out to identify the systems of meaning and those implicated in these, and then to analyse how far the plan accords with a notion of Habermasian open communication in which statements are comprehensible, legitimate, sincere and true. In all three plans there are found to be a number of 'discourses' operating, some of which are dominant, such as a 'strategic economic debate' (ibid. p.100), an administrative discourse and a 'social needs' approach (ibid. p.101). None of the plans are seen to reflect a diversity of discourses, or the voices of different communities. However, analysis is based upon the analyst's interpretation of whether the plans are 'comprehensible', 'true' and so on, and there is no exploration of how different interests responded to the plan in practice. Furthermore, the decisions and debates over *how* the plans were written were not analysed, leading to a simple analysis of the *product*, rather than the process of *plan-making*. Other studies have also analysed plans from a

Habermasian perspective, including a recent study by Kumar and Paddison (2000). This analyses the Scottish Joint Structure Plan-making process and in particular the Joint Committee which was formed to enable local authorities to work together on this plan. They contend that in addition to Habermasian notions of comprehensibility, sincerity and so on, trust between participants should also be analysed. In such a way, the Joint Committee was seen to be a means by which open debate could occur and more importantly a way of building up trust. However, the study did not focus on how power relations were enacted through such structures as 'Joint Committees', and how trust might be seen as a product of a stabilised system of relations which may propagate certain forms of power. Furthermore, trust might be seen as a product of the Ideal Speech Situation, rather than separate; something which arises out of knowledge that the arena of debate is open. The literature which applies Habermasian analysis to plans and plan-making processes is not very large and is to some extent diverse in its focus on notions such as power and discourse. There seem to be a number of more generic problems associated with such analyses, and these will be explored below.

HABERMASIAN ANALYSES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Due to the stress paid to communication and the attainment of consensus through specific forms of language use, the work of Habermas has been used both to study 'public participation' and to propose that it provides a blueprint for the work of planners in this field. Healey and Hillier (1996) have focused on the dynamics of a public meeting in Western Australia. The public meeting concerned development in an area of Perth and brought together a number of groups, including residents and planners who had been involved in the project for a number of years. Healey and Hillier viewed the meeting as a "*collection of statements*" (1996 p.173 italics in original) each carrying out different kinds of communicative work. The paper identifies statements which for example 'give information', 'make proposals' or 'make threats'. However, the means by which, or why the categories were chosen are not given. The statements did show different forms of knowledge being used and the ways in which their communicative work was being carried out within discourses. The article does also indicate that intersubjective understanding may be gained between various groups and explains how

consensus may be built through the sharing of information, increasing social awareness and understanding power relations. The paper attempted to explain how a public meeting “builds and mobilizes shared intellectual, social and political capital” (ibid. p.167); however the processes by which meanings were constituted socially within and without the meeting were not explicitly tackled. Rather the focus of attention was on how pre-existing values were brought together in a consensual way.

Innes (1996) has looked at the public involvement in growth management schemes in the USA from a communicative viewpoint. This study follows a number of schemes in various states and assesses their ability to reach consensus between the various interests. The format of public involvement in these schemes was compared to its ability to mitigate conflict within growth management projects. The study showed that group working led to more sustainable, long-term solutions to urban and industrial growth conflicts. However, the study tended towards a procedural approach to solving problems in the planning system. For example, although the article claims that “no set of experts can design a successful program” (ibid. pp.164-165), it then states that “[g]roups typically require training and professional help in facilitating discussion and bridging the gap between technical and everyday knowledge” (ibid. p.167). This procedural approach backed up by professional knowledge implies that consensus can be reached in any location or with any problem through the correct implementation of group management processes. This approach values information as a key means by which power relations can be mediated. However this seems to ignore the construction of ‘information’ in group processes and the inherent social bias both in its formulation and its use as a term. Finally, the article gives no detailed account of group processes and the micro-level language use in which the work of Healey and Hillier (1996) engaged. Some of the characteristics of employing a Habermasian approach have been outlined above. This is not to say that all applications of Habermas’ ideas to the planning process are the same in their outlook, scope and detailed use, however there are some more generic problems associated with this approach and these will be outlined below.

CRITICISMS OF HABERMASIAN APPROACHES

Although different elements of Habermas' work have been drawn upon for different purposes in planning theory, there are some problems which arise out of his work, and especially difficulties of applying his philosophical injunctions to micro-level studies of planning practice. Some of these problems are related to the process of analysing statements for their conformity to an idealised notion of discourse. Analysis of statements, as to whether they were sincere or true requires further evidence or subjective interpretation. For example, a statement can be made which may be insincere, however the sincerity of the speaker is not easily ascertained. As Clegg notes: "the notion of an 'ideal speech situation', although it would have been helpful in showing under what circumstances people might know their 'real interests' would be of little value in analyzing how their apparent interests are formed under non-ideal circumstances. It would also remain an observer's privilege to formulate whether or not the circumstances which prevail are ideal" (1989 p.94). This problem may be related to the more generic problem of analytical frameworks in their imposition of a classificatory system which may not be able to deal with events outside, or different to their own classification (see Silverman, 1985). Another related methodological problem is the level of analysis. The difficulty of describing general patterns and the process of interaction in everyday life has been the subject of much debate surrounding qualitative research. The use of the broad theoretical statements of Habermas concerning processes of societal change and idealistic forms of communication does not easily relate to the situations observed in the planning department. This might be seen to relate to tensions in Habermas' theories on how structure and agency are conceived. Agency and structure are related to his concepts of the 'lifeworld' and of 'system integration' (Swingewood, 2000 p.204) which are articulated through 'communicative' reason and 'instrumental reason' respectively. The problem arises from his unilinear conception of the relationship between the system and the lifeworld. As Dodd notes: "it is invariably the system which shapes the lifeworld. The lifeworld does not appear to shape the system." (1999 p.121) In particular this problem arises when Habermas ties certain institutions and practices, such as money, to the system. For example, social use of money is seen as entirely consisting of instrumental rationality, thus foreclosing any possibility that money might have cultural or symbolic meaning (ibid.) Habermas'

theory thus conceives of a system functioning externally to agents and collective action, and a lifeworld being colonised by an external instrumental rationality. This tends to ignore complex relationships between individual action and replicated structures, and so his writing tends towards a “contradiction between a deterministic systems theory and a voluntaristic action theory.” (Swingewood, 2000 p.207).

A further problem which may also be associated with theories of communicative action is their lack of connection with issues of power and how it operates. At this level of analysis a statement may be identified which seems to conform to Habermas’ idealised discourse, but which cannot be measured in terms of the wider context of power relations within which it exists. Habermas provides no tools with which to understand why and how power relations are formed (Hillier, 1993). As Foucault has written: “The problem is not of trying to dissolve [relations of power] in the utopia of a perfectly transparent communication, but to give...the rules of law, the techniques of management, and also the ethics...which would allow these games of power to be played with a minimum of domination” (Foucault quoted in Flyvbjerg, 1996a p.14, parentheses and omissions in original). The model provided by Habermas does not explicitly address the practicalities of institutionalising discourse, so that questions are raised about who should set the terms of debate and who decides which arenas are appropriate for communicative action (Campbell and Marshall, 1998). The applicability of communicative action to the complexities of the British planning system is also debatable. Many processes can be seen to operate within the planning system which deals with many different policy areas and is influenced by complex processes of social and economic change. Attempts to set up practices of discursive argumentation within the field of planning are likely to be compromised by varied strategic interests with different objectives (ibid.). One example might be consensus and mutually agreed outcomes achieved through informal participatory methods being weakened or ignored by strategic imperatives to regenerate local economies.

Another criticism which has been made of Habermas’ work centres around its universal suppositions. The aim of much of Habermas’ work is to establish universal conditions in which consensus is achievable: “[t]he task of universal pragmatics is to identify and

reconstruct universal conditions of possible understanding” (Habermas, 1984a p.1). This task is central to Habermas’ ideas of reconstituting modernity and reinvigorating the lifeworld. For Habermas the reconstitution of discourse relations should be achieved through identifying the conditions of open communication (i.e. the Ideal Speech Situation). However, there also seems to be a tension within Habermas’ work between universal suppositions and attempting to accommodate contextualist criticisms - so that although these criteria are set up they are not seen to provide a blue print for communicative action (see White, 1988 p.23). Criticism of this can be made on two levels. Firstly, Habermas’ universal procedural criteria imply a teleological philosophy to which humans can strive. This suggests that communication can be measured against the ‘ideal’ and that therefore there are ‘better’ or ‘worse’ means of communication, thus setting up an implicit set of ‘good practices’. Secondly, if we are to accept that Habermas provides a set of universalistic criteria for communication, then this raises the question of its applicability in all situations. However, this approach seems to ignore the power relations which are set up through language, and the uneven patterns of language and power. Can the same criteria be applied in a situation of high political stakes as a situation of consensus? Some literature within the field of planning theory does see that discursive argumentation is possible and desirable for all interaction within the practice of planning. For example, Innes (1996) claims that consensual group processes are applicable to growth management strategies and that those which use this technique are more likely to succeed. The sharing of information is seen as a central means by which all voices can be made equal; however, the enactment of this in practice might be problematic.

A further problem which can be raised with respect to Habermas’ work is its lack of analysis of meaning creation and the social construction of categories. Work on communicative action concentrates on the expression of pre-existing meaning, rather than analysis of how meaning is created within different contexts. Thus the social construction of meaning is not seen to be influential in changing discourse relations; the power constructed and mediated through language and meaning systems is therefore ignored. Following from this, Habermas concentrates almost exclusively on linguistic

relations, thus setting aside questions of materiality and the ability of humans (or others) to transform the physical world (see Harvey, 1996).

FOUCAULT AND HIS INFLUENCE IN PLANNING THEORY

The work of Michel Foucault provides an alternative focus on the politics of language use to that of Habermas. Both Foucault and Habermas were concerned in their writings to provide a critique of modernity, and both agree that rationality and misuse of power are important problems in modern society. However, they approach these topics from different angles; Habermas searches for a universal foundation to rationality, while Foucault concentrates on the context within which power and knowledge operate and are reproduced. Foucault's work has increasingly been cited within the field of planning theory, partly as a response to problems raised by Habermas' theories, and due to his radical interpretation of how power and knowledge are created at different times in history. This section will describe Foucault's approach, some uses of his work in planning theory and some applications of his style of work to planning practice and plan making.

Foucault's work is relevant to planning for a number of reasons. Firstly, he provides a way of understanding how power is influential in contemporary society. In particular, Foucault concentrates on the subtle ways in which power influences the individual and his/her actions, and becomes normalised within a society. The powers which planners exert cannot be seen solely as overt, but must also be understood as subtle ways of controlling people's actions. The role of discourse and construction of subject positions is crucial within this conception of power, and an analysis of language is a relevant method of uncovering power relations. Secondly, Foucault writes about the influence of institutions in contemporary society, and their role in the dissemination of power, crucially through discursive practice and the identification of humans as subjects of a discourse. Planning may be seen as an institution which seeks to exert disciplinary power, through regulating what is seen to be 'normal' and 'true'. Practices such as distinguishing individuals, categorising them and intervening in their lives are seen in a Foucauldian analysis to be an important means of exerting administrative power (Allen,

1996). The state is seen as a key aspect of power relations in contemporary society, and carries this out through administrative means, such as planning. Thirdly, Foucault makes no epistemological judgements on the correctness or adequacy of knowledge, but instead concentrates on the production of knowledge through institutions and what the knowledge is used to legitimate. This allows a study of how truths, for example about the accuracy of technocratic forms of planning, are related to a specific social organisation, which is likely to be hierarchical and potentially oppressive (Potter, 1996). Finally, Foucault is concerned with oppositional struggle against power. Although power relations are seen to be normalised in the state and institutions, there is still room for opposition to dominating power. The relationship between power and knowledge is open to question, and through the realisation that people's normalised subject positions can be challenged, an oppositional politics may develop (Allen, 1996).

Central to Foucault's understanding of how power operates in society is the discourse. Discourse might be seen as a set of meanings which are relevant to their context, so that the meaning of a statement is derived from who is saying it and how it fits into wider patterns of statements. This conception provides a crucial link between social structure and social interaction and subjectivity. Discourses as a structuring concept are seen as made up of statements grouped together in specific, regular relations (Foucault, 1972, Lemke, 1995). Discourses are seen as central means of both ordering relations of power and knowledge. This occurs through discourses creating knowledge which entails the power to define subjects, objects and relationships, while discourses also create power by forming a set of relations (between statements) which are seen as true and therefore as knowledge. Therefore, power is not concentrated in the hands of the few, but is "exercised from innumerable points" (Foucault quoted in Richardson, 1996 p.281). Power might therefore be seen as an *effect* produced in discursive relations, an effect which operates everywhere dynamically. Central to the exercise of power through discourse is the constitution of objects and subjects. Discourses both create (through their regularised systems of meanings) various objects which are counted and classified (the discourse of planning might have been seen to create the object 'green belt') as well as creating subjects of discourses who are constrained within norms of behaviour constructed by the discourse.

Foucault's theoretical approach to the study of power attempts to link broad structures of discourse with local practices of speaking and acting. In particular there is a focus on language as a means of constituting subjects and objects within a discursive structure. The methodology which Foucault advocated was based on the study of power relations at the most local level which could then be related to broader structures. Foucault leaves the methodological detail to be worked out by the analyst/researcher, as he indicated by stating "All my books...are little tool boxes. If people want to open them, to use a particular sentence, a particular idea, a particular analysis like a screwdriver or a spanner...so much the better!" (quoted in Prior, 1997 p.77 omissions in original). However, this is not necessarily a straightforward process, as will be explained below, and a number of different methodological approaches might be taken.

FOUCAULDIAN ANALYSES OF PLANNING AND PLANS

Foucauldian approaches within the planning theory literature are less numerous than work drawing on Habermas' ideas. These take a variety of approaches to planning, and use Foucault's work in different ways. One of the earliest studies uses a genealogical technique to understand the history of North American city planning (Boyer, 1983). In this she identifies the discourses arising throughout the history of planning, for example utopian garden cities and comprehensive physical planning. This is an overtly historical study, and as such uses an archive of texts in a similar manner to the work of Foucault (see for example, 'Madness and Civilization' (1965)). Most other work within the field of planning concentrates on an analysis of power relations and discourses in the micro-politics of planning practice. Judith Allen has analysed the actions of the Paddington Federation of Tenants within a Foucauldian framework (1996). This study identified different discourses arising in a long-running conflict between the Federation and Westminster City Council. Allen identified the operation of technical discourse which "mirrored professional control over technical information that characterises political decision-making processes within British local government" (p.335). This study identifies a number of discourses operating over a number of years and highlights the ability of marginalised groups to construct counter-discourses. Plans are seen in this

analysis as an articulation of power relations which constrain and enable certain groups to carry out certain activities. However, the study never fully engages with the detailed work which serves to construct discourses or shows how these became effective (Flyvbjerg, 1996b). Similar work has been carried out by Flyvbjerg and reported in Flyvbjerg and Richardson (1998) analysed the power relations and rationalities used within Aalborg, Denmark. This has shown that much of the work of planners draws on notions of technical rationality to mask the complex political machinations in the planning process. Work such as this draws attention to the constitutive processes which serve to create realities for actors involved in the planning process, however it does not always follow the linguistic processes by which meaning is created and concrete processes are subsequently shaped.

CRITICISMS OF FOUCAULDIAN APPROACHES

The variety of approaches to studying the politics of power in planning has led to the use of Foucault's work in different and often contradictory ways. For example, work within the field of planning theory draws alternatively on Foucault's 'archaeology' and 'genealogy' without always highlighting the differences between the two approaches. There is also a tension between identifying the discourses operating within the micro-context of planning practice and the more historical work of Foucault which traces changing forms of rationality and power over long periods.

A different set of problems are raised by the nature of Foucault's work (rather than their interpretation). Firstly, his work has been criticised for being relativist. Habermas has attacked Foucault's theory for not expressing normative foundations. The work of Foucault does imply that there is nothing outside language, that 'things' are only 'real' to the extent that discourses describe them. As there are numerous discourses surrounding any one 'thing', then there can be no true definition of the 'thing', and thus conceptions of what is true or false are relative to discourse (Burr, 1995 p.61). This raises two problems; firstly that outlined by Habermas (1987), that this conception of truth means that no positive foundations for future action can be given, and that we cannot distinguish between the validity of discourses 'in power' and other counter-

discourses. This brings in the criticism made by Poulantzas, that if power is everywhere, then where is the space to resist it? (see Jessop, 1990b Chapter 8). This is partly answered by Foucault, who proposes 'counter discourses' as part of the systems of power, and which allow the expression of individual subjectivity to resist dominating power. Some authors have also claimed that Foucault is not a relativist, but a contextualist who seeks to analyse the relations of power within its context (Flyvbjerg, 1996a). Foucault aimed in his own work (e.g. with prisoners) to uncover the dominating forces implicit in government action, and so criticisms of him being 'normless' cannot be wholly substantiated.

A second problem with Foucault's work is its attention to studying broad processes without a firm connection to the micro-processes which constitute them. Potter has outlined the problem of this approach: "By treating discourses themselves as objects he [Foucault] draws attention away from the practices and contexts in which they are embedded" (1996 p.87) or as Habermas puts it he "tends toward the superordination of discourses over the practices on which they are based" (1987 p.267). While the description of these discourses provides a useful picture of power relations within modern society, it does not fully analyse the ways in which discourses work or are made to work. Thus constitutive questions are not asked, for example which processes are involved in the creation of 'power relations'? Within the planning theory literature there is much written on the need to understand 'power' and 'power relations'. However, there is an assumption that power is reified as something that is 'there', rather than a name for various constitutive processes which have more or less real consequences. There is a need to understand how 'power' might be identified from the micro-processes of speech, action and the constitution of meaning systems. This problem leads onto methodological issues, mainly concerning the tools used by Foucault to analyse power relations. While discourses at a wide scale may be identified (to some degree of certainty), the lack of connection of these to the practices of everyday life is not well defined. This might lead to difficulties focusing on the 'inconsistencies and contradictions' (Dodd, 1999 p.101) which might allow resistance to discourses. Furthermore, Foucault has been shown to confuse the ways in which discourses are constituted by statements, and whether these derive from common

linguistic units such as the sentence, or whether statements refer to a more abstract concept (Brown and Cousins, 1980). The tension between description of discourse operation at a broad scale and the local practices which constitute these discourses can also lead to problems of knowing when discourses have been formed and when they overlap within specific contexts.

The work of Foucault seems to provide a more coherent view of how power might operate in society than the philosophy of Habermas. His conceptions of human agency as created through discourses also focus attention onto processes by which agency is created and by which power is exercised. His work is especially useful in considering how power is constructed in certain situations and tied to certain practices. Although he recognises the importance of discursive processes in creating power and human agency, he does not provide a detailed description of what these processes might be. This problem has significant implications for drawing up a methodology which is able to relate very local practices with wider structural concepts, such as discourses. As Prior comments "It is not, of course, always easy to translate Foucault's work into a set of methodological precepts that can be followed by the empirical researcher" (1997 p.77) and this was not perhaps Foucault's aim in his writing. However, in order to study how actual practices which we may observe happening in the field of planning and how they relate to wider concepts of social structure, we need to find a way of connecting the micro and macro, while maintaining some of Foucault's conceptions of power and agency.

CONCLUSION

This section has summarised some of the writings which have related the practice of planning to its social and political context. A dominant mode of conceiving the place of 'planning' has been to relate it to modernity. The instrumental, scientific and bureaucratic rationality of modernity was seen to suffuse the practice of planning. This was especially true of one of the key components of planning work, the plan. Plans have been viewed as ways of relating certain ends to certain means, whereby efficient and aesthetic cities and regions could be realised through following the injunctions of

these plans. In particular, the making of plans was seen in this modernist period as a scientific process which produced a document that could lead to the bureaucratic exercise of control over development. This conception of planning also drew upon ideas of politicians charged with the task of setting the goals of planning in the public interest, whilst planners were the expert scientists and bureaucrats who could identify the means of achieving these goals. Such a conception of planning is frequently articulated in writings on the history of planning and of planning theory, and may provide a way of typifying planning activity; however it is also debatable the extent to which these 'pure' forms of modernity were dominant in the practice of planning.

Changes identified in the planning system have subsequently been identified as a reaction to planning's modernist characteristics. For example, increasing unease with the results of planning work and wider changes in political thinking have been seen as reasons for 'public participation' to become part of planning practice. A literature has developed on 'public participation' as a technique by which planners and politicians can elicit the views and involvement of the public in decision-making, especially on plan policies. However, much of this literature does little to theorise or critically evaluate the wider contexts in which 'public participation' is carried out, or to examine what might be meant by 'participation' and how 'the public' might be defined. A central task of this research is to move away from using established terms surrounding 'public participation' and plan-making, and instead uncover what might be meant by these terms and what might be done in their name.

Critical evaluations of planning as a modernist activity and its tensions with 'post-modern' social forms have increased over the last 15 to 20 years. Within the field of planning theory, two writers/theorists have been drawn upon extensively, Habermas and Foucault. Habermas' ideas have entered into planning theory mainly through his work on re-formulating modernism through reinvigorating public debate through open and transparent language use. Planning theorists have picked up on the normative implications of this work, especially the ways in which disadvantaged groups might be given a voice in the planning process. As part of this process, plans have been conceived as tools which can potentially embody and reflect many different voices.

Partly in reaction to this, some planning theorists have drawn upon the work of Foucault to more explicitly uncover the relations of power which are seen to suffuse planning practice. This work concentrates on showing how certain systems of meaning or discourses arise and replicate complex relations of power. Within this view, plans are seen to propagate certain relations of power which delineate what different groups can do.

Theoretical writing on planning has tended to conceive planning practice in fairly broad-brush ways. Although there have been a number of detailed studies of the practice of planning, much of the writing on planning unproblematically ties the micro-practice of planning to macro-concepts such as 'modernity' and 'political system'. This raises the question of resolving (or eliding) the split between the micro and the macro or between human agency and societal structure. Writing on planning theory has also tended to position different theoretical approaches, such as those of Habermas and Foucault, as necessarily polarised, and therefore have not sufficiently analysed commonalities between approaches. The dominance of the work of Habermas and Foucault in recent writings on planning theory has also tended to marginalise other approaches, for example those based in the tradition of deconstruction (Moore Milroy, 1989) or discourse analysis (Macnaghten, 1993). There seems to be a need to use theorists' work in a wider project to understand the nature of planning and how the processes inherent within it affect people and places in different ways. One particular opportunity is to study the processes which make up 'planning work' and assess how certain practices, especially language use and text production, might constitute and reflect forms of organising social activity. This approach would require a particular focus on resolving tensions between micro-level and macro-level studies. The next chapter will deal with the theoretical approaches which will be drawn upon in this research.

CHAPTER 3

ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY

INTRODUCTION

The problem of identifying the importance of social structures and individual action have concerned many theorists. The difficulties associated with this problem have taken many forms, but all derive from a dualistic mode of thinking. Such a mode of thinking has been related to modernism and an Enlightenment rationality (Latour, 1993). Such dualist thinking concerns the separation of the subject and the object, the particular and the universal, the micro and the macro, agency and structure and contingency and abstraction (Murdoch, 1997a). From this we might be able to typify theories as structuralist or voluntarist, functionalist or agentive. The problem of reconciling these dualities lies not only in the philosophical realm but also has consequences for the way in which we might conduct our research and explain the world. Such problems have expressed themselves for example in the work of Habermas and Foucault (see Chapter 2) as well as studies of planning and its practice (see Adams, 1994). One of the aims of this research is to seek to recognise such problems and avoid some of the pitfalls either of adopting a voluntaristic/agentive perspective (as much ethnomethodology does) or of using a structuralist analysis which does little to explain the particularities of the micro. In other words, I need to adopt a perspective which explains not only the contingent and particular, but also the durable and stable features of social life. In this chapter I will initially outline Giddens' attempt to overcome the structure/agency dualism and then focus in more detail on actor-network theory. This theory will be used to derive a theoretical framework for this study. Some of the characteristics of this theory, its applicability to a study of planning and some of the implications of its use will be explored in this chapter.

STRUCTURATION THEORY

One attempt at overcoming the duality of structure and agency was made by Giddens through a theory of structuration (1984). In this he focuses on social practices which are conceived as ordered through space and time. These practices are both ordered by

social structure and constitutive of social structure itself. Agency is seen as intentional action and the capability to act; structure is seen as an underlying code consisting of rules and resources to be inferred from surface manifestations. Structuration theory proposes that structure and agency determine each other in a recursive process. “Although actors define and pursue their strategies, interests and actions in the context of a structural framework, structure itself is established, re-established or replaced as the resources, rules and ideas by which it is constituted are deployed, acknowledged, challenged and potentially transformed through agency behaviour” (Adams, 1994 p.67). In this way the order which we may see, for example in the planning system, is constituted by social practice but is also the medium in which we act. One of the ways in which structure is actively produced and re-produced is through the rules which guide how things are done and how resources are used. So, for example, the ways in which a planning application is decided upon are bound by explicit and implicit rules which are constantly re-produced through the work carried out using these rules. This is not to say that the rules are immutable, but open to transformation from one period to the next through social action and interaction. This constitutive approach to a study of societal structure is useful in challenging ideas of structural determinism and voluntary, individual action. To study the concept of structuration a methodology needs to be based on observation of how rules are commonly used and transformed within social interaction. This has resonance with ethnomethodological and micro-sociological techniques, whereby human action is seen as constituting social life through interaction.

There are, however, problems with the approach taken by structuration theory. Within the theory, structure is built through rules and resources. As some have noted, Giddens seems to prioritise the constitution and reproduction of rules over the material features of social life, or resources. This has led to a weak conceptualisation of the materiality of the world, including the resources at our disposal and the organisation of social life through institutions. As Murdoch puts it in his review of Craib’s criticisms, “this neglect of materiality is important because it contributes to a weak conceptualization of structure in structuration theory: by collapsing structure into action...nothing recognizably ‘structural’ remains” (1997a p.324 omission added). A related criticism views the role of the agent as capable of understanding rules as too voluntaristic and

ignoring the place of structures which operate as 'objective, independent institutions' (Swingewood, 2000 p.211). Therefore, a methodology based on the work of Giddens would provide an explanation of rules made through social interaction, but would have difficulty explaining human interaction with the physical world, including the durable institutions which are an important constituent of society. For example Giddens' conception of language as a set of rules (and therefore structure) does not deal with the relation of language to materiality. An alternative approach to a constitutive view of the world, which deals directly with the materiality of human life will be discussed next.

ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY

As outlined in the introduction, this research aims to uncover the ways in which plans are written and how the processes surrounding plan-making reflect, enact or challenge social norms. The research will focus on the processes involved in constituting the practice of plan writing, how meanings and assumptions are bound up in these and how material objects, such as texts, might be influential in re-producing or changing social norms. In order to understand these processes the research will draw on actor-network theory, which as a loose body of ideas aims to uncover the ways in which social and physical objects become defined and mobilised within sets of relationships. Actor-network theory aims to trace the ways in which certain objects and sets of relations become built up into 'networks' which allow actors to be defined and organised in particular ways. The radicalism of actor-network theory derives in part from its attempts to elide the distinction between structure and agency and between the human and non-human worlds. This has certain consequences for how we might conceive an ontology and how we might view the role of texts in social life, and these aspects will be discussed at the end of the chapter.

THE RELEVANCE OF ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY TO A STUDY OF PLANNING

Actor-network theory has a number of features which make it relevant to an explanation of planning practice. Firstly, the theory aims to elide the distinction between structure and agency, which has distinct consequences for the way in which we might shape our

research. Briefly, actor-network theory does not distinguish between the small scale and the large scale, the near and the far. Instead the theory aims to trace the connections between things however near or far. Structures become seen as accomplishments or 'black boxes' (Callon and Latour, 1981) which summarise the great deal of work which has gone into making them durable structures. Such an approach may allow this research to uncover the means by which 'things' such as 'the planning system' become built up into stable networks. Secondly, actor-network theory does not replicate the division between human and non-human, social and physical and so on. Instead any combination of things can be brought together in networks, and their heterogeneity may even aid their stability. This has particular consequences for a study of the planning system, which aims to regulate human action on the physical world. Thirdly, actor-network theory is process oriented; it aims to trace how things are constituted. This interest in process seems to lend itself to a study of planning practice as a set of practices which aim to deal with changing relationships and situations. Fourthly, the theory allows a view of the world as one in which practices and network relations might be solidified into unquestioned conceptions of the world. Such solidities may, however, be undermined and it is the task of an actor-network analysis to trace how networks might be made stable (through things like Government publications or local plans) or de-stabilised through the dissent of various actors. Lastly, actor-network theory views power as an effect rather than a resource, which allows the analyst to trace *how* actions become legitimated. This view of power therefore has similarities to Foucault's conception of power as an effect.

THEORETICAL PREMISES OF ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY

Actor-network theory set out as a body of ideas originating in the writings of Michel Callon, Bruno Latour and John Law, and which initially were largely concerned with explaining scientific and technological practice. Their writings draw on a number of metaphorical devices (such as the actor and the network) to conceptualise a radical departure from previous studies of science and technology. In particular, their work was a reaction to work on the sociology of science which tended to criticise technologically deterministic views of the world, only to replace these with a socially determined view

of the world, one where the sociologist was pre-eminent (see Michael, 1996). Actor-network theory aimed to cut the distinctions between science and society, nature and non-nature, human and non-human. The theory has two main propositions. Firstly, that the researcher should seek a 'generalised agnosticism' (Law, 1986a p.4) in which no distinctions should be made about what is 'natural' in the world. Instead explanation should identify *how* things come to be (through tracing relations and associations). Secondly, the researcher should aim for a 'generalised symmetry' (ibid.) in which explanation should not be changed according to whether we are studying a macro-actor or a micro-actor, the 'natural' or the 'non-natural'. In order to allow this level of explanation, actor-network theory needs to provide a means of tracing the associations and relations which it focuses on without adopting inherited social science categories (such as society, economy and so on). The concepts or metaphors drawn upon by actor-network theorists in their semiotic task of tracing connections include such terms as actors, networks, intermediaries and translation.

ACTORS, NETWORKS AND ACTOR-NETWORKS

Actor-network theory does not define actors or networks in a rigid way. Networks are not stable systems of links and nodes, such as telephone systems, instead they are metaphors for associations and connections between entities which may be heterogeneous in character. For Latour networks do not have a scale in a traditional sense (that is they are bigger or smaller than others); instead they may be "simply longer or more intensely connected" (1997 p.3). In this way they provide an understanding of social process that does not privilege micro-level or macro-level explanation. Related to the notion of networks are actors. These are not in a conventional sense individual, intentional human actors, rather they are entities which are defined in relation to networks, and in turn describe these networks. Actors in particular carry out work within networks to alter, define and circulate concepts, ideas, physical things and so on. In contrast to intermediaries (which will be described below), actors attempt to alter a set of relations or author a new set of relations (Callon, 1991). In this way an actor may be a piece of machinery or an animal, if it manages to change the series of relationships in a network. In such a way, actor-network theory does not favour individual action

over societal structure, or the human world over the physical world. The task of actor-network theory is to trace the associations between entities which are stabilised and seen as coherent structures in society. Although, actors and networks have been defined separately, they should be seen as intricately related concepts, for as Callon states “an actor is also a network” (ibid. p.142). This means that an actor can only act through the relationships or network which surrounds it. Action is thus a consequence of a series of relations, and to define an actor also means to define the network which makes it an actor. For example, we may say that ‘the Government’ is an actor; however we need to uncover how ‘the Government’ is defined as an actor through the relationships between things which constitute it, such as departments, legislature, civil servants and so on. This is a recursive process and we may trace the network which makes up an actor however ‘large’ or ‘small’ (see Deleuze, 1993 for a philosophic perspective on the recursive nature of relations).

Intermediaries

To define an actor also means to identify intermediaries, or as Callon puts it: “actors define one another in interaction - in the intermediaries that they put into circulation” (1991 p.135). As actors and networks are closely related concepts, so intermediaries also come to be closely related to networks as well as actors. Intermediaries serve to both describe the networks they inhabit and compose the network, they “both order and form the medium of the networks they describe” (ibid.) Callon identifies four main types of intermediaries. Firstly, the text is seen as crucial in being able to define and order network forms. Texts serve to define others and place them in particular sets of relations, they serve to define and associate other texts as well as a multiplicity of other entities, such as humans and material things. A particular text, for example a development plan, might be seen to describe a set of relations as well as ordering a multiplicity of things into a network. A text not only describes a network but also orders that network of different entities, so that the text might be seen to *do* things rather than reflect a state of affairs (the links to speech act theory will be discussed below). For the purposes of this research, texts are seen as key intermediaries in organising sets of relations. Secondly, technical objects are seen to describe certain sets of relations,

especially those between the 'social' and the 'technical'. For example, a turnstile describes a set of relations which not only encompasses the physical mechanisms of which it is composed, but also other sets of relations to do with controlling flows of people and of the economic necessity to take money for entry. The turnstile also serves to order a network which includes human beings who have to enter the turnstile one at a time. In this way technical objects describe a heterogeneous network of the material and non-material (see Latour, 1991). Thirdly, embodied skills are seen as intermediaries in the ways they are able to describe links between things and to pull together diverse entities. Planners might be seen as intermediaries in the way through their work of writing reports and convening meetings they describe a network of documents, pieces of land and developers which we might call 'the planning system'. Fourthly, money is defined as an intermediary which describes an 'economic system' and manages to order the actions of people, machines and texts. However, all these intermediaries are usually not separate. Intermediaries tend to organise a diversity of things whether they be humans or non-humans, texts or money. Texts are particularly important in organising other forms of intermediary through their ability to represent many different things whether physical or abstract (Callon, 1991). Finally, intermediaries are especially important for their ability to carry sets of relations from one place to another and from one time to another. This is a consequence of their durability and has led Latour to describe them as 'immutable mobiles' (1987, see also Law, 1986b). Texts as intermediaries therefore have some form of positivity, they are able to organise future actions and relations.

Translation

The intermediary does not serve to merely describe a set of relations, it also manages to order the actions of others. Such ordering comes about via an intermediary which is *authored* by an actor, and this (strategic) process of ordering, defining and associating is termed 'translation' in actor-network theory. Translation therefore must have a translator, something which is translated and a medium in which translation is carried out (Callon, 1991). Translation is the process by which the identity of actors is negotiated and through which interaction is managed. In order to make this clearer, it is

necessary to describe an empirical study - the research carried out by Michel Callon into the “domestication of the scallops and fishermen of St. Brieuc Bay” (1986). In this study, Callon looked at a programme which aimed to maximise the harvest of scallops through scientific research into their life cycle. There were four main sets of actors involved in this study; the fishermen, the researchers, the scientific colleagues of the researchers and the scallops. Callon defined four ‘moments’ of translation. Firstly, ‘becoming indispensable’, which involved the researchers determining a set of actors with which they were going to work and showing that the interests of the actors lay in allowing their proposed research programme. The researchers were seen to define an ‘Obligatory Passage Point’ through which the other actors should pass in order to meet their own goals. For example, the researchers aimed to show how in order that the fishermen maximised their harvest of scallops they should follow the directions of the researchers. Secondly, the stage of ‘interessement’ involved imposing and stabilising the identity of the other actors, partly through severing existing linkages between actors. Thirdly, the stage of ‘enrolment’ involved negotiation with the other actors, for example through the research into the scallops, the researchers were engaging with the scallops. Fourthly, the stage of ‘mobilisation’ involved the researchers speaking for the other actors and was based on notions that those engaged by the researchers were representative. Such a task involves the researchers attempting to speak on behalf of this complex network and so become ‘macro-actors’. This is similar to Latour’s notion of ‘centres of calculation’ which speak on behalf of many others (1987, also see Murdoch, 1997b). This is where the project failed because both the fishermen’s representatives and the scallops in the sample studied were not representative and other actors intervened. This study showed the instability of actor-networks and the strategies used to impose a set of power relations on other actors. Callon also showed how the identities of these entities arose from a set of relations rather than a pre-given ontology, so that the scallops played as important a role in this story as any other thing. Such a study could be carried out into many topics, not just those concerned with scientific practice (see, for example, Wood, 1997), and so a study of plan-making processes might draw on the notions of translation and enrolment to uncover the ways in which certain actors become bound up in networks.

Power

A final theoretical consequence of using actor-network theory is its view of power. Power is not seen as a thing which an actor possesses, but as an *effect* of network relations. As Latour puts it: “when an actor simply *has* power nothing happens and s/he is powerless; when, on the other hand, an actor *exerts* power it is others who perform the action” (1986 p.264 emphases in original). Thus power is an outcome of sets of relations; something that we might identify from the actions of various actors. This view of power is very close to that of Foucault as an omnipresent consequence of particular sets of relations. Whilst power for Foucault is a consequence of discursive formations, something which is found everywhere due to the omnipresence of discourses, for actor-network theory power is a consequence of networks which may extend and enrol others who/which do the work of exercising power. This view of power points to a methodology which does not make *a priori* assumptions about hierarchy and social position, but one which attempts to trace how actors are actively aligned behind the wishes of other actors (who might conventionally be termed ‘powerful’).

APPLICATIONS OF ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY IN PLANNING STUDIES

Whilst actor-network theory initially arose from a reaction to sociological studies of science, its utility beyond research into scientific and technological practice has led to its adoption in other fields of enquiry. For example, it has been drawn upon to study educational practices (Verran, 1999), organisations (Lee and Hassard, 1999, Munro, 1999) museums (Hetherington, 1999) and agriculture and food (Lockie and Kitto, 2000). A growing body of literature has also developed into the spatiality and geography of actor-network theory (Murdoch, 1998, Bingham, 1996, Bridge, 1997, Law, 2000 amongst others). The intensive relational focus of actor-network theory seems to have implications for the way in which relations through space are conceived. Furthermore, space must be conceived in a different way if the injunctions of actor-network theory are followed for “the network perspective cannot readily co-exist with a notion of space as fixed and absolute in its co-ordinates.” (Murdoch, 1998 p.357). A number of geographers and theorists have related this conception of a non-metric space

to Deleuze's notion of 'the Fold' (1993) where the far-away (in metric terms) may be brought together or compressed (Bingham, 1999). In such a way, notions of the global and the local have become problematised as, to draw on Latour (1993), such things as railways are at once 'global' in their connections of far-away places and at the same time 'local' in that it is always situated through rails, sleepers and stations in particular places. However, I do not want to explore in detail the ways in which notions of space-time are problematised in actor-network theory; instead I want to focus on some of the more applied studies of planning which have drawn upon the theory.

Within the field of planning studies there has been a very small, but growing amount of research which has developed actor-network accounts of planning practices. One of the few detailed case studies in planning which draws on actor-network theory is a study of environmental conflict surrounding minerals development in south-east England (Murdoch and Marsden, 1995). This work draws on actor-network theory as a way of by-passing problems of structure and agency and connecting local relations with relations in other places. They use the term 'actor-space' to describe the "indissoluble linkages between the material, phenomenological and social components of situations that are mobilized during the building of associations" (ibid. p.372). Murdoch and Marsden use their case study to describe how actors are tied together by various linkages, such as the links between national and local actors through the planning hierarchy. In this case, the tensions between policy imperatives to allow mineral development and the 'anti-development network of actor-spaces which extended from the local to the national and back again' (ibid. p.375) are described. One of the critical elements of the study are the attempts by the anti-development actors to break the established network constructed by policy makers, especially through criticising the basis of minerals planning forecasts. In this way the work of actors in mobilising resources, whether they be human, physical or representational is described and something of the plays of power in the case study articulated. However, studies such as this have rarely been repeated using other, perhaps more mundane, case studies within the field of planning where actions are taken-for-granted. There seems to be a need to extend this line of work, in order to further test the explanatory potential of actor-

network theory for an understanding of the exercise of power within the planning system.

More recently, Woods researched the politics involved in making policies on hunting policy in south-west England. This traced the attempts to form a pro-hunting and an anti-hunting network which included not only such things as 'councils' and 'politicians' but also the deer which were being hunted. Woods shows that only representatives of defined groups, such as scientists representing the deer, were enrolled in these particular networks and that this meant that representation could break down and dissent occur. This research develops an interesting account of the work to align groups in particular relations to each other, and highlights some of the problems of explaining complex political machinations through actor-network theory. However, the research does not fully uncover the detailed ways in which resources (intermediaries) are used by actors to order and organise networks. Selman and Wragg (1999) also trace the processes of translation, but in a study of biodiversity action plans and Local Agenda 21 strategies. In this study they trace how groups were formed in response to a defined need to produce biodiversity action plans. They also trace how obligatory passage points are accepted by different groups and identify low-key 'interest-driven' networks (p.334) and 'vision-driven super networks' (p.336) to explain how the expansion of networks might occur. However, such conceptions of 'interest-driven' networks highlights a problematic aspect of actor-network theory; that 'interest' should not be seen as a pre-given motivator for action, but an *effect* of network relations (see Pickering, 1993 and Murdoch, 1998). Instead of identifying the networks as 'interest-driven', the research may have more fruitfully explored the way in which interests were constructed as an explanation for the activities of actors. Secondly, the study highlights a problem of writing actor-network descriptions; that certain things (especially networks) may become reified rather than seen as a metaphorical tool for describing sets of relations between actors and intermediaries.

A more explicit focus on power and policy making is afforded by McGuirk's study of regeneration in Dublin (2000). This sets out to uncover the relations of power in various networks of governance, and concentrates on how the roles of planners, developers and

local government is constructed in networks of policy making in Dublin and “how this enrolment situates planners within...governing policy networks and associations” (ibid. p.654 omission inserted). In particular, the study traces how bureaucratic modes of ordering constituted planners’ roles and contrasts this with other modes of ordering associated with speculative development. The study has similarities to Foucauldian analysis (although his work is not cited) through the study of how subject positions are formed by particular ‘modes of ordering’ and how power is exercised through the actions of these subjects. This study unlike most of the other actor-network descriptions in planning, deals directly with power relations and the constitution of power through the action of actors. However, as McGuirk notes: “this paper has not explored the question of resources in depth” (ibid. p.668). It is hoped in this research that the resources which construct and describe network relations surrounding plan-making will be uncovered, and that an understanding of the use of resources can be furthered. Very little research has drawn on actor-network theory to provide a description of the development plan-making process, and Murdoch et al (1999) is probably the first published work to deal explicitly with plans and actor-networks. In this study, the review of Buckinghamshire Structure Plan is analysed through a framework based on Latour’s conceptions of positive and negative modalities. A positive modality is seen to ‘black box’ the ‘conditions of production’ of a statement, making it ‘fact’, whilst a negative modality is a sentence which draws attention to the ‘conditions of production’ of a statement (Latour, 1987 p.23 and Murdoch et al, 1999 p.195). The research presents a story of the plan-making process which highlights the dual technical and political nature of the plan and the arguments surrounding its writing. In particular, strategies of forcing the positive modality of statements by planners were uncovered, and only at certain times did these ‘black boxes’ get opened (for example through the work of the House Builders’ Federation at the Examination in Public). Although not drawing on all the resources of actor-network theory, this study does highlight the multiplicity of relationships which are constructed through the writing of plans and how certain assumptions and decisions are hidden in certain forms of language and how these might be highlighted. An aim of this research is to focus in more detail on some of these topics, especially those concerning the use of texts as a means of organising, ordering and defining objects and relations which may be normalised and unquestioned

or which may be uncovered. The links between actor-network theory and language will be outlined below.

ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY AND ONTOLOGY

A philosophical consequence of actor-network theory is a concern for ontology, or the nature of things. In particular, the nature of things arises from their formation in a set of relations, or as Law puts it: “entities achieve their form as a consequence of the relations in which they are located” (1997b pp.2-3). Actor-network theory therefore starts from a view that the analyst must trace how things are made to be, rather than using pre-established categories. This is important in this study, as such a constitutive view of the world allows us to trace how the things we take-for-granted are made ‘solid’. Tracing the ways in which things (such as a piece of land or a council) are formed and/or split up allows us to follow the reasons why certain things have legitimacy and how certain things are made legitimate. This points to the role of language use in forming and solidifying social objects, and the role of language in producing and re-producing particular entities will be outlined later in the chapter.

The diversity of actor-network theory means that different interpretations of the ontological work of networks have been formulated which view the fixity of categories in different ways. Law (1997a) describes the differing ways in which (what can be termed loosely) actor-network theory has connected with ontology. Drawing on the work of Akrich (which may be seen as near the centre of actor-network theory), he shows that a focus on translation of objects points not just to similarities in a network but also to difference and that “it is going to be much more interesting to explore differences than similarities” (Law 1997a p.4). From this starting point he uses the work of Cussins to show that difference is not just about difference in terms of a network, but difference as inconsistency and about how ordering is momentary. This has been termed ‘ontological choreography’ by Cussins, which implies not a free-flowing, easy process of changing the order of things, but much work and effort in re-ordering materials which may be firmly fixed in place. This may have some relations to Foucault’s work on discourses which, although subject to change, also show a great deal

of solidity in their formulation of concepts and statements. Law also uses the work of Singleton into cervical smear programmes to show that there may not even be ontological fixity for even a moment, as the 'whole' cannot be perceived as one, but something under tension. In order to understand a single reality, it is therefore necessary to see the tensions, inconsistencies and incoherences within it. But even this may not describe the complexity sufficiently, because perhaps there is no pattern to it. If this is the case then we should not attend to epistemology, or the business of knowing, but to ontology or the ways of describing things as they are, their connections, and making them the objects of our study. Law (1997a) describes this as 'ontological patchwork', where there are "multiple realities, many ontological interactions and intersections" (p.10) and that there is work behind this interaction in the process of attempting to make something real or pull it into ontological certainty. Law argues that this is not a form of relativism, because it is not "an expression of epistemological perspectivalism" (p.10), but a rejection of knowledge expressed from one viewpoint. However, the extent to which one person is ever able to acknowledge all viewpoints and describe this ontological patch-work is debatable. In addition, this view of multiple realities and 'ontological intersections' perhaps focuses too much attention on contingency and not enough concern with more durable parts of (social) reality.

ONTOLOGY AND LANGUAGE

Actor-network theory aims to reject many of the foundational assumptions of social theory, such as micro/macro-explanation and division of the natural and the social. Instead actor-network theory privileges a view of the world as a myriad of associations and connections from which concepts, ideas and things arise through the operation of actor-networks. As described above, actor-network theory might be seen to be, in part, about ontologies and the creation of meaning by actors. The space it allows to actor-networks to create new ontologies and things means that we must be able to conceptualise the possibility of bringing together 'things' in any way. For Latour, actor-network theory "grants activity to the semiotic actors turning them into a new ontological hybrid, world making entities; by doing such a counter-copernican (*sic*) revolution it builds a completely empty frame for describing how any entity builds its

world” (1997 p.8). However, we need to conceptualise this ‘empty frame’, if we are to understand how things might be formed. In order to describe this process we need a perspective on ontology from which we can analyse the ways that objects are constructed through the representational strategies surrounding actor-networks.

Null Ontology

Much of the writing on actor-network theory has not explicitly engaged with the philosophical literature on naming or ontology. Instead the closest it has come to dealing with ontology and language is through proposing a semiotic method to trace the ‘deployment of associations’ (Latour, 1997 p.5). I want to draw on a separate literature which deals with naming and necessity and therefore has a profound effect on ‘how we think about what it is to be a thing’ (Jubien, 1993 p.ix). This perspective involves conceiving of a ‘null ontology’ (Bibby and Shepherd 2000) in which nothing as an entity exists. Instead there is undifferentiated ‘stuff’ in the universe which may then be brought together to form entities, objects or things. Actor-network theory does not deal with concepts of where things might be derived in a philosophical sense, and this seems to be a weakness with the theory. The null ontology is based on the work of Quine (1960) and Jubien (1993) who conceive of the universe as made up of regions of space-time filled with ‘things’. Or to put it the other way round, “[p]hysical objects...comprise simply the content, however heterogeneous, of some portion of space-time, however disconnected and gerrymandered” (Quine, 1960 p.171 omissions added). Thus the criterion for being a thing is “just occupying any spatiotemporal region, where regions may be thought of as corresponding one-to-one with sets of space-time points” (Jubien, 1993 p.6). This view taken by Jubien relates to a conception of the universe that does not see it as divided into an array of discrete ‘things’; instead there is ‘stuff’ spread more or less densely around space-time. Carving up the world into ‘things’ in our way is not compelled by features that are intrinsic to the stuff that confronts us. This philosophic viewpoint relies on a notion that there would be physical stuff if there was no intelligent life in the universe - in other words there would be objects in space time that were by their nature bigger or smaller than others. However, it is a human construct to inscribe these intrinsic relations as properties of the objects and it is language that carries out this

task. A thing can be made up of heterogeneous materials spread over space and time. Jubien gives the example of a wristwatch and a baseball hit for a home run as one 'thing', which makes up a single region of spacetime (1997 pp.155-156). In this way humans create 'things' out of 'stuff' or as Jubien puts it "[a] *thing*, on the present view, *is* nothing more than the stuff of a precise, fully occupied region. It acquires its status as a thing only as a consequence of our decision to quantify over it" (1993 p.43 emphases in original).

This ontological view also proposes a way of conceiving how things may be sums of other things. Jubien uses the example of a 'house' which has one brick missing (U) and a choice of bricks to finish the house (A) and (B). The house is finished with brick (A) leading to an object (U+A), but could have been finished with brick (B) and would have ordinarily (but not necessarily philosophically) been seen as the same house. Jubien resolves this tension through claiming that 'to think that we denote the house and assert an identity claim when speaking of the house and its possible construction with (B) is fallacious' (Shalkowski, 1995 p.630). When we are talking of the house as being (U+A) or (U+B) we are claiming that (U+A) *is* the house, that there is an identity relationship (this is the fallacy of reference). Instead we should see (U+A) as having the *property* of being the house, and that (U+B) could have had the same property. It is therefore the assignation of properties to objects that is a social process and not intrinsic to stuff. This has consequences for how we might identify social objects in an actor-network description. For example, we might say that a thing named 'the Council' is made up in one instance of 50 councillors; in another instance we may say that a thing named 'the Council' is made up of ten departments or of 500 officers. In this Jubienesque view, we do not need to say that 'the Council' *is* all of these things. Instead we may say that 50 councillors might have the property of being 'the Council', while we might also contend that ten departments have the property of being 'the Council'. This allows us to trace the ways in which relations between things might be built up into stabilised concepts such as 'the Council', and to follow the linguistic work of different actors. However, we need to go further than Jubien's analysis, as he concentrates mainly on mereological sums and naming rather than the processes by which stuff gets bound together into social objects. In order to understand this, it is necessary to look at how our use of

natural language constructs things out of stuff through imposing an organising system on this undifferentiated stuff (Bibby, 1998).

LANGUAGE, TEXTS AND ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY

Actor-network theory has as part of its ambit, a concern with the ways in which stabilities emerge from the work of actors in organising resources and entities around them. A particular focus of this work is the way in which language, and especially texts, are used to stabilise entities in particular relations. Natural language might be seen to stabilise meaning in two ways (following Frege (see Kluge, 1980). Firstly, through sense which derives from a position in a set of associations, and secondly through reference which links the word with the stuff of the physical world (Bibby, 1998). Sense and reference might therefore be seen to be actively inscribed in texts, so that we might identify how texts serve to ‘solidify’ terms in an active process of definition and re-definition. Such texts within an actor-network analysis therefore serve as intermediaries in describing and ordering entities in a network.

There are certain ways in which things, events, actions might be represented in language, and these conventions allow language to be understood and meanings created and communicated. These conventions are not, however, seen as fixed or natural to language; instead they might be seen as created and changed through social process. As mentioned above, actor-network theory aims to trace how stabilities emerge, and this task might be applied to language, in a study of how conventions get drawn upon, re-produced and challenged through language use. This might be conceived in a recursive process, by which users of language are both constrained by the structures which they have to use, but also through their use they re-produce and may change these conventions. These structures might in turn be more widely defined as discourse, register or discourse habitus (see Lemke, 1995). From an actor-network perspective it is important to show how actors/entities might be constrained by these structures, but also how these structures allow them to carry out certain tasks, and how these structures may be changed. These conventions or structures in language are often codified as a grammar. Such a grammar provides a way of conceiving how language is organised and

the ways in which meaning might be realised (Halliday, 1994). However, the rules of language (and more precisely its grammar) do not force us to write in a particular way. Instead these rules allow us to do things, such as represent the world, express intentions and get others to do things. Language allows actors to do things socially and there have to be some conventions as to how it is used. This entails that in certain situations we draw on certain conventions in order to allow our language to be meaningful to others. Language allows us to identify objects, entities, processes and agents and allows things to be done. This process of representing things, processes and agents is done in particular ways, the rules of which are described in a grammar (or more precisely a lexicogrammar). Grammar is however not fixed. Although language may be seen as formed of sets of rules/conventions which actors follow, through their use of language actors also reinscribe these rules, so that they may change over time. A focus on grammatical forms in texts may therefore show how language is used to do various things through the way in which not only things are represented, but the action of others is implicated in particular language forms. Some of the grammatical forms which will be analysed in this research will be set out in the next chapter.

Texts are an important means by which representations of the world might be encoded and meanings created, re-produced and solidified. As such texts have an important part to play in both solidifying and challenging relationships between actors. The structuring of relationships occurs both at the level of grammar within the texts (for example, combining word forms which constitute actors' understandings of things and their associations), and at the wider level of textual relations structuring non-textual practices (for example, the physical alteration of the world about us). The structuration of the grammatical and non-textual is closely interrelated, because the text has a 'structured certainty' which allows the stuff of the world to be conceived similarly among groups of people, and also because texts can be used to legitimate our physical actions. Texts not only construct a representation of the world, by associating things, ideas and concepts in particular (grammatical) forms; they also have a positivity which enables such representations to be stabilised and stretched out in space and time (Bibby, 1998), so that other actors might become implicated in its representations. Such a view of texts has been proposed by actor-network theorists through such conceptions of the text as

'immutable mobiles'. The use of texts to stabilise meanings and force readers to follow such stabilisations is traced by Latour (1987) in his study of how scientific texts use such devices as 'positive modalities' to 'funnel' readers through the text (and enrol them in a certain subject position) (also see Callon et al, 1983). Texts and language are not therefore seen solely as a means of representing or reflecting facts; they are also seen as means by which definitions and associations between entities might be actively constituted. This, in turn, means that texts and language use have distinct social consequences, which arise not only from the words within them but also from the social relations in which they are embedded. Callon states: "[s]o whereas, traditionally, we have assumed that texts are closed - we have distinguished between their context and their content - now we are saying that texts neither have an inside nor an outside. Rather they are objects that define the skills, actions and relations of heterogeneous entities" (1991 p.136). Latour has also written of the way in which language is used, especially statements. He states that "the force with which a speaker makes a statement is never enough, *in the beginning*, to predict the path the statement will follow" (1991 p.104 emphasizes in original). This 'active' conceptualisation of texts and their embeddedness in social relations has links with Austin's notion of speech acts (Austin, 1962). Austinian speech act theory usefully highlights the ways in which language and texts might give rise to acts which are 'felicitous' in particular social settings. Texts, such as development plans, might be analysed not only for the ways in which they represent particular representations of the world, but also for the way in which they implicate actors in certain relationships and thus require them to act in certain ways.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has set out some of the theoretical background to this research, particularly drawing on actor-network theory. This theory provides a radical alternative to dualistic conceptions of the world which embody distinctions between agency and structure, humans and non-humans and subject and object. Other attempts have been made to 'close the gap' between these dualities, such as structuration theory, but actor-network theory provides a way of not only eliding the problem of linking structure and agency, but also provides a radical view of human-non-human relations and power which are

perceived in a processual fashion. Actor-network theory thus provides a distinct way of analysing how things get to be defined and related, and in particular how stabilities might emerge and be challenged. This allows us to trace the work of actors in defining other actors and using resources to create sets of relations or networks. In this way, we might trace how groups are constituted through actors' use of resources in the making of development plans. In particular, we might trace how texts and language more generally is used by actors to define other actors, entities within a particular set of relations. Texts might therefore not only be seen as representations of states of affairs, but also as a resources which are used actively to produce certain outcomes. This means that there are two linked aspects which may be explored in an analysis of texts. Firstly, the way in which texts structure representations of the world, through defining entities and their relations; this might be highlighted through an attention to the grammatical form of language. Secondly, texts might be analysed not only as closed sets of rules, but also as things which actively shape (social) relations and are in turn products of wider sets of relations. The effect which a text has, might therefore be traced by following how it is produced within sets of relations between actors and entities and how it manages to alter these sets of relations. This form of analysis is close to that of actor-network theory in its concern to trace the networks which texts describe and the *effects* which texts have on sets of relations between entities. The analytical framework for this study will be elaborated upon in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

As outlined in the previous chapter, the theoretical basis for this research is derived from the writings of actor-network theory, and in particular with a focus on the role of language and texts in stabilising networks of entities and actors. This approach requires a distinctive analytical framework which will serve to uncover how actors, networks and relationships between diverse entities are built up and solidified. A consequence of this is the ability to focus on the ways in which processes at the micro level *constitute* stabilities or ‘black boxes’ which in other analytical frameworks might be defined as macro-level features. Such an analysis will require a qualitative methodology which is able to trace the ways in which such processes may stabilise or undermine sets of relationships which surround the plan-making process. A particular focus will be on the work of texts to stabilise and re-produce network forms.

This chapter will initially set out the research questions which underpin this study, and will provide some of the background to these research questions. The second part of this chapter will define the analytical framework which will structure the analysis of fieldwork material from the two case studies. The analytical framework combines two main concerns. Firstly, to uncover the grammatical structure of texts and some of features of texts which might define and stabilise (or undermine) conventions, objects and relations. Secondly, to follow the actors observed in the case studies and analyse how they manage to build or re-produce networks and to trace the consequences of certain actions. This form of analysis will rely on some ethnographic techniques to follow the actors and identify how they are affected by the sets of relations in which they are defined, and how they might orchestrate sets of relations.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions, which will be given below, derive from one of the key objectives of this study; to uncover the stabilities and taken-for-granted concepts which are built up and drawn upon in the practice of planning. To do this requires a focus on the processes by which stabilities emerge or may be undermined. This processual perspective allows us to view the re-production of, and challenge to, definitions and 'modes of ordering' (Law, 1994 Chap.4). In addition, actor-network theory prioritises process (rather than fixities), seeing stability as an accomplishment and not a 'natural' state of affairs. Such a focus on process allows the means by which actors define, associate and challenge objects and other actors through such means as text production.

A number of other concerns also lie behind the research questions. Firstly, the processual perspective also entails a constitutive approach to the world. The research questions are derived, in part, from the theoretical premise that terms, concepts and definitions are constituted through social process and that some of these terms and concepts have a significant social currency and meaning. This constitutive approach seeks to analyse the ways in which concepts and definitions are constructed and how these are accorded more or less status within social settings. This constitutive approach can be linked to actor-network theory in a number of ways. Firstly, texts are seen as an intermediary within networks which through their ability to construct and stabilise meanings become essential to the expansion of networks. Secondly, the constitution of texts can become a process by which actors are brought into networks, and their identities negotiated. Thirdly, the constitutive perspective also links into notions of actors and networks defining each other, so that agency and structure are not seen as two separate properties but as something which is defined through social process. Lastly, the construction of definitions, concepts and terms as described by constitutive processes also relates to the ways in which these concepts are used. Various concepts and terms may be fairly stable so that the task of actor-network theory might be seen to be how these become stable and solid. As Callon et al have noted: "in this world without any fixed points of reference words, by the very fact of their scriptural and

phonetic permanence, are among the basic materials preventing all these movements from collapsing into a most indescribable disorder” (1983 p.207).

A second aspect of this study which has informed the research questions is a need to understand the plan-making process from an actor-network perspective. In particular, the research hopes to uncover the ways in which the practice of planning is constructed in particular settings, and to show the consequence of some of these practices. This also focuses attention onto the ways in which power relations might be identified through the ways in which planning practices define actors and enrol them in networks (see McGuirk, 2000). Very little research has been carried out into the power relations embedded within the plan-making process, or how different actors are constituted as subjects in the practices surrounding plan writing. It is hoped that this research, drawing on actor-network theory, will not only uncover some of the ways in which plan-making is constructed as an activity, but will also show how wider practices of planning in Britain are constituted.

The third aspect of this study follows from the need to understand the wider ‘context’ in which plan-making sits. More particularly, this research views the practices of plan-making as embedded within (or linked to) other practices and stabilities associated with the work of local government. In order to understand the plan-making process it will be necessary to uncover the ‘wider’ set of relations surrounding local and national networks of governance. It is also contended that the concept of ‘public participation’ is closely linked to notions of the boundaries of local government and how it is defined in relation to a wider community. The research questions, in part, derive from this ‘hunch’ about how local authorities work. Local authorities and those working within them construct conceptions/definitions about what a local authority is, and what is inside and outside the authority. These definitions are not rigid, but are shaped by the task at hand, the culture of the authority and, crucially, by networks operating inside (and outside) the local authority. The conceptions of the boundary of the local authority also influence the operation of the networks and links made in and out of the authority. There is not a randomness to these networks and definitions, but a strategy to them; they enrol actors, define their skills, actions and relations and ultimately transform them. The networks

created in local authorities constitute various realities and definitions in a strategic manner. This propagates the power of the local authority and some actors, while prohibiting other groups from the ability to act in certain ways. Local authorities, through network building, are able to define what is to be done and therefore set agendas which leave certain groups in a disadvantaged situation. Networks do not solely originate in local authorities but intersect with other networks which may conflict with, reinforce or change these network relations. Following this, there also needs to be an analysis of the wider networks associated with 'Central Government' as well as other networks which may surround other defined 'interest groups'.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There are two sets of research questions, which address different issues arising from the perspective adopted for this study. The first set aim to focus attention onto the processes of planning practice, the work to define and associate entities and actors, and the constitution of power in planning as a local authority practice. This set of questions is addressed in Chapters Eight and Nine which evaluate the case studies. The second set deal with the evaluation of actor-network theory and the 'tools' it provides to describe constitutive processes. This set of questions deals with the methodological implications of actor-network theory and is covered in Chapter Nine, the conclusion.

Research Questions: Set One

1. What influences the writing of a plan?
2. What networks, actors and intermediaries are constituted as influential in such work?
3. Which groups or actors are formed and influence the writing of plans?
4. How are 'local authorities' defined and what implications do these definitions have in shaping how a plan is written?
5. How do notions of (and actions ascribed to) 'the public' influence how a plan is written?
6. How are texts used in defining groups and actions surrounding the writing of a plan?

The first and wide-ranging question, focuses attention onto the processes by which plans are written. Many factors may influence the writing of a plan, and these are detailed in the following questions. The question delimits the area of study to plan-writing processes, although these may take many forms and encompass a variety of arenas from 'Central Government', 'legislative texts', 'local authorities to 'planning officers', 'interest groups' and 'elected members'.

The second question focuses analysis onto identifying networks as a means of conceiving how plan-making processes might be structured. Networks are a key concept in actor-network theory and through the identification of networks we might also be able to distinguish closely-related actors (see question three) and intermediaries and the processes of translation which compose network forms. Such analysis does not, however, prioritise the identification of networks and the *subsequent* definition of actors and other entities. As Callon notes: "an actor is also a network" (1991 p.142) and so we have to trace the ways in which actors, networks and intermediaries are mutually defined in processes of translation. This research question, therefore aims to uncover the ways in which stabilised networks associated with plan-writing arise. The second part to this research question focuses on the influence of these stabilised networks, actors and intermediaries. This is a central part of this study, namely that networks, actors and intermediaries can only be fully defined through the influence arising from the peculiar sets of relations they embody. In such a way, a network of 'central government' can only be shown to be stabilised and influential by tracing the translation processes by which actors are enrolled within its specific set of relations.

The third question is closely related to the second. It focuses attention onto studying how groups or actors are constituted, and following the second question, also requires the influence of such groups to be traced. The working definition of 'group' will remain deliberately wide to include all forms of collectivity which have achieved some stability and potential to act. Furthermore, groups may be defined as actors due to their role in carrying out work to author new intermediaries (Callon, 1991). In this way, it will be possible to follow the means by which groupings are defined and how they might alter network relations. Not only will 'interest groups' be studied, but other groupings such

as 'elected members' and 'developers' may be included in the analysis. The first three questions relate to actor-network analysis by proposing that the processes by which actors and networks are constituted should be followed. These processes will include the authoring of intermediaries which define groups and actors and relate (translate) them in a network form. The influence of network forms on the practice of writing plans may, in turn, be identified.

Research questions four and five serve to focus attention on specific forms of postulate actor-network. Question five derives from one of the 'hunches' of the research, that the work to define the boundaries and nature of a 'local authority' is important in shaping how plans are written. A number of definitions of a 'local authority' might exist (depending on the network form in which 'it' is embedded), and it is a key task of this research to trace the differing ways in which 'local authorities' are defined and related to other (social) objects. Different definitions of 'a local authority' will be produced in different networks, and consequently what a 'local authority' is, and what it can do will be influenced by the 'position' in a network it inhabits. For example, a 'local authority' may be defined very differently in legislature from the definitions drawn upon in a public meeting. In such a way, different meanings of the term 'local authority' will arise from different sets of relations, and these variant meanings will be used for different purposes. This might seem to have important consequences for an understanding of what is carried out in the name of a 'local authority', and plan-making may be one of these activities. The construction of the 'local authority' or 'council' as an actor in certain networks is an important part of this study. The linguistic ways in which meanings of 'local authorities' are enacted will be one of the aspects of the analytical framework set out below.

Question six is closely related to question five. Similarly, a number of definitions or meanings of 'the public' occur which reflect different network forms and which have consequences for actions of other groups defined and associated in a network. The work to define 'the public' may also be related to work to define 'the local authority'. Defining 'a local authority' might mean constructing a conceptual boundary which allows some groups and practices to be *internal* to the authority and others to be

external. Practices associated with ‘public participation’ might be seen to enact this boundary, so that ‘a council’ is defined as interacting with an entity (‘the public’) outside the boundary. In turn, these definitions of a local authority boundary and ‘the public’ may reinforce or challenge networks surrounding the writing of plans. This research question, therefore, focuses attention onto how texts (and other intermediaries) produce, re-produce or challenge conventionalised practices of plan writing.

The sixth research question serves to highlight the role of texts as intermediaries in describing and re-producing actor-networks. As intermediaries they may serve to define groups, actors and sets of relations which constitute the practice of writing plans. Texts might also be seen as actors if they serve to author new intermediaries (such as other texts) which alter definitions of groups and actors. Much of the analysis of the case studies will centre around texts as intermediaries and actors in stabilising practices of plan making. One concern of the analytical framework will be to outline how the structure of texts might be analysed to highlight the ways in which definitions, associations and meanings are produced in texts.

These six research questions reflect the main concerns of this study. In particular, they focus on the substantive topic area of the study, namely the writing of plans and the processes involved in this. The research questions influence the analytical framework and shape the fieldwork strategy. These research questions might be more usefully grouped around four aims of the research for the purposes of evaluating the results. Firstly, a concern to understand how plans are written. Secondly, to show how groups are formed and act. This will include an evaluation of how ‘local authorities’ and ‘the public’ are defined as groups and which actions might be ascribed to them. Thirdly, to show how texts are influential in the writing of plans. Lastly, there is a need to show how power is enacted, which relates to the analysis of networks and the operation of different actors. These four research aims will structure the evaluation of the research in Chapter Nine, the conclusions.

Research Questions: Set Two

A second set of research questions will also be drawn upon to aid an evaluation of actor-network theory as a tool for understanding social processes. These focus on the main elements of actor-network analysis:

1. How successfully were intermediaries defined?
2. How successfully were actors defined?
3. How successfully were networks defined?

All three research questions are very closely related, as defining an intermediary will be affected by definitions of actors and networks and vice versa. A more detailed description of each of these terms has been given in Chapter Three, however it might be useful to outline some of the characteristics of each. Firstly, intermediaries are those things which serve to describe, compose, stabilise and re-produce a network. Four types of intermediary have been defined by Callon (1991) (texts, technical objects, human skills and money), however it is likely that intermediaries will be hybrid in nature. Secondly, actors might be defined as “an intermediary that puts other intermediaries into circulation” (ibid. p.141). This means that an actor transforms or alters intermediaries and therefore the network they compose and describe. Actors thus attempt to translate others into a particular network form. Lastly, networks are closely linked to actors and are sets of relations which are orchestrated by actors and intermediaries. Networks may also be seen as the (changing) results of translations. Networks may also tend to have more or less stability (which might be achieved through successful translation).

Finally, these two sets of research questions are not intended to be completely separate. Work to define actors, networks and intermediaries will affect how we might identify the influences on the writing of a plan, the role of the local authority or the work of texts in defining the groups involved in making a plan. In turn, the focus on texts may also affect how actors, intermediaries and networks might be defined.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

As mentioned above, the perspective of this research derives from a processual view of the world. This means that work to define and associate entities in networks is seen as a process which might be followed, rather than an objective state of affairs to be analysed. As Latour states: “ANT [actor-network theory] is not about *traced* networks but about a *network-tracing* activity” (1997 p.8). This means that it is difficult to draw up a static framework for analysis, which might be applied to any situation. Instead, actor-network theory tends towards an ethnographic means of interacting with situations in order to learn something of how that situation is ordered and comes about. In this way, actor-network theory is not about imposing pre-established categories (summarised in analytical frameworks), but of maintaining an ‘open frame’ in which to describe the world.

There needs to be, however, some tools or vocabulary for describing the world and the ones used in this study are largely derived from actor-network theory. These have been mentioned in the research questions; that an aim of this research is to uncover how actors, networks and intermediaries are formed and what effect they might have on how things are done. This analytical framework loosely follows these in attempting to analyse how texts, speech and physical actions *define* entities, *associate* them in network forms and to show the *consequences* of these processes. The main form of analysis will be descriptions of the case studies which show how entities were defined, associated and stabilised and what actions ensued. From this, it is hoped that actors, networks, intermediaries and processes of translation will be uncovered. The ambit of this study also needs to influence the analytical/descriptive framework. This means that those processes which arise as influential in the writing of plans will be described. This, of course, requires a judgement to be made about how far to follow networks and this will be discussed below. Further topics are also derived from Research Questions Four and Five which draw attention to the processes by which concepts of ‘councils’ and ‘the public’ are defined and articulated in networks surrounding the writing of plans.

One of the main aspects of this analysis/description will be a focus on texts as intermediaries and actors. Texts are seen to be a crucial means by which definitions and

associations between entities are developed and replicated. In this way, texts are seen to describe network forms through their work in defining and relating objects, actors and other intermediaries. Texts also have a positivity which allows their definitions and associations to be stretched out in time and space (Bibby, 1998), and might be seen as 'immutable mobiles' (Latour, 1987). A focus on the way in which texts necessitate actions by others will be considered in the analysis. This means that texts are not only seen as reflections of the world, but as means by which the world is changed. For example, a text might act to enrol an entity in a network, not solely describe a network form. There will not be an exclusive focus on texts in the case study descriptions/analysis; instead spoken language and actions will be studied. In particular, the role of texts in legitimating and re-producing practices will be traced.

As an adjunct to this form of analysis, attention will also be drawn to some of the grammatical features of texts which serve to define entities and relate them together. This will not involve a full textual or discourse analysis of different texts, but is intended to highlight some of the conventionalised uses of language and show some of the consequences of these forms of language use. This focus on taken-for-granted features of grammatical structure in language will also reflexively focus attention onto the constraints of writing these case study analyses.

DEFINING ENTITIES

The first concern of the analytical framework is to identify what entities are defined and how they are defined. These entities may be actors, groups, or objects. Entities which may arise as of particular importance in understanding the plan-making process include the development plan itself, planning officers and elected members. However, it is recognised that a myriad of entities will be circulating around the making of the plans in the case study arenas. It will therefore be necessary to identify those entities which have been influential in the plan-writing process. These entities will be uncovered after a reading of both texts and, importantly interviews which may indicate which entities actors view as influential. Of particular interest, and following from Research Questions Four and Five, will be a need to uncover how 'the local authority' or 'the

council' and 'the public' is defined in texts and talk. This aims to show how different meanings of these terms arise from different sets of relations. A second part to this, is to uncover how 'local authorities' and 'the public' are represented as made up of constituent parts (whether these be 'departments' or 'interest groups'). This is intended to show the ways in which different terms are related to each other and thus enact (or describe) a set of relations.

In practical terms this will involve a focus on texts, as these are viewed as a prime means by which definitions (and their meanings) might be stabilised. However, the spoken word will also be analysed (especially from interviews), as this may also indicate some of the ways in which definitions are conceptualised by different actors.

ASSOCIATING ENTITIES

A second, and related, focus is identifying how entities are associated with other entities in intermediaries. Such work closely relates to the work to define entities, and it might be proposed that entities achieve their definition (or meaning) from their position in a set of relations (following semiotics). Numerous sets of associations might be uncovered in this research, and it will be necessary to focus on those which arise as important in the writing of plans in the case studies. The importance of certain relations will be deduced from a reading of the texts, and from interview material. This will also shape the way in which networks are followed, and a judgement will have to be made about which relationships are traced and which are not followed. Part of the judgement will be based on a reading of interviews and texts and part will be informed by the need to analyse 'in depth' rather than analyse all aspects of the fieldwork material. This follows injunctions of actor-network theory to let the informants tell the stories. However, this research does have a focus on plan-making, local authorities and public involvement, and these will be key topics when tracing how entities are associated in network forms. The sets of relations surrounding 'plan-making', the constitution of 'local authorities' and 'the public' will be particular concerns of this analysis.

As with the work to identify how entities are defined, the key analytical concern will be texts and their role as intermediaries. Texts can be viewed as one of the means by which diverse entities are defined, associated and enrolled into a network form. For example, a plan may define and associate such things as 'a council', other documents and 'pieces of land'. Other means of associating entities will also be studied. These include spoken language derived from interviews and participant observation of everyday activities and meetings. Texts will be analysed especially for the ways in which they are linked into the work of plan-making. Documents may both define what a plan is and the practices required to write it. In turn, text production may be seen as a practice in itself, one which is constituted in a series of relations between texts and other objects. Analysis will also be concerned with the ways in which texts refer to (or are linked to) other texts. For example, documents setting out a 'Council Strategy' may be linked to 'the Plan', and similarly other texts such as 'Government guidance' may also enact certain relations with respect to development plans. It will be important to trace the ways in which these documents influence one another through focusing on the ways in which they derive legitimacy (or form) from other texts.

TRACING ACTIONS AND PRACTICES

Part of the concerns of actor-network theory is to uncover the ways in which actors arise from network relations. Although actors might be conventionally conceived as able to act, this is seen as an accomplishment in actor-network terms. Part of the task of an actor-network analysis is to unpack the 'black boxes' or the 'macro actors' to show the network of relations 'behind' them. In this study, there will be description of the ways in which actions and practices are constituted by particular network forms. These network forms may be re-produced in texts (as intermediaries) which describe and compose these networks. Furthermore, texts may also have a force which requires certain actions to be taken (see Austin, 1962). The link between texts and other texts and between texts and the physical world means that it will be necessary to follow the consequences which texts enact, as well as tracing the relations which texts describe. For example, statute might be seen not only as a reflection of a particular state of affairs, but also as a means of enacting a set of relationships and enrolling actors in a particular

network. In this way, the link between statute and the actions it compels should be followed.

The task of identifying consequences of network forms is suited to ethnographic analysis which enables links between objects and texts and the surrounding world to be traced. This study will not only look at texts on their own, but also observe everyday actions and meetings and use interviews as ways of tracing how practices are established and re-produced. One particular aspect of the analysis will be to assess how individuals and groups position their activities around development plans. This might in turn reveal the processes of translation, and show how actors are enrolled in sets of relations which entail certain actions.

GRAMMATICAL FEATURES OF TEXTS

As shown in Chapter Three, grammar codifies the sets of rules or conventions by which language is organised and meaning might be realised. It is important to note that this does not imply a fixed set of grammatical relations in language; instead such relations are formed by social process and in particular changing language use. However, there have to be some conventions so that language use can be meaningful to others. It is a particular concern of this study to show how these conventional forms of language use influence how we might represent the world, and in particular how these conventions might replicate networks or modes of ordering in the world. For example, the use of passive voice in scientific texts is seen to importantly reflect and constitute a particular mode of ordering related to scientific practice.

A lexicogrammar might in some sense seem to describe a particular network form, as it is concerned with the words we use and the order in which they are put. This might be seen to be a network in the way in which entities (words) are associated in particular forms. In order to understand texts as means by which things are defined and related and as ways of compelling actions, it is necessary to show how texts achieve this through their structures. It is not, however, an aim of this study to carry out a systematic grammatical analysis of texts, as this would focus attention away from an

actor-network description of the various links between texts and actions, and the ‘broader’ aim of tracing both textual and non-textual relations. However, this section will outline some of the grammatical features of texts which affect the way in which they define and associate entities and re-produce sets of network relations.

A FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR PERSPECTIVE

An understanding of grammar which can provide a useful description of the ways in which representation is realised in the English language, is provided by Michael Halliday in his *Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1994). He proposes that language is structured in different ways according to the task at hand and has identified three aspects of this:

1. Representation: We represent things, entities, actions, processes, circumstances and agents in what we say or write.
2. Exchange: We try to get things done through language. We try to influence our audience and use language as a means of exchange.
3. Message: We organise our language so that one part relates to the surrounding discourse.

Functional grammar is useful in this understanding for a number of reasons. Firstly, the grammar aims to “account for how the language is *used*” (ibid. p.xiii). Secondly, it looks at how language is used to *realise* meanings. It sees language as a “system of meanings, accompanied by forms through which the meanings can be realized” (ibid. p.xiv). This is distinct from the view that there are ‘natural’ forms of language (the word or the sentence) to which meanings are then placed. Thirdly, it conceives the whole language system, and sees each part of it as functional to the whole. Fourthly, functional grammar concentrates on the clause as an important unit in language. The clause exists as a unit of language that is larger than the word, but smaller than stretches of text. The clause is conceived as a key unit in realising meaning within a language, so that a clause can embody structures of representation, exchange and message within it. In particular, aspects of the clause might highlight ways of expressing process and

denoting actors from an actor-network perspective. It is not necessary for this study to follow all the classificatory aspects of Halliday's functional grammar. Instead, those distinct features of language use and structure which affect the ways in which texts might represent process, define entities and portray usuality will be focused on in this section.

GRAMMAR AND THE REPRESENTATION OF PROCESS

Representation of the world usually involves conceiving of it being made up of different processes (an idea close to the processual dimension of actor-network theory). There are a number of elements which may exist in a clause. In some cases, to represent some process or relationship certain grammatical features might be used, such as an agent or a nominal group. These elements are parts of the clause and include verbal, nominal and adverbial groups which will be outlined below.

On a general level, representation of processes is realised through three components:

1. the process itself, which is typically realised by a verbal group;
2. participants in the process, which are typically realised by a nominal group;
3. circumstances associated with the process, which are typically realised by adverbial groups or prepositional phrases.

(From Halliday, 1994 p.107, 109)

Verbal Group

The chief clausal element in many representations of process is the verbal group. This marks the process being written/talked about, as well as expresses the process within a time scale (through one of the three main tenses).

Nominal Group

Many representations of process realise an object in the clause. These are chiefly realised through the nominal group, which has the function of specifying a class of

things or some category of membership in this class. Nominal groups are made up of a set of elements:

- 1) Deictic. This element indicates the specificity of the thing to be represented. If the nominal group is specifically indicating some thing, then the deictic is ‘the’, ‘that’, ‘this’, ‘those’, ‘my’, ‘your’, ‘his’, ‘her’ and so on. If the thing is not specified, then the deictic is ‘a(n)’, ‘each’, ‘every’, ‘both’, ‘all’ and so on. Mass and count nouns are also realised by different deictics depending on whether they are being referred to specifically or non-specifically:

Non	Plural	Plural	Specific
Singular/Count	Mass		
‘this train’	‘this electricity’	‘these trains’ (no ‘these electricity’)	

Singular	Non	Singular	Non-Specific
	Mass	Plural	
‘a train’	‘some electricity’	‘some trains’	

FIGURE 4.1: DEICTICS IN PLURAL AND NON-PLURAL NOMINAL GROUPS
(from Halliday, 1994 pp.182-183)

- 2) Numerative expresses either the exact number of things or the exact order of some thing (for example, ‘second’).
- 3) Epithet indicates the quality of the set and is realised by an adjective (‘old’, ‘blue’, ‘good’).
- 4) Classifier indicates a particular subset of thing, for example ‘brownfield land’.

Verbs may also enter into the nominal group, both as a present participle as in ‘a planning application’ or in the past tense, as in ‘a hidden cupboard’. This is one way in which verb forms can be realised as noun forms.

Agent/Actor

In some representations an agent or actor might be identified. These are represented as doing something or standing in some relationship to something else. Actors may be highlighted in the clause as a name or a nominal group, in which case the clause structure will need to identify an actor as well as a verb.

Circumstances

Clauses may finally express the circumstances of a process. Circumstances might be defined as ‘associated with or attendant on the process’ (ibid. p.150), they cannot take the role of subject in the clause and are expressed as adverbial groups or prepositional phrases. The circumstantial element may indicate the location, extent, manner or cause of the process. It may also show the conditions under which the process took place, who or what accompanied the process or the role of the participant in the process.

ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF REALISING PROCESSES

Apart from the clause structure as means of realising processes, there are alternative means by which processes can get realised without the need for a complete clause. These means of representing processes come about through the use of nominal groups. One of the most common ways of realising this is through nominalisation. Whereas in a clause process is expressed through a verbal group with an optional object and agent, in nominalisation the process becomes realised as a thing. So ‘they applied for a licence’ becomes ‘the licence application’ and the process of ‘applying’ becomes a thing functioning in a noun group (‘application’). In this case ‘licence’ becomes a classifier of ‘application’; it serves to modify it and is itself a nominalisation of the verb ‘to licence’. When a clause is nominalised, then information is lost, most importantly the agent of change. Nominalisation serves to remove actors from the representation of a process, and in some senses makes the process seem ‘natural’. However, the process of nominalisation also allows the nominal to participate in a process, without losing its semantic character as a process (Halliday, 1994 also see Lemke, 1995). For example ‘the application progressed quickly through the system’ shows that by nominalising the verb ‘apply’, then its nominalised form ‘application’ can be related to the verb

'progress'. Nominalisation is frequently indicated by the word tags '+tion' and '+ment', however others such as 'access' do not follow this pattern. This process of nominalisation is metaphorical, in the way in which the congruent form of a verb is reworded metaphorically as a noun. Such nominalisation is a common feature in written, adult writing, as it allows texts to be 'lexically dense' at the expense of 'grammatical intricacy' (ibid. p.350). As Halliday states: "A significant feature of our present-day world is that it consists so largely of metaphorically constructed entities, like *access*, *advances*, *allocation*, *impairment* and *appeal*" (ibid. p.353 emphasizes in original). Such 'process nominals' are especially prevalent in planning texts, possibly because the planning system does not carry out physical processes itself, but rather serves to regulate processes and thus needs to act on actions. The use of nominalisation might be seen as a grammatical response to the need to act on actions, and to control from afar. This concern might link into an actor-network concern for understanding how processes get 'captured' as parts of other processes within networks. Representing how these processes become the goals of other processes is carried out through a set of grammatical resources which reflect this social organisation. This concern does not, of course, solely relate to planning; the nominalisation of processes might be seen to be a taken-for-granted part of many institutionalised systems. Nominalisation might be seen as a pervasive grammatical feature of institutions; however it is difficult to write without using this feature (as any use of the word 'nominalisation' shows!)

A second way in which processes may get realised without the clausal structure is through participles in the nominal group, as described briefly above. Such phrases as 'planning permission' indicate where a process has been expressed as a nominal group. Such a phrase might be realised clausally as 'the permission relating to planning'. In this case, both 'permission' and 'planning' are nominalisations of the verbs 'to permit' and 'to plan'. However, through a need to reflect this as a commonplace activity, the process becomes described in the form of a nominal group. Participles are also used in other situations where the activity or process becomes the focus of another process, as in 'the walking of dogs is prohibited in this park'. This structure, as with nominalisation, removes the need to identify a human agent.

TYPES OF PROCESSES

Halliday identifies six different classes of process which are realised in language: material, mental, relational, circumstantial, behavioural, verbal and existential. Each of these can be seen to be represented through different grammatical structures. For the purposes of this discussion from an actor-network perspective, the three most important are material, mental and relational.

Material Processes

Material processes are represented in specific ways within the English language. Processes are broadly realised with a number of grammatical components. Firstly, there may be an 'actor' which is the thing which carries out the action. Secondly, there may also be an optional goal of the process, that is something to which the process is extended. For example:

the boy	Jumped	the girl	caught	the ball
Actor	Process	Actor	Process	Goal

FIGURE 4.2: INTRANSITIVE AND TRANSITIVE CLAUSES

These structures have been conceptualised as intransitive and transitive forms, where intransitive forms do not have a goal to which the action is extended, whereas transitive forms have a goal. An alternative ergative interpretation does not follow this distinction. Instead of the process being one which is extended or non-extended, the process is one which is caused by the participant or is caused by some other participant. For example, 'the water boiled' and 'John boiled the water' express the 'causer' of the action differently (the water and John). This has links with actor-network theory's concern that humans or non-humans may act in particular circumstances. Many verbs in the English language can have this transitive/intransitive dimension, and may more usefully be interpreted by the ergative system. Many verbs of change are ergative, for example, 'change', 'close', 'develop', 'form', 'improve' and 'increase' (Stubbs, 1996).

With the transitive interpretation, passive and active forms of verb structures can be identified. The active form of the clause is usually expressed as the form ACTOR-

PROCESS-GOAL (for example: the boy caught the ball). The passive form is usually expressed as the form GOAL-PROCESS-ACTOR (for example: the ball was caught by the boy). This is important for an understanding of how agency might be expressed in language. Even in the passive form, it is possible to identify an underlying agent. For example, the passive clause 'Edinburgh has been developed as a tourist destination' can be probed with 'who by' thus indicating some underlying agency. The intransitive form: 'Edinburgh developed as a tourist destination' cannot, according to 'traditional' linguistics, be probed with 'who by' or 'what by', thus not realising an agent of this change in the clause (from an actor-network perspective this may instead be interpreted as 'Edinburgh' having agency in a certain set of relations). This form of clause structure might be seen to be important in representing abstract processes, such as those written about in planning documents which draw on a language of economics and geography. This form of grammatical construction might be interpreted as a conscious effort on the part of the writer/speaker to deny an actor agency (in the 'traditional' linguistic form), however there are many forms of writing whereby agentless clauses are widespread and necessary for expressing complex processes. There needs to be a realisation of how this form of writing denies a particular human form of agency, and how this is conventionalised in various discourses; however it is also difficult to write without drawing on this type of grammatical construction.

Mental Processes

For mental processes the actor/goal distinction starts to break down. In the same way, mental processes are not expressed as clauses which can be active or passive. Halliday proposed that there are clauses which generally represent mental processes and that these are different from material processes. He identified five criteria for distinguishing these, including different mood and a subject of the clause which can be either the senser or the phenomenon.

Relational Processes

The third category of process which is frequently realised in clause structure is that of relation. Relational processes have a central function to tell that something is; in other

words they are processes of being. This feature of language is important in defining the nature of things, and often does this through placing them in a class or giving the thing an identity. Halliday identifies three main ways of expressing 'being' in language (1994 p.119):

Intensive, where 'x is a'

Circumstantial, where 'x is at or on a'

Possessive, where 'x has a'

Each of these ways of being exists in two modes. Firstly, 'attributive', where 'a is an attribute of x' (a has a quality or is member of the class x) and where a and x are not reversible, so that 'today is sunny' is usual and 'sunny is today' is not. Secondly, 'identifying', where 'a is the identity of x', where a and x are reversible, so that 'the conductor is Bernstein' and 'Bernstein is the conductor' are both usual forms. Such clause types are important in realising the identity of things, the position of things or the ownership of things and thus may show how relations are represented. For example, in the 'identifying' form of 'intensive relational processes', a number of verbs such as represent, consist of and comprise can relate a sign or name to a meaning, referent, status or role. This verb form is common in planning texts, which use such phrases as: 'This plan represents Council policy'.

MOOD

A final grammatical feature which may be important in understanding how language is used to re-produce network forms is mood. This feature relates a verbal action "to such conditions as certainty, obligation, necessity, possibility" (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973 p.40). It serves to mark what might be seen as network features, such as what an actor should do, what an actor might do or what an actor could do. Mood may also mark the sense in which something is true. A feature of the mood element of the clause is modality. Modality may be viewed as a means of representing a likelihood. Halliday identifies two main ways in which this may be realised. Firstly, in a proposition where we might identify a degree of probability ('probably', 'possibly') or a degree of usuality

(‘sometimes’, ‘always’). Secondly, in a proposal where we might identify a command with varying degrees of obligation (‘allowed to’, ‘required to’) or of an offer with varying degrees of inclination (‘willing to’, ‘determined to’). In this way modality might be seen to represent the predictability of events or actions, and thus highlight an action’s normality or abnormality. Modality therefore qualifies an event, and it is this which might be related to Latour’s notion of ‘positive’ and ‘negative modalities’ (1987). A positive modality qualifies a statement as ‘solid’ (ibid. p.22) and therefore allows other statements to be based on the prior statement. A negative modality has opposite features, which means that it is raised as questionable. However, such uses of the term ‘modality’ do draw attention to different aspects of language use and should not be conflated.

LANGUAGE AND THE WRITING OF AN ACTOR-NETWORK DESCRIPTION

It is hoped that this focus on grammar not only highlights some of the ways in which conventions are used in the writing of texts to be analysed, but also shows how the writing of an actor-network description is shaped by these conventions. There is a need to understand that my own writing draws on these grammatical resources and follows the various rules which grammar implies. In writing about how relationships are built up and stabilised through texts, I am also having to write within a framework. While trying to uncover how certain representations and conceptualisations are made conventional, I am also having to write within a certain system of representation. It would be impossible for me to write without drawing on certain conventions of grammar. For example, in the discussion on nominalisation there are numerous examples of nominalisation itself. Instead, the writing of a network description must recognise the rules which I am following when I am describing these networks. This will allow me to show how certain aspects of representation are forced by the devices of writing (which rules I am following) and will therefore show where and how other texts are following these rules. For example, I will often need to define objects within my writing, and an understanding of grammar will show when and how I might need to define an object. This will focus attention onto the nature of an object as a function of

linguistic choice (see Jubien, 1993) and how that object might become conventionalised within a certain network. In many cases, I will need to resist writing about objects, entities, processes as if they were taken-for-granted features of the social world which I am investigating. One of the aims of this study is to uncover how these objects, actors, processes become conventionalised. The core concern is to show how I may draw on grammatical conventions in order to write, but that I should also be aware that some of these grammatical conventions need to be explored. By outlining in this chapter the grammatical rules by which we might represent, I am hoping to show how these rules allow us to represent the world in different ways and to understand the political implications of this. This means that I must reflexively understand the rules which I am following when I am writing a network description, and it is hoped that the sketching out of these rules will enable me to do this. Some of the practical strategies which will be used in writing the case studies will be examined in the next chapter.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the research questions which embody the aims of this study and the analytical framework which will be drawn upon to examine the case study material. The analytical framework is composed of two parts. The first is a necessarily 'loose' vocabulary which will allow the formation of actor-networks to be followed. Work to define entities and associate entities in relations as well as showing the consequences of such processes will be traced. The second part identifies some grammatical features of language which might be important in this work of defining, associating and constituting action. This grammatical focus, based on Halliday's 'Functional Grammar', will allow a study of *how* texts (through their structure) might re-produce certain conventional structures which embody particular ways of organising the world. The next chapter will deal with the research strategy, and will describe how fieldwork and analysis were organised and conducted.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out the strategy for conducting fieldwork and analysing and describing the case studies. This research draws on qualitative methodology for a number of reasons and these will be explained, before examining why a case study approach was chosen for this research. The choosing of case studies and some of the practical aspects of case study research will be explained. The second part of the chapter will deal with the various techniques employed during fieldwork and will end with a discussion of how the research findings were analysed and written up.

QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

This research aims to uncover actions and meanings within the environment of a local authority. The most appropriate methodology for this research into these areas is derived from qualitative techniques. The study of the use of language and texts is a key feature of the proposed research, and qualitative methods provide the best way of tracing the ways in which actors enrol others in sets of relations. Quantitative research methods provide a wide scope for collecting data, and allow the results to be 'proved' and trends to be predicted. Quantitative methods are also appropriate for large scale surveys studying a narrow range of phenomena. However, quantitative methods would not uncover specific meanings behind events, or the context within which events occur. The theoretical premises and approach of this research mean that quantitative methods are inappropriate to the study of meaning systems and the creation and maintenance of network relations. It does, however, have to be borne in mind that 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' research methods and theories are not polar opposites (Silverman, 1993) but embody various theoretical and methodological standpoints.

A central feature of this research is the need to follow in detail the ways in which interaction between entities occurs in certain settings. As part of this, is a need to follow the processes and practices which constitute features of the world and may help to re-

produce certain stabilities. A focus on language and especially the production, use of and interaction with texts by different actors is a means to trace how networks are built or challenged. A qualitative methodology is suitable due to its tendency to allow meaning-production and processes to be followed, its concerns with problematising taken-for-granted social 'facts' and conventions (see Silverman, 1993). Furthermore, a qualitative methodology allows 'data' to be connected to theoretical concepts, for example those of actor-network theory, through a process of observing how well the theoretical concepts can be used to describe and understand the processes observed. A qualitative methodology also shapes attention reflexively on the researcher as an active constituent of the research process, whether this be fieldwork or writing up a study. Studies in actor-network theory have almost wholly engaged in qualitative research. This seems to arise from a need to trace processes and relations between things, or 'to follow the actors' as they go about their work. Some studies, such as John Law's work at the Daresbury Laboratory (1994), have been ethnographic in the detailed way in which he attempted to explain social ordering in one setting. Ethnographic concerns for understanding the social world through intensive observation and interaction allows the ethnographer to build accounts of how the social world might operate. This is useful in studying, for example, how language and texts are defined, used and exert influence in social settings. This study will draw on ethnographic approaches to allow the detailed study of interaction and communication. However, this study does not follow 'traditional' ethnographic work in immersing myself for prolonged periods in a particular setting. This is due to the time constraints imposed on this research, a desire to carry out more than one case study and perhaps most pertinently, the inability to negotiate prolonged access to the arenas in which plan-writing occurs. In particular, work as a planning officer in a planning department for a long time was not viewed as a possibility at the start of this research. Instead, fieldwork was carried out in two different settings for shorter lengths of time, allowing comparison between the two settings to be carried out.

CASE STUDY RESEARCH

This research was carried out through two case studies. A case study approach was chosen for a number of reasons. Firstly, case studies provide a means by which events may be observed and analysed to provide explanation of phenomena, such as language use. The case study also allows detail and context of situations to be studied, especially where the researcher has little control over events (Yin, 1994). More particularly, case studies are shaped towards researching areas where “the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (ibid. p.13). In this way, case studies are particularly appropriate for ‘how and why questions’ (ibid. p.21). This may be particularly relevant to an actor-network study where the task is to trace the relations between the local and the global, or phenomenon and context. Secondly, case studies allow the study of a single environment, without attempting to gain statistical generalisability through repeated observations. The aim of case studies is to “expand and generalize theories (analytic generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization)” (ibid. p.10). This is carried out through the collection of different types of data; in this case comprising observation, interviews and documentary/textual research.

Choosing Cases

The choice of case studies should be guided by the aims of the research. Cases should attempt to provide answers to the research questions or research propositions. The aims or propositions of the research should guide the choice of cases by delimiting a topic or a process to study. The research questions should then influence the choice of setting in which to start the research. This does not preclude research from following actors to other settings, as long as this work is contributing to answering the research questions. This might be seen as particularly appropriate in actor-network research where actors and processes should be followed. There are, however, practical limits on the extent to which this can be carried out (which will be discussed in the Conclusions).

The choice of cases in this research was guided by the aim of the research: to carry out an actor-network analysis of plan-making processes in the British planning system. In

particular, a focus of the research was placed on how conceptualisations of ‘local authorities’ and ‘the public’ might affect such work of making plans. This focus allowed fieldwork to concentrate on particular practices and importantly allowed the aims of the research to be clearly communicated to others. This did not, however, preclude research from engaging with areas which after some fieldwork were identified as important to the writing of plans. The two main criteria for choosing case studies were:

1. A need to focus on development plan-making as a ‘local authority’ practice, and
2. A need to look at involvement by ‘the public’ in this process.

For the practical purposes of the research the criteria needed to be defined. Whilst it is recognised that definitions of ‘local authority’ and especially ‘public involvement’ are fluid and open to contest, the research needed to have a working definition of these terms. Firstly, ‘local authorities’ are fairly rigidly defined in geographical terms and in statute. The criteria for choosing a local authority was solely that it was producing a development plan (as defined in statute). Whilst there are various types of local authorities (district councils, county councils, unitary authorities), distinguishing between these types was not seen as a part of choosing the case studies. This is due to the focus of the study being on plan-making processes, and not on differences in plan-making process in these types of authority. Whilst the structures/forms of an authority may differ according to whether it is a county council or a district council, this feature was not seen as a particular concern of the research design; instead such features of structure and ways of working were seen as contingent factors to analyse during fieldwork. Such an approach was chosen because the research design aimed to make as few *a priori* judgements about the world as possible. Secondly, ‘local authorities’ were chosen which claimed to be ‘consulting the public’ on their development plan. Defining this process of consulting is aided by statute and guidance which requires local planning authorities to ‘consult the public’ and various defined organisations upon the contents of their development plans. This process is specified as particular stages, including ‘pre-deposit’ consultation and ‘deposit consultation’. Local authorities were chosen which were undergoing either ‘pre-deposit’ or ‘deposit’ stage consultation. In order to limit

the range of the cases, it was decided that public involvement during local plan inquiries was not a criteria for choosing cases. The techniques employed in consulting the public were also not a relevant criteria for choosing cases. Whilst authorities could have been chosen which were engaged in 'minimal' or 'widespread' consultation, this would require consultation exercises to be graded according to a schema prior to fieldwork. Instead, this broad definition of 'consultation' allows empirical research to uncover what 'consultation' might mean in each case. Thirdly, it was decided that authorities where the 'story' of consultation was widely textualised would not be chosen as cases. A number of local authorities which have engaged in high-profile exercises in consultation on plans and many of these have been researched and written up. This would mean that textualised accounts would exist, and actors would portray events in very similar ways (according to these texts). The choice of 'non high profile' consultation practices would allow a focus on mundane activities and hopefully uncover the ways in which taken-for-granted practices are built up.

There were also two practical constraints in choosing cases. Firstly, geographical limits had to be set on the area in which cases would be chosen. England and Wales was chosen as the geographical area for choosing cases. This is because both countries have broadly similar legal and planning systems and as travel to cases within this area was feasible. Secondly, practical choice of cases was limited to those local authorities willing to grant me access for fieldwork, and this topic will be dealt with below.

The second part of choosing case studies was deciding on the number to be studied. It was decided that two cases should form the empirical element of the research. There are two main reasons for this: firstly, two cases would allow comparison of the processes and practices operating in both authorities. This might uncover similarities (and possibly enrolment in the same networks/modes of ordering) in both cases and would also allow contrasts to be identified in the ways in which actor-networks developed. Such a comparative approach has been very rarely carried out in actor-network studies, and comparison between cases might also reveal some of the difficulties in comparing actor-network accounts. Secondly, two case studies would, within the practical limits of this research, allow a sufficiently detailed study of processes and practices in both cases.

More than two cases may have constrained thorough investigation of all cases, and so it was felt that sufficient material could be gained from two cases.

Gaining Access

As Buchanan et al note: “Fieldwork is permeated with the conflict between what is theoretically desirable on the one hand and what is practically possible on the other” (1988 p.53). Gaining access to organisations and conducting fieldwork is a process which is shaped by this tension between the desirable and the possible, and is often “a game of chance” (ibid. p.56). However, it is possible to use a number of techniques to maximise the chances of securing access. Buchanan et al suggest that the researcher should be ‘opportunistic’ (ibid. p.53) and willing to be flexible and this strategy was found to be necessary to gain access to local authority planning departments. The ‘open’ schema for choosing case studies also helped, as there are 409 local authorities in England and Wales (Local Government Information Unit, 2000) and a significant number are likely to be engaged in some form of consultation on their development plan. The main aim of this work was to negotiate satisfactory access which would allow observation, interviews and the study of documents to be carried out.

The strategy for gaining access initially involved a scan of recent planning news and databases held by organisations such as the London Planning Advisory Committee to find those local authorities which were at a pre-deposit or deposit stage of consultation on their development plans. A second strand to this was to visit three authorities to ascertain whether they were likely to be at a consultation stage in the following year and to interview officers and members as to the likelihood of gaining access and to discuss some of the issues surrounding the writing of a development plan for the area. The areas visited were Tameside Metropolitan County Borough in Greater Manchester, West Wiltshire District Council and Wrexham County Borough. A discussion with an elected member at Tameside revealed that the development plan was not likely to be at a stage of consultation in the course of the next year, and so was not likely to be a case study. During a visit to West Wiltshire I managed to observe a public exhibition dealing with changes to the local plan and interviewed officers and an elected member. Whilst West

Wiltshire was not suitable for a case study due to the consultation period ending too early for fieldwork, it did allow some of the topics surrounding plan making to be highlighted. The visit to Wrexham revealed that pre-deposit consultation was to occur on their Unitary Development Plan within the next year and an interview with the Chief Planning Officer secured access for fieldwork. This, however, proved problematic in that using the Chief Planning Officer and another senior manager as gatekeepers led to a breakdown in communication with the forward planning team with which I would have the greatest contact. This led to the forward planning team being unprepared for my arrival, and the first day of fieldwork was mainly engaged in negotiating access and acceptance. As Buchanan et al note: "The permission of senior management, a letter of introduction, and academic affiliation, do not in themselves achieve sustained levels of cooperation." (1988 p.59). On reflection, using senior management as the contact to organise the first period of fieldwork was not the best strategy, and contact with members of the forward planning team should have been made in addition to those senior managers. This was carried out for the second period of fieldwork in Wrexham and no problems were encountered.

The organisation of the second case study also proved problematic. I had made contact with a forward planning officer in a London borough which was to carry out consultation during my time allocated for fieldwork. Tentative arrangements were made to carry out fieldwork; however the particular gatekeeper had to leave her post which left the planning department understaffed and unable to deal with my requests for fieldwork. This forced me to consult a list of local authorities which were to carry out consultation and from this I 'cold-called' a number of local authority forward planning departments to discuss the possibilities of research. This led to negotiating access with the planning department at Islington Borough Council who were interested in my area of research. The final stage of gaining access was an informal meeting with one of the forward planning officers to discuss my requirements for research and to gain some information about the plan-making process in Islington.

The periods of fieldwork negotiated were especially dependent on the co-operation of the forward planning teams with whom I was most closely working. Part of the strategy

was to carry out more than one period of fieldwork, to allow reflection on the first period and then further more focused research on pertinent issues in the second and subsequent periods. For the Wrexham case study, this involved two main periods of fieldwork over nearly a year, with smaller periods of fieldwork to carry out interviews both in Wrexham and other areas. In the Islington case study, fieldwork was carried out in three main periods over four months. Other visits were also made during this period to carry out interviews and attend meetings. Deciding when to withdraw from 'the field' was made in negotiation with the forward planning teams. I had agreed some fixed dates with those involved as to the period of my fieldwork, and these did not need to be changed as I felt that I had secured sufficient material from my periods of fieldwork. In addition, when I found that I needed further information on particular topics, I either made a short visit or was sent this information, thus obviating the need to secure another prolonged period of fieldwork. Although there were some problems in organising the fieldwork and especially gaining access, the periods of fieldwork generally progressed smoothly, and I felt that I had sufficient material by the end to enable the processes of plan-making in both cases to be identified.

RESEARCH METHODS

Three main methods of collecting material were used during fieldwork. These forms of research were chosen to provide an understanding of the wide range of social practices which surround the making of development plans. Using different means of collecting 'data' has been termed 'triangulation' (Yin, 1994) and is seen as a central feature of case study research. Such triangulation allows more than one perspective on an event, series of events or an issue, and is seen as a means of constructing validity for research (ibid.) In particular, using more than one source allows the researcher to corroborate representations of events and processes, thus allowing a fuller picture of what might be deemed 'fact' in a particular setting and what is open to contest. The three methods of collecting material were chosen for the different types of processes and issues which they focused upon, and thus allowed a fuller picture of the social processes occurring within the case study setting. Interviews, observation and documentary information all

provide different perspectives on a social setting and social process and helped follow the different actions carried out by actors.

OBSERVATION

Use of observation was one of the three main ways in which 'data' and texts were collected during fieldwork. This form of research was used for a number of reasons. Firstly, it allows the study of people in their 'natural' setting, how actors act and the ways in which they interpret the world and construct meaning from it (May 1993). Of particular importance to this study is the focus on action within certain stabilised arenas, such as planning committee meetings and public meetings. This focus allows some of the ways in which structures and conventions are performed to be observed. Observation is also not only confined to carefully managed events, such as meetings, but may also provide a means of tracing how actions are carried out in the course of all work carried out by actors (for example, in the 'everyday' work of planners). Secondly, observation allows the social structure of organisations to be investigated as some thing which is performed by actors. Whilst diagrams of organisational structure may provide some clues as to the roles and responsibilities of actors, observation allows the ways in which roles are enacted in a variety of settings. Thirdly, observation also highlights the role of the researcher in a setting, thus pointing to the need for reflexivity by the researcher. Whilst observation in this research was not strictly participant (in that I did not act as a planner whilst I was in planning offices), my influence on the environment I was studying needs to be recognised. Lastly, observation entails the study of language used by subjects, as this embodies the ways in which meanings are constructed, problems are conceived and actions validated. The focus on language use in this study therefore shapes attention onto how different actors used language to construct and replicate particular ways of doing things.

In order to structure the way in which observation was carried out, and to provide a means of analysis, a loose schema was developed to allow a focus on particular elements of the social processes observed. Whilst the schema provided some structure to the observation process, it was not intended to rigidly 'collect data' on just these

particular elements. Instead, observation attempted to note down the main features of events, conversations and interactions with particular attention being paid to certain features of social process. A number of arenas were observed during fieldwork. Firstly, meetings of different types were attended. These included Council Planning Committee meetings, meetings of Community Councils and Neighbourhood Forums and public meetings. Whilst all serving different purposes, a number of common elements were recorded during these meetings. These consisted of descriptive observations which were designed to draw out the context within which actions took place and focused observations which were designed to concentrate on the language used in talk and texts.

1) Descriptive Observations	Physical setting
	What people do
	Events
2) Focused Observations	How the plan was talked about
	How other documentation (especially Government guidance) was talked about
	Typifications and definitions of actors and groups
	Descriptions of who and what constitutes groups
	what these actors and groups do
	how groups influence and relate to each other
	how different groups use different forms of language
	the structure of the meeting and who is controlling how the meeting is structured

TABLE 5.1 SCHEMA FOR OBSERVING MEETINGS

The second arena in which observation was carried out was the planning office environment, which allowed a focus on the work of the officers most closely associated with the plan-making process. Such observation was generally carried out whilst at a

desk in the forward planning office of both local authorities. ‘Observation’ could be carried out whilst looking through files, which allowed me to ‘look busy’ and to question officers over particular aspects of the files. Sitting within the planning office also allowed informal conversation with planning officers, which seemed to circumvent some of the problems associated with the ‘artificial’ setting of an interview. Observation in the planning offices generally centred around a number of themes and similarly involves descriptive and focused observations:

1) Descriptive Observations	Physical setting
	What people do
	Events
2) Focused Observations	How problems were articulated, especially of the plan-making process
	How representations to the draft and deposit versions of the plans were dealt with
	How the plan was written and re-written and who has an influence in this process
	How different groups and actors were talked about, and how they were conceptualised (this includes how officers talked of elected members)

TABLE 5.2 SCHEMA FOR OBSERVATION IN PLANNING OFFICES

Observation provided much material about how actions were carried out and through informal conversations some of the ways in which groups and actors were conceptualised. Much of the observation was centred on the work of planners, and this might be seen to bias the material collected; however, it was difficult to negotiate access to observe the activities of other groups, and as local authority planners assumed a central role in the plan-making process then a focus on this group seemed necessary. The material derived from observation served as another means of understanding what actions were carried out, and allowed opinions of texts and other groups to be gauged.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews were used to complement the 'data' collected through participant observation (see Burgess, 1984). Interviewing provides a different form of 'data' from participant observation, in that it provides detail of actors' experiences and opinions as well as providing extra information on actors' roles and duties. There is, however, a tension between objectivity and subjectivity when designing or preparing for interviews (May, 1993). Interviews may tend to be too structured to allow people to express their opinions freely and to justify them. At the other extreme interviews can be totally unstructured, which allows free expression of ideas, but may not provide clarification or validation of specific topics highlighted by participant observation. Interviews need to be designed in relation to other forms of research to allow triangulation, but should also recognise that highly structured interviews may not provide the detailed linguistic information which allows topics and meanings to be explored.

Interviews may become problematic if the preparation and conduct is not carried out adequately. Question wording may be biased, and encourage responses which are not sincere expressions of the interviewee's opinions. Interviews also need to be constantly monitored for direction, depth and detail to ensure that topics are covered and that opinions are probed (Burgess, 1984). Research may also encounter difficulties if interviewees do not wish to discuss relevant subjects; although this may provide clues in itself of the opinions of the interviewee. In order to counter these problems, interviewees were informed of the topics to be discussed, why they were chosen for interview and how long the interview would last. An interview schedule was also drawn up for each interview (but outlining questions of the same topics) to ensure that all topics were covered during the interviews.

Interviews for this research were semi-structured. This method provides depth to the interview in allowing the interviewee to explain his/her views on various subjects and for the interviewer to probe these. An unstructured interview may not provide enough room to ask about certain topics so that interviewees' responses can be compared. May (1993) identifies a need for the interviewee to understand what is required of him/her,

and to feel prepared for the interview and therefore at ease. The management of the interviews was therefore important in collecting 'data' on the meaning system within which actors conceived the world. An important topic for the interviews was questioning interviewees about various documents (such as development plan consultation statements) and probing the meanings in these texts. This provided useful clues as to the different meanings of texts for different actors. Transcripts from interviews also provided texts which were subsequently analysed for the way in which actors constructed/structured their world and how this may affect their actions. Interview texts were also related to observation notes to compare understandings of events, such as public meetings.

Choice of interviewees

Choice of interviewees poses fewer problems for qualitative research than quantitative research. Representativeness can be seen as a problematic concept and attempts to gain a homogenous sample "sacrifice explanatory penetration in the name of 'representativeness' and 'getting a large enough sample'" (Sayer, 1992 p.245). Qualitative research is not intended to be taken as representative, instead its aim is to find out why an event or process occurred, its context and the meanings attached to it by interviewees. The choice of interviewees was of secondary importance to gaining an 'in-depth' idea of the interviewees' views and actions which would be relevant to the research questions set out in the last chapter. The criterion for choosing an interviewee was involvement with the plan-making process in the particular authority. Of primary importance were the planning officers involved in the writing of the development plan, and these were chosen as interviewees in the first instance. Other interviewees were identified after a period of fieldwork which allowed me to identify their role within the plan-making process. Separate periods of fieldwork allowed me to return to the case studies after identifying those actors which were important in the plan-making process and to interview these actors drawing on knowledge I had gained during the initial period of fieldwork. In some cases, potential interviewees were suggested by other interviewees, following a 'snowballing' type of research process. However, care had to

be taken not to solely interview those suggested by others, as this may have led to a one-sided account of events or issues.

Interview schedules

The interviews aimed to uncover how concepts and ideas are articulated in relation to planning work in each case study. Although each interview schedule was different, a number of aims of the interviews were derived from the research questions:

1. To uncover the interviewees' role in the plan-making process and their perceptions of the role of others. This included particularly, 'Central Government' and other stabilised organisations, such as 'Councils'.
2. To identify how far the interviewee identified the plan with 'the Council' and their conceptions of 'the Council'.
3. To probe the interviewees' conceptions of 'the public' and how 'consultation' should be carried out.
4. To identify the importance which the interviewee attached to the plan and to its role in affecting development and relating to an area. These questions related to the nature of the plan, its aims and its position within a wide set of relations.

Another part of the interviewing strategy was to use common 'key words' in all interviews to compare responses and attitudes to some central concepts of the research. These varied slightly for each case study to take account of local variation. These key words included: *UDP, the Council, Central Government, Welsh Office/Government Office for London/LPAC, PPGs (for Wales), Development, Developers, Community Council/Neighbourhood Forum, Interest Groups, the Public, Local People, Public Participation/Consultation*. Use of these key words focused attention onto similar topics in each interview.

DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH

Texts are a key focus of this research especially due to their role in defining and associating entities in networks; however they are often absent from much research

work and not seen as a focus of methodological writing (May, 1997). Texts in this research are seen as intermediaries through their description of network forms, and might also be viewed as actors able to author other intermediaries. It is thus important to identify the documents which shape and are shaped by practices to write plans in each case study. From this theoretical perspective, texts should not be seen as neutral recordings of events, but as structured means to represent and communicate for a particular purpose. The task of this research is to trace how such texts might be shaped by the relations which they describe and how they might actively re-produce sets of relations.

Numerous definitions of 'text' might be drawn upon in documentary research, ranging from narrowly defined formal documents (such as statute) to conceiving cultural activities as a 'text' to be uncovered (Geertz, 1993, Clifford, 1986). We may, however, distinguish between the written word and the spoken word and different forms of analysis might be needed for each. Written texts are stabilisations which may hold conceptions together and in some ways summarise ideas about the world. Spoken communication has different forms and functions, being instant, immediately contextualised and needing the presence of a speaker and listener. Both spoken and written forms of communication create meaning, however written texts may create sets of meanings which are able to be transmitted further than spoken-forms. Associations (in networks) may be constructed and mediated through both speech and writing, however written texts may more effectively allow the extension of networks. Thus, a focus of the research will be on written texts circulating around local authorities, and their involvement in creating and maintaining associations between entities. This is not to ignore the role of speech in an analysis of actor-networks. Speech may play an important role in creating meaning in context, allow an understanding of written texts and invoke actions.

Picking texts

This concern with defining how spoken and written discourse are interrelated leads onto a concern with the methods by which texts might be picked for analysis. The aim of the

research is to uncover how groups and actors are defined and associated in networks constituting practices of plan-making. Such practices might be seen to include the writing of texts and reading of texts, and as has been outlined in the previous chapter, documents might be used to define and associate actors. It is therefore necessary to analyse those texts which are most important in defining and associating actors, groups and concepts within the plan-making process in each case. Such analysis requires not only attention focused on those texts which are crucial in undermining networks or authoring new sets of relations (texts as actors), but also those texts which reproduce network forms and might be seen as 'mundane' (texts as intermediaries). In order to identify the importance of the multitude of texts circulating in each case study, an ethnographic approach was taken, using interviews, observation and 'informal' conversation. In this way it was possible to situate texts in relation to other texts and practices, and could highlight how certain texts were seen as important by various actors. This allowed a number of texts to be uncovered which were seen as critical parts of the plan-making process. This range of research methods (but especially observation and informal conversation) also allowed texts to be identified which constituted more 'mundane' work and which were not identified by actors (in interview) as important. Such texts included memoranda, minutes of meetings and hand-written notes. This means of picking texts avoids problems of creating an *a priori* framework to identify important texts, but instead allows texts to be identified from their importance in maintaining, building or dissolving network relations.

This 'ethnographic' means of identifying texts, which by no means constituted a full ethnographic study, also allowed links to be made between textual practices and non-textual practices. The discursive and the non-discursive are closely related, as sets of non-discursive practices are legitimated and enacted through texts and textual production is influenced by events and actions in the physical (non-discursive) world. Use of observation and interviews allows links between such events as meetings or exhibitions and documents to be traced. To take this argument further it may be seen that defining boundaries between the 'textual' and the 'non-textual' or the 'text' and the 'context' are meaningless. From an actor-network perspective, texts are intermediaries which associate (often) disparate entities, and it is difficult to show that an intermediary

has a pre-definable context. Instead the intermediary describes a set of relations, thus associating a number of objects and concepts. From this, it might be possible to show how meanings are constructed through sets of relations inscribed in texts. As Lemke (1995) states: “We say that when an act occurs it occurs in some *context*, and that ‘its’ meaning depends in part on what the context is. Better to say that we make the act meaningful *by* construing it in relation to some other acts, events, things (which we then call its contexts).” (p.166 emphases in original) Therefore, we need to focus our attention onto the ways in which texts embody meaning by associating certain things together. The ‘ethnographic’ approach and use of different research methods allows the ways in which texts and acts are linked together, and reveals how texts might become important in shaping network relations.

INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH MATERIAL

Much of the analytical work of identifying how entities are defined and translated in networks has been outlined in Chapter Four, especially in the analytical framework. This section will briefly describe some of the ways in which the material collected during fieldwork was practically analysed in order to allow the cases to be written up. There are a number of features of this, including the practical work of dealing with interview, observational material and documents, the work to analyse this material and some of the issues associated with writing the case studies. The main approach used in interpreting the material was a descriptive form of analysis which allowed the work of actors to be described and thus understood within the context of the theoretical aims of the research. Such description is not viewed as a neutral statement of what went on, but is instead seen as necessarily involving choices about what to represent and how to represent. More particularly, the description was structured around the needs to show how things were defined and associated in particular sets of relationships, and to trace the consequences of these relationships.

Fieldwork produced a large amount of material including notes from observation, interview tapes and many documents either as original copies or as notes taken from

documents. Analysis and collation of the material was carried out between the periods of fieldwork, and this proved useful in identifying further documents to collect or people to interview whilst conducting subsequent stages of fieldwork. A particular feature of dealing with the material was transcription of interview tapes. Each interview was recorded, with additional notes being made in case the equipment failed. This allows the interviewer to focus on the interview and monitor its direction and depth, rather than concentrate on remembering and writing down direct quotes. Secondly, tape recording allows 'the richness of the verbatim account' to be captured (Buchanan et al, 1988 p.61). Interviews were transcribed in full, although some 'cleaning up' of the recordings (that is omitting pauses, exclamations and so on which constitute speech) was necessary, especially as the transcripts were not to be used for conversation analysis. Other material, such as observation notes and documents were collated and organised according to the analysis being undertaken. For example, in constructing the initial account of what went on in the plan-making process, documents were ordered in chronological order, whereas for describing the main themes of the cases, documents were reordered to reflect this type of description/analysis.

Analysis of the case study material involved a reading of the material in order to construct an initial account of what happened, what was done and some of the main themes or stories. This allowed a description of the main events and processes involved in the plan-making process. This description was reported to planning officers in the case study authorities who verified, clarified and corrected some of the pattern of events and actions. From this initial description, some of the main themes emerged around the work to define 'the public', 'the council' and some of the key actors. This led to sifting out the main story, and in both cases involved disposing of some of the themes which were not directly related to the focus on plan-making and the work of different groups in this practice. Whilst a broader set of themes might have captured a wider range of processes and actors, it was felt that in order to analyse texts, interviews and so on in sufficient detail, that some of the more 'peripheral' themes would have to be omitted.

Each research method produced different forms of material to be analysed, and although the aim of the analysis is the same for each, there were some differences in the ways in which each type of material was drawn upon for analysis and writing up.

1) Analysing Observation Notes

This involved identifying: what events happened, how events were structured, what topics were raised, what did actors do and which texts were drawn upon. In particular, the ways in which conceptions of ‘the plan’, ‘the local authority’ or ‘the council’ and ‘the public’ were identified.

2) Analysing Interview Transcripts

These required analysis of: what themes/stories/processes/event did actors raise, what objects/entities did they define, what actors, groups and actions did they highlight, what texts did they raise as important (this proved very useful in identifying texts for analysis). As above, the ways in which interviewees conceptualised and articulated notions of ‘the plan’, ‘the council’ and ‘the public’ were analysed.

3) Analysing Documents

The ways in which texts were analysed has been outlined in the previous chapter, especially the grammatical features which were to be identified. Much of the analysis followed the research questions in uncovering how texts defined entities and related things together, how texts enacted or represented processes and how the text related to other texts.

WRITING THE CASE STUDIES

This analysis, through a reading of the different materials collected during fieldwork fed into the write-up of the case studies. Some of the analysis was carried out during the writing up process, as topics were raised and new texts identified as important. In this way, the research process does not conform to an idealised model of data collection, data analysis and write up as discrete activities. Instead analysis and writing up is a complex process involving numerous decisions relating to choice of structure, themes,

style and words. Part of the aim of this research is to highlight the ways in which texts present a fairly coherent structured account of the world drawing on a number of conventions, and through the writing of the case studies it was necessary to highlight the ways in which these accounts might also be presenting a particularly structured account of events which in themselves re-produce conventional forms of writing. Curt states that: “Making the readers work at understanding what has been written, ‘worrying’ or ‘troubling’ the taken-for-granted, is a style of writing intended to make people ask questions which would otherwise probably not occur to them” (1994, p.17 emphases in original).

As has been detailed at the end of the last chapter, my own writing necessarily draws on certain grammatical conventions which may serve to stabilise particular ways of representing the world. In the writing of the case studies this had to be recognised, and through detailing some of the grammatical conventions which re-produce stabilised conceptions of the world, it is hoped that the constraints of writing these case studies are highlighted to the reader. Whilst a recognition that there are certain conventionalised ways of representing the world, it was felt that wherever possible the writing of the case studies would not re-produce taken-for-granted ways of representing entities and processes. For example, through nominalisation, verbs become stabilised as a noun form making them seem conventional and ‘normal’. In the same way, agents of change may not be realised through various grammatical forms, such as intransitive verb forms. In writing the case studies, attention was paid wherever possible not to re-produce these conventionalised ways of representing, as the aim of the study was to highlight how these come about. However, there are some necessary conventions which must be replicated. For example, the words council and local authority need to be used in some passages, and it is therefore necessary to highlight that these are conventionalised objects by placing warning marks around them. These are “intended to signal that ‘something needs thinking about’. When ‘stress’ is written rather than stress, the intention is to signal its reified status as a thing-constructed rather than a thing-in-its-own-right.” (Curt, 1994 p.16 emphases in original) Other linguistic devices are also used to highlight some word which is taken-for-granted, such as stringing words together or splitting them up (for example re-present). All these might be seen to

presuppose a set of 'taken-for-granted' in the world; however the use of these linguistic devices is meant to highlight words which arise as unquestioned in the texts or conversations I am describing.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has set out the research strategy for conducting fieldwork and interpreting and analysing the material collected during fieldwork. The research strategy draws on a qualitative methodology which uses case studies to explore how and why certain things and actions occur within a setting (in this case relating to the making of development plans). Three forms of research methods have been used; observation of events and processes, interviews and documentary analysis. All three provide a range of perspectives on processes and actions occurring in the case study settings. The analysis of the material collected was shaped by the research questions and was carried out through an analytical description of the cases. The research is, in part, exploratory as it aims to show how the vocabulary of actor-network theory might be applied to the analysis of a diverse range of texts, conversations and observations. In particular, the focus on how language use re-produces conventionalised ways of representing means that the case studies needed to be written in a particular way. The next two chapters contain the descriptive analyses of the two case studies.

CHAPTER 6

THE ISLINGTON CASE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes and analyses the processes surrounding the writing of a particular plan, Islington Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The aim of this case study write-up is to understand the complex ways in which groups, entities and their actions become associated with work to write Islington UDP. Following the research questions, this chapter aims to describe the processes involved in forming, re-producing and challenging network forms and actors. Attention will be paid to how entities, such as ‘the Council’ or ‘the public’ become defined and how practices draw on these definitions. This relates to the analytical framework which focuses analysis on the work of defining entities, associating entities and of tracing actions and practices. In particular, the descriptive analysis will concentrate on the role of texts in defining, associating and enrolling actors and entities. Analysis will start with describing the nature of Islington UDP and the reasons for producing it. Drawing on research question four, the next section will deal with how ‘the Council’ was defined as an entity which had different network roles. A focus of this will be how notions and boundaries of ‘the Council’ are articulated in a set of ‘Council Strategies’, and these will in turn be related to the UDP. Following this, the ways in which ‘officers’ and ‘members’ came to be defined in relation to plan-making will be described. Finally, the last major section draws on research question five in examining how ‘the public’ came to be perceived as a group and how strategies were formulated to define groups and their relation to a process of plan-writing. This section will deal with a number of practices and texts which served to enrol groups within certain networks and thus perform the activity of ‘consulting’.

Islington exists as a geographical area of ‘North London’ which is frequently described in its boundaries through the notion of a ‘borough council’ related to this area. The area ‘has’ a population of 177,000 (Islington Planning Service, 1999) and is 1487 hectares in spatial extent (Llewellyn, 1998 p.106). Descriptions of Islington frequently remark on

its small size (compared to other London boroughs) and its diversity in terms of wealth, facilities and history. Interviewees and a number of texts remarked on contrasts between wealth (and often young wealthy people) and areas of significant social deprivation (see Mason, 1999). Whilst this discourse on the nature of Islington is not a prime focus of this research, some aspects of this will emerge through the following case study description.

THE NATURE OF ISLINGTON UDP

Part of the aim of analysis is to identify how things are defined and in particular, drawing on the research questions, to show how 'the plan' was defined and conceived. Islington Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was portrayed in a multitude of texts as a coherent, single document. These texts included the text which contained policies relating to land use (which was described as the 'Unitary Development Plan' by other texts). This text, contained a variety of policies and statements including those concerned with the aims of the policies as a whole (or 'the plan' as a whole) and policies which aimed to control specific aspects of land use (often related to certain areas of Islington borough). This text (of the UDP) was structured in a certain way and a number of elements were defined in the text. These included 'Parts 1 and 2' and chapters which grouped policies under certain headings (such as 'housing' and 'transport'). I do, of course, recognise that 'policies' are not one thing, and take on a number of meanings according to how they are actively described and used by different actors.

Part of the aim of this analysis is to show what 'planning policy' might mean in specific circumstances, and how these 'meanings' might be replicated through the work of actors and texts. Islington UDP was not only portrayed as a coherent document in the text which contained the policies; other texts also used the term 'UDP' to describe a single document. These texts included the reports presented to committees of Islington Council as well as other documents associated with 'the Council' such as the 'Council Action Plan for a Sustainable Future' (London Borough of Islington, 1997b). Islington UDP was also represented as a single and coherent document by individuals in spoken

interaction; for example an Islington councillor said: “but the problem and the very human problem I think for the UDP is that there are so many cross-current issues on it that time just does not allow anyone to look at it in the round” (this description of the UDP as a ‘thing’ occurred frequently in conversation with all actors interviewed during fieldwork). The UDP was therefore portrayed as a single thing or a coherent text in a multitude of documents and by a variety of actors. Islington UDP was frequently mentioned as ‘the UDP’ with the deictic ‘the’ indicating the specificity of the ‘UDP’ and showing it as a singular object. Hence, Islington UDP was portrayed as an entity by a variety of texts, which meant that processes could act upon it, actors could talk and argue about it and other texts could refer to it. In constructing the UDP as a thing actors could then change it and relate it to other texts and other processes. The UDP, as I hope to show below, might be seen to circulate as an intermediary within a complex set of relationships which I hope to identify.

Islington UDP has been described above as a singular entity; however ‘the UDP’ is not *always* described in texts and by actors as one thing, but is described and talked about in sections. These included such things as chapters and ‘Part 1 and Part 2’ as well as categories which were not identified as a result of headings in the text, such as ‘policies about large housing estates’. Although ‘the UDP’ was not always described as a singular entity, there was a desire by some actors to portray it as a ‘coherent’ document and something which had a unity. One feature to arise from the case study based in Islington was that of the tension between the UDP being promoted as a coherent document and other views which expressed the ambiguity and differences in policies. This feature can be most explicitly highlighted through a study of ‘Part 1’ of the UDP concerned with ‘Vision, Strategy and Objectives’ (Islington Planning Service, 1999b), and some attention will be focused in this analysis on that identified part of Islington UDP later in this chapter.

In this analysis, I will focus on how various individuals and groups positioned their work and activities around ‘the UDP’ and various definitions of this thing. This work was frequently mentioned as work of ‘producing the Plan’. For example, the document ‘Planning for the 21st Century’ which was distributed as part of public consultation

stated: “the law requires us to produce a development plan” (Islington Planning Service, 1997b p.2). The concept of producing a plan implies that some thing (a plan) is the target of this action, and that there is a finished entity to which the work of production is focused (known as ‘the adopted plan’). This work is legitimated through the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and through other texts, such as the ‘Development Plan Regulations’ (1991). These texts might be viewed as attempts by ‘central government’ (this term will be discussed below) to force individuals and groups to work to produce the finished product of a ‘unitary development plan’. In addition these texts require that in order for a plan to be adopted, that various stages have to be completed by certain defined bodies (such as ‘Local Planning Authorities’ and ‘The Planning Inspectorate’).

REVISING THE UDP

The work of various groups concerning Islington UDP did not start from a blank template. Other texts and actions were seen as important in the work of writing policies for the UDP, notably previous plans. A number of texts stressed the links between ‘previous’ work to produce plans and ‘current’ work. The concept of a plan as a singular thing which had a finished state (‘adoption’) allowed certain actors to write about one plan influencing another. For example, in the introduction to Part 2 of Islington UDP (adopted in 1994), ‘Islington Development Plan’ is recognised as an influence on the writing of ‘Islington UDP’:

“Although this is our first UDP, the Council was not starting afresh as Islington already had a plan – the Islington Development Plan which had been adopted in 1986. Obviously parts of the 1986 plan have been carried forward into this current document, but significant changes have been made” (Islington Planning Service, 1994 p.2 of Chapter 1).

The notion of one plan as following directly on from others was particularly strongly expressed by those who initially wrote the policies (the planning officers). The work which was studied in this case study concerned the ‘review’ of Islington UDP, and so was portrayed as work to revise policies which were ‘stabilised’ in the form of an ‘adopted’ UDP.

REASONS FOR PRODUCING THE UDP

A number of reasons were given for why the adopted UDP was being changed in various documents. These reasons included the need to integrate new Government and LPAC guidance, to take account of new trends occurring in Islington and to take greater account of the impact of development on 'the environment'. The need to integrate new guidance (in the form of policy documents) was always highlighted as the first reason to change UDP policies (see Islington Planning Service, 1997b and Islington Planning Service, 1999a). This seems to highlight a position which is implicit in much of the work surrounding the review of the UDP policies; namely, the significant importance attached to certain documents written by bodies defined as part of 'central Government'. These documents were represented as part of a hierarchy of documents produced by different bodies, with different roles and jurisdictions. This hierarchy was reproduced through the documents themselves, other documents which were related (in text) to these 'guidance documents' (such as legislation) as well as in documents produced by officers working on the plan review process. In this way, a network was described by officers who acted for 'Central Government' in replicating these stabilities. An important part of this set of relations might be seen to be legislation concerning the production of planning policy. These relations are expressed in the first paragraph of the Draft Report on Consultation:

"The production of a Unitary Development Plan is a statutory requirement. This plan will be the main, but not sole, determinant of all planning decisions made and as such the government have strongly advised local authorities that plans should be kept up to date. Strict legal procedures exist for preparing and reviewing the plan, which include formal consultation procedures and a public local inquiry" (Islington Planning Service, 1998 p.3).

These sets of relations not only define a role and set of legitimate responsibilities for 'central government', but also importantly define a role of 'local planning authorities' (themselves defined in legislation). Thus, as many texts reiterate, 'local authorities' have responsibilities (defined in documents such as Statute) to follow procedures when reviewing planning policies written in plans. The need to follow 'guidance' was articulated in this set of relations, and within these 'officers' were constructed as having a role in ensuring that the work surrounding the UDP review followed stated procedures

and guidance. This might be seen as part of a more widespread effect of the notion of 'professionalism' which is attached to the work of officers and is re-articulated through such work.

Integrating Guidance: The Work of Officers

In order for the UDP to be reviewed in light of 'guidance' and to react to the other stated reasons for a review, certain officers decided to set up a 'Working Group on Environmental Issues'. This group was defined as having a role co-ordinating and carrying out an 'internal review' (strengthening conceptions of an inside/outside 'Council' division). The group was further sub-divided into a steering group and a number of working or topic groups. All these groups were composed of officers. The first meeting of the Working Group on Environmental Issues had an agenda which proposed these groupings and how groups were to be composed, indicating that some officers had already decided on a mode of working. The Steering Group was proposed as being made up of senior officers, including the Chief Planning Officers and members of the Policy Team. In addition, there were six working groups proposed which were to investigate defined topics. These topics were defined in written 'Terms of Reference'. These topics generally related to chapters in the existing UDP, thus strengthening the conception that the work was to review existing policies, rather than formulate a set of new policies. As one Chief Officer stated: "we went into a chapter by chapter review at an officer level which we initially had to confine to four or five key chapters". The 'Terms of Reference' of each group also served to define what the group had to do. For example, the 'Transport Working Group' was to review the policies in the UDP with respect to various new acts, including the 1995 Environment Act. Other groups (such as those concerned with the UDP policies on 'housing' and on 'design and conservation') were also required to review whether new supplementary planning guidance would be necessary. The Environment Working Group was given the task of looking at the whole plan (although Chapter 3 'Environment' was a major focus) and to integrate the findings of an Environmental Appraisal Report. The 'Strategic Policy' group had a number of roles to play within the overall review process. One part of their remit was to re-draft Part 1 of the UDP as well as Chapter 1 entitled 'Strategic Context' and this was the only

part of the UDP to be comprehensively re-written. The group also carried out discussions with the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) and the Government Office for London, indicating the statutorily defined and hierarchical set of relations which these bodies were situated in. The existence of discussions with these bodies also indicated that their guidance was also open to some interpretation by officers, and that there may have been some leeway in following 'the guidance' in the writing of specific policies for Islington Borough. In addition, the Strategic Policy Group was also to review the impact of regeneration initiatives such as the Single Regeneration Budget.

The Working Groups were composed of officers from the Regulatory and Planning Services Department, who also consulted with officers from other departments. This process was described in interview by a Chief Officer: "we very much involved the relevant other services - people from housing, people from regeneration, people from parks, people from engineers - that was the transport chapter...and so that was comparatively corporate, low profile". These 'relevant services' were therefore seen as 'outside' the core group of officers who defined themselves as those with most responsibility for the UDP (as indicated by the 'we' at the beginning of the quote). These officers from 'outside' this core group were given policies to review, so for example, the Access Officer was allocated policies seen as relevant to their role by the core group of officers. This was enacted through letters from officers in the Development Planning Service requesting comments on relevant policies from officers such as the Recycling Officer and the Policy Development Officer. Allocating policies or chapters to review seemed to strengthen conceptions of officers' roles, and harden the identity of 'Council' departments and individuals.

This way of working in identifiable groupings was not seen as contentious by those involved, but was rather seen as a 'common practice' and indicated by the comment that the process was "low profile". The work of these groups consisted of meetings and individual officers re-writing individual policies or commenting on these. For example, this work was carried out through annotating copies of existing chapters in the UDP with detailed wording changes. In addition the Working Group on Environmental

Issues met a number of times to discuss progress and report the work which officers had been carrying out. The steering group had a remit within the terms of reference to 'coordinate the overall programme and the consistency of policies'. In addition to the steering group (composed of senior officers and the Policy Team) overseeing the work, all working groups were given general terms of reference. These included checking that policies were consistent with 'strategic guidance, PPGs, Council-wide strategies' and to measure the 'effectiveness of policies especially with regard to sustainability principles and LA21' (taken from minutes of the Working Group on Environmental Issues, 4th June 1997). These general terms of reference further enacted the set of relations which defined and tied together the responsibilities of 'central government' and 'local planning authorities'. Other parts of the general terms of reference also serve to highlight other discourses which can be discerned as having an impact on the work to review the UDP; namely a concern for sustainability and the mechanisms of local agenda 21. The concern for these topics (which were not defined in the terms of reference) also supports the stated reasons for reviewing the UDP (updating and paying attention to sustainability concepts in UDP policies (see above)).

DEFINING THE COUNCIL

An entity which was mentioned frequently in both the text of Islington UDP (1994) and in other texts, conversations and interviews was 'the Council' or 'Islington Borough Council'. However, 'the Council' is a word which is used in a variety of ways, for a variety of purposes and in many cases is not actively defined or clarified in language. 'The Council' was frequently described as a thing which carried out actions. This is shown in a policy in the Proposed Changes to the UDP: "The Council will designate two categories of local road, namely 'local distributors' and 'access roads.'" (Islington Planning Service, 1999b Policy T7, Reference 6.008 emphasis in original). In this form of use, 'the Council' is a thing which 'designates' and work to carry this out is represented as the work of this entity. On tracing the network in which 'the Council' becomes an actor, we might identify other actors, for example 'officers' or 'members'. In this way, 'the Council' arises as a macro-actor summarising the work of other actors in a network. Using the term 'Council' within the UDP seems to simplify and

summarise a complex network of ‘officers’, ‘members’, ‘texts’ and so on. ‘The Council’ becomes a collective noun which is used to ascribe work to a single entity, and is widely replicated in a range of texts and conversations by those who are enrolled in these networks.

‘The Council’ is also used as a term to describe an entity with attributes and which is constituted of parts. This might be seen to reveal some of the sets of relations on which ‘the Council’ as a macro-actor rests. For example, certain meanings of the word are attached to statutory roles and defined procedures. In particular, ‘the Council’ can be conceived as some thing which is made up of all elected councillors, and this is often articulated in texts stating procedures associated with committees and decision-making. ‘The Council’ is also defined as an entity which has ownership of certain things. For example, texts detailing ‘strategies’ were related to ‘the Council’ in the nominal group ‘Council strategies’. Other things such as ‘policy’ were similarly related. The role of these ‘Council strategies’ will be discussed below.

Another consequence of ‘the Council’ being a ‘thing’ is the way in which ‘it’ could be related to other entities. Defining ‘the Council’ means setting certain boundaries around it, which in turn allows ‘the Council’ to be placed in relation to other objects. For example, in Part 1 of the UDP there is a section which states: “However the Council recognises that these strategies in themselves are inadequate to deal with Islington’s needs and problems, and that change can only occur through partnerships with local people and businesses.” (ibid. p.7) This defines ‘the Council’ as separate from ‘local people’ and ‘businesses’, thus showing how ‘the Council’ as a thing can be related to other defined groups. One key aspect of this is how ‘the Council’ is constructed as a thing with relationships to the ‘the public’, and this might be seen as critical in an understanding of the practice of consulting. This section aims to highlight how these different meanings attached to ‘the Council’ arise in texts. Much of the section deals with how ‘Council strategies’ are defined and related to ‘the UDP’. In particular, the text of the Proposed UDP Part 1 will be drawn upon as it articulates relationships between ‘the Plan’ and ‘the Council’. In addition to this, another text (the New Council Action Plan for a Sustainable Future) which aimed to define ‘the Council’ and its

actions will also be analysed. Other aspects of the work to define ‘the Council’ will arise throughout this write-up; for example the boundaries of ‘the Council’ will be discussed in relation to a Sustainable Transport Round Table.

COUNCIL STRATEGIES AND LINKS TO THE UDP

An important set of texts which defined ‘the Council’ was ‘the Council strategies’. There is not space here to examine these texts in detail. Instead, ‘the Council strategies’ will be analysed in relation to ‘the UDP’, and this relationship is expressed in Part 1 of the UDP. This document sets out a definition of ‘the Council’, what it was to do and how this affected the nature of the UDP.

Within the proposed text of Part 1 of the UDP is a section entitled ‘Aims and strategies of the Council’. This described Islington Council’s overall aim as “to make Islington the best place in London in which to live, work, learn and do business, through the provision of high quality services, and by working in partnership with the local community, the private sector and other providers of public services.” (Islington Planning Service, 1999b p.7) This stated aim constructs a role for ‘the Council’ as an entity which provides ‘high quality services’ and works in partnership with other entities, which are described in the text as having some stable identity (shown through the use of the deictic ‘*the*’ before ‘local community’ and ‘private sector’). Such a statement of intent is possible because ‘the Council’ is constructed as an entity which has some defined characteristics (that is, as a service provider and as working in partnership). The statement might also be seen to be part of a strategy to define ‘Islington’ as a place which has some unity, partly pulled together by the work of ‘the Council’. Islington is also related to London as a whole, which can be seen to furthermore enhance the identity of Islington. This strategy can be seen to run through many of the statements of intent which are written for ‘the Council’, and the UDP was portrayed as having a significant role in this place-making both in texts and discussion. This aim of the Council was presented as being split into six priorities. The six priorities were ‘education’, ‘housing’, ‘streetscene’, ‘community safety’, ‘regeneration’ and ‘customer care’. In the proposed text for Part 1 of the UDP it is claimed that “not

all of these priorities are relevant to the UDP” (ibid. p.7), thus delimiting the influence which the policies in the Plan can have. This limit is defined in the first section of the Part 1 as deriving from ‘the law’ when it states:

“Planning is for people. This means helping to create an environment which is healthy, safe and enjoyable; in which local people have access to secure, well paid jobs and to high quality education throughout their lives; and where people have a pride in their neighbourhood and a stake in its future.

Whilst this is the aim, the law requires that town planning policies - and the UDP in particular - must focus on land use, buildings, traffic and environmental quality. We have therefore prepared a practical vision, set out below, to guide our actions.” (ibid. p.1)

The text of the Plan therefore states an ideal to which ‘planning’ should play a role in achieving. This defines ‘planning’ as a means to creating an environment with the characteristics described in the first paragraph. However, this is contrasted with ‘a practical vision’ which takes into account the limits imposed upon planning policies, notably by ‘the law’. The second paragraph states areas which the UDP must focus on. These areas are not substantive in themselves, but terms such as ‘land use’ and ‘environmental quality’ seem to be defined by a range of texts, of which Planning Policy Guidance Notes may be seen to be important in shaping the remit of ‘planning’ for the purposes of writing policies.

Defining the limits of planning policies

The limits of planning policies are therefore defined in Part 1, possibly in order to justify the range of actions which the policies seek to influence. In this way, the Plan is constructed as not relevant to some of the six priorities. Such a process of delimiting planning policies also implies that there are areas in which the policies have an effect. With Part 1, these areas are defined as “promoting the regeneration of the borough by improving the quality of the environment, increasing opportunities for employment and providing the land use/development framework for regeneration schemes.” (ibid. p.7). This form of wording, which can be found in a number of planning documents, shows the role in which ‘planning’ is constructed, both in texts and through actions carried out

in the name of 'planning'. The quote shows a number of times the way in which a verb (for example 'promote', 'provide') in the present tense is combined with nominalisations of verbs (such as 'regenerate' and 'develop'). Such forms of grammatical usage highlight how processes have taken on nominal qualities (perhaps through their being ingrained in patterns of activity) and can be modified by other processes (such as those enacted by planning policy). For example, 'the plan' is defined as 'making a significant contribution' to 'promoting the regeneration of the borough'. This places 'the plan' as an important text in the way in which it can enact various processes which affect other processes.

The UDP is therefore constructed as having a role in affecting or altering other defined processes. This role is further defined through a number of Headline Targets which the UDP Task Group considered in February 1999. These Headline Targets related to the six Council priorities described above. The Headline Targets document lists 17 targets which planning policies could help achieve, as well as the role the UDP could generally bring to achieving these targets. For example, under the priority of regeneration, there is listed a target to "facilitate £150 million of private investment per annum into the borough". There are, however, no details given of how this target might be measured in practice. These targets seem to have been included in the Plan in response to advice in Government documents, however a report to a Task Group of councillors also states that identifying targets also follows 'good practice' in 'focusing on critical issues for the plan'. During a meeting of the Task Group, there was some discussion as to the effect which targets for the plan might have. One councillor suggested that the Council 'could be held hostage to fortune' to meeting the targets, and tabled a copy of targets which he agreed with. One of the Executive Directors at the meeting responded that he "agreed with the principle of the targets but there need to (sic) more discussion and thought over their precise nature. (A Chief Planning Officer) suggested having a call over of Councillors before the joint meeting of the Committee to agree the actual targets. This was agreed." (Minutes of the UDP Task Group, 8th February 1999). The targets seemed to produce some uncertainty amongst councillors, who seemed to feel that it was difficult to predict precise outcomes of plan policies, as the targets suggested. This might highlight one way in which the plan was not seen by all to be as strongly a

defined actor as might have been suggested in the text. The discussion on the targets for the plan showed that there was uncertainty as to the ability of 'the plan' to co-ordinate so many entities and to have an effect on such a wide range of activities. This view may have been strengthened by the detail of the targets and their accountability; in other parts of the Plan where intentions have been stated, but are less accountable (for example, "to promote improved services and facilities for those who live, work or visit Islington" (Islington Planning Service, 1999b p.1)) there was less debate about the policies. This might reflect the nature of policies, as statements of intent by some defined body, in that the results of policies may not be directly predictable. This in turn may reflect the difficult task which policies have in co-ordinating and enrolling many actors and entities to carry out certain tasks.

Whilst the six priorities and the targets which were related to them covered one part of the Council strategy, there were also a number of other 'Council strategies' which were described in Part 1 of the UDP as influencing the Plan. These strategies were seen as 'Council' strategies and were related to the idea of the 'Council' as a service provider. The strategies were seen to shape the activities of individuals, departments and other entities in their role as providing certain defined services. These strategies, in turn were seen as part of a wider change in the way in which work was done by officers. One of the Chief Planning Officers stated that the ethos that the Chief Executive was trying to create was that of "thinking corporately". The ways in which this was enacted was described as through creating directors who did not have responsibility for a service, and were therefore seen as 'pulling together' work in different divisions. The Council strategies were portrayed in Part 1 as 'council-wide' due to them being 'co-ordinated by the Council's Strategic Planning and Resources Committee', and officers and members both described the role which members on this committee had in co-ordinating strategies. However, the UDP was also portrayed as a document which integrated these strategy documents. In Part 1, a table lists the Council policies and strategies which were seen to have an influence on the planning policies in the UDP. These included, the regeneration strategy, the annual economic development plan, the housing strategy, a sustainability action plan, recycling strategy, energy policy, transport policies and programmes, education action plans and community care plan. This variety of strategies

and policies were described as influencing the planning policies in the UDP, and the work of the officers in working groups (described above) details some of the ways in which ‘Council strategies’ were considered in the work to review the UDP. Within Part 1, the UDP is also portrayed as an important means of enacting some of these strategies:

“The different strategies shown in Figure 1 mesh together in a variety of ways. The UDP has a particular role to play in that its policies are implemented directly through the process of planning control. The plan is therefore one of the mechanisms by which strategies, such as that for regeneration, can be achieved on the ground. However there are other areas - such as extending job skills - where the plan has little or no role. The UDP certainly has a key role in the implementation of the Council’s environmental aspirations, through its policies for transport, design and conservation. It also provides a (sic) important vehicle to implement both local and regional housing strategies” (Islington Planning Service, 1999b p.8).

The UDP is therefore defined as having a specific role due to the nature of its policies, which are implemented through a defined procedure, ‘planning control’. This is described as important for some strategies, but due to the defined nature of ‘planning control’ and of the policies in the UDP (as described above), as not relevant to others. Importantly, the Plan is described as a ‘mechanism’ which allows actions to be achieved, such as ‘regeneration’. The idea of policies as ‘mechanisms’ or ‘tools’ is further expanded in another table which gives examples of policies in the UDP and states whether they have an impact on four Council strategies (Housing Strategy, Regeneration Strategy, Environment Policy and Extending Opportunity). The UDP can be viewed as a means to enact other collective intentions expressed in ‘Council strategies’ and is also portrayed as a practical means (or mechanism) which serves to link this variety of policies. In this way, the plan is distinguished by ‘its’ ability to play a role in integrating a variety of policy objectives into one document. This might be seen to be an attempt to reify ‘the Plan’ as a document with certain qualities, which are described as important to other areas of work. In this way, the UDP might be seen to be defined as such a document in order for it to influence the work of others, and seek their enrolment.

Defining 'the council' and its boundaries

The Council Strategies are however not described in Part 1 of the UDP as being adequate to meet the aims of 'the Council'. In particular, Part 1 states:

"However the Council recognises that these strategies in themselves are inadequate to deal with Islington's needs and problems, and that change can only occur through partnerships with local people and businesses, and through empowering the community to determine the Borough's future." (ibid. p.7)

This statement seems to infer that there are boundaries to the Council's influence, and that 'the Council' as an entity does not have the ability to single-handedly solve defined needs and problems. The statement then suggests that there are other things which can contribute to the process of dealing with needs and problems. These things are defined as 'local people', 'businesses, and 'the community'. 'Local people' and 'businesses' are described as things which can aid this process through 'partnership', thus further strengthening the identity of 'the Council' as a body which can enter into partnership. Highlighting 'businesses' may indicate that this group was defined as a key entity in changing what were seen to be economic problems. 'The community' is however described in a different way; a group which 'the Council' feels it is necessary to 'empower'. This might indicate how groups are distinguished for the purposes of carrying out some action (dealing with Islington's needs and problems). Whilst local people and businesses are defined as entities which 'the Council' should enter into partnership with, the community is defined as an entity which does not have power in determining the Borough's future and which the Council should seek to empower. This constructs an important role for 'the Council', not solely as the provider of solutions to problems, but also as a body which is seen to hold a critical role in defining other bodies and their role in solving problems. This theme seems to run through many documents, and places 'the Council' and the texts that they produce as co-ordinators of many disparate influences. This might be viewed as an important strategy for many texts of this type, which are defined through their role in relation to other texts and groups.

This conception of the UDP as being influenced by other texts, and having a role in integrating or combining other texts is shown in another section of Part 1:

Figure 1 shows some of the Council's strategies which feed into the UDP. It also shows other influences on the content of the plan which have been highlighted in this chapter, such as strategic policy, the policies of other agencies and the views of the public. It clearly highlights the importance of consensus building to ensure that this diverse range of interests can be brought together. The formalised and relatively long timescale for statutory plan preparation provides the opportunity for this to be done." (ibid. p.7)

This statement thus defines certain elements as important in the writing of the Plan. Significantly, policy is mentioned which is defined as originating from 'outside' 'the Council' (described as 'other influences'). This is broken down into two types, 'strategic policy' and 'policies of other agencies'. In Figure 1, strategic policy is seen to be "European, national and regional planning policies" and "London-wide policies and guidelines" (ibid. p.9). This might be seen as a way of defining scales over which policy has an influence (that is, larger geographical areas than the Borough). This description of strategic policy may also relate to ideas of legislative frameworks with which the UDP should comply. Certainly, such a perspective seems to reinforce the notion of a hierarchy of policy and legislation into which the UDP should fit (and which has been mentioned above in relation to statutory controls). The 'policies of other agencies' draws on a less hierarchically defined set of influences, and Figure 1 mentions these other agencies as including "the health authority, the universities, housing associations and public transport operators" (ibid. p.9). The more disparate nature of this grouping of interests is further highlighted through mentioning "local businesses, architects and developers" and "outside organisations and pressure groups, such as the London Ecology Unit and the London Tourist Board" (ibid. p.9). The third 'outside' influence is described as the 'views of the public'. This is also described in a less hierarchical fashion, and in particular mentions the 'inputs to the UDP' as being expressed through a number of mechanisms: "formal consultation on this plan, the views of local neighbourhoods and forums, local groups, such as the Islington Society, the sustainable transport round table, local agenda 21 etc." (ibid. p.9). Such a statement seems to show how 'the views of the public' are not textualised in the same way as 'policies' and 'guidelines', but rather need to be explicitly garnered through certain processes, mechanisms and institutions. These views may be less stable than textualised policy documents, however attempts are made during 'consultation' and through other

institutions (such as neighbourhood forums and local agenda 21) to stabilise and inscribe such 'views'. This is further highlighted in the quote above, which mentions 'the importance of consensus building to ensure that this diverse range of interests can be brought together'. Through this clause, the words 'consensus' and 'brought together' operate to reinforce the importance of acting on 'diverse interests' in a way which will make them less diverse, and therefore more easily integrated into the UDP. In addition, the 'formalised' nature of the plan writing process is mentioned as providing an opportunity to draw together diverse interests and convert such interests into a more ordered form in policy. As will be shown below, notions of the 'formalised' and bounded nature of plans were often used to order the many diverse statements deriving from 'the public'.

THE NEW COUNCIL ACTION PLAN FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Another document which was seen as important in the plan-making process was 'the New Council Action Plan for a Sustainable Future'. This document was seen as a 'Council-wide' plan and was viewed as an expression of 'the Council's' policies and a way of integrating 'Council' work. The action plan was represented as important in meetings of the Environmental Working Group (described above) and was therefore to be integrated into the UDP texts. This document was discussed during a meeting of the Working Group on Environmental issues (11th December 1997). The document was described as:

"a new council action plan for sustainability which merges the existing environment and sustainability action plans, and takes into account actions from the community led LA21 working groups and initial findings from the District Audit environmental stewardship study." (Islington Borough Council, 1997 p.1).

The action plan therefore combines two existing plans as well as integrating the work of another report and LA21 working groups. This way of making plans, through updating previous plans might therefore be viewed as an embedded practice in government; a practice which draws on other texts to create new texts. The section on 'background' in the Action Plan provides reasons for preparing a new plan. It firstly mentions an

agreement by the Policy and Resources Committee that “a new plan for sustainability should be prepared merging actions where progress can still be made from the existing environmental action plan and action plan for a sustainable future which were agreed in 1995” (ibid., p.1). Thus a defined group (the Policy and Resources Committee) had powers, defined in a set of relations surrounding decision-making in local authorities, to agree to a new action plan or provide a stabilised ‘agreement’ which would legitimate further work. The ‘background’ section to the Report does not define which groups or who is carrying out the ‘actions where progress can still be made’ (this may be detailed in the previous plans). The second reason for preparing the new Action Plan is that it needs to account for actions proposed by ‘the community-led LA21 action groups’, thus highlighting other groups which have an influence on ‘policy’ and defining these as ‘community-led’ and thus distinguishing them from other ‘council groups’. Thirdly, and importantly:

“The need for the new plan to link to other planning processes such as the corporate planning process, Islington State of the Environment report, unitary development plan which is currently being reviewed, transports policies and programmes and housing strategy was recognised” (ibid., p.1).

This statement says that the Policy and Resources Committee recognised a need for diverse pieces of work to be integrated through the means of the Action Plan. Thus the Action Plan has taken on a role as an intermediary in tying together different “skills, actions and relations of heterogeneous entities” (Callon, 1991 p.136). The Action Plan may even become an actor if it manages to ‘transform other intermediaries to create new intermediaries’ (ibid. p.141). Therefore, if the Action Plan was to transform the unitary development plan, and officers discussed ‘how the UDP should be amended to incorporate the Action Plan’, then it might be viewed as an actor. However, there are many other relations surrounding the UDP and the Action Plan, and it is problematic to state that the Action Plan directly transformed the UDP. The Policy and Resources Committee did agree that the Action Plan should ‘link to other planning processes’ rather than ‘linking’ these heterogeneous entities, thus showing a different transitive interpretation. In the Action Plan itself, there are a number of policies which are marked as the responsibility of Assistant Director of Technical and Environmental Services

(Development) (one of the Chief Planning Officers), and a number of other policies which are marked as having implications for the UDP. The Action Plan only mentions the UDP specifically in two policies. However, numerous other policies related to work that was perceived by officers to be relevant to the UDP review process, including the devising new Controlled Parking Zones and extending conservation areas in parks. The Action Plan, therefore, tended not to mention the UDP specifically in its policies, but instead was implicated through the means of defining responsibilities of various officers, and drawing on inherited notions of the remit of development plans.

Another aspect of the Action Plan for a Sustainable Future is the ways in which groups are defined throughout the document. Most of these groups have been defined through other texts and other aspects of work surrounding 'the Council' (including conversations, job titles, departments and so on). Within the Plan itself, officers are defined as 'the Post Responsible' for implementing the Plan, thus making the Plan one which might be defined as an internal plan. However, the responsibilities of officers which are detailed in the Action Plan extend 'outside' the Council to groups which are more or less tightly defined in the text and in other texts. For example, Islington Agenda 21 Forum and neighbourhood forum environment sub groups are cited in the text, and have been defined in other texts and through practices such as meetings as having a fairly fixed membership. These groups, which are defined through texts and practices, were to be consulted on the Plan in detail. Other groups are not as strictly defined (or definable) in the text of the Action Plan, because their membership is not one which is tightly attributable to other practices (such as meetings, production of reports and so on) or tied to other defined identities (such as position within the local agenda 21 hierarchy in Islington). These groups include, for example, 'developers' who were to be provided with advice on sustainable construction through the UDP. This group might be defined as a type of group of users of the UDP. Other groups were also cited in the document, and were related to 'the council' and its activities. This was most clearly expressed in the section on 'Proposals':

"A sustainable future for Islington is only achievable through an effective partnership of shared effort and responsibility with individuals, businesses and local organisations. However, the council has an important role to play and

can impact on the environment in a number of ways; through provision of services, as a consumer and purchaser, by continuing to involve local people in decisions about the environment, and as a democratic voice for local people.”
(London Borough of Islington, 1997b p.2)

This piece of text refers to a number of groups in relation to Islington Council. The Council is not defined specifically in the document, but is instead created as a body which has an identity through defining its roles and responsibilities. In other words, Islington Council is defined by work which is carried out by a diverse set of individuals and entities, but attributed to ‘the Council’ (in a wider sense than ‘the Council’ being the body of elected members, as statutorily defined). This way of defining ‘a Council’ is also found in other documents, including the UDP itself, and seems to be a strong mechanism for shaping an identity around which work is based and carried out. The piece of text also mentions local people, which might be viewed as a group which it is not possible to tightly define through various practices, apart perhaps from residing within the boundaries of the Borough. This statement within a ‘council’ plan, is similar to other statements which define the public and its relation to ‘the council’, and may reflect a defined ‘Council Priority’ of ‘Customer Care’ (Islington Planning Service, 1999c).

The Action Plan for a Sustainable Future shows some of the ways in which ‘the Council’ is defined, and highlights some of the consequences of these definitions; for example setting out the work of ‘officers’ in relation to ‘the Plan’. The work to define ‘officers’ as a grouping will be dealt with in the next section.

DEFINING OFFICERS AS ACTORS IN PLAN-MAKING

Fieldwork material showed that one of the key actors defined in relation to plan making was officers. This grouping was also related in many texts and conversations to ‘the Council’ and might be viewed as an important part of ‘Council’ networks. This section will outline how ‘officers’ were defined and how their role in ‘plan making’ was delimited in texts and actions.

Work surrounding the review of Islington UDP was described in a number of texts as being started in October 1996 by the Environment Committee of Islington Borough Council. This Committee of elected members of the Council agreed that a review of Islington's UDP should take place. As this analysis will show, officers of the Council were to carry out much of the work surrounding the review of Islington UDP and were to be influential in co-ordinating the activities of other groups and individuals. In this study I do not wish to define the roles and responsibilities of 'officers' in a static way (as might be seen in many other texts, for example, Committee on Management of Local Government, 1967 and Department of the Environment, 1972). 'Officers' as a group are actively defined through a multiplicity of texts and activities. In this way, 'officers' can be a term used in a variety of settings and for different purposes (for example, 'housing officer', 'planning officers', 'senior officer' and 'Chief Planning Officer'). The term 'officer' may be used to describe individuals with differing roles and responsibilities in a variety of settings. However, the term 'officer' is also used as a noun which is used in a more generic way within texts. This may be the result of inherited concepts of local government structure propagated in numerous texts, which has allowed 'officers' to be used as a singular term which relates to a diverse range of individuals. (This might be seen as a central feature of language use; that of classifying diverse entities into singular categories so that the category can be related to other categories.) Although this argument may seem somewhat arcane, a key aim of this analysis is to understand how inherited concepts come to have an influence on the activities of individuals and groups, and especially what they can do within certain settings. The work associated with reviewing Islington UDP was for many reasons associated with the work of the group of individuals known as 'officers'. As I have noted above, this group consisted of a diverse array of individuals which was constituted in different ways, at different times, for different purposes and by different actors.

OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

One way in which 'officers' were defined in texts and actions was through a conception of local authority structure in which 'officers' were contrasted with 'members'. This was articulated in minutes of committees which mentioned 'members' and 'officers' as

groups which influenced and were bound by decisions made by those committees. Additionally, the two groupings were re-produced by officers and members during interviews, for example: “I wouldn’t say that it was adversarial between either members and the officers, and between the members on the party lines” (an Islington Councillor). Councillors seem to be more coherently defined between different texts than officers, possibly because such texts are written by officers. This may also be due to the rigidity and stability with which they are defined within widely circulated texts, such as the various acts of Parliament concerning local authorities and the standing orders of local authorities themselves. Thus the definition of elected members is stabilised within a widely accepted legalistic discourse. Officers, as a group are not as tightly defined within this legal discourse. However, this concept of separate groups of ‘officers’ and ‘members’ is not sufficient to allow this analysis to uncover the complex definitions of these groups which arose from numerous texts.

DEFINING OFFICERS IN DEPARTMENTS

Another way in which ‘officers’ were defined was according to the concept of departmental structure. This was cited by many individuals as an important influence on the work surrounding the UDP review. This notion of a structure within ‘the council’ also implies that ‘the council’ is one thing which can be divided, and this will be explored below. The idea of ‘the council’ as a defined entity is articulated in numerous texts and for different reasons. Whilst ‘the council’ was used in different texts as a term and which may have vastly different meanings ascribed to it, there seemed to be some stability to a definition of ‘the council’ as an entity made up of different departments. This definition was articulated in numerous documents, which mentioned various services or responsibilities which ‘departments’ provided. These included ‘Regulatory and Planning Services’, ‘Social Services’ and ‘Law and Public Services’ amongst 15 ‘services’. The structure of functionally different services allowed these services to be conceived as having their own internal structure. This was articulated through documents which attempted to stabilise identities of departments, as well as through day-to-day conversation and meetings. A number of structures were identified by documents as ‘within’ ‘Regulatory and Planning Services’, and which

were related to functions and responsibilities to be carried out by 'officers'. These included 'Environmental Health' and 'Planning Services', as well as constituent sections of 'Planning Services' such as 'Development Planning', 'the Conservation Team' and 'the Policy Team'. Each of these definitions was related to the work carried out by individuals who were members of these groups (all 'officers' and 'administrative staff'). The documents and meetings which re-produced these groupings might be analysed as stabilising identities and the work of individuals defined in these groups. However, these definitions were not inherently stable; instead they were changed over time, and the work carried out 'within' these groups was not always the same. These groupings have been changed by certain actors at different periods. For example, one of the Chief Officers said in an interview: "the Chief Executive - she came around three years ago and set up these Executive Directors without service responsibility of which there were four". Near the end of the fieldwork period, a number of 'departments' were also going to be merged, which was seen by a number of officers as part of a process by which 'senior officers' and councillors were constantly reorganising (or renaming) departments. This was illustrated by a note on the wall of the 'Policy Team's' office which said:

"Welcome to the: Policy Section of the Development Planning Service of The Development Division of the Directorate of Technical and Environmental Services of the London Borough of Islington" Written in red ink below this was *"Superseded (again)"*.

Thus the naming and renaming of departments was in some ways conceived as irrelevant to much of the work carried out 'within them'. This may reflect other influences on what work is done and how it is organised. The importance of the statutory functions which local authorities are required to carry out by legislation influences what work is to be done and who is responsible for this work. Legislation such as the Town and Country Planning Act and attendant documents such as the Development Plan Regulations stabilise the work carried out by 'officers'. However, organising and defining departments and teams was also seen by a number of individuals as important to the work that was to be carried out (including the work of consulting 'the public'). As one councillor said:

“about four days after consultation on the UDP ended, the consultation on the sustainable transport policy began - now that’s daft, that really should be totally linked together and until a few weeks ago planning and transport were different departments - one was Environment and Leisure and the other Regulatory and Planning - now they are combined under the same head of service”. (Liberal Democrat Councillor).

Work to define a grouping called ‘officers’ was found to be important in setting the practices enacted in the making of the UDP. Defining roles and responsibilities of ‘officers’ within sets of relations between ‘departments’ served to legitimate certain practices. Some of these ‘practices’ or ‘ways of doing things’ were largely unchallenged, whereas others (such as ‘consultation’ in the quote above) were challenged by some actors. Importantly, a particular group of officers were defined as having a key role in work to review Islington UDP. This group of officers was defined not only in ‘Council’ hierarchies, but also in other networks which related ‘officers’ to notions of professionalism and specialised knowledge. The grouping of officers might be seen as an actor in networks described by texts such as the UDP and ‘Government guidance’.

DEFINING MEMBERS

Whilst the previous section has focused on the work carried out by the group defined as ‘officers’, this section will concentrate on that group which is referred to in texts and discussion as ‘members’ or ‘councillors’. This group as an entity has been described above as more coherently defined in different texts than officers. This is not, however, to say that ‘members’ are uniform in role and responsibility and in the work that they do. There are many different divisions along which this group is split, both through ‘formal’ hierarchies and according to more fluid groupings. Elected members are divided by mechanisms which define membership of a political party; as shown by a comment from a councillor: “occasionally it so happens that all the Labour members appear to be of one mind and all the Lib. Dem. Members appear to be of a different mind, but we don’t go for whipping, occasionally you can see why people split politically - presumably where all other arguments fail - but usually it’s done with a cross vote”. There are also other divisions, such as membership of committees, which

was expressed in a statement from a councillor: "I'm on the Environment, Leisure and Transport Committee which is in a way the parent committee of the UDP, although Development Control is now a committee in its own right, it doesn't report to the Environment Committee which owns the UDP, whereas Development Control just puts in some input". This quote highlights a number of committees; the committees were defined according to roles which they took and responsibilities for various pieces of work. Therefore, some committees were defined according to the defined types of work which officers undertook within departments. (Conversely types of work were also defined by committee responsibilities; for example the work undertaken by officers in the Development Control Division might be seen to be shaped in part by the need to provide advice to committee members on planning applications). As mentioned above, the members of the Environment, Leisure and Transport Committee approved the review of the adopted UDP in 1996. There are links between the work of officers and the work of members, and this is shaped in a hierarchy based on departments and committees, so that the Environment, Leisure and Transport Committee was linked to work on the UDP, and was even described as the 'owner' of the UDP. However, such distinctions are not necessarily set hard solely through the existence of committees and departments. Divisions are also created and re-created through the texts and practices written and carried out by various actors.

THE UDP TASK GROUP

Whilst the committees which were named above had responsibilities which were defined through such mechanisms as standing orders (and were set to change with a new 'cabinet-style' decision-making system), a number of other practices and arenas seemed to shape the ways in which members worked. One of the most important arenas in which members considered the UDP was the 'UDP Task Group'. The idea of a task group was suggested by officers in a meeting with members of the Environment, Leisure and Transport Committee in early 1998. This group was described as an 'informal body' by a senior planning officer, which suggested a perception that the Task Group was different from 'formal bodies' such as the committees. Although the group was described as 'informal', the rules concerning membership and procedure were

similar to the ingrained procedures associated with committees. This meant that the Task Group's membership by councillors belonging to each political party reflected the overall membership of the Council. At the time, the Council was hung, and the Task Group therefore had four members from the Labour Party and four from the Liberal Democrat Party, with the Chair of the group being a Labour Party member. This was shown in a quote from a Liberal Democrat councillor: "I ended up chairing it (the Task Group) on one occasion - no Labour councillors had turned up at the appointed time - by acclamation of my Lib. Dem. Colleagues assumed the chair, but fortunately there was quite a good bi-partisan atmosphere when the chair did arrive later - he let me keep the chair". The Task Group as a body, therefore used a number of inherited decision-making forms, such as having a chair and use of votes. In addition, the group considered reports written by officers which concerned particular chapters of the UDP, or issues which were seen as important by either officers or members. However, one of the characteristics of the Task Group which was frequently repeated, by both officers and members was its difference from other decision-making practices associated with 'council work'. This was stated as one of the main reasons for the Task Group's existence by one councillor: "I think there's no doubt that it needed something like the Task group because the existing committees were far too big and overloaded and had far too much to do, so it required a group of councillors to come along and officers to sort of concentrate on the job in hand". This reason for the Task Group being formed (that committees had 'far too much to do') was seen as important by many of those involved. This in turn seemed to reflect a view that the work surrounding the review of the UDP was substantial in nature, and needed much time to be committed by those involved. Thus the Task Group was perceived as made up of councillors who were 'interested' in planning; and as one senior planning officer said in conversation: "they've (the Liberal Democrat group) got one or two keen members on planning issues, the same as Labour has - but neither group has got huge numbers of members interested in planning issues". The idea of the UDP review process involving much work and certainly involving a significant number of documents can be illustrated by the agenda for the first Task Group meeting, which apart from the main report to the Task Group, also had five large attached documents. As one councillor said: "I don't have a recollection of being presented with some precise policy choices at one time, rather it was a sort of

braindump of four or five chapters one after the other and you had to work out what the wider issues were". The work which the Task Group did might be seen to highlight the role of texts and varied ways in which the roles of the Task Group members were constructed through these texts as well as the inherited notions of the role of councillors which were enacted in the work of the group.

THE UDP TASK GROUP AND ITS ROLE IN REVIEWING UDP POLICIES

The Group, as a body of councillors, met five times from October 1998 until the deposit period of the UDP in June 1999. The short period over which the Task Group worked, up to the deposit period (a term which will be defined below), seemed to focus the work of the group on the detail of the Plan policies. This need to study individual Plan policies in detail, rather than discuss principles behind these policies seemed to derive from officers, who took a role in organising the Group and its meetings. This is illustrated in the Report written by officers in the Policy Team for the first meeting of the UDP Task Group. The Report initially gives reasons for why the UDP was being reviewed. These largely coincide with those reasons given in both the consultation document, 'Planning for the 21st Century' and the revised UDP text. In addition to 'government guidance' and the need for an 'environmental appraisal' of the Plan, the report also said that the UDP had to have some technical improvements and stated that 'members wanted closer integration between the UDP and other Council documents'. The report, which was written by a small group of officers, therefore highlights 'members' as wanting the UDP to link to other Council strategies more clearly. This means that 'Council strategies' had to be defined within a number of texts and that the UDP as a whole was seen as an entity which could combine and integrate these other entities.

However, the proposed section on Part 1 of the UDP did not provoke much debate from councillors, except over the Targets. Other statements were also made in relation to how work to integrate strategies and involve the public, and these mainly consisted of reporting details of 'the consultation exercise' (which will be described below). The Task Group did not widely contest the Aims and Objectives section of the UDP, and

there seemed to be agreement over its form, as indicated by the Chair of the UDP Task Group:

Interviewer: "I know that monitoring is a new thing that's coming through plans, and aims and objectives seem to be a quite important part - is that something that you had much influence over in the Task Group, or was it something that came from the officers generally?"

Chair of the Task Group: "No, I think it came from the Task Group - suddenly there it was, I think it came from the Lib. Dems. - although I wouldn't admit it - but it's fine having a plan, but what about some objectives, and er we latched onto that - I might be wrong - I think it's a great idea, especially if it works"

The majority of discussion within the Task Group was seen as centring around one or two issues, and most elements of the reports to the Task Group were not discussed at length by the group. Most reports took the form of an introduction to the changes in the chapter of the Plan to be reviewed and then the detailed changes to the policy being set out (often in tabular form). The changes were presented to the Task Group as a number of chapters which had had policies re-written by officers in the Environmental Working Group and the Policy Team. There tended not to be much debate on many issues due to the number of policies which were being reviewed in the meetings of the Task Group. This may have allowed officers to gain the agreement of councillors over a large number of changes in the wording of policy. There was some dissatisfaction expressed by one councillor over the role of the Task Group: "I don't have a recollection of being presented with some precise policy choices at one time rather it was a sort of braindump of four or five chapters one after the other and you had to work out what the wider issues were" (Liberal Democrat Councillor). This view was reinforced by the same councillor who felt that the presentation of the changes to the policies was lacking, and that this might have been a result of the need to alter policies in order to conform to other, newer texts: "I don't think that there was a shortage of big ideas, there was a shortage of the presentation of those big ideas - they're there...I think that the influences on UDPs can tap into those ideas - quite a lot of it was what I would call housekeeping in a number of key areas that sort of informed policy - government policy or even building regulations have left the old draft high and dry". In this way, 'the big ideas' or 'precise policy choices' were already interspersed throughout the draft chapters which

the councillors received, and it was the role of councillors to ratify this. The Chair of the Task Group expressed fewer qualms about the structure of the meetings:

Interviewer: Did you also find that you could shape agendas, obviously the officers gave you reports or gave you draft chapters - did you find that you changed much in that in the task group - was there more ratification than change?

Chair of the Task Group: well yes more ratification than change erm I can't remember any specific example, yeah we sent them back to reword ___ in some cases which happened, it was a very creative atmosphere; I wouldn't say that it was adversarial between either members and the officers, and between the members on the party lines, on the planning side we are reasonably apolitical"

The minutes of the Task Group meetings also indicated that much of the role which was defined by officers and some councillors for the group was that of ratification and that the changes revolved around updating the policies in relation to other documents. An important element of Task Group meetings was the role of officers in clarifying pieces of wording in the text of the revised policies. For example, one councillor asked if policies in the UDP could prevent the Secretary of State (for Education and Employment) closing schools, to which the officer replied that they could not. Some reference was also made to restrictions placed by legislation or central government documents. One example concerned a criticism by a councillor that the map scale was too small to show Sites of Nature Conservation Importance clearly, and to which one of the Chief Planning Officers replied that such a scale was required by Government. In addition, officers also sought to set limits on how policies could be changed, and drew on their role in dealing with policies more regularly. This was shown when a councillor asked whether criteria for non-mandatory environmental assessments could be included in the UDP, to which a Chief Officer replied that such a strategy would be 'inflexible and that negotiation and planning briefs were more suitable tools'. The role of officers was thus defined as a group who had knowledge in how policies were implemented, and was the group who had to deal with them.

This is not to say that there was not debate during the meetings of the UDP Task Group. One of the main policies which was debated was that concerning acceptable housing

density. This policy change seemed to provoke much discussion, as it was viewed as being linked to other policies in the UDP. This was reflected on by the Chair of the Task Group:

“The main arguments were then really important issues like housing density - there was a lot of argument and a lot of politicking around that both inside the group and outside the group in various committees - so we have ended up with a higher density but informed by higher standards particularly for sites that are near good public transport”

He later reiterated the links between that policy and other policies and the aims of the Plan: “one of the reasons for lower density is to accommodate the motor car and (this plan) doesn’t do that - all these high density designs are designing out parking”. Other councillors were not convinced of the need to increase housing density standards in policy, and referred to it as a ‘return to post-war social housing disasters’. However, those councillors who supported such a change in policy referred to the target for increasing housing in the Borough set in regional guidance (Department of the Environment, 1996). Drawing on the regional guidance document published by the Department of the Environment proved an important strategy in changing the policy, as there was a defined need to accommodate another 5750 dwellings between 1992 and 2006. However, the policy change was not viewed as inviolable and the change in policy was described as a compromise by one of the Chief Planning Officers: “in the end the big issue was probably density where two of the leading Labour members were really at odds with each other - one saying yes it is acceptable to have high density and one saying no it is not, and we’ve got a bit of a compromise in the wording of the UDP”. Other policies which were seen as controversial by members and officers included those concerning ‘controlled parking zones’ and a policy on mansard roofs within conservation areas, which will be discussed below.

The UDP Task Group enacted a particular role in relation to the plan-making process. ‘Officers’ arose as key actors in defining what the Task Group was and more importantly its relationship to texts of the UDP. The elected members on the Task Group generally held a role of ratifying policy changes, rather than a role of challenging them. This was ensured through officers producing large documents which members

could not fully analyse due to time constraints and lack of professional knowledge. Some members did not challenge their enrolment into this network relation, whilst others were more critical of their defined role.

CONSULTING THE PUBLIC

In this section, I will concentrate on the work which was defined as ‘consultation’ by a number of texts and by interviewees. There were numerous ways in which the activity of ‘consulting’ was realised, and a number of influences on these practices. One particular way in which ‘consultation’ practices were legitimated and enacted was through ‘Central Government’ documents. In a similar way ‘Council strategies’ were also used to legitimate actions. This part of the write up will deal with a number of activities which were defined as ‘consulting’. These include the setting up of a Sustainable Transport Round Table, an environmental appraisal and writing texts (such as Planning for the 21st Century and the Proposed Changes to the UDP) which were distributed to particular groupings.

The term ‘consultation’ is a nominalised form of the verb ‘to consult’ and was used in many texts as a way of conceiving this process as an entity in itself, for example a ‘Report of Consultation’. ‘Consultation’ was frequently used as a nominal group, in order that it could be associated with another verb and often another noun (for example ‘consultation with local businesses was carried out’). In this way, texts linked named groups with an action (consulting). However, ‘consultation’ was also used as part of a nominal group, so that a ‘consultation process’ or ‘consultation procedures’ were mentioned. The grammatical features of the use of this word show how processes and actions are conceived in texts. ‘Consultation’ has a series of objects associated with it; for example, pamphlets or questionnaires. The word was also related to groups, so there needs to be an entity to consult. In this way, an analysis of ‘consultation’ should identify how the bodies to be consulted are defined. The groups to be consulted are not always identified in texts, and ‘consultation’ as a nominalised form of the verb allows it to be used without a subject. This seems to reflect some stability in the way in which the process of ‘consulting’ has been conceived. In addition, there is some sense that

'consulting' also needs an object, something which is consulted on. In some texts, this is stated, whilst in others 'consultation' is a less tightly focused process. Many of the texts referred to 'consultation on the Plan', which enabled the process of 'consulting' to be controlled due to its limitable extent. This was challenged by an interviewee who said: "there was this guy...and he got into a very articulate argument with the Chief Planning Officer who was at the same meeting about how the consultation ought to be done, and he said it's really important to consult people on an ongoing basis up to the point of the deposit and get people to buy into it, and not just to bang it in and then let people have a statutory month to comment on it". This therefore focuses on the changing and changeable nature of 'a Plan', and attempts by some to limit the way in which such a thing (once defined) can be changed. Consulting was in this case seen as an activity which could have an influence on the UDP.

GOVERNMENT AND CONSULTING

There seems to be a number of reasons why certain actions were taken, which were defined as 'consulting' or 'consultation'. One seems to be derived from texts emanating from 'central government'. In particular, legislation was cited as a reason to carry out certain actions. In the Report of Consultation (Draft) it is stated: "Strict legal procedures exist for preparing and reviewing the plan, which include formal consultation procedures and a public local inquiry". Consulting is thus defined according to certain procedures which are seen to be formalised in legal texts. The adjective 'strict' indicates that these legal mechanisms are tightly defined and must be adhered to. In addition, use of the noun 'procedures' indicates a stabilised process which is oriented to consulting. The legal texts which were viewed as important (certainly by those involved in the everyday work on the plan) were also mentioned by a Chief Planning Officer: "the consultation specifically in 1999 has not been big, and while we've certainly tried to meet the statutory requirements, I would argue that we haven't really done anything beyond that".

COUNCIL STRATEGY AND CONSULTING

Another reason why these actions were taken and legitimised was due to strategies ascribed to 'the Council'. As has been discussed above, Part 1 of the UDP mentions how 'the Council' should encourage 'local people' to deal with defined needs and problems in Islington. The section mentions how certain groups (local people, community, the public) should be involved in making decisions on 'Council strategies'. In respect of the Plan, Part 1 says: "the process of plan preparation itself ensures that local people have a say in deciding on the Council's planning policies for the future" (Islington Planning Service, 1999b p.7). Thus writing planning policies is conceived of as a process which enables 'local people' to decide on policies for 'the Council'. However, officers who were involved with the writing of the UDP did not frequently mention stated Council aims as specific reasons to 'consult local people'. Other procedures associated with the Council were mentioned as having an influence on the actions of consulting. For example, neighbourhood forums and Local Agenda 21 groups were conceived of as means by which the Plan could be consulted. Whilst specific 'Council aims' were not frequently mentioned as reasons to 'consult', certain mechanisms associated with 'the Council' and with 'the Public' were used as means to consult. Finally, a more nebulous set of reasons may have shaped the actions associated with consulting on the UDP. These include the personal political values and judgements of officers most closely associated with the writing of the UDP, and the political values of councillors and how these interacted with the values of other groups. 'Values' might be seen as important reasons for taking certain actions, but the work of enacting these values and norms through talking with others, and writing is more importantly the means by which actions are justified. The reasons why actions were taken and various procedures defined and used, might be related to a complex set of intersecting values and interests which might be defined as a 'culture' of a specific setting or group. The reasons why actions were taken may in some way be related to notions of a 'culture' which makes these actions seem normal or right. However, for this study such a term is not sufficient to allow a detailed analysis of the relations of power which are acted out through the micropractices of writing and speaking. Instead of a 'culture', this study will use the metaphor of an actor-network to describe the ways in which certain practices, such as consulting, are seen to be normal and how certain

actions are contested. In order to study both the influence of certain texts (such as statute) and ‘values’ in shaping the actions of ‘consulting’, it is necessary to explore in detail the ways in which actions are legitimated or challenged through texts and talking.

THE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT ROUND TABLE

Defining specified activities as ‘consulting’ is difficult, and does not take account of what ‘consulting’ might mean in a particular situation. This focuses attention onto what ‘consulting’ is and what is being ‘consulted’. In this case study, ‘consulting’ was often related to practices described as emanating from ‘the Council’, so that this entity was ‘consulting’ others. We might, therefore, conceive a boundary or identity being attached to ‘the Council’ so that we can distinguish things outside the boundary as related to things inside the boundary. By way of an example, a particular grouping, the Sustainable Transport Round Table will be analysed as an entity which showed how the boundary of ‘the Council’ was frequently adjusted and negotiated. In particular, the role of texts in this process will be examined.

Many texts and a number of interviewees identified the Sustainable Transport Round Table as a thing with a particular role in a set of relations. This was shown in a report to Islington Borough Council Transport sub-Committee:

“It is important to engage local interests in the debate on ends and means before indicating priorities for officer action and to work in partnership with local interests in developing and implementing new initiatives. The establishment of an Islington Sustainable Transport Round Table could provide the forum to take this work forward” (London Borough of Islington, 1997a)

This quote identifies a process in which the ‘Islington Sustainable Transport Round Table’ is defined as having an influence. This process is set up as ‘the debate on ends and means’ which would precede ‘indicating priorities for officer action’. In addition, there is a separate process which is ‘important’: ‘to work in partnership with local interests in developing and implementing new initiatives’. This process (or ‘work’ as it is referred to in the last sentence) is viewed as something which needs a mechanism to

enable it. In this quote this is defined as a 'forum' and in turn 'Islington Sustainable Transport Round Table' is defined as the thing which could provide a forum. In addition, the modality of the clause in the last sentence also indicates future possibility through the word 'could'. The future possibility of providing such a forum to take this work forward, is further expressed by 'The establishment of an...' which presupposes a process (of establishing), but nominalises this in order to make 'Islington Sustainable Transport Round Table' a defined entity. Setting up a 'forum' also relates to the work which it can 'take forward', and this seems to be related to a number of separate processes/actions. Firstly, 'developing and implementing new initiatives', secondly, 'working in partnership with local interests' and lastly 'engaging local interests in the debate on ends and means'. Thus 'the forum' to be provided by the Round Table has been defined by what it is proposed that such a forum should do. This importantly involves 'local interests'; however, the nature of local interests or their relation to other things is not clearly defined. 'Local interests' are not defined, and in this quote those whom 'local interests' will be working with or are being engaged by are not mentioned. This quote comes from a Transport sub-Committee report on 'Developing a Sustainable Transport Strategy' and might be seen to be similar to many other report documents. Through reports such as this, 'the Council' is mentioned frequently, and although 'the Council' is not mentioned in this quote, the report is structured in such a way that all proposals are related to 'the Council'. The quote itself follows sections entitled "New Council Initiatives" and "The Way Forward". Through such documents, groups are defined and the boundaries of their actions set. The work which this text does is to provide a focus around which past and future actions can be related. In defining 'an Islington Sustainable Transport Round Table', the report also draws in actions of 'officers' and 'local interests' and defines a mechanism (a forum) by which such inherited concepts can be related, and thus further defined or strengthened.

This quote in the report might be seen to define or propose a Round Table for the first time. However, the report draws on past events and work which has also been related to setting up this forum. The report relates the new proposal to another entity - 'a local Transport Forum' which was in existence from 1993 to 1995. The statement that this group existed, seems to highlight that such mechanisms and processes are not new or

unusual, but things which certain individuals are used to dealing with. In addition, the report (and the quote) also seemed to reflect or iterate work which had been carried out previously. This work was expressed in texts and by interviewees, and was presented as 'an idea' which arose from discussions between three defined groups ('council officers', 'Agenda 21 Transport Working Group' and 'Islington Friends of the Earth'). All three groups had different histories and identities, and this work which involved all three was seen as positive. The work of the group was represented in texts and talk as being different from other work to write policy. As one councillor said: "it (the Sustainable Transport Round Table) had a very, slightly inside track on the formation of policy in that area". This work was specifically directed towards the writing of one element of policy, the Sustainable Transport Strategy, although this objective of 'the Round Table' was initially contested, as shown in a Friends of the Earth newsletter: "originally we wanted the Council to get large businesses to introduce green commuter plans. But the Council officers persuaded us that we should jointly write a Sustainable Transport Policy (Strategy) which would be used to underpin all future TPP applications (Transport Policies and Programmes)" (Islington Friends of the Earth, 1998). Such a quote shows how different groups are represented, so that 'Council officers' act to persuade other groups. In particular, 'Council officers' are shown to want to focus the work of the Round Table in a particular way, namely the writing of a Sustainable Transport Strategy. This is then linked to another set of actions, that is the process of applying related to TPPs (this might be seen as the 'officer action' mentioned in the quote from the sub-Committee Report). In other words, a defined group (Council officers) wanted to direct work towards a specific purpose or goal. This was not contested by other 'members' of the Round Table. As one attendee of the Round Table's meetings said "they, the Council have decided in its infinite wisdom for transport issues they would use the input from the Sustainable Transport Round Table and that was very straightforward and there was no argument about that". It seemed that those who were involved saw the process of writing the Strategy as positive, as it was seen to affect the work and the intentions of those defined as 'normally' making decisions. The Islington Friends of the Earth newsletter stated: "the Round Table is making a significant impact on the hearts and minds of councillors and council officers. It also looks as if we are going to be allowed to direct long term transport policy,

subject, of course, to ratification by the appropriate sub committees.” Thus the Round Table was conceived as a direct way to influence other defined groups, through the actions of writing a ‘Strategy’ which was seen to be valued by these groups (councillors and officers). Representing the processes surrounding ‘the Round Table’ in such a way also reinforces group identities (especially of councillors and officers), even when actions are being taken which are not seen as ‘normal’ (such as having such a forum writing policy). Although inherited concepts of the work of officers (as writing policy with members) are not iterated, identity of officers as a group is still maintained due to the other work which they are seen to carry out. In this way, the Round Table was seen as occupying a distinct relationship to ‘the Council’, ‘officers’ and ‘members’.

Integrating the work of the Round Table and the work on the UDP

Writing of the Sustainable Transport Strategy which was defined as a task for the Round Table, was also represented as an influence on the writing of policies in the UDP. The writing of new policies was represented as an important concern by the Transport sub-Committee report: “Drawing up new policies is a priority with the programmed UDP review, the consultation scheduled for July on a Borough LA21 Strategy and the need to be in a position to respond promptly and effectively to new Government proposals” (London Borough of Islington 1997a). Policies are an important part of the work represented in the quote; they are seen as crucial for the UDP review, are things which make up strategies and enable responses to be given to ‘Government proposals’. Developing the Sustainable Transport Strategy was seen as an important part of influencing the writing of other policy, especially that in the UDP. As a senior planning officer said: “the Sustainable Transport Round Table which has in turn produced the Sustainable Transport Strategy and most of the transport chapter in the UDP, so it has been a very big input”. The work which was carried out to convert the Sustainable Transport Strategy into UDP policies was carried out by officers in the Policy Team, rather than by those attending meetings of the Round Table. The reason for this work being done by officers was expressed by a member of the policy team that some of the Round Table’s work was defined as covering ‘non land-use’ issues, and could not therefore form part of planning policy. This reinforces roles of groups, especially

officers as those who have the skills to define the limits of 'land-use' issues. It also hardens the identity of what 'planning policy' can be.

REVIEWING THE UDP AND DEFINING THE ROLE OF GROUPS

The work of officers was central to the task of reviewing Islington UDP. As mentioned above, the Environment Committee of Islington Council agreed that a selective review of Islington UDP should be carried out. Such a decision was not influenced solely by councillors; officers (both those in the Policy Team and 'senior' officers) also had a role in proposing that a review of the UDP should be carried out. Review of the UDP was conceived of in a certain way in a number of documents. The clause "The Council's Environment Committee formally agreed...that a review should take place" (Islington Planning Service, 1998 p.3) indicates that the process of review is conceived as a singular thing (hence 'a review') and also leaves out any reference to an agent which 'should carry out the review'. Such a statement allows some flexibility in the way in which actors to carry out the review might be defined. As I hope to show below, many of the agents subsequently involved in the review process were defined in inherited groupings which enabled them to take part in the review.

Officers and their role in defining groups

'Officers' as a group, and more specifically those who were members of the Policy Team already had a role in relation to the writing of the previous plan. As this plan was to be 'selectively reviewed', then knowledge of the previous plan was important in securing a role in 'the review'. Officers who were 'within' the Policy Team were constituted as central to the review process, both through their own work and by their position within the structures of 'the Planning Service' and 'Islington Council'. Other officers were also constituted as having a role through a number of mechanisms; the most influential being the Working Group on Environmental Issues. This Working Group had a membership which was defined in the minutes of the first meeting along with its 'terms of reference'. However, the Working Group did not include all the actors who were to influence work on 'the review' in the early stages of the process. Work by other groups was also important, especially that carried out to construct an

'Environmental Appraisal' of the adopted UDP policies (partly carried out due to requirements laid down in government documents). Environmental appraisal involved members of the Policy Team and those defined as 'the public' in assessing policies. 'The public' were defined partly by the Policy Team, as 'local interest group representatives' and were invited by the Policy Team to attend a public meeting in March 1997. The Draft Report on UDP Consultation described the remit of the meetings and those involved in the following way:

"It is now a requirement of government that each borough should carry out an environmental appraisal of all its policies and to assist in this a small group of local interest group representative (sic), many with an existing interest in the Agenda 21 process, has been set up and has so far met on two occasions." (Islington Planning Service, 1998 p.3).

The first meeting was set up to discuss the 'environmental' and 'transport' implications of the UDP policies. Such topics might be seen to be difficult to define, and to address this problem members of the Policy Team constructed a questionnaire which asked respondents to assess policies in relation to: 'global sustainability', 'natural and semi-natural resources', 'local environmental quality' and 'social equity and citizen involvement'. The interest group representatives and unspecified 'members of the public' who attended the meeting, thus had a role defined by officers to fill in the questionnaire. This role was reflected on by a member of an interest group (Friends of the Earth) who attended the public meetings and described the role he played in the process of Environmental Appraisal:

"another thing that the Council asked us to do in the very early days, which I think we did it first which gave me the idea that we were doing a really great UDP was that we did - they sent out a questionnaire on how we should environmentally assess the UDP and had lots of little - it was one of these standard documents used for reviewing another document so was going to be a systematic approach for assessing the UDP and I thought, I really studied it closely and gave in a FoE [Friends of the Earth] version...but that seems to have died, I haven't heard anything about the environmental assessment of the UDP....but we didn't get any results from it, I did a load of homework on it and sent in my response you know in lots of detail, but I'm not sure how they're modifying the assessment" (Friends of the Earth member).

A second meeting, along similar lines, was held in June 1997 with the agenda (broadly set by officers) to discuss impacts of the UDP policies on 'the local area', 'housing', 'the economy' and 'conservation'. Much of the work surrounding the Environmental Appraisal was carried out by officers in the Policy Team, as well as officers drawn from other Teams, such as the Conservation Team. This work centred around analysis of the policies in the adopted plan by various officers, but the work also involved officers assessing the goals and objectives (Part 1) of the adopted plan. A report which brought together the policy analysis work of different officers was written over summer 1997. The report indicated the environmental impact of the policies in detail (especially of Chapter 3 on 'the environment'), as well as the goals and objectives of the adopted plan. The appraisal of these goals and objectives in the report is of particular interest, as it sets out how this group of officers conceived the role of groups such as 'local people' and 'residents' in making policy. Goal number 3 of the adopted UDP states:

"To ensure that its planning policies reflect the needs of all residents, including those suffering from discrimination or disadvantage. The Council recognises that this requires a determined effort to find out the needs and aspirations of local people and local communities. It will also entail the active involvement of residents in decision making, and in some cases specific initiatives to assist in favour of disadvantaged groups." (Islington Planning Service, 1994 p.2)

This goal was assessed in the Environmental Appraisal Report in the following way:

"Islington was at the forefront of having this goal and the participation of residents recognised in the recent versions of the environmental Objectives for a sustainable future as being central to their achievement. Many of the targets which must be reached in order to bring about a change require the active participation of the public at large, as well as changes that authorities and companies may make to their waste, transport and other processes etc. This will require additional work in developing processes for active participation, methods of monitoring and exciting and retaining interest over time." (Islington Planning Service, 1997a).

These quotes define groups which should have a role in influencing the writing of planning policy. However, there is a demarcation between the groups which write policy and those groups influencing this writing process. In this way, the first sentence

of Goal number 3 states that the ‘planning policies’ contained in the UDP should “*reflect* the needs of all residents, including those suffering from discrimination and disadvantage.” (emphasis added) This might be analysed on one level as a broad desire (by the writers of this goal) to take into account all residents of Islington borough. However, it also sets up two distinct groups, namely ‘all residents’ and ‘residents suffering from discrimination and disadvantage’. Both these groups are conceived in this goal as having ‘needs’ which need to be ‘reflected’ by policies. The rest of the goal attempts to outline how this might be carried out. Importantly, ‘the Council’ is defined as an entity which has the role to assess needs of ‘local people’ and ‘local communities’. The second strand to this is that residents becoming ‘actively involved’ in decision making. The goal portrays this as a singular phenomenon (rather than an open-ended process) through the nominalisation ‘involvement’. Lastly, the goal mentions initiatives that will favour disadvantaged groups, but does not further define the membership of ‘disadvantaged groups’ or what the ‘specific initiatives’ might involve. Such goals within documents can be analysed as means of setting a context within which other policies and expressions of intent might fit within. In this way, these goals do not attempt to define groups and processes in detail, but rather tend towards vagueness which might be construed differently by different readers. As the environmental assessment document noted, ‘these goals are more difficult to assess than detailed policies’, and might be seen to be written as a specific contrast to the ‘detailed policies’, in that they resist attempts to measure or assess.

The second quote is taken from the Environmental Assessment Report and relates to Goal number 3 of the UDP. In this piece of text, the concept of ‘participation’ is introduced (and which is not mentioned in Goal number 3). The concept of participation is associated with ‘residents’ and ‘the public at large’, but not with ‘authorities and companies’; possibly indicating a perceived difference in roles which the authors of report (re)articulate. This is further strengthened in the last sentence which relates ‘active participation’ with ‘processes’ which highlights the procedural nature of ‘participation’ (and is linked with other procedures such as ‘methods of monitoring’). Furthermore, the report does not state in what residents or the public at large should ‘participate’, indicating that ‘participation’ is reified into a set of

procedures. In contrast, 'authorities and companies' are seen as more internally coherent, in that they (as defined entities) should make changes to their ways of working, rather than being subject to 'participation'. This extract from the Environmental Assessment Report places participation as an important practice (which should be further developed), and links this to other defined goals (the Environmental Objectives for a Sustainable Future (London Borough of Islington, 1997b)). Thus 'participation' is linked to the goal of ensuring a sustainable future.

The work associated with carrying out an Environmental Appraisal of the UDP highlights the ways in which identities of groups are formed and re-articulated and how roles are ascribed to these groups. 'Officers' as a group were defined as having an important role and an identity within this work (such as 'detailed policy analysis'). The meetings for 'the public' also highlighted the ways in which this group was identified. In particular, documents such as the Environmental Appraisal Report stated that these were 'meetings for the public'; however other groupings were also articulated (such as 'residents' and 'local people'), which might be seen to be related to notions of 'the public'. In particular, both 'residents' and 'the public at large' were related to the process nominal 'participation' grammatically through using 'of' as a structure marker in the quote from the Environmental Appraisal Report. Other groupings were also defined for the purposes of the public meetings. For example, in the Draft Report on UDP Consultation, those involved in these meetings were "a small group of local interest group representative (sic), many with an existing interest in the Agenda 21 process"(Islington Planning Service, 1998 p.3). A senior planning officer described the make up of the group in a slightly different way: "we have done one or two useful meetings on the environmental appraisal - that's probably in 1997 - with you know, the usual suspects broadly - there's quite a few people in Islington interested in the environment, however you want to define it". In this quote, another grouping is highlighted, namely 'the usual suspects' who are defined as 'interested in the environment'. Such a grouping might be seen as a way of officers (amongst others) of categorising a diverse set of individuals according to criteria of 'interest in the environment' and taking part in meetings. The result of these meetings (completed questionnaires) was integrated into the Environmental Appraisal Report by those

officers writing the Report. This follows the conception of ‘the Council’ assessing the views of ‘the public’ as expressed in Goal number 3 of the UDP, and discussed above. The public, as a group, became defined in different ways and other groups were also identified as closely associated with the definition of ‘the public’, such as ‘residents’, ‘local people’ and ‘local communities’. These definitions are all written within documents associated with the work of officers and members, and might be seen to reflect their work in defining ‘the public’, and the ways in which they define and stabilise conceptions of groups.

PLANNING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

A key stage in work defined as ‘reviewing the UDP’ was the production of a document ‘Planning for the 21st Century’ by officers in the Policy Team. This was closely related to the practice of consulting as indicated in the Report of Consultation (Draft): “The consultation process was initiated with the publication of a twenty page pamphlet entitled ‘Planning for the 21st Century’ in October 1997” (Islington Planning Service, 1998 p.3). Although other actions referred to as ‘consultation on the UDP’ occurred before this date, such as the Environmental Appraisal, this document was conceived of as the start possibly because it was deemed part of ‘formal consultation’. In this sense, ‘formal consultation’ relates to a certain set of procedures encoded in documents such as the Development Plan Regulations (1991) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 (Department of the Environment, 1992). The writing of ‘Planning for the 21st Century’ was described by one officer as largely another officer’s work. Although the document referred to ‘the Council’ and ‘the planning service’ and refers to these groups as ‘we’ or ‘us’, it seems (as is common with many documents attributed to ‘councils’) that one person wrote the majority of the text. The text itself, is worded in a way which uses ‘we’, ‘us’ and ‘you’ (the reader). In particular within sections entitled ‘Some issues for the new plan’, there are proposals with the subject ‘we’, as in “Should we be providing more housing in Islington?” (Islington Planning Service, 1997b p.9). In this clause structure, the use of the subject ‘we’ implies “the one that is actually responsible for realizing...the offer or command” (Halliday, 1994 p.89). However, in this instance it may be difficult to identify the subject with a pre-existing group (maybe something

along the lines of ‘housing providers’). In other cases, the subject of these proposals is related to a specific entity. These are expressed in two ways. Firstly, through sentence structure, as in “The council insists on minimum ‘space standards’ in new houses or flats and that all new units are self-contained. Should we continue to do this or should we allow lower quality, but cheaper, accommodation with smaller rooms?” (ibid. p.9). In this case ‘the council’ is related to the subject ‘we’ through being the subject in both sentences and by relating two processes of doing, namely, ‘insisting’ and ‘continuing’. Secondly, grammatical subject may be tied to an entity in a more direct way, through using the third person form, as in “Should the council be trying to change the culture of car dependency?” (ibid. p.17). Such forms of expressing subjects which carry out actions allows groups and actions to be tied together. In the case of ‘Planning for the 21st Century’ there are a number of ways in which future action is represented and who is to carry this out. In some cases future action is tied to a specific entity (such as ‘the Council’) or to an entity with less inscribed identity (such as ‘we’). In other cases, the subject is not tied to that ‘which is responsible for realising’, so that in the question “How can public transport be rejuvenated?”, the agent of rejuvenation is not highlighted. The text of ‘Planning for the 21st Century’ therefore mixes different forms of representing future action, but uses questions and proposals to highlight that such future action is not fixed. This will be related to the form of policies in the deposit version of the UDP below.

Much of the rest of ‘Planning for the 21st Century’ consists of statements used to explain various topics (identified by different headings). These ranged from text concerned with expressing why the Plan was being written, such as: “To do our job properly we need to understand all the relevant issues and we need to know what people think. We must steer an honest, fair and consistent course between the often conflicting needs and pressures of businesses, residents and other interests” (ibid. p.2) (note the use of ‘we’ and ‘our’. In the previous sentence, the subject is ‘The planning service’.) The document also reproduced a diagram which identifies different strategies and agencies which are portrayed as influencing Islington UDP. Other parts of ‘Planning for the 21st Century’ were organised into sections, such as ‘Looking into the Future’, ‘A sustainable environment’ and ‘A green transport policy’. In addition there is a map which identifies

parts of the borough where sites are to be developed and highlights issues and questions relating to specific areas, such as Upper Street where the caption reads: “are there too many restaurants opening up? Should the Plan aim to protect local shops instead?” (ibid. p.10). These sections mix various forms of writing, from brief ‘facts’ and identifying ‘government policies’ and statute to summarising existing UDP policies and identifying possible solutions to problems. The document also identifies a number of groups or bodies which are linked in the text to other actions in the past. For example: “In 1994 the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution proposed traffic reduction targets for both London and the UK” (ibid. p.17). Such statements serve to identify how groups might be related to actions, and this in turn is related to other actions. The sentence immediately following the last quote states: “However borough-level targets would be difficult to achieve in the absence of a London-wide consensus, although local schemes may be possible.” (ibid. p.17) Through ‘proposing targets’ the Royal Commission seems to align this document in relation to questions of succeeding in achieving these targets. In this way, the document might be seen to express modality in the sense that it shows how probable such action would be. In particular, such a statement is an example of ‘negative modality’ in Latour’s sense: “We will call negative modalities those sentences that lead a statement in the other direction towards its conditions of production and that explain in detail why it is solid or weak” (Latour, 1987 p.23). Such a quote from ‘Planning for the 21st Century’ shows how these targets become questioned through problematising certain consequences of following these targets. However, groups and bodies are not the only entities to be related to actions in the text of the document. There are many examples of other texts entailing action from certain groups. For example, “The Environment Act 1995 has given the council new powers and responsibilities” (ibid. p.17). Thus ‘the Environment Act 1995’ is stated as the subject or actor of the clause and as such is able to carry out an action (of ‘giving’). There is also a goal of the process, some entity to which the process is extended, namely ‘the council’. A new state of affairs is represented as having taken place through the action of ‘the Environment Act’, and in addition this new state of affairs may be related to other actions taken by ‘the council’. This grammatical form is found throughout ‘Planning for the 21st Century’ and seems to highlight the way in which texts can entail certain actions by defined entities. The actions which are entailed in texts might be

analysed as structured in a network form, thus identifying certain actors and their actions.

Questionnaire

The 'Planning for the 21st Century' document was attached with a 'Questionnaire and Comments Sheet'. The questionnaire "intended to help you respond to issues which are discussed in 'Planning for the 21st Century' - although we haven't attempted to cover every issue raised in the document" (Islington Planning Service, 1998 Appendix 3). However, the questionnaire was not intended as the only means of responding to the document: "We would also be happy to receive your views in other ways - for example if you prefer to write a separate letter please do that - particularly if you want to raise additional issues which we may have raised." (ibid.) This shapes attention onto other means of responding, and a number of letters were written by individuals and groups. The questions are placed in categories relating to sections of 'Planning for the 21st Century' and in many cases reword the questions in the 'Some issues for the new plan' sections. Many questions are 'closed', in other words they can be answered yes/no/don't know; however one question asked respondents to rate responses on a scale from very important to not important. There are also spaces for 'any other comments' and these were used by at least half the respondents in each case. Questions were worded in a similar way to those in the main document, using the subject 'we' in a number of questions. Others do not identify an agent for the action, such as "Is it a good idea to encourage a night-time economy ie (sic) more pubs, clubs restaurants etc?" (ibid.) Other questions identify 'the Council' as the actor in a process, such as "In general do you think that the Council should operate firmer planning policies to ensure that all new buildings improve Islington's environment?" (ibid.) Such questions help to define 'the Council' through actions such as operating planning policies, and relating these to other actions such as improving the environment. However, such questions were also seen to be ambiguous, and as one respondent commented: "the question was seen as not being easy to answer because some policies are good and some are bad." In this way, attempts to define 'planning policy' as coherent and generalisable was resisted by one respondent, who attempted to show that policies were not always consistent.

The wording of the questions (as seems to be common to many questionnaires) tends to present issues as clear-cut, and this textual strategy is highlighted as respondents are aligned to answer questions according to the way in which the questions are framed. This strategy may in turn allow certain groups to claim support for various actions, and this will be discussed below.

Actors and Representivity

The legitimacy of actions which are justified through referring to the questionnaire returns are also bounded by claims of representivity of respondents. This is a problem which is frequently mentioned in literature on 'consultation'. Such notions of representivity relate to ideas of what or who actors represent. In actor-network theory, stability is seen to be temporarily achieved by actors who manage to translate the interests of other entities and who then speak for those translated interests (Callon, 1986). In actor-network theory terminology actors come to represent these other entities (be they humans or non-humans). However, this is achieved through much work by actors. In contrast, notions of representivity employed in political analysis do not recognise that interests are actively aligned and represented; instead, someone merely represents others' pre-existing interests. From this viewpoint, the questionnaire returns could be analysed with regard to which group the respondents represented. Planning officers analysed the questionnaire returns in relation to the age, gender and ethnic origin of the respondents and presented this in the Report of Consultation. For the purposes of this analysis it will, however, be necessary to show how actors were aligned in a certain set of relations through the writing of the Plan, and in this case through the text of 'Planning for the 21st Century'. As has been outlined above, some officers were deeply involved in the writing of the new UDP. These officers carried out much work to write texts involved, and to decide how these texts were to be disseminated. In the case of distributing 'Planning for the 21st Century', officers drew on a database which had been constructed by them since the writing of the previous version of the UDP. This database served as a technique for constructing and reiterating group identities. Many of the 'groups' who were sent a copy of the document had identities which were shaped through numerous other processes. These groups seem to have had an

ontological hardness, which allowed them to be defined as 'interested'. Part of the work of defining an 'interest' in this particular text was inherited from other documents, including PPG12 which lists those groups or bodies which should be consulted (Department of the Environment, 1992). Other groups which were defined as having an 'interest' included neighbourhood forums, which were liaison bodies of local people, whose role was defined in various 'council' documents. Some individuals and groups were included by officers on the database because they had commented on previous planning documents. The Report of Consultation stated that: "Around 1,000 copies of the pamphlet "Planning for the 21st Century" were produced and widely distributed locally to interest groups, forums, societies, residents associations (sic), schools, businesses, institutions and any individuals who expressed an interest in contributing or commenting." (Islington Planning Service, 1998 p.3) The set of groups and individuals which were sent the document seemed to conform to certain planning officers' ideas of groups which would have an interest in the planning system. This defined set seemed to have become 'normal', in that such a set was not questioned by other actors. That such groups and individuals were seen as interested (or at least potentially interested) in the writing of the Plan was therefore not strongly contested, and might be seen to reflect a fairly stabilised conception of 'the public'. This is not to say that this was seen as an ideal procedure by all councillors or officers. A chief officer commented that "we've certainly tried to meet the statutory requirements but I would argue that we haven't really done anything beyond that". This was expressed as a result of lack of resources and especially the number of officers who could involve themselves in 'consultation'.

The 'Planning for the 21st Century' questionnaire was returned by 173 groups or individuals. Those who returned the questionnaire were divided into different groups by those officers working on the plan, and a table was produced in the Report of Consultation. Responses varied between these groups, from no returns from the nine advisory members of Council Committees to 51 per cent of individuals (that is those not defined in groups) consulted. This in some way might recognise the differing ways in which 'interest' in the UDP and existence as a body to be consulted might coincide or diverge. Those individuals who were sent the documents had previously commented on similar documents and their interests might be seen to be tentatively enrolled within an

emerging network surrounding the writing of the plan. In contrast, groups such as the Advisory members and ethnic minority groups did not respond in the same manner, and might be seen to resist enrolment in this formative network (even if resisting was through no action - those trying to enrol these groups did not make enrolling essential to them). While such groupings have no 'natural' boundaries or membership, the way in which they are defined (through work by planning officers or through other means) may affect the way in which they became enrolled in the writing of the UDP. In actor-network terminology those trying to translate other entities' interests have to first of all define that entity and its relation to other entities, before attempting to make their involvement in the network of relations essential to them. It seemed that for many groups and individuals consulted their involvement was not made essential and so they did not respond. Whilst this may have been to do with perceived ideas about 'planning' and 'the Council' or how they were committed to other activities, the intermediary which they did not respond to was the document 'Planning for the 21st Century'. Such a document through its structure may be able to allow an actor to enrol others within a network. The structure of the text was shaped in such a way as to explain various aspects of the Plan, through techniques such as a 'jargon buster'. The text also aims to shift the mood of the wording through the use of subjects 'us', 'we' and 'you' rather than using the third person form (although this is also used). Much of the wording, especially at the start refers to other texts and represents the ways in which these other texts are seen to influence 'the UDP'. In this way, numerous documents, such as 'government guidance', 'council policies' and 'the existing plan' are mentioned in the text as having an impact on the way in which the UDP can be written. In this way, those writing the UDP are portrayed as enrolled in other networks through these texts. For example, in a section entitled 'A rapidly changing context' it is stated: "New government planning policies were issued in 1994 (PPG13), which require the council to reduce car use and encourage alternative means of travel which have less environmental impact" (Islington Planning Service, 1997b p.14). Such a statement expresses a specific form of modality through the conjunction of the nominal group (new government planning policies) and the verb 'require'. In addition, the object of the verb 'require' is 'the council' which has to follow a specific action (reducing car use). In such a way, another text defines a group and its action as well as stating the

mandatory nature of the text. In this way, networks might be seen to be temporarily congealed in some places, where there are expected actions required of certain defined groups/actors. This means that those reading 'Planning for the 21st Century' have to accept some of these network relations/institutional facts in order to engage with other parts of the text. This is shown in a section following the quote above, entitled 'The way forward?' with the sub-heading "There is much potential for developing new initiatives to reduce the environmental impact of traffic and reduce traffic generally. Some of these are listed below." (ibid. p.16) In such a way, readers can accept the defined need to reduce car use and then can assess the merits of these 'new initiatives'. If such a statement is not accepted, then such 'new initiatives' are not relevant. Although this presents such choices as 'black and white', such textual strategies or forms do require readers to accept certain 'facts' before moving onto 'proposals'. This in turn raises the issue of modality (as defined by Latour) and whether a statement is leading the reader towards or away from its conditions of production (Latour, 1987). Although in some cases in 'Planning for the 21st Century' there are active attempts to question these 'conditions of production' (for example: "Should the council be trying to change the culture of car dependence" (ibid. p.17)), there are other examples of statements which have a closely defined modal structure, which make it difficult to question the bases of other statements and texts which are referred to. This form of writing is not unique to 'Planning for the 21st Century'. Compared to other documents which are related to the UDP, this document attempts to set questions and question some norms; however, partly due to the way in which the writing of planning policy is defined by other texts and norms, there are many examples where certain statements have to be accepted by the reader.

Responding to the Questionnaire

Whilst many groups and individuals who were sent 'Planning for the 21st Century' did not reply, 173 either filled in the questionnaire and/or wrote a letter regarding the document. These groups and individuals were willing to engage with the text, and position their views and interests in relation to the document. This is not to say that all those who responded agreed with the document, or responded in a uniform manner. In

particular, some of the 'open' questions elicited a varied response, especially one which asked: 'Is Islington getting better or worse?'. However, most of these responses related to questions set by the writers of the text, and followed the themes and topics within it. A number of interviewees commented on 'Planning for the 21st Century'. Each expressed differing opinions of it. One point which was reiterated by those interviewees who had had a planning education was the nature of document in relation to the process of writing a plan. The document was described as an 'issues paper', a term derived from the government document PPG12. This was contrasted with other documents and with other perceived 'stages in the process'. As a planning consultant who had responded to 'Planning for the 21st Century' noted:

"to be perfectly honest there wasn't much to respond to because in this document (Planning for the 21st Century) - it doesn't seem to be putting policies forward it just sets out the issues which is an approach many planning authorities take these days"

Interviewer: *"It's quite interesting about your response to what was essentially a sort of very broad document produced for a wide variety of readers - as planning consultants, professional planners how you felt you would go about responding to something like that, how useful do you find documents like that*

erm in the past what councils would have done is prepared consultation draft local plan stating all their policies and then look at what responses would come back and then after that to go on deposit so it's quite a long process to come up with a draft plan and then to come up with a deposit so I see how councils want to go down the route of preparing issues and erm and on the whole I think some are better at it than others erm because issues papers that I've come across I've had quite detailed quite involved ideas of what the council's trying to do in terms of allocating sites, in fact it might propose these sites which might come forward but as a consultancy our advice to clients is that they should come in at the earliest opportunity in the development plan process and notwithstanding that it may not say much in terms of the document - we will try to influence what the planners are thinking - it's that stage because when you get to the deposit stage because of the work that has gone into the deposit plan sometimes it's a bit more difficult to try and persuade officers to re-write policies or get them changed and although that's not unheard of you may well find yourself in a position of objecting at a local plan inquiry"

Interviewer: *"Do you feel that's where you can have an influence on the whole process in the draft consultation plan?"*

erm from our point of view I don't think it matters either way whether its a draft consultation plan or an issues paper we just want to not push it too far but promote (sites) in the development plan process and erm whether responding to a document like that or a fully fledged policy document it's neither here nor there and it's advantageous to the planning authority when they go for limited consultation on an issues paper"

Other 'planning professionals' did not value the perceived change in process from draft consultation plans to issues papers:

Interviewer: *"There also seems to be a trend of issues papers replacing draft consultation plans - I wondered whether you saw that as a positive step?"*

I don't know - I have very mixed feelings about that I can see why boroughs are going for it and I can see that it's in their interests to eliminate one of the formal stages - I know how complicated and lengthy and mind-bogglingly boring it can get and issue papers are a good way about focusing around a particular issue developing policy around what people feel and through consultation, but the danger of that of (flighting) the planning process into discrete issues is that you lose the planning process and the temptation to avoid one of the key issues of planning which is deciding between competing different types of housing or priorities between different areas - you just deal with all of them on their own - we tend to fall into that trap ourselves we develop policy on a topic basis largely". (Principal Planner at the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC)).

These responses show how 'Planning for the 21st Century' was conceived as one part of a process, in which different actors defined themselves in different roles. For the planning consultant, such documents may not be regarded as of the same importance as the 'deposit version', but are seen as means by which influence can be brought to bear on 'what the planners are thinking'. In this case, 'planners'/'officers' are seen as those who have a major role in the writing of policies. Therefore, the issues paper may not provide a hardened text to which the consultant can align himself with or resist, but seems to be viewed as a means by which the policies themselves may be changed through influencing the perceived writers of these policies. The planner at LPAC expressed different interests, those of wanting plans to be 'integrated' documents. This further highlights a view of plans as coherent entities, and plan writing as work which aims to pull disparate entities (issues) into a coherent textual structure.

An alternative response to 'Planning for the 21st Century' was given by both officers and members of the public. This seemed to orient the document as one which should provide a summary of 'issues', and one which should appeal to a number of actors. In this sense, their views expressed less instrumental or procedural attitudes towards the role of the document. One senior planner commented: "we did produce the issues paper, Planning into the 21st Century (Planning for the 21st Century), if you've seen that, which I think is good, it was largely X's (a planner) work, not entirely his and I think that was quite good, and we got quite a good press from the press and from the local politicians and those members of the public who thought it was an interesting and worthwhile assessment of what the issues were". A Friends of the Earth group member also commented on the document, but was more critical of how planners distributed it:

"I thought that it was a great document because it had a lot of very pertinent and critical issues and was very simple to read - I liked the map in it I thought that it was great"

Interviewer: *"How have other members of friends of the earth - did they respond to it?"*

Well for that document individual people put in response and also we - I was actually giving them away with the forms to encourage people, get people in council estates, council tenants - it's one of the problems of these processes is that they're not in any sense democratic they're not that in terms of the people who respond to them - there are always people who have got issues - because at the time a group of people, we had a garage that we were squatting down by the Angel and so people walking past, one particular day I was giving out forms - which I believe some of them did"

Interviewer: *"Right so there was some response then - do you think that they could have done it any better in distributing the document and targeting it at key audiences and generally encouraging participation?"*

well obviously that's something, well I would say that's the best thing to do, but from a campaigning group point of view it may not be, it may not give the results we want - I know that that sounds ridiculously cynical but depending on the way the questions are worded you can get exactly the response that you want from these things so if you say - should motorists have the freedom to drive anywhere they like, the answer's always yes, should we do something about all the traffic on the roads, the answer's always yes so I know people have to be aware of all the issues in some of the depth before you ask them whether we should have mandatory CPZs [Controlled Parking Zones] across

the borough or something like that. I don't know what the answer is - I accept that there should be more representation"

This interviewee thus pointed to the tensions between interests and how these cannot be resolved in one document. This might be related to the structure of the document and the ways in which the text was made consistent (for example, through drawing on 'government guidance' and shaping other parts of the text around this guidance). The interviewee thus highlighted the perceived need to pursue a particular agenda, and that this may conflict with ideas of representing a variety of interests. The issues paper therefore was seen as something which needed to frame itself with respect to explicit agendas, such as reducing traffic, rather than it being written to reflect a wide range of interests. This can be related back to the view that such documents are expressions of collective intentionality, which may reflect certain defined discourses (for example, that of environmental protection).

As a practice of consulting, the Planning for the 21st Century document re-produced particular sets of relations, especially those relations which had previously defined the groups which were 'consulted'. The role of 'officers' in this process of 'consulting' was crucial. Firstly, they wrote the document and the questionnaire. Secondly, they constructed the database which was used to define those to be 'consulted'. Lastly, 'officers' also responded to comments on the questionnaire. This was mainly through producing a Report of Consultation which summarised responses. This in turn was used to highlight contentious issues, such as 'housing density', which was subsequently debated in other arenas, such as the Task Group and a Round Table Discussion on Housing Density. As Planning for the 21st Century did not propose draft policy wording for the UDP, many of the comments received concentrated on 'principles' of the Plan, rather than the text of the Plan, which was instead written by 'officers' and ratified in the Task Group and Council Committees. This meant that the text of the revised Plan was 'consulted on' at a later date, and this will be discussed below.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE UDP

The second major part of work which was defined as ‘formal consultation’ surrounded the deposit version of the Proposed Changes to the UDP. Work on this document made many connections to other texts and pieces of work, which have been described above. In particular there might be seen to be links between the work to write the Proposed Changes and the work arising out of ‘Planning for the 21st Century’. However, such links were not always easily recognised, and relations between these texts was also mediated by various other texts. Work to revise the policies in the adopted plan, as has been described above, involved a number of groups being formed and a number of roles being enacted by different groups. The re-writing of policies was portrayed by a number of actors as the work of planning officers, and such a group (including ‘the Policy Team’) did have an important role in such work. Other groups were also described as having an influence on the writing process, including elected members and the Sustainable Transport Round Table. Such work seemed to be carried out by these groups through certain mechanisms, such as the UDP Task Group of councillors. Other actors also had a role in the re-writing process, and many of the actions of these actors were shaped by mechanisms surrounding the concept of ‘consultation’. Such ‘consultation’ mechanisms were instantiated in a number of texts and practices. For example, this happened through the practice of holding meetings between ‘officers’ and interest groups (for example a community housing association).

Placing the Plan on Deposit

One set of practices which was re-enacted was that of placing the Plan ‘on deposit’. This practice is derived from statute and other documents which require ‘local planning authorities’ to make the Plan available for comment for a certain period. Statute as a set of texts embodies relations between defined groups with sanctions for those groups who do not enact specified roles in this set of relations. Statute and other documents re-define groups, such as ‘local planning authorities’ and ‘central government’ in certain relations. The relations defined in these texts also re-articulate previous relations, leading to ‘networks heavy with norms’ (Callon, 1991 p.151). Thus ‘central government’ might be seen to become such a network form based on unquestioned

actions and relations. This is not to say that such network forms are inherently stable, in certain ways they may be challenged and may also change. For example, challenge may be made to various decisions in this network of relations (see Ho 1997 for details of Secretary of State's direction regarding Islington's UDP). However, in the words of a chief planning officer regarding 'consultation': "we've certainly tried to meet the statutory requirements". Whilst these 'statutory requirements' are viewed certainly by most officers as important, the texts which set these out do not prescribe other practices. This means that other actors apart from 'central government' can exercise power through defining how they and others can write planning policies.

Officers and consulting

In the case of Islington UDP, the work to define groups and how they should influence the text of the UDP was largely carried out by a group of officers. These officers also had other roles apart from writing the UDP; they had relations to other groups such as councillors and were subject to other influences such as 'financial' and 'political' relations. These other relations and the positions which these planning officers held seemed to shape 'consultation'. In many cases planning officers portrayed the 'consultation' as influenced by 'political' and 'financial difficulties'. The Chief Planning Officer in describing the situation said: "we had a political decision before this UDP review actually started...that we would keep it comparatively low key, we wouldn't review the entire plan, we would go through the areas we felt had to be changed and part of the reason for that was financial - we didn't want to spend a lot of money". Many officers related the work which they were doing to work in other councils, and expressed a desire to 'extend consultation' or follow what other 'councils' were doing; however they viewed their work as restricted by financial relations. Practices defined as 'consulting' were thus deemed to have 'financial' consequences. These consequences were most keenly expressed as inhibiting changes to the ways in which 'consulting' was carried out. As one team leader succinctly stated "attempts to broaden out consultation will cost money". Consulting was therefore portrayed by this group of officers involved with the UDP as something that would follow inherited practices. In this way, practices such as placing documents for comment before

Neighbourhood Forums were enacted (for further details of these forums, see Mason, 1999). Therefore practices which were established through stated procedures and through repeated work comprised much of the work described as 'consultation'.

These 'low key' practices were not viewed as ideal by some actors, who were not involved with the everyday work on the UDP. The practice of only 'consulting' on the deposit version of the UDP was not viewed as a way in which these other actors could influence the writing of the Plan. A member of the local Friends of the Earth group said: "they decided they were going to go for the fast track approach and that they were going to go for minimum consultation and they would go to deposit and then we would get to chew on the deposit - all we were told before then was that if you wanted to make comments on a particular part of the UDP that's fine, but we weren't going to give you sections of the document to review and we weren't going to encourage public participation". This issue was raised at one public meeting, and the same interviewee commented:

"initially it looked like they were going to have several meetings - we had one meeting which was a general public meeting and I thought that it was a pretty good meeting but maybe it's because I had lots of opportunity to speak for some reason, but I was so pleased because there were just so many green type people at the meeting and they were all banging away at the same type of issues that Friends of the Earth believes in - I thought this is wonderful - if we're going to go down this track then it's just great, but then the fast track thing kind of froze things up and we had this very interesting discussion - there was this guy from the Sustainable Transport Group...and he got into a very articulate argument with the Chief Planning Officer who was at the same meeting about how the consultation ought to be done and he said that it's really important to consult people on an ongoing basis up to the point of deposit and get people to buy into it and not just to bang it in and then let people have a statutory month to comment on it, but they didn't agree on that, and I think that it's the officers that have decided on the fast track - I'm not aware of any councillors who are wanting to push it through".

In this way, officers were seen to play an important role in controlling who was to be involved in the writing of the UDP. Officers were conceived of, by this interviewee, as able to control many of the resources and arenas in which policy writing could take place. However, the control of such arenas was contested, and other groups attempted

to resist these practices, but seemed to be unsuccessful in changing the set of relations between ‘officers’ and these ‘interested parties’. Other groups which were defined more closely in ‘council’ documents (rather than as ‘interest groups’) were also seen to be excluded from the process, but in different ways. For example, one neighbourhood forum had at a meeting discussed how to influence the writing of the UDP, and had felt that the local councillor could influence this process through membership of the Task Group. However, as the Neighbourhood Development Officer for the area expressed, there seemed to be a view that planning officers controlled the process of writing the UDP:

“one of my members actually went there (to the UDP Task Group) because they’re part of what I’m calling the decision making process because you’re actually there while things are being discussed - now all the stuff has gone into this consultation document which is now going out so that people can actually comment on it - I just think that planners feel slightly precious because they do the work, they are the professionals as such, and I think they come and look down on lay people and I think it’s quite the condescending attitude and I’m not a planner but I do try and make things as accessible as I can to local people, but there is this professionalism stuff which really gets people angry - I don’t know how one changes, I think that it’s just an attitude I think you get in quite a lot of professionals”

However, the Neighbourhood Development Officer also recognised that officers did not always act in the same way, and reflected that one meeting between the Forum and a member of the Policy Team was ‘really good’, and that this officer recognised the way in which the UDP as a document could exclude those without an education in planning. These views seem to indicate the multiple ways in which processes and actions might be conceived, and indicate the ways in which groups may influence these processes. In this way, planning officers are seen as a group who influence many of the actions associated with making a plan; however they may also be viewed as subject to other influences, such as statute or financial and political relations.

Enacting the ‘low key’ practice of consulting entailed specific types of work. In particular, officers who were involved most closely with the writing of the UDP used a variety of techniques which conformed with inherited practices. These inherited practices constituted ‘the ways of doing things’ which existed in the setting where these

officers worked. These techniques included the use of a database, and forms of 'publicity' associated with other 'council' work and the requirements inherent in statute. These techniques also involved seeking approval for the means of consultation from other groups, notably the UDP Task Group. This was carried out through an item on the agenda of the meeting of the UDP Task Group in May 1999:

“Over the last year we have built up a database of relevant names and addresses which currently stands at around 900 entries. A letter will be sent to everyone on this list, inviting them to request a copy of the Changes Document, the summary and any other relevant documents as required. In the case of 'statutory consultees', neighbourhood forum chairs and selected local groups these documents will be sent automatically. The Changes Document and Summary will be free of charge, whilst the Revised Plan will be charged at cost.

Publicity will include a small display at the planning enquiries office, an information pack for libraries and neighbourhood offices, newspaper coverage and information on the Council's website. Planning Officers will be required to attend forum or other meetings as required.”

The quote sets up a series of practices, which officers (the 'we' in the first sentence) are to enact. Such a statement expresses mood in a way which makes action certain, through the use of the commissive phrase 'will + verb' (see Austin, 1962 and Searle, 1979). However, those officers who are to do this work are not highlighted in the grammar; instead, other categories are set up, such as 'publicity' which take the place of subject in the clause. These sets of actions were enacted throughout the summer of 1999, and such a text might be seen to commit this group of planning officers to such actions. The database consisted of groups and individuals who had previously contacted planning officers about the UDP, as well as a defined list of 'statutory consultees' as laid out in guidance documents. The database therefore reflected different elements of work, including the work of individuals and groups to contact planning officers, the work of writers of the list of statutory consultees, and work (by planning officers) to define 'relevant' bodies, such as 'Neighbourhood Forum Chairs' and 'local groups'. The work of planning officers in constructing the database was therefore influenced by a number of practices, such as 'council-wide' strategies for consulting, as well as officers' work to define which groups were 'relevant'.

Nature of the Proposed changes

The document which was to 'be consulted on' was entitled 'Islington's Unitary Development Plan: Proposed Changes'. This is a large document, and it would be impossible to analyse its form and content in the space available. Many of the changes to the 'Part 1' section have been discussed above. The other changes to 'Part 2' involve changes in wording to existing policies in the adopted UDP. This was seen as somewhat confusing for 'members of the public' by planning officers, as the document did not set out the UDP text in full. However, as was stated in a letter sent out with the document, "the Council is only obliged to consider objections to the proposed changes" and so the text only contained policies which had been changed. However, the letter also stated that "we would be pleased to receive any other comments, or indeed statements in support of the changes". The policy changes were recognised as complex by planning officers, who also wrote a summary of the main changes which was also sent out with the Proposed Changes.

The Proposed Changes document was different from Planning for the 21st Century due to the highly complex relations it described. Rather than setting out choices of policy 'principles', the Proposed Changes text enmeshed 'principles' in a series of relationships which were presented as statements with positive modality. Such relations included those between the text and statute, other texts and intentions of 'the Council'. The Proposed Changes text therefore contained a myriad of relations between entities and future actions, and it was difficult to identify how previous practices of 'consultation' influenced the writing of this text. This might be seen to be a stylistic feature of plan; however such a style arises through complex networks surrounding 'Central Government', 'Councils', 'officers' and other groupings.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented a description of the processes of writing the Islington UDP and the work of various groups in carrying this out. The chapter firstly presented ways in which 'the Plan' was defined, how notions of 'the Council' as a body arose and how 'officers' and 'members' were defined in texts and actions. The latter part of the chapter

has dealt with how activities referred to as ‘consultation’ have been constituted in sets of relationships and importantly the work of certain defined groups.

A key point to emerge from the analysis of the case study is how ‘the Plan’ was defined and how this was influenced by differing sets of relations. These included sets of relations surrounding ‘the Council’ and which served to define ‘the UDP’ as a ‘Council’ document. In turn, the UDP also re-produced certain definitions of ‘the Council’ as an entity which carried out particular actions and was associated with other entities. The making of the UDP was also organised through the work of defined groups, especially ‘officers’ and ‘members’. A Task Group was set up of ‘councillors’ and this served to enrol them in a particular network position of ratifying texts detailing changes to the Plan. It might be concluded that, certainly in the task of writing the UDP policies, elected members were not a key influence. On the other hand, ‘officers’ were defined in a number of ways as influencing the writing of the UDP. Through defining themselves (an being defined) as able to deal with ‘Government’ texts and the complex relations surrounding ‘the Plan’, ‘officers’ came to occupy a significant role. However, this was tempered by these same ‘Government’ texts which delimited what might be written in the UDP. In such a way, officers, members and other groups were enacted through these texts to write planning policy, but were also constrained in what could be written.

Work defined as ‘consulting’ on the text was conceived as a part of the plan-making process. This allowed various practices to be enacted during the plan-making process. Such practices defined various groups and also drew on groups defined in other relations (and which therefore had an identity). For example, ‘interest groups’ with pre-existing identities were defined as ‘consultees’ in a database used by officers. A number of practices were defined as ‘consulting’ (ranging from meetings of the Sustainable Transport Round Table to a questionnaire); however ‘Government guidance’ was drawn on more heavily in defining consultation towards the end of the process (deposit stage). This might indicate that new putative networks and practices (such as the Environmental Appraisal Group) were ‘squeezed out’ of any role to write the plan, especially by officers increasingly drawing on ‘Government guidance’. Such findings indicate a complex web of associations. However, some stabilities did emerge, especially through

a 'Government' network and the work of 'officers' in defining groups and what they could do.

CHAPTER 7

THE WREXHAM CASE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will describe and analyse the processes surrounding the writing a another plan: Wrexham County Borough Unitary Development Plan (UDP). Many of the same concerns as the Islington case study write-up (in Chapter Six) will form the basis of this chapter. These include an aim to understand the processes by which groups, entities and their actions become associated with Wrexham UDP. In particular, definitions of ‘the Council’ and ‘the public’ and their role in plan making will be described, following research questions four and five. Other concerns of this chapter include the need to trace how groups such as ‘officers’ and ‘members’ become formed as actors in the networks which compose and regulate the making of this development plan.

As with the Islington case study, this chapter will start by focusing on the nature of the plan and will describe how Wrexham UDP was portrayed as part of a lineage of plans. A second section will then detail the ways in which Wrexham County Borough (or Wrexham Council) was defined in texts such as the UDP, and the consequences of these definitions will also be outlined. This leads onto a concern for how ‘the Council’ is related to other objects such as ‘officers’, ‘departments’ and ‘elected members’. The ways in which these entities are constructed and the different ways in which these entities are related to the process of writing the UDP will be described. The roles of ‘officers’ and ‘elected members’ in making the plan will be describe in some detail. In this section some of the problems associated with organising these groups or entities will be highlighted, as these had an impact on how the plan was written. A second main concern for this case study write up will be to trace how activities were conceptualised as ‘consultation’, and in particular the ways in which ‘the public’ was defined in relation to this process. Much of this analysis will centre around a particular text, the Draft UDP and the work of various groups, both defined specially for the plan-making process and those groups with an inherited identity will be described. One of the features to be highlighted will be how groups attain stabilised roles within the various practices

surrounding plan making. A final section will focus on the work of groups (whether they are defined as ‘the public’ or as other entities) in changing the text of the UDP, and the role of ‘officers’ in assessing comments on the draft UDP will be examined.

Wrexham is a town situated in north-east Wales. Surrounding the town is an administrative area known as Wrexham County Borough which was formed as an area in 1996 by creating ‘Wrexham County Borough Council’ in statute and other texts (this will be described below). The area has a population of 125,350 (Wrexham County Borough, 1998f p.1). Descriptions of this area tend to focus on a diversity of characteristics, ranging from its agricultural nature to areas with declining ‘traditional’ industries such as coal mining and steel production. According to these characteristics, Wrexham County Borough might be viewed as very different from the intensely urban nature of the London Borough of Islington. However, a task of this research is to avoid explaining particularities according to a set of criteria (such as land use or geographical location). Instead, the next chapter will contrast the two case studies through tracing the ways in which practices and processes of plan making are made similar or different by sets of relations or actor-networks.

NATURE OF THE UDP

As with the text defined as Islington UDP, so Wrexham Unitary Development Plan was portrayed in a number of texts as a coherent, single entity or document. Before I embark on an analysis centred around the actions involved in writing this text, it is therefore necessary for me to identify some of the ways in which this document was conceived. Whilst differing portrayals of the text described as ‘the UDP’ will appear throughout this chapter, it may also be necessary to show how ‘Wrexham UDP’ was conceived in texts and talk as a coherent entity, and how in other portrayals was split apart. It may also be necessary to describe some of the textual work involved in providing reasons for producing ‘the Plan’.

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan was described as an entity in a number of texts and by a number of actors. In the document which contained policies concerning land

use and which had the title “Wrexham Unitary Development Plan” there were a number of references to ‘the Plan’. For example, the first sentence in the main text in this document states: “The Plan covers the administrative area of Wrexham County Borough Council as identified in Plan 1” (Wrexham County Borough 1998f p.1). Other references to this entity are made in the rest of the text; for example: “The Plan identifies sufficient fully serviced and easily accessible employment land to cater for the sustained economic development of the County Borough” (ibid. p.33). Thus ‘the Plan’ is not only made a specific entity through adding the deictic ‘the’ before ‘Plan’, it is also made (through the text) as an entity with certain capabilities. For example, ‘the Plan’ is associated with actions expressed by the verbs ‘covers’ and ‘identifies’ in the two quotes above. In this way, ‘the Plan’ takes on a number of attributes which identify its nature. These attributes are ascribed to this text through complex networks of other texts and actions, and in this chapter it is hoped to trace some of these. ‘The Plan’ is also represented as an entity in numerous other texts, which derive from diverse sources. For example a letter entitled “Representations from the Welsh Development Agency” states: “The Agency notes that the Strategy of the Plan seeks to secure economy, efficiency and amenity in the use of land resources through limited outward growth appropriate to the scale and character of settlements, together with continuing rehabilitation of older areas”. The way of representing ‘the Plan’ in this letter was also found in other letters written in the name of other bodies, such as the Welsh Office and the House Builders’ Federation.

As with Islington UDP, the text defined as Wrexham UDP contained a number of elements which were also defined in other texts. These included two main parts to the document, which were referred to as ‘the strategy’ and the ‘specific policies’. The text described various characteristics of each section, and describing the purposes behind these sections, for example ‘the strategy’ was “chiefly concerned with a vision of how the area should develop” (ibid. p.1). These sections were influenced by other texts, including Planning Guidance (Wales): Unitary Development Plans (1996) (PG(Wales):UDPs) which defines two sections for UDPs. However, the naming of these sections in the text as ‘strategy’ and ‘specific policies’ was challenged by a document detailing comments in the name of the Welsh Office. This stated that “it

would be helpful if “Part 1” was inserted before the heading so it reads “Part 1 Policies”. This would clarify their status.” Similarly, regarding ‘specific policies’ the document says “Insert “Part 2” above the title to make it clear to plan users who may be unfamiliar with the documents and may be relying on the white booklet ‘Development Plans - What you need to know’ to follow their way through the process and the terminology”. This quote draws upon another text to justify the statement, and makes it more difficult to challenge, as resisting this change also entails resisting this booklet (see Latour, 1987 for discussion on references to other texts). Thus other actors perceived the naming of these sections as important. There are, however, numerous other ways in which texts divide up the document named ‘Wrexham UDP’. The document is portrayed as containing a number of policies, which state a variety of actions and aim to control future actions. The nature of some policies will be described later in this chapter. The text of ‘the UDP’ also includes these policies grouped under headings such as ‘Environmental Conservation’ and ‘Housing’. These headings were re-iterated in other texts, such as those letters providing comments on the UDP. These headings reflected the text of another document, PG(Wales):UDPs which stated that “Plans should include land use policies and proposals for” amongst others “Housing” and “Conservation of the natural and built environment and, where relevant, Green Belts” (para.22). Although the headings in the UDP did not exactly match those in the guidance text, it seems that such similarities indicate that such guidance documents have a role in setting and re-iterating ways of structuring the text of a plan. Therefore, the UDP as a text is both defined in texts and talk as a single entity which has a number of elements. Much work surrounding the UDP reflected ways of making the document a coherent entity, although as it is hoped to show, this work was subject to challenge.

WREXHAM UDP AND PREVIOUS PLANS

Wrexham UDP was conceived of as a new document in a number of texts; however it was also related to other documents which were portrayed as important in shaping the way in which the text of the UDP was written. In this way, the UDP was portrayed as having a ‘lineage’ which consisted of other plans. In particular, those who had been closest to the writing of the UDP (broadly ‘officers’) portrayed the UDP and policies in

it as arising from previous documents. For example, the Planning Policy Manager stated:

“as a technical exercise the advantage Wrexham had was that it had up to date old fashioned development plans and the key local plan, the Wrexham Maelor Local Plan was approved I think two or three months before the reorganisation - the roll forward of the second Clwyd structure alteration was also virtually complete and would have gone on for completion in a year had it been for reorganisation (sic) and the Glyndwr Local Plan was reasonably up to date”

Thus the UDP was seen as being influenced by other documents, which meant that an idea of continuity and process was being proposed, at least by some actors involved in writing the UDP. The work behind constructing plan policy writing as a process will be dealt with below. Although the UDP was portrayed in some places as a new document, due to it being related to other documents in a process, its nature was also constrained by certain actors. The Chief Planning Officer commented that:

“as far as the present draft is concerned, the fact that we had a sound base of planning policies had a very significant influence on the document”.

In addition to conceiving other plans as an influence on the writing of Wrexham UDP, some actors conceived certain stages in the process of writing a plan. This has been indicated in the two previous quotes. In the quote from the Planning Policy Manager, plans are mentioned as being ‘approved’ or ‘completed’ which is related to a finished state for the text, thus allowing the ‘approved Plan’ to be portrayed as having certain qualities which allow it to influence other plans. In the quote from the Chief Planning Officer, the document being discussed is called a ‘draft’. The Wrexham UDP is described as a ‘draft’ in a number of documents, including minutes of the Planning Policy Panel (which will be described below): “The draft UDP had been based upon the predecessor Authority’s (sic) Structure and Local Plans”. Attaching this classifier (‘draft’) to the nominal group indicates a particular subset of UDP, and shows that it has certain qualities. These qualities were defined in a number of texts, although no single text attempted to prescribe the exact nature of a ‘draft UDP’. A number of interviewees mentioned that the plan was a ‘draft’ and was described as “being issued for public consultation” in the minutes of the Planning Policy Panel (Wrexham County Borough,

1998a p.1). However, in the text of the document entitled Wrexham Unitary Development Plan, the document is not referred to as a 'draft' UDP. This seems to arise from a desire from those who wrote the text to retain its textual form, and so become the 'adopted Plan' with a minimum of change.

REASONS FOR PRODUCING 'WREXHAM UDP'

A number of different actors were defined in texts and in actions as being central to making a decision on producing a new plan. One of the main actors to be defined in texts was 'Wrexham County Borough'. This was defined as an actor in numerous texts through its ability to carry out tasks, such as 'developing strategies' and 'negotiating' (for example: "the County Borough has developed a strategy for gypsies" (Wrexham County Borough, 1998f p.27)). However, much work was carried out by other actors and intermediaries to construct an identity for Wrexham County Borough as an entity which had these abilities. Particularly important was the 'newness' of Wrexham County Borough. As an entity, the County Borough was described as being formed in 1996. This was the result of actions by other groups, notably 'the Government' and 'the Welsh Office' in re-organising local government in Wales. Such work was carried out through statute, altering flows of financial intermediaries (especially money (see Callon, 1991 on money as a network)) and other resources. Whilst there is not the textual space here to describe all the actions, networks and resources in the processes conceived as 'local government reorganisation', it is necessary to trace how such actions impacted on the work to write the 'Wrexham UDP'. The work associated with forming 'Wrexham County Borough' might be seen as work to re-arrange resources of government in a particular geographical area. In particular, one of the main intentions ascribed to this process of re-organisation in various 'Government' texts, was the need to abolish 'County Councils' and 'Borough Councils' and form new 'Unitary Authorities'. These entities were partly defined by their actions which were ordered through notions of responsibilities encoded in various documents such as 'statute' (Local Government (Wales) Act 1994). For example, 'County Councils' had defined responsibilities to provide 'social services' and 'education' amongst others, whilst 'Borough Councils' had responsibilities to provide such services as 'housing' amongst others (these

responsibilities have however been altered through other processes of ‘contracting out’ and changing roles of providing ‘services’). The notion of ‘Unitary Authorities’ was to have all the responsibilities of ‘County Councils’ and ‘Borough Councils’ ascribed to one group or entity.

The work behind changing these responsibilities in respect of writing plans was explicitly textualised in a number of documents. Before such work to re-organise the resources and responsibilities of government in Wales, ‘County Councils’ had responsibilities to produce ‘structure plans’ while ‘Borough Councils’ were to provide ‘local plans’. Texts such as statute changed this set of relations. In particular the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 was amended by another text, the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994 and “required each local planning authority to prepare a Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for its area” (Welsh Office 1996 para.2). Such a statutory document re-enacts sets of relations between defined entities of ‘central government’ and ‘Parliament’ and ‘local planning authorities’. In this case ‘local planning authorities’ were re-defined in legislation with the change to ‘Unitary Authorities’. These statements in statute were further strengthened by PG (Wales): UDPs which set out to further define responsibilities of ‘local planning authorities’. In particular the Planning Guidance document states: “The UDP will be the development plan for each county or county borough council and each National Park, superseding the structure plan, local plan and any other existing development plan.” (ibid. para.2) In this way, a network of relations was enacted through texts which defined entities such as ‘local planning authorities’ and ‘unitary development plans’ and their role within this network. This might be seen as a fairly stable network, certainly at one level, especially in the way in which ‘local planning authorities’ were defined and the lack of manoeuvre which such entities had in carrying out certain actions. However, these textualised sets of relations were not always followed at all times. For example PG (Wales): UDPs states: “Each authority should have an adopted UDP in place by 2000” (ibid. para.2). However, very few authorities had an adopted UDP in place by the start of 2000 for a variety of reasons, and as one civil servant in the Welsh Office said “it [the writing of UDPs] is a horrendous process”. However, the work to define the new ‘Unitary Authorities’ was successful, although such changes were not always smooth. The

Director of Development Services commented that “it hasn’t been easy bringing the Council together”, showing that much work needed to be carried out by a number of different actors, and that statute and other documents authored in ‘central government’ were not sufficient on their own to enact a change in relations.

In this case, the Unitary Authority was defined as coming into existence in 1996, and the work to produce a ‘Unitary Development Plan’ for the new geographical area of the County Borough was started soon afterwards. This work was conceived as inheriting policies from other plans. This was expressed in a number of documents; for example, in a report to the Planning Policy Panel which states: “The Draft UDP had been based upon the predecessor Authority’s (sic) Structure and Local Plans” (Wrexham County Borough, 1998a p.1). Another report entitled ‘Planning Policies in the County Borough’ which was written for ‘the Planning Committee’ described the previous Plans which were portrayed as important. These included the ‘Clwyd County Structure Plan: Second Alteration’ which was ‘up to the stage of public deposit’ and which Wrexham County Borough was to choose how to ‘complete the adoption process’. The other plans were the Wrexham Maelor Local Plan which was described as ‘continuing in force until replaced by the UDP’ and the Glyndwr Local Plan which was described as ‘adopted in February 1994 and ‘continues in force after April 1996’. This report then stated that ‘the County Borough want to review the assumptions which underlie present policies and that the best way forward is to produce a UDP’. Such a document shows that this one course of action (producing a UDP) is ‘correct’ and ties this to other processes and interests. This was reflected further on in the report which states that the UDP “brings all aspects of planning policy into a single process” and that “The Council and the Community have an opportunity to develop a vision for the future development of the area which reflects local aspirations” (Wrexham County Borough 1996a). However other reasons for producing a UDP, aside from ‘Government directions’ and ‘developing a vision’, were articulated in interviews. In particular, one officer closely involved with the writing of the UDP stated that the Clwyd Structure Plan was ‘too wordy’ and ‘needed to be cut down’. This view was reinforced by drawing on Welsh Office advice that ‘Part 1s’ of UDPs (analogous to the Structure Plan in that they provide ‘strategic policy’) should be ‘one to two pages long’. In addition the figures for

housing allocations were presented as contentious in the previous plans. A planner at the House Builders' Federation said that 'in the Structure Plan the figures for Wrexham were challenged by Wrexham Maelor Borough Council who wanted lower figures - they stalled and were waiting for re-organisation and the formation of Wrexham County Borough'. In this way, the writing of a 'new plan' was seen as a way of some planners resisting a particular policy through the writing of a new policy attributed to a different body (Wrexham County Borough). A number of interviewees described a rivalry between Clwyd County Council and Wrexham Maelor Borough Council, and some of these tensions seemed to arise in Wrexham County Borough between officers who had been previously employed by the different bodies. This showed some of the difficulties of creating a new entity, due to certain individuals aligning themselves with other groups and expressing another identity. This will be highlighted later on in the chapter, when discussing how different groups were formed in relation to the writing of the UDP.

CONSTRUCTING WREXHAM COUNTY BOROUGH AS AN ENTITY

As has been described above, much work was carried out by different actors and through different texts to construct a 'new' entity - Wrexham County Borough. The UDP referred to 'the County Borough' and 'the Council' a number of times in the text (although not as frequently as was the case in Islington UDP, which will be discussed in the next chapter). Such an entity is described in a number of ways, using a variety of grammatical forms, and which seems to indicate a multiplicity of roles for this entity. One identity of this body is its relation to an area. This is shown in the 'Introduction' section to the UDP which states: "The Plan covers the administrative area of the Wrexham County Borough Council as identified in Plan 1." (Wrexham County Borough, 1998f p.1) A commonly used way of creating an identity for the 'Borough' in the UDP is to associate the area with certain characteristics. For example: "Wrexham County Borough is situated in north-east Wales. Bounded by the Clwydian Hills to the west and the undulating Shropshire and Powys Countryside to the south, the district stretches northwards and eastwards to the English border." (ibid. p.1) In this way, such

characteristics of this area are highlighted as relevant to the UDP, especially as 'the Plan' is conceptualised as 'covering' an area. The County Borough is therefore conceptualised as an area with characteristics which are placed into it. These characteristics are portrayed in the text as of importance to 'the Plan' and to the policies in particular. This might be seen to be a frequently utilised mode of writing in development plans. Another, slightly different, entity is defined in the text of the Plan as having certain characteristics and identities, namely, 'the Council'. Whilst 'County Borough' was associated in the text with a notion of an area and characteristics, 'the Council' is not frequently associated in the text with this area. Instead, 'the Council' is related to actions and is portrayed as an agent of change. For example, "The Council will, from time to time, issue supplementary planning guidance with the aim of encouraging high standards of development" (ibid. p.9). In this way, according to a functional grammar analysis, 'Wrexham County Borough' is frequently realised as a circumstantial relational process (as in 'Wrexham County Borough is situated in north-east Wales'). In contrast, 'the Council' is frequently realised as an agent in a material process, such as 'issuing', 'minimising', 'consulting' (as in 'The Council consults the Environment Agency') and so on. Thus 'the Council' is constructed in the text as an actor which carries out a variety of actions. As has been described in the previous chapter regarding Islington, 'the Council' might be viewed as a macro-actor which summarises a variety of work carried out by a broad range of actors. 'The Council' might therefore be seen as a 'black box' which would need to be 'unpacked' in order for another actor to challenge this action. Such use of 'the Council' in the text also tends to separate it as an entity from other entities which are defined in the text. The text of the UDP tends to represent the Council as an actor, perhaps due to the role of the text as an intermediary which aims to extend a network of relations through describing these. The UDP itself, is also described as an agent of change in the text of the document, through phrases such as: "Although the Plan provides for a generous supply of undeveloped sites" (ibid. p.35). This may reflect the role of 'the Plan' as both an actor and an intermediary according to differing sets of network relations. In other words, 'The Council' may be defined as an actor through the intermediary (the Plan) which it puts into circulation. 'The Plan' may also be defined as an actor through the way in which it puts other intermediaries into circulation, such as 'undeveloped sites' which describe a

set of relations to do with defining 'sites'. We may, therefore, ascribe differing characteristics to seemingly the same entity or text, depending on the network relations in which it is inscribed/inscribes. The problems associated with this will be discussed in the next chapter.

'The Council' is described in particular ways in the text of the UDP, especially in relation to 'the Council' as an actor. However, other ways of portraying 'the Council' were expressed in other texts. These include documents which were related to the UDP, such as reports and minutes of meetings. 'The Council' was not only represented as an actor which carried out defined actions, but also as an entity which has certain attributes. For example, in a report entitled 'Planning Policies in the County Borough' it is stated:

"In order for the team within my department to properly discuss and understand the aims of the Council it is recommended that we establish a forum for informal discussion of the issues between officers and members"
(Wrexham County Borough, 1996a)

In this extract, 'the aims of the Council' serves to nominalise a verb form ('to aim') into an entity which can be acted upon. In this case, 'the aims of the Council' can then be 'discussed and understood' by 'the team within my department'. The 'aims' thus become something which is defined as a coherent entity, and something which 'the Council' owns. In this way, 'the Council' is further strengthened as an actor as it is defined both by its actions (as shown in the text of the UDP and elsewhere) and by the attributes which are ascribed to it. Another way in which 'the Council' is conceptualised in texts is of an entity which possesses certain things. For example in a report entitled 'Wrexham Unitary Development Plan':

"Preparation of a Unitary Development Plan by local authorities in Wales is a statutory requirement. It [the UDP] is the Council's primary source of land use planning policy advice." (Wrexham County Borough, 1999d p.1)

The ownership of the UDP is expressed as a possessive relational process by the intensive verb form 'is'. Thus the UDP is closely related to 'the Council' and furthermore the UDP has the attribute of being the 'primary source of land use planning

policy advice'. 'The Council' is thus expressed in a number of ways in the texts which are related to the UDP, as something which carries out actions and has attributes and expresses ownership of certain things.

DIFFERENT ENTITIES AS 'THE COUNCIL'

'The Council' is not, however, solely portrayed as an isolated body. Instead, a number of different entities are related to 'the Council' throughout texts. We might say that there are different texts which define different entities as having the *properties* of 'the Council' (after Jubien, 1993) (for example, all elected members or all departments). However, certain sets of entities (which are referred to as having the properties of 'the Council') are fairly stable, and are re-established through numerous texts. These stable ways of defining groups as having the properties of 'the Council' are both derived from texts written 'within' 'the Council' and from those defined as authored 'outside' 'the Council'. Such texts as statute, and 'central government' reports serve to define elements of 'the Council', their characteristics and how they should work. This variety of texts serves to describe these elements using inherited categories, as well as re-inscribe or harden the ontology of these elements. In this way, ways of conceiving the world might be seen to stabilise. However, at other times, these categories may become questioned, and texts aim to de-stabilise the ontology of these entities. Such a process might be seen to occur in attempts to 'modernise local government' and re-define the elements of 'local government'. These stabilised categories are important to the way in which work is carried out, and can be seen to structure the means by which documents, such as Wrexham UDP are written. One of the most stabilised ways of conceiving 'the Council' was as a body constituted of 'officers' and 'members'. The next section will deal with how 'officers' and 'members' are constructed as groups, and how this structured and shaped the way in which Wrexham UDP was written.

CONSTRUCTING OFFICERS AS A GROUP AND INTO GROUPS

The work to create groups of 'officers' and 'members' was portrayed as essential to much of the work of writing the UDP and to much other work ascribed to 'the Council'. As with the Islington case study, officers as a defined group (or set of groups) carried

out much work to create a new plan. 'Officers' as a group were also actively defined through texts and through spoken interaction in other arenas. Conceptualising activity in 'the Council' as consisting of both work by 'officers' and 'members' and interaction between the two defined groups was strongly expressed in a number of texts. For example, a document concerning the writing of planning policies states: "it is recommended that we establish a forum for informal discussion of the issues between officers and members" (Wrexham County Borough, 1996a). This way of conceptualising how these two groups might interact seemed to stabilise relations and was expressed in a number of documents. The work of 'members' in writing the UDP will be discussed below. 'Officers' as a group were often defined in texts through various actions ascribed to them, and using the noun 'officers' enabled texts to identify 'officers' as an actor. For example, the minutes of a meeting of the Planning Policy Panel state: "Green Barriers - Officers produced a Plan which identified the extent of the designation as proposed in the UDP compared to the designated areas contained in the predecessor plans." (Wrexham County Borough 1998b) This defines 'officers' as the agent which carries out the action of producing a Plan. This form of defining 'officers' as a single entity was frequently used as a grammatical device in reports and other documents associated with 'the Council'. However, such ways of portraying 'officers' as a single actor was not universal in texts and talk. Instead 'officers' were also portrayed as composed of different groupings and individuals. The set of individuals who were defined as 'officers' were also defined in numerous other ways, some of which included individuals who were not defined as 'officers' (for example, 'planning professionals').

One of the most common ways in which the group 'officers' was defined was according to the notion of departmental structure. As with the Islington case, the concept of structure and hierarchy as a way of defining roles and tasks associated with the UDP was very important. The making of departmental structure, through texts and forms of interacting, helped identify actors and their roles within certain network relations. Whilst the term 'the Council' was frequently used in the text of the Plan, other terms were introduced outside this document, especially in day-to-day interaction between individuals and in 'internal' documents. Such 'internal' documents whilst seemingly

being defined in this analysis according to an arbitrary distinction between the 'inside' and the 'outside' of a thing defined as 'the Council', also had a number of textual features which distinguished them from other texts. One important feature of these 'internal' documents was the way in which they portrayed and allocated work and ascribed action. Whereas in the text of the UDP, it is an entity known as 'the Council' which is placed textually as an agent and is ascribed some intentionality; within other texts such as memoranda between officers, other entities are ascribed work and agency depending on what the text is attempting to pull together. For example, in minutes of the Planning Policy Panel, 'officers' and 'members' are the main agents, along with others such as 'The Director of Development Services', as shown in: "The Director of Development Services submitted a report DDS/07/98 seeking the observations and support of the Panel for the Draft Unitary Development Plan (UDP) prior to it being issued for public consultation". Therefore documents identified different actors according to the network in which the texts were situated. This seems to show how networks of relations between entities might be interpreted as 'nesting' one within another. So that the UDP 'black boxes' numerous sets of relations when it uses the term 'the Council', and talk of 'officers' in Planning Policy Panel document serves to summarise numerous divisions and relations within the category 'officers'.

As mentioned above, one of the most important ways of dividing up the body of officers was through the concept of departmental structure. This form of division was articulated in various documents, and was re-articulated in much of the work to write the UDP. This idea of departmental structure, as described in the Islington case, rests on a notion that there is a defined body or entity to structure into departments, whether this entity be 'the Council' or 'officers'. Wrexham County Borough was conceived as a new council in a number of texts and in interviews, and was seen as new partly because it was allocated certain responsibilities, such as social service provision, education provision and so on. These responsibilities were defined through statute and other guidance documents from 'Government Departments'. In the case of 'education' and 'social services' there were separately defined departments set up in 'the Council'. In the case of the work to write the UDP much of this was carried out within a defined directorate: the Development Services Directorate. This in itself was divided into

different elements through various texts, signs, names attributed to jobs and so on. This was shown in written notes accompanying a presentation on the Development Services Directorate:

“The Directorate is divided into four Departments supported by a central Finance and Support Services Unit” (Wrexham County Borough 1999b)

Such a document serves to re-articulate structures and relationships between different entities. Furthermore, the notes also further strengthen notions of roles and responsibilities attributed to these Departments through identifying their ‘Functions’ and their ‘Aims’. For example, in the section on ‘Planning’ it is stated:

“Functions - responsible for providing strategic planning guidance and exercising development and building control which supports the economic and cultural development of the area in accordance with agreed plans (Unitary Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance) and Government Policy. The Department also provides an Administrative Agency for private sector housing renewal.

Aims

- *to provide a Planning and building Control Service which supports the economic and cultural development of the County Borough.*
- *to protect and enhance the built natural environment of the County Borough.”* (ibid.)

Such a statement attempts to give ‘the Planning Department’ an identity and a singular set of roles with which to operate. In this way, ‘the Planning Department’ becomes a thing which has the ability to do things, rather than a disparate set of entities. Prominence is given to the Unitary Development Plan within the functions of the Planning Department. Such a singular set of roles and responsibilities was, however, challenged and the idea of the Planning Department as a coherent entity was not always articulated especially in talk. Whilst the quotes above speak of ‘the Planning Department’ as a single entity, further on in the document are diagrams which divide each department into different entities. The diagram which represented the structure of the Department indicated the ‘Chief Planning Officer’ as being linked to five different groupings; Secretarial Services, Building Control, Development Control, Policy and Implementation and Conservation and Renewal. All these groups were portrayed as

having someone ‘in charge’, and for all groupings apart from Secretarial Services there is a list of what may be termed ‘responsibilities’. The Unitary Development Plan is mentioned as a responsibility of the Policy and Implementation grouping. The full list of responsibilities is as follows:

- *“Unitary Development Plan*
- *Planning input to joint policy initiatives (eg (sic) Integrated Transport Strategy)*
- *Landscape appraisals/advice*
- *Tree Preservation/advice*
- *Ecology/nature conservation*
- *Planning input to corporate environmental projects/policy*
- *Statistical Service*
- *Mapping and Graphic Design” (ibid.)*

This list indicates some of the work carried out to stabilise activity within these groupings. These activities are not, however, further defined within this text; instead other texts and individuals’ concepts of this work seemed to structure the detail of this work. Some of these activities could be measured, for example work to write the UDP could be measured according to various criteria. This document which aims to define groupings and responsibilities is one of many documents which serve to strengthen a form of structure which attempts to make ‘the Council’ a coherent entity or network of entities. Other documents, such as the minutes of the Planning Policy Panel also distinguish groups, individuals and responsibilities, such as the quote above which mentions the ‘Director of Development Services’. In this way, numerous texts and talk served to perform this set of relationships between the entities which were built up into a structure of ‘the Council’.

However, this work to organise various resources into a structure of groups and individuals with defined responsibilities and relationships was not always successful. Whilst much activity observed during fieldwork at Wrexham and in the texts surrounding the UDP did serve to re-enact these stabilised relations and structure, there were also tensions between some of the defined groups. This indicated the ways in which this structuring of ‘the Council’ was not always performed by the various groups and individuals and was, therefore, not wholly successful. Part of the difficulties of

maintaining this structure were attributed to Wrexham County Borough being conceived as a new authority. The Director of Development Services commented that “it’s not been easy bringing the County and the districts together...there needed to be a partnership but in some areas it hasn’t worked too well”. This was illustrated in the case of a superstore development in which tensions between ‘the Planning Department’ and the ‘Property Services Department’ were articulated. The various tensions between groupings manifested themselves in different ways. Firstly, they occurred as differing objectives or styles of working between defined groups (such as the Property Services Department and the Planning Department). Secondly, they existed as differing ways of working within groupings defined in the structure of ‘the Council’. The differing objectives between different departments were seen as a problem by some officers due to delays created in their work such as writing the UDP. The Planning Policy Manager felt that these were partly related to Council re-organisation:

“now we work in a Directorate that embraces all of the land professions - the development professions and erm there were considerable delays due to the fact that the comments of the other departments were late erm that we in retrospect should have spent more time telling them why we weren’t going to take their comments on board erm and I don’t think our Director at the time recognised the significance of his role as a person who was co-ordinating it - not co-ordinating the UDP but co-ordinating a stream of decisions which included the UDP but which were all consistent and coherent with one another”

Interviewer: *“was this a reaction or consequence of erm reorganisation and people still finding their feet to a certain extent?”*

yeah I think so - I think we just hadn’t erm tested the system, obviously from day one when you’re appointed as director you’ve got to pull the place together but I don’t think he had a realisation of just how complicated it was and what conflicting threads there are between development and conservation, between promoting the council’s own land and having a planning point of view on it how conflicting these were so we got held up there so now we are two and a half years from reorganisation and you could put six months of delay on those we would be where we are now in two years in that sense.”

Interviewer: *“have the comments back been generally interesting or very generally been contrary to your ideas of where the UDP was trying to get to?”*

“you can’t generalise there are a mixture of each what I’m saying is that there isn’t a schism between us and other departments but we are still learning to

have a dialogue to resolve or to recognise that we have different points of view and that you're not going to get very far by constantly knocking on that particular door and that there are other ways of doing things"

This comment on organising work in departments highlights a number of aspects of the tension between groups and their objectives. Firstly, the comment highlights the importance of one individual in organising and regulating relations between different groups. In some ways this individual (the Director) is portrayed as a key actor; an individual who acts to co-ordinate resources surrounding him according to a defined schema, as indicated in the phrase "co-ordinating a stream of decisions which included the UDP but which were all consistent and coherent with one another". In an actor-network analysis, the Director is not seen as invested with 'power', but instead has the ability to co-ordinate resources, and it is through the ability to get others to do things that we ascribe this actor with 'power' (see Latour, 1986 and Law, 1994). The Planning Policy Manager is describing how the Director seems to be unsuccessful in organising the network of resources surrounding him, and in translating the interests of the different groupings according to a certain structure and notions of how to do things. Secondly, and related to this, the difficulty of organising the work of different groups is seen not solely to be a problem of the director, but also a consequence of differing interests in separate groups. The comment recognises differing interests as expressed through the notion of 'professions' (a "directorate which embraces all of the land professions"). The quote also highlights conflict between two differing objectives, 'development' and 'conservation' and how this manifests itself through tensions when making decisions on 'Council' land and 'having a planning point of view on it'. In this way, tensions are realised through the notion of 'professions' and some of the ideological differences between them. The quote then states that the Director was unsuccessful in organising these separate interests into a coherent structure because he did not have "a realisation of just how complicated it was and what conflicting threads there are between conservation and development". The Director was not successful partly because he could not alter the interests and ideologies held by these two groups (or professions). Another network of relations which surrounded a notion of 'a profession' and which tied together entities such as 'officers' and ideological statements was too difficult for the director to alter. However and thirdly, the Planning Policy Manager seemed to

indicate that there was a means by which the network of relations could be re-organised, through “learning to have a dialogue to resolve or to recognise that we have different points of view”. This seems to indicate that the interests of the two groups could not be translated into one network which enrolled all aspects of work. Instead, a set of relations could be formed which did not cover every practice, but which managed to translate a small number of specific interests at certain points in time. This is related to the last point, which relates back to the UDP. The quote conceives of the problems of organising the structure of ‘the Council’ as having practical consequences, and most importantly for the Planning Policy Manager, creating a delay in the writing of the UDP. Thus the UDP is related to a notion of process (which will be discussed below), and that this process involves a number of decisions taken by a network of different groups. The problems of co-ordinating the work of different groupings is seen to necessarily affect how decisions are made on the text of the UDP and how this in turn influences another structure, that of portraying the writing of the UDP as a process.

The Planning Policy Team and Work of Writing the UDP

These tensions between different groupings and their consequences for the way in which work is done, not only manifest themselves in conflicts between ‘professions’ and ‘departments’, but in many other groupings. One grouping which was frequently articulated by actors as crucial to the writing of the UDP was the Planning Policy Team. This was a group of four officers who worked on a daily basis to write and deal with the UDP. This group was organised specifically to co-ordinate the writing of the UDP, and did a large amount of the work surrounding it. Whilst other officers, defined as outside this group, such as ‘the County Borough Ecologist’ contributed to the Plan, it was this group of four officers who co-ordinated these inputs. The group was defined and organised through various mechanisms, such as documents outlining departmental structure (see above), job description documents and even the way in which the group was organised spatially. The role of the group to produce the UDP was performed in a number of ways, according to these various texts, but also following inherited patterns of working. These ‘ways of doing things’ were not textualised but seemed to be enacted on an ongoing basis, and seemed to follow the way in which tasks had been carried out in

the past. This was particularly important, as the majority of the group were formerly employed by Wrexham Maelor Borough Council to produce the local plan. These inherited ways of doing things manifested themselves in a number of ways. For example, the notion of following a specific process in producing a UDP was drawn upon a number of times. It was conceived of as work in different stages which accorded with various texts, such as Planning Guidance (Wales) and the Development Plan Regulations. So that, the writing of Plan involved writing a draft UDP, undertaking 'consultation', dealing with objections to this, producing a deposit version, public inquiry and so on. For example, the way in which 'consultation' was carried out seemed to follow inherited notions of how 'consulting' should be done, and in contrast to Islington where various 'Council' texts stated aims of consulting, in Wrexham the form of consulting was not textualised in this way. These issues will be discussed both later in this chapter and in the subsequent chapter. The specific way in which work was carried out seemed to be shaped by notions of professional expertise expressed through knowledge of 'how to produce a plan' and through ways in which experience of producing previous plans was drawn upon. This notion of a specific professional expertise in producing plans seemed to be closely guarded, as shown in a quote from the Chief Planning Officer who said: "the Planning Policy Team are a bit proprietorial". This was expressed in the debate over the building of a superstore which contravened policies in the Plan. However, the site was partly occupied by a school which would be relocated to another part of the site leading to, it was argued, better school facilities. The Planning Committee voted to permit the building of the superstore against planning policy.

The non-textualised nature of much of the work on the UDP was also portrayed in interviews as the product of the preferences and ways of working of individuals. This might be illustrated through a discussion of the UDP's brevity. Wrexham UDP was frequently referred to in interviews as a 'slim document' (the main section had 58 pages). There were a number of reasons given for this, however most frequently cited was that Wrexham Maelor Local Plan had been brief and that one of the forward planning officers was a strong advocate of concise plans. The forward planning officer had also worked on Wrexham Maelor Local Plan and wanted to re-enact many of the

same processes for writing Wrexham UDP. Two people who were ‘consulted’ on the Plan stated that the slimness of the UDP was a consequence of one individual’s desire for short plans: “slimness is due to the nature of the key person in charge who’s very incisive and doesn’t want unnecessary detail”. The forward planning officer who was portrayed as having this influence on the shortness of the Plan, also reinforced this view by saying that “the Clwyd Structure Plan was too wordy, so we cut it down”. However, he also legitimated this by drawing on a conversation he had had with a member of the Planning Division at the Welsh Office who said that UDP Part 1s should be ‘one to two pages long’. This was reinforced by another member of the Planning Division at the Welsh Office who said: “a previous planner here joked that Part 1s should be on two sides of A4”. Other claims were made to justify the slimness of the UDP, notably that concise planning policies would be less susceptible to challenge at public inquiries. The Planning Policy Manager said: “you’ve got to cut down the rubbish and concentrate the points, but I think that that has been recognised, loose words cost an awful lot of money in planning inquiries”. This point was re-iterated in the minutes of a meeting of the Planning Policy Panel which stated: “It was considered that a plan with a concise format would be less likely to founder at the Inquiry stage” (Wrexham County Borough, 1998a). The slimness of the UDP was therefore portrayed as the result of a number of different influences. Most importantly, it was seen as the work of one actor to seek the consent of other actors to write the Plan in this way. This was seen as largely achieved through raising claims that large plans would be more difficult to defend in a public inquiry, thus also pointing to difficulties in following ‘the process’ of writing a plan. Whilst there was some disagreement that not enough detail was included in the text of the Plan, the strategy to write a ‘slim’ UDP was generally successful in gaining the assent of different actors, especially through drawing on other claims to legitimate this ‘way of doing things’.

The work to define the Planning Policy Team through various texts as well as through their activities served not only to create an identity for this group, but also to construct their relation with other groupings. Most particularly, this was expressed through their relation with other groups defined as ‘within the Planning Department’ and ‘within the Council’. As outlined above, there were tensions portrayed between the Planning Policy

Team and other 'departments', especially concerning delays in gaining comments from other departments on the text of the draft UDP. This was not only expressed as a problem between 'the Planning Department' and other departments, but also as a consequence of problems portrayed as 'internal' to the Planning Department. This seems important, as it indicates how different groupings are drawn upon to highlight specific issues; so that 'the Planning Department' is seen to be a coherent entity (as shown by using the word 'internal') in some cases, whilst 'the Planning Department' is also seen to have a number of conflicting elements within it. For example, groupings such as 'Forward Planning' and 'Development Control' were drawn upon by one interviewee in expressing 'problems of communication' between these two entities. Importantly for an analysis of the writing of the UDP, various groupings were called upon to explain how the UDP was written and used to conceive of how these might be used to identify problems. In particular a boundary was drawn around the group of three officers who carried out the bulk of the day-to-day work on the Plan. This group was constructed as excluding the Planning Policy Manager, who was portrayed as included in this group in various documents, such as the report of the presentation on the Directorate of Development Services described above. This grouping of three officers was reinforced by the way in which they were spatially organised in the building. The three officers had desks in one part of the open-plan office, whilst the Planning Policy Manager had a separate office. This was expressed by one of the group who said: "the Plan slows down once it leaves this room". This quote also highlights the concept of writing the UDP as a process (which needed to be expedited). This planning officer also commented: "internal politics tends to slow the progress of the Plan down - someone else will get a report and it will sit on someone's desk for ages...it will go to the Planning Policy Manager and wait on his desk for ages, and then to the Chief Planning Officer". This quote seems to construct a boundary around these three officers, and shows how their ability to control work outside this boundary is limited. In this way, they seem to fail to enrol these other actors behind their network which aims to quickly deal with 'the Plan'. This seems to show the problems of enrolling actors and exerting control at a distance, especially in controlling how a text is shaped by other actors. The three planning officers seem not to have the organisational resources to pull other actors into a coherent network. In this way, work to define groups and their

activities seems to be important in shaping how actors might be able to exert an influence over other actors. In particular, groups which are stabilised through a variety of resources (such as ‘departments’) become more difficult to align in a particular network as this involves altering their identity and ways of working.

CONSTRUCTING MEMBERS AS A GROUP

The Islington case study showed that ‘members’ or ‘councillors’ were more coherently defined in various texts than ‘officers’. This situation was reflected in Wrexham, where the membership of the group ‘councillors’ was quite uniformly defined (there were 52 elected members for the County Borough). This stabilised membership might be analysed as resulting from a durable network consisting of legal devices, a number of actors and the practice of holding elections. In this way, the number of members of the Council was strictly controlled. Although the number of councillors was strictly defined, their roles and the ways in which they were divided can be viewed as less stabilised. There were a number of ways in which this group was divided, some of which were less stable than others. The means by which ‘members’ were split into different groups also affected the work which they carried out and their responsibilities. One of the mechanisms by which ‘members’ were divided was according to political party. This had consequences for the ways in which decisions were made, and of how other groupings were decided (for example, the Planning Policy Panel). Whereas in Islington Borough Council all councillors were members of political parties, in Wrexham some members were ‘independent’ and were therefore not aligned with any party structure. However, the division of members into political parties was still an important mechanism for shaping the way in which decisions were taken (for example in deciding who should hold the chair of a particular committee).

Members also became organised into other groups, notably as members of committees. These serve to shape the work of ‘members’ and constitute an arena for decision-making. In particular, councillors’ work was divided into separate areas which were covered by different committees, for example the Social Services Committee or the Education Committee. One councillor reflected on the changing work of councillors

after Wrexham County Borough was formed: “well I’ll tell you it’s a lot more work - when I was on Wrexham Maelor we didn’t use to have education or transport or social services - you get hundreds of things - it is wearing really, and all that has to be done, and because there’s more things to be dealing with, there’s more committees and sub-committees and you try to have to go to everything”. The committee which was initially designated through various texts, such as ‘Council standing orders’ to make decisions on the UDP was ‘the Planning Committee’. This committee was composed of all elected members for Wrexham County Borough who made decisions on planning applications and planning policy. Having all elected members on the Planning Committee was a subject of some debate, especially between elected members and some officers. For example, the Chair of the Planning Committee justified the Planning Committee’s membership in two ways. Firstly, he drew on notions that decisions should be taken quickly: “I always think that it does help with our system of planning committee where we’ve got all members of the Council involved - you can get a major decision done quite quickly - you’ve got a decision tonight and the letter can be going out to the applicant tomorrow to say you’re not delaying things”. Secondly, he drew on notions of democratic inclusivity: “if you’ve got 52 or 53 members on the committee you debate like we did last night - you’ve got a difficult application through last night where some members were against it on highway grounds and some members were against it because of the material we were using, but at the end of the day a detailed balance of members’ opinions and it was voted on in a democratic way”. However, others were not as supportive of the structure of making decisions; for example the Chief Planning Officer commented: “it’s very difficult to get a detailed and informed discussion in the committee when you’ve got 50-odd people in the room”. In this way, the Chief Planning Officer seemed to be drawing on notions of quality in making decisions, and this will be discussed below with reference to debate regarding planning policy.

Between the two phases of fieldwork research, considerable changes occurred in the way in which decisions were taken in Wrexham County Borough. Whilst there is not space here to describe in detail the reasons for these changes and the mechanisms used to enact them, it is necessary to discuss some of the changes which impinged on work to

write the UDP. In May 1999 local elections were held in which the ruling group of Labour councillors lost seats to create a hung Council of 26 Labour members and 26 members belonging to other political parties or standing as independent members. The casting vote on decisions is ceded in this system to the Mayor (as with Islington Borough Council). At about the same time, changes were being enacted to the structures in which decisions were to be made. This came about for a number of reasons, but significantly documents and new statute (significantly the Local Government Act 2000) enabled and encouraged Councils to alter structures for decision-making within local authorities. Between July and October 1999 an 'interim structure' was agreed by the Council; however as a number of officers indicated no 'major' decisions were taken during this period. After October 1999 a new structure was set up which was described by the Director of Development Services as comprising an executive board was set up to take decisions on a wide range of issues, including those on the UDP. A scrutiny committee to oversee the work of the committees and the executive board in particular, and a policy development board were also set up through various texts. In addition there were 'specialist' committees including the Planning Committee and the Environmental Licensing Committee created in this new structure. In particular, 'the Planning Committee' did not consist of all elected members and did not have responsibility to make decisions on the UDP. The Director of Development Services said that there had been dissatisfaction expressed by some members of the Planning Committee that they did not have responsibility to have a say in the way the UDP was being written. This seems to show how under these new networks of actors, those outside the Planning Policy Panel were excluded from decisions on how parts of the UDP were to be written. Instead this defined group of members were forced to hold another role, that of 'approving' the text of the UDP. This was highlighted in the Report to the Council which recommended: "That the Planning Policy Panel's recommended responses on the Unitary Development Plan's public consultation comments and the consequent amendments to the Plan be approved by the Council." (Wrexham County Borough 1999d) This comment highlights 'the Planning Policy Panel' as having a specific role in giving 'responses' to a particular class of thing, 'the Unitary Development Plan's public consultation comments'. The 'responses' of 'the Planning Policy Panel' are also portrayed as having an effect, namely to force

‘consequent amendments to the Plan’. The use of the nominalisation ‘amendment’ removes agency from the work of ‘amending the Plan’, and this might indicate how the authors of this Report wish to mask the agency involved in this activity. This may be seen to be a frequently used form of writing in reports, in that activity, often enacted by ‘officers’ is hidden and replaced by a neutral, non-agentive grammatical structure.

THE PLANNING POLICY PANEL

Reasons why the Planning Policy Panel was set up

In this next section, I want to concentrate on the work of the Planning Policy Panel. As indicated above, some elected members perceived the Panel to have a significant influence on the writing of the UDP, and quotes like that above indicate the role which the Panel played. There were a number of reasons given in documents and by interviewees why the Planning Policy Panel was formed. Firstly, a report to the Planning Committee written by officers (it is unspecified which officers wrote this) suggested the Panel:

“The preparation of the UDP will be a complex process. It will involve participation by the public as well as discussion and decisions by the Council. In order for the team within my department to properly discuss and understand the aims of the Council it is recommended that we establish a forum for informal discussion of the issues between officers and members. The decisions will always be taken by the Committee and the Council, but a smaller working group is needed to go into the detail.... Other members will have the confidence of knowing that officers’ recommendations are based on a clear understanding of the views of the Council and have been developed in partnership with members.” (Wrexham County Borough, 1996a)

This quote identifies a number of groups, which are related together. Most importantly, ‘officers’ and ‘members’ are highlighted as two groups which are crucial to enacting the set of relations defined in this piece of text. In particular, ‘a forum for informal discussion’ is mentioned which will serve to define and enact certain relations between ‘officers’ and ‘members’. These relations include a specific kind of work which is defined as ‘going into the detail’ (of the Plan) and this is portrayed as different from the work of ‘the Committee’ which ‘takes decisions’. In particular this difference is

realised by the use of the conjunctive adjunct 'but'. Another two closely related groups are also defined, namely 'the team within my department' and 'the Council'. These two groups are related in a similar manner grammatically to 'officers' and 'members' (as shown in the second sentence). However, the group 'members' is also differentiated in the text, and this is realised through the notion of 'a smaller working group' which is defined as part of the larger group of 'the Committee and the Council'. This is highlighted again through the phrase 'other members' in the final sentence. Another important activity (apart from 'going into the detail') is that undertaken by 'the team within my department' which is "to properly discuss and understand the aims of the Council". In particular this work is realised through the activity of 'recommending' which officers are defined as carrying out. This is nominalised in the last sentence into 'officers' recommendations' which should reflect 'the views of the Council'. Thus officers' have a defined task of producing 'recommendations' (which will be carried out 'in partnership with members'). However, the use of the noun 'the Council' seems slightly different from its use in the first sentence (of a body which takes decisions). The Council in this case is defined as having 'views' or 'aims'. This in turn allows a different set of relations, enabling 'the forum' to provide a means for officers to 'understand' these 'aims'. It might be interpreted that the 12 members of the Panel were seen as able to represent these 'Council aims' to officers. Therefore, the Planning Policy Panel was set up through defining different groups and outlining what forms of work they could do. Officers, members, 'the forum', the Council and the Committee were all defined as having certain roles and different relations within this tentative network.

The discussion above relates to the textualised reasons for setting up the Planning Policy Panel. Interviewees also represented their own reasons why this body was inaugurated. One of the main reasons was given as the unwieldiness of the Planning Committee in discussing aspects of the Plan. This has been outlined above, especially as a criticism by some officers of the ways in which decisions were made, but it is useful to show this in relation to the Planning Policy Panel. One councillor stated some of the problems of taking decisions in the Planning Committee:

“going back to the old days, I’m thinking of the Borough Council now, the planning committee is a committee of the whole council - so you have forty or so members who would sit down there, as I said before, with any discussions on local plans, structure plans - [a councillor] would be on his feet and [another councillor] would be on his feet and maybe two or three people from the Labour group would be on their feet and there would be half a dozen people maybe who realised the importance of structure plans and local plans and we had to look ahead of things and if we wanted to preserve certain things or make sure certain things happened that would be there in the plans erm other people thought it boring, ‘we don’t want a long discussion on this’ and this tended to stifle things...structure plans and local plans became more important and people dealt with more planning applications and they realised that they should be part of that so from that point of view the Panel was set up”

This quote presents the reasons for the setting up of the Panel as partly due to a lack of interest expressed by many members in arenas such as ‘the Planning Committee’, and partly because some members were portrayed as seeing the importance of plans and the ways in which they were related to other processes such as deciding planning applications. Thus a view was being proposed in these texts and talk that the Planning Committee was inappropriate for a practice of discussing certain topics at length, of which the UDP was defined as one example. Instead, another structure was formed through documents and activity to allow the UDP to be discussed ‘in detail’. Certain officers seem to have been integral to pulling this network of actors together, and they managed this through documents and meetings with some members.

Work of the Planning Policy Panel

The meetings of the Planning Policy Panel started in December 1996 and continued up to November 1999. However, meetings were not regular, but occurred in groups. These groups of meetings seemed to reflect different forms of work and showed how this work followed a specific path which was constructed around the notion of different stages of ‘plan-making’. There were two meetings in 1996-1997. Work in these meetings focused on documents written by officers, especially those in the Planning Policy Team, and were termed ‘Issue Papers’. For example, the first meeting of the Panel had an agenda which included reports on ‘Background Information to the UDP’, ‘Timetable’, ‘Main Principles’ and ‘Any Other Issues’. In particular these reports seem to set out a defined boundary for the work of the Panel, and draw in other texts such as ‘Central

Government Advice' and 'previous plans' to justify these principles. The work of the Panel is then focused onto discussing and agreeing these principles, as shown in the Report: "Members are asked to give general support to a UDP based on these planning principles" (Wrexham County Borough, 1996b). These 'planning principles' and 'main issues' may be viewed in some analyses as 'obligatory passage points' through which various actors (especially 'members of the Planning Policy Panel') have to pass (see Callon, 1986). In order for members of the Planning Policy Panel to achieve their interests of encouraging 'economic growth' and restraining 'development' they might be viewed as having to accept the 'main principles' behind the Plan as identified by certain officers. However, there are problems with viewing this one text as central to other actors in seeking their goals; this will be discussed in the next chapter. Instead, the text may be viewed as enacting a strategy to seek agreement on various issues as defined by its authors, and more broadly this might be analysed as a frequently used textual strategy within the work to write plans.

The work of the Planning Policy Panel was also expanded in an interview with the Planning Policy Manager who commented on how these 'principles' were decided:

Interviewer: "how did the main principles of the plan get decided upon - was this from government policy and the emerging ideas of planning as a tool to achieve sustainability and other things that are in your main principles or did they come through from the previous plan?"

Planning Policy Manager: "well I think that the answer is 'yes' to everything and probably a bit more - the principles of the ones embodied in the first two policy panel papers which you've seen - now to begin with the officers, we sat around this table and said what are the key things that we must have decisions on if before we can write a plan and then at the end of the policy panel we said to the members are there any things you want to talk about and really the only thing that they contributed was that they were quite keen on discussing landscape areas erm and I think we put towards the second policy panel paper something on landscape areas which they were happy with - the principles which I think were about ten bullet points we just cobbled out of the previous plans and government advice and also our own knowledge of what we thought the members wanted and they were very happy with that, the key areas for decision like the range of housing the disposition of ditto employment are the obvious strategic things that you would need to do for a plan - the review of Green Barriers and so on and so forth, we even sounded them out a bit about consultation"

This quote reflects the way in which the writing of the Plan was carried out and the role which the Planning Policy Panel performed. The work of ‘officers’ to construct a framework of the topics to be covered in the Plan was influenced by a number texts and judgements. These were ‘the previous plans’ which seemed to be viewed by officers as important documents to draw upon in order to maintain a continuity of texts. ‘Government advice’ was also highlighted as important influences, and importantly ‘knowledge of what we thought the members wanted’. This reflected the relations between ‘officers’ and ‘members’ in that this officer felt it important to know the goals and interests of ‘members’ as a group. This may seem curious, as one of the reasons for the Panel was for ‘officers to understand the aims of the Council’. However, the Planning Policy Manager alluded to reasons why various aims of the Plan were chosen before meetings with the Panel:

“members are not comfortable talking for long periods of time about abstractions and strategies - if you wanted to discuss a planning strategy with members you would have to use examples of what it means on the ground - having done that they might take umbrage or concern at one of the examples you have given them and in that sense each strategy may not be given the careful consideration that you would hope if you could say to somebody that was an example you don’t have to use that - there are alternatives - you could have a strategy - there are alternatives - they may or may not listen to you”

In this way ‘members’ are typified by this officer as not having certain skills which enable ‘a planning strategy’ to be written. From this, it might be deduced that officers are constructing or re-enacting a set of relations which embodies some groups with certain abilities, such as writing ‘a planning strategy’. This seems to reflect ways in which discourses shape what is knowable or what counts as knowledge within certain settings, and which shape the relations between officers and members (see Tait and Campbell, 2000). The role which ‘members’ performed in this setting (and in others) was not explicitly challenged by most interviewed. These members accepted the relations between officers and members which were enacted through the Planning Policy Panel. The Chair of the Panel described the work of the Panel in these terms:

Interviewer: *“What were your experiences of being on the Planning Policy Panel - how did you see it working?”*

Chair: *“Well it was a method where the officers come up with ideas and they were banded about with councillors from all political divisions and at the end of the day we come to an agreement”*

This seems to indicate that the Chair accepted the role of ‘the officers’ to ‘come up with ideas’. This was reflected by another councillor who reflected that ‘officers’ had not been forceful in trying to align ‘members’ behind their strategy:

Interviewer: *“Have the officers been fairly supportive of you?”*

Councillor: *“Oh I should say so, yes very good - they never pushed their own point of view, even though they had their point of view but erm they would say what their point of view was, but if we said have a look at that and come back and say well we’ve thought about that and we’ve changed our minds or we haven’t changed our minds because _____. but they never sort of rammed it down us - well its a bit awkward in a committee structure - sometimes there were half a dozen of us - but they could have said we’re not doing that or we don’t - they came back with a range of sort of things - of options and sorts of things - there’s always something.”*

However, one councillor who was interviewed had qualms about the work of the Planning Policy Panel and the way in which relations between officers and members were enacted. This particular criticism drew on notions of democratic accountability and the specific role which members of the Planning Policy Panel had in relation to other councillors, and how that might have affected how the writing of the Plan was carried out.

“I think most of those meetings [of the Planning Policy Panel] the maximum number I would imagine we had at any of those was maybe half a dozen, the discussions we had were very open, non-party political, everybody listened and made their point in a genuine way and were listened to in a genuine way. I think that we distilled the best out of everybody, but the thing I worry about is because it was done that way there was a great rapport between officers and councillors. I think that as I said to you the other day, now that it [the draft UDP] has arrived, and we went through so much detail before and you can get a lot of apathy because of the discussions we’ve had before now, and that has betrayed all the sort of forty something members of the Council, and the

officers will get away with things because it is concentrating it in the hands of a small group of people”

In this way, this particular councillor felt that officers (as a group) were able to control the way in which issues were raised within the Planning Policy Panel, in a way in which he felt they would have been unable to do amongst all elected members. Although this councillor did state that relations between officers and councillors who sat on the Panel were satisfactory, he did express concerns that other councillors did not have the opportunity to change how the UDP was written and which issues were covered. This issue was also covered in an interview with the Planning Policy Manager:

Planning Policy Manager: “You see you have here a plan which is essentially the result of the council’s thought of maybe ten per cent of elected members of five or six councillors and half of whom you already know and have talked to and erm you know in superficial terms is not democratic process this is an elitist process but its the best we can do “

Interviewer: “Is it the best way you can get a plan out?”

Planning Policy Manager: “it does get the Plan out - I should say that it is a transparent process anybody can get a copy of the policy panel papers - they go before council - erm the plan doesn’t go that far you can’t actually put a spanner in the works and say I’m dreadfully unhappy with the decision the policy panel made I think you should look at this, this and this and can you go back and reconsider it and it’s not actually done that - but I don’t see an impediment to that actually happening in council - it maybe elitist but it’s also transparent, it’s elitist because people don’t intervene, but they could easily”

The Panel is therefore conceived as ‘elitist’, but that it is seen as a consequence of a necessary process, that is ‘to get the Plan out’. However, this is balanced by a claim made in the quote that ‘it’s also transparent’, and is therefore portrayed as a mechanism which could be understood by all. In this way, claims are being made about how a certain way of doing things is exclusive, but also open to challenge. The balance between ‘elitism’ and ‘transparency’ in this set of relations seems to be towards an elitism because ‘people don’t intervene’. In this way, the set of relations surrounding the Panel and the writing of the UDP might be seen to be partly stabilised because they are not challenged.

Much of the discussion above has concentrated on how work to define ‘a strategy’ for the Plan was carried out through the Planning Policy Panel and other work, notably by ‘officers’. This work seems to uncover some of the relations between ‘officers’ and ‘members’ which were enacted in meetings. However, work of the Panel also included other defined tasks, such as agreeing ‘the details’ of policies in the Plan. This constituted much of the work of the Panel in two stages, firstly in May and June 1998 and secondly in October and November 1999. These stages reflected the way in which work was based around different stages defined in the process of writing the UDP. Whilst the earliest group of meetings covered issues of ‘strategy’, the group of meetings in 1998 concerned a particular text, the draft UDP. This document was defined in minutes of a Panel meeting on 7th May 1998 which stated: “The Draft UDP had been based upon the predecessor Authority’s (sic) Structure and Local Plans together with the views previously expressed by Members at Meetings of the Planning Policy Panel and the Planning Committee. Additional policies had been included due to statutory changes that had occurred since 1986 (sic (possibly 1996))” (Wrexham County Borough, 1998a). This statement defines a particular document, ‘the Draft UDP’ which is then described as having certain characteristics. In addition the minutes report that ‘officers’ stated that “The Draft UDP was now considered defensible at Public Inquiry” (ibid.). This further strengthens the identity of the document, as it identifies it as having certain characteristics which make it ‘defensible’. This characteristic was reiterated during meetings, and served as a way to justify the text of the Draft UDP. For example, the minutes report: “*Members questioned* the Housing Committee (sic (possibly ‘Control’)) figure in light of the figure put forward by the Welsh Office. However they appreciated the fact that the figure of 5550 had advantages as it would allow some flexibility and would be more defensible.” (ibid.) The meetings of the Panel during this series of meetings discussed the wording of individual policies. One councillor described the process as ‘doing it paragraph by paragraph and making amendments’ and was thus conceived of a ‘going through the detail’. This was illustrated in the minutes to the meetings which state how the wording of policies should change, for example: “Resolved - That the Wrexham town centre shopping area be extended to include the shopping element of the Pentrefelin/Central Station Site.” (Wrexham County Borough,

1998c) These meetings discussed all elements of the text of the Draft Plan, however two main areas of debate arose. These were described by one councillor:

Interviewer: *“Were there any contentious issues which caused much debate?”*

Councillor: *“the housing allocation and the industrial sites, but you’d expect that...it had a heck of an impact on housing sites and so on, and we said how many houses we wanted in total and we left the officers to come up with a recommendation and that recommendation went to the Planning Committee”*

The quote indicates how these areas of debate were resolved and showed the role of officers in being asked to make ‘recommendations’ which could be discussed by the Planning Committee. In this way, it seemed that some debate in the Panel was avoided, through transferring decisions to another arena. This was reflected in the minutes of one meeting which stated: “Members referred to the fact that the fullest consideration should take place with Local Members who have housing sites allocated in their wards” (Wrexham County Borough 1998d). The quote shows how ‘members’ were calling on other relations in this case of taking decisions on housing sites, especially relations between councillors as members of the Panel and other councillors. The statement of intent shows how councillors who were members of the Panel constructed their roles and their abilities to make decisions.

The series of meetings which dealt with the Draft UDP discussed a document which comprised policy statements. Debate was therefore structured around a text written by a group of officers, and the solidly-formed nature of the text seemed to make it difficult to challenge many of the bases upon which the document was written. Most discussion involved changes to wording of policies and defining work for officers to clarify or change these wordings. In this way, the roles of officers and members were being enacted in relation to a particular text and showed how such a text might be changed. As shown above, deciding some changes to texts were left for ‘the Planning Committee’ whilst other decisions were taken by councillors who sat on the Panel. Other attempts by some members to change the text were resisted by officers. Officers resisted changes often through recourse to defining a change as ‘unpracticable’ or ‘outside the remit of the Plan’. For example in the last in the series of meetings it was reported: “In relation

to amendments arising from the Meeting of the Panel held on 19 May 1998 concerns were expressed by Members in relation to Policy H4. These related mainly to the parking provision required for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) particularly those that were being used to house students. Officers reminded the panel that the majority of HMOs fell outside development control.” (Wrexham County Borough, 1998e) The change to the policy in this case was therefore resisted through recourse to defining a boundary around the remit of the Draft UDP.

The last series of meetings of the Planning Policy Panel took place in November and December 1999. These meetings were also convened to deal with a particular stage of the process to write a UDP (the defining of this process has been discussed above). In the first meeting in this series, the role of the Panel was outlined by the Planning Policy Manager:

“The role of this Panel was to consider the observations and any resulting amendments that had been made arising from the consultation exercise required for the draft UDP. After due consideration and any required amendments, the draft UDP would be presented to Council for approval. Once approved, it would then be placed on legal deposit prior to the Plan being considered at a Local Inquiry.” (Wrexham County Borough, 1999a)

The Panel is therefore given the role of reacting to other texts, namely those ‘observations and any resulting amendments’. These changes might in turn be seen as the result of other texts, especially those documents written by those constructed as ‘consultees’ in the process. Much of the work of the Panel at this stage involved discussing and deciding upon the parts of the UDP which identified sites for ‘housing’ and ‘employment’. Debate drew on documents produced by bodies such as the Welsh Development Agency and Sesswick Community Council. The changes which resulted from these debates involved changes to the wording of policies, and the majority of the Draft UDP text was unchanged by the end of the series of meetings. This seems to reflect the way in which the text of the UDP had become ‘solidified’ and actors sought to change only parts of the text, rather than attempting to change much of the text.

Conclusion

The work of the Planning Policy Panel might be interpreted as a means by which certain officers could control how the Plan was written. Although this might be seen as a result of the work of the Panel, there were many issues which seemed to affect how the Panel carried out its activities and reasons why it was set up. These issues might be identified as a wish on the part of both certain officers and members to set up a means by which the writing of the Plan could be discussed. This aspect might also be related to the ways in which the means of writing planning policies were conceived. The writing of the UDP was expressed in a number of texts and by interviewees as a 'complex' process, which involved numerous decisions. The idea of such a 'process' also focuses on an aim to 'get the Plan adopted quickly', and this was expressed in a number of texts and in talk. That the writing of the UDP was both complex and should be as quick as possible was not disputed by any interviewees and there seems little evidence that this was challenged in texts. The Panel was suggested by officers, who constructed themselves in a set of relations where they had the knowledge to write a Plan, and therefore proposed the Panel as the best means of carrying out this specified process.

CONCEPTUALISING 'CONSULTING'

In this next section, I aim to show how processes which were termed 'consultation' by a number of documents and interviewees were constructed. Different processes and activities might be allied to the work of 'consulting', but I want to show how certain activities become accepted as 'consultation' and why this might occur. Notions of 'consulting' seem to be related to ideas of influencing something; or how some thing attains certain characteristics which are suitable for it being 'consulted on'. In this work, the focus is on how the UDP became defined as a text which merited 'consultation'. In addition it is necessary to show how such a text might be influenced by certain groups and activities. Whilst in the section above discussion has centred on the work of 'officers' and 'members' (and 'central Government') to influence the Plan, this section will concentrate on how other groups and activities influenced the UDP. In particular dividing analysis into these sections will hopefully show how influences on the Plan were conceived as being 'internal' and 'external' to the Council. This

boundary was constructed through relating various entities, such as ‘officers’ and ‘members’ together into another entity named ‘the Council’. This activity might be contrasted with the work of entities ‘outside’ this boundary. However, crucially for this study, the constructing of this boundary may be seen to shape the way in which relations between the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’ of ‘the Council’ are constructed. This will be the focus of the following analysis, which will centre on how processes of ‘consulting’ were constructed in relation to Wrexham UDP.

WORK TO DEFINE ‘PUBLIC CONSULTATION’

Activity which was defined as ‘consulting’ was constructed in certain ways and related to other activities. Consulting was conceived as part of the process to write a development plan, which has been outlined above. In particular, ‘consulting’ was often defined as a stage in a process, and was related to other stages which were identified as structuring the ways in which the UDP was written. This work to identify certain activities as ‘consultation’ and to contrast these activities with other defined forms of work was built up through different texts. For example, such work was delimited through documents such as the ‘Statement of Pre-deposit Publicity and Consultation’ (Wrexham County Borough, 1999c) which described the activities conceived of as ‘consultation’. In particular, these activities were defined as happening at a particular time and were related to a particular text. This was shown in a report to the Council:

“The Wrexham UDP (July 1998 edition) was subject to public consultation between 16 November 1998 and 11 January 1999. Within this period, a total of 161 different respondents made written representations in support of, or objection to, the draft Plan.” Wrexham County Borough, 1999d)

The report conceives ‘consultation’ as an activity which happened between certain dates, and which was related to specific texts (‘The Wrexham UDP July 1998 edition’ and ‘the draft Plan’). In this way, the activity was bounded both in time and in its object. This allows such a process to be conceived of as a thing in itself, as having a defined identity of ‘consultation’. This is shown through the way in which the verb ‘to consult’ has been nominalised to become ‘consultation’. This might be interpreted as indicating a certain stability to the work defined as ‘consulting’, in that it can be related

to certain other objects and processes. Other documents also relate the work of 'consulting' to certain objects which are seen as artefacts of a particular stage in the process of writing a UDP. In particular, Planning Guidance (Wales) relating to UDPs states: "Each authority must consult the following on its pre-deposit draft plan and take their representations into account before determining the contents of the deposit plan" (Welsh Office, 1996 para.27). This document, which is identified with the 'Welsh Office' as author, therefore places work to consult within a process which is concerned with producing different texts ('pre-deposit draft plan' and 'deposit plan'). Thus consulting might be analysed as a fairly stabilised process which relates to different documents and particular stages in a process.

DEFINING 'THE PUBLIC'

The work of consulting not only relates to different stages of a conceived process and different documents, but also relates to other entities which are being 'consulted'. As mentioned above, these entities might be seen as groups defined as being 'external' to 'the Council'. This section will therefore deal with the work carried out to define groups which were to be subject to this process of consulting. One group which was linked to the work defined as 'consulting' was 'the Public'. This was highlighted in the wording used in both written material and in talk. For example, the Statement of Pre-deposit Publicity and Consultation stated: "The draft Unitary Development Plan was then subject to public consultation between 16 November 1998 and 11 January 1999" (Wrexham County Borough 1999c). This shows how a nominal group is created, 'public consultation'. In this way the nominalised form of 'consult' has a classifier 'public' attached, which indicates a particular type of 'consulting'. Defining 'the public' was carried out in different ways, and many concepts were linked to this term. The way in which 'the public' were conceived by officers and members varied, but these conceptions also seemed to affect what work was carried out in the name of 'public consultation'. The text of the UDP itself rarely mentions 'the public' as a group and does not mention how 'the public' might have influenced the text of the Plan. The contrasts between the two plans will be assessed in the next chapter. Wrexham UDP instead of highlighting 'the public' as a group, instead draws on other groupings, such

as 'local residents', 'businesses' and 'visitors' (Wrexham County Borough, 1998f p.5). Therefore the text of the Plan does not highlight 'the public' as an influence on the way in which the text was, or might be, written. The text of the UDP instead draws on other concepts as influences on what is written in the Plan. This is shown most clearly in the section entitled 'General Considerations':

"Though the Plan is principally concerned with land use development it also takes account of the demographic, social, and economic considerations which affect, and are affected by its policies. Its main theme is the improvement of local residents' quality of life." (ibid. p.3)

These 'demographic, social and economic considerations' are seen as important influences upon policies. This might be seen to highlight the way in which the Plan was written, through defining certain processes as 'considerations' when writing policies.

Other documents, however deal with 'public consultation' as a part of the process of writing Wrexham UDP. In particular, this topic was discussed at a meeting of the Planning Policy Panel. A report to the Panel drew upon Planning Guidance (Wales) as providing a guide to what 'consultation' should be. In particular, the Guidance states:

"Local people and interested bodies should have the opportunity to participate in plan preparation from the earliest stage so that they are fully involved in making decisions about the development pattern in their area." (Welsh Office, 1996 para.27)

This quote was reproduced in the text of the report, showing how this text was related to work in Wrexham, and attaching some importance to the Guidance document. However, the report to the Panel also states: "A local authority can, if it thinks fit, invoke additional public consultation over and above the stipulated minimum" (Wrexham County Borough, 1996b). 'Public consultation' is therefore stated as an entity which is related to 'a stipulated minimum' thus drawing on other texts as forcing the local authority to carry out certain actions. In this way, texts such as the Development Plan Regulations (1991) and Planning Guidance (Wales) act to enrol the local authority (or activities in its name) in a certain network. However, a planner at the Welsh Office stated "we don't police the regulations - if a council doesn't comply then

we [the Welsh Office] would only know if a member of the public wrote us a letter". This seems to indicate that at least this part of these texts is not enforced in the same way as other texts, such as statute. The report to the Planning Policy Panel also raised issues of how 'the public' should be consulted. This was phrased not as a matter of defining what 'consulting' was or should be, but used the metaphor of 'the minimum' to describe 'consulting' as above or below this:

"The issue to be considered by Members is the extent to which the County borough should undertake public consultation over and above the prescribed minimum. Given very limited staff resources should public meetings or exhibitions be considered or will they simply raise issues not relevant to the production of a Unitary Development Plan? Alternatively should some form of market research be undertaken?" (Wrexham County Borough, 1996b)

The clausal structure of the second sentence has the marked theme, 'Given very limited staff resources' which explicitly foregrounds this issue before considering whether meetings or exhibitions should be considered. Furthermore, the second part of the sentence questions the efficacy of these public meetings by relating them to 'irrelevant issues', thus stating that the UDP has a defined scope. The report to the Panel seems to relate 'public consultation' to a set of activities or techniques (meetings, exhibitions, market research). The text of the report does not therefore serve to define what 'the public' is or might be. Use of the nominal group 'public consultation' allows 'consulting' to be viewed as an entity which can be related to various activities. In the following meeting of the Planning Policy Panel there was some discussion of these issues. In particular the report to this meeting outlined that 'members had agreed the form and extent of public consultation, but had asked officers to investigate the practicalities of carrying out consultation on the Plan's main principles' (Wrexham County Borough, 1997). The report gave a response to this request:

"The regulations require that certain consultees must have a copy of the full draft plan. It would seem inequitable to provide some consultees with a full draft and others with just the main principles and issues. It would also be very time consuming for a third, preliminary round of consultation on principles and issues to be introduced." (ibid.)

This draws on a number of arguments why ‘the main principles’ should not be subject to ‘public consultation’. Firstly, the quote draws on another text, the Regulations, thus relating this issue to a network of texts which have some stability and are attached importance. Secondly, the quote highlights fairness as a reason why this action should not be taken. Lastly, the issue to time taken to carry out this action is given as a reason; this seems to relate to concepts of the writing of the UDP as a process which should be carried out quickly. These issues were also highlighted in background documents concerning ‘consultation’, which mentioned delays, as well as problems of lack of resources and the raising of ‘irrelevant issues’. In the subsequent meeting of the Panel which discussed this report, members agreed that consultation should take place when a full draft was available. This also seemed to highlight the desire to stabilise the text of the Plan before it was placed in arenas which had the potential to enable it to be changed.

These texts which were concerned with ‘public consultation’ generally related this concept to techniques, and the way in which these practices (such as meetings) would affect the text of the Plan. In particular, these techniques were related to issues of time, resources and eliciting ‘relevant’ comments on the Plan. The way in which these issues were related to different techniques seemed to arise from inherited concepts of ‘the public’ which were expressed in interviews with both officers and members.

Interviews with both officers and members showed how they constructed an identity for the public as a potential delay in the process. (One forward planning officer said that with more ‘public participation’, the plan-making process would take four months longer). This was not necessarily through the objections which they might raise, although one councillor identified a small group of people who ‘do it [object to the Plan] like it’s a hobby’. Instead, the public were commonly portrayed as uninterested, and that any public participation exercise would be a waste of time. This view was dominant amongst members and officers, and was expressed time and time again. One councillor, when talking of public consultation, “I just hope that it does work and that there is a lot of interest, but I think sometimes you think, well what’s the point at the end of the day - they look at that and they make a dozen contributions - it’s just that

nothing happens". This view was also expressed by a number of officers, who also drew on previous experience of 'public consultation' and a lack of interest from members of the public. The lack of interest from the public was not wholly explained through failures in the mechanisms used to consult the public, but on a much broader level as a problem arising from the abstract nature of development plans. The planning policy manager summed this up by saying "Do you give the public a blank sheet of paper - or do you give them a framework of ideas on it, and unless you tell them a lot about planning, giving them a blank sheet of paper is going to end in tears, because they will ask for the most unreasonable demands, not in the fact that they are not laudable demands - they will make unreasonable demands in terms of what a planning policy document can deliver - because the things that people want in their community are no vandalism, no drugs and kids hanging around on street corners, no graffiti, no dog dirt - those are the key things - planning is already in the second division of those requirements". These quotes seem to show how the notion of 'the public' as a coherent group was not widely held. Instead, 'the public' were conceived of as 'uninterested' or as 'eccentrics'. This was related to notions of 'the Plan' as a specialist document, and one which had a tightly defined remit. In this way, certain techniques of 'public consultation' were seen to be wasteful because 'the public' were perceived as uninterested in the particular remit of the UDP. In many ways, concepts of 'the public' were not used by officers or members to structure work to write the Plan. Although the term 'the public' and 'public consultation' were used, it was not broadly used to structure the way work was carried out. This may be a fairly widespread phenomenon, and use of the term 'public consultation' encompasses many differing practices, ideas and networks of relations. Instead of identifying 'the public' as an entity, officers and members (as well as others) used other groupings to structure their plan-making activities. These groupings will be discussed in the next section.

CONSTRUCTING AND RE-CONSTRUCTING GROUPS

In the writing and re-writing of the text of the UDP numerous groups were defined and acted in networks surrounding this activity. These groups might be analysed as being defined by other groups as well as defining themselves in relation to the text of the

UDP. The ways in which these groups came to be defined relied upon many practices, materials and actions. In this section, I want to concentrate on textual inscriptions as one of the most important ways in which groups became defined. I have described above how groups of ‘officers’ and ‘members’ became defined through textual and other practices. This part of the chapter will deal with the ways in which groups were defined in relation to the writing of the UDP. One of the means by which groups were specified in the networks surrounding the UDP was through the practices described as ‘consultation’. One of the consequences of conceiving the making of the Plan as a process with stages was that it allowed groups to be identified as contributing at certain times. For example, the work to write the text of the Draft UDP might be analysed as being carried out by two groups, namely ‘officers’ and ‘members’. The work to write the text of the deposit version of the UDP might be analysed as being influenced by other groups, who might be termed consultees, who existed ‘outside’ the Council. Whilst this analysis shows how different arenas of work are constructed through notions of the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ of ‘the Council’, this does not show how these arenas may be permeated by influences from the ‘outside’. For example, policy documents such as ‘Planning Guidance (Wales)’, statute and housing allocation figures compiled by the Land Authority for Wales might come to influence the writing of the draft UDP. In this way, writing plans does not start from a blank template upon which more and more influences and groups do their writing. Instead, there are many inherited groupings, documents and practices which constrain and enable the text of the Plan to be written. This might be seen as part of the extended networks in which the practice of writing planning policies in Wrexham is embedded.

The extended networks and use of inherited groupings and practices seemed to be particularly strong in the case of Wrexham. Whereas in Islington certain groups had been formed to write or influence the writing of policy (such as the Sustainable Transport Round Table), only the Planning Policy Panel can be seen to have been solely formed to deal with this specific Plan (although it might also be argued that the group ‘forward planning officers’ also held this role). In addition, practices of ‘public consultation’ did not identify particular groups which were pulled together (or defined) for the purposes of writing the Plan. These practices did not carve up the population

into particular groups to be targeted specifically for this Plan (they did not target 'schoolchildren' or 'ethnic minority' groups in their consultation work for example). Practices which were defined as 'consultation' in documents and by interviewees drew upon groups established in other sets of relations. These groups might be seen as tied into other networks (even having an existence independent of these consultation practices). These groups were defined not only through their relations to 'the Plan' but through numerous other relations and structures. For example, the Housebuilders' Federation as a grouping is defined through numerous relations between house building companies, employees of the Federation and its identity is enacted through structures such as committees and through activities such as commenting on plans. This might be analysed as true of many of the groups which became involved in the practices associated with the writing of Wrexham UDP. These were 'organisations'; groups which had some stability and durability in their structures (as shown by the nominalised form of the word).

The identity of these groups was defined and re-defined through numerous texts, which might be seen to create a network of entities and relations. The identity of groups such as 'the Welsh Office' was largely created (especially for the purposes of writing UDPs) through texts such as Planning Guidance (Wales). The identity of the Welsh Office was tied to notions of what it could do and how it enacted various practices. This might be shown through the ways in which documents from the Welsh Office concerning Wrexham UDP drew upon texts such as Planning Guidance (Wales) and statute. This aspect of the work of the Welsh Office will be outlined below. Other textual inscriptions also served to identify groups and re-define organisations around the work of writing the UDP. These included letters and reports written in the name of organisations and concerning the UDP. For example, the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) wrote reports which were sent to Wrexham Planning Department, and helped define the WDA as a body which was enrolled in a network of relations surrounding the Plan. These groups became involved in the writing of the Plan due to specific practices. Certain groups were involved through texts which stated their role in producing a plan. These groups were defined through documents such as the Development Plan Regulations (for example, the Welsh Office) and Technical Advice Notes (for example,

the Land Authority for Wales (latterly part of the WDA)). Other groups were defined through Planning Guidance (Wales) and the Development Plan Regulations 1991. These included 'the Secretary of State for Wales, the council of any community covered by the proposals, any adjacent local planning authority, the Environment Agency and the Countryside Council for Wales' (Welsh Office, 1996 para.27). A further list is also appended which defines 24 other bodies which should be consulted. This list was used in the writing of the UDP to identify which groups were to be sent a copy of the draft UDP, and this list was replicated in the Statement of pre-deposit Publicity and Consultation. Other groups were also listed in the List of Consultees produced in December 1999. These included local Members of Parliament, Wrexham County Borough members and Wrexham County Borough directors and chief officers. The list therefore identifies groups and individuals who were both seen to be 'internal' and 'external' to the Council. The final section in the List of Consultees is entitled 'Members of the Public' and states that 225 groups or individuals defined in this category were consulted. The List of Consultees does not state any names or details of this group, 'Members of the Public'. However, a practice of sending copies of the draft UDP to groups and individuals who had expressed an desire to see the draft Plan was enacted. In addition to this, another set of practices was enacted which were described in the Statement of pre-Deposit Publicity and Consultation. This involved placing advertisements in two newspapers which stated where copies of the Plan could be inspected. Copies of the draft Plan were placed in Wrexham County Borough offices, and various libraries in the Borough. This strategy seemed to target groups who had some identity and were already enrolled in networks surrounding the making of planning policy. This was recognised in a background report on 'Consultation Options' for the Planning Policy Panel. This stated that the practice of 'solely relying on local press notices to achieve consultation with the general public' targeted 'specific local groups and the local development industry'. It went on to state 'this method gets straight to the groups who have an interest in the Plan...it is statutory and cheap'. However, the report also highlighted that this practice, 'would give a one-sided view from specific vocal interest groups whilst not giving specific weight to the general public whom must also live with the resultant Plan and its policies'. This indicates the ways in which the practice of consulting was conceived, especially through identifying

'specific vocal interest groups' and 'the general public'. This strategy was criticised by a member of a two groups who had commented on the Plan, who said that no Environmental Statement (part of the UDP) was left in Ruabon library and that "the Council don't want public consultation or to take account of people's views". From this a division was also made between groups which could afford the £30 charge for a copy of the UDP and those which had to inspect copies in libraries. Practices described as 'consultation' therefore were designed to allow certain groups to participate in the writing or making of the Plan, and in particular these groups seemed to be those which had strong structures and were embedded in networks surrounding the making of planning policy.

The stability and durability of many of the groups which became involved in the writing of the UDP seemed to favour the aim of 'getting the Plan adopted quickly'. Whereas consultation with the public did not seem to fit into the goal of following the process and getting the plan adopted quickly, interest groups were more strongly defined, and could be accommodated within the process which the officers, members and central government worked to define. These groups are to some extent portrayed as 'predictable' in that officers and members could identify what their concerns were on the UDP. Through the relative stability of these groups' identities, officers and members were therefore able to forecast their role in the plan-making process. The identities and attributes of the interest groups were not solely built up by officers and members; the interest groups carried out much work in stabilising their own identity and attempting to extend their influence. Such work was commonly carried out through the production of documents by bodies such as the RSPB, Council for the Protection of Rural Wales, the Countryside Council for Wales and the Welsh Development Agency. Officers seemed to find these documents useful, and drew on these documents for ideas which could be incorporated into the writing of the UDP. However, interest groups were also portrayed as producing different ideas and wanting the Plan changed, although this was in a somewhat predictable way. The Chief Planning Officer commented on this: "the housebuilders are a well resourced objector - I am assuming that they will have a point of view that will diverge from the plan...and that is likely to be a closely argued part of the taking it through the deposit and finally through to the public

inquiry”. The differing goals of the housebuilders are therefore portrayed as having an effect on how the process of plan-making is conducted. However, the formal system of deposit editions and public inquiries (stipulated by Central Government) was acknowledged by both interest groups and planners, and both worked to ‘use this system’ to their best advantage. In such a way, the networks which interest groups and ‘the Council’ were seeking to expand interacted with the social resources which existed in the formal plan-making system. Planners did however highlight difficulties in dealing with many interest groups. The Planning Policy Manager expressed these when he said: “a development plan is very often a political thing and the option of going to a select band of organisations means that you have to draw a line somewhere - these organisations speak to each other and if you speak to one the others will say ‘can we speak to you’ and again I’m not certain at this stage to what extent that’s useful”. Interest groups are portrayed as a disparate group, but one which is fairly predictable and which acknowledges and reinforces the procedures built up by the Council and Central Government.

GROUPS AND THEIR WORK TO INFLUENCE THE UDP

The practices which were instituted as ‘public consultation’, as has been detailed above, focused on defined groups having some ability to change the text of the draft UDP. Drawing on defined groups and the fairly stable networks in which these groups were defined, allowed the writing of the Plan to be made more predictable. Work which was defined as ‘public consultation’ drew on various inherited texts and practices which were viewed as ‘normal’ by a number of those involved. The way in which the practice of consulting was built up through drawing on such documents as the Development Plan Regulations served to make the process ‘normal’ and more resistant to challenge. In this way, a network built up around the practice of ‘consultation’ drew upon texts (and the networks in which they were situated) to legitimise these practices and make them more durable. This was shown through the way in which the practices of consulting, although questioned, were not seriously challenged.

This 'normalised' form of consulting also shaped the ways in which groups attempted to influence the UDP text. In particular, consulting on the draft UDP with its already defined policies and fairly stabilised text, forced attempts to influence the making of the UDP in certain ways. In particular, the writing of the draft UDP so that the text would be as close as possible to an adopted UDP, structured the way in which groups reacted to the text and defined what was at stake. Most groups became involved in trying to influence only certain parts of the text, rather than aiming to change its bases and principles. Attempts to change the whole form of the text would involve much work to unravel the many relations which the text embodied. This would seem to explain why groups tried to change the 'detail' rather than the 'principles' on which the Plan was based. Work to influence the text of the Plan by those groups defined in 'public consultation' was also influenced by the timing of the stages of plan making. Work to write the Plan was broken down into stages. These stages were defined in various texts such as Planning Guidance (Wales): UDPs which identified certain procedures involved with writing plans. This stabilised the work which was carried out during these stages. For example, work to involve groups was defined at certain times, so that 'the public' were to be involved during 'consultation periods'. This was strongly reflected in the press notices advertising the 'Pre-Deposit Public Consultation' which stated: "Representations received after the above expiry date will not be considered" (Wrexham County Borough, 1999c). In this way, the writing of the Plan became stabilised through identifying different practices as operating at different times. However, there was also some evidence that some groups attempted to influence Plan policies over a longer period of time, through contact with officers. Even for these groups (such as the WDA) which were involved in the writing of the Plan over a longer period, a particular form of text was still produced for the 'consultation period'. This took the form of documents listing 'representations' on the Wrexham UDP. The next section will deal with some of these documents, and their role in changing the text of the UDP.

Within the period that was stipulated for comments to be made on the draft UDP, 161 different respondents sent documents. This was described in the Report of pre-Deposit Publicity and Consultation as "an encouragingly large and varied response" (ibid.) (this is in contrast to the Islington case study where 173 responses was viewed as a small

number)). Whilst it will not be possible within this section to deal with all these documents, there were some which are indicative of differing attempts to influence the writing of the UDP. Some documents were also more successful in changing the wording of policies, and these might illustrate certain textual strategies which are able to change the relations surrounding the making of the Plan.

A document which attempted to influence many parts of the Plan was a list of comments written in the name of the Welsh Office. Whilst these comments are collated in one document, the covering letter refers to different 'divisions' within the Welsh Office, namely, 'Cadw, WOAD [Welsh Office Agriculture Department] and Housing'. The document therefore attempts to represent a number of different groupings in one text. This would seem to re-enact both the divisions and the notion of the Welsh Office as an entity. The means by which this was carried out was described by a member of the Planning Division at the Welsh Office: "When plans come in we order about 20 copies and send them to every policy branch in the Welsh Office - transport, health, education, housing and so on. We then get responses back and produce a composite statement - sometimes there are contradictions, but not often and then we have to use our judgement to decide on them". The document submitted in the name of the Welsh Office deals with nearly all sections of the Plan, and this was seen by the member of the Planning Division as unusual amongst the documents sent in by other bodies. There are two broad issues which the Welsh Office document deals with. Firstly, the document draws on other documents and checks the conformity of policies in the Plan with these documents. For example, the document draws on Planning Guidance (Wales) to attempt to alter the wording of the Plan so that it might be viewed as conforming with the guidance. This is shown in the comment: "Policy H3: Consideration should be given to the guidance in PG(W)PP [Planning Guidance (Wales): Planning Policy] paragraph 190, about conversions for residential use requiring particular care". In this way, a particular piece of text (paragraph 190) is contrasted with a particular part of the UDP (Policy H3) and found not to re-articulate this particular piece of 'guidance'. An attempt is therefore made to enrol this policy within the set of relations embodied in the guidance document. In this particular case, this attempt was not immediately successful, as such a change was resisted in the document containing 'Council' responses to 'objections'. Other

attempts to align the text of the Plan with other documents was more successful, showing that such 'guidance' is not uniformly integrated into the texts of Plans. This aspect of the document was reflected in an interview with a member of the Planning Division who stated: "we look at their statutory duties and conflicts with Government policy, then we look up the Council's justification if they depart from these". Secondly, the document suggests re-wording of the Plan's text, mostly justified as making the Plan 'clearer' and 'easier to use'. This was reflected in an interview with a member of the Planning Division who said: "The second thing we look at is 'is it a good plan?', drafting is the bread and butter of a plan and we have built up experience in looking at wording and presentation, we look for sloppy wording and make comments on this". This was shown in the document written in the name of the Welsh Office. For example, "Policy PS7: Most new shopping..." The use of the term 'most' weakens the policy as it introduces uncertainty. The policy could be re-worded as follows: 'The priority areas for new shopping and office development will be Wrexham town centre and the district centre shopping areas'. The original wording of Policy PS7 was as follows: "Most new shopping and commercial office development will be concentrated in the defined Wrexham Town Centre and district centres (sic) shopping areas." Wrexham County Borough, 1998f). In this case the Welsh Office document aims to get the text of Wrexham UDP to conform to a notion of 'certainty' and 'strength' of policy. These metaphors are used to draw attention to ways in which policies might be assessed (namely 'weakness/strength' and 'certainty/uncertainty'). The suggested change places a nominal group 'The priority areas' as theme in the clausal structure of the policy, which serves to define a new object ('priority areas') as the subject of the clause. This is in contrast to the original wording which has the modal adjunct 'most' at the beginning of the clause and thus highlights typicality. In both cases 'most' and 'priority areas' may be defined in different ways by different groups, however the change in wording draws attention away from questions of normality and typicality. Other parts of the Welsh Office text draw on such things as divisions between 'policy' and 'policy advice', titles of chapters and links between policies. These 'comments' in the name of the Welsh Office were viewed by members of its Planning Division as important because the wording of Plans was seen as important and because of the status of the Welsh Office. As one member of the Planning Division at the Welsh Office said: "I

used to work for a local authority, and we always tried to satisfy central government comments...it doesn't really matter what Joe Blogg in the streets' comments are, but you want to avoid objections from the Government department if you can".

Another document which aimed to change the text of the draft UDP was entitled 'Representations by the Welsh Development Agency'. As with the Welsh Office document this set of comments was described as representing not only the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) but also elements which were seen to be part of the WDA, such as 'the Environment Division', 'the Housing Division' and 'the Land Division'. The work to combine comments from these elements was described by a member of the Land Division as difficult. The work to enrol these other actors behind one document was seen as difficult because the WDA was described as formed from a number of agencies, with differing objectives. For example, the Land Division was described as being created out of a former body, the Land Authority for Wales. The WDA was also described as being composed out of other entities, such as the Development Board for Rural Wales. The document, 'Representations by the Welsh Development Agency' reflected the differing objectives and different networks in which these Divisions were incorporated. There are a number of textual strategies operating in this WDA document. Firstly, attempts are made to get the text of Wrexham UDP clarified. For example, it states: "While it is appreciated that the precise boundary may not yet have been decided upon, an indication in the Plan of the approximate area under consideration would be useful.". Other parts of the document state where there are seen to be conflicts between policies, thus propagating the notion that plans should be 'coherent' documents. Secondly, the WDA document states issues which it would like to see more work carried out. The text states that 'the Agency' would carry out this work, and would like 'the Council' to contribute. This is shown in the statement: "Having regard to the fundamental importance of the housing requirement figure the Agency is proposing to carry out an analysis/appraisal of the population projections and housing requirement prior to the deposit stage of the Plan and would be pleased to do this in association with the Council." This statement draws on other networks and structures to carry this out. The text goes on to state: "This could be carried out in conjunction with the Council, and if possible other members of the Wrexham Land

Availability Study Group”. This defines another grouping which is seen as important in discussing the text of the UDP. This grouping is itself solidified through other texts, notably a particular planning guidance document: “This note provides guidance on the continued preparation of Joint Housing Land Availability Studies by study groups coordinated by the Land Authority for Wales (LAW). For unitary authorities the groups will comprise the Land Authority, the unitary authority, housebuilders’ representatives, Housing for Wales, statutory undertakers and other bodies as appropriate.” (Welsh Office, 1997 p.1). This sets up a group which has a defined responsibility for deciding upon land for housing in Wales. The WDA document draws on this, as co-ordinator of the Study Groups (the Land Authority became the Land Division of the WDA) and uses this defined role as co-ordinator to attempt to change the text of the UDP. The text of the WDA document therefore attempts to draw in other actors in an established network to influence the Plan. Thirdly, the WDA document suggests particular sites be included within the Plan. These sites were owned by the WDA and the text of the document lists these defined sites and some of their characteristics (such as ‘highways access’). This textual strategy defines ‘the Agency’ as central to material change on these sites (that is development of them) through enacting the notion of ‘ownership’ as crucial to these sites. The text also re-enacts relations surrounding the WDA, local authorities and land (as defined bodies in a network). In particular, the roles of the WDA are enacted through the text. The WDA was not only seen as a body which ‘commented’ on texts such as UDPs, but was also seen as a body which had a special status through its ownership of land. Some interviewees expressed concern over these two roles of the WDA, as they were seen to conflict and that the former Land Authority for Wales was ‘aggressive’ in getting their sites allocated in Plans. This indicates that much work was carried out by this body to alter the text of plans.

Other documents which aimed to change the text of the UDP included a large number which were concerned with a specific part of the UDP or a specific topic. One example is a document written in the name of the House Builders’ Federation (HBF). This text is divided into a number of sections relating to separate policies in the draft UDP. These sections attempt to outline where the text of the Plan should be changed. For example, the document draws on various other texts, such as ‘Part M of the Building Regulations’

and 'Welsh Office Circular 32/98' to argue that the wording of a sub-section of one policy, dealing with disabled access, should be changed. In doing so, the HBF document draws on these texts to state the remit of the Plan: "The Circular makes clear, at para. 11, that in considering planning applications for new dwellings, location and arrangements of dwellings on site is a matter for planning, whereas the approach to and the internal layout and construction of the dwellings is a matter for building control." The HBF document was successful in changing the wording of the policy in question, and this was described in the document detailing changes to the Plan: "'Disabled access' will be deleted from Policy GDP1(c)" (Wrexham County Borough, 1999f p.23). One section of the HBF document is entitled 'Housing Issues' and seeks to change the text of the Plan in two ways. Firstly, through clarifying figures relating to 'housing supply'. The lack of clarity defined in the HBF document is related to a particular feature of the Plan, namely 'keeping textual comment to the minimum' which is seen to provide 'insufficient detail'. This attempt to change the Plan was successful, and new wording was drafted subsequently. Secondly, the HBF document draws attention to 'reservations' about the 'genuine availability' of sites. This draws on notions of 'sites' having a characteristic of 'availability' and this is underlain by questions of how this 'availability' is measured. The response in the document detailing changes draws on the network surrounding decisions on 'availability': "Sites allocated for housing development in Policy H1 have been agreed as likely to be completed within the next 5 years by the annual joint housing land supply study group which includes the HBF" (ibid. p.47). In particular, the quote serves to implicate the HBF in decisions already made (as indicated by the past participle 'have been agreed'). This means that the HBF are shown to have aligned themselves behind this policy at one time, and that the HBF document is portrayed as contradictory. This shows how texts can be defended through drawing on previous decisions and implicating other entities within the networks which shaped these decisions.

In contrast to the documents outlined above, which frequently draw on other texts to support attempts to change the UDP, other documents which attempted to change the UDP rely on other textual strategies. These other documents might be typified as written by 'non-planners'. This is not to say, however, that there is a strict division in

textual style between documents written by ‘planners’ and ‘non-planners’. An example of a document which utilises a variety of textual strategies is the ‘written representations’ from an environmental campaign group, ‘Communities Appeal for Respect of the Environment’ (CARE). This group was formed in response to concern about public health arising from a particular factory. However, the group also commented on most policies in the UDP. The CARE document draws on a number of means of challenging policies. Firstly, arguments are made which draw on notions of ‘public health’, ‘environmental protection’ and ‘community’. These arguments do not draw on texts in the same way as do those documents discussed above. For example, the document refers to a policy, PS9 which states: “Minerals development which is environmentally acceptable and consistent with regional landbank requirements will be permitted” (Wrexham County Borough, 1998f p.7). In relation to this, the CARE document states: ‘Object to PS9: Mineral working is not environmentally acceptable. There should be clear reference to preventing mineral development within environmentally sensitive locations, and where quality of life and human health may be affected’. This draws on a number of concepts, including ‘environmentally acceptable development’, ‘quality of life’ and ‘human health’. In particular, the quote not only relates ‘mineral working’ to concepts of the environment, but also to notions of ‘quality of life’ and ‘human health’. In this way, attempts are made to draw upon links between concepts which are not made in other texts, such as the Plan or ‘Government guidance’. The response document states in reply: “Disagree. The extraction of minerals is essential to enable modern society to function adequately. Policies GDP1 and PS9 ensure that mineral working takes place in an environmentally acceptable manner” (Wrexham County Borough, 1999f p.14). The response draws on other notions such as ‘a modern society’ and its adequate functioning. These notions might be seen to ‘black box’ many different concepts and networks in order to propagate an argument. Objecting to this response, not only involves arguing against sites for mineral extraction, but also involves unpacking diverse networks which are defined as constituting ‘modern society’. Secondly, the CARE document attempts to change individual words in policies. These words are seen to be crucial in regulating decisions and thus frequently express modal aspects of grammar. For example, the word ‘materially’ in Policy PS2 which stated: “Development must not materially

detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, or open space” (Wrexham County Borough, 1998f p.6) was viewed as problematic. This identifies ‘materially’ as changing the meaning of ‘detrimentally’ in this word group. In particular, ‘materially’ is seen to operate modally in changing the semantic character of ‘detrimentally’. Other examples of concern over words which were viewed as changing the illocutionary effect of policies were also found in the CARE document, such as ‘in exceptional circumstances’. Thirdly, the CARE document, whilst not relying greatly on other texts to propagate the arguments within it, drew on ‘local knowledge’ to argue against policies. This ‘local knowledge’ was expressed particularly in relation to policies which concerned individual sites. Such ‘local knowledge’ might be defined more coherently as composed of complex networks of relations involving pieces of land, defined entities (such as Community Councils) and the various concepts of how change occurs in a defined place. Such complex networks which draw on many diverse entities are not easily extended into other networks which are more textualised. The writing of the Plan relies on numerous textual resources, and non-textual resources are not as easily related into the network surrounding the making of the Plan.

ASSESSING COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT UDP

The documents described above all seek to alter the text of the UDP in some way. All use different textual strategies, from suggesting alternative wording to questioning the basis of the Plan. However, many draw on other texts to attempt to change the UDP. The use of these other texts is to make links with other entities or notions, in other words to compose a network. As Michel Callon wrote: “The more one reads the more one links, and the more important it is to negotiate and compromise.” (Callon, 1991 pp.138-139) The arenas in which these texts circulated and in which negotiation and compromise might be identified were specified through various other networks. The work to respond to these texts was carried out by two defined groups, officers and members (see above for how they might be defined). These groups were defined in a set of relations which placed them as the entities which would make decisions on these documents from other groups. The role of the officers was crucial in this network; specific officers (especially those defined as part of the Planning Policy Team) read all

the documents, summarised them and produced a report on these representations. In addition, members of the Planning Policy Team also produced a list of responses to each document which related to every comment. The form of these responses was initially of three types; to agree, to disagree and to note each comment. In some cases changes were made to individual words and followed suggested wording given in comments documents. The Welsh Office document seemed particularly successful in changing wording, both through drawing on other texts, but also perhaps due to suggested changes in wording being stated in its text. The document 'Summary of Representations and Responses' states these changes as being made without an agent of change. For example, 'agree', 'disagree' and 'noted' are all verbal forms which do not realise an agent. In the introduction to this text it is stated: "This report sets out the statement of responses of Wrexham County Borough to the objections and representations made to the consultation draft of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan." (Wrexham County Borough, 1999f p.5) This identifies the actor which is 'responding' as 'Wrexham County Borough', rather than another grouping such as 'officers' or 'members of the Planning Policy Team'. However, from interviews it was ascertained that the responses in this document were largely written by members of the Planning Policy Team. Where the 'Summary' document states a disagreement with a comment then there is further text to support the decision. This supporting text draws on different strategies to support the decision. Firstly, the text draws on other documents to extend legitimacy through making links; in particular documents such as 'Planning Guidance (Wales)' and 'Welsh Office Circulars'. Secondly, the text utilises statements about a particular site; for example: "Disagree - Housing development would be highly visible, intrude into open countryside, and be totally out of scale for the village of Pentre" (ibid. p.78). This quote draws on a number of criteria such as whether 'development' would be 'visible', 'intrude into open countryside' and 'out of scale'. These criteria are not linked to specific texts, but seem to be drawing on stabilised notions which circulate through work surrounding the Plan and perhaps of 'planning' work more generally. These notions are, however, further stabilised through such things as policies and 'Planning Guidance' texts. Thirdly, the text defines a boundary around a thing called 'land use policy'. In many cases, the document states 'not a land use policy matter'. This serves to define a boundary for the text of the Plan, or what it can and

cannot refer to. This means that certain statements can be defined as out-with the remit of the Plan and therefore do not need to be dealt with in the 'Responses' document. Fourthly, the document draws in other parts of the text of the UDP to resist change to another part. For example, other policies are stated which serve to resist a particular comment, as in: "This is covered by criterion c) of policy EC11" (ibid. p.41). This serves to relate this particular piece of text to another piece of text, meaning that any challenge to this extract will also need to deal with other parts of the document. Conceptualising the UDP as a coherent set of statements also allows policies to be defined as having a particular remit. Some attempts to change a particular part of the text of the Plan are resisted through defining one particular policy as relevant. This especially seemed to be the case for the policy GDP1 called 'General Development Principles' which was cited as relevant to many comments made on the Plan. This is stated in one response: "Policy GDP1 criteria are relevant to all development" (ibid. p.21). Lastly, responses are stated which draw on a wide range of statements which are linked to 'principles' in the UDP. These include statements about 'economic diversification' and 'enhancing the environment' which are linked to statements about what the Plan is seeking to achieve. These statements are not linked to other texts, and may therefore be difficult to define; however their vagueness seems to allow them to be used in different ways for different purposes.

Whilst the document summarising responses to comments on the UDP was written by members of the Planning Policy Team, other work was carried out by the Planning Policy Panel. The work of the Panel was structured by a number of texts and practices. Firstly, all members had been sent a copy of the draft UDP and a number of councillors made comments on the text. Nearly all comments from members related to specific sites defined in the plan for housing. This may have arisen from councillors wishing to make comments on policies which affected their ward. Comments may not have been made on other sections of the Plan because members had voted and agreed on the text of the draft UDP, and to comment on this may have been viewed as undermining this vote. This was expressed by a councillor in a different context, that of the Planning Policy Panel and the vote on the draft UDP: "You realise that some things you're saying, there's no point in raising them when it comes to the committee because if you fell out

in the group [the Planning Policy Panel] there's no point in me taking up things at a later time". The work of the Panel was also structured by reports, in addition to the 'Summary of Representations and Responses'. Firstly, a document entitled 'Main Issues' outlined eight issues which were viewed by members of the Planning Policy Team as the most important to arise out of the documents in response to the draft UDP. This document dealt with the 'Housing Requirement' policies and suggested new wording for the Plan which sought to "update and clarify the housing requirement situation" (Wrexham County Borough, 1999e p.1). The document also dealt with issues of a large employment site and public transport facilities amongst others. The first two meetings of the Panel (in this set of meetings) centred around discussing this document. Members questioned officers over details in the report and made a number of resolutions which were stated in the minutes of the Panel. The issue defined as 'Housing Requirement' seemed to prove difficult to resolve and the Panel sought to extend debate to other members. This was enacted through a resolution which stated: "(1) That all Members of the Council be provided with a copy of the Report of Public Consultation together with a list of the proposed sites to meet their shortfall. (2) That their comments on the whole document be invited and considered at a future Meeting of the Panel." (Wrexham County Borough, 1999a). This served to expand the arena in which decisions were to be made on the 'Report of Public Consultation' and may also have legitimated the decision of the Panel. Further reports were also submitted by 'the Chief Planning Officer' (the wording used in minutes of the Panel meetings). These were described as providing more information on matters which the Panel had decided to discuss further. These reports also stated new policy wordings written by 'officers' and these were mostly accepted by the Panel. One part of the draft UDP which was changed was a policy regarding shopping. In a meeting of the Panel some members wished to ensure that buildings in a particular part of Wrexham would not be allowed to be 'shuttered during daytime'. This led to a resolution which stated: "That the wording of Policy S2 be revised taking into account the Panel's concern with regard to the need for ground floor frontages not to have a detrimental effect on the character, vitality or viability of the area in which they are situated" (Wrexham County Borough, 1999a p.12). The next meeting of the Panel agreed upon a change in wording written by officers. Meetings of the Planning Policy Panel were therefore structured through

various reports written by ‘officers’, and many of the changes to the text of the UDP suggested in these reports were accepted by the Panel. However, councillors on the Panel also managed to structure the work of the Panel through the making of ‘resolutions’. These resolutions served to shape the work of officers, for example of re-writing policies, providing further information or importantly extending the arenas in which reports were circulated (that is to other councillors). The Panel therefore held an important role in making decisions on how the text of the UDP should be changed, even though many of the changes in wording were drafted by a group of officers. This work to change the text of the UDP in response to documents containing comments from ‘consultees’ was structured through the work of a group of officers and the Panel which was constituted through various practices of meetings, making decisions, resolutions and writing reports. The structuring of this work allowed some stability in the way in which the Plan was written and re-written. In particular, these structures allowed decisions to be made on behalf of other entities, notably elected members who did not sit on the Panel. These other members might be viewed as being enrolled in a network, and their interests being, to some extent, translated through these various practices of decision-making.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to identify how a text, defined as Wrexham UDP, was written and re-written, and in particular to define which groups became involved in this activity. Wrexham UDP had to at first be defined, and this seemed to be done in a number of ways. This included drawing on texts such as statute and ‘Planning Guidance’ to define what a UDP might be. Work to define the UDP was also carried out by relating this UDP to a notion of its place within a ‘history’ of plans. This allowed groups to draw on these other plans as texts which would provide a template for work on the ‘new’ Plan. One of the most important aspects to arise from this case, therefore seemed to be the ways in which the writing of the UDP was defined as a process. Identifying a process allowed stages of this process to be defined, and thus allowed specific practices to be enacted at different stages. Certain groups (especially those defined as ‘officers’) used the idea of plan-writing as a process to argue that this

process should be carried out quickly. However, Wrexham UDP did not just exist within a tightly defined network of other plans and certain documents. The Plan was also related to an entity defined as ‘the Council’ or ‘Wrexham County Borough’. Defining this entity also allowed elements of ‘the Council’ to be defined, and in this way structures such as departments and committees were drawn upon to shape the way in which the Plan was written. Defining the Council as an entity also allowed groups to be defined, and especially important were ‘officers’ and ‘members’. Much of the work of writing the UDP was structured by notions of what ‘officers’ and ‘members’ were and what they could do. Relations between these two groups seemed to be central in making the Plan. Structures such as departments or the ‘Planning Policy Panel’ constituted the means by which entities were to be related and therefore work to be carried out. For example, the Planning Policy Panel as a means of organising groups and taking decisions, shaped much of the writing of the Plan. The panel also allowed claims to be made on behalf of others; for example, the Panel could be seen to represent all ‘elected members’ and operated as a way of legitimating decision-making on behalf of all councillors.

Work which was defined as ‘consulting’ on the text of the Plan was also conceived as part of a process. This allowed ‘consulting’ to be defined as certain forms of practices which could be carried out at certain stages in this process. Work which was defined as ‘consulting’ was importantly structured in ways which replicated norms. Through identifying groups which were already defined in networks of relations, little work had to be carried out to define ‘new’ groups which should influence the writing of the UDP. Using ‘existing’ groups (which were already defined) served to make the work of writing the UDP more predictable (at least to ‘officers’), quicker and using less resources. In this way, much of the energy which might have been expended expanding a ‘new’ network, with new groups and new relations, was avoided. In the practices which were defined as ‘consulting’ texts and textual relations were seen as important. Much work in making the Plan was carried out through texts, both writing new texts (such as documents containing comments on the draft UDP) and drawing on other texts. This seemed to illustrate the importance of using texts as a means of extending influence and extending networks. Texts seemed to allow relations between many diverse

resources, notions and entities to be pulled into one thing (the text) which could then impinge on the activities of others. Texts also served to define boundaries, and to argue that a particular statement might not have been 'relevant' to a particular policy or piece of text. The most important feature to arise from this case, however, seemed to be the ways in which groups defined as 'officers' and 'members' had an influence on the writing of the UDP. 'Officers' especially had an important role in setting up the arenas in which writing could take place. They were able to draw on many resources to form networks and structures in which decisions could be made. Whilst what could be done was constrained by such things as resources and especially texts (for example, legal devices), 'officers' (although subject to these) were also enabled by such things as texts which allowed them a distinctive identity and role within the writing of Wrexham UDP.

CHAPTER 8

EVALUATION AND COMPARISON OF THE ISLINGTON AND WREXHAM CASE STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I want to analyse some of the similarities and differences between the two case studies described in the previous two chapters. I want to focus in particular on assessing how the research questions and the general aims of the research can be answered in relation to these two case studies. This will also involve work to evaluate whether the theoretical framework adopted in this study provided a satisfactory way of uncovering the processes and actions observed in the field. This chapter will focus on a comparison of the two case studies, in order for some of their similarities and differences to be highlighted through the use of the analytical framework. More particularly, much of the work in this chapter will revolve around identifying actors, networks and intermediaries which might be distinguished from the case study materials and write-ups. In the next chapter I will analyse the benefits and problems associated with applying this actor-network perspective to a research topic of this kind. The first part of this evaluation chapter will focus on similarities identified between the case studies in Wrexham and Islington, and in particular how such similarities might have arisen. This will concentrate on the ways in which networks, actors and intermediaries might be identified as having some commonality between the two case studies. The second part of this chapter will then explore some of the differences between the two case studies, and how spaces to act were negotiated differently in each example.

RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS

This research aims to focus on the processes which form the taken-for-granted aspects of planning work as described in the many texts and talk which circulate around this practice. The analytical framework which has been described in Chapter Four draws on actor-network theory to provide a vocabulary with which to describe how various processes form taken-for-granted social objects and facts. From this theoretical framework my work attempts to identify actors, networks, intermediaries and processes

of translation from my case study material. The focus of this work is on a particular text, a 'Unitary Development Plan' (UDP) which is identified in each case study. Work has focused on uncovering the nature of these Unitary Development Plans and tracing the significance of these texts in shaping and reflecting how 'planning' is carried out. The focus on these particular texts does not aim to restrict analysis to a particular document, but instead hopes to provide a starting point from which to trace the multitude of ways in which the practice of planning is enacted, and to show how various actors and social objects are defined through the networks surrounding work to write these Unitary Development Plans. From this, I want to show some of the processes which circulate around the work of writing a UDP. A number of research questions flow from this:

- What influences the writing of a UDP?
- What networks might be identified as influential in such work?
- Which groups are formed and influence the writing of these documents?
- How are 'local authorities' defined and what implications do these definitions have in shaping how a UDP is written?
- How do notions of (and actions ascribed to) 'the public' influence how a UDP is written?
- How are texts used in defining groups and actions surrounding the writing of a UDP?

These research questions will be answered through using the analytical framework described in Chapter Four to shape the way in which fieldwork material is described, analysed and evaluated. In this chapter, the theoretical framework will be drawn upon to structure the evaluation of the fieldwork material in order that the research aims and research questions might be answered.

EVALUATING THE CASE STUDIES FROM A PROCESSUAL PERSPECTIVE

One of the key concerns for actor-network theory is to focus on processes and the means by which things are formed. This is illustrated in the way in which Latour's work is

described by Barnes as: “mainly interested in the events while the dust is still flying. For it is then that the various networks of resources, allies and actors that are responsible for all the commotion, and which for Latour are the stuff of both science and society, are best glimpsed.” (1998 p.207) This perspective is especially important in the theoretical framework developed for this study, with its concern for an ontology of objects, how they are created and how they become ‘normal’. For the purposes of evaluating the case studies there are a number of processes which need to be focused upon. Overall, the work to evaluate the case study will concentrate on the processes of translating or enrolling, as described in Chapter Three, and how entities are enrolled into networks through such devices as intermediaries. This work of translating might be seen to operate through two processes. Firstly, work to define objects. Defining might be seen to operate through various media, but most importantly through texts. Texts create or re-create social objects, they (drawing on Jubien, 1993) create ‘things’ out of ‘stuff’. There is a need, therefore, to trace how discursive objects are defined and to evaluate how these objects are taken for granted when they are used textually. Work to define objects or to use inherited definitions may also be observed in other media, such as talk. We might also make the distinction between work to *create* social objects as the work of *actors* and work to *re-produce* social objects as the work of *intermediaries* which describe and reproduce a network. Secondly, there is the process of organising objects into networks which have a stability. Work to organise might also be identified in texts which relate objects together in certain ways and which may enable or constrain certain actions or practices. Texts therefore may attempt to define objects in a stable way and relate them in a stable fashion. However, texts may also attempt to de-stabilise other networks through undoing a definition of an object or the ways in which objects are related. Furthermore, texts also relate to other texts and might be viewed as inhabiting other sets of relations. Of course, defining and organising might be seen as the same process from an actor-network perspective. To define some thing means to enact some set of relations. In a semiotic sense, a word is defined (has meaning) as the result of a system of relations. In actor-network theory at one ‘level’ we might see ‘things’ being related in a network with other ‘things’. At another ‘level’ we might see these ‘things’ as networks in themselves; as composed of other ‘things’ related in some way. For example, we might identify ‘Government’ as a thing which can be related to other

things (such as 'business' or 'the public'). However, we might also identify 'Government' as a network made up of other things (such as 'departments' or 'the Cabinet') related together. One of the aims of this research is to trace how networks (such as 'the Government') become 'black boxes', and to uncover when such social objects get taken-for-granted.

COMPARING THE ISLINGTON AND WREXHAM CASE STUDIES

In order for a comparison between the two case studies to be made, it is first necessary to identify elements of the two to be compared. As this study aims to highlight processes, then the elements which will be compared between the two case studies will be the processes which have been identified from case study material. These processes have been briefly outlined above and are related to the theoretical framework; namely, processes of defining objects and relating them together which may be attributed to work by actors to enrol or translate entities into certain networks. The evaluation of the two case studies therefore looks at how networks are formed and what spaces for action they entail. In particular there is a need to assess which network forms are important in explaining the actions and practices observed in the field. Evaluation will also focus on how actors are formed, what they do (such as defining and organising) and to identify which actors are important in both the Islington and Wrexham cases. Finally, the evaluation will trace how intermediaries are created and assess how they serve to reproduce networks or sets of relations.

HOW WERE THE ISLINGTON AND WREXHAM CASE STUDIES SIMILAR?

There are certain (discursive) objects and sets of relations which are common to both the Islington and Wrexham case studies. Identifying these common elements to both case studies allows relations between these elements to be traced, and in turn we may identify a network operating similarly in both cases. Importantly, in distinguishing common objects we might ascertain that some process is happening to replicate these objects in this particular set of relations. From an actor-network perspective, we may

also be able to identify an actor as central to this process of making the two cases similar in many respects. In particular, I want to propose that similarities in objects and relations in both Islington and Wrexham comes about largely through the action of an actor we might call 'Central Government'. The work of Central Government to define and co-ordinate numerous entities and resources might be seen to arise through it authoring intermediaries which serve to describe and re-inscribe a particular set of relations. Intermediaries, according to Callon (1991) may include money, technical objects, skills and probably most importantly for this study, texts. Central Government may be seen to author texts which define social objects and relate them together in forms we may call networks. From this, a process of translation might be discerned which defines entities and aligns these in particular relations to one another which allow certain actions to be carried out. Furthermore, successful translation will produce objects and relations which are not questioned, but might be seen as 'the norm' or the taken-for-granted.

DEFINING 'CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'

Identifying 'Central Government' as an actor, an author or a translator does not always mean that Central Government exists as an actor. We might identify Central Government as an intermediary in another network (for example, Central Government in a network of European governance). We may also see other entities which play the role of actors (for example Government departments) and which serve to extend this particular set of relations. 'Central Government' also exists as a term which might be viewed as a black box which summarises a complex network of entities and assumptions. There is a need to unpack this black box and show how some of the norms it embodies are constructed and how it comes to act in certain settings. Attributing the identity of an actor to an entity is not always easy, and may in some cases be somewhat arbitrary; however there are rules which serve to define what thing has the ability to *act* and to author intermediaries. These rules may themselves be seen as part of a network, which in this case might be identified as a network of legal texts and norms. From this, 'Central Government' may have a stabilised meaning as an actor due to a stabilised network of relations which extends over time and space. For this

analysis, 'Central Government' is identified as an actor from the empirical , practical work of case studies. This entity became viewed as an actor because it served to define many of the entities and relations I observed in both case studies.

HOW WERE THE WREXHAM AND ISLINGTON CASES MADE SIMILAR BY 'CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'?

Central Government as an actor attempted to enrol certain entities within a network of relations. It carried this out through authoring intermediaries such as texts, meetings, skills and so on which defined certain entities and how they were linked with one another. In particular, Central Government defined certain objects through these intermediaries, for example, 'Councils', 'Local Planning Authorities', 'Unitary Development Plans', 'elected members' were amongst a diverse array of objects defined and re-defined through these intermediaries. In this case we might view the text of PPG12 as an intermediary which defines 'local planning authorities', 'Unitary Development Plans', 'Statutory Consultees' and so on. These intermediaries served to describe a wide set of relations which concerned numerous entities, and which were in turn, related to other intermediaries which also described this set of relations. In this way, numerous intermediaries produced over time served to re-describe a network. However, sets of relations were also subject to change through the work of actors which defined new entities and relations. The importance of 'Central Government' as an actor was the way in which it attempted to stabilise sets of relations, so that network forms had some durability.

Which intermediaries were important in describing this network?

Numerous texts operated as intermediaries in both case studies, and a number of these were common (or similar) in both Wrexham and Islington. One text which was served to define many of objects and their relations was the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This served to describe many of the objects which were common in both case studies, and also described a network which had consequences on actions for those entities enrolled in it. Another text (often defined as 'statute') which was common to both cases was the Development Plan Regulations (1991). Texts such as Planning

Policy Guidance Notes also served as intermediaries in defining entities such as ‘local planning authorities’ and ‘statutory consultees’ and relating objects together. The commonality of these Guidance Notes was, however, complicated by another set of relations to do with defining elements of ‘Central Government’ and their roles. This set of relations defined two entities, ‘Wales’ and ‘England’ and different networks of governance for both these entities. This meant that Guidance Notes were different for both networks of governance; Planning Guidance (Wales) for Wales, and Planning Policy Guidance Notes for England. The texts of both these intermediaries were different; however for the purposes of this analysis, due to them both being defined by actors in each case study as ‘Government Guidance’ both texts will be described as authored by ‘Central Government’. Furthermore, both sets of texts describe many of the same entities and sets of relations, and might therefore be viewed as similar in their role as intermediaries. Other texts which served as intermediaries included ‘letters of representation’ and memoranda attributed to ‘the Welsh Office’ and ‘the Government Office for London’. Once again, these texts were different in each case study, but served to describe many of the same objects and relations. In the same way, both ‘the Welsh Office’ and ‘the Government Office for London’ may be viewed as different entities; however for the purposes of this analysis we might impute these entities to ‘Central Government’ as they serve to author intermediaries which describe many of the same features of this network. Lastly, non-textual intermediaries might be identified in the talk circulating during meetings between ‘Councils’ and ‘Central Government’. In both cases, humans (representing ‘Central Government’) described objects and how they were to be linked and might therefore be seen as intermediaries in this network.

What did the intermediaries define and how were objects related?

The texts of ‘statute’ and ‘guidance documents’ arose as important intermediaries in defining objects and their relations and in propagating network forms. Many objects were identified from texts and materials, and many objects were not replicated in both cases. However, a number of objects were similar in the way in which they were defined and in how they were related to other objects. Numerous texts defined ‘Local Authorities’ and these texts served to construct an identity for these entities through

regulating actions and linking 'local authorities' to other entities. Statute (as a set of texts) defines 'local authorities' through implicating this textual entity in a very diverse network. This network might be analysed as concerning various actions (governance) which entities (such as 'local authorities') are enabled to carry out in a particular geographical area. Various texts therefore construct a 'local authority' in different, but often connected ways, so that through tracing these connections we might ascertain how a boundary or identity might be ascribed to a 'local authority'. Statute authors this thing called a 'local authority' in intermediary texts and defines particular sets of relations in which this entity is inscribed. Through authoring this entity, the text enables actions to be attributed to the 'local authority', such as provision of social services and refuse collection, and from this we might impute that a 'local authority' may become an actor in certain circumstances. For the Wrexham case, this work of statute (and associated documents) to author a 'local authority' was exposed in numerous texts and in talk (see the document describing the Development Service Directorate). In particular, the text of the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994 defined a 'local authority' which was named 'Wrexham County Borough' and through defining this entity also linked it with other objects and actions (such as producing a Unitary Development Plan). 'Central Government' as an actor constructed a new set of objects and relations, and as shown in the chapter on Wrexham, this caused some tension as certain individuals and groups acted to resist this particular network. Much of the same process of authoring a 'local authority' named 'Islington Borough Council' came through texts such as statute, however this process was more embedded in other texts and practices as the work to author a new entity had been done some time previously.

A number of texts, including 'statute' and 'government guidance' also authored another entity, the 'local planning authority'. This object is ingrained in a particular set of relations which entail certain forms of action and association with other entities. Especially important to this study is how 'local planning authorities' are related to another object of discourse, the 'UDP'. For example, in the text Planning Guidance (Wales): Unitary Development Plans, it is stated: "*The Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994, requires each local planning authority in Wales to prepare a unitary development plan (UDP) for its area*"

(Welsh Office, 1996 para.2). This text, therefore, authors a 'local planning authority' as a thing which is associated with another object, a 'UDP'. Texts such as these relate these two objects through defining how one entity (the local planning authority) acts in relation to another (the UDP) through verbal forms such as 'prepare'. However, there is more complexity in the relations between these two objects, as texts also define the local planning authority in relation to another object 'an area' and also defining a UDP which is associated with this 'area'. In this way, intermediaries construct or describe complex connections between entities which may extend to form a network with many defined entities.

Texts authored by 'Central Government' (such as statute) also define and implicate the UDP in numerous other relationships. This might be illustrated by a quote from the Draft Report on Consultation produced for the review of Islington UDP:

"The production of a Unitary Development Plan is a statutory requirement. This plan will be the main, but not sole, determinant of all planning decisions made and as such the government have strongly advised local authorities that plans should be kept up to date. Strict legal procedures exist for preparing and reviewing the plan, which include formal consultation procedures and a public local inquiry" (Islington Planning Service, 1998 p.3).

This text defines certain entities and relates them to a 'Unitary Development Plan'. However, this text is not attributed to 'Central Government' as an actor, instead it expresses a set of definitions and connections stated in the texts of statute and guidance documents. This may be interpreted as showing the success of statute and guidance documents as intermediaries in the way in which their definitions are repeated elsewhere. We might therefore describe this quote as another intermediary which serves to describe a network and indicates that this network has a stability. Furthermore, the work of this quote seems to illustrate how power might be seen to act at a distance and through the actions of others (see Latour, 1986 and Law, 1986).

Intermediaries such as the quote above, as well as statute and government guidance documents create the UDP as a thing which is related to other objects such as ‘formal consultation procedures’ and ‘a public local inquiry’. Use of terms such as ‘formal’ might be seen to indicate a stable set of relations which are instantiated in these intermediaries. Other objects which were defined and associated with UDPs included ‘Part I’ and ‘Part II’ which are defined as parts of a UDP with defined features. The importance of these parts of the UDP to ‘Central Government’ was indicated in a letter from the Welsh Office to Wrexham County Borough which successfully aligned the text of the UDP behind this set of relations so that ‘Part I’ and ‘Part II’ were identified. Other objects associated with UDPs included ‘Draft UDPs’, ‘Issues Papers’ and ‘UDP on deposit’. These entities were related together in documents such as the Development Plan Regulations (1991) and PPG12 (1999), and in particular such objects were linked into a time frame. This allowed actors and entities to conceive of a process which contained various stages which had to be completed by various defined entities. In this way, the network implicated those actors aligned with it to carry out certain actions, such as ‘producing a draft UDP’. Many examples of the ways in which actors were defined and had to carry out certain actions in a process could be identified from both the Wrexham and Islington case studies.

Many other objects were defined and described in intermediaries authored by ‘Central Government’, and some of these were related around another discursive object, ‘consultation’. Such an object was defined in documents such as Planning Guidance (Wales) which defined various entities and actions under the heading ‘Publicity and Consultation’. In this way, actions defined as ‘consulting’ become an object of discourse, as indicated through the nominalisation of the verb ‘to consult’. Documents such as this relate entities such as ‘authorities’, ‘local people’ and ‘pre-deposit consultees’ in a set of relations which requires certain entities (such as ‘authorities’) to carry out defined actions (such as ‘consulting’ and ‘participating’). However, these actions are not always defined through linking them with other objects. For example, actions defined as ‘pre-deposit consulting’ tended not to be defined further through linking them with other objects. However, actions defined during ‘the deposit stage’ tended to be further defined through relating actions to other objects such as ‘standard

forms' and 'advertisements'. In this way, such a document serves to define different spaces in which entities could act according to defined 'stages' in a process.

How did this network affect what was done?

Intermediaries provide a means by which entities are defined and related within a set of relations. However, intermediaries might not always succeed in defining and relating entities in the way in which the intermediary describes. There is thus a need to trace how successfully entities become aligned or translated in this network of 'Central Government'. This might be indicated by the way in which intermediaries are produced which reflect and describe this network. There seemed to be a fairly high degree of alignment in numerous texts which replicated these network objects and relations. Objects such as 'Councils', 'Local Planning Authority' and 'Unitary Development Plan' were described in texts in similar ways in both Islington and Wrexham. Relations between entities were also re-produced in intermediaries produced by those not defined as 'Central Government'. These entities, such as 'Local Planning Authorities' were defined in texts authored by 'Central Government' and ascribed some space to act within this network. Actions which were ascribed to these 'Local Planning Authorities' or 'Councils' included authoring other intermediaries, and these in turn described certain objects and relations, and thus replicated them. For example, the texts of the UDPs in both case studies reproduced many features of a network of relations described in other texts, such as PPGs and statute. In addition, many interviewees defined 'Government guidance documents' as important in defining what could be done by certain entities, thus indicating a broadly successful alignment of these actors and a stabilised network.

The stability of this network, which has been described above, was important in translating entities into a set of relations and into prescribing certain forms of action. However, such work to translate these entities did not produce a wholly 'rigid' network. Defining entities and their relations (that is translating them) through the use of intermediaries both constrained and enabled action of these entities. Intermediaries authored by 'Central Government' defined who or what could act in relation to other

defined entities, but they also enabled action within boundaries. In this way, not all action was prescribed in texts and certain actors had some discretion to act within boundaries which were subject to 'policing' by other entities (notably 'Central Government'). This was indicated in an interview with a civil servant at the Welsh Office who described how she responded to UDPs especially in ensuring that these texts conformed with the texts of statute and guidance. Actors/intermediaries who were defined in this network, such as 'Councils' and 'Local Planning Authorities' thus had some ability to act in certain ways, for example through writing UDPs specific to that 'Council'. More rarely, there was dissent in the ways in which certain entities were defined and aligned in intermediaries authored by 'Central Government'. This was illustrated most strongly in the Islington case, when the defined entity of 'the Council' challenged 'Central Government' (specifically the Secretary of State) over the way in which 'the Council' was defined as unable to write certain policies in a previous plan. However, most challenges to alignment in this network were expressed not through processes of legal redress, but were textualised and in some cases compromise ensued. This was illustrated in a text which responded to a 'Central Government' letter of representation in the Wrexham case. This stated why 'the Council' rejected some of the ways in which the 'Central Government' text attempted to align the text of the UDP. The room for action of certain defined entities/actors in this network did, however, mean that both cases were different. If the network resources of 'Central Government' had attempted to influence, and was successful in defining all the actions observed in the cases, then it might be assumed that there would be even more similarity between the Wrexham and Islington cases. However, it seems that the actor-network of 'Central Government' created spaces in which actions could be carried out. If intermediaries had defined down to the last detail all actions, then this might have meant too 'rigid' a network in which entities may have dissented and de-translated themselves (see Singleton and Michael, 1993). Whilst there were many similarities between the two cases and a common network could be defined, it is this space which made the two case studies different. The next section will trace how within these spaces, certain actors emerged and were able to author separate intermediaries and construct their own networks. This will also allow a comparison to be made between the two cases, through

assessing how actors defined in the 'Central Government' network (for example, 'Councils') acted differently.

Before highlighting differences between the two case studies, there is a need to briefly consider whether other networks could be identified which were similar in both cases. There seems to be much less certainty in being able to identify other similar networks operating in Wrexham and Islington. This may be because ascertaining the boundaries of networks is a difficult and uncertain process. Whilst Callon describes the boundary of a network as a function of its 'level of convergence' (1991 p.148), measuring such convergence involves ascertaining the number of times a translation is inscribed in texts. Identifying the relevant texts to a network is difficult, as the relevancy of these texts might be seen as a feature of their membership of the network we aim to measure. This problem will be discussed in the next chapter. One network which might be tentatively identified from case study materials is that surrounding 'planning' as a professional activity. The inscription of 'planners' as having certain skills (which were described as professional) in texts and talk was found in both Wrexham and Islington. 'Planners' were defined as having certain skills, and these were contrasted in a number of texts and in talk (especially in Wrexham) with other defined groups. Such a network, if it can be defined as such, relates to texts which define 'planners' and how they relate to others and to practices. This set of relations might be seen to be propagated through the texts and practices associated with the education of 'planners' and through defining entities such as the Royal Town Planning Institute. However, these sets of relations might also be viewed as part of the network surrounding 'Central Government' as an actor. Intermediaries in this network define 'Local Authorities' as entities with specific functions, and a consequence of this may be to define skills to carry out these functions. This may involve defining 'planners' as those with these skills, and in turn we might identify 'planners' as intermediaries who/which describe this network through the exercise of these skills. As mentioned in the chapter concerning the Islington case, such skills might be seen to embody values and interests which circulate through 'the planning system'. However, such values and interests might be viewed as a construct arising from a set of relations which are articulated through texts and talk. The 'professional values' of 'planners' might therefore be seen as a means of summarising

complex sets of relations which define not just ‘planners’, but numerous objects and skills which serve to re-produce these objects and relations. Identifying a network surrounding ‘planning as a professional activity’ seems to be tentative, especially through defining a boundary. There may be certain similarities with defining discourses according to Foucault’s principles, especially in ascertaining how discourses might interact or overlap, and this will be discussed in the next chapter (but see Foucault, 1972 and Tait and Campbell, 2000).

HOW WERE THE ISLINGTON AND WREXHAM CASE STUDIES DIFFERENT?

There were numerous features of each case study which were different, however the first task of this analysis is to define which features to compare between the two cases. The features which might be compared will be drawn from the ‘Central Government’ network which was common to both cases. The ‘Central Government’ network which was described above defines a number of objects, relations and actions, such as ‘Councils’, ‘UDPs’, ‘consultees’, ‘officers’ and ‘members’. These entities were common to each case, however the way in which they were further defined and related was different in Islington and Wrexham.

DEFINING A NETWORK ASSOCIATED WITH ‘COUNCILS’

‘Councils’ were defined in the ‘Central Government’ network as the same entity, and were formed through intermediaries which associated ‘Councils’ with other objects such as ‘Central Government’ and ‘Statutory Consultees’ and with actions such as providing social services or refuse collection. Nevertheless, as outlined above, ‘Councils’ were different due to the differing sets of relations with which they inhabited. Thus, ‘Councils’ were constrained in some ways (to be the same) but also enabled in other ways to be different. This allows them to be viewed not only as intermediaries, but also actors in the spaces formed in which they could act. We might therefore trace how Islington Borough Council and Wrexham County Borough Council became actors through authoring intermediaries and pulling entities into a certain order. Both

'Councils' were defined through authoring different intermediaries which defined different entities and associations. In this way, Islington Council and Wrexham Council were different, and this section will analyse how both bodies were constructed as unique entities. However, complexities arise in this analysis in the diverse ways in which other network forms and their defined entities might impact upon the work of these 'Councils' as actors. For example, we might identify how Islington Council in authoring texts drew upon entities, such as the London Planning Advisory Committee, which might be viewed as artefacts of other networks. From this, we may view Islington Council as an intermediary in re-describing this network. However, to identify Islington Council as an actor we need to show how it might attempt to re-define what an entity, such as the London Planning Advisory Committee is, in order for it to be translated into this 'Islington Council network'. We might, therefore see the work of actors as attempting to re-define entities at the expense of other network definitions. This might in turn be related back to Jubien's writings on how different entities may be made out of roughly the same stuff (Jubien, 1993).

HOW DID ISLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL AND WREXHAM COUNTY BOROUGH EXIST AS ACTORS?

As Callon notes: "Actors define one another in interaction - in the intermediaries that they put into circulation" (1991 p.135); so for this part of the evaluation we need to identify which intermediaries each 'Council' puts into circulation and what entities they define and organise. It is, of course, outside the remit of this study to define all intermediaries which define each council as their author. Instead this evaluation will identify those intermediaries which are associated with the writing of the UDP as a 'Council' activity. This includes the text of both UDPs as very important intermediaries in describing 'the Council', other objects and their association. Other important intermediaries include texts which attempt to define what 'the Council' is and how it acts (loosely policy and organisational documents) and minutes of 'Council' meetings and Committee Reports. All these texts, in some way are defined as authored by a thing called 'the Council' and aim to describe a network of entities and relations. Other intermediaries might also be defined as the skills of human beings which describe a

certain network, and in particular we might identify skills attributed to two groups, 'officers' and 'members'.

What did intermediaries define and how were objects related?

The text of both UDPs defined 'the Council' as author of these documents. In turn, both documents also define 'the Council' as an actor through identifying it as organising various defined entities into certain relationships. This was carried out in different ways in each case study, and these seem to reflect differing network forms in Islington and Wrexham. Each 'Council' is defined through ascribing various actions to it, especially the authoring of texts and other intermediaries. The writing of these intermediaries serve to define objects and relate them together, and in this way change to the physical world might be stabilised and controlled through textual forms. This might be seen as a crucial element of development plans.

UDPs and their role in stabilising networks

Both UDPs describe 'the Council' as authoring the UDP itself. For example, in the Islington case, a letter sent out with the 'Proposed Changes to Islington UDP' document states: "*As you may know the Council's planning policies and proposals are set out in our Unitary Development Plan*" (Islington Planning Service, 1999b cover letter). Both UDPs, as intermediaries serve to define 'the Council' as author, but also allow actions and an identity to be attributed to 'the Council'. Furthermore, through authoring texts, 'the Council' can define objects and relations and establish what it is and how it might act. This might be shown in a quote from Wrexham UDP: "*The Plan reflects the Council's vision for its area's future*" (Wrexham County Borough, 1998f p.2). This constructs 'the Council' as a thing which has a 'vision' and 'the Plan' serves to describe (or reflect) this nature of 'the Council'. The UDP as an intermediary serves to define a number of entities and relations which are associated with 'the Council' as an actor. In particular, the text of the UDP allows actions to be related to 'the Council'. As a development plan, this is of crucial importance as through the text objects and actions are defined, and physical change is seen to come about through the author of this intermediary, the Council. Actions are often portrayed as in the future and so the UDP

text defines a collective intentionality embedded in a thing called 'the Council'. This occurred in both Wrexham and Islington UDP, however the grammatical form of both texts was different. In Islington UDP 'the Council' is frequently mentioned as an agent of change. For example: "*The Council will encourage the use of renewable energy, district heating and combined heat and power schemes.*" (Islington Planning Service, 1999b Policy Env29A). In contrast in Wrexham UDP, 'the Council' is less frequently mentioned, and agentless and passive clauses are used instead, through such features as nominalisation. For example, "*Encouragement will be given to the conservation and management of existing hedgerows, trees, woodland, wildlife and other natural landscape features.*" (Wrexham County Borough, 1998f p.11) This might be viewed as a stylistic feature of Wrexham UDP; however it might also indicate a stability of network relations, in which 'the Council' does not have to be actively constructed as an actor, but is instead constructed as an actor through the relations which the UDP as an intermediary inhabits.

Both UDPs describe sets of relations which we may view as shaped by actors who author these intermediaries. The UDPs define and enact action by 'the Council' and this might be seen as coming about in two ways. Firstly, the text of the plans re-describe objects and relations which may be viewed as part of a 'Central Government' network, such as 'Planning Policy Guidance Notes' and 'transport policy'. In this case, the plan acts as an intermediary in re-producing this network and stabilising notions of 'the Council' and what it can do. Secondly, UDPs may be viewed as acting as an intermediary in a 'Council' network, which enacts actions attributed to 'the Council'. The texts do this through setting up objects and relations specific to 'the Council' as an actor, such as policies for particular areas. Wrexham and Islington UDPs act as intermediaries in different ways. Wrexham UDP draws on and re-describes many objects and associations of the Central Government network, for example a policy mentions 'agricultural grades of land' which may be seen as part of a 'Central Government' set of relations. However, Wrexham UDP also acts as an intermediary authored by 'Wrexham County Borough Council' in defining specific objects. Islington UDP similarly describes sets of relations both authored by Islington Council and Central Government. However, Islington UDP re-presents a carefully and strongly constructed

notion of 'the Council'. It does this by drawing on and identifying other documents, which include 'Council Priorities', 'Council Aims' and 'Council policies and strategies' (Islington Planning Service, 1999b p.9). In this way, the UDP serves to describe a set of relations between objects (such as policies) and in which certain entities are defined as having a role. This is illustrated in the way in which groups such as 'the Islington Society' are defined as having a particular role in the set of relations surrounding the writing of the UDP. In turn, the UDP is not only describing a set of relations but authoring new ones, and the role of the UDP as an actor will be discussed below.

The different ways in which both UDPs describe a set of relations authored by 'the Council' is one of the most striking differences between the two case studies. It might reflect the position of each UDP text as an intermediary in a network. Wrexham UDP is fairly 'self-contained' and its role as an intermediary is to stabilise a certain set of relations and translate specific entities, such as 'housebuilder', 'pieces of land', 'buildings' and so on. Whilst Islington UDP also served to stabilise a set of relations to do with 'planning', it was also an intermediary in stabilising a set of relations surrounding 'the Council', what it was and what it could do. This may seem strange considering the 'newness' of Wrexham County Borough Council and one might expect such a document to stabilise 'the Council'. However, as shown in the case study, tensions and instability in 'constructing the Council' might have meant that integrating the UDP into these uncertainties would have left it open to too much change. From this, we might identify another group as actors in wishing to constrain the set of relations in which the UDP was integrated; these being 'the officers' whose role will be discussed below.

Whilst the above discussion has concentrated on the UDP as an *intermediary* in a network authored by an actor called 'the Council', we might also in an actor-network analysis view the UDP as an *actor*. If we accept Callon's definition of an actor as "*an intermediary that puts other intermediaries into circulation - that an actor is an author*" (Callon, 1991 p.141) then we should look at how one intermediary may be seen to author other intermediaries and new sets of relations. Whilst identifying agency with the Council, this analysis has concentrated on this agency being expressed through the

mechanisms of the text of the UDP (which serves to describe sets of relations). We might see that this agency is enacted *through* the text of the UDP so that from one analytical perspective we might attribute some sense of agency to the UDP itself, in much the same way as power is enacted through the action of others in an actor-network analysis. Attributing agency and defining structure is thus a recursive process, one which is an *outcome* of analysis rather than an *a priori* identification (see Deleuze, 1993). We might, therefore, not only view the UDP as an intermediary, but also as an actor. The UDP identifies and relates together such things as pieces of land which through their relationship to other things become intermediaries in describing a network. The grammatical form of the UDP may also be seen as a network which draws together elements (words) into a particular form which has some illocutionary and perlocutionary effects. We might also define the UDP as an actor through the way it is described as an author; for example, a frequently used phrase in both studies was ‘the Plan says...’ thus implying some authorship. A thing such as ‘the UDP’ is defined in numerous ways depending on how it is described in relation to other things. We might therefore analyse this thing called ‘the UDP’ as both an intermediary and as an actor which relate to different networks. The task of this analysis is, however, to ascertain the consequences of things being arranged in a particular order. Whilst identifying actors and intermediaries is one part of the analysis, the other part is to show how and when these actors are successful in forming a network or set of relations. The problems of identifying actors and intermediaries will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Other intermediaries and their role in stabilising networks

Not only did the UDPs serve to stabilise and define ‘the Council’ as an entity and as an actor, but other texts also served to do this. A number of texts closely associated themselves with the UDP and the Council. In Islington, one of these was the document, ‘Planning for the 21st Century’. This described many of the objects and relations which were stated in the UDP, such as ‘transport policy’, ‘space standards’ and ‘change of use’. These objects might be seen as formed in a ‘Central Government’ network through intermediaries such as PPGs. However, ‘Planning for the 21st Century’ also defined other groups and actions, in particular ‘the Council’ and ‘Islington Planning

Service'. Importantly, this document was defined and regulated by other texts, which aimed to associate this with other entities. Most importantly, a database defined a number of groups, some of which had some defined identity through other networks, such as the University of North London. This database, through defining groups allowed them to be associated with 'Planning for the 21st Century', 'the Council' and attempted to make them carry out certain actions, notably filling in a questionnaire. However, only 17 per cent of those listed on the database responded, and it might be assumed that these groups were weakly enrolled in this network. In particular, this intermediary was unsuccessful in making these actions necessary to defined interests of the groups, and so translation was largely ineffective.

In the Wrexham case a similar situation arose, however it was textualised in a different way. Some texts were used to relate the UDP to other objects, such as groups. For example, a report to the Planning Policy Panel mentioned objects such as 'public meetings' and 'exhibitions', but in doing so attempted to distance the UDP from these objects or practices. Instead the UDP was related to defined entities such as consultees, and thus re-described a set of objects and relations defined in a 'Central Government' network. For example, the 'Development Plan Regulations' were cited as important in shaping what was to be done. In this way, texts such as the 'Statement of Pre-deposit Publicity and Consultation' acted as intermediaries in a 'Central Government' network. In this way, attempts to author a separate set of relations surrounding 'the Council' were resisted, and an established set of relations re-enacted. This seems to be the result of a particular set of relations, in which 'officers' were defined as actors aiming to control the writing of the UDP. The work of 'officers' as actors in aligning other groups will be discussed below.

Whilst, intermediaries authored by 'Central Government' were important in the Islington case, other intermediaries authored by 'the Council' were also drawn upon. These texts served to describe groups not mentioned in 'Central Government' texts, but defined and associated entities in relation to Islington Council. Groups such as the Sustainable Transport Round Table and Officer Working Group were defined in texts and associated with the UDP. This led to the Sustainable Transport Round Table

influencing the writing of 'transport policies' in Islington UDP. However, this set of relations was not constantly maintained and 'Central Government' intermediaries became more important in stabilising actions. This may explain why interviewees described some of the later stages of writing the UDP as being 'fast tracked'.

'Consulting' in both cases was seen to be defined as an activity in different networks, and might be interpreted as relating to how the UDP is defined and related to other intermediaries. In Wrexham, the UDP was integrated into a specific set of relations through 'Central Government' texts, and was actively portrayed as 'separate' from other 'Council' activities. In contrast, Islington UDP was, initially at least, linked into a 'Council' network which defined its place in relation to various other 'Council-authored' intermediaries.

The key difference which arises from these case studies is the extent to which actions and relations are textualised. In Islington many texts serve as intermediaries, which more or less successfully, align other entities in a 'Council' network. In Wrexham, fewer texts served to relate the UDP to other entities and activities, and actions were instead enacted through 'Central Government' intermediaries or through other networks associated with the profession of planning and inherited ways of working.

Other texts also acted as intermediaries in regulating and defining a network of relationships. Some of these served to describe 'new' groups and relations, and might be viewed as actors in a particular analysis through the ways in which these texts also authored other intermediaries (such as reports). In the Islington case, a report of the Transport sub-Committee defined an entity called the Sustainable Transport Round Table and linked this to other entities and groups, notably 'officers', 'local interests' and 'new initiatives'. In particular it also defined actions such as 'developing new initiatives' and 'engaging in debate' which were attributed to the Round Table and to groups such as 'officers'. Although the Round Table was described in another document as an idea arising from discussions between three groups ('council officers', 'Agenda 21 working group' and 'Islington Friends of the Earth') it was enacted through an intermediary authored by, and ascribed to, 'the Council'. Other 'Council-authored'

documents also further defined who was to be involved and actions to be taken. The Council seemed successful in aligning these other defined groups to carry out actions, such as making policy. This was indicated by a quote from a member of the group: "*the Council have decided in its infinite wisdom that for transport issues they would use the input from the Sustainable Transport Round Table and that was very straightforward and there was no argument about that*". No such work was discerned in Wrexham to define and enact a similar group. Instead, action in Wrexham seemed to follow forms which were embedded in inherited, stabilised networks, especially those defining 'officers', 'members' and their actions.

In the Wrexham case there was, however, work to define a new entity which was related specifically to the UDP. In this case a 'Planning Policy Panel' was defined and enacted through the intermediary of a report to the Planning Committee. This report and a subsequent decision to act on it might be attributed to 'the Council', although the report also indicates that an individual, the Director of Development Services is also ascribed as author of this document. This may reflect how the authorship of intermediaries is a function of which networks they are attributed to, and is thus an analytical problem. The report defined a number of entities such as 'officers', 'members', 'the Council' and the 'Planning Committee' and actions which they would carry out. The work of the intermediary in aligning these groups was mostly successful, through defining specific roles for groups such as 'officers'. The result of this was that these groups became enrolled into a set of relations which enabled the writing of UDP policies. A very similar set of relations was enacted in the Islington case. In this, a report to the Environment Committee and a subsequent decision enacted a 'UDP Task Group' which defined a similar set of groups and actions to Wrexham's Planning Policy Panel. These intermediaries also successfully aligned the defined groups, although there was some dissatisfaction from individuals as to the workload assigned to them. Nevertheless, this did not force these individuals to de-align themselves from this set of relations. Both the Planning Policy Panel and the Task Group served to re-enact a set of relations associated with 'the Council' of 'officers' writing reports and 'members' discussing these reports. In this way, these documents re-described a set of relations which defined 'the Council' (through committees, reports and votes) and which 'the Council' aimed to

propagate through these intermediaries. However, these small groups enabled a different practice to those established through such entities as committees. Both groups were also fairly stable, and 'the Council' was successful in enrolling these entities. The similarities between the groups may have arisen from a common response to the requirements of a 'Central Government' network which defined various actions which 'Councils' must carry out.

Other intermediaries important in council networks

Not only did the UDPs serve to stabilise and describe 'the Council' as an entity and actor, but other texts also served to do this. There were many of these circulating in both cases, but only a few can be analysed in this chapter. These include the list of 'Council Priorities' in the Islington case, which was drawn upon in the text of the UDP. This document, as mentioned above, defines a number of entities such as 'the local community', 'businesses' and so on. These were related to 'the Council' which was portrayed as an actor in organising these entities in order to reach stated goals. In some ways this text might be viewed as an 'obligatory passage point' in that Islington Council as an actor attempts to define entities and their goals. Through a process of 'interessement' (Callon, 1986) 'Islington Borough Council' attempts to stabilise the relations between these entities and what they should do to reach their goal. In this way, Islington Council defines 'businesses' and states that to reach their goals they should align themselves with the Council's programme. However, to trace all the linkages and alignments which this may take is out of the scope of this study. In the Wrexham case there were fewer of these 'Council strategy' documents associated with the work of writing the UDP. Such documents did exist, but were not linked into the set of relations surrounding the UDP, which may reveal how Wrexham UDP was associated with Wrexham County Borough Council.

CONSTRUCTING DEPARTMENTS AND OFFICERS IN A 'COUNCIL' NETWORK

Important to realising 'the Council' were also intermediaries which defined a fairly stable network of 'departments', 'officers', 'members' and actions. These intermediaries were numerous and existed in both Islington and Wrexham. They may

be seen partly as intermediaries in a 'Central Government' network which defined 'councils' and attributed actions to them. Many documents described the 'legislative responsibilities' of the two councils; for example, in a text describing the Development Services Directorate at Wrexham outlines its 'functions' as 'supporting economic and cultural development of the area in accordance with agreed plans...and Government Policy' (Wrexham County Borough, 1999b). As described above, this 'Central Government' network both constrains and enables 'councils' through providing certain 'spaces' in which it can act. Intermediaries, such as that quoted above, may also be viewed as constructing Wrexham Council as an actor which aims to stabilise sets of relations around itself. The text describing the Development Services Directorate not only reproduces 'Central Government' entities but authors separate entities such as 'the Development Services Directorate', 'the Economic Development Department' and the 'Planning Department'. Constructing these entities and aligning them in a particular set of relations allows certain tasks to be carried out (such as writing a UDP). The ways in which these entities are organised is through intermediaries which may include numerous texts, but also skills of individuals to describe this network and operate in it. Such resources stabilise actions and enable regularity. We may identify numerous documents in each case study as holding this role, through defining and relating such entities as 'departments', 'officers', 'members', 'committees', 'UDPs' and so on. As an actor-network analysis seeks out processes, it is taken that such entities and linkages are not fixed, but constantly re-enacted and thus open to change. The task is to trace how this network is stabilised and how it might change. There seem to be some differences in this respect between the two case studies. Whilst many of the same word forms are used in texts in both case studies, such as 'department' and 'officers', and there are similarities in some roles, there was also variation in how these entities were constructed in detail. Wrexham County Borough Council as an entity was frequently described as 'new' and many texts explicitly aimed to stabilise relations between entities. These texts aimed to define what departments were, who they were made up of and what actions they were to carry out. Although, some changes occurred between the two periods of fieldwork in respect of 'Council committees' and other decision-making structures, there was some stability in the organisation of entities and work. However, this stability did not just exist but was achieved through frequent circulation of

intermediaries. Furthermore, this stability was tentative as indicated by tensions between different departments during 'internal consultation' on the UDP. Thus alignment of entities such as 'departments' and 'officers' was sometimes achieved, but at other times (and in certain settings) some of these groups rejected their alignment. The work of some entities (officers in particular) to construct their own network will be described below. In the case of Islington Council, there seemed to be more fluidity in the set of relations which made up 'the Council'. Intermediaries authored by 'the Council', although drawing on objects such as 'departments' and 'directorates' also tended to author new groups, and thus network forms were being changed. This seemed to relate to overall goals of changing 'organisational structure'. Groups which were identified in these texts were more uncertain about their relations with other groups due to changes, and their alignment tended to be more provisional than those of groups in Wrexham Council. This was reflected on by interviewees who highlighted the number of changes of names to 'their' departments. To a limited extent, some individuals could resist alignment in these (changing) networks and drew upon other networks (such as that authored by 'Central Government') to define their identity and shape their work.

Both 'Councils' authored intermediaries which defined objects and entities and thus attempted to stabilise 'the Council' as an institution. However, differences arose in the ways in which networks were formed. In Wrexham, texts attempted to stabilise a network and constantly re-enact this set of relations through maintaining the alignment of 'officers', 'departments' and 'directorates'. In Islington, whilst texts attempted to stabilise certain network forms, this was only tentative and other texts altered the relations in which entities were to be formed and groupings constructed. The spaces which were constructed for both councils in a 'Central Government' network were negotiated in different ways, thus indicating the complex ways in which networks might be seen to form.

DEFINING A NETWORK ASSOCIATED WITH 'OFFICERS'

Numerous texts and much spoken interaction constructed 'officers' as an important group in both case studies. In some ways, the roles which 'officers' enacted were

similar to the work of ‘officers’ as defined in Council-authored texts. Officers in these texts were defined and aligned in a particular set of relations, and ‘officers’ might also be described as having skills which acted as intermediaries in describing these ‘council’ networks. However, such a set of relations also seemed to create a space in which ‘officers’ could act and therefore author their own intermediaries.

HOW WERE ‘OFFICER-AUTHORED’ NETWORKS CONSTRUCTED?

In an actor-network analysis it is important to identify which documents were authored by an entity named ‘officers’ and ascribed to them. However this is not always an easy task, as in some depictions (especially those articulated in interviews) documents such as the UDP were largely seen to be written by ‘officers’. Despite this, it is necessary to identify ‘authors’ rather than ‘scriptors’ of texts (see Derrida, 1978), and texts such as the UDP are attributed in a set of relations to ‘the Council’. Other texts were more closely ascribed to, and defined, ‘officers’. These included reports to committees (although these might also be attributed to ‘the Council’ in certain circumstances). In both case studies reports to the constructed groups of the Planning Policy Panel (Wrexham) and UDP Task Group (Islington) were accredited to ‘officers’. These reports defined certain objects such as ‘planning policies’, ‘household projections’ and ‘chapters of the UDP’ which might be analysed as objects of other networks (such as that authored by ‘Central Government’). Importantly, these texts also defined ‘officers’ and ‘members’ through relating them together, with other entities and in ascribing actions to each group. In this way, a particular relationship between ‘officers’ and ‘members’ was constructed. For example, in the minutes of a meeting of the Planning Policy Panel it is stated: “*The Panel considered the points made by Members in their representations and resolved that the following amendments to the Officer’s responses be made*” (Wrexham County Borough, 1999a p.13), so constructing identities and roles for ‘officers’ and ‘members’ and attributing actions to them. In both case studies, texts portrayed ‘officers’ as writing reports, policies and explaining these whilst ‘members’ discussed and ratified these. Such portrayals served to stabilise a particular set of relations between these two groups. Furthermore, there was evidence that groups defined as ‘officers’ or ‘forward planning officers’ aimed to align ‘members’ in certain

sets of relations. Part of the way in which texts acted as intermediaries in enrolling 'members' was through defining work on the UDP as a series of stages which needed to be completed quickly, and thus legitimating certain actions. These texts drew on a number of network objects to validate such actions, including Planning Policy Guidance and Statute. In this way, other sets of relations provided space and resources from which 'officers' could translate other entities. In both cases, this was largely successful, as members and other entities aligned themselves in this particular network. There was little dissent, perhaps because this set of relations also drew on other inherited and stabilised ways of doing things. In addition, these stabilised ways of doing things also enabled 'members' some space in which to act.

'Officers' also authored texts which enrolled other 'officers', and this was especially evident in the Islington case. A group defined themselves (and were defined) as 'officers responsible for the review of the UDP', and managed to define themselves as actors through authoring intermediaries which constructed 'new' groups and actions. These groups included the 'Working Group on Environmental Issues' and the 'Environmental Appraisal Group' which were set up through a series of documents and enacted in meetings and other texts (such as memoranda). These intermediaries constructed such entities as a 'Transport Working Group', a 'Strategic Policy Group' and 'local interest group members'. These groups were assigned specific tasks. For example, in work surrounding 'Environmental Appraisal' a group of 'local interest group representatives with an interest in Agenda 21' (Islington Planning Service, 1998 p.3) were formed and enacted through two meetings and filling in a questionnaire. In this way, this group was constructed especially in relation to work defined as 'Environmental Appraisal'. In this way, a group (of officers) in the Islington case constructed new groups which were aligned behind a purpose of 'writing the UDP'. Alignment was mostly successful, although one 'member of the public' criticised the ways in which this group was integrated into this network for a particular purpose and then excluded. It might be concluded that in the Islington case intermediaries defined groups and their relations especially for the purpose of 'writing the UDP'. In contrast, 'officers' in the Wrexham case did not construct new groups and relations. Instead texts acted as intermediaries in replicating inherited and stabilised groups and relations. This

was particularly revealed in the ‘internal consultation’ on the UDP which reproduced ‘existing’ groupings (such as ‘departments’ and ‘chief officers’) derived from ‘the Council’ network to enable ‘writing the Plan’.

‘Officers’ were defined as important in many texts and in talk in both the Islington and Wrexham cases, and managed to align other groups (especially ‘members’) in this network. They might be viewed as key actors in orchestrating networks of resources and intermediaries. In particular, ‘officers’ seemed to construct themselves as able to draw on numerous network resources, whether these were the objects of a ‘Central Government’ network (for example, PPGs and Regulations) or the objects of a ‘Council’ network of ‘departments’, ‘committees’ and ‘reports’. Through being enrolled in these networks, officers (as variously defined) became key actors in shaping what was done in both case study environments.

HOW DID ‘MEMBERS’ ARISE AS ACTORS

‘Members’ as a defined group were defined and related to other entities in ‘Council’ networks in both cases. In some intermediaries ‘members’ were very closely defined and related to ‘the Council’. This allowed ‘elected members’ to be defined as ‘the Council’. Furthermore, defining ‘the Council’ allowed a collective will to be represented in texts and through actions such as ‘voting’ and ‘passing resolutions’. However, in other stabilising texts, ‘members’ were separately defined from ‘the Council’ (which became defined in different ways). For example, the UDP might state, ‘the Council will...’, however such a statement may not entail action by all elected members, but will associate other entities, such as ‘officers’ in this action. In this way, ‘the Council’ becomes defined in different ways according to the intermediary and network in which it becomes inscribed.

In both case studies, ‘members’ were defined in texts and talk. In documents such as reports to the Planning Policy Panel and minutes of Islington Borough Council Environment Committee, ‘members’ are constructed as having a specific role, often associated with actions such as ‘supporting’, ‘agreeing’ and ‘ratifying’ certain texts.

Such roles might be seen to replicate sets of relations surrounding 'the Council' and might not be viewed as authored by 'members'. This highlights a particular feature of both cases, but one which was enacted differently in each case study. It is difficult, from the fieldwork material, to ascertain whether 'members' became actors able to author new sets of relations. This may be because work to define 'members' is closely allied to work to define 'the Council' and texts influenced by 'councillors' may have been attributed to 'the Council'.

One difference which does arise from the fieldwork material is the way in which 'members' became enrolled in work to write the UDP. In the Islington case, it is difficult to identify 'members' as a group of actors in the strict actor-network sense. Much of the role of members in Islington was portrayed as 'ratifying' texts and policies, and through this they can be seen to be intermediaries in describing and replicating networks, such as that authored by 'officers'. 'Members' thus seemed to inhabit roles defined by actors, such as officers and in texts attributed to 'the Council'. On a few occasions, 'members' did succeed in changing texts, including calls for 'officers' to integrate the UDP with 'Council Strategies' and through questioning a housing density policy. However, it is difficult to define these actions as radically altering sets of relations, and re-defining groups and their actions.

In the Wrexham case, 'members' seemed to construct a more active role for themselves in the relations surrounding the writing of 'the Plan'. Whilst also 'supporting', 'agreeing' and 'ratifying', 'members' were also defined as able to alter the ways in which 'the Plan' was written. This work to alter a set of relations was articulated through the mechanisms of the Planning Policy Panel, and councillors who were members of the Panel were especially active. In particular, these councillors were successful in altering the means by which the UDP was being considered (and which was largely controlled by 'officers'). This involved elected members on the Panel calling for a copy of the Report of Public Consultation to be distributed to all councillors, thus changing what had been planned by 'officers'. This was enacted in a meeting of the Panel and was reflected in its minutes:

“Members indicated the need for the fullest consultation to take place with Councillors with regard to allocating sites prior to the Plan being submitted to Council for approval.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That all Members of the Council be provided with a copy of the Report of Public Consultation together with a list of proposed sites to meet the shortfall.*
- (ii) That their comments on the whole document be invited and considered at a future Meeting of the Panel.”* (Wrexham County Borough, 1999a p.2)

Such a quote not only replicates objects such as ‘the Panel’ and ‘the Council’ which we might attribute to a ‘Council’ network, but also authors a new set of relations in respect on defining a relationship between ‘all Members of the Council’ and ‘the Report of Public Consultation’. We might conclude that in this situation a group we may define as ‘Councillors on the Planning Policy Panel’ became actors in authoring a new set of relations. However, it is more difficult to describe a stable and durable network which we may define as authored by ‘elected members’. In most situations, ‘elected members’ might be coherently defined as intermediaries serving to describe other network forms.

DEFINING ‘THE PUBLIC’ AND ‘INTEREST GROUPS’

The various networks described above were constituted through numerous texts, humans, entities and defined groups. These were related together in specific ways, in order that some stability might be achieved and in turn allow certain actions to be carried out. Defining entities and groups was a very important part of this. One entity which might be defined is, ‘the public’ and a concern for understanding how this entity is formed is expressed in one of the research questions. However, the term ‘the public’ was used in a limited way in texts and talk in both cases. A frequently textualised way of expressing this concept was through relating ‘the public’ to another entity defined as ‘consultation’ and expressed as the nominal group, ‘public consultation’. This term was used in both cases and served to describe (and legitimate) a number of actions. In the Islington case, reference to ‘the public’ or ‘public consultation’ was rarely found in texts

authored by 'the Council' or 'officers'. There were more references to 'the public' and 'public consultation' in texts and talk circulating in the Wrexham case. However, as shown in the previous chapter, 'the public' were portrayed as a disparate entity, which were difficult to enrol into networks because they were both disparate and 'uninterested' in the Plan itself. The lack of use of such a term might indicate that such an entity is difficult to define in relation to more stabilised entities, such as 'the UDP' or 'the Council'. Instead, texts in both cases used other terms to construct groups which might be enrolled into sets of relations surrounding the UDP. In the Islington case, these terms encompassed a wide variety of definitions and a large degree of 'ontological hardness'. The UDP refers to 'the local community', 'local people' and 'businesses' as entities with which 'the Council' should be in partnership. However, the form of partnership, or consultation with these entities needed to be further defined through setting up other entities which were seen to represent these groups. Neighbourhood forums or the Environmental Appraisal Group might be seen to be an example of this. In the Wrexham case, fewer references were made in the UDP and other texts to groups which we might identify as having a loosely defined identity. Instead, texts made references to groups which had some 'ontological hardness' deriving from their position in a variety of networks. For example, texts used terms such as 'consultees' or 'interested bodies' to enable certain actions to be carried out. The difference between the two case seemed to arise from who (or what) was creating these groups. In the case of Islington, entities such as the Neighbourhood Forums were portrayed as created by 'the Council', while in Wrexham entities were drawn on which were portrayed as authored by other actors (especially 'Central Government').

The importance of the way in which groups were created seems to arise from how these groups might be identified and enrolled in various sets of relations. It would seem difficult to enrol a group such as 'the public' which is defined in numerous ways and thus does not have a stable identity. Instead, groups which have some stability through their position in a network might be more easily identified and may be more predictable in their actions. In this study, their relationship to a particular text, the UDP is especially important. Work to define groups came about in different ways and through different networks in both cases. In Wrexham and Islington groups were defined

through a 'Central Government' network. For example, bodies such as 'the Welsh Office' and the 'London Planning Advisory Committee' were drawn upon in texts such as Planning Guidance Documents which stated that such groups should be related to the process of writing the UDP. Such bodies were fairly stabilised through their position in a network of 'Central Government' and due to their 'internal' structure. These groups produced texts which related to the UDP (termed letters of representation) and were frequently successful in changing the text of the Plan. They might, thus, be identified as actors as they produced intermediaries which changed a set of relations (in the text of the UDP). In both cases entities were defined as 'interest groups', showing that they had some identity surrounding a defined 'interest'. These groups frequently had some stability due to their position in networks and through the way in which they were organised. For example, the House Builder's Federation was defined as an 'interest group' and derived its stability from a set of relations between house building companies, employees of the Federation and ways of organising its activities through such things as committees. These groups were related to the process of writing the UDP in different ways. In Wrexham and Islington these groups acquired texts such as the UDP and authored documents which attempted to change the UDP and policies. In both cases, 'interest groups' were defined in texts such as databases as those 'who had expressed an interest in the Plan' and were therefore defined as 'those who should be consulted'. In the Islington case, such a process was particularly noticeable during the stage of placing the UDP 'on deposit' which might be related to a requirement to follow stated procedures in 'Central Government authored' documents. The similarity between the two cases might therefore have come about because of the place of 'Councils' in a 'Central Government' network which stipulated how groups should be related to the process of writing UDPs. Similarities may also have arisen as a result of networks associated with 'planning and planning officers as a profession' and the actions enabled by this. However, in Islington such 'interest groups' were also defined in a different set of relations, which involved them being enrolled into specially formed bodies. For example, the Environmental Appraisal Group was described as formed by "*a small group of local interest group representatives, many with an interest in the Agenda 21 process*" (Islington Planning Service, 1998 p.3). This might be seen as the third way in which groups were defined and integrated into networks. Forming special groups with

particular relationships to the UDP only occurred in Islington. Apart from the Planning Policy Panel no groups were specifically set up in Wrexham. These groups were defined in intermediaries authored by 'Islington Council' and included the Environmental Appraisal Group and the Sustainable Transport Round Table. Such groupings allowed an entity to be defined which could be specially enrolled into networks surrounding the writing of the UDP. These groupings although they might be described as composed of members of 'interest groups' had a specific identity which was related to the text of the UDP. In the case of the Sustainable Transport Round Table, this group was able to produce its own texts which were integrated into the text of the UDP. The Environmental Appraisal group was less successful in aligning texts which it produced with the UDP, and 'officers' were described by one member of this group as 'deciding on the fast track' and thus de-aligning this group from the set of relations surrounding the UDP. The key difference between the two cases was the ways in which special groups were formed and integrated into a particular set of relations. In Wrexham, stabilised groups were integrated into work to produce 'the Plan', and thus provided some predictability as to their goals and actions. Even if these groups wished to change the text of the UDP, their predictability in doing this allowed other actors to shape their actions accordingly. In Islington, 'new' groups were set up and integrated into work to write the UDP. This had mixed consequences. The Sustainable Transport Round Table became a fairly 'solid' grouping which had a defined role to produce 'transport policy'. In contrast, the Environmental Appraisal Group did not become deeply embedded in the set of relations surrounding the UDP. Instead, due to a number of possible factors, inherited ways of working and stabilised groups were enrolled into this set of relations, especially during the 'deposit' period. From this, we might ascertain that there was a tension between drawing on stabilised concepts and practices and creating new groups and practices. In particular, work to create new groups required significant work on the part of actors such as 'officers' and entailed the use of valuable resources (especially money), and this may account for the change in the 'style' of consultation.

CONCLUSION

In evaluating the two case studies and ascertaining differences between them, it has been necessary to form a descriptive framework in which to identify features which might be evaluated. These features derive from both the research questions and the theoretical underpinnings of this research. In particular, there has been a focus on the processes observed during fieldwork and a major part of the evaluation has been to compare these. A number of processes were seen to operate in both Wrexham and Islington, and these can be largely identified as work to define entities, actors and intermediaries and work to relate these together into network forms, following the actor-network theoretical perspective of this research. This chapter has therefore concentrated on how certain social objects are created and are then linked with other objects to enable certain actions to take place. To delimit the field of study, this chapter has drawn on a number of research questions, which broadly relate to gaining an understanding of how a thing called a 'UDP' is written, which groups are formed around in the writing of a UDP and tracing how texts are used to stabilise this work.

Numerous sets of relations have been identified from the analysis of the two cases. In the space available it has not been possible to describe all the possible objects created and the myriad of relations surrounding the writing of a 'UDP'. In particular, an actor-network study requires numerous relationships to be traced, and in some ways this is an endless task, and one which will be discussed in the next chapter. Due to this, it has been necessary to describe only those networks and actors which are seen to play the crucial roles in writing the UDPs in each case. The main actor-networks which seem to arise from these studies have a number of similarities. In particular, this chapter has identified a 'Central Government' network which is described and enacted through numerous intermediaries which circulated in both cases. These included texts such as 'Planning Policy Guidance' documents, statute and regulations which identified objects such as UDPs and Local Authorities. Such a 'Central Government' network was seen to align these objects in fairly stable sets of relations, and therefore many actions were similar in both cases. However, this network did not describe all objects and relations encountered during fieldwork, and it might be seen that the 'Central Government' network creates spaces in which entities such as 'Local Authorities' might act. In both

cases, the Local Authority was portrayed as an important actor in both texts and talk. Much work and many entities were ascribed to 'the Council', especially UDPs. However, the ways in which 'the Council' was constructed was different in both cases. In Islington, 'the Council' was represented as an important actor (rather than just an intermediary in a 'Central Government' network) in numerous texts, including the UDP. The text of the UDP thus created a particular identity for 'the Council' which defined its relation to other things and created space for it to act. The numerous texts managed to align certain entities, such as 'officers', 'pieces of land' 'interest groups' and so on in a putative network. The text of the UDP was important in defining an identity for 'Islington Council' and the place of the 'UDP' within it. In Wrexham, 'the Council' was also represented in a number of texts and actions were ascribed to it; but other network objects were drawn upon more heavily, especially those formed in the 'Central Government' network. In this way, texts such as statute were related to 'Wrexham Council' and used to define what it was and what it could do. One of the main points to arise from the comparative analysis was that in Wrexham texts were used far less frequently to describe a 'new' identity for 'the Council'. Instead the identity of 'the Council' was frequently drawn from its position in a Central Government network. Work defined as 'consultation' reflected this. In Islington, texts defined 'new' entities (such as the Environmental Appraisal Group) and 'new' relationships which surrounded 'the UDP'. However, these 'new' entities were aligned in a particular set of relations and were then de-aligned as objects and relations authored by 'Central Government' were drawn upon to shape the writing of the UDP. In Wrexham, only the 'Planning Policy Panel' might be interpreted as a 'new' entity, and much of the work to write the UDP was structured in accordance with 'Central Government' texts. This seemed to result from a desire by a certain group (officers) to have a significant role in controlling how 'the UDP' was written and minimise work to author 'new' entities and relationships. This leads onto identifying 'officers' as another actor, which was influential in both cases. 'Officers' were both created as a group in the 'Council networks', but also were portrayed as actors through their ability to author new relations and align various groups (such as 'members'). In particular, 'officers' as a defined group may have become influential actors through a role in co-ordinating the resources of a number of networks (such as statute, 'Council' texts and so on). Members were

also defined as a group through their position in 'Council' networks, but did not seem to occupy such an influential role in respect to 'the UDP'. In Islington, 'members' as a group might be defined as intermediaries (rather than actors) in networks, and did not manage to alter sets of relations. In Wrexham, 'members' seemed to be defined as actors through their ability to author 'new' intermediaries and alter sets of relations surrounding the writing of the UDP. From the two cases, differences did emerge in the ways in which texts defined and aligned certain groups into networks. However, many similarities were identified, and this might be attributed to the stability of a 'Central Government' network and the way in which this set of relations was inserted into the work of numerous entities (including 'officers', 'members' and 'interest groups'). The consequences of this finding will be assessed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

This final chapter will evaluate the general findings of this research, and will attempt to identify some of the theoretical, methodological and analytical consequences of this research. This will involve pulling various strands of work together. Firstly, the chapter will assess how far the main research questions have been answered in this work. Evaluating these will have bearings on both how far this research explains 'planning practice', as well as on theoretical considerations of the role of groups, texts and power in the writing of development plans. This will hopefully show how useful the theoretical framework is in addressing these questions. Secondly, this chapter will evaluate the practical and methodological consequences of using such a theoretical framework developed from an actor-network perspective. Finally, the chapter will identify some areas which might be fruitfully developed from this study.

There are two broad sets of research questions which have been formulated for this study. These will allow an evaluation of the theory and methodology employed, as well as enabling an assessment of how this study might contribute to an understanding of 'planning practice'. Firstly, there are those (detailed in Chapter Four) which deal with the substantive topic area of this study, namely the writing of plans and the processes involved in this. The research questions are as follows:

- What influences the writing of a UDP?
- What networks might be identified as influential in such work?
- Which groups are formed and influence the writing of these documents?
- How are 'local authorities' defined and what implications do these definitions have in shaping how a UDP is written?
- How do notions of (and actions ascribed to) 'the public' influence how a UDP is written?
- How are texts used in defining groups and actions surrounding the writing of a UDP?

For the purposes of this evaluation these six questions might be grouped around four aims of the research. Firstly, a concern to understand how Plans are written. Secondly, to show how groups are formed and act. This includes understanding how ‘local authorities’ and ‘the public are defined as groups and which actions might be ascribed to them. Thirdly, to show how texts are used in the writing of a UDP. Fourthly, there is a need to show how power is enacted. This relates to the concept of networks and groups being influential, as defined in the research questions above. The first part of this chapter will be structured around these four aims of research. The second set of research questions relates more directly to the theoretical framework adopted for this study. There is some overlap with the first set of research questions, but these questions are intended to highlight advantages and problems of using an actor-network theoretical framework, which will be discussed at the end of the chapter. These questions are as follows:

- How successfully were intermediaries defined?
- How successfully were actors defined?
- How successfully were networks defined?

These research questions are all closely related to one another, as work to define an intermediary will be affected by definitions of actors and networks and vice versa. Finally, these two sets of research questions are not intended to be wholly separate. Instead attempts to answer the first set of questions will be influenced by the success of the theoretical framework, and questions over the identification of such things as power will be discussed in the first section of this chapter. The second section will, however, be concerned more explicitly with the practical and methodological problems of using this actor-network theoretical framework.

EVALUATION

SHOWING HOW PLANS ARE WRITTEN

The first research aim is to show how Plans were written in both case studies. This might be viewed as uncovering various processes which were related to an object called

'the Plan'. There was some success in identifying sets of stable relations which shaped what a UDP was, what it could do and who was to be involved in writing it. In particular, a set of relations which were identified as a 'Central Government' network were shown to define things such as 'a UDP' and how these things were to be related. Some intermediaries were defined in the analysis as attributable to 'Central Government' and these were seen to identify objects such as 'local authorities' and 'statutory consultees' and associate them with other objects such as 'PPGs' and 'development plans'. This might be viewed as a network in the way in which objects and relations between them are defined, and it did seem that many actions observed during fieldwork were justified through recourse to 'Central Government' intermediaries such as the 'Development Plan Regulations'. In both cases, this 'Central Government' set of relations seemed important in shaping what UDPs were and how they were written. However, this network form did not seem to account for, or enable, all the action observed during fieldwork. Other sets of relations were also identified as having an influence on the writing of plans in both cases. In particular, the 'local authority' or 'Council' were defined as authors of both UDPs, although in different ways. The UDPs and other texts which might be attributed to 'the Council', identified groups such as 'officers' and 'interest groups' with specific roles in the writing of the Plans. Some of these relations were more stabilised than others. For example, 'officers' were defined in a number of intermediaries as having a specific role in the writing of both UDPs (although this was articulated more clearly in Wrexham). This in turn allowed 'officers' to be viewed as actors through the intermediaries which were attributed to them and the attempts to alter sets of relations. Other entities such as 'interest groups' or 'the public' were less clearly defined and enrolled in networks associated with the writing of the UDPs, especially in the Wrexham case.

Analysis of both cases did reveal some network forms which might be viewed as stabilised. In particular, a set of relations enacted through intermediaries authored by 'Central Government' seemed particularly important. This network produced many of the similar features which could be ascertained from both case studies. Defining other networks was more difficult as boundaries between sets of relations seemed more fluid than that of 'Central Government'. For example, the role of 'the Council' and 'officers'

in writing the UDPs seemed to overlap as both entities were presented as carrying out similar work. The complexity of sets of relations also made identifying how Plans were written difficult. The numerous relations and entities defined in texts and talk could not all be traced, and thus their impact on how Plans were written was difficult to ascertain. For example, in the Islington case it was difficult to identify all the relations surrounding the writing of 'Council strategies' which were defined as influential in the writing of the UDP. However, that said, the aspect of the work focusing on intermediaries and their role in defining, associating and aligning did prove to be useful in uncovering how entities such as 'Central Government' managed to stabilise a set of relations. Some of the grammatical relations which allowed such intermediaries to define and associate were also uncovered, however this was difficult to carry out fully in this study. Analysis of the grammatical forms of intermediaries may be one area where this research can be developed.

SHOWING HOW GROUPS WERE FORMED AND ACTED

Identifying groups in an actor-network analysis involves showing how entities are constructed in intermediaries, rather than an a priori definition of things. Analysis of texts and talk did show how groups were defined, especially through their relation with other objects. For example, the cases highlighted how bodies such as 'the Council' were created as entities in texts authored by 'Central Government' as well as those attributed to 'the Councils' themselves. Other groups, such as 'officers' and 'members' were also shown to be defined in fairly stable ways through a multitude of texts. Work to define these groups necessarily involves relating these objects with one another in a set of relations, so that 'officers' were defined partly through their relation to other objects and groups such as 'members', 'the Council' and 'the UDP'. The analysis, in particular, showed how documents such as minutes of meetings defined and re-defined entities and thus stabilised sets of relations. Such definitions within network forms enabled groups to act (or at least allowed actions to be attributed to such groups), and therefore highlights how 'spaces' were created which enabled action. In both cases, fairly stable definitions surrounded such groups as 'officers' and 'members' (although it may also be argued that such stability is related to how we define objects and their

relation to certain networks. For example, 'local authorities' were defined in a stable set of relations surrounding 'making UDPs'; however, 'local authorities' might also be viewed as defined in a more fluid set of relations surrounding forms of governance and might therefore be seen as a different thing.)

The analysis also showed how certain groups have less stable identities within sets of relations. This was particularly the case in Islington, where groups were defined as part of specific networks surrounding 'plan-making'; so that 'the Environmental Appraisal' group did not have a very stable identity, as it was defined in only a few documents and for a short time (compared say to 'members'). Such temporary or tentative stability highlighted the constant work to define and re-define groups and attribute actions to them. This however also shows some of the difficulties in identifying all the groups which might be defined in a particular situation. Whilst those groups and entities which have gained a stable position within a network are fairly easy to identify, those evanescent groupings which are not 'solidly' defined become difficult to identify and assess their actions. For example, groupings such as 'the public' tended to have a nebulous identity which was not closely linked with other objects in texts. In this way, it was difficult to show how actions might be attributed to groupings such as 'the public'. In contrast, entities such as 'interest groups' had less nebulous identities as they were more consistently related to other objects. This seems to be a particular outcome of the research; that groupings which are not consistently and closely related to other objects (and might therefore be nebulous in nature) are difficult to enrol into sets of relations. This may explain why, especially in the Islington case, other groupings such as 'interest groups' and 'the Sustainable Transport Round Table' were defined in relation to the UDP. However, the analysis has shown that identifying stable groups and relations is easier than tracing the fleeting, less coherently defined groups which may still have temporary influences on the processes observed.

SHOWING HOW TEXTS ARE USED

The third aspect of the research questions concerns the writing and use of texts as observed during fieldwork. Drawing on actor-network theory allowed texts to be

viewed as a resource for defining entities and shaping relations between them, rather than as a representation of some 'real' state of affairs. This fits in with the Jubien ontological perspective (Jubien, 1993) outlined before, where things are constructed through their naming in language. This perspective also stresses the performative nature of texts, the way in which language may enact changes in the world from an Austinian point of view (Austin, 1962). In particular, texts may be viewed as intermediaries in their role in defining network forms and so acting to stabilise meanings and relations through their positivity. Analysis uncovered a number of texts which acted as intermediaries in defining objects and associating them in a set of relations. Particularly important as intermediaries were documents attributed to 'Central Government' (or entities associated with this term). These texts included statute, regulations and guidance documents which were regularly cited in other texts and by individuals in interviews in both cases. Such texts had a particularly strong role in defining objects such as 'UDPs' and 'local planning authorities' and relating them to other objects defined in other texts. In this way, these documents acted as intermediaries in not only describing a set of relations, but also creating objects and associations and defining certain actions. These texts were also drawn upon in both case studies, indicating their positivity in replicating this 'Central Government' network through time and space. Other texts were attributed to different authors, for example the UDPs to 'the Council' (especially in the Islington case), which allowed another set of relations to be extended and stabilised. Identifying 'the Council' as author also allowed a collective will to be defined and represented. These texts were all largely successful in defining entities and relating them together in a stable network. These texts might be viewed from an actor-network perspective as not only existing as intermediaries, but also as actors through their ability to author new sets of relations.

Other texts seemed to have less success in defining and associating, and tended to stabilise sets of relations for a short time, if at all. Such documents were not able to extend their author's will for many reasons. Texts such as some 'letters of representation' proposed a certain set of relations (or, in short, an argument) which was unable to shift other definitions or enrol actors. These documents due to their inability to define and change sets of relations were less prominent in other texts, and therefore

more difficult to identify from the fieldwork material. This issue might be related to the problems associated with identifying more temporary and evanescent groupings, as described above. This might be viewed as a problem, in that this analytical framework tends to concentrate attention on those texts which were successful in describing and extending network forms. In this way, an actor-network analysis might be seen as prioritising 'the powerful'. Woods, writing about rural conflicts states: "*Thus although actor-networks may at first appear pluralist in their dissipation of power, they can in fact become elitist; a focus on networks excluding the alternative narratives about rural conflicts which might be told by those who float in the between spaces; or indeed by other entities in the network who are less able to communicate their narratives.*" (1997 p.338) However, the point of such analysis may be to trace how stabilised network forms are able to resist challenges from other actors through resources such as intermediaries. It is not enough to say that there are 'alternative narratives'; there has to be a way of tracing *how* these narratives are *made* 'alternative'. By way of an example, a text was written in the Wrexham case which dealt with all the letters of representation regarding the draft UDP. Part of this text included wording such as 'not a land use policy matter' referring to comments made on the draft UDP. Such wording might be seen to describe a boundary and a set of relations which define certain objects, and serve to exclude other objects and proposed sets of relations. In this way, the analysis shows how certain sets of relations are devalued and how this process operates. The process of identifying not only those texts which propagate network forms but those which challenge them is however difficult due to the number of texts circulating within complex sets of relations. It was difficult to identify all those texts which were influential in stabilising networks and those which failed to author new networks. In practice, the analysis tended to concentrate on texts which served to stabilise and propagate sets of relations, such as 'the UDPs' and 'statute'. A focus on texts may also have led to other intermediaries, such as human skills and technology being somewhat excluded from analysis. However, this was a necessary part of the study, in that one of the main objectives of the research was to study the role of texts as intermediaries.

SHOWING HOW POWER IS ENACTED

One of the main reasons that an actor-network approach was taken in this study was its constitutive view of power (as described in Chapter Three). In particular, actor-network theory does not assume groups *have* power, rather that ‘power’ is an outcome of sets of relations between entities. Some actors might be attributed power to do things, but it is other things which carry out actions (other actors, intermediaries). There are similarities in this approach with Foucault’s injunction that analysis should not identify *who* exercises power, but *how* power is exercised (Flyvbjerg, 1996). The theoretical framework enabled analysis which uncovered how power is relational and is transmitted through materials organised in certain fashions. A focus on intermediaries as resources by which ‘power’ might be exercised allowed various relations of power to be traced, and in particular focused on how things such as texts had a positivity which bound actors and entities into a certain set of relations. For example, texts such as statute structured actions by numerous entities (planning officers, local planning authorities) and in this way might be seen as a resource or technique by which ‘power’ might be exercised. A key feature of actor-network analysis is the uncovering of processes of translation, and it is in this way that certain actors are seen to orchestrate entities and resources in particular patterns. Identifying all the processes of translation from the fieldwork material was difficult due to the complexity of relations between entities. However, through starting with intermediaries it was possible to attribute authorship to texts, which in itself might be seen as an outcome of a convention or another network. For example, ‘the Council’ was attributed authorship to a number of documents, and this might be seen as a result of a stabilised set of conventions. Through analysis of intermediaries it was possible to show how objects were defined and how attempts were made to enrol these in a particular set of relations. Some intermediaries were more successful than others. For example, ‘Central Government’ policy documents and statute were remarkably successful in defining entities and aligning them in a stable set of relations. Such intermediaries identified numerous entities and complex systems by which the alignment of others could be controlled, through such things as the legal system and local plan inquiries. However, as mentioned in the last chapter, the success of these intermediaries was not solely enacted through rigid sets of associations and defined tasks for entities. These intermediaries also authored spaces in which actors,

such as local authorities, could write their own intermediaries and thus 'exercise power'. Other intermediaries were less successful in aligning actors and entities. Numerous documents attempted to enact a particular set of relations and get other entities to carry out certain actions (such as 'allocating land for residential development'), but were unsuccessful in aligning other actors. Successful translation could be shown through tracing how texts, such as the UDPs (or their various versions), were altered to describe new certain sets of relations. Although an actor-network analysis does not preclude description of how certain intermediaries fail to change sets of relations, this task is more difficult as these intermediaries are not as prominently reproduced or described in other texts and talk. The practical consequences of this is that texts which are successful in enacting 'power' are more likely to be described than those which fail to enact new sets of relations. There is scope for further work which traces how texts and other intermediaries associated with the writing of plans fail to translate other actors. This said, the theoretical framework did uncover the means by which we might see 'power' exercised, especially through highlighting the role of texts in enrolling entities into networks. Focusing attention on intermediaries also allowed the means by which action could be replicated and extended through time and space, and thus networks extended and stabilised. The main benefit of the actor-network analysis was therefore to show how 'power' might be enacted in particular situations as a result of the work of actor-networks. Such a theoretical perspective also seems to avoid some of the problems associated with a structure-agency dualism of identifying 'power' as residing in either the individual or in some overarching structure. In actor-network theory power is an outcome of both the entity and its position in a set of associations.

EVALUATING THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY

The use of actor-network theory to explain how plans are written proved useful in uncovering a number of issues to do with power and how the system of planning is constructed. However, a number of practical and philosophical problems arose from this study. In addressing these problems, I will draw on the second set of research questions outlined at the beginning of this chapter. These shape attention onto how

intermediaries, actors and networks are constructed and described as well as questioning how the exercise of power is revealed.

HOW SUCCESSFULLY WERE INTERMEDIARIES DEFINED?

As noted above, analytical work to uncover intermediaries is closely related to how we might identify actors and networks. An actor can be defined as both an intermediary which authors other intermediaries and as a network, thus showing the close links between these three terms. In the analytical work carried out for this research, an intermediary, actor or network had to be identified first, in order for the other network effects to be identified. This was carried out through a reading of case study materials (texts, interview transcripts and observation notes) and identifying to whom or what a text or other intermediary could be attributed. This concentration on intermediaries matches closely with Lockie and Kitto's injunction that: "the object of analysis and generalization is thus not the agent, institution or process, but the relationships through which these are constituted" (2000 pp.13-14). However, this said, there is also a need to uncover the processes which such relationships enact, and the putative agents which we might identify. Through identifying various intermediaries, it was possible for various actors such as 'Central Government' or 'Local Authorities' to be uncovered, and these will be discussed in the next section. The focus on intermediaries did allow the work of defining, combining and associating of objects to be uncovered.

In many cases the process of identifying texts as intermediaries was not unduly problematic, especially when authorship of these was attributed to one entity. This may in itself indicate that the field of research exhibited some stability, as texts served to reproduce and reinforce a particular network form or actor-space (Murdoch and Marsden, 1995). For example, statute as a number of texts arose as an important resource in defining objects and the relations between them, as was shown in both cases. A number of intermediaries were uncovered in the 'Central Government' network, such as statute and various guidance documents which identified such things as 'local planning authorities' and 'unitary development plans'. Furthermore, other intermediaries which were not ascribed to 'Central Government' described and re-

produced these objects and relations, thus indicating a significant degree of alignment of other actors/intermediaries/entities. Texts such as UDPs were also identified as intermediaries which served to describe a particular set of relations. The analysis showed how texts such as the UDP in both cases served to describe both a 'Central Government' network and a 'Council' network. In this way a text (if we can describe it in the singular) can act as an intermediary in a number of networks. However, complications also arose when analysing texts; as the text might be viewed as both an intermediary in describing a set of relations and as an actor in authoring new sets of relations. This is an important issue in an actor-network description; of when we might define an entity as one thing (an intermediary) or as another (an actor). This leads to a complex analysis in which, according to the description undertaken, things which we would 'normally' see as a singular entity (such as a UDP) exhibit multifarious characteristics. In some ways, these things become different entities. It is therefore impossible to identify a coherent set of intermediaries. Rather, the analysis has had to accept that at some points things have an 'intermediary-role' whilst at other times have an 'actor-role' (Callon, 1991). Although in some cases this might complicate analysis, it does not import an *a priori* ontological schema to the analysis.

The analysis of the case study material has mainly focused on texts as intermediaries. This might be viewed as limiting the level of actor-network description, especially through failing to highlight the heterogeneity of materials which might act in a certain situation. There is, of course, scope for further work which explores the role of technology, pieces of land and money as intermediaries circulating and forming the practice of planning. However, the focus of this research was on the writing of texts (in particular UDPs), and so it became necessary to focus on text-production. Furthermore, the arenas of planning practice observed, whilst being linked to the material world, were very largely concerned with the production of texts. Nearly all the activities observed during fieldwork centred around the writing of, and responding to, texts, and so the focus of analysis has inevitably fallen on texts as intermediaries. This does highlight the issue of when or where to stop such an analysis (in the planning office or on the building site), and this will be discussed below.

HOW SUCCESSFULLY WERE ACTORS DEFINED?

As mentioned above, actors and intermediaries may be very closely related, and things can have actor-ish or intermediary-ish qualities depending on the analysis. However, differentiating the two depends on authorship, so that “an actor is an intermediary that puts other intermediaries into circulation” (Callon, 1991 p.141). A number of actors were identified from both case studies, due to their production of texts which defined and related other intermediaries. ‘Central Government’ was identified in the analysis as a thing which authored texts, such as statute which defined and related objects such as ‘development plans’ and ‘local planning authorities’. However, problems arise in doing this, and related to the attribution of authorship. Texts such as ‘statute’ are attributed to ‘Her Majesty’s Government’ and ‘Parliament’, whilst such things as ‘Planning Policy Guidance Notes’ (PPGs) are attributed to the ‘Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions’ (DETR) or the ‘Secretary of State’ of this department. These may be viewed as different bodies, and we might not, therefore, be able to identify an actor named ‘Central Government’. In some ways, the identification of ‘Central Government’ as an actor might be regarded as an analytical conceit. Such an analysis tends to fall into the trap of making ‘macro-actors’ which serve to explain a diverse range of phenomena. However, there are three related reasons for conflating different entities. Firstly, the texts produced by different actors (such as the Welsh Office and the DETR) served to define and relate remarkably similar intermediaries (such as ‘local planning authority’ and ‘UDP’). Secondly, and as an explanation of this, we might view these similarities as being produced through a network form. In this way, some sets of relations are being enacted which tie together things such as the Welsh Office and the DETR so that they become intermediaries describing a network which we may label ‘Central Government’. The work to construct this network might be seen to be performed by other intermediaries, such as Acts of Parliament which define objects such as the DETR, the Department of Health and the Welsh Office. These intermediaries might also have been explored; however there have to be limits imposed on research such as this. The question of knowing when/where to stop actor-network analysis will be dealt with below. Lastly, identifying ‘Central Government’ as an actor serves to highlight different forms of government and relations between them, especially those set

up between 'Central' and 'Local' Government. Such relations were strongly reflected in both texts collected from the case studies and through interviews.

Other actors, such as 'Councils'/'Local Authorities', 'officers', 'members' and 'interest groups' were also identified. The stability of these entities and their success in orchestrating sets of relations varied. Within the case studies, 'Central Government' was identified as a stable and successful actor in its work to translate others. Entities such as 'officers' also arose as successful in altering and shaping relations, whilst 'members', certainly in the Islington case, only arose as actors in a few settings. Entities such as 'the public' could not be wholly viewed as actors from the case study material. Such a grouping served to 'black box' a variety of things, and thus allowed phrases such as 'public consultation' to be used and practices to be legitimated. Other groupings, such as 'interest groups' in certain arenas could be identified as actors, through their authoring of intermediaries which attempted to translate others and describe a new network. In many cases, these actors were not wholly successful in altering sets of relations described in intermediaries such as UDPs and PPGs.

In general, actors could be defined, but there were limits to the number which could be identified. As an actor can be defined as anything which authors intermediaries, then numerous actors could be ascertained from texts and talk. Some were successful in translating others, some would be temporarily successful and others would fail. Part of the problem of writing an actor-network description is choosing which actors/intermediaries/networks to include and which to leave out. Description not only in this study, but in many others (for example, Latour, 1988 and Callon, 1986) tends to focus on actors who achieve some kind of success and such descriptions have been criticised for giving heroic accounts (Michael, 1996). This may be true to some extent, but it may also be argued that such 'heroes' are effects or accomplishments, and that the task of actor-network theory is to show how such effects are produced. The issue of describing 'the unsuccessful' and 'the other' will be considered below.

HOW SUCCESSFULLY WERE NETWORKS DEFINED?

John Law, in a recent paper, argues that the term ‘actor-network’ is “intentionally oxymoronic” in that there is a tension between a ‘centred actor’ and a ‘decentered network’ (1999 p.5). Following from this, it is therefore difficult to talk of an actor without relating such an entity to a network. Part of the reason for using actor-network theory in this study was its aim to elide differences between agency and structure (and other ‘Modernist’ dualisms). The conception of an actor-network manages in some ways to do this, through revealing the recursive nature of things and their structure (see Deleuze, 1993). In an actor-network analysis an actor is a network, or at least a network effect. Following this, it might be seen that these three research questions are not useful in uncovering the complex outcomes of analysis. What they hopefully do, however, is highlight how none of these terms is separate, or can be assessed without relation to the other terms. The last section focused on some of the links between actors and intermediaries; in this short section I want to highlight some of the links between the terms ‘actor’ and ‘network’ in order to show how such links characterised the research findings.

In analysing the case studies, a number of networks or sets of relations were uncovered. These included a ‘Central Government’ network and ‘Council’ networks, which were seen as significant in defining and relating various entities. These networks were also related to an actor (‘Central Government’, ‘the Council’). From an actor-network perspective such an actor is a network effect, and one which emerges from a degree of stability in the set of relations. Such a process of creating an actor from a set of relations has been termed ‘punctualisation’ by Michel Callon (1991). In this way, the whole network becomes a black box which is represented by this actor or node. This allows the complexity of the network to be related to other sets of relations and inhabit other sets of relations. In this way actors and networks can be defined repeatedly. By way of an example, an actor termed ‘Wrexham Council’ was identified. This might be seen as a summarisation (or a black box) of numerous relations between things such as departments, elected members and council officers. The summarisation (or punctualisation) of these entities and relations allowed Wrexham Council to be identified in other sets of relations. For example, the Council could become an actor in

seeking to alter patterns of development activity. The network could also be summarised as an intermediary, for example in a network of 'Central Government', where it served to re-describe other sets of relations. The case studies also uncovered other actor-networks, such as UDPs, which could be seen to have a particular (linguistic) structure which enabled the text to act or enable action in certain settings.

The analysis thus highlighted numerous actor-network forms. Analysis could also be traced from actor to network or network to actor. For example, a thing such as Wrexham Council could be seen as a punctualisation of a set of relations and could therefore be related into a 'Central Government' network. Conversely, the 'Central Government' network and its resources could be seen to define an object called 'Wrexham Council', which had a certain space in which to act. This second part of the analysis seems important, as in many texts, objects such as 'Wrexham Council' were defined in intermediaries authored by 'Central Government'. In particular, such texts seemed to enact a certain space in which the 'Council' could act, and did not attempt to completely define the actions of 'the Council' (see Singleton and Michael, 1993).

As might have been shown above, there are problems arising from the complexity of such an analysis. In particular, it is difficult to ascertain the limits to a network, and what objects inhabit it. Defining a network of 'Central Government' is problematic, in that the relations extend long distances and involve a myriad of objects. In this way, identifying such a network can at best be seen as tentative and provisional, as all the connections which might be identified could not be traced. The complexity of other networks such as 'Councils' or 'interest groups' also mitigated against identifying boundaries or limits to these and their scope for action. Whilst this is undoubtedly a significant methodological issue, the focus of actor-network theory on process and fluidity may mean that attempting to identify fixed limits to actor-networks is impossible and runs counter to the aims of an actor-network analysis.

PROBLEMS AND ISSUES ARISING FROM AN ACTOR-NETWORK APPROACH

Some problems associated with adopting an approach derived from actor-network theory have been outlined above. These have included issues to do with defining boundaries of networks and actors, and when things/texts act as intermediaries or as actors. However, some more general problems might be identified as relating to actor-network theory, both practical and philosophical. This section will outline some of these problems and issues, as well as highlighting some practical difficulties associated with this particular research.

A problem which arose out of the analysis, and which is pertinent to an actor-network analysis, concerns the identification of what or where to start analysis. This has been touched on briefly before, but in general relates to identifying actors, networks or intermediaries as the first objects to analyse. In particular, the inter-connection of the concepts of actor, network and intermediary means that identifying one will influence how we ascertain the existence of the others. Actor-network theory aims specifically to circumvent problems associated with constructing objects, such as 'society', 'class' or 'individual' as the means to structure analytical accounts. Instead, actor-network theory aims to trace effects and how they are sustained; in other words to talk about contingent patterns (Law, 1994). To define a fixed set of actors and networks would therefore run counter to actor-network theory's premise; the task instead should be to follow how such actors and networks might be provisionally and contingently formed. However, analysis has to start somewhere in order to follow how actors and networks are formed. Lockie and Kitto (2000) suggest that the initial focus of analysis should be on the discursive and material resources used in a setting, that is the intermediaries. This approach was followed, in that texts and talk were analysed in order to understand how objects were defined and relationships developed in network forms. This allowed a tentative identification of networks and actors which were important in explaining events observed during fieldwork. However, defining an intermediary instantly means defining an actor who author this and the network it describes, thus making this form of description complex from the outset. In an actor-network analysis, there are no simple causal relationships, as each object can be linked to a variety of other theoretic objects.

This is a strength of actor-network theory, but also provides practical problems associated with the complexity of such research, if 'modernist' dualisms are to be avoided and symmetry maintained. The particular problems of linguistic resources in the writing of actor-network descriptions will be described below.

A second issue, concerning the conduct of fieldwork relates to identifying the resources, texts and representations which are important in a setting. Through its focus on process and contingency, actor-network theory seems to favour qualitative and especially ethnographic research in order to attain adequate explanation of social and material process. Questions relating to the collection of fieldwork material are not, of course, specific to an actor-network analysis. Defining which materials to look for might be seen firstly as a function of the researcher's interests and topic of study. This will inevitably constrain where the initial research will take place and what texts and representations are 'collected'. This will, secondly, also affect how the researcher negotiates different settings. Representing the research to others is a difficult skill which requires a great deal of sensitivity to the workings of the fieldwork environment (see Lareau, 1996). This skill is particularly important in gaining access to organisations. During my research in both case studies I felt a tension between representing the theoretical element of my research and making any representation understandable to a diversity of people. The process of gaining access to organisations thus seems to have an important bearing on what material might be collected. Problems arose in one of the case studies with being associated with a particular 'gatekeeper' which at first closed off opportunities to talk to other people and gain access to certain texts. These problems, however were largely absent during my second spell of fieldwork for this particular case study. Utilising an ethnographic approach, however allows such problems to be circumvented, and importantly allows these problems to highlight issues to do with how organisations are structured and performed by individuals. However there are also practical difficulties associated with the amount of time which might be spent following connections and problems associated with representing such 'open' research to those 'in the field'. In my research, this was partly overcome by introducing a schema which helped shape what I was looking for, and define the topics in which I was interested. The problems of following the multitude of

connections and associations in the field and in texts leads onto the next problems associated with actor-network theory; knowing where to stop the analysis.

Actor-network theory is characterised by a concern to follow the numerous connections which are made by intermediaries and actors. As mentioned above, a difficulty in this approach relates to the definition of the boundaries of networks. This has practical consequences for an actor-network analysis, in that it is difficult for the researcher to know when or where to stop following the numerous connections. The relations uncovered from the case studies tended not to be discrete, but involved numerous linkages spreading over space and time. Lockie and Kitto note that there are methodological implications which relate to “the difficulty when developing network accounts of knowing when to stop following the network and how far to look into the ‘black boxes’ of taken-for-granted hybrid collectives” (2000 p.13). Woods also highlights this problem: “Yet there are thousands of entities that might be considered to have an influence on the network. Where would we draw the limits, or do we accept the network as infinite?” (1997 p.337). This problem was illustrated in both case studies. For example, whilst a set of relations embodied in texts such as statute was seen as important in shaping actions observed in both case studies, it was not feasible to research the sets of relations which enabled the writing of statute to be uncovered in this piece of research. Such an analysis may have had to concern itself with such diverse things as debates in Parliament and meetings of lawyers and civil servants. Therefore, much of the workings of ‘Central Government’ became a black box. This problem also arose in not being able to analyse all the texts, meetings and representations which occurred in each case study arena. For example, numerous interest groups sent in letters of representation on each UDP; however it was only possible to analyse a few of these in sufficient detail to understand the actor-networks behind these. This problem required a practical strategy, which could be used during periods of fieldwork. Firstly, there had to be some kind of focus applied to the research, for example to be concerned with the writing of UDPs. Secondly, there needed to be an assessment, whilst ‘in the field’ and during analysis, of the importance of different sets of relations, texts and representations to explain various key practices, such as writing UDPs. This did not preclude the following of relationships, but did help to focus on those which were

crucial in reproducing some of these key practices. Lastly, the actor-network description needed to 'black box' some networks, such as 'Central Government' and some 'interest groups' in order to retain some focus to the study. Such work inevitably entails compromises, however it is hoped that those sets of relations which arose as important in explaining certain intermediaries, activities and norms were uncovered in sufficient detail.

Another problem which was highlighted in the methodology section relates to the techniques we might adopt in writing an actor-network account. In particular, actor-network theory implies a radically different use of language than other theoretical approaches. As Woods notes: "The adoption of the actor-network approach produced a very different narrative style than that of more conventional accounts" (1997 p.335). The concern of actor-network theory to uncover taken-for-granted sets of relations needs to be extended to linguistic relations. Not only do the texts which we may see as network objects need to be analysed to uncover the assumptions and norms embodied within them, but our own actor-network descriptions need to be similarly analysed. Such analysis, therefore, calls for reflexivity and an understanding of how our own accounts might embody taken-for-granted assumptions and norms in the words and grammar we employ. As has been outlined in the methodology section, words and the way in which we use them reflect a certain ordering and way of conceptualising the world. In order to uncover this, it has been necessary to pay attention to how an actor-network description might reproduce certain norms, and to uncover this. Such a process of writing in a way which does not replicate these norms, or at least highlights them, is difficult. Words and grammatical forms are deeply embedded in our conceptions of the world, and it is difficult to write without unconsciously reproducing these. However, such an approach is also necessary, because it is these deeply embedded linguistic forms which allow networks to extend, and texts such as development plans to enable action.

Such concerns with the writing of actor-network accounts leads onto criticisms that actor-network theory has the ability to explain all things and actions in the world according to its relational schema. As Lee and Brown put it: "ANT has achieved a metalinguistic formulation - inscribed as problematization, interessement, enrolment,

mobilization, and dissidence...- into which any sequence of human or nonhuman actions can be encoded” (1994 p.781). This ‘metalanguage’ is, however, according to Latour “poor, limited, short and simple” (1997 p.7) and should only be sufficient to move from one network description to another. Whether actor-network theory does have a totalising or a limited vocabulary, there is still a need for an actor-network analysis to understand and write in the language of those researched. This might mean understanding and accounting for the language of biotechnology, politics or planning practice. Such an approach, whilst theoretically justified, is also practically difficult as the researcher is forced to learn the languages (or metalanguages) of those he or she is researching. Whilst such problems did not unduly hamper this research into plan-writing, problems might arise when numerous languages have to be understood and explained.

Related to the criticism that actor-network theory is the ‘final, final vocabulary’ (Lee and Brown, 1994 p.783) are problems associated with identifying ‘otherness’ in an actor-network account. Earlier versions of actor-network theory have been criticised for a rather managerialist focus on successful networks and ‘powerful’ actors (see Star, 1991, Michael, 1996). These criticisms have re-focused attention by a number of researchers away from ‘the struggle to centre’ (Law, 1999 p.5) towards a focus on marginality, otherness and non-strategic ordering. They have been concerned with describing networks not only as orderings from a centre from which actors may comply or dissent, but also more impure networks in which subjects and objects have a more ambiguous character (see Singleton and Michael, 1993 and Lee and Brown, 1994). Such work to describe relations not only from the perspective of the actor in a network, but also from the point of view of ‘the excluded’ is however difficult. Such work not only needs to describe the relations between actors, but also how other relations might have occurred and the quality of associations. This said, actor-network theory does provide a useful way of understanding how sets of relations are built up and performed, and how ‘power’ is distributed through networks. In this way, the actor-network analysis employed in this research was successful in uncovering the way in which stabilised sets of relations (such as the planning system) were re-produced in differing forms of action and through different materials.

A final criticism of actor-network theory has been to do with retaining a symmetrical description, one which does not privilege the social, the human, agency and so on. Such a symmetrical description has been central to the radicalism of actor-network theory and its usefulness in eliding troublesome dualisms. However, there are questions over whether a completely symmetrical description is possible. Firstly and although non-humans are given prominence in actor-network theory, there are still problems associated with the representation of non-humans. Criticisms have been voiced over the inability for non-humans to consent to the identity ascribed to them (Woods, 1997). In this way, the analyst assumes a central role by 'looking into' the network and identifying 'actors' and 'intermediaries'. This is undoubtedly a serious problem, but one which is inherent to any descriptive and analytical work. The problem may however be ameliorated through the analyst attempting not to impose categories in her or his description. A second and related problem concerns intentionality in actors' actions. Intentionality has been seen by some as "the key distinction between human and nonhuman entities" (Murdoch, 1998 p.368), especially through the human ability to understand representations of themselves and respond to these (ibid.). Although intentions might be understood as a network effect (or even an analytical label), there is an ability for humans to understand that they might be subject to numerous sets of relations and act to comply with some of these and not with others. In this way, it is possible for human actors to be ambivalent towards their position in a set of relations. The problem of maintaining symmetry is therefore a difficult issue for analysts to overcome. Treating humans and non-humans in the same way can be difficult in research into human activity, but has been a major tenet of actor-network theory. The task may not be to look for 'intentions' but rather series of relations, whilst also understanding that it is possible for some actors to inhabit a number of network positions and realise this (so that they might be seen to be ambivalent).

FUTURE RESEARCH

There are a number of areas which could be further developed from this research to explore new topics and address some of the criticisms outlined above. This study has concentrated on texts as a prime means by which network relations are ordered. This

approach was chosen as it was seen that texts were important in the work of planners and in the planning system generally. This was largely borne out by the research, and highlighted how certain texts were successful in reproducing network relations and authoring new sets of associations. However, actor-network theory also implies a focus on other forms of intermediaries, whether they are technologies, humans, money or 'natural' entities. Certainly there is scope for uncovering the ways in which certain skills are able to re-articulate definitions and associations between things, and there may be room for analysing how individuals (who might be identified as 'planners' or 'interest group members') might through their skills reproduce the networks associated with environmental policy. Other intermediaries such as money might also be seen to re-describe sets of relations which have an important effect on the way in which localities are constructed. There may also be space to uncover the ways in which the material world is changed through the actions of such things as development plans. For example, it may be possible to trace how effective development plans are in relating to and altering heterogeneous objects such as pieces of land, road networks and mineral resources. This leads onto a second area of research; that of further studying the role of texts in creating and re-creating the world. This might mean developing some of the linguistic/grammatical work sketched out in this research. Identifying how texts through the use of language both enable and constrain what might be defined and associated could be a fruitful area of research which uncovers the possibilities afforded by texts in networks. In particular, the ways in which processes and actions can be represented in language might reveal some deeply-embedded norms which shape what we can do.

Another area of work which might be developed concerns how fluidities and stabilities might emerge from the same network form. This follows from criticisms expressed about the exclusion of 'the other' in actor-network theory. Whilst it is important to study durable features of the world and how they shape what can be done, it may also be useful to develop ideas of how actors are both constrained by stabilities but can also realise space for action, thus highlighting an ambivalent relationship towards a set of relations. This issue was highlighted in the research through the ways in which 'interest groups' were defined in certain network forms and how attempts were made to enrol

them in other networks (such as those forming around work to write the UDPs). Interest groups were thus being defined in a number of networks and thus drew on varying network positions at different junctures. Such ambivalence towards certain networks seemed to be a characteristic of many of these network forms, but was probably best illustrated by 'interest groups'. Finally, there are naturally many different topics to which actor-network theory can be applied. Some areas which were touched on in this research and which could be developed included the sets of relations surrounding the operation of Local Agenda 21 (see Selman and Wragg, 1999). In particular, the work of Local Agenda 21 groups in Islington seemed to exhibit interesting relations with 'the Council' and representations of what it could do. One of the strengths of actor-network theory is the wide range of social (and non-social) processes which it can be used to study. Within the field of planning research, there are many areas, such as the development control system economic development (see McGuirk, 2000) and property investment analysis, which could usefully be explored with the tools of actor-network theory.

BENEFITS OF THE ACTOR-NETWORK APPROACH

Whilst some of the criticisms outlined above have cast doubt on some of the principles of actor-network theory, there are still a number of advantages of using this approach. Firstly, actor-network theory makes a brave attempt to circumvent the problem of representing structures and agency in analysis. Problems of explaining events in the world through conceptions of societal structure or individual agency have been seen as problems associated with a modernist rationality (Latour, 1993). Attempts to overcome this problem have been proposed by a number of writers, especially Anthony Giddens in his theory of structuration (Giddens, 1984). However, actor-network theory has proposed a more radical view in its task to treat both sides of dualisms equally and thus hopefully elide some of the problems inherent in this. Such a task requires a commitment to giving a symmetrical account which does not privilege the human over the nonhuman, the macro over the micro-account, the social over the technical and structure over agency (or agency over structure) (see Law, 1986). This symmetry is enabled through viewing such things as agency, human-ness and society as emergent

effects of sets of relations. In this way, analysts should not look for things such as 'society' or 'class' to explain what they might observe 'in the field'. Instead an actor-network account will describe sets of relations and importantly how certain sets of relations might get 'black boxed', so that 'society' is seen as a black box which summarises the multitude of relationships happening within it (Bowers and Iwi, 1993). Such an approach also shows how agency might be seen as an effect of network relations. In this way, actor-network theory has provided some tools with which I was able to trace how things such as 'the state', 'Central Government', 'Local Government' and 'the planning system' are built up through numerous resources (especially texts). I was able to follow how certain actors might emerge out of these sets of relations, and how these actors served to summarise these relations and could act on others. Such a task of describing relations allowed me to trace how certain sets of relations were constantly re-produced and thus stabilised, whilst others were temporary. Problems of attributing structural or agentive characteristics to things are elided through seeing any actor as a network, so that if agency is ascribed to something (as an 'actor') then it is possible to trace how such agency is an emergent effect of a set of relations or causal structure. Whilst such work to trace relations is not always easy, it does help avoid problems of generating explanation from abstract categories and thus is suited to a detailed, qualitative research process.

A second benefit to arise from the actor-network approach is its conceptualisation of power. As has been described before, power is not viewed as something held by entities, but as "a consequence rather than as a cause of action" (Latour, 1986 p.264). This productive view of power is close to Foucault's conceptualisation, and entails a focus on sets of relations and identification of how power might arise as an effect from these. This allowed me to trace how stabilities emerge and how power is ascribed to various actors in a network. Through describing how actions were enabled by sets of relations and how these actions reproduced such stabilities, it was possible to show how certain actors arose as 'powerful' in these networks. Such power was shown to be always dependent on others assenting to act in a certain way. For example, the power of 'Central Government' as an actor might be seen to be an effect arising from the action of others such as 'local government', 'planning officers' and so on who acted in a

particular manner. The study revealed how through a network of 'Central Government', 'Councils' were defined and enacted a certain set of relations. In particular, it showed how texts, such as UDPs, reflected these relations and also reinforced the 'Central Government' network. One finding in particular, which illustrated how power might be transmitted, concerned the spaces in which entities could act. It seemed that although the 'Central Government' network was generally stable, texts and other intermediaries did not aim to define wholly what entities could do. In this way, 'local authorities' although enrolled in this network, had a certain space or room for manoeuvre. This may allow such a network to remain stable, as attempting to define all entities and relations might engender dissent amongst such entities. This conception of power as an effect of various relations also allowed less stable network forms to be traced. Work to define and enrol other entities, such as 'the public' was shown to be less stable. Such groupings tended to be vaguely defined and therefore were not easily enrolled in a set of relations. This may in itself have been a particular strategy in allowing 'officers' to represent their work as enrolling a wider set of actors, without the many difficulties associated with defining and enrolling such a diverse group inhabiting many networks. Instead, action by 'officers' and other defined groupings tended to draw on groups defined in other networks (such as interest groups) and enrol them in a particular set of relations concerned with writing a development plan. This allowed some temporarily stable set of relations to be formed, in which 'officers' attempted to get these groups to act in certain ways. Such work seemed difficult to do, due to the complexity of network forms which actors had to negotiate. The exercise of power was thus one which was shown to be enacted through various relations, some of which were very complex in nature.

Thirdly, and central to the tenets of actor-network theory, is a focus on action and process. This allows the constant re-production of regularities and structures to be traced, as well as any change in network forms. A focus of this study has been on the resources used to carry out the work of re-producing network forms. A number of actor-network descriptions have not placed much emphasis on the detailed circulation of resources in building actor-networks, and have thus not fully shown how the actors and networks which they talk of are formed (for example, Callon's (1986) study of scallop

farming does not explicitly engage with the texts and technologies which acted as intermediaries in the network). Although it was difficult to carry out, particular texts were identified as important intermediaries in defining entities and their associations. Focusing on these texts allowed the process by which entities were defined and associated through the use of linguistic resources. Identifying regularities in the objects and associations defined in different texts allowed the work of intermediaries in re-producing networks to be followed. Texts such as UDPs acted to re-produce certain sets of relations (and thus act as intermediaries) as well as authoring new associations (and thus acting as actors). Thus the work by which texts held the world (or various versions of it) in place and altered it could be traced.

FINAL WORDS

This study has attempted to understand the complex relations which surround plan-making in Britain. Plan-making has been portrayed as an activity central to the practice of planning, and such an activity has been conceived in numerous ways. This research specifically focuses on the processes and actions which constitute plan-making in two case studies. However, many studies into plan-making have related it to a modernist activity which has been based on instrumental and bureaucratic rationalities. Others have focused on the ways in which such modernist conceptions have caused societal problems and have not been applicable to changes in social form. In particular, those writing about planning have drawn on the theories of Habermas and Foucault to understand the practice of planning. Both theories are different in their concerns, but do concentrate on how rationality might affect what can be done in any particular situation. However, there are a number of problems associated with these theories, particularly concerning conceptions of power, the problems of applying their theoretical concepts to 'practical' research and their inherent difficulty in reconciling structuralist or voluntarist perspectives.

The theoretical perspective of this research has drawn on actor-network theory for its radical conception of structure and agency and its constitutive view of power. Actor-network theory draws on ideas of the world being constantly made and re-made, rather

than as containing certain fixities (such as structure or individual agency). However, this theory does have few methodological precepts, making it difficult to relate it to any one form of research. This meant that in this study an analytical framework needed to be constructed in order to operationalise an actor-network account of plan-making processes. This framework focuses research on how entities are defined and associated (in networks) and of what processes occur and are linked to these networks. An important perspective of this research is the role of language and in particular, texts in defining, associating and performing actions. Texts are seen as a means by which certain stabilities might emerge through their work of defining, associating and enacting. A concentration on documents also shows how texts describe the sets of relations in which they are embedded.

This research used qualitative methods of observation, interviews and documentary analysis to understand the plan-making process in two case studies. These cases were shown to be different in many respects, but a number of important similarities were also uncovered. In particular, the case studies showed how such entities as 'the Council', 'the Plan', 'Officers' and 'Central Government' arose as actors implicated in various networks. The case studies also focused on how notions of 'the public' were articulated by different actors, and how these were reflected in practices defined as 'consultation'. A part of this research was to uncover the ways in which different groupings were drawn on or defined in these practices.

Analysis of the two case studies revealed significant similarities, which were seen to be a consequence of a 'Central Government' network. This network was composed of actors such as 'Councils' and numerous texts which defined what actors could do and how they related to one another. However, differences were also identified in both cases. These particularly sprung from the various ways in which entities such as 'Councils' were defined in the practices of plan making. These varying definitions were important in shaping what was to be done and how relations were organised. For example, in the Islington case, 'the Council' was more frequently defined as an active agent in shaping plan-making processes compared to Wrexham Council. Differences were also identified in the ways in which work was carried out to define 'new'

groupings and putative networks, with actors in Islington carrying out more of this type of activity. The two case studies also exhibited the different ways in which groups were organised, especially 'Council departments', 'officers' and 'elected members'. However, the main finding to arise from these case studies was the similarities in actors identified and practices enacted.

Actor-network theory provided a different way of conceiving the practices of governance. In particular, it allowed a focus on how structures or networks are constantly built up or re-produced, and how taken-for-granted activities and concepts are a major means of shaping our world. There are, however, problems associated with actor-network theory, especially of how we might practically conduct an actor-network description. The radical propositions of actor-network theory leave a necessarily 'blank' theoretical framework, which leads to some practical problems of knowing where to start analysis and to identify what relations we should be tracing. However, there are areas for future research which may lead to a better understanding of how an actor-network analysis might be improved. This study, through using two case studies (an unusual technique in actor-network research) allowed some level of comparison between what might 'conventionally' be seen as very different cases. Most importantly, a number of similarities were identified between the two cases and many of these could be imputed to a 'Central Government' network. Whilst this finding might seem obvious, as both cases followed practices within 'the British planning system', it is also useful to point out the variety of ways in which practices are made similar through the action of people, entities and texts which replicate such a structure. The importance of this study was therefore to show in detail the ways in which the practices of many actors re-produce a particular system of governance.

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