

**URBAN REGIME THEORY IN CRITICAL
PERSPECTIVE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN UK
LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

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Abstract

Urban regime theory has become one of the dominant theoretical perspectives for the study of urban politics during the 1990s. It has also gained currency within the UK as a tool for analysing local regeneration partnerships. Regime theory has, however, raised more questions than it has answered about whether it adequately explains or characterises different partnership forms. This study provides both an exposition and a critique of regime theory, generating a picture of what regime governance might look like in the political and institutional landscape of the UK and proceeding to identify factors which might explain how regeneration partnerships have come about in this country. It draws on four case studies of regeneration partnerships in Barnsley, Rotherham, Hull and North East Lincolnshire, concluding that regime governance has not taken root in local collaborative endeavours between local authorities and businesses. As a contribution to the wider 'governance' debate it further concludes that central government may be gaining rather than losing influence on local political processes, arguing that regeneration initiatives, particularly the SRB, are inhibiting the development of local governance capacity. In summary, it takes a sceptical view of claims that we are in or moving toward an era of local governance, defined as autonomous, self-organising networks.

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Glossary

ABP	Associated British Ports
BBEP	Barnsley Business Education Forum
BCCI	Barnsley Chamber of Commerce and Industry
BDA	Barnsley Development Agency
BEAG	Business Education Advisory Group
BEP	Business Education Partnership
BiTC	Business in the Community
BMBC	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
BMP	Barnsley Miller Partnership Ltd
BRF	Barnsley Regeneration Forum
BSES	British Steel Engineering Steels
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order
CRS	City Regeneration Strategy
CRSSG	City Regeneration Strategy Steering Group
DETR	Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DoE	Department of the Environment
DVP	Dearne Valley Partnership
EAZ	Education Action Zone
EBP	Education Business Partnership
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EU	European Union
FIG	Financial Institutions Group
GIPP	Grimsby and Immingham Ports Partnership
GOYH	Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber
HCC	Hull City Council
HCF	Humber Chemicals Focus
HTEC	Humberside Training and Enterprise Council
ICP	Inner City Partnership
IIB	Invest in Britain Bureau
IPPR	Institute of Public Policy Research
IRS	Integrated Regeneration Strategy
KHCC	Kingston upon Hull City Council
LEA	Local Education Authority
MDSD	Most Different Systems Design
MSSD	Most Similar Systems Design
NEL	North East Lincolnshire
NELC	North East Lincolnshire Council
NELRP	North East Lincolnshire Regeneration Partnership
RBEL	Rotherham Business Education Links
RCCTE	Rotherham Chamber of Commerce Training and Enterprise
RDA	Regional Development Agency

REP	Rotherham Economic Partnership
RHPL	Rotherham Housing Partnership Ltd
RiDO	Rotherham Industrial Development Office
RMBC	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
RTEC	Rotherham Training and Enterprise Council
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SYF	South Yorkshire Forum
TEC	Barnsley and Doncaster Training and Enterprise Council
UDP	Unitary Development Plan
YHDA	Yorkshire and Humberside Development Association

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Introduction

Local governance has become the dominant paradigm through which local political processes are studied in the 1990s. It is a broad concept, encompassing all local governing activities which require collaboration by a local authority with other organisations.¹ Collaboration takes many different forms, from the contract relationship associated with compulsory competitive tendering and service delivery, to the ‘stakeholder’ partnership associated with ‘supply-side’ activities and urban regeneration. This latter element of local governance has generated much intellectual curiosity in British political science, engendering debates about the nature of partnerships themselves and about the factors which have brought them about. Urban regeneration partnerships are not exclusively about the relationship between local authority and business, but this relationship has generated great interest in scholarly discussions (Pierre, 1998a). Four main reasons can be identified for this interest. First, the collaborative agenda established by the Conservatives in the early 1990s was principally about the pooling of local government and business resources in the regeneration effort (Curry, 3.4.98, personal interview).² Second, early partnership agendas were concerned primarily with economic development and the later emphasis in government initiatives on integrated economic and social approaches to regeneration, involving a wider cross-section of stakeholders, has developed only slowly. A third reason why the local authority-business relationship has proved of interest to scholars is the perception by some that local authorities have become ‘entrepreneurial’ in character, favouring the growth agenda above other political objectives.³ Finally, interest in the local authority-business interface has been given added momentum by the increasing use of urban regime theory as an explanatory tool. Regime

¹ The definition of governance is discussed in more depth in chapter 3.

² David Curry MP was Minister for Local Government, Housing and Urban Regeneration from July 1994 to May 1997.

³ See for example Seyd (1990), Lawless (1990, 1994) and Malpass (1994).

theory is concerned with collaborative dynamics and processes, particularly those between local government and business (Elkin, 1987a; Stone, 1989).

These dynamics and processes of local governance have not proved easy to pin down and the use of regime theory as a tool through which to examine them has posed more questions than it has answered about what kind of governance is represented by public-private partnerships. Regime theory has been used in a variety of ways, often far removed from the intentions of its original authors, Elkin (1987a) and Stone (1989). As well as stimulating discussion about what kind of partnerships have emerged in the arena of regeneration policy, regime theory has also generated debate about the factors driving partnership development and about how far governance by partnership and governance by regime are different processes, a key issue explored in this study.⁴ Harding (1998: 71) argues that there is a 'blind spot' in the public-partnerships literature about how and why partnerships form. Hence, argues Hastings (1996), there remains work to be done in 'unravelling' partnership processes both at the analytical and the empirical levels. This study takes up her twin-pronged challenge, offering a contribution to the 'governance' debate.

The research agenda tackled in this study focuses on a single facet of local governance, the relationship between the local authority and the business sector in regeneration initiatives, analysing those which involve no formal-legal contract or other command relationship between the parties. In other words, it focuses on the characteristics of non-command, non-statutory relationships and the dynamics which have brought them about. This approach eliminated from the inquiry many of the interfaces between the local authority and the business sector and all of the interfaces between the local authority and other local groups.⁵ It can be justified in two ways. First, the definition of 'governance' as autonomous, self-governing networks offered by Rhodes (1996) itself eliminates contract or command relationships from consideration. Second, as

⁴ See for example Stoker and Mossberger (1994), Lawless (1994), Stoker (1995), Ward (1996, 1997a,b) and, Harding (1994, 1996a,b).

⁵ Although the role of Training and Enterprise Councils is examined by virtue of the role of business leaders in these bodies.

elaborated above, the dynamic between local government and business leaders is of significant interest to scholars of local governance and urban regeneration. This method of limiting the research agenda has left open a wide range of questions which this study examines.

How, then, was the research carried out? A detailed methodology is set out in chapter 1, so the summary here is brief. The first task was to take a step back and look at the way in which partnerships have been theorised in British political science using the framework offered by urban regime theory. The diverse treatments and understandings of regime theory by scholars within and outside the UK begs the question of what regime theory is and what it is not. For this reason, an exposition of regime theory is developed in chapter 2. This exposition is not unique (see for example Stoker, 1995), but it is the most expansive analysis yet undertaken of the conceptual origins and theoretical claims deriving from regime theory. Furthermore it is unique in treating the combined works of Elkin and Stone as an authoritative statement of regime theory. Thirdly, it settles a number of disputes about the scope and applicability of regime theory. It thus provides a solid conceptual foundation for the remainder of the study.

A discussion is then undertaken in chapter 3 of the diverse and sometimes contradictory ways in which regime theory has been used in British political science. This exercise facilitates an examination of partnerships from two perspectives. One perspective is to question what kind of partnerships are compatible with the notion of regime governance, an original conceptual development within the chapter which is drawn from regime theory. The other perspective is to question which factors might be capable of combining to produce this type of governance in the UK. At the same time, questions are asked from a sceptical perspective as to how far urban partnerships are likely to resemble Elkin's and Stone's urban regimes and it is suggested that urban partnerships cannot be explained by drawing on the concepts central to regime theory as outlined in chapter 2. The existence of regimes is therefore problematized as Ward recommends, while abstract conditions for partnership and regime governance in the UK are outlined (Ward, 1997b: 1494).

The main hypothesis drawn from this discussion, therefore, is that regime theory is unlikely to explain or to characterise the partnership workings of local governance in the UK. The point of this exercise is not to make the obvious point that the institutional landscape in the UK differs from that in the US where regime theory originated, but to provide a contrast and a clarification of the similarities and differences between local governance in the UK and regime governance in the USA. The lesson is drawn that insights can be gained from challenging as well as from confirming the propositions of a theoretical perspective. It is in providing a set of parameters which underpin the concept of regime governance and against which partnerships can be evaluated that regime theory makes an important contribution.

The empirical phase of the study is an evaluation of local partnership processes in Barnsley, Rotherham, Hull and North East Lincolnshire and of the extra-local processes which produced them. The case studies make contributions in three dimensions: the relationship between local and extra-local factors; comparison between policy oriented and implementation oriented partnership activities; and in analysis of partnership activities in different policy arenas, specifically a comparison between different economic development activities and education. They answer questions about what partnerships are, about the nature of the relationship between local authority and business within them, and about how partnership objectives are set and carried out. They also provide an original perspective on the process and the anatomy of partnership, showing that partnerships were not always established in response to the central government agenda. The case studies explain the trajectory of partnership development, highlighting the heterogeneity of partnership approaches within and between cases. The conclusion drawn from the case studies is that the government exercises an overbearing and inhibiting influence on local partnership agendas and practices. *Challenge partnerships*, in particular, are symbolic in character, prevented by the weight of bureaucratic requirements from producing genuine local synergy.⁶ Contributions to partnership working by a handful of local businessmen are limited and the business sector has not really engaged, so far, with the partnership agenda. Finally, partnership working is

⁶ Those partnerships responsible for bidding and for management of Single Regeneration Budget funds, which are procured by competition between local partnerships.

heterogeneous in character. Those partnerships which are not involved in the challenge process tend to be stronger, productive of more added value and generative of a higher level of business interest. There is some evidence of regime governance in these activities, but at present it exists only in isolated initiatives.

These studies provide a powerful empirical case that regime governance is, for its advocates, a pipe dream. Partnership is not driven by the interdependence of local authority and business sector resources. Rather, it is driven ideologically and through the allocation of 'selective incentives' and penalties by central government. In looking at the anatomy of collaboration through the lens of urban regime theory, it is concluded that regime governance has not developed and, indeed, that in important arenas it is inhibited by central government initiatives. Rather, it is argued, a process of partnership governance is developing. Partnership governance is not necessarily a half-way house between 'government' and 'regime governance' because in some respects they counteract processes which would be necessary for governance to develop. In suggesting that regime theory does not capture the substance of partnership activities, the study is also a rallying call to scholars who might wish to join under the label 'governance sceptics'. It therefore contributes to a range of empirical and theoretical debates. It is novel in its characterisation of regime theory and it adds a significant body of new empirical material, while suggesting potential avenues of inquiry for future studies. The perspective that central government is very powerful in relation to local government is, of course, old hat and in confirming this fact the study says little which is new. But in claiming that partnership governance represent an enhancement of central state influence over local political processes and a means by which the state gains added influence with non-state actors, the conclusions presented here offer a different perspective on the governance debate and a counterblast to the notion that central government is losing its capacities or its ability to influence local politics.

The study is primarily a contribution to scholarly debate. It may be of interest to a number of academic sub-disciplines including urban theory, comparative politics and public administration. It is also being fed into the IPPR Commission on Public-Private Partnerships as a contribution to

practitioner discussions about the efficacy of collaborative endeavour and its future direction. The study is organised into ten chapters.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the study and a methodological exposition.

Chapter 2 sets out the core concepts and key claims of regime theory, drawing on a critical analysis of the works of Stephen Elkin and Clarence Stone.

Chapter 3 comprises a critical review of applications of regime theory in British political science, identifying the core characteristics of regime governance as they might be expressed in local partnerships and the factors which might be capable of producing regime governance in the UK setting.

Chapter 4 commences the empirical phase of the study, providing a contextual outline of the extra-local factors and initiatives which influenced the local partnerships identified in the case studies.

Chapters 5 to 8 report the findings from research undertaken in Barnsley, Rotherham, Hull and North East Lincolnshire.

Chapter 9 provides a comparative analysis of the case study findings, drawing out key themes: the influence of central government, the symbolism of challenge partnerships, the poverty of business activism and the potential for greater governance capacity to develop in partnerships which are removed from the bureaucratic influence of challenge fund schemes.

Chapter 10 concludes the study, showing the limits of regime theory as a cross-national explanation for local governance and arguing that central government has maintained and augmented its capacity to influence local politics through key local regeneration partnerships.

Chapter 1. Methodology

Introduction

This study is essentially a deductive analysis of processes involved in the establishment and maintenance of partnerships between local authorities and local business sectors. The project is not concerned with methodological innovation and the research design follows from the literature with which it engages and from the questions it seeks to address. In this sense, it is not self-consciously methodological and has much in common, says Ragin, with most case oriented research (1987: 34). The approach taken in this study has been described and re-described in the literature.¹ It corresponds with what Yin recommends as the 'linear analytic' model, in which a problem is identified, a literature review undertaken, methods stipulated, the case study findings presented and finally conclusions drawn from case study findings (Yin, 1994: 138). It also follows Bailey's study of partnership agencies in British Government in building up a narrative on the origins, development and activities of each case based on interviews with key actors and on use of other primary and secondary sources (Bailey *et al*, 1995: 3).² The study begins in chapters 2 and 3 with a critical review of the concepts associated with urban regime theory in its British and American guises, developing from this review a set of variables both to categorise and explain local authority-business sector partnerships. The four case studies set out in chapters 5 to 8, Barnsley, Rotherham, Hull and North East Lincolnshire, are structured with a view to evaluating the issues discussed in the literature reviews. They follow a broadly similar format, where possible, to facilitate the comparisons undertaken in the analysis of the findings. In chapter 9, the empirical material is analysed and the similarities and differences within and between the case studies are evaluated. Chapter 10 returns to the conceptual issues raised at the beginning of the

¹ See Holt and Turner (1970), Ragin (1987), May (1997), and Yin (1994).

² Yin suggests that this format is the most advantageous for a student facing a thesis committee!!

study, discussing the nature of partnership phenomena, the efficacy of urban regime theory in explaining them and, inductively, the kind of theoretical explanation best suited to accounting for them.

This chapter sets out the methodological rationale for the research project. It proceeds sequentially, examining the issues encountered at each stage of the study. Hence, it begins with an explanation of the structure of the thesis, proceeding to examine the methodological issues associated with carrying out the four case studies of Barnsley, Rotherham, Hull and North East Lincolnshire and the ensuing analysis. The chapter is organised into four sections. First, an overview is given of the rationale for the study. A discussion of the case study method follows, incorporating a discussion of issues in comparative research. The third section examines issues in data collection. The fourth section explains how the case study findings were assembled and reported, finally addressing methods and epistemological assumptions involved in drawing causal inferences and in explanation building.

The Nature of the Study - An Overview

As noted above, this study evaluates the efficacy of urban regime theory as an explanation for local government-business sector partnerships. As it is theory driven, the research is necessarily deductive in character (May, 1997: 31). However, it is also inductive in that it offers a constructed characterisation of local partnership phenomena and a constructed theoretical analysis based on the research findings, which contrast with the propositions in regime theory and with some of the hypotheses arising from the critical review of it in chapter 3. This approach is highlighted by Ragin (1987: 45-6) with exemplar studies which are deductive by virtue of their initial theoretical assumptions, and inductive in terms of the final re-conceptualization of initial theoretical ideas.

The deductive approach to this study derives from the researcher's primary interest in theoretical issues. It is recognised, however, that an inductive approach to the project could also have provided an assessment of the relationship between the phenomenon of local governance and the

explanation provided by urban regime theory, unencumbered by reflexive assumptions deriving from the theory in question. For example, it would have been possible to undertake a series of case studies guided by a loose conceptualization of public-private partnerships (see, for example, Corry *et al*, 1997). Such a study could have revealed much about the nature of local government-business sector relationships and the findings could have either been presented as a descriptive case (Lijphart, 1971) or conceptualized in accordance with the principles of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Either way, the case study built inductively could, through a theoretically oriented secondary analysis (Lijphart, 1971: 691), have been compared with the claims generated in urban regime theory. The intrinsic difficulty is that this approach could engender an explanation focussing on phenomena which are irrelevant to the claims of regime theory. As chapter 3 shows, a broad definition of public-private partnerships could incorporate an analysis of purchaser (local authority)/provider (business) relationships which necessarily involve a command structure in the form of contracts between the parties. Evaluation of these phenomena, interesting though they may be, would not in itself reveal anything about the applicability of regime theory which rests on the existence of non-command relationships and on the supposed necessity of inter-agency collaboration for the production of local governance (Elkin, 1987a; Stone, 1989).³ As Mackenzie argues of good case studies, they control the material they present in relation to criteria of relevance. A good case study is, he says, orderly and ruthlessly selective. An inductive case study, subsequently used in an evaluation of regime theory, would have been unlikely to conform to these strictures (Mackenzie, 1975: 143).

Furthermore, this study is, in part, the follow up to a pilot study (Davies, 1996) which itself sought to evaluate regime theory. Given the level of ‘conceptual pollution’ within the mind of the researcher, it would have been extremely difficult to construct a research design which was not influenced by regime theory. As Yin argues, when designing case studies, the processes involved

³ The term ‘governance’ is used in this study to denote an output of partnership activity between different agencies, public and private, active in the locality. ‘Governance’ is achieved when these agencies collaborate to produce an output which, otherwise, could not have been achieved. These outputs may, in Stone’s view, be material, financial, administrative or intellectual (Stone, 1993: 11).

should 'force' a researcher to develop theory of some kind in order to inform the choice of cases s/he makes (1994: 27). He goes so far as to reject outright the grounded approach to research, arguing that theory is crucial to the design of a case, whether the purpose is to develop or to test theory. Both Mackenzie (1975: 142) and Lijphart (1971: 691) reinforce this position in arguing that any narrative of events is necessarily deductive in character. However rigorous a researcher may be in attempting to filter out personal views, it is likely that a case will be guided by some 'vague theoretical notions and anecdotal knowledge of other cases' (Lijphart, 1971: 691). As Hastings puts it in her analysis of power relationships in partnerships, the 'inference of a pre-supposition' is necessary for the argument to make sense (1999: 97). As well as following logically and naturally from the research concerns, a deductive approach was therefore crucial to transparency in this study.

The Case Study Method

The empirical component of the study consists of four case studies defined in relation to the local authority areas of Barnsley, Rotherham, Hull and North East Lincolnshire.⁴ The issue of 'what is a case' is strongly contested and the term 'case' has many, some ambiguous, meanings (Stake, 1994, Ragin and Becker, 1992). The studies undertaken in this project are viewed, principally, as 'real' empirical units, rather than as theoretical or discursive constructs (Ragin, 1992a: 9-10), or as objects, which may be subjected to one or more methods of empirical study (Stake, 1994: 236). Nevertheless, much of the evidence presented in the cases is based on the perception of the participants and it is discursive in character. Although this study involves the analysis of narratives, it is not a narrative, or anti-foundational analysis (Rhodes, 1999b). It proved possible, in most instances, to make sense of differing, or contradictory views. For example, in Rotherham, the Chief Executive stated that the Council had always been involved in partnerships, whereas the Leader stated that partnerships had only recently developed. It was possible, through careful

⁴ Given that cases occur within a seamless fabric of social interaction, it is hard to say where they begin and where they end (Ragin, 1992b: 220). This is true not only with the designation of case boundaries, but also in terms of the phenomenon under investigation, in this study partnership, which may in principle exist within a matrix of types some of which are more visible than others. The matrix would incorporate four axes based on a continuum: visible/intentional, visible/unconscious, invisible/intentional, invisible/unconscious.

examination of each interview, to establish that this contradiction arose through different understandings of the term 'partnership'. Both parties agreed that the Council had been involved in longstanding co-operative arrangements with the business sector, but unlike the Chief Executive, the Leader applied the term partnership only to institutionalised forms of co-operation. This issue, however, suggested that shared vocabularies may develop only over time and that partnerships operate within very different organisational cultures (Skelcher *et al*, 1996: 39).

The case study is viewed by Ragin (1992b) and by Stake (1994) as providing a link between theoretical and empirical concerns; both a process and a product of learning. Stake distinguishes between case studies which are designed to provide insight into theoretical problems, which he defines as 'instrumental' cases and those in which the subject matter of the case is itself the focus of inquiry, which he defines as 'intrinsic' cases (Yin, 1994: 237). Case studies may, therefore, be used in either deductive or inductive research, but they are viewed by Yin as particularly suited to the task of answering 'how' and 'why' questions of the kind addressed in this 'instrumental' study (Yin, 1994: 1)

Alternative Research Strategies?

The case study, while not the only possible method of research, was an obvious choice. It corresponds with the practice in much of the preceding literature using and evaluating regime theory and partnerships more broadly.⁵ As this is not a self-consciously methodological study, it adds to a body of case study material, rather than seeking to question the integrity of the methods used in previous case study research and it facilitates a comparative perspective (Lijphart, 1975: 159). The case study approach can be defended on the grounds that it is particularly suited to the kind of questions dealt with in this study; questions of 'how' and 'why', requiring detailed detective work to identify processes of partnership activity in the case study areas. It seeks to evaluate explanatory links in social situations which are too complex for survey or for experimental techniques (Yin, 1994: 15). Ragin, while rejecting what he sees as a tendency in

⁵ See Lawless (1994), John and Cole (1998), Orr and Stoker (1994), Bailey *et al* (1995).

social research to counterpose small-N, case-oriented strategies with large-N variable-oriented strategies is nonetheless a strong defender of the case study in comparative research (Ragin, 1991: 7).⁶ Elsewhere, he argues that the comparative method *is* a case based method, inherently unsuited to statistically based variable analysis (Ragin, 1981: 117).⁷ While a variable analysis could have enabled a greater degree of generalization about particular causal factors, the case study method enabled a more nuanced approach to be taken to the subject matter, addressing the problem of multiple-causation.⁸ While the orientation of this study was deductive, it was flexible in seeking to identify variables and relationships between them which could not necessarily be anticipated in the literature reviews and which would not have been revealed in a variable analysis. As Stone argues of the study of urban development, given that causation is manifold and cumulative, inquiry that attempts to isolate the universal importance of specific structures or variables is unlikely to be fruitful (1987c: 294).

The Case Study and Comparative Research

Where, then, does this study, as a multiple case study, stand in relation to the ‘comparative method’ and what is the specific rationale for this particular comparison between Barnsley, Rotherham, Hull and North East Lincolnshire? It is not proposed to discuss issues and debates concerning ‘the comparative method’. Comparison in the case studies is more a heuristic device, stimulating hypotheses in relation to theoretical concerns, than it is a means of evaluating precise similarities and differences, or ‘proofs’ (Lijphart, 1975: 159/60). However, there are issues concerning the nature of comparison which are worthy of brief discussion. This study is comparative in three dimensions. It is inherently comparative in the contrast it provides between the empirical data presented here and the accounts of regime governance in the USA discussed

⁶ Basically, this distinction points toward the fact that in studying cases, large numbers of variables mean that only limited numbers of Ns (cases) can be analysed. If, on the other hand, the focus is on a variable, or a few variables, say for example the effect of the Single Regeneration Budget in leveraging matching project capital from business sector sources, N (subjects rather than cases) can be much greater.

⁷ This point of view is contentious. See for example Sartori (1994: 23).

⁸ Where more than one variable accounts for a dependent phenomenon.

in chapter 2. It is intentionally comparative both in the analysis of the four case studies and in its attempt to view partnership as a historical process. It is in these second and third dimensions that a discussion of issues encountered in designing and carrying out the research is relevant.

The Nature of Intra-National Comparison

Marsh and Mackie (1995: 173) note that the boundary of the comparative method is problematic, but that its conventional usage is in relation to cross-national research, rather than intra-national research of the kind proposed here. The literature tends to minimise the distinction between intra-national comparisons and cross-national comparisons (Daland, 1969, Holt and Turner, 1970, Lijphart, 1975, Marsh and Mackie, 1995, Yin, 1994), the latter described by Marsh simply as a necessary extension of the former (Marsh, 1970: 165). Yin makes no methodological distinction between single and multiple case studies, intra-national or cross-national, arguing that multiple cases are simply variants of single case designs (1994: 14). Instead, he treats multiple studies as one study with several facets within the same methodological framework (1994: 45). Holt and Turner treat the issue with greater sensitivity (1970: 6):

In principle, there is no difference between comparative cross-cultural research and research conducted within a single society. The differences lie, rather, in the magnitude of certain types of problems which have to be faced.

For example, dialects within a country may pose problems for research, but this problem would not be as difficult as that of dealing with different languages. However, Daland (1969: 17) points out that aspects of politics can vary more within nations than between them. He had in mind examples like the USA, whose government is organised on a federal basis and he claimed that techniques developed for comparison within the USA had proved useful in cross-national studies (1969: 33). In determining which cases to compare and how to compare them, the issues highlighted by cross-national comparativists are heeded in this intra-national study.

Choosing the Cases - Most Similar Systems Design or Most Different Systems Design?

There is a continuum in comparative research between 'The Most Similar Systems Design' (MSSD) and the 'Most Different Systems Design' (MDSD) (Faure, 1994: 310). The MSSD is well suited to intra-national comparisons. The cases chosen in this study are all located within a

single region of England, Yorkshire and Humberside. In the first instance, every local authority Chief Executive and Leader in Yorkshire and Humberside was contacted to determine access levels and the potential range of cases to be studied.⁹ Based on the responses received, it was decided to proceed on the basis of similarity, rather than difference, with the effect of ‘neutralizing’ certain differences, such as that of local party political composition, to permit a better analysis of other differences, such as the impact of central government on the development of partnership processes (Mackie and Marsh, 1995: 178). Furthermore, the emphasis of the study, though not exclusively, was on the phenomenon of partnership, rather than non-partnership. It made sense, therefore, to opt for those cases where initial inquiries showed visible partnership activity, in other words those cases from which most could be learned about the phenomenon under consideration (Stake, 1994: 243). The objective was not, however, to maximise similarity in view of the potential problem of ‘over-determination’, where the cases are so alike that they automatically eliminate the possibility of other explanations, a problem more likely to afflict intra-national comparisons than cross-national studies (Mackie and Marsh, 1995: 178/9).¹⁰ Rather, Ragin’s caution was heeded that objects must be similar enough and different enough to permit treating them as comparable instances of the same general phenomenon (Ragin, 1992a: 1). In this sense, the case studies represent something of a ‘middle way’, erring on the side of similarity. The level of detail at which institutions and partnership practices are explored in these cases in itself limits the problem of over-determination. Differing meanings attributed to the word ‘partnership’, as noted above, highlight Foddy’s (1993: 39) point that the meanings of ordinary words are not necessarily shared even by those socialised within a single cultural framework.

The eventual choice of Barnsley, Rotherham, Hull and North East Lincolnshire made comparison possible at various levels, for example: between Rotherham and Barnsley as coal and steel areas

⁹ A study of cases within Yorkshire and Humberside was feasible, given the need for extensive travel to and from locations up to an hour and a half by car from York.

¹⁰ It would, for example, have been possible to minimize difference further by limiting the study to Doncaster, Rotherham and Barnsley in South Yorkshire, eliminating both economic and geographical differences which subsequently proved to be important variables in the case studies.

on one hand and Hull and North East Lincolnshire as port areas; between the two coal and steel areas and between the two port areas ; and between Hull, a city and Barnsley, Rotherham and North East Lincolnshire as relatively small towns. Studies of smaller, lower-profile towns and cities are few. It is Elkin's claim that regime theory is applicable to smaller cities and towns of over 50,000, as well as to major cities (1987a: 8). This claim coincides with Daland's view that urban areas are defined by functions associated with populations of over 50,000 people (Daland, 1969: 21).¹¹ The population centres in the four cases ranged from around 325,000 (Hull) to 90,000 (Grimsby), permitting an evaluation of the extent to which size affects the nature and quality of partnership activities and the extent to which size might affect tendencies to local governance by regime.¹²

Choosing the Cases - Why a Multiple Study?

There were two elements in the decision to undertake four case studies: why more than one and why not more than four? In relation to the former element, Yin argues that multiple cases enhance the 'external validity' of a study, enabling some generalizations about typicality (1994: 36).¹³ There is a limited body of case study material addressing problems posed by the application of regime theory to the study of local governance in the UK. As chapter 3 illustrates, existing empirical studies differ both in the conceptual frameworks they use and in the phenomena they evaluate. An evaluation of regime theory based on secondary comparisons with these cases would be an imprecise exercise. The production of one more case, based on a different understanding of regime theory and on different hypotheses would, furthermore, compound the problem of precision inherent in the diversity of the existing literature. Yin cautions against comparisons of this nature for exactly these reasons (Yin, 1994: 36). This study is the first using urban regime

¹¹ John and Cole, however, argue that regimes are likely to form and stay in place in large metropolitan contexts (1998: 388).

¹² This choice of cases limits potential generalizability to smaller and middle size urban settlements, in the same way as comparative urban studies of London, Tokyo and New York limit potential generalizability to 'global' cities (Fainstein and Harloe, 1992).

¹³ If two or more cases support the same theory, 'replication' may be claimed (Yin, 1994: 31).

theory in British political science to generate multiple cases based on comparable assumptions and on a comparable methodology.

Conversely, undertaking more than four cases would limit the subtlety and the reliability of inferences made in each case. It is characteristic of the case study method that in multiple studies, only small case numbers can be undertaken (Yin, 1994; Lijphart, 1975; Ragin, 1987) if any depth of analysis is to be achieved. King *et al* (1994: 87) argue that to make sense of multiple causation, one should use a methodology with many explanatory variables and few ‘observations’, that is, a small number of cases subject to the effects of a large number of variables. Put simply, studies of multiple causation have to sacrifice breadth for depth. It was judged that another case in a study of this scale would have either significantly reduced the credibility of the findings or have resulted in an overly large and unwieldy study, given the stipulated limits on word-length. The material in these four cases is sufficiently detailed to represent a credible account of the dynamics and relationships within each area. Without this detail, much of the nuance in the analysis would have been lost. The analysis of the case studies in chapters 9 and 10 highlights those issues in relation to which evidence is weak or conflicting and where claims need to be qualified.¹⁴

Comparison and Control Variables in the four Cases

The choice of Barnsley, Rotherham, Hull and North East Lincolnshire as relatively similar case studies provided for a number of ‘controls’, some of which are evident in the contextual sections of each case. A control variable is a background factor to multiple cases, considered identical in each, which cannot therefore produce different phenomena (Holt and Turner, 1970: 12). In this study, control variables common to all cases, which are not treated as relevant in the explanation

¹⁴ The case studies are necessarily partial in character, sacrificing depth for breadth in relation to some issues and breadth for depth in relation to others. Moreover, much relevant evidence is liable to concealment. The ‘Donnygate’ scandal in Doncaster, referred to in the case of Rotherham, chapter 6, illustrates the problem in relation to a potential case. Processes which may be described, loosely, as ‘partnership’ or as ‘networking’ have, for example, allegedly resulted in corrupt land deals and planning fraud by the Chairman of the Council’s Planning Committee (The Observer, 8.8.99). Activities of this kind, clearly relevant to research into partnerships and networking, however atypical they may be, would not have been revealed in course of normal academic study, certainly not by the parties involved.

of difference include, for example, the statutory and financial frameworks of local government in England, the party political composition of each local authority, all strongly Labour until May 1999, the respective influence of local authority members and officers and the means by which the diffusion of ideas and practices takes place between local authority areas.¹⁵

Regeneration was the major theme across the four case studies. It was used as a guide to this study to provide limits to the subject of inquiry and to facilitate, at a level of generality, comparisons with existing case study material oriented on partnership and economic development.¹⁶ However, the term regeneration is now associated with ‘joined up’ thinking and with integrated approaches to economic decline and social exclusion. It is held by Europe, central government, think-tanks, local government associations and local authorities alike to be a very broad concept. Following the DETR discussion document ‘Regeneration Programmes: The Way Forward’ (DETR, 1997) and the LGA, regeneration is here held to mean ‘*promotion of the social, economic and environmental well-being of an area*’ (LGA, 2 April 1998). As the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber (hereafter GOYH) suggested in its response to ‘Regeneration Programmes: The Way Forward’ (GOYH, January 1998), many local authorities view regeneration ‘as an integral part of wider urban/rural policy and governance’. This was certainly true of the cases in this study. The focus on partnership in regeneration activities did not, therefore, limit this study to the traditional concern with economic development. Instead, a range of partnership activities were examined, principally in the spheres of school education and economic development, but also, in the spheres of image building, promotions and place marketing. Despite the benefits of similarity between the case study areas, comparison with approaches to partnership in areas which differ in political, economic and social complexion would also need to be undertaken, were the findings in this study to be further generalized. For example,

¹⁵ Although, as the differing views expressed in the case studies show, Labour cannot be viewed as unidimensional.

¹⁶ See Lawless (1990, 1994), Di Gaetano and Klemanski, (1993) Judd and Parkinson, (1990), Malpass (1994) Oatley (1998) Bailey *et al* (1995)

in what ways is an orientation towards alleviating economic and social deprivation relevant in determining local authority approaches to partnership with the private sector?

The method for including and excluding certain variables from an analysis is necessarily imprecise (Lijphart, 1975: 164). Criteria of relevance in case studies will almost certainly be too complex for a full explanation of the facts (Mackenzie, 1975: 143). Control variables in social research are likely to have some, even minimal, influence. To the extent that this is true, knowledge is approximate, or imperfect (Stake, 1994: 240). A good illustration of the problem in relation to this case is the treatment of the Local Government Association as a control variable. Central government is shown within the cases to be a key influence in relation to certain partnership practices, suggesting that local authorities might be viewed as subordinate in a command relationship. The study doesn't allow for the possibility that local government as a totality, through its representative body, the LGA, may exert substantial influence over central government, as recent initiatives such as *New Commitment to Regeneration* (LGA, 2 April 1998) suggest is a reasonable hypothesis (see also John, 1997: 269).¹⁷ This problem of 'endogeneity' is discussed by King *et al*, who question how far we can be certain that an independent variable is not in some sense caused by the dependent variable (1994: 94).¹⁸ In other words, insofar as central government policy is viewed as a dominant influence, this is only true to the extent that it is not articulating the wishes of local authorities, expressed via the LGA through a forum such as the Central-Local Partnership, established in July 1997 to consider major local government issues (see for example, LGA, undated).¹⁹ This problem is inevitable in a study whose intention

¹⁷ New Commitment to Regeneration is a programme, being piloted in 22 local authority areas, which experiments with the potential for 'contracts' between central government and local partnerships. The objective of the 'contracts' is to ensure that central government programmes are better co-ordinated and more flexible in their delivery at the local scale. Each partner, central and local, commits resources over a period of years. The initiative was inspired by the French programme, 'Contrat de Ville' (LGA, 2.4.98).

¹⁸ A similar point is made by Stone who argues that it is not always possible to distinguish independent variables from dependent variables because regime governance influences policy development, just as policy development influences regime governance (1989: 164).

¹⁹ Although, for this ideal-typical scenario to be true, the views expressed within the four cases would have to be exceptional - a factor which itself would require explanation.

is to examine the way in which particular variables operate on and within the locality. It merely points to the limitations of the study and to the need for further studies which examine other variables. It does not necessarily undermine claims about the relationship between endogenous and exogenous variables, but rather suggests that the anatomy of the exogenous variables would be of interest in building a more generalized explanation of different influences on the processes examined here.

Comparison and Historical Factors

Hay (1997: 7) highlights an important issue in the analysis of processes:

[t]he pervasive tendency has been to extrapolate from evidence gathered and gleaned at a particular instant; a methodologically prescribed propensity to frame and fix what is, essentially, a moving target - a contingently unfolding reality.

Hence, as Fainstein and Harloe argue (1992: 17), attempts to draw inferences regarding dynamic processes can only justly be made through longitudinal study. These cases aim to provide a comparative historical context for the development of partnership processes in each of the cases, based on documentary evidence and on personal recollection.²⁰ While recollection of the past and documentary records reveal many things about the trajectory of partnership in the case study authorities, these are patchy in depth and in quality. Research into the history of partnership working was limited by the recall of participants, the relevant parties were sometimes retired or even dead, and by the availability of documentation, especially archive material (Foddy, 1993; May, 1997), both of which proved to be of variable quality. Though there were in each case individuals who were familiar with events going back up to thirty years, the case studies are weakest in the temporal dimension. The subject here would also favour future longitudinal analysis. As David Curry, former Minister for Local Government, Housing and Urban Regeneration suggested of the Single Regeneration Budget, its effectiveness in terms of the government's objective to establish rooted and self-sustaining local partnerships cannot be fully evaluated when many of the first round projects are no more than half-way through. He believed

²⁰ As chapter 4 explains in relation to education, research in each case was undertaken at different times. In a fast moving policy arena, this approach can limit comparability.

that full evaluation would only be possible after a period of 10 years (Curry, 3.4.98, personal interview).

The Data Sources

According to Yin, the Case Study Method necessitates the use of multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 1994: 13). The 'triangulation' of resources is recognised as an important way of strengthening and corroborating research conclusions (Silverman, 1993: 145, Yin, 1994: 91). This study makes use of a variety of sources, principally documentation and interview material. Within the category of documentation are included various archive materials. A third source of information was the Internet, from which important material, particularly from on-line newspaper archives, was gleaned.²¹ Documentary sources were evaluated in terms of their authenticity, their representativeness and their credibility (May, 1997: 169/70).

A total of 85 elite interviews, listed in Appendix 1, were undertaken in the course of the study with Government ministers and former government ministers, regional officials, local government members and officers, TEC directors and officers and representatives from the business sector, both individually and representatively through chambers of commerce.²² Access, once granted, was by and large excellent, a process made easier by the researcher's background in local government.²³ The emphasis on elite interviews was dictated by the focus of research on identifying and evaluating the key relationships between local authorities and the business sector in partnership settings.

²¹ Some internet references were reproductions of hard copy documents. Others are considered acceptable from the point of view of data collection but not for the citation of scholarly arguments. Without overstating the degree of editorial or scholarly control over many publications, internet articles often do not go through even the minimum of preparation common among publishers (Wilson, 1997). Unlike hard copy, internet sources are not necessarily permanent. Where possible, facts discovered on the internet were corroborated by interview or documentary material.

²² Ward notes that regime theorists proceed by interviewing local elites to establish how public and private interests are mediated locally (1997b: 1494).

²³ Jonathan Davies, Policy Advisor, London Borough of Merton, 1990-1996.

A strategy was adopted of using semi-structured interviews. The research process required constant delving beneath the initial answer for clarification and elaboration. The semi-structured interview, a sample of which is included in Appendix 2, provided the necessary flexibility to meet this need, while providing sufficient structure for comparability between interviews (May, 1997: 111). The strengths of interview research identified by Yin are respondent insights, the causal claims that respondents themselves make or imply, and the corroboration they can provide for other sources of information (Yin, 1994: 80-84). There are weaknesses in the interview approach, those arising from poor research design and those arising from various response biases and poor memory (Yin, 1994: 80-84). Foddy (1993) considers a range of problems associated with interview research. The most salient problem encountered in this project concerned respondent bias (Foddy, 1993: 2). For example, in one or two cases, more than one respondent claimed ownership of a particular part of the 'game', suggesting a reluctance by some parties to recognise influences on them by others. It was in relation to flagship initiatives that organisations were most territorial in claiming ownership and it was not always possible to evaluate between accounts. However, as in the case of the meaning of 'partnership' (see pages 10 and 11), apparent differences of opinion could sometimes be synthesised.

A number of steps were taken to maximise the credibility and the comparability of the interviews. Insofar as was feasible, the same questions were put to individuals in analogous positions across the four cases. Following Foddy's advice to limit the potential response range and to facilitate understanding, a brief overview of the research and research purposes was provided to all respondents (Foddy, 1993: 89). This was done either by letter, or orally. Every effort was made to ensure that questions were addressed to the appropriate people. For example, political questions were posed to local authority members rather than officers and technical issues were addressed to officers rather than members.²⁴ Where potentially difficult questions were asked, those requiring research by the respondent, advance copies of the questionnaire were provided

²⁴ The case studies often refer to a view as that of 'the Council'. Where this term is used, it denotes either the official position of the local authority, or a consensus within the authority about an event or an issue.

(Foddy, 1993: 91). Foddy identifies a tendency among respondents to answer questions they are not qualified to give. Respondents were therefore encouraged to say if they did not know an answer and to identify an alternative source who might be able to help, a process described as 'filtering' (Foddy, 1993: 110/111).

May highlights the problem of values, which, he says, enter the research process at all stages (May, 1997: 46). This problem of reflexivity cannot be eliminated but it can be minimized if the researcher is conscious of it (Foddy, 1993: 192). In this study, the main problem of reflexivity was the prior conceptualization of the subject matter, the need on occasion to lead the respondent, and the personal pre-disposition of the researcher against the further ingratiation of the business sector with local government. But reflexivity is not only a constraint on research, it can be beneficial. As Foddy says, it is inherent in human communication (1993: 189). Reflexivity between researcher and respondent doesn't simply invalidate or contaminate an interview account. A better understanding of an event may be achieved by the respondent in an interview situation than s/he may ever have otherwise achieved. Just as some respondents claimed that partnership, a reflexive situation, produces synergy, so reflexive discussions in social research can also generate 'synergy' in new and better conceptions of a situation or an event, hitherto unrealised either by researcher or respondent. In this case, the experience of the researcher as a local government officer clearly proved beneficial, facilitating trust and enabling the exploration of nuance which otherwise may have been missed. Even though the research was oriented towards people with an interest in partnership success, the informed approach to the questions by the researcher as a former local government officer, perhaps combined with personal scepticism, was successful at getting beneath the official 'partnership is good' theme with most respondents.²⁵ While the negative aspects of reflexivity were taken into account and minimized, they were nonetheless presumed to have had

²⁵ The focus on participation in partnership, rather than on non-participation, may have resulted in an overly positive account of partnership, partly because, although thoughtful, and often critical of partnership processes, the local authority respondents, not to mention representatives of government, had a clear interest in showing partnership activity in a positive light (Stoker, 1999: 6). For this reason, business participants may have been more objective about partnership achievements than their public sector counterparts, but these views too may be unrepresentative in relation to those of the wider business sector, given the very small numbers involved.

an impact on the outcomes of the research. Hence, as is explored further below in relation to evaluation, the credibility of inferences and generalizations is limited and those which are made are viewed not as proven, but as probabalistic in nature.

Most of the interviews were recorded and transcribed. Some interviews had to be carried out over the telephone. These were transcribed as they were taking place. The approach taken to data collection was first to seek general information about approaches and attitudes to partnership and its meaning. This approach enabled an assessment to be made, for example, of the relative importance of informal networking and more visible partnership mechanisms, from the standpoint of the participants. This information provided signposting to specific aspects of partnership activity. Initial interviews, unsurprisingly, revealed that partnership initiatives differ from place to place, depending on the natural and inherited characteristics of the area. As far as possible, attention was restricted to comparable partnership activities in each case. The direction of the research was, in this sense, participant led.

Neither interviews, nor documents were subjected to a forensic textual analysis of the kind designed to establish discursive nuance in attitudes to partnership (see for example Atkinson, 1999 and Hastings, 1999). For this reason, the transcripts approximate to the discussion, often missing, for example, pronouns to save time. The analysis of interviews was based more on listening to the discussion than on the text, which was used as an aid to memory. Interpretive notes were added to the text in **bold** as the interviews were transcribed. The analysis of the interviews involved a form of 'coding' (May, 1997: 125) which comprised: listening to and reading the interviews, identifying common themes, building up a picture in note form, then writing it up as a narrative. This process was facilitated by the semi-structured nature of the interviews and by the theoretical questions from which they derived.

Reporting and Evaluating the Case Study Findings

The cases are presented in four separate chapters, followed by two chapters covering the cross-case analysis (Yin, 1994: 134). A short chapter, prior to the four case studies contextualises the

case studies, identifying extra-local factors relevant to local events and processes. Each of the cases follows the same general format, providing sections on: context; the process of partnership development; business attitudes to the concept of partnership; flagship partnerships and regeneration strategies; and 'mini-cases', three in each case, which examine implementation oriented partnership activities beyond the flagship partnership.²⁶ Chapter 9 involves a comparison of the four case study reports, identifying both common and singular themes, piecing the elements together to create what May describes as tendencies, sequences, patterns and orders (May, 1997: 173). Chapter 10 returns to an evaluation of the hypotheses set out in the first part of the study, answering the questions: what kind of phenomena are we dealing with, what kind of explanation provides for them and how does this explanation relate to urban regime theory?

By what criteria are the empirical and theoretical claims of the study made? It is necessary, as Mackenzie says, to define the standards of 'proof' applied in the analysis (Mackenzie, 1975: 139). Holt and Turner argue that research involves assumptions about the relationship between what people say they'll do and what they actually do - a rule of interpretation which assumes that their responses are valid (1970: 2). The rule of interpretation used in this study is that responses may be valid, provided that they are corroborated. The strength of the claims made in the analysis is partly determined by the extent to which parties representing different institutions and interests agree on a particular issue. Hence, comment on an aspect of a relationship between local authority and business sector requires an agreed view from both. Corroboration, however, is not sufficient on its own. The evidence has to be plausible and plausibility is here gauged in relation to the foregoing literature reviews, the pilot study undertaken in 1995 (Davies, 1996) and personal intuition.

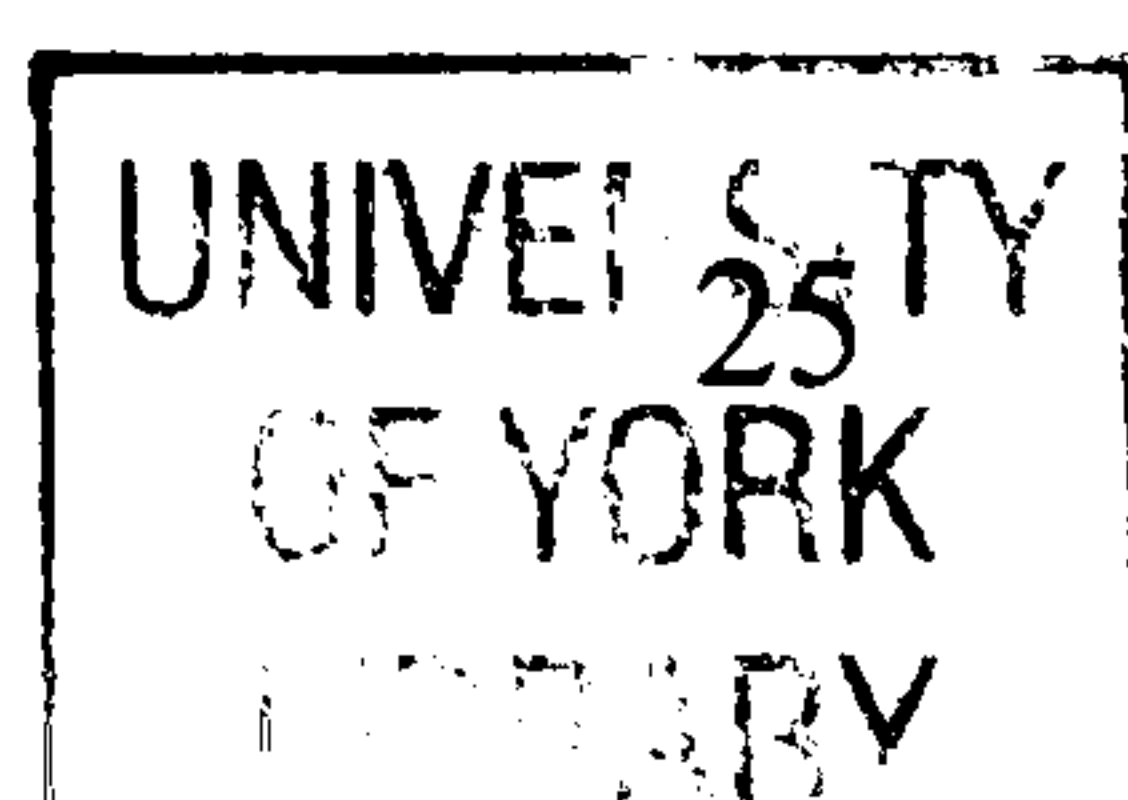
²⁶ Challenge partnerships, those responsible for bidding and managing challenge funds are also designated as 'flagship' partnerships if they are also responsible for establishing policy goals in the form of an area strategy or a vision statement. The distinction between flagship and implementation partnerships made in this study is based on Skelcher's distinction between mechanisms responsible mainly for establishing regeneration goals and mechanisms responsible mainly for carrying out programme activity (Skelcher *et al*, 1996: 5).

Within this framework of analysis, it is recognised, for all the cautionary reasons set out in the foregoing sections, that the knowledge claims which can be made are limited. There are different views about how case studies should be used in generating knowledge claims. Mackenzie (1975: 142) argues that the point of a case is to establish facts and let them speak for themselves, so that the reader may evaluate them as she wishes. Yin argues that the objective is to produce compelling conclusions which rule out alternative interpretations (Yin, 1994: 103). In relation to the system of 'coding', noted above, qualitative judgement is made in this study, based on the plausibility of interpretation of evidence presented and that known to have been omitted. King *et al* argue that causal inferences should be provided where they seem appropriate with a best estimate of the uncertainty in that inference (King *et al*, 1994: 76):

We need not provide evidence for all implications of the theory in order to state it, so long as we provide a reasonable estimate of uncertainty that goes along with it (King *et al*, 1994:113).

Yin agrees with this perspective, urging the researcher to be bold about her knowledge claims (Yin, 1994: 152). The analytical chapters seek to make bold claims, while avoiding abstracted empirical analysis.

In deciding to be bold in making causal inferences, the researcher must be sensitive to the Humean question of how to separate cause from sequence. The information gained in this study is not precise enough to make strong, generalizable, claims about whether the value of a particular dependent variable changes in a regular way when the measure of an independent variable changes, a method viewed by Becker as one way of overcoming this problem (Becker, 1992: 205-6). However, the problem of differentiating between cause and sequence is reduced when a human agent is recognised as part of the process of causation. If a respondent is able to identify influences on her actions, then it is arguable that causation can be identified in a way that it cannot, for example, in the effect of one billiard ball striking a second, causing the second to move. Stone's concept of mediation is helpful in illustrating this point (Stone, 1998a: 250). Urban regime theory, he says, posits that the impact of the global economy on the local economy is mediated through local governing structures. Stone shows how early psychologists analysed their subjects through a stimulus/response (S>R) framework, where 'S' can be characterised as



‘structure’, and ‘R’ as ‘agency’. This approach was found to be flawed and another stage ‘organism’ was added to the analytical framework, giving stimulus/organism/response (S>O>R), where ‘O’ mediates the impact of S on R. In regime theory, ‘O’ is the process of regime governance. In relation to Hume’s problem, ‘O’ is a conscious, articulate part of the causation process, a mediating factor of which scientists studying the interaction of billiard balls do not have the benefit. Hence, if a respondent states that her action was caused by a particular factor, or a number of factors, that statement can be taken as evidence of causation, provided that the capacity of agents for knowledge is allowed.

Finally, the form of explanation building set out above results in the specification of causal links which are difficult to measure in any precise manner. As Yin cautions, case study narratives cannot be precise, so they have to reflect theoretically significant propositions (Yin, 1994: 110/111). There is room for due scepticism in the analysis without recourse to anti-foundationalism. The epistemological position taken here is akin to that of critical realism (Bhaskar, 1989) in the sense that there is perceived to be a correspondence between interpretation and reality, but not an identity and not an unbridgeable dualism either. Hence, Lieberman’s (1992: 106) and Becker’s (1992: 206) position is endorsed that causal claims are likely to be probabalistic given imperfect measurement, given that we cannot determine all the influences in a case study and given that the influence of independent variables may counteract one another in conditions of multiple-causation, which the case studies attempt to reveal. The cases show, as King *et al* argue, that the same, or similar outcomes, can result from differing combinations of causal variables (1994: 87). It is these variables, and the relationship between them which the study seeks to explore. Chapter 2 now turns to an exposition of urban regime theory.

Chapter 2. The Conceptual Origins and Central Claims of Urban Regime Theory

Introduction

Urban politics have, according to Imbroscio, witnessed an ‘explosion’ of studies using urban regime theory as a lens through which the political dynamics in cities might be understood. Regime theory has, he says, become the dominant theory for the study of local politics (Imbroscio, 1998a: 233/4). With its focus on the economic and political interaction between agents and organisations regime theory has, without doubt, become a key tool for evaluating urban politics in and between liberal democratic nations including New Zealand (Brown, 1999), the UK,¹ the nations of Europe,² and the United States, the country of its origin.³ Just as diverse is the range of critiques, sympathetic and otherwise, with which regime theory is associated. It has been accused of lacking an overall theoretical framework (Feldman, 1997) and of being empiricist, localist and inductive (Ward, 1997a,b), determinist (Ward, 1997a,b; Di Gaetano, 1997) and intentionalist (Painter, 1997). It is regarded as normative and it is criticised at the same time for operating at the meso level of analysis (Imbroscio, 1997, 1998a,b) while it is viewed as adaptable to regulationist (Harding, 1996; Lauria, 1997) and post structuralist (Brown, 1999) perspectives. Its central claims have been denied (Nichols Clark and Goetz, 1993) and it has been dismissed as inapplicable to the analysis of urban politics in the UK (Lawless, 1994). In short, regime theory has been used and abused in a decade in almost as many ways as has Marxism over 150 years.

¹ See DiGaetano and Klemanski (1993), Di Gaetano (1997), Harding (1994,1996a,b, 1997), Stoker and Mossberger (1994), Lawless, (1994) and Ward (1997a,b).

² See Levine (1994), Harding(1996a,b, 1997) John and Cole (1998) and Strom (1996).

³ See Elkin (1987a), Stone (1989), De Leon (1992), Imbroscio (1997) and Sites (1997).

In light of these diverse perspectives, consideration is needed as to what regime theory is and what it is not. To this end, this chapter undertakes an examination of regime theory based, principally, on the works of Stephen Elkin and Clarence Stone.⁴ Others, such as Fainstein *et al* (1983, 1986) have been instrumental in developing regime theory and the concepts it deals with are not novel as Elkin (1987a: 18) highlights. But Elkin and Stone have proved to be the most influential scholars in the contemporary development of this strand of thought (Imbroscio, 1998a: 236) and it is they who authored what can be described as the paradigm theoretical and empirical statements of regime theory, Dallas (Elkin, 1987a) and Atlanta (Stone, 1989). The work of Stone has been the most influential of the two scholars and with few exceptions (see for example Brown, 1999), it has provided the starting point for the range of theoretical and empirical approaches to which regime theory has given birth.⁵ But whatever the merits of Stone's work, it is not possible to achieve a rich understanding of regime theory without consideration of the contribution made by Elkin. It is quite clear, as the following exposition will show, that regime theory is a mutual endeavour (Elkin, 1985b: 207). The approach taken here, therefore, is unique in treating regime theory as a 'canon' of work, authored by Elkin and Stone, and in providing a full exposition of this work. The purpose of the exposition is to generate a full understanding of regime theory, addressing some of the claims and counterclaims found in the secondary literature.

While primarily exposition, the chapter has a critical edge. The critical element suggests that at least some of these secondary approaches are, as Stone (1998a: 250) complains, based on a partial or mistaken understanding of regime theory. It is further argued, however, that regime theory can legitimately be criticised for not possessing the empirical-theoretical tools to support its normative prescriptions. The chapter also provides a conceptual foundation for chapter 3, which considers in more depth the ways in which regime theory has been employed in British political science. The virtue of this approach is twofold. The literature currently lacks an exploration of regime

⁴ See Elkin (1985a,b,c,d, 1986, 1987a,b, 1993a,b, 1994, 1996a,b) and Stone (1980, 1987a,b,c, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1997, 1998a,b,c).

⁵ These approaches are hereafter characterised as secondary approaches. This designation is purely for convenience and is not evaluative.

theory which examines in breadth and in depth the work of both of the scholars central to its development; and it provides for a more refined basis upon which to evaluate the relevance of regime theoretical concepts for examining partnerships in the four case studies, Barnsley, Rotherham, Hull and North East Lincolnshire.

The chapter is organised into six main sections. It begins by examining the theoretical conditions for regime formation identified by Elkin and by Stone. It proceeds secondly to explore the empirical conditions in which regime governance is produced; and thirdly to review the processes involved in regime governance. The fourth section evaluates the empirical scope of regime theory; and the fifth considers its explanatory limits. In light of these discussions, the final section elaborates and evaluates the normative tasks of regime theory.

Theoretical Conditions for Regime Formation - Systemic and Pre-emptive Power

Regime theory represents a revival of the critical pluralist 'community power' tradition of the 1950s and 1960s (Hunter 1953, Dahl, 1958, 1961) and it belongs broadly in the neo-pluralist tradition (Lindblom, 1977). Lindblom recognised that governments in capitalist countries require economic growth and that in a market system, decisions are taken by business in which government plays no role. These decisions affect everyone, but they are not subject to democratic control.

Any government official who understands the requirements of his position and the responsibilities that market oriented systems throw on businessmen will therefore grant them a privileged position. He does not have to be bribed, duped or pressured to do so. Nor does he have to be an uncritical admirer of businessmen to do so. He simply understands, as is plain to see, that public affairs in market oriented systems are in the hands of two group leaders, government and business, who must collaborate and that to make the system work government leadership must often defer to business leadership (Lindblom, 1977: 175).

Thus, the unrefined pluralist notion that groups have equal access to the decision making process is perceived to be flawed. This neo-pluralist perspective underpins the works of Elkin and Stone, who both subscribe to the notion of a division of labour between state and market in which ownership of productive assets rests largely in the hands of the private sector, while the machinery

of government, on the other hand, is subject to popular control (Elkin, 1987a: 18; Stone, 1989: 9). Both Elkin and Stone are concerned with the articulation between the public and private sectors and, as Stone puts it, the regime is the 'organism' which mediates the relationship between popular control of the political process and private control of the economy (1993: 2; 1998a: 250). This concept of the regime, as mediating between extra-local structures and political outcomes, is central to regime theory as a theory of structure and agency, a theme explored further below.

It is the core claim about the relationship between state and market which gives rise to the conception of 'systemic' power, developed by Stone in 1980. He categorises four types of power relationship between groups. Situational power is contrasted with intentional power and direct power to indirect power (Stone, 1980: 981): *Intentional and direct power* is a 'decisional' relationship based on an 'orthodox' first dimensional view of power. Here, the superordinate party consciously makes the subordinate undertake an act of her choosing. This is a form of command power, in which A exercises domination over B. *Situational and direct power* is an 'anticipated reaction' relationship where the subordinate party seeks to interpret the wishes of the superordinate. The subordinate therefore recognises the position of the superordinate party, whether or not this position is recognised by the superordinate. *Intentional and indirect power* is exercised when the superordinate party purposively exercises influence over the decision making context, resulting in 'non decisions' (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970). The subordinate party need not recognise her position as such. *Situational and indirect power* is systemic power, the kind of power underpinning regime governance. Here, the superordinate party influences the decision making context, but not purposively. She has influence whether cognizant of the fact or not. The subordinate party is also influenced, whether she recognises this fact or not. This form of power is reflected concretely in the division of labour between state and market. Systemic power is defined by Stone as:

that dimension of power in which durable features of the socioeconomic system (the situational element) confer advantages and disadvantages on groups (the intergroup element) in ways predisposing public officials to favour some interests at the expense of others (the indirect element) ... Because its operation is completely impersonal and deeply embedded in the social structure, this form of power can appropriately be termed 'systemic' (Stone, 1980: 980/1).

Systemic power - control by business over substantial productive resources upon which public officials depend - is articulated at the urban scale in the USA.

It should be noted that local governments are especially dependent on property taxes and they show a particularly strong concern with revenue production because of their place in the federal system. The strategic dependence of local officials on business is thus partly a matter of a market economy and partly a matter of the federal system (Stone, 1980: 982).

For Stone, systemic power results in an indirect conflict between favoured and disfavoured groups with the former frequently concerned with economic growth, the latter with redistribution. Due to its control of productive resources, business is more likely than not to have a privileged influence on the urban policy agenda. Public officials at the urban scale are the bearers of these structural constraints and community power relationships manifest themselves in the behaviour of these officials' (Stone, 1980: 982).

Systemic power is not overt or direct in the way it is exercised, it lies in the imperatives of the situation. The concept of systemic power is used by Stone to show how business interests tend to prevail in the domain of economic development policy because it is in the interests of public officials to respond to business concerns and they tend to respond to economic pressures before conflicting electoral demands (Stone, 1980: 987). Systemic power therefore derives from a combination of structural resource privilege and an economic-rational perspective on official behaviour which purports to explain how officials come to be the bearers of systemic structures. For these reasons, liberalism and democracy will always stand in dynamic contradiction to each other, a contradiction which Elkin perceives to be at the heart of the bourgeois state (1985b: 210).⁶ The state and its agents embody these contradictions which become the subject of political mediation and activity.⁷

⁶ Elkin believes that these contradictions provide the very dynamic in capitalist economies (1993b: 126).

⁷ Elkin's and Stone's view of the contradictions between liberalism and democracy as embodied in the public official resembles Poulantzas's (1978) notion of the state reflecting the 'condensate of class forces'. Yet it differs significantly from Poulantzas. Though both views accord the state a 'superstructural', role in the sense that it is neutral with respect to contending forces, for Elkin and Stone, the forces 'condensed' in their view of the state are not those of class but of liberalism and democracy. See below for a broader discussion on regime theory and Marxism.

While this perspective undoubtedly owes much to Lindblom's formulation, Stone traces it back to Hunter's classical (1953) work *Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers*. Stone attributes to Hunter, through a sympathetic reading, the development of an approach to power not dissimilar to that of regime theory, which he terms 'pre-emptive power', defined as 'a capacity to occupy, hold, and make use of a strategic position' (Stone, 1988: 83). Pre-emptive power is a derivative of systemic power in the sense that the state/market division identified in regime theory will tend to endow business, rather than any other group, with the capacity for pre-emption, that is the capacity to occupy a strategic position. Systemic power creates the conditions in which pre-emption occurs, but pre-emption itself is dependent on the exercise of those capacities. It is, therefore, an 'intentional and active' form of power (Stoker, 1995: 64/5).

These two concepts, systemic and pre-emptive power, represent the key to understanding regime theory. If systemic power is understood as a tendency within liberal-democratic societies for politicians to accord a privileged role to controllers of productive assets (business) (Elkin, 1994: 124), then the realisation of this tendency is dependent on the exercise of pre-emptive power by the controllers of productive assets. As pre-emptive power is intentional, the possibility of revolt by 'dissatisfied publics' is not ruled out (Stone, 1988: 89). Regime theory is, therefore tendential in character, a theory based on Stone's understanding of 'structuring' (1989: 10), which he draws from the work of sociologists Abrams (1982) and Giddens (1979).⁸

Politics must not be romanticized as a sphere of free agency. While not tightly controlled by deterministic laws, there are recurring tendencies in political behavior that must be reckoned with (Stone, 1990: 230).

Agents are not, therefore, objectively subordinate to structures, they act on and change them. The concrete processes of regime governance, outlined by Elkin and Stone in their paradigm studies of Dallas (Elkin, 1987a) and Atlanta (Stone, 1989) follow from these propositions.

⁸ Regime theory as an approach to structure and agency is discussed further below.

The Empirical Conditions for Regime Governance

Elkin's work on Dallas draws on and develops Stone's concept of systemic power (Elkin, 1985a,b; 1987a). His account of regime governance in Dallas depicts systematic governmental bias toward business interests. The bias he identifies does not arise as a consequence of immutable economic determinants, but rather through political and institutional structures which privilege the business sector. Elkin thus seeks to avoid what he describes as 'reductionism' in public choice theory and 'determinism' in Marxism (1987a: 8). However, like Stone, he acknowledges the necessity of studying urban phenomena in the context of broader political economy. In a pre-cursor to regime theory, he concludes apocalyptically that:

If the principal participants in the discussion of the nature of the urban question turn out to be those devoid of any sense of the larger political economy and Marxism, then intellectual ruin is likely to exceed all expectations (Elkin, 1979: 30).

Because the dispersal of political power in Dallas is a consequence of the 'division of labour between state and market that is manifest in cities' (Elkin, 1987a: 18), control of economic performance at the local level does not lie within the purview of public officials. The city government can, indeed must, 'induce' but not 'command' economic activity. Elkin demonstrates that the system is skewed against the emergence of local policies addressing broader social issues and that city government is predisposed to work on behalf of business. This situation represents a failure of popular control in Dallas. Elkin's central proposition, that the policies of city government in the US are biased toward business interests as a consequence of institutionally mediated structures, is manifest in three principal ways.

Local Government Dependence on Local Capital

City Government in the USA is highly dependent for its revenue on tax raised locally and on bonds which it issues to private buyers in order to fund capital projects. King, for example, notes that in 1983, locally generated revenue in the USA accounted for 74.2% of all city government revenues (1988: 93). It follows that elected officials need to convince the business community of their fiscal prudence and of their commitment to stimulating economic growth. In a healthy economic environment, city bonds are more attractive to investors and property values will rise, improving the city's fiscal position. It is argued that land use policies can generate a high 'bond

rating', since development increases land value, which is a sign of underlying economic strength and of the correct 'attitude' among public officials (Elkin, 1987a: 38). Locally dependent business and local authority, therefore, have a joint interest in collaboration. The local authority seeks to mobilise business resources, while owners of fixed capital, local land owners in particular, have an interest in working with local government to secure new investments to strengthen their position. The city government therefore has a direct interest in prioritising growth to fund services and capital projects. Antipathy to business is an invitation to 'fiscal trouble' (Elkin, 1987a 30/31).

Economic Growth and the Mobility of Capital

According to Elkin, much business in the US is footloose, much more so than it is in the UK (Elkin, 1987a: 32). Thus, if a firm does not like the policy of a particular city administration, it can re-locate (Elkin, 1987a: 33). Elkin draws a distinction between mobile capital and fixed, locally dependent capital. The latter type consists of enterprises whose success is closely associated with the economic vitality of the city. These enterprises include banks, developers, real estate agencies, large stores and property management firms (1987a: 32-42). Their behaviour, says Elkin, is 'best understood as an effort to enhance the value of their fixed assets by attracting mobile capital to the city'. Many fixed assets, that is non-mobile capital, are parcels of land. Businesses controlling these assets thus favour land use schemes to increase their value (1987a: 41). Local authorities favour these schemes to improve their fiscal base.

Among other things, local politicians are tied to preserving the value of local land uses because both are deeply concerned to hold and attract mobile capital. Those who hold fixed capital in land need to attract high-intensity use to maintain and enhance its value. And local politicians wish to have the political benefits that a vibrant local economy will send their way (Elkin, 1994: 137).

So, for Elkin, the policy arena around which growth alliances most commonly form is that of land use. This proposition is based upon the assumption that land and property values are key indicators of economic health and thus of the ability of city government to obtain credit.⁹

⁹ In this regard, Elkin appears to have drawn inspiration from Molotch (1976). In his growth machine approach, land owners are the key business interests. See chapter 3 for a brief discussion of this literature.

The Role of Local Officials in Regime Governance

The third feature Elkin identifies is a pre-disposition of local officials, elected and unelected, toward the business agenda. Politicians depend upon privately backed electoral coalitions. 'Reputation' is the key to political success, which is dependent on the support of the business sector (Elkin, 1987a: 37). Elkin shows just how important business can be to a political campaign, highlighting the difference on one occasion between a business backed incumbent whose campaign fund totalled \$400,000 and a challenger without business backing who managed to raise \$20,000 (Elkin, 1987a: 77). Dallas is run by a 'City Manager', a professional civil servant. Senior officials, like politicians, tend to have an interest in maintaining business support for instrumental reasons associated with career opportunities, and Elkin shows how City Managers in Dallas had intimate connections with the business leadership of the City. Furthermore, it is argued that the professionalisation of Dallas's local government effectively routinises, or excludes from politics, decisions which could become controversial were they to be handled by elected politicians (Elkin, 1987a: 70). Issues of importance to the wider community are thereby excluded from the agenda, placed instead within the remit of professional bureaucrats who are better insulated than politicians from popular demand (1987a: 85-8). The predispositions of public officials for Elkin are structured by the regime itself which in this context takes on the status of an explanatory variable, a set of relations in which the agent is embedded. Hence:

Any story that interprets the rise of positive welfare-oriented states as the means by which either capitalists solved their problems or the working class dealt with theirs overlooks that it is more nearly a case of liberal democratic politicians solving *theirs* (Elkin, 1985b: 197).

Elkin endorses Stone's explanation for the way public officials tend to prioritise economic performance, suggesting that the 'reach' of popular control is limited in terms of its ability to change the way performance is enhanced (1985b: 190-193). The democratic aspect of liberal democracy is thus limited by necessity and were it not, the regime would either collapse or become qualitatively different, prospects which Elkin believes to be neither desirable nor feasible (1985b: 191). Because officials are instrumentally rational, liberal-democracies cannot sustain too much popular control since this would tend to result in officials undermining the growth agenda which

sustains the system (Stone, 1980: 987).¹⁰ Given these conditions, and the emphasis on intentionality in the concept of pre-emptive power, how is regime governance carried out?

The Process of Regime Governance

Stone's account of regime politics in Atlanta (1989) builds on his own account of systemic power.

... the question that systemic power directs us toward, but does not itself answer, is how, in the face of complex and sometimes divisive forces, an effective and durable capacity to govern can be created (1989: xi).

Stone's study of Atlanta therefore develops a stronger emphasis than Elkin on the internal dynamics of regime governance.¹¹ Stone's objective is to break what he sees as the impasse between pluralists and elitists in the earlier community power debate (Stone, 1988). He takes a sociological view of group dynamics which begins from the perspective that all groups have an interest in production. It follows that governance is only possible given cooperation between governmental and other interests. In Atlanta, the production of governance is dependent upon business resources and so developmental interests prevail in public policy (Stone, 1989: 219-233). A governing regime is thus comprised of those institutions or actors with the resources necessary for governance. Resources are broadly defined to include the material, the financial, the administrative and the intellectual (Stone, 1993: 11). Access to a governing regime is dependent both on the possession of resources necessary for governance and the will/capacity to combine them with other resources (Stone, 1989:4). Stone's account of Atlanta is the study of who participates in urban regimes and how they come together to produce governance. Regime governance is thus about the capacity to act, the actors who act and the relationship between these actors. Stone provides a succinct definition of the urban regime:

An urban regime may thus be defined as *the informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interests function together in order to be able to make and carry out governing decisions* (1989: 6).

¹⁰ This perspective resembles the argument advanced by Samuel Brittan (1975), who believed that democratic overload in the form of union power had led to untenable demands by the populace on the British state.

¹¹ Perhaps it is for this reason that Stone has proved the more influential of the two scholars for those who are concerned with the analysis of local politics.

By *informal arrangements*, Stone means that the legal authority of a local government is insufficient to furnish the capacity necessary for local governance to occur. He argues that if agents are not 'unified under the formal authority of government to command compliance, then the mechanism of coordination must be *informal*'. Informality does not in itself preclude visible coalition arrangements, it simply denotes the absence of a legal command structure (1989: 180).¹² Both Elkin's and Stone's accounts show business organisation to be both formalised and highly effective.¹³ On the other hand, the interface between business and local officials is informal but well organised (Elkin, 1987a: 66; Stone, 1988: 89). The story of the building of the Atlanta Stadium illustrates the informal nature of regime governance. The Mayor of Atlanta wanted to pursue this prestige project, but did not possess the necessary resources to do so. However, he persuaded a powerful local banker that the stadium was a good idea. According to the Mayor's account, the banker responded to his plea:

You've got it ... Tell you what. If you'll recreate the old Stadium Authority and appoint the people I recommend, and make Arthur Montgomery Chairman and me treasurer, I'll pledge the full credit of C&S Bank to build it (Stone, 1989: 63).¹⁴

This account shows that Atlanta was governed by a tight, highly integrated elite based around key business leaders and the Mayor in pursuit of a common agenda. How, then, can these arrangements be produced?

Power as Social Production

Perhaps Stone's key contribution to regime theory is his conceptualization of power as social production, which derives from his conceptualizations of systemic and pre-emptive power. He challenges 'ideological hegemony' as an explanation for regime characteristics, which he describes as the 'social control paradigm' (1989: 222). In its place, he proposes a model of 'social

¹² The distinction between formal and informal partnerships is considered further in Chapter 3.

¹³ Businesses concerned with development organise independently. This activity appears to be less about pre-empting other sectors than about pre-empting anti-development elements within the business sector and it highlights the heterogeneity of business interests and objectives within the broad constraint of the accumulation process.

¹⁴ Arthur Montgomery was an executive of Coca Cola.

production', or 'power to', in which public officials need to 'get things done' and seek suitable allies for that task.

Stone suggests that urban power in the USA bears a 'class' imprint which cannot be predicted by pluralist theory, but that this comes about in ways requiring no ruling elite or command forms of domination which he associates with Marxism (1980: 979). His approach is based on a critique of the Marxist argument that differences in opinion about how to do things are insignificant within a pro-market capitalist society.

As long as the community embraces capitalism, this broad commitment overrides positions on lesser issues. Hence, they would argue, business prevails on policy matters as long as it can maintain the legitimacy of a capitalist political economy (Stone, 1989: 221).

While acknowledging the power of this argument, Stone nevertheless offers an alternative view, that change comes about not through the alteration of basic commitments, but through the piecemeal evolution of practices of cooperation. This detail is important because power lies in the evolution of new practices. Thus, the deed precedes the thought and key developments take place not in ideology but in the specifics of how people organise (Stone, 1989: 221). The way people organise in Stone's analysis is in pursuit of 'small opportunities', comprising selective incentives, small purposes and accomplishments. Most of the time, actors pursue immediate opportunities and respond to immediate threats (1989: 229-235). If power is about the capacity to get things done, then getting things done is about small opportunities. Stone shares not only aspects of Lindblom's neo-pluralism, but also his view of incremental policy development (Lindblom, 1977, 1979) (Stone, 1980: 987).

Stone (1989) therefore focuses on the role of the agent in agenda setting, for whom the way problems are perceived defines the solutions which are chosen (Rocheford & Cobb, 1994: 1-3). He presents a 'Tillian' model of low social coherence in which a chaotic picture of group relations emerges, where no single group can dominate ideologically. For Stone, 'governance' is not dependent on control, it is about bringing together elements in a fragmented world (Stone 1989: 226-227, Tilly, 1984: 26-33). Business control in Atlanta is not command power, it is indirect and limited. Attitudes are not controlled directly, but anti-business views are not able to gain a

purchase, given that the role of business is central to the activities of governance (1989: 220). Regime formation for Stone is partly dependent on an actor's evaluation of the benefits of compliance or non-compliance in a coalition (1989: 8-9). The 'free rider' problem associated with rational choice thinking is addressed with the allocation by key players in the regime of 'selective incentives' to induce and coerce compliance through privilege and discipline respectively (1989: 186/242). In Atlanta, it is business which holds the key with substantial 'slack' resources which are used as selective incentives to purchase compliance (1989: 244). For regime change to occur, opposing groups have both to raise the 'cost of compliance' and, pro-actively, to generate a governing coalition to supercede the entrenched interest of the developer (Stone, 1988: 90).

Notwithstanding his emphasis on 'power to' in the process of regime building, Stone recognises that different types of power are interwoven. 'Power to' is a particular type of power which he regards as crucial to regime building. However, other kinds of power are also evident in the social production model itself. He argues that 'power to', in the sense of constructing regime governance, 'spills over into a kind of domination' (Stone, 1989: 229). Further, he argues that the "power to" of the social production model translates into a form of "power over" (Stone, 1993: 9). Stone shows how 'power to' can, in fact generate indirect conflictual relationships, given that the exercise of pre-emption by party A, to influence the policy agenda of B, precludes party C from gaining access to the policy process (Stone, 1980: 980). If A, by using her superior resources consciously or unconsciously prevents C from access to the policy process, whether or not C is aware of her exclusion, 'power over' has been exercised in an indirect fashion. "Power to", then, is not simply about cooperation, it is also about causal factors which predict certain kinds of cooperation. We are back at the starting point in regime theory, that the forms of cooperation we observe in society can be predicted by the division of labour between state and market. This analysis has implications, not only for the theoretical relationship between social production and social control, but also for Stone's explanation of preference formation and for rational choice interpretations of regime theory (Painter, 1997).

Factors in Human Motivation

Stone's account of behavioural motivation begins with the assumption that people respond to what is familiar, immediate and concrete - a notion which, he says, underlies March and Simon's (1965) concept of 'satisficing'. This behavioural tendency is articulated as 'narrow cognition', where individual preferences derive in a dynamic fashion from one's place in society (Stone, 1993: 9/10). This concept starts in a similar position to Marx's view of alienation (Meszaros, 1975), whereby consciousness is not simply a product of purposive ideological domination, but of the way in which the concrete processes and tendencies of the market are normally, but not always, obscured by day to day relationships and the place of the subject within them (Marx and Engels, 1973). In Stone's analysis, like Marx's, the big picture is not normally visible to the individual. However, he identifies no objective processes, akin to the laws of motion of capital, which are obscured until crisis tendencies are realised, and so he speaks of bounded rationality not false consciousness.

Within this context exist 'elementary principles of motivation' in human behaviour (Stone, 1993: 10). At one pole can be found the economic rational tendency and at the other, the desire to be associated with something larger than one's own individual concerns, a social-purposive tendency.

This duality affects preference formation:

Vision can be expanded by discussion and interaction, leadership, exposure to a social movement, participation in a set of activities that point beyond the immediate and much more (1993: 10).

As this quotation implies, preferences may be 'fluid' and Stone asks what explains the differential appeal of causes. Here, the notion of 'feasibility' is important.

There is circularity in the relationship between commitment to a cause and its feasibility. The more people support a cause, the greater its feasibility (Stone, 1993: 11).

It may be deduced from this account how perceptions of feasibility are constructed. Feasibility cannot be reduced to the question of support for a cause *ie* that if we all want to do something, we can do it. Stone's 'narrow cognition' provides a further basis for relating support for a project to feasibility. If people express both economic rational and social-purposive motivation, then the extent to which one or the other is realised depends on a person's perception of their immediate

position in relation to others. People's interactions shape their preferences and their understanding of feasibility. Narrow cognition regulates ambition.

In short, the ready availability of means rather than the will of dominant actors may explain what is pursued and why. Hence, hegemony in a capitalist order may be more a matter of ease of cooperation around profit-oriented activities than the unchallenged ascendancy of core ideas (1993: 12).

Yet feasibility is also the subject of struggle over conviction (1993: 11) and this is where social production can become social control. The implication is that those with resources are most likely to be able to convince others - a form of 'power over' because they hold the key to opportunity and thus to preference formation. The imbalance created by uneven resource distribution then itself represents a mode of social control, whether or not the imbalance is sought by the dominant agents. For Stone, it is easier to be pro capitalist in a capitalist world than it is to be otherwise. This rather mundane observation predicts a 'pragmatic' view of purpose. Pragmatic behaviour is itself a product of 'narrow cognition' and may, therefore, in the context of unbounded rationality, prove to be flawed. This is not false consciousness in the Marxian sense, but Stone clearly accepts that pragmatism is influenced by systemic power.

If people are purposive, but purposive in wanting to be involved in achievable goals, and if some goals are more readily achievable than others, then people will tend toward those goals that are achievable (1993: 12).

Pragmatism is thus connected to an imbalance in resource distribution, while preference formation is linked to pragmatism, to the limited opportunities for change afforded by governance and to the narrow cognition of agents. Preference formation is endogenous to the power relationship. Stone develops the argument by emphasising that individual preferences do not form in isolation, but also through social bonds. Coalitions are formed through the exchange of information and because of perceived interdependence (1993: 13). Preferences can then change if understanding changes. Understanding changes by virtue of purposive interaction (1993: 14). Finally,

Contrary to the assumptions of some analysts, cooperation is not an unnatural act that people have to be coerced or bribed to perform. To be sure, the centrifugal force of individual interest and immediately achievable purpose have to be reckoned with, but there is also the possibility of tapping the human yearning for larger social purpose (1993: 25).

Humans, then, are not crude instrumentalists. Being purposive is a fundamental part of human nature, it is just that most of the time, people are drawn to small purposes (Stone, 1998a: 255).

This complex of ideas purports to explain why local governance is more usually associated with development oriented regimes, rather than those oriented on enhancing lower class opportunities. Ultimately, those with control over resources have the power to influence perceptions of interest and, therefore, preferences. This perspective is an enhancement of Stone's 1989 account, but it lacks an elaboration of the kind of events or dynamics which might lead people swing between the polarities of economic rational and social purposive action. The role of systemic power in influencing human behaviour is recognised throughout, but this is not a fully developed, or grand narrative theory of structure and agency since the way systemic power causes people to oscillate between polarities is under theorised. For Stone, change occurs at the margins of enduring relationships. If enduring relationships, such as urban regimes, are conceived of as structures, then Stone's account of Atlanta shows that events occur which have an impact on such structures and help to reshape them (1989: 10). There is reciprocity between structure (regime) and agency (regime actors). However, this limited reciprocity seems to occur within an invariant set of socioeconomic rules, those expressed in the relationship between liberalism and democracy. For Stone to argue convincingly that local agents can influence and change structures incrementally, he would need to show not only that agents influence regime activities, given that here the regime is a 'mediating' variable (or a meso level structure) (1993: 2), but also that the very factors which facilitate business privilege can be changed by regime/agent activity.¹⁵ He shows only that the conditions he refers to allow for a range of outcomes which can be influenced by urban regimes as a mediating force (1993: 2). So, the regime influences the outcomes, but not the structural forces which constitute it, an interpretation supported by Imbroscio's (1998a,b) critique of the 'static' formulation in regime theory of the division of labour between state and market. Reciprocity occurs between regime and agent, but not between regime and agent and systemic context.

¹⁵ Note Stone's characterisation of the regime as mediating organism between stimulus and response (S>O>R) described in Chapter 1 (1998a: 250).

The most important feature of Stone's later account for regime analysis is the exposition of a social purposive dimension to human behaviour. This perspective is inconsistent with a pure rational choice perspective and it is suggestive of a development in Stone's thinking between 1989 and 1993. If Stone can be labelled a rational choice theorist in 1989 (Painter, 1997), something he denies (Stone, 1998a: 250), this is by no means true in 1993.¹⁶ There is now a more flexible basis for understanding the behaviour of local officials, which may have less to do with self interest than with pragmatism, which may reflect instrumental and social-purposive thinking.

It is arguable that this elaboration of a social-purposive dimension to behavioural characteristics widens the scope for choice by state actors. In 1980, Stone suggests that local officials are bearers of community power relationships, implying that decisions are based on the relative pressures of democracy and economic performance embodied in the official (1980: 982). Self interest will be determined by whichever pressure is stronger and will predict a limited range of choices consistent with it. A social purposive motivation, however, opens the possibility for flexible interpretation of the relative pressures of democracy and economic performance by allowing that on occasion, the balance of these pressures may be represented less than precisely in the ensuing decision. The scope for 'choice' is thus greater. In this perspective, the public official is more than a conduit for the struggle between competing forces. Politics matter in two ways, both in the mediation of competing pressures, and in a greater capacity for local officials to evaluate these pressures.

The Empirical Scope of Regime Theory

The foregoing exposition provides a basis upon which to examine the empirical scope and the explanatory limits of regime theory. This section focuses on the empirical scope of regime theory, engaging critical debates about the arenas to which regime theory can be applied. It first considers the range of phenomena, or 'types' which regime theory encompasses. It proceeds to explore the related question of whether regime formation is considered inevitable in the work of Elkin and

¹⁶ See discussion of regime theory and the question of structure and agency below

Stone. The discussion of scope concludes with an evaluation of how far regime theory can be applied to different policy and geo-political arenas.

The Evolution and Differentiation of Regime Types

The urban regime, as a set of governing relationships, is not static and Stone argues that it must be studied over time (1989: 9). There was significant change over forty years in Atlanta, notably an increase in the influence of the black middle class (1989). The story of the Atlanta regime is a story of continuity and change, a story of changing dynamics which serves both to re-enforce the dictum that 'politics matter' and as a reminder that the down-town business elite has exercised continuing, if variable, levels of pre-eminence in Atlanta's politics throughout much of the 20th century. The same is true of Dallas, as illustrated in Elkin's account of the transition from a pure entrepreneurial economy to a complex entrepreneurial political economy, characterised by the loosening of ties between the business elite and the city, weaker business power and greater autonomy for the city official (Elkin, 1987a: 74; 1987b: 27).

Elkin emphasises that the structures predicted by regime theory are institutionally mediated and that greater popular control of decision making at the urban scale might be achieved through institutional restructuring (Elkin, 1987a: 103).¹⁷ Federal policies, such as the Urban Development Action Grant (see Wolman, 1992) can assist in making regimes more inclusive by encouraging the mobilisation of not-for-profit organisations (Stone, 1989: 242). The extent to which political 'resistance' to the demands of business may be possible is therefore related to the extent of federal aid, a higher level of which it is argued will give officials greater autonomy, making them 'bolder' with business. It is axiomatic to regime theory that while the business sector enjoys strategic advantage, this advantage can be challenged by other group interests, including anti-growth coalitions, although these are hindered by the constraints of a biased playing field (Elkin, 1987a: 44). Neither Elkin nor Stone believes that business driven governance will always emerge, or

¹⁷ Regime theory clearly falls within the institutionalist tradition, which contends that institutional choice can shape people's ideas, attitudes and preferences (Hall, 1986, Thelen & Steinmo, 1992: 27).

succeed in its developmental objectives. Politicians are subject to pressure from the citizenry to ensure a certain level of public satisfaction if they wish to be re-elected. Forces are therefore balanced between the need for politicians to respond to their constituents, producing resistance to 'fiscal constraint' and, on the other hand, an inability to resist business pressures because of the city's need for credit (Elkin, 1987a: 51). Nonetheless, regime transformation is difficult. Stone's representation of four regime types, presented in order of perceived feasibility, serves as an example.

Maintenance regimes are concerned with routine service delivery. They are not 'active' in any developmental sense and require less in terms of resources to achieve governance (Stone, 1993: 18). They are easiest of all to constitute. *Development regimes* require coordination of institutional elites to achieve growth objectives. These, as regime theory implies, exist given the unequal allocation of resources in society (1993: 18/19). *Middle class progressive regimes* involve a compromise with the development agenda. An active, resource rich, middle class electorate interested in environmental protection, affordable housing and other 'social' purposes is necessary for these regimes which require continued economic development in order to gain 'exactions' (1993: 19/20).¹⁸ The fourth type is the *lower class opportunity expansion regime*. For Stone, this type is a hypothetical regime form. These regimes would require the social purposive dimension of human behaviour at the fore together with a strong lower class motivated to grasp the opportunities afforded by investments in human capital. The efforts required to coordinate and maintain such a regime would, says Stone, be immense (1993: 21/2).

This latter regime type, nevertheless, illustrates the contingency of business pre-eminence in regime theory, showing that power can be pre-empted by groups other than business, given favourable conditions,. At the same time, it shows just how difficult it is for some groups to drive up compliance costs for business while, at the same time, constituting alternative governing

¹⁸ This regime type describes the conditions identified by Nichols Clark and Goetz in Boulder and Boca Raton in their attempt, described below, to rebut the central claims of regime theory. (Nichols Clark and Goetz, 1993).

arrangements (Stone, 1988: 90). It is theoretically possible to transform regime governance and render it amenable to greater popular control. But beyond the possibility of different regime types, how far is the existence of regime governance taken for granted by Elkin and Stone?

The Contingency of Regime Governance

Elkin points out that regimes need to be maintained, that they may decline and that they may be replaced by 'a different regime or by an interregnum in which no stable patterns are established' (Elkin, 1985c: 14). He notes that in some areas businesses and politicians cannot find ways of advancing common interests which are politically feasible (1985c: 18). The politics of Boston in the 1930s, for example, are described as 'an erratic and unorganized politics moving from crisis to speeches to crisis again' (1985c: 21). Stone also acknowledges that regime building and maintenance is a costly business. The problem of collective action is not one that is easily resolved and, he argues, it would be very difficult, if not impossible to build a new regime from scratch (1989: 236). Compliance costs cannot always be met and the resources necessary to pursue a common agenda cannot always be raised. Furthermore, Stone makes a distinction between a growth coalition and a governing coalition, emphasising that one should not be mistaken for the other (1991: 293). This account is supported by John and Cole (1998), Stoker (1997a) and Stoker and Orr (1994), whose study of Detroit argues that 'Detroit is a study of failed regime building' (1994: 65):

The essence of the regime approach to power is not to identify an elite partnership of governmental and nongovernmental actors but, rather, to explore the conditions for such a partnership to be created and maintained. Our analysis has suggested that in Detroit, the conditions for a cohesive partnership were not met (Stoker and Orr, 1994: 66).

It is strange, then, that it has been argued that work in the US takes the existence of urban regimes for granted (Ward, 1997a: 430; 1997b: 1494). Di Gaetano (1997: 847) argues that Stone fails to recognise the possibility that conflict, rather than co-operation may prevail and that regimes may be the exception, rather than the rule. This criticism illustrates one of the misunderstandings of regime theory complained of by Stone (1998a: 250). The criticism may hold water in relation to

elements of the secondary literature, discussed in greater depth in chapter 3, but it is misplaced in relation to Elkin and Stone.¹⁹

Regime Governance and Policy Arena

Just as regime governance is not inevitable, pro-development alliances do not dominate every arena of governance. Whereas a growth alliance may dominate land-use policies, growth politics are not considered to be as strong in other investment related policy areas, which include city budgets, education and taxation, where open domination by business would antagonise professional bureaucrats and lead to public charges of corruption (Elkin, 1987a: 49). Elkin argues that the principal manifestation of business-state relationships occurs in those domains where economic performance is most visibly at stake (Elkin, 1994: 118). But, he argues, the separation of domains is arbitrary and since political realities can sometimes join what has been separated, political struggles in the non-economic domain can quickly turn into contests where it is asked what effect the various options will have on promoting business performance (Elkin, 1994: 118).

Stone's work on education develops this point. He argues that international economic challenges have brought to the fore the need to improve workforce skills, giving business an incentive to become involved in seeking to improve schools (Stone, 1998a: 254). He shows that business plays a prominent role in public education in the USA (1998b:x). Despite the fact that school districts are, strictly speaking, legal creatures of the State, local autonomy in education is deeply rooted in the USA (Stone, 1998b: 2).²⁰ Stone views education policy as an arena of regime politics. He identifies two regime types in this arena: employment regimes which are exclusive regimes concerned with the protection of insider pre-requisites and which favour the privileged classes; and performance regimes, the normative objective of his study, which would, could they be created, be oriented on improving the academic performance of lower class children to enhance

¹⁹ It is also recognised in management literature that collaborative endeavour is not straightforward. It needs special attention and resources and it is difficult to achieve (Huxham, 1996: 177).

²⁰ The fact of local autonomy in education policy does not necessarily indicate a strong role for local government in the policy process.

their post-educational opportunities (Stone, 1998b: 9). The performance regime is viewed by Stone as a social purposive regime (1998b: 12). Development politics can be pursued, says Stone, by a narrow coalition of elites. Education, though, is different. It involves a policy task in which the participation of professional educators and parents is indispensable. Business, therefore, has more limited leverage in inducing educational change than it does in inducing economic performance (Stone, 1998c: 262). This perspective shows that regime governance can be diffuse and heterogeneous and that the state-market division has reduced causal impact in arenas beyond those concerned with economic performance.

On this issue, the secondary literature is relatively faithful to Elkin and Stone (Di Gaetano, 1997; Orr and Stoker, 1994; Andrew and Goldsmith, 1998; Brown, 1999). Di Gaetano, for example, identifies competing coalitions within Bristol, centred on competing Council departments, a pro-growth alliance (economic development) and a growth management alliance (planning) (1997: 855). Stoker's and Orr's account of regime governance in Detroit at the beginning of the 1990s identifies two competing regimes, one based around physical renewal, the other concerned with human capital (1994: 65). Regime theory is not, therefore, based on an assumption about the uniformity of governance across policy arenas, or on an assumption that it is applicable only to economic development, though the key proposition concerning the state-market division has reduced causal force in other policy arenas.

If any element of regime theory can be criticised as 'bottom up' or 'localist' (Ward, 1997a,b), it is Stone's treatment of education. While it is noted by Elkin (1987a) that policy arenas are interrelated and the state-market division has a continual, if variable, influence across these arenas, consideration is not given, beyond the local dynamics involved, to the question of why performance regimes dominate in education. If the state-market variable is, in general, weaker in the sphere of education, then which other extra-local variables, if any, have prime causal efficacy? Nonetheless, Stone's concern with education provides an important element in the rationale for basing the empirical element of this study around the theme of regeneration, focussing on both

economic development and education to evaluate similarities and differences in patterns of local governance across different policy arenas.²¹

The Geographical Scope of Regime Theory

Regime theory can be applied across different policy arenas, but is it applicable at different geopolitical levels? For Elkin, the public task of promoting business confidence is not the preserve of local politics only, but of any geographical level of government (Elkin, 1985b: 188). This point illuminates a key dimension of Elkin's and Stone's regime theory. It is not a theory of urban politics as such, it is a theory of state action and is part of the state debate (Elkin, 1994: 118). According to Stone, the conditions for the intertwining of politics and economics are negotiable at local, state, national and international levels (1990: 291). This fact makes sense of Elkin's claim that (empirical) regime theory is, in principle, applicable to all liberal democratic societies, though the USA is his principal empirical referent (1985b: 181). The task of regime theory as a theory of liberal democracy is to identify (and also to prescribe) the interface between market and popular control. If it occurs at national government level, then that level is a relevant focus for regime analysis. If it also occurs at the local scale, as it does in the USA, then that scale too is an appropriate focus of analysis. The urban focus of regime theory is thus contingent on the sites of interface between state and market - an empirical question. Elkin and Stone analyse the urban arena because a tension between market and popular control is evident at this level of governance in the USA.²² This interpretation is supported by Elkin's and Stone's references to Krasner (1983) whose concern with international regimes they re-interpret at the urban scale in the USA.

This interpretation has implications for critics and adaptors of regime theory in British political science. *Urban* regime theory, strictly interpreted, is applicable only to the extent that the division between state and market is evident at the local scale. Regime theory does not direct research to

²¹ Regeneration is defined as a broad concept in Chapter 1.

²² They also analyse urban politics because local governance is a key element in the good society (Elkin, 1993, 1996).

the local level in the first instance, but to a search for the level at which the division between economic development and popular control is most strongly articulated.²³

The Explanatory Limits of Regime Theory

Before moving on to consider the way in which the normative tasks of regime theory fit in with its empirical analysis, limits to its explanatory capacity need to be specified. This section explores the strengths and weaknesses of regime theory, drawing on critical perspectives and on the limitations prescribed by Elkin and Stone themselves. First, the relationships identified in regime theory between land use, economic growth and coalition building are discussed from a critical perspective. Second, consideration is given to the question of how far regime theory can be viewed as a theory of structure and agency. Finally, the limits inherent in taking the profit economy as given are explored (Stone, 1991: 294).

Regime Theory and the Dynamics of Economic Growth

Elkin argues that land and property values constitute a key indicator of economic growth and that locally dependent alliances are driven by competition for mobile capital (1987a).²⁴ These perspectives are vulnerable to criticism in at least two ways. It is questionable just how mobile productive capital is and physical development may not correspond with business objectives. Stone, for example, agrees with Elkin in acknowledging the way in which local banks have extensive local investment interests leading them to have a direct concern with redevelopment and tax policy (1993: 8) but he downplays capital mobility, emphasising that businesses with substantial capital investments in an area cannot just move away (1988: 99). Some investments are inherently immobile and the movement of others will incur costs (Stone, 1991: 290). To this extent, Stone's perspective is commensurable with that of Cox and Mair (1988, 1989), who offer

²³ Stone (1998a: 250) views regime theory as a second level theory in that it is not a grand narrative project like Marxism. But as a second level theory, regime theory is much more expansive in its claims, normative and empirical, than meso-level approaches such as Policy Network Analysis, which makes few *a-priori* empirical-theoretical claims and in which no explicit normative assumptions are embedded (Rhodes, 1990).

²⁴ See pages 33 and 34.

a broader concept of local dependence than that which identifies land and property based elites as the key business interests in local alliances (see Molotch, 1976; Elkin, 1987a: 32-42).²⁵ Furthermore, while higher land and property values may generate revenue for local authorities, they may also conflict with the objective of generating and maintaining inward investment by mobile capital, which has to bear the higher costs demanded by rentiers. Nor, on the other hand, should it be assumed that physical development necessarily increases the value of land or property. Molotch, in his seminal article 'The City as Growth Machine' makes the point that different land uses may be 'noxious' to one another (1976: 311). On the other hand, as Cochrane argues, local property values can rise because of tight growth controls (1999: 118).

Nichols Clark and Goetz (1993) use quantitative analysis to rebut regime theory (1993: 105-145), arguing that there is strong evidence of growth-limits and anti-growth strategies in cities (1993: 107). There is no evidence, they claim, that the presence of powerful business groups in an area leads automatically to pro-development programmes or to actual growth. On the contrary, they say, business leaders tend to adopt the dominant local preferences. Political mobilisation by organised groups is seen to be the key factor in government decision-making (1993: 135). However, neither Elkin, nor Stone, deny the possibility of 'anti-growth' coalitions and Stone himself notes that active redevelopment and infrastructure expenditure can add to 'fiscal distress', making an area less attractive for investment and creating hardship for small, local, property owners (Stone, 1987b: 279). But to measure the impact of explicitly stated business preferences on the public agenda misses the point in regime theory that decisions are routinised, or arrived at by exclusion (Elkin, 1987a: 87).²⁶ This critique uses a perspective based on the first dimension of power to criticise a perspective based on the second and third dimensions (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970, Lukes, 1974). Two of the empirical examples used by Nichols Clark and Goetz refer to the successful mobilisation of anti-growth coalitions in Boulder and Boca Raton (1993: 113). The social basis of these coalitions included: a largely professional or well-to-do adult

²⁵ However, Cox and Mair criticise regime theory from a Marxist perspective. See also Stone's response to Cox and Mair (Stone, 1991).

²⁶ See discussion of the role of local officials above.

population; striking physical surroundings; and high-tec business parks. However, an earlier study by Rosenbaum calls this account into doubt in two ways, showing both that the city governments of Boca Raton and Boulder were *reluctant* to support the anti-growth movements (1978: 45-49) and that the cities were *not* dependent upon new development for economic growth (1978: 54-55). In these cases at least, growth led to increased costs for business. Anti-growth coalitions may therefore act in the interests of local business and local business may support growth control.

In summary, if rising land values are not necessarily good indicators of business interest and if, on the other hand, land values can rise without growth, they must comprise a weaker dynamic to regime formation than Elkin anticipates. Conversely, if business is sometimes inclined to limit growth, regime building around anti-growth aims could be easier than Elkin or Stone suppose.²⁷

Regime Theory as a Theory of Structure and Agency

Regime theory has been viewed as a corrective to what Stoker (1998b: 122) describes as the overemphasis on constraining forces in Marxist approaches to urban politics. In this sense, while it moves beyond the pluralism-elitism debate characteristic of the community power studies, it has re-invigorated the structure and agency debate. Perhaps the most serious criticism levelled at regime theory is that it is incapable of relating local and extra-local factors, and it stands accused of localism and empiricism (Ward, 1996, 1997a,b; Di Gaetano, 1997, Cochrane *et al*, 1996). Says Stoker 'Regime theory must escape from the localist trap' (1995: 67). How valid are these perspectives and how far should regime theory be understood as a theory of structure and agency?

There is disagreement within the secondary literature on this question. Ward views regime theory as a bottom up approach, which is empiricist in character (Ward, 1997a,b). He further claims that regimes appear to be bottom up because that is the way they have been studied, an epistemological weakness in the framework (Ward, 1996: 432). DiGaetano (1997: 849) argues that regime theorists overemphasize the importance of local factors in setting urban governing agendas, while

²⁷ More fundamental weaknesses in the way regime theory characterises the profit economy are discussed further below.

neglecting national and international economic and political factors. Stone, he says, neglects to specify how external forces shape processes and structures of urban governance (1997: 865). Cochrane *et al* further argue that the focus in regime theory on the way power is distributed locally may disguise the fact that power has shifted away from local actors (1996: 1328). Some scholars disagree with this localist evaluation of regime theory (Lauria, 1997: 234). Brown views regime theory as recognising both local capacity for action and the structural constraints of capitalism and liberal democracy (1999: 70), while Strom sees regime theorists as having embraced an understanding of interest articulation and coalition building without abandoning their understanding of the structural constraints within which city politics unfold (1996: 457). Other approaches plough the middle ground. Sites views regime theory as a useful corrective to economic reductionism, but he believes that it has led analysts to err too far in their focus on the activities of local agents (1997: 551). Similarly, for Kantor *et al*, (1997: 349), regime theorists concede the importance of contextual factors, but they focus on internal decision making, leaving the socioeconomic environment as a factor to which regimes respond.

So, where then does regime theory actually stand? Is it possible to adjudicate between these differing perspectives? Stone states:

Regime theory adopts the central tenet of political economy - that economic forces play a strong role in shaping urban outcomes - but appreciates that 'politics [also] matters' in shaping these outcomes (1987a: 17).

He further argues that just because he takes the profit economy as given, it doesn't mean that he separates agent from structure (1991: 294). He denies that regime theory is localistic and, he argues, it provides a way of relating extra-local forces (1998a: 250). For Stone, capitalism is viewed as a major source of policy challenges, perceived as a key extra-local factor generating the interests and activities of the business community (1998a: 251). His own objections suggest that these critiques, at least, misinterpret regime theory. The foregoing exposition of regime theory further suggests that criticisms of localism are unfair, given the abstract nature of the generalizations made about the nature of liberal democratic societies and the way in which Elkin identifies concrete independent variables operating in urban politics which derive from this abstract generalization. Furthermore, the debate between Stone (1998a) and Imbroscio (1998a,b), noted

above, is precisely about the abstract pre-conditions for regime formation which Ward urges on scholars of regime theory (1997a,b).²⁸

This issue raises the question of how we formulate questions in political science and of which phenomena are appropriate for study. Wendt argues that what is primitive in one research endeavour must be problematic in another. But, he says, scientific practice has to start somewhere (Wendt: 1987: 349). Obviously, we cannot possibly study everything at once. In an ‘internal’ explanation of the kind offered by Stone in Atlanta, external factors exist, but serve as ‘background’ variables. Stone’s approach is based on the view that the test of a theory is not its ability to account for everything that happens, but its ability to pinpoint the most important factors (1979: 187). The point of empirical research, then, is to identify the most important variables governing the characteristics of a social phenomenon. Max Weber, an influence on Stone, once cautioned:

Consider the historical and cultural sciences ... they give us no answer to the question, whether the existence of these cultural phenomena have been and are worthwhile. And they do not answer the further question, whether it is worth the effort required to know them (Gerth and Wright Mills, 1948: 145).

Are local political processes worth the effort of knowing them? In regime theory, the study of local processes is justified by the *a priori* claim that politics matter. This position is qualified, theoretically, by the claim that structural factors will tend to produce local outcomes favouring the business sector and it is qualified empirically by Elkin’s study of Dallas. In this sense, regime theory can be viewed as progressive because it links the question of structure and agency theoretically and empirically.²⁹ In addressing the question of how far local politics can have an impact in mediating structural tendencies, it is arguable that it produces facts which are worth knowing, provided that the respective efficacy of structures and agents are evaluated in explaining social phenomena. Stoker, (1997a: 1) points out that the study of urban politics has been subject

²⁸ Of course, this debate was published after Ward.

²⁹ While regime theory is here viewed as a step forward from the structure *or* agency debate, the following discussion of regime theory and Marxism suggests that it is nonetheless limited as a theory of structure *and* agency.

to cycles and trends, like the wider field of political science. Given that regime theory is a response to 'structuralism', those who have argued that it falls into the trap of 'localism' run the risk of perpetuating a futile debate, swinging pendulum-like between explanations which emphasise structure and those which emphasise agency. The whole point of regime theory is that it moves beyond this debate downplaying neither local nor extra-local explanatory factors.

However, regime theory does not identify reciprocity between all variables. The point has been made in relation to Stone's discussion of human motivation, that regime theory identifies 'structuring' between regime (organism) and policy orientation (response), but not between regime and policy outcome on the one hand and the division of labour (stimulus) on the other. Reciprocity occurs between regime and agent, but not between regime and agent and systemic context. Stone (1998a) recognises that systemic power can be mediated by other variables, that it can have differential impact across different policy arenas and that its realisation is contingent on pre-emption. But in itself, systemic power can only be manipulated through extra-local (for example, State or Federal) action. It is contingent in relation to higher levels of government, but it is reified in relation to local regime governance. Regime theory is not, therefore, a complete theory of structuring, if structuring is taken to mean a dynamic interrelation between all variables having an impact on local politics.³⁰

There are two qualifications to be made to this defence of regime theory against localist interpretations. While these criticisms of 'localism' or 'empiricism' are unfair in relation to Elkin and Stone, they have greater substance in relation to the secondary literature some of which, as chapter 3 shows, tends to be oriented on case studies and on the presumption that regimes exist. To the extent that the secondary literature does this, without either incorporating an analysis of structures, or stating *a priori* assumptions about structural factors, they can be criticised for localism (Horan, 1997: 151/2). Secondly, it is arguable that in moving away from Marxism and downplaying economic theory, regime theory fails adequately to explain the reasons why, in liberal

³⁰ This point is an observation, rather than a criticism, since the limits of structuring constitute an empirical as well as a theoretical question.

democracy, there has to be a constant tension between business objectives and those of the wider citizenry. The following section addresses this question by considering further the position taken by Elkin and Stone on the workings of the capitalist economy.

Regime Theory and the Profit Economy

It has already been shown how the legacy of structural Marxism is visible; firstly in Elkin's and Stone's early characterisation of the way in which societal contradictions are embodied in public officials; and secondly in Stone's analysis of the imperatives governing human behaviour. Recognition of the structural position of capitalism is not, however, accompanied by an analysis of the dynamics within it. So, when Stone says that redevelopment policies are a response to economic restructuring, we do not know whether this restructuring is a cause or an effect of preference formation or both (1993: 15). This deficit is recognised by Stone, who simply acknowledges the point, noting that he does not explain how systemic power came into being, but only how it is maintained in the system of governance (1980: 989).

Why then is Marxism rejected? Stone believes, as was noted above, that society is only loosely co-ordinated and his 'Tillian' view of society rejects the economy centred view of the world on which Marxism is dependent (Stone, 1989: 226-227). Elkin objects to class analyses of the state on the basis that public officials are not 'instructed' by a dominant capitalist class. They exhibit a level of discretion which Marxism cannot, he says, explain. Elkin believes that the Marxian ruling class thesis requires the dominant class to exercise an 'implausible' degree of rationality and planning (1985b: 184). Validation of the Marxist thesis, according to Elkin, requires that the ruling class be shown as capable of identifying decisions crucial to its interests and of calculating and carrying out a course of action to realise them. Elkin follows Lindblom's (1977) approach in which the central building blocks of societies are not classes, or modes of production, but 'control systems' (Elkin, 1985a: 7).³¹ Popular control and market economics therefore represent different control systems. In his critique of Castells' volume *The Urban Question* (1977) Elkin

³¹ Elkin doesn't use this concept in a way which contradicts Stone's social production model.

(1979) argues that Castells and other Marxist scholars fail to integrate their accounts of structural contradictions with an adequate analysis of political processes.³²

In moving beyond Marxism, it is assumed that within the bounds of the profit perspective, the terms of co-operation between government and business are negotiable (Stone, 1991: 290). The business objective of growth is embodied in the activities and capacities of local officials (Elkin, 1985a: 7). This, then, is the terrain of agency and it is the choices of state officials which explain economic fluctuation. Whatever the merits of this return to politics, Elkin views capitalist societies pessimistically. In language more reminiscent of Marxism, he speaks of a 'decline' in both liberal and democratic practices and a crisis of liberal democracy represented as a decline in state legitimacy. The implication is that economic crisis has been caused by an excess of democracy, or perhaps an over-articulation of democratic demands by state officials.

The state may be able to survive problems of declining productivity and capital accumulation, fiscal undernourishment ... overloading ... and disaggregation ... These all cut deep, but because they are probably imbalances within existing arrangements, profits can be raised, interest aggregation can be increased, and citizen mobilization can be reduced and a crisis thus averted (Elkin, 1985b: 205).

But at the same time:

If a liberal democratic state is to survive, the political community or public must be seen as a source of evaluation. Just how this is to be done is less clear (1985b: 206).

It is arguable that the problem this perspective poses for regime theory lies in its retreat from economics (Imbroscio, 1998b: 263). In rejecting Marxism, Elkin and Stone have effectively dispensed with economic theory, despite the critical question within the regime perspective being 'whether a regime dedicated to both popular control and a property-based market system can thrive' (Elkin, 1987a: 17). In this sense, regime theory depends on the long-term sustainability of the market economy, but it does not explain or account for the fact that market economies fluctuate and it does not address the possibility that the conditions for this fluctuation are built into the social practices of accumulation and competition, rather than into the performance of business

³² This criticism of Marxism is unfair. In a longer exposition, it would be possible to show that Marx's conceptions of class and domination invoke a concept of systemic power which does not necessarily require command power or domination.

leaders and public officials. Neither does it consider the implications for the accumulation process, were the state to limit its capacity for profit as regime theory prescribes.

Given the absence of economic prescriptions to enhance the sustainability of the market, a contradiction emerges between the need for public evaluation and the problem of democratic overload, expressed as poor economic performance, which too much democracy tends to produce (Elkin, 1985b: 206). There is a tension here between the normative and the empirical dimensions in regime theory. If it is true that the decline in liberal democracy, in the first instance at least, requires a moderation of citizen demands, then how can easing business pre-eminence, by reducing material inequality and by increasing popular control, be feasible? In light of Elkin's analysis, the liberal element of regime theory appears to stand not in a dynamic, reciprocal relationship with the democratic element, but in a position where liberalism tends to undermine democracy and vice versa. This perspective is lent weight both by Elkin's view of capitalism and in the pessimism which proceeds from the normative element of regime theory, to which the exposition now turns.

The Normative Tasks of Regime Theory

Both Elkin and Stone share a normative commitment to the ideals of liberal democracy. In practice, this means a commitment to greater political equality and popular control and to the amelioration of business pre-eminence in politics. Stone's contribution to this 'constructive' element of regime theory is much more limited (Imbroscio, 1998b: 264), though he urges fellow scholars to take a normative approach to the future study of the politics of urban development (1987c: 297).³³ His normative concerns are visible, however, in his edited collection of essays, in which he and his collaborators consider the feasibility of bringing about greater equality and popular control in the education system. However, it is Elkin whose work fully elaborates the idea of a commercial republic.³⁴

³³ Wolman and Goldsmith also criticise rigid distinction between normative and empirical theory (1992: 7).

³⁴ See Elkin (1985d, 1986, 1987a, 1993a,b, 1994, 1996a,b).

Elkin argues that American society, broadly, aspires to the idea of a commercial republic. Such a society has two organising principles: it must be subject to political decision, (democracy), but it mustn't arrange the daily lives of individuals (liberalism):

A liberal democratic regime is the successful accommodation of these two impulses - one popular, the other private and individualistic. Its appeal lies in its contradictions - and so do its difficulties (19987a: 200).

Given that the market economy is a good thing, says Elkin, the controllers of productive assets not only will, but must and ought to have substantial discretion over how these assets are to be employed. In liberal democracies, this imperative means that businessmen must and ought to continue to have a special place in government counsels (1994: 122). But, at present, this place is viewed as excessively pre-eminent.³⁵

Elkin's approach, inspired by Aristotle, is a constitutional, or constitutive, approach to the design of institutions. He argues that political institutions cannot simply be viewed as generative of good outcomes, such as freedom and equality, but that good institutions have freedom and equality embedded within them (1985d: 262). Political institutions are just as much ends in themselves as the outcomes they are intended to produce. The most important thing about a political institution is, therefore, not only what it does, but also what it is (1985d: 262). Elkin proposes the reconstitution of those institutions which facilitate business pre-emption of the local policy agenda with measures, for example, enhancing the constitutional status of local government and reducing the mobility of capital. Throughout this normative discussion runs a strong thread of pessimism, visible not only in Elkin's view of capitalism, but in the reformist blueprints put forward by both Elkin and Stone. At no point does either scholar make a positive or confident statement about how the objectives of liberal democracy can be achieved. According to Elkin, the system itself undermines serious efforts at reform.

Regardless of their merits, the prospects of such reforms occurring are slim, not least because the very workings of the political economy that serve to prompt the concern for reform will substantially impede it (Elkin, 1987a: 181).

³⁵ The fact that Elkin's normative project is so clearly oriented on the USA may be another reason why British political scientists have been influenced more by Stone.

Even if the reforms advocated occur and institutions are designed in the way recommended, they may, as suggested above, be consumed by the strains of the larger political economy (Elkin, 1987a: 188). Elkin further asks, but does not answer, the question of whether it is possible for mutual respect to flourish between individuals and groups in conditions where there is a division between owner and worker. Even if there were material equality, he wonders whether the very fact of an owner-worker relationship would create insurmountable barriers to mutual respect (1996a: 139):³⁶

Any pleasure that we may derive from noting that there are no compelling alternatives at the moment to a commercial republican regime, for Americans at least, must be tempered by the extreme difficulty of realizing such a regime (Elkin, 1994: 137).

Even in education, where the grip of the development agenda is weaker, the prospects for establishing performance regimes enhancing the opportunities for lower class children, are viewed with pessimism (Stone, 1998c: 11/18).

The limit of regime theory, then, is that while it views the economic dimension as critical, the anatomy of that dimension is not adequately theorised. Regime theory fails, for all its strengths, because it offers neither description, nor prescription for capitalism itself (Lauria, 1997), except to say that the market economy is a key element in the good society (Elkin, 1994). This point matters because the normative dimensions of regime theory, particularly in Elkin, require both that the market economy be sustainable and that levels of democratic participation be increased. However, the real world situation means that the needs of the market economy will often require the further limitation rather than the expansion of democratic demands. It is arguable, therefore, based on the evaluations of Elkin and Stone themselves, that the empirical-theoretical elements of regime theory do not support its prescriptions. As a second level empirical theory, it is inadequate to the normative tasks it sets itself.

³⁶ Mutual respect, says Elkin is vital to the success of the commercial republic. He believes that some unspecified, but greater, level of material equality is necessary to generate this mutual respect (1996a: 143).

Conclusion

In summary, this exposition treats the work of Elkin and Stone as an authoritative, coherent, statement of regime theory. It shows the strengths and the weakness in an approach which is not a ‘grand narrative’, but which nonetheless generates explanatory variables at a range of levels from the structural foundations of liberal democratic society to the elementary motivations of human behaviour. Regime theory is rich with possibilities and in many respects, its critics are unjust. If it fails to realise its normative objectives (and it recognises the likelihood of such failure), it is nonetheless a powerful and refined contribution to the concept of structure and agency as applied to local politics. It is a theory of liberal democracy, whose empirical and normative claims direct it to the study of local government. Regime theory therefore bears the characteristics of a multi-level theory in which the interorganisational and micro levels of analysis can be seen to depend on core assumptions made about the macro, or state, level of analysis. Box 1 illustrates this point, and Box 2 summarises the main propositions in regime theory identified in this exposition.

Macro <i>(Second level theory)</i>	Meso <i>(Inter-organisational)</i>	Micro <i>(Decisional Level)</i>
Liberal democratic state based on division of labour between market and popular control	Urban politics based on fiscal structures which make city governments dependent on business resources	Various strategies for governance based on recognition by officials that they cannot govern without co-operation with business. Decisions are based on bounded rationality and on an instrumental/purposive continuum in human motivation

Box 1: The Analytical Levels of Urban Regime Theory

Based on the foregoing perspective, the remainder of this study, accepting that local politics matter, asks the question just how much do they matter? Chapter 3 will now consider the way in which regime theory has been used in the study of urban politics in the UK and explore the factors which might govern the establishment of local regeneration partnerships. It examines adaptive and critical approaches to regime theory, drawn mainly from British political science, with a view to identifying and inter-relating variables which may have caused urban partnerships to emerge; it compares these variables with those posited in regime theory; and it examines the range of phenomena which this complex of variables might produce, considering which of these phenomena are commensurable with the notion of regime governance.

<i>Theoretical Pre-conditions for Regime Governance</i>	The division of labour between state and market creates governmental dependence on other organisational resources, particularly those of the business sector. The ownership by business of productive assets gives it systemic power and a privileged capacity to occupy strategically important positions in the process of local governance.
<i>The Empirical Scope of Regime Theory</i>	‘Second Level’ theory of structure and agency operating at the state, interorganisational and decisional levels.
<i>Generalizability of Regime Theory</i>	In principle to all liberal democratic states and to cities with a population over 50,000.
<i>Operational Dynamics to Regime Governance</i>	Federal/state policy regulates the conditions for regime governance through fiscal structures. Local government is heavily dependent on resources raised through local taxation. Antipathy to business leads to fiscal trouble and capital mobility. Well organised, locally dependent business groups share an interest with the government in attracting mobile inward investment to increase land values, which in turn improves the government’s fiscal base. Stone generally takes the same view, but downplays the impact of mobile capital.
<i>The Process of Regime Governance</i>	Driven by imperatives of co-operation - the social production model. All parties have an interest in getting things done. Collaboration is therefore necessary, particularly between local governance and business. Those with certain resources are more likely to have the capacity to pre-empt strategic positions and take a pre-eminent position in the policy process. Regime governance is contingent. Failure to construct regime can result in non-governance.
<i>Elementary Factors in Human Motivation</i>	Based in dualism in human nature between economic rational and social purposive behaviour. Which direction is taken depends on perceived feasibility of course of action. Perception of feasibility based on narrow cognition of the world, though cognition is dependent on interaction with other agents.
<i>The Geographical and Functional Domains of Regime Governance</i>	Regime analysis is applicable to different geographical levels and to different policy arenas at the local level.
<i>Normative Perspective of Regime Theory</i>	Embraces division of labour, but seeks to mitigate iniquitous effects. Seeks to establish pluralist commercial democracy.
<i>Prescriptions</i>	Constitution, federal government and states determine the institutional context of local relations. Measures can be taken to limit business pre-eminence. For example, capital mobility can be penalised and fiscal dependence on local business by local government reduced. There is scepticism about the feasibility and the efficacy of the prescriptions, if implemented.
<i>Limitations of Regime Theory</i>	The empirical analysis of liberal democratic society suggests neither that the market economy is sustainable, nor that the influence of entrenched interests can be reduced. The Commercial Republic therefore appears to be utopia.

Box 2: The Major Characteristics of Urban Regime Theory

Chapter 3. Urban Regime Theory in Critical Perspective: Theorising Urban Partnerships in the UK

Introduction

Comparative studies of urban regime theory have focussed on defining regimes by typology (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994; Di Gaetano and Klemanski, 1993), examining potential reasons for local coalition formation in the UK (Harding, 1991, 1994; 1996a,b, 1998; Ward, 1997) and on examining the local processes by which regime formation might occur and be sustained (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994). This chapter links these debates, considering how far regime theory is able to explain and to characterise urban partnerships in the UK. It develops a distinction between different types of partnership, of which regime governance is viewed as a specific case, and it considers the conditions necessary for the establishment of partnerships and of regime governance in the UK. At present, critics and adaptors of regime theory lack a common conceptual framework against which to evaluate and compare developing partnerships in the UK or to evaluate these partnerships in comparison with those described by Elkin and Stone. These issues are recognised as important, but they have not been fully addressed in adaptive literatures to date (Stoker, 1995; Painter, 1997; Ward, 1997). Mindful of criticisms by Stoker (1995) and Ward (1997) of inductive approaches to theory building, the objective here is to establish plausible 'abstract preconditions' for partnership and/or regime governance in the UK and to generate hypotheses about the kind of phenomena which might be produced from the realisation, or empirical instantiation, of these conditions.

The chapter does not attempt to demonstrate the obvious, that many of the propositions and characteristics which Elkin and Stone identify are inapplicable to British local governance (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994; Lawless, 1994). Rather, the objective is to assess whether regime theory represents a useful tool in building explanations for public-private partnerships in the UK. In other

words, following Elkin and Stone, can we identify variables in the UK which: predispose public and private sector groups/actors to cooperate in order to achieve governance; predisposes this cooperation to occur on terms favouring the business sector and economic development policies to the exclusion of other sectors and goals; and which result in phenomena commensurable with regime governance? The objective, therefore, is not so much to test urban regime theory as it is to explain and identify forms of co-operation between local government and the business sector, evaluating the contribution which regime theory makes in building those explanations. The analysis moves from a contrast between partnerships and regime governance, to an assessment of the abstract pre-conditions necessary for regime formation in the UK avoiding, as Ward (1997a,b) and Andrew and Goldsmith (1998) caution, the 'trap' of localism and the presumption that partnerships should necessarily be perceived as regimes (Bailey *et al*, 1995: 26). The new concept of regime governance developed here is concerned with the interface between local authorities and the business sector and in what ways this interface resembles that in the USA. It is, however, recognised that regime governance may involve other groups or even exclude the business sector. These forms of governance lie beyond the scope of this study, whose concern is one potential facet of regime governance, the interface between local government and business, the core relationship identified by Elkin and by Stone.¹

The chapter begins by considering why it is that regime theory has gained such currency in the UK during the 1990s. It then establishes criteria for the ensuing discussion by clarifying the definitions attributed to the terms partnership, governance, network and regime. It proceeds to identify the properties of regime governance, through the lens of empirical studies involving British cases, arguing that to broaden the concepts in regime theory too far is to reduce it to description and classification of any governing phenomenon (Stoker, 1995). Moving on to the theoretical dimensions of regime theory, two different adaptations, those of Harding and Stoker and Mossberger are evaluated, examining issues they highlight in relation to procedures of theoretical

¹ Regime governance, as used in this study, hereafter refers to the relationship between local government and the business sector, without prejudice to the potential for regime governance in other interorganisational relationships.

integration and convergence. Finally, hypotheses are generated concerning those variables capable of explaining partnership/regime formation and it is considered how far these variables are commensurable with those identified in regime theory.

Why Urban Regime Theory?

Chapter 2 began by showing just how influential urban regime theory has become during the 1990s (Imbroscio, 1998a). This growth in influence coincides with a wider debate, concerning the process of transition from local government to local governance (Harding, 1991; Stoker, 1991). This transition denotes that we have entered an era of local governance in which local government is no longer able to carry out its responsibilities alone. Consequently, it has had to engage in new relationships with a range of other organisations, private, quasi-public and voluntary, to meet its objectives.² It is questionable just how new 'local governance' is. Hall and Hubbard (1996: 155) argue that many commentators take for granted that local governance prior to the early 1970s was dominated by managerial politics, thereby masking the question of whether the shift to 'entrepreneurial' modes of local governance actually supplants, or merely supplements, traditional approaches. Stanyer reminds readers that there has 'long been a complex relationship between public and private organisations in the delivery of public services' (1999: 237). Continuity needs to be explained as well as change (Shaw, 1993: 258; John and Cole, 1998: 385). However, while this study provides a limited examination of the history of partnership working, it does not offer a comparative analysis of evidence over decades or centuries, thereby seeking to differentiate one era from another (Stanyer, 1999: 237). Its most important contribution is in identifying the nature and characteristics of partnership working in the present day and possible trends that may be developing.

While local governance may, or may not, be a recent phenomenon, it has further been argued that since the 1980s, there has been a growing exchange of initiatives between the USA and the UK, many of which have influenced the process of local government-business partnership development

² The meaning of 'governance' is considered further below.

(Atkinson, 1995: 8). These initiatives include the Enterprise Zone, the Training and Enterprise Council system, the Urban Development Corporation and the Urban Development Grant (Atkinson, 1995; Wolman, 1992). As Ward observes:

The 1980s witnessed attempts to import to the UK an 'American' philosophy, culture and ideology that actively seeks to incorporate the business sector into urban regeneration' (Ward, 1996: 427).

An often cited example of urban policy transfer (see Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996) is that of the Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG), originally developed in the USA and implemented as the Urban Development Grant (UDG) in the UK (Boyle, 1985; Wolman 1992; Wolman and Goldsmith, 1992; Atkinson and Moon, 1994). Wolman's study (1992) demonstrates how the UDG was inspired by UDAG and he shows how the Department of the Environment undertook research in the USA during 1981 examining potentially adaptable policies for inner city regeneration in the UK. According to Wolman, officials and ministers who visited the US were impressed by UDAG. In 1980, the Department of the Environment began to develop a version of UDAG based upon American principles of private-public partnerships and leveraging concepts which were compatible with the ideas of the new Conservative Government.

Initiatives of this nature have led to claims that there may be a process of institutional convergence occurring between British and US local governance (Bennett, 1991a,b). This study is not concerned with providing an empirically based comparison between the institutional arrangements in the UK and the USA, but the suggestion throws up the possibility that regime theory may increasingly be able to provide insights into the way in which partnerships are developing. Hence, the question of whether regime theory may be growing in explanatory potential due to policy convergence.³

³ This study doesn't address the influence of policy transfer on central government and local governance. See, for example Davies and Evans, (1997) and Evans and Davies, (1999).

Partnership, Network, Governance and Regime

The term 'governance' can have many meanings (Rhodes, 1996: 653).⁴ Stoker (1998b: 19), however, defines governance simply, as a 'complex set of institutions and actors that are drawn from but also beyond government'. Local governance at its simplest means that local government has been transformed from the dominant legitimate public institution to being one body among many which participates in a complex framework of governing (John, 1997: 253). For Rhodes, governance is accorded a more specific meaning, referring to 'self-organizing, interorganizational networks' (Rhodes, 1996: 660).⁵ It is the product of processes which Rhodes characterises as 'the hollowing out of the state' (1990: 661).⁶ According to this definition, governance is a specific network type (Rhodes and Marsh, 1992: 251), characterised by Rhodes according to four factors: interdependence between organisations; continuing interactions between network members caused by the need to exchange resources and negotiate shared purposes; game-like interactions rooted in trust and regulated by the rules of the game as negotiated by participants; and a significant degree of autonomy from the state, which, while no longer in a sovereign position, can steer indirectly and imperfectly (1996: 660).⁷ For Rhodes, trust is the central co-ordinating mechanism in networks in the same way that command and competition are the key mechanisms in hierarchies and markets. Networks are viewed as high trust mechanisms and contracts as low trust mechanisms (1999a: xx). These characteristics of networks as governance are close in kind to the

⁴ Rhodes identifies six meanings of the term 'governance': the minimal state, as corporate governance, as the new public management, as good governance, as a socio-cybernetic system and as self-organizing networks (Rhodes, 1996: 653).

⁵ Stoker (1998a) makes five propositions characterizing governance which are viewed as complementary, one of which is that governance is about autonomous self-governing networks of actors (1998a: 23).

⁶ The 'hollowing out of the state' refers to: privatization and limiting the scope and forms of public intervention; loss of functions by central and local government departments to alternative delivery systems, the loss of functions by Britain to the European Union; and limits to the discretion of public servants through the new public management with its emphasis on accountability and clearer political control through a distinction between politics and administration (Rhodes, 1996: 661).

⁷ This perspective seems to be a departure from the Marsh and Rhodes continuum in which an issue network can be characterised by conflict and mistrust (1992: 251).

interactions described in regime theory. For regime theorists, however, the process of building regime governance is crucial to its success and it is perceived to be difficult. The literature on policy networks, on the other hand, tends to take networks, particularly policy communities, for granted. This is a difference in focus, however, rather than a theoretical disagreement. The terms ‘governance’, ‘self-organising interorganizational network’ and ‘governing regime’ are, therefore, interchangeable according to this understanding. But as a theory of networking, regime theory is specialized, generating claims about why and how interdependence occurs, particularly between local government and elements of the business sector in liberal democratic societies. These perspectives underpin the discussion below of Stoker’s and Mossberger’s (1994) treatment of regime theory and policy network analysis. Where, then, does the concept of partnership stand in relation to those of network, governance and regime?

The terms ‘partnership’ and ‘network’ have been used in imprecise ways in the literature (McCabe *et al*, 1997: 10; Atkinson, 1999: 63). For Skelcher *et al*, networks constitute a basis upon which more formal partnerships can develop (1996: 2). Alternatively, Stoker views self-governing networks to be the ‘ultimate partnership activity’ (1998a: 23). Lowndes and Skelcher choose to distinguish between partnerships as organisational forms and networks as modes of social coordination, or governance. Importantly, they argue that the existence of partnerships does not imply that relations are conducted on the basis of mutual benefit, trust and reciprocity, the characteristics of governance as self organizing networks (1998: 314). Formal arrangements do not guarantee meaningful relationships and formality can limit the capacity of partnerships for flexibility and innovation (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998: 324). In fact, argue Lowndes and Skelcher, the process of formalisation tends to re-enforce hierarchical tendencies in the partnership, rather than networking dynamics, with different groups becoming marginal or dominant. Either way, they caution that the co-operation and mutuality implied by the ideal-typical network mode of governance can too easily be read into existing partnership organisations (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998: 331). Similarly, the following discussion shows that there has been a tendency in the literature to apply regime theory to many kinds of partnership.

In summary, regime governance is a specialized form of networking, a highly developed partnership arrangement which does not require formal structures to sustain it. The remainder of the chapter is, therefore, based on the perspective that partnership working cannot necessarily be characterised as regime governance, unless it exhibits the features set out in Box 3 below. Regime theory is not a theory of public-private partnerships, insofar as these partnerships do not correspond with Rhodes' definition of governance. Examination of the processes within formal partnership bodies provides for an evaluation of whether these bodies are generating the tendencies associated with regime governance or whether they are inhibiting the kind of networking arrangements described as 'governance' above. Given this approach, what kind of phenomena have been held to denote urban regimes in British political science?

Conceptualizing Regime Governance in British Political Science

As was argued in chapter 2, the phenomena described as 'urban regimes' in the secondary literature vary to a wide extent. Recent writers have been critical of this tendency among adaptors of regime theory (Stoker, 1995; John and Cole, 1998; Painter, 1997). The following sections consider different governing arrangements which have been characterised as regimes, identifying features whose presence could denote processes of regime governance, the key concept developed in this section.

The Distinctive Properties of Regime Governance - Interorganisational Working and Partnership Longevity

Stoker is particularly critical of what he believes to be misapplications of regime theory. He criticises Savitch and Thomas (1991) for using the term 'regime' as a:

convenient descriptive label for any political system whereas in Stone's analysis a regime is a particular type of long-term stable relationship between governmental and non-governmental partners (Stoker, 1995: 62/3).

Stoker might also have been referring to Di Gaetano and Klemanski, whose analysis produces a description of 'regime' which corresponds neither in explanation, in process, nor in type, with the work of Elkin and Stone. They redefine Stone's notion of the regime to encompass 'formal and informal arrangements for policy making and implementation, both across public and private

domains and within the public domain' (1993: 58). This application reconceptualizes urban regime theory to the extent that it can describe any governing arrangement, regardless of whether business or any other sector is involved. Di Gaetano and Klemanski broaden regime theory to encompass all modes of government and governance in the UK. The 'regime' they analyse consists of members and officers who are split by department and interest concerning the merits of growth/anti-growth strategies (1993: 73/4). This condition of internecine warfare between departments of the Council is described as a 'mixed pro-growth/management' regime (1993: 78).⁸ The situation described here deals neither with governance capacity building, nor imperatives to co-operation between state and market actors. It breaks the association between regime theory and the notion of 'governance' since a regime may comprise only 'government' for Di Gaetano and Klemanski. The cross-cutting of different concepts, government and governance, complicates the task of elaborating theoretical conditions for regime governance. 'Local governance' is commonly treated as a historically specific phenomenon stemming from the decline of the Keynesian Welfare State (Stoker, 1991), an era of 'local government'.⁹ A conception of governing regimes spanning these periods would need to be based on a set of conditions other than, or in addition to the dynamics of organisational interdependence. The idea of a regime outlined by Di Gaetano and Klemanski is incommensurable with regime theory, to the extent that regime theory is based on analysing interdependence between organisations.¹⁰

Peter John and Alistair Cole make a similar point in a more sophisticated account, commenting that attempts to broaden the range of phenomena counting as regimes have moved well beyond the original formulation (John and Cole, 1998: 386). They further comment that the involvement

⁸ The situation described by Di Gaetano and Klemanski suggests the continuation of professionalised policy networks and the absence of strategic management (Bassett, 1996).

⁹ It is not assumed here that such a characterisation is valid.

¹⁰ Di Gaetano's later (1997) work on Bristol is more sensitive to the traditional conceptualization of regime theory and instead of characterizing the local authority as a mixed regime, he identifies two regimes, pro-growth and growth management, which are centred around different local authority departments, but also incorporate influences from outside the local authority. See chapter 2.

of business in urban politics does not, alone, amount to regime governance (1998: 399), but detect signs of an ‘incipient’ regime in Leeds. The main example of partnership offered is that of the ‘Leeds Initiative’, formed in 1990. The Leeds Initiative consisted of an alliance between the Council, the Chamber of Commerce, the Training and Enterprise Council and, until it was wound up, the Urban Development Corporation. This initiative is described as an accommodation between city and business based on shared objectives (1998: 392). It is then explained that other public sector players also take key decisions in Leeds and suggested that the ‘governing coalition’ consists of the Council, the Chamber of Commerce, the Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) and the Government Office, which was not identified as part of the Leeds Initiative.¹¹ Policy is said to be determined by the relations between these four groups which ‘usually are in intense conflict’ (1998: 393). This account is not clear about the importance it attached to the Leeds Initiative in the incipient regime. Furthermore, the series of relationships described as the ‘governing coalition’ are antagonistic, not the pattern associated with regime governance, and it does not fit in with their own list of favourable conditions for regime formation which include ‘trust’, or with the conclusion that a regime is about co-operation and exchange (John and Cole, 1998: 388/9). Moreover, it contrasts with their description of shared objectives in the Leeds Initiative. We are left unclear about which actors participate in the regime, about the significance of business involvement and about whether the incipient regime is constituted in the formal partnership (the Leeds Initiative) or through wider networking processes. While the city’s politics are said to exhibit ‘regime like’ politics, this conclusion is qualified by the central role identified for the council and for the other public sector organisations (John and Cole, 1998: 394).

These issues highlight the need for methodological clarity. Are we seeking an explanation for urban partnerships as we find them in the UK and considering how far regime theory represents a useful conceptual standpoint for this purpose, are we considering whether urban regimes as conceptualised and explained in urban regime theory exist in the UK, or are we attempting to find ways of designating public-private partnerships as regime governance? This chapter considers

¹¹ As the regional adjudicator on the Single Regeneration Budget, the Government office stands in a hierarchical relationship with the partnership (Rhodes, 1999a: xviii).

first whether it is possible to identify urban partnerships which are comparable with Elkin's and Stone's urban regimes, and second to what extent these phenomena can be explained by drawing on the concepts central to regime theory. It therefore problematizes the existence of regimes, as Ward recommends, while speculatively outlining the abstract conditions for partnership/regime governance in the UK (Ward, 1997b: 1494). Based on the preceding discussion, and on that in chapter 2, one necessary feature of regime governance is cooperation between local government and other sectors, for the purposes of this study, the business sector. A second feature is strength and longevity in cooperative arrangements based on trust and reciprocity. These criteria are necessary indicators of regime governance but they are not sufficient. The next step, following the conceptual links made between partnership, network, governance and regime, is to consider the relationship between regime governance and different aspects of partnership working.

The Distinctive Properties of Regime Governance - Formality and Informality in Partnership Arrangements

Stoker (1998b), identifies three types of partnership. He distinguishes between principal-agent relations, inter-organisational negotiation and systemic co-ordination. The first category involves purchaser-provider relationships. The second category involves negotiation and joint project work between parties through the blending of capacities, which arrangement might correspond with a 'challenge partnership' (Oatley and Lambert, 1998). The third category goes further, establishing a level of 'mutual understanding and embeddedness' to the extent that organisations develop a shared vision and joint working capacity which leads to the establishment of self-governing networks. It involves local autonomy, games about rules, rather than games under rules, the games played within challenge partnerships (Stoker, 1998a: 22). This kind of partnership can, as suggested above, be equated with governance and networking. John and Cole (1998: 384) point out on the other hand that central state inspired public-private partnerships cannot be equated with autonomous and localist regimes, mirroring Stone's view that a growth coalition is not the same thing as a governing coalition (1991: 293).

Competitive Tendering

A good example of a purchaser-provider 'partnership', distinguished from the networking arrangements associated with regime governance, is compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) (Stoker, 1991; Clark and Stewart, 1990; Butler, 1985). The arrangements made under competitive tendering legislation are legally binding, formal in the sense used by Stone (1989: 180).¹² Cooperation is induced directly through government legislation and applied coercively, where local arrangements are not deemed satisfactory. This relationship, then, is a combination of market and hierarchy, but not network (Rhodes, 1999a: xviii). If we return to Stone's fourfold categorisation of power (1980: 981), this is 'intentional' and 'direct' power, a decisional relationship associated with the first dimension of power (Dahl, 1957). In regime theory, cooperation is not established through command structures but through the mediation of systemic power, the division of labour between state and market. In this kind of partnership, the business sector is not a party to agenda setting, but to implementation.¹³ The local authority is a client of the company delivering the service and it draws up the contract specifications based on whatever principles it likes, subject to statutory limitations. In regime theory, the interests of the private sector are articulated at the level of policy and project formulation. Finally, in contract arrangements, service delivery does not require the interdependence of public and private resources and nor does it generate governance outcomes hitherto unobtainable by other means. CCT is about subjecting local authority services to competition, not about generating governing capacity.¹⁴

¹² The rules for competitive tendering have been changed since May 1997. Local authorities are now under an obligation to provide 'best value'. This concept marginally weakens the pre-disposition in the previous legislation requiring local authorities to award contracts to the lowest bidder (DETR, 30.7.98).

¹³ This is not to deny the role of 'street level bureaucrats' in policy development. However, regime analysis prescribes a necessary role for the private sector in influencing policy.

¹⁴ Unless 'efficiency savings' are construed as governance capacity.

The Challenge Partnership

The question of regeneration partnerships is less straightforward (Malpass, 1994; Stewart, 1994). Stoker (1998a) characterises the relationships in these bodies as interorganisational negotiation. Are there conditions under which such partnerships, formal in character, could indicate regime governance? A partnership organisation which exists solely as a response to challenge fund opportunities, even if it does not indicate command power between agents, cannot be said to exhibit the characteristics of regime governance. It must demonstrate a concern with other issues, with sharing local resources to achieve local objectives which are not subject to a contract arrangement with central government or other funding body, like the European Union. In other words, it must exhibit autonomy from higher governmental authorities and it must show evidence of local governance capacity (DoE, February, 1995, April 1995; DETR, 10.9.98).¹⁵ In challenge fund partnerships, there may be no such dependence properly so-called, but rather a paper commitment to work together to obtain the resources provided by central government (Davies, 1996).¹⁶ The concept of leverage is a useful illustration of this point. As Berger and Foster show, the USA and the UK apply different definitions to the concept of leverage.

The concept of leverage in the United States goes much further than in the UK. In the US the first level is the leveraging of the pool of loan capital or seed money with which to initiate the redevelopment activity in a given area. The second level of leverage is the project investment stimulated by the availability of the seed capital. The final level is the spin-off and the ancillary development or what the Americans call the “critical mass of revitalisation” in the area (1982: 40).

Private sector investment, as a response to seed capital or infrastructural investment, is the key measurement of leverage applied by Government in its economic regeneration programmes (DoE, 13.6.95; Davies, 1996). This aspect of leverage is not governance capacity of the kind anticipated in regime theory. Regime governance generates business resources not only in the form of reactive inward investment, but also in the form of pro-active ‘seed money’ necessary for the project to proceed in the first place, for example, a Bond issue. This kind of investment would be indicative of resource dependence between agents and of local governance capacity.

¹⁵ This question is pursued further in defining ‘added value’ in chapter 4.

¹⁶ See below for a discussion of how interfaces in a challenge fund partnership may be the catalyst for the development of regime type governance.

Characteristics	Indicators of Regime Governance	Contra-indicators
<i>Participation</i>	Involves a core relationship between local authority and the business sector.	No pro-active relationship between local authority and the business sector, except through statutory processes, such as planning and tendering.
<i>Synergy</i>	Interdependence of resources between sectors to achieve hitherto unattainable governance outputs. Must involve mobilisation of local business resources.	Partnership does not generate governance capacity. Ends attainable without collaboration or simply unattainable.
<i>Mode of Co-operation</i>	Voluntary. May informal or institutionalised, provided other criteria are met.	Partnership involved command structure between local agents and/or between extra-local and local agents.
<i>Sustainability</i>	Relationship is sustainable over a long period.	Short term, symbolic or instrumental relationship.
<i>Governance Autonomy</i>	Many partnership objectives determined and resourced locally.	Partnership concerned solely with grant procurement.
<i>Spheres of Influence</i>	Strategic and operational. May exist beyond economic development and could affect capacities for governance in other policy arenas. Competing regimes may grow around competing objectives.	Partnership has no influence on local policy formation, nor on programme implementation. Purely symbolic in character.
<i>Governance Objectives</i>	Likely to be entrepreneurial in character, driven by a local growth agenda.	Determined externally, not by local partners. For example, SRB bid criteria.

Box 3: The Properties of Regime Governance Expressed as a Relationship Between Local Government and the Business Sector

Harding poses the question of whether networks are more important than, or determine the success of, partnership institutions (1996c: 3). In examining the extent to which partnerships correspond with the characteristics of regime governance in the case studies, sight is not lost of the fact that formal institutions may generate, or be underpinned and sustained by, networks. This perspective leaves open to empirical analysis whether regime governance exists only in informal networks, or also in institutionalised partnerships. It is here assumed both that governance by network and governance through formal partnerships may, provided that the latter form exhibits the properties indicated in Box 3, indicate regime governance. Further, the visibility of institutionalised partnerships, whether or not these partnerships indicate the characteristics of regime governance, does not exclude the possibility that influential networking, characterised by 'invisible factors' such as 'trust' and 'reciprocity' (Morgan *et al*, 1999: 193) may represent the key to processes of local governance. To identify a regime, then, is not just to identify the properties in a partnership but to identify regularity in the influence of key groups or individuals across a period of time. It is, as John and Cole say, to identify a form of decision making which extends way beyond particular initiatives and which may extend beyond particular policy arenas. Regime governance can be summarised as 'interorganisational, sustained, coordinative and empowering' (John and Cole, 1998: 387). The properties set out in Box 3 incorporate these principles and serve at the same time as a reminder of the main characteristics of the governing regime characterised by Elkin and Stone. These properties are treated as indicative of a process of governance, which may emerge in certain conditions (John and Cole, 1998: 387), not just as a set of institutional arrangements. The contra-indicators column provides a representation of governing arrangements which do not exhibit any of the properties associated with regime governance. The properties discussed above may, of course, be exhibited to a greater or lesser extent in a range of partnership activities. They represent a useful point of departure against which the resemblance of particular partnerships to regime governance can be assessed and, where appropriate, counterposed. This, then, is a question for empirical analysis.

The Theoretical Contribution of Adapted Urban Regime Theories

While it is important to be clear about the characteristics of regime governance, a broader objective of this chapter is to determine how far urban regime theory constitutes a useful conceptual framework for understanding the exogenous and endogenous dynamics which explain urban partnerships. Regime theory, while it does not preclude command relationships in partnerships, cannot explain them. Conversely, it is possible that regime governance is produced by different explanatory variables to those identified in regime theory. Regime type governance may not, in itself, indicate a tension between liberalism and democracy as its explanation. This section, therefore, examines theoretical issues arising from the process of adapting regime theory to the different political and institutional context represented by the UK. The final section considers potential explanatory variables which might account for various partnership types, including regime governance.

Comparing and Integrating Theoretical Approaches

Pickvance draws on Galtung's (1967) work concerning the co-existence of theories, arguing that it is sometimes necessary to choose between them (Pickvance, 1995: 273). Theoretical inconsistency can, he says, only be avoided if theories which address different levels of analysis 'nest' inside each other. This approach necessitates a distinction between levels of analysis in the development of multi-theoretical models. The idea, for example, of a policy transfer network illustrates this distinction insofar as the existence of the network is explained by the transfer process (Evans and Davies, 1999). The logical corollary of this position is that to the extent any two theories which operate at the same level of analysis differ in accounting for the phenomena they seek to explain, they are incommensurable. A necessary starting point for integrating policy network analysis and policy transfer analysis is that agreement can be achieved as to which 'causes' which. With respect to these two particular approaches, there are no invariant factors which preclude either proposition. In part, of course, the question is empirical. But insofar as one is making theoretical generalizations about events which draw on both approaches, a causal relationship, indeterminate or otherwise, should be stipulated. Purposive theoretical integration

can be justified analytically through exposition of this kind. It may be described as integration without convergence.

David Marsh (1995b) shows how three major paradigms of twentieth century political science; pluralism, Marxism and elite theory have converged, he argues, toward the territory occupied by elite theory. He demonstrates that this process has occurred through a series of intellectual compromises in which the foundational propositions in each theory have been qualified. Hence, for example, he shows that Marxists from the time of Gramsci have sought to break Marxism from the 'grip' of economism and class reductionism and that in doing so they remove many of the suppositions which differentiated it fundamentally from other perspectives. While it cannot be said that pluralism, Marxism and elitism are now indistinguishable, Marsh believes that they now differ less in essentials than in emphasis. So 'pluralists' emphasise agency and 'Marxists' emphasise structure (Marsh, 1995b: 281) but neither tradition tends to take a determinate position on the relationship between the two. The consequence of this change is that choices between them need not be based on foundational positions.

This debate is relevant to comparative adaptations of regime theory and the discussions which follow counterpose theoretical convergence and theoretical integration, suggesting that integration permits greater clarity of perspective, facilitating comparison between distinctive theoretical positions. The objective is to show that where different theories are treated as commensurable without indicating, as Pickvance puts it, where choices have to be made, or have been made between them, explanatory power is weakened. The following discussions consider the relationship between the growth machine model and urban regime theory and between urban regime theory and policy network analysis.

Growth Machines and Urban Regimes

Space does not permit full account to be taken of the growth machine model developed by Logan and Molotch (Molotch, 1976; Logan and Molotch, 1987, 1996). It has been the subject of fewer comparative studies than regime theory (but see for example, Lloyd and Newlands, 1988), possibly

because it is seen by some as deterministic, whereas regime formation is tendential or contingent, lending the framework additional flexibility (Lawless, 1994: 1318). Wood (1996: 1283), on the other hand criticises the growth machine literature as ‘voluntaristic’. He views it as being about the way in which elite material interests are realised by economic agents, while, in comparison, he says, regime theory is about the way coalitions produce and re-produce governing capacity.¹⁷ Unlike regime theory, growth machine analysis is therefore based on an individualistic account of elite action. For Logan and Molotch, the activism of entrepreneurs is the critical force shaping the urban system, explaining the ‘rise’ and ‘fall’ of particular urban systems and the dominance of entrepreneurial politics (1996: 293). ‘[G]rowth is the result of the usurpation of political control by unrepresentative land based local elites and is the source of their continuing coherence as a power bloc’ (Molotch, 1976: 349). Molotch’s perspective is, furthermore, much closer to that of Marxism than regime theory and he cites the work of Marxist geographer David Harvey (1973) favourably. Thus, a form of command power is invoked in contrast to the conceptualization of systemic and pre-emptive power developed by Stone (1980, 1988, 1989). Molotch’s work on growth machines predates and, to an extent inspired regime theory (Stone, 1989: 175). But Stone himself views Logan and Molotch as elite theorists in their emphasis on the part played by private elites involved in land use decisions (Stone, 1990: 224). Regime theory can, therefore, be regarded as a reconceptualization of this approach, as part of the neo-pluralist reaction to Marxism and as an attempt to sensitise it to the perceived centrality of interorganisational co-operation in achieving governance outputs.

Alan Harding’s work has been especially concerned with the applicability of these literatures for the analysis of urban coalitions.¹⁸ He acknowledges the conceptual foundations of growth machine analysis in elite theory and of regime theory in neo-pluralism (Harding, 1995, 1996; 1995). However, he tends, on occasion, to use the terms interchangeably. Referring to perceived weaknesses in Logan and Molotch, Harding argues:

¹⁷ The literature is viewed as ‘deterministic’ in its prediction of outcomes and ‘voluntaristic’ in its dependence on elite activity.

¹⁸ See Harding (1991, 1994, 1995, 1996a,b, 1997).

Regime theory offers a way around these apparent contradictions by allowing for the fact that the growth machine model ... is only one form of regime amongst others (1996: 12).

Thus, the growth machine may be treated as a type of regime governance. Logan and Molotch identify similar phenomena to those in Elkin and Stone, business domination of urban policy based on the objective of raising land values (1996: 292). The entrepreneurial urban regime and the growth machine are commensurable as governance outcomes.¹⁹ Yet to draw this conclusion says nothing about the explanatory value of either approach, in particular the role of collaboration and pre-emption in regime theory and that of elite activism and domination in growth machine analysis. To treat the growth machine as a type of regime is a form of convergence, rather than integration by synthesis, since these basic causal propositions, as stated, are incommensurable and no means of bridging this incommensurability is offered.

It would be unreasonable to generate a critique of Harding on this basis, given his acknowledgement of the conceptual differences between the two approaches and given that theoretical precision is not critical to his project. Nevertheless, the example is illustrative of a problem in comparing, integrating and adapting different theoretical approaches. Harding, however, points toward a potential solution to this problem. He draws neither on elitism nor neo-pluralism for his hypotheses, but on a model of globalization derived from regulation theory.²⁰ Recent scholars have asked (Ward, 1996) and attempted to answer (Lauria, 1997, Painter, 1997), the question of whether regime theory is commensurable with, and might fruitfully be integrated with, regulation theory. Regulation theory expresses the interdependence between the regime of accumulation and the mode of regulation, necessary in the regulationist approach, through the claim that the technological innovations enabling the globalization of production processes have led to a high level of dependence at the national level on international trade flows, rendering

¹⁹ Although it is recognised that regime theory allows for greater flexibility in type - witness Elkin's and Stone's typologies.

²⁰ Regulation theory derives, in part, from Althusserian Marxism (Althusser, 1979). See Aglietta (1979), Boyer (1990), Jessop (1990) Mayer (1994).

nationally based interventionist economic strategies ineffective (Harding, 1996b: 649).²¹ The effects of this globalization have been two-fold: economic aggregation in the form of the European Union at the supranational level; and delegation of powers and responsibilities for economic policy to the sub-national level (Harding, 1994: 370). Together with the abandonment of Keynesianism and the squeeze on local authority finance, increased responsibility for economic development has led to 'a pronounced tendency toward coalition formation between local actors and agencies in this field in order to compete with other urban areas for globally mobile capital investment' (Harding, 1996b: 649-50). Globalization and economic restructuring have, therefore, resulted in a global-local 'dialectic' in which, to a greater or a lesser extent, the national state is becoming marginal (Harding and Le Gales, 1995).²²

It is plausible that as a theory according relative autonomy to economic and ideological variables, regulation theory could be used to synthesize the different emphases in regime theory and in the growth machine approach, which boils down to the question of how far political processes matter. To achieve this synthesis, however, a theoretical exposition would be required. The relationship between regime theory and regulation theory has been discussed in a volume edited by Mickey Lauria (1997). Contributions to this debate have found little favour with Stone (1998a), who regards himself as influenced more by Weber than by the regulation school. This is unsurprising since regime theory is a critical departure from the kind of Marxism which generated regulation theory. To integrate the two approaches would require a reconceptualization of the dynamics driving the process of local governance. For regulation theorists, each mode of regulation can be effective only for a limited period, before it is undermined by its own crisis tendencies (Boyer, 1990; Painter, 1996: 2). Thus, however much it mitigates the crisis tendencies identified by Marx (Boyer, 1990), regulation theory contains an inherent concept of crisis which cannot simply be fused with regime theory, whose normative claims depend on the sustainability of the market

²¹ Simply put, production processes are the regime of accumulation, while governmental strategies are the mode of social regulation.

²² This claim is a hypothesis in Harding's work, which his later empirical work tends to undermine. See chapter 3.

economy. The main difference between regime theory and regulation theory lies not in the rational choice basis of the former, (Elster, 1989; Painter, 1997), but in its conceptualizations of the state-market division and governance as social production, and in its commitment to the market economy at the centre of a Commercial Republic.

This discussion demonstrates the need for both distinction and linkage between the appearance of regime governance and regime theory. On one hand, emphasis is placed on distinguishing partnership formations of which only particular kinds can legitimately be referred to as regimes. Yet at the same time, to observe an entrepreneurial urban regime can also be to observe a growth machine. It is therefore the explanation for the phenomenon which lends regime theory its distinctiveness, as much as its focus on process and outcome. Theories which predict similar phenomena are not necessarily commensurable at the explanatory level. The next section draws on the work of Stoker and Mossberger (1994), who have reconceptualized regime theory, arguing that it can throw light on processes of local governance in the UK.

Urban Regime Theory and Policy Network Analysis

At the beginning of this chapter, the concepts of partnership, network, governance and regime were compared. Partnership, as discussed above, is a concept which describes a wide range of public-private interfaces, whereas governance by network, as described by Rhodes (1996), is a specific form of partnership working. Regime governance of the kind discussed in Dallas and Atlanta conforms closely in kind to this concept of networking. How, then, does regime theory relate to policy network analysis as developed by Marsh and by Rhodes (1992)? Stoker and Mossberger (1994) provide a basis for the discussion of this issue, considering how regime theory can be used to generate an adapted model of local governance in the UK. They seek to overcome ethnocentricity in regime theory, developing a typology of urban regimes: organic, instrumental and symbolic to categorise local governance (1994: 199-200). Five explanatory elements are identified affecting the process of regime building: purpose, motivation of participants, sense of common purpose, quality of coalition, and the local relationship with the wider political environment (1994: 200-208). The character of the regime arises from the combination of these

elements. An organic regime is defined by uniformity of interest, conservatism and exclusivity. Instrumental regimes, most commonly established for developmental purposes, are practical in nature, characterised by an orientation toward project realisation.²³ The symbolic regime may consist of actors with a low congruence of interest and it may be characterised by the presence of conflict. Common purpose in the symbolic regime is based on the perceived need for a new image in cities wishing to change direction. The objective of economic growth is mediated by a sense of 'value' based upon the chosen identity of the city. The principles to underpin future economic growth strategies are drawn from this 'image' of the city (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994: 200-201).

Stoker argues that the utility of regime theory lies in its contribution to understanding the variety of responses to urban change (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994: 196-199). He also recognises similarities between regime theory and policy network analysis. Benson describes a policy network as:

a cluster of organisations connected to each other by resource dependencies and distinguished from other clusters of complexes by breaks in the structure of resource dependencies (Benson, cited in Rhodes, 1990: 304).

Stoker (1995: 59) invests regime theory and network theory with the same basic proposition concerning capacity building:

The network approach, like regime analysis, sees effective action as flowing from the cooperative efforts of different interests and organizations. Cooperation is obtained, and subsequently sustained, through the establishment of relations promised on solidarity, loyalty, trust and mutual support rather than through hierarchy or bargaining.

The link is also apparent at the level of typology. The Rhodes and Marsh concept of a tight-knit policy community resembles the exclusive and homogenous organic regime. The issue network on the other hand, with its inclusive and diverse range of interests resembles the symbolic regime (Rhodes and Marsh, 1992: 251). Stoker compares 'competitive agreement' within a symbolic regime with differing priorities within an 'issue network' (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994: 206). Both the issue network and the symbolic regime are characterised by an absence of common understanding and the presence of conflict. This regime typology is, therefore, broadly analogous

²³ Stoker and Mossberger identify this type as the regime described by Stone in Atlanta.

with the continuum in policy network analysis.²⁴ In explanatory terms, interdependence is the underlying dynamic, driving different elements in the locality to co-operate in the production of governance. As in Elkin and Stone, politics matter in mediating this interdependence, producing the variety of responses set out in the typology.

What is the thinking behind this approach? First, it is argued that the contribution of regime theory lies at the meso level of analysis, again like that of network theory (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994: 199). It is also argued that cross-national variation necessitates a framework abstract enough to encompass many cases (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994: 200). That is, it requires the conceptual amelioration of difference. With regard to the first point, the exposition of regime theory in chapter 2 shows that the scope of regime theory, while it is not a grand narrative, has far greater explanatory and normative commitment than network analysis. They are not strictly comparable in this regard. In relation to the second point, as an endeavour which seeks to highlight arenas of similarity, the approach is just as valid as that undertaken here, to consider how far regime theory can categorise and explain local government-business sector partnerships. The issue at stake here is whether, in compromising theoretical specificity, divesting regime theory of its ethnocentricity, Stoker and Mossberger retain distinctive elements from within regime theory. The remainder of this section considers this question.

Stoker and Mossberger (1994: 207) acknowledge the point made by Stoker and Orr (1994) that tensions may be so great that no sustainable regime can emerge.²⁵ The ‘discovery’ of regime governance is not, says Stoker, the point of regime analysis (Stoker, 1995: 66). However, the breadth of the typology, sacrificing specificity for comparability, encourages the classification of a wide range of governing arrangements as regimes, rather than encouraging consideration, first

²⁴ One possible distinguishing feature is that the typology is not oriented on policy arenas. The typology could incorporate the argument put by Bassett (1996: 552), that regime theory is about the analysis of continuous, horizontal links between policy arenas, where the organic regime would represent harmony and the symbolic regime conflict, between different policy networks.

²⁵ See chapter 2.

and foremost, of whether regime governance exists in the UK. It was argued in the first part of this chapter that the specificity of regime theory as a theory of networking lies in the nature of the explanations it provides. The explanatory potential of regime theory lies in the variables which distinguish it from the broad assumption in network theory concerning the interdependence of resources. The emphasis on the production of different governance types in Stoker's and Mossberger's typology of regime construction, therefore, underplays the issue of who benefits from this kind of governance and why. A key normative and theoretical component of regime theory for Harding (1994: 363), this question is not addressed by Stoker and Mossberger in developing their typology.

Policy network analysis therefore differs from Elkin's and Stone's regime theory in two important respects. It predicts a wide range of phenomena, the issue network being incompatible with the process normally recognised as regime governance. Second, the networks described in regime theory are produced by a range of extra-local variables based on a neo-pluralist analysis of liberal democratic society. Regime theory, like policy network analysis, is a theory of interorganisational governance, of mutual resource dependence. To this extent, they are closely related. However, regime theory is a specialised aspect of network theory, making specific explanatory claims, predicting not only interactions between local government and other groups, but patterns in those interactions which tend to favour business and economic development over other groups and objectives. The purpose here is not to criticise the endeavour of adapting regime theory to explain public-private partnerships, but the absence, as Ward puts it, of analogous pre-conditions for regime formation (Ward, 1997b: 1494) beyond the all encompassing concept of interdependence. Elkin and Stone identify a set of variables which account both for the interdependence of organisations and for the characteristics of the relationship between organisations. Stoker and Mossberger do not undertake this task and, while there is nothing inherently wrong in not doing so, it is noteworthy that their endeavour places them in closer alliance with policy network analysis than with urban regime theory. It is arguable that in highlighting interdependence as the core variable in British and American local governance processes, those aspects of regime theory which distinguish it from network analysis have been obscured.

The foregoing discussion is not, therefore, addressed in any pejorative sense to the value of the Stoker and Mossberger typology, or to the factors to which outcomes are attributed. Rather, it is claimed that elements of the typology are incompatible with the concept of regime governance, as it is understood in chapter 2, and that it is not underpinned by explanatory variables corresponding with those set out by Elkin and Stone.²⁶ Richer explanations for the range of partnerships indicated in the typology may not be commensurable with regime theory, but that prospect makes the comparison of causal mechanisms all the more interesting and begs the question of whether similar network types in different countries can be explained using a common explanatory framework which goes beyond the general claims made in policy network analysis.

In summary, Stoker and Mossberger ask: given the necessity of interorganisational collaboration for local governance to occur in different political systems, what kind of governing regimes do we see, exhibiting which internal dynamics? In this study, it is asked first; what factors might generate collaboration between local government and the business sector; second, to the extent that such collaboration occurs, what kind of partnership arrangements have developed with which dynamics; and third, can the answers to these questions be aligned with the concept of regime governance, based on the characterisation developed by Elkin and Stone? The following sections proceed to examine the variables which could, potentially, generate interdependence between local government and the business sector in the UK. Consideration is given to the question of how far these variables, set out in Box 4 at the end of the chapter, are commensurable with those set out in regime theory.

Conditions for Partnership and Regime Governance in the UK

The following sections examine a range of potential explanations for the emergence of partnerships in the UK and for the potential emergence of regime governance, as outlined above. Both exogenous and endogenous variables are considered in relation to the question of why partnership working has become common. It is suggested that while exogenous variables have

²⁶ Such an explanation might, in principle, claim that extra-local variables do not affect partnership working.

undoubtedly proved to be powerful in influence, regime governance can only emerge from partnerships if strong endogenous variables drive the process.

Comparing Systemic Factors: The UK and the USA

Chapter 2 shows that a division of labour between state and market lies at the core of regime theory. There is nothing immediately ethnocentric in this analysis, which Elkin argues is characteristic of liberal democracies (1985b: 181). The UK, like the USA, is a liberal democracy in which substantial resources are concentrated in the hands of the private sector. It is clear, however, that the interface between state and market differs in the UK. Critics and adaptors of regime theory correctly point out that local government resources in the UK are constituted differently from those in the USA. The unitary system of government in the UK and the federal system in the US create very different intergovernmental contexts for urban governance (Di Gaetano, 1997: 849; Kantor *et al*, 1997: 351). Central government grants of one kind and another continue to account for a much higher percentage of local government expenditure than revenue raised directly from the business community or from the Council Tax (Harding, 1994: 365). Local government in the UK cannot be said in any direct sense to be dependent on private sector resources to fund its core activities. John shows how total recurrent local authority spending is made up almost entirely of government grant and council tax revenues (1997: 258). It is thus far more insulated from the direct material pressures which regulate the city-business interface in American urban politics. Systemic power is not, therefore, reflected at the urban scale in the way it is in the USA through fiscal dependence. If this form of systemic power is realised in the UK, it is at a different spatiality of governance. If, on the other hand, interdependence between local authority and business, and/or bias in favour of a growth agenda, can be detected in processes of local governance, these factors must be attributable to different causes. The state-market division is not a useful concept to explain such interdependence as occurs between public and private sectors at the local level in the UK.

Local Government Finance

Lawless (1991: 15) argues that governments elected since 1979 have tended, in real terms, to reduce the scale of central government support to local government, while restricting the ability of local authorities to acquire funds from elsewhere. Is it plausible that reductions in local government expenditure through cuts in grant, together with community charge/council tax capping, may have pushed local authorities, who wish to maintain service levels into seeking partnerships with business in order to ameliorate resource reductions. Pickvance (1991: 56), however, shows how the Labour Government between 1976 and 1979 succeeded in reversing the growth of local government expenditure to a much greater extent than did the first term of the Thatcher administration. Cuts in local authority resources were, it is arguable, greater in the late 1970s than throughout the 1980s or the 1990s so far. Why, then, did local authorities not adopt partnership strategies in response to earlier financial cutbacks? Or did they, as approaches emphasising continuity suggest they might have (Hall and Hubbard, 1996, Shaw, 1993, Stanyer, 1999)? It is equally plausible that there is no direct link between the level of local authority resources and partnership formation. This claim would tend to be supported by analyses which see the growth of public-private partnership mainly as a phenomenon of the 1980s (Barnekov *et al*, 1989; Bassett, 1996; Hastings, 1996) stimulated by various central government policy initiatives associated with 'Thatcherism'. Harding's study of five European cities, including Manchester, concludes that in no cases have coalitions been triggered by the fact that there would otherwise be a detrimental effect on the core business of local government (1996c: 5). He is supported by Levine, who argues of France, that the competitive pressures for development derive more from a concern about the preservation of jobs and for a healthy economy than from concern for budget integrity (1994: 406).

Conversely, why would business be pre-disposed to provide or finance local authority services, save through the contractual mechanisms associated with tendering? It is feasible that in policy areas where business perceives that it has a direct interest in the maintenance of a service, cut backs could stimulate a willingness to pay, through local taxation, more toward infrastructural costs associated with policy arenas such as transportation. In part, this is the debate occurring

around the question of the local business rate and the duty upon local authorities to consult business on supplementary levies (DETR, 30.7.98). In the pilot study for this project, the CBI expressed a lukewarm interest in the idea of a hypothecated business levy, involving ringfenced business contributions to local authorities which could only be spent on infrastructural projects of benefit to private enterprise (CBI, 21.8.95). Ultimately, business rate payers will not be allowed to block the setting of a rate. Thus, while arrangements of this kind could go some way to establishing local coalitions rooted in trust, in themselves, they would be indicative of command power, notwithstanding the duty of the local authority to consult. Finally, research on what real benefits business representatives bring to partnerships is limited (Bailey *et al*, 1995: 10). Even given a broad definition of 'resources', it is questionable whether businesses are able or willing to deliver sufficient goods to ameliorate reductions in local authority services.

Global Economic Forces and the Locality

In Elkin and Stone, the potential for state intervention in the market place is not discussed in great detail, given the normative commitment in regime theory to a market economy.²⁷ However, the twin notions of capital mobility and spatial capital dependence are recognised, particularly by Elkin (1987a: 32-42). Both elements constitute important dynamics to regime formation for local authority and locally dependent business alike. Cox and Mair (1989, 1991) go further, arguing that local dependence, the contradictions between mobile and immobile capital, should be invoked as the key explanatory tool for coalition formation, rather than the state-market analogy. These elements are important dimensions of the globalization debate (see Cerny, 1996). Cox, for example, identifies a 'struggle of territorially organised populations' competing for inward investment by mobile capital (1995: 216). Thus, spatial identity, rather than class, status, gender or race represents the primary cleavage in globalizing society. Mayer argues that:

[Local political systems, with their skills in negotiating with supraregional and multinational capital, in the effectiveness with which they tailor the particular set of local conditions of production, have become decisive factors in shaping a city's profile as well as its place in the international urban hierarchy (1994: 317).

²⁷ One or two means of ameliorating business pre-eminence are identified, but the implications of these measures for the market economy are not discussed.

From an even more extreme perspective, Reich argues that in the era of globalization, national economy will have no meaning other than as short hand for the collective power of various sub-national production processes in the world market (Reich, 1991 cited in Harding and Le Gales, 1997: 182).

Alan Harding's analysis of globalization and urban coalition formation which develops these themes has already been discussed above. Harding's basic contention is that developments in the global economy have resulted directly in the emergence of phenomena which he describes as growth coalitions. In other words, economic forces have had a direct impact on local authorities and businesses, pre-disposing them to co-operate in the quest for mobile capital investment. At least two hypotheses can be derived from Harding's work. The first is that coalitions may be 'caused' by government programmes imported from the US as a response to global pressures on the national state.²⁸ The second hypothesis is that these global pressures act directly on the locality 'causing' the emergence of urban coalitions. Characterised as such, global economic pressures may be identified as an explanatory variable. This variable would be realised at the local scale in terms of capital mobility/dependence on a particular area and the degree to which this factor pressures the local authority into partnership working with the private sector and vice versa. Central, then, to globalization orthodoxy is the notion that markets are increasingly powerful in relation to states by virtue of globalizing production/capital and that the urban partnership/regime can be argued to be a competitive territorial response to such empowerment. If local governments are empowered by national governments to undertake economic development functions, they may be dis-empowered, as democratic institutions, by virtue of having to exercise these functions in cooperation with and on behalf of business interests.

²⁸ It was noted at the beginning of this chapter that 'policy transfer' has been claimed as an important explanation for changes in urban policy during the 1980s and 1990s. The relevance of government programmes to partnership formation is discussed further below. However, the sources from which such programmes may have been inspired is beyond the scope of this study which examines the impact of variables on the locality, rather than on the national state.

Harding's empirical work casts doubt on the extreme elements in this perspective, which he considers too general and unsuited to the analysis of European cities. The nature of the link posited between economic globalization and cities is questioned (Harding, 1996b, 1997; Harding and Le Gales, 1998). Given this scepticism, it is worth considering how the business sector and the local authority respectively might be driven directly by the pressures of globalization into partnership activity with the other.

Business and Globalization

The 'global-localization' hypothesis suggests that amorphous macroeconomic and macro technical developments result in an unspecified fashion in pressure toward urban partnership formation. One can see from Elkin and Stone why locally dependent businesses might respond to increased capital mobility through forming territorial alliances with local authorities and other local agents. Businesses in a market economy necessarily face whatever competitive pressures are generated by economic globalization. Continued inward investment may be vital to their prosperity, though local capital institutions, such as banks, are not place dependent in the UK as they are in the US (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994). It is also plausible that residual local capital may seek to reverse the effects of economic decline and the collapse of markets through collaboration with their local authorities. To the extent that local businesses can be said to benefit from new inward investment, they may have an interest in collaborating with place marketing projects aimed at stimulating local growth.²⁹ However, the idea of local interdependence generated through the impact of global economic forces is plausible and it is compatible with the variable identified by Elkin. It may thus represent a dynamic to regime governance, a bottom-up response to systemic (*situational and indirect*) pressures. The extent to which certain businesses may rely on partnership with local government to improve their competitive position is therefore treated as an empirical question.

²⁹ However, as in the USA (Molotch, 1976), inward investment may also be catastrophic for local businesses. The impact of hypermarkets on small retailers in Cardiff is indicative of this point (Imrie *et al*, 1995). See chapter 2.

Local Authority and Globalization

It is less obvious, however, why local authorities might respond directly to economic globalization either by partnership building or in a more passive sense by adopting a growth agenda, unless in response to a perceived effect of globalization, relative economic decline.³⁰ It is one thing to suggest, like Harding (1994, 1996b) and others quoted above, that globalization of production and capital is causing economic aggregation at the supranational level and a delegation of powers and responsibilities for economic development policy from the national to the subnational level (Harding, 1994a: 370). It is another to argue that this delegation empowers the local authority or necessitates its participation in partnerships with business around growth objectives. There is no direct material incentive for the local authority to do so, of the kind evident in regime theory. The power to undertake economic development projects is not the same thing as the compulsion, and, moreover, to do so on terms favoured by local business. Is it possible to observe the direct impact of economic globalization on local authority attitudes to partnership? The literature which presupposes such an impact does not identify mediating mechanisms, economic, political or ideological, to demonstrate and account for it. It is not clear, for example, which economic factors or institutional arrangements might render local authorities in Britain materially sensitive to global economic factors, given that local authority activities do not depend for sustenance on the economic capacities within their geographical areas.

Harding recognises this difficulty, emphasizing the need to hypothesize precisely how the formation of economic development coalitions might have been encouraged by globalizing factors:

What needs to be assessed is the way these factors affect the motivation of local governments to be sensitive to the relative buoyancy of their local economy and to compete with other authorities for new economic activities and whatever supports them (1996: 16).

Harding's conclusion about Manchester, one of five European cities studied, is that networks and institutions concerned with economic development lack the 'gravitas' of the classical growth machine and urban regime.

³⁰ It is possible to distinguish in regime theory between intentional collaboration in the form of regime governance and the tendency of local officials to 'prefer' developmental agendas. The latter does not require the former, although the former may be encompassed.

It is not, however, assumed here that in the absence of material stimulus, local authorities will display indifference to the state of the economy. It is feasible and, indeed, likely that they will seek in whatever way they feel able to ameliorate dereliction and poverty, factors which weigh heavily in a negative sense on local authority budgets. Given the move toward economic development activities, place marketing for inward investment is one way this might be achieved and global economic factors might, conceivably, require local authorities to engage in 'competitive' behaviour, in collaboration with local business, to obtain it, given a decline in the influence of national states. Hall and Hubbard (1996) argue that the ideology of globalization may be more important to local elites than the fact. They suggest that political actors are becoming aware of competition with other places for mobile capital, but argue that it is the belief in this trend which makes it true. They further argue that globalization theorists seriously overgeneralize the mobility of capital at different scales. It is the possibility, therefore, not the actuality of 'hypermobile' capital investment which is, they say, providing the impetus to 'entrepreneurial' local government (1996, 159/60). In this scenario it cannot be argued that globalization has a direct material impact on the local authority. Rather, it might perceive a decline in inward investment and in economic and social vitality, responding in ways determined by local political and ideological views about globalization.

In summary, the question asked here is whether, directly or indirectly, economic globalization affects local authority sensitivities, at the same time predisposing it to try and build alliances with business groups to ameliorate economic problems. A project on this scale cannot undertake an exhaustive study of the ways in which globalization has a direct and an indirect impact on local political practices. Rather, consideration is limited to the question of how far local partnerships are engaged in competition for inward investment and on how important the interface between locality and global corporation proves to be in decisions concerning inward investment. The question tackled is not, therefore, how important is globalization, but rather the more manageable issue of whether there is evidence of a global-local dialectic in the procurement of mobile capital.

Urban Policy as a Stimulus to Partnership

There is a sizable literature, highlighted above, discussing the way in which urban policy has promoted multi-sectoral partnerships (Lawless, 1981, 1991; Robson *et al*, 1994; Bailey *et al*, 1995; Hastings, 1996; Oatley, 1998). This section focuses on the potential causal effects of government policy on the development of regeneration partnerships. A more detailed exposition of government approaches to urban policy, insofar as it relates to the partnerships under study, is given in chapter 4. This section focusses on the debate as seen through the eyes of those utilising regime theory.

Using the language of regulation theory, Ward suggests that regimes in Britain represent a locally mediated, nationally prescribed response to the 'fordist institutional crisis' (1997a: 188). Regimes result, he argues, from the top-down policies of privatism associated with the conservative government's neo liberal agenda. National programmes, such as the Single Regeneration Budget (Stewart, 1994) and a variety of EU programmes, provide the context in which regime governance can emerge.³¹ This idea accords with the view expressed by Harding (1991, 1994, 1995, 1996b), that the borrowing of urban programmes by the British government from the US may have stimulated coalition building. Rather than direct interdependence between public and private sectors, we have dependence on funding from government programmes, requiring local government to seek cooperation with business groups, a perspective suggestive not of growth coalitions, but of 'grant' coalitions (Cochrane, 1999: 119). Government action is, in turn, a response to the pressures of economic globalization. It is thus a bridging, or intermediate variable. Ward questions whether the stimulus of intergovernmental funding is sufficient to ensure 'real' regime formation (1997b: 1495). In this sense, the characterization of the partnership phenomena produced in response to these funding mechanisms is problematised, leading to the question of whether partnerships are likely to occur 'naturally', without this or other external stimulus. Either way, it is arguable that the process of bidding was significant in shifting recalcitrant political attitudes to the central government imposed agenda of partnership (Oatley and Lambert, 1998: 122). This question is considered in the empirical part of the study.

³¹ Discussed further in chapter 4.

Does the urban programme provide an incentive for business to participate in grant oriented partnerships? If it is true that locally dependent businesses are inclined to participate in collaborative endeavours, the prospect that extra money can bring extra business is an obvious incentive for, at the least, symbolic involvement.³² Stoker and Mossberger (1994), for example, identify 'tangible' results alongside local dependence as key motivations for organisations participating in partnerships. The procurement of selective incentives from government can be construed as one tangible output of partnership.³³ Hence, according to John and Cole (1998: 387), it is the capitalists who have most to gain from public sector investment who are most likely to get involved in urban coalitions.

There is clearly a co-ercive element to these schemes. Di Gaetano (1997) and Malpass (1994) show how Bristol City Council moved toward partnership only because it believed it could not otherwise obtain governmental funds. The main Bristol partnership was established for this purpose. For both local authority and business sector, partnerships which are driven by external funding or by other forms of coercion may not be permanent, nor indicative of local governance capacity:

Limited local autonomy for both public and for private sector actors in Britain engenders symbolic politics. To secure external resources, local regimes attempt to build bridges outward, while at the same time fostering a sense of community (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994: 210).

As well as producing symbolic politics, central policies and programmes may induce 'provocation', leading to antagonism and loss of co-operation (Stoker, 1999: 11). Urban policy may thus limit, as well as facilitate, the emergence of regime governance and it should not be assumed that central government policy makers always get what they want (Stoker, 1999). Morgan *et al* (1999: 194) show how the Welsh Office, by virtue of its power and resources, fostered vertical networks which had the effect of impeding bottom-up collective action.

³² Businesses represented on partnership boards are not entitled to benefit directly from grants that they are involved with managing.

³³ Though chapter 4 makes a distinction between extra-local inputs and local governance outputs as 'added value'.

Challenge funds, furthermore, comprise a very limited proportion of local authority expenditure as a whole (Lawless, 1991) and they are by definition selective. Government challenge funds result in a few winners and many losers.³⁴ In those areas which have not succeeded in winning challenge funds, the process could result in demoralization (Bailey *et al*, 1995, Oatley, 1998; Stoker, 1999).³⁵ If Government programmes can, nevertheless, produce partnerships, can they produce regime governance?

It is useful, finally, to recall that in Elkin and Stone, fiscal dependence is a representation of systemic power, a power which is situational rather than decisional, indirect rather than direct (Stone, 1980). The power invested in the economic programme acts both as carrot and as stick. It is intentional, whether direct (stick), as it might be in the case of the local authority, or indirect, as in the case of business (carrot). Moreover, systemic power, while it is only realised contingently, is by definition universal in liberal democratic societies. Urban policy and urban programmes are not systemic since they are not universal in application, and they are often spatially oriented. Government programmes also tend to be transitory, as the changes in policy between 1982 and 1994 show (Lawless, 1994; Davies, 1996). The difference between fiscal dependence, the empirical realization of systemic power, and the urban programme is that the former generates a bottom up dynamic to collaboration, the latter a top-down dynamic. However, while the urban programme is in some senses a command variable, like fiscal dependence, it need not generate a command relationship within the partnerships it produces. In this sense, it is analogous to fiscal dependence as a meso-level variable, but alone, it is likely to produce different partnership effects. It is unlikely, therefore, that urban programmes represent a sufficient stimulus to regime governance of the kind predicted by Elkin and Stone. For this reason, the urban programme is best conceived as a stimulus to partnership formation but, as an insufficient condition for regime governance. However, as the following sections suggest, a partnership

³⁴ SRB1 saw 464 bids of which 201 were successful. Round 2 saw 326 bids of which 172 were successful, suggesting a high demoralization rate (Tyler, March 1998: 25).

³⁵ For those authorities which do not seek partnership dependent funds, this variable is, of course, irrelevant to processes of partnership building.

mechanism established in response to bottom-up pressure, may take on a life of its own if local actors develop commitment to it. How might partnerships, established to bid for partnership dependent grants, develop the characteristics of regime governance?

The Role of Ideology in the Development of Partnerships

Changes in the global economy may have led to significant restructuring at the national and the local levels, but the literature discussed above does not show clearly how restructuring has produced the conditions for regime governance locally. Local authorities may, of course, be ideologically pre-disposed to intervene in their local economies to facilitate market led growth, regardless of political composition and regardless of any compulsion on them to do so. This is certainly the implication in the work of Hall and Hubbard (1996) and Shaw (1993) who suggest that entrepreneurial strategies are not really new. Elements in the business sector may also be predisposed to collaboration, particularly locally dependent businesses, or businesses with roots in an area. The process of accumulation and competition does not preclude a sense of civic responsibility (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994: 203), or a simple wish to become involved in community affairs for personal reasons (Harding, 1998: 84). This perspective is supported by documents such as the CBI's 'Initiatives Beyond Charity' (1988) which argues that local business communities are capable of providing leadership in the sphere of development and regeneration, which politicians are not. For example, during the period when Bristol City Council was turning toward a partnership approach, business overtures were led by a 'self-confessed Christian socialist', who spearheaded the Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Morgan *et al*, 1999: 189).

One of the reasons for importing American approaches to urban policy is the ideology of 'privatism', a component of resurgent neo-liberalism in the UK, which has turned British policy makers toward exemplar public-private partnership initiatives overseas (Barnekov *et al*, 1989). Judd and Parkinson (1990: 19), for example, identify a hegemonic project by UK government to create an enterprise culture in the locality. Thus, the battle against the so-called urban left in the 1980s was not only a battle over spending, it was a battle over political ideas. The outcome of

this battle is illustrated vividly in accounts of the dramatic political shift from ‘socialist’, or redistributive policies to ‘entrepreneurialism’ in Sheffield City Council (Lawless, 1990; 1994; Seyd, 1990). In much the same vein as Stewart (1994) and Malpass (1994), Judd and Parkinson (1990: 19) perceive the UDC and the systematic exclusion of local government as part of a hegemonic project by the Government to create an enterprise culture in the locality. During the political conflicts of the 1980s, local government was often excluded from urban policy experiments. It is only from 1989 that central government felt comfortable enough with the ‘new pragmatism’ in Labour local authorities to begin delegating them a limited role in economic development (Harding and Garside, 1995: 170; Atkinson, 1995: 13). The partnership based challenge funds of today were the Conservative Government’s response to this new pragmatism, the advancement of its hegemonic project for control of local governance (Stoker, 1990: 167). This study is not directly concerned with the reasons for change within the Labour Party, but change is clearly linked to the resurgence of free market ideologies and practices and the corresponding ‘modernisation’ of the Labour Party from 1983 under Neil Kinnock’s leadership and to the defeat of the urban left in the 1980s (Seyd, 1990; Lawless, 1990; 1994; Di Gaetano, 1997). These ideologies have been summarised by Tony Blair:

I think that one of the great changes that has happened in the whole Labour culture is to recognised that we need entrepreneurs and people who are going to go out and be wealth creators and who are going to become wealthy by their own efforts. I support that, I want that, a successful economy needs that (Blair quoted in Driver and Martell, 1998: 29).

Atkinson argues that government advice on local capacity building in regeneration partnerships may also have played an important role by incorporating partnership activists into the ‘linguistic market and products which dominate urban regeneration, creating an appreciation of what is appropriate and likely to be valued’ (Atkinson, 1999: 67). In short, discourses of partnership are not neutral, they limit interpretation through ‘performative utterances’. Therefore, domination and the inculcation of centrally determined values may be achieved unconsciously (Atkinson, 1999: 70). It is difficult, though, to imagine that Atkinson’s linguistic market would have this effect unless participants were first amenable to the key concepts it conveys, thus this discursive analysis is suggestive of ideological domination. However, once collaboration with the private sector has

been accepted as inevitable, this discursive manipulation, whether intentional or not, could serve to strengthen and further legitimise the activity of partnership in the minds of those so persuaded.

Government guidelines for bids to the SRB certainly imply a much broader agenda for partnerships than grant chasing. The funding criteria emphasise the importance of qualitative elements in partnership building (DoE, April 1995; DETR, 10.9.98). The SRB is, perhaps, best thought of as a pump-priming mechanism, intended not only to deliver inward investment by the private sector to targeted areas, but also to stimulate the creation of more permanent partnerships between the public and private sectors (DoE, 13.6.95). Here, the enterprise culture may be interpreted as a culture of cooperation. Underpinned by a culture of political 'pragmatism' among Labour authorities, government inspired partnerships may help in stimulating regime governance. According to John, part of central government's objective is to ensure that 'implementing actors come to believe in its overall philosophy of market-driven economic development' (1997: 261). Much of the literature on urban partnership suggests that whether new or not, 'civic entrepreneurialism' now dominates political approaches to urban regeneration policy and partnership building in the UK (Hill, 1995, Malpass, 1994).

An entrepreneurial philosophy is consistent with and necessary to regime governance, as elaborated by Elkin and Stone. But entrepreneurialism in itself is not indicative of regime governance, nor of local business influence, since growth oriented ideologies and practices within local authorities may derive from different sources. An orientation on market led economic development may, however, predispose a local authority to collaborate with the business sector and vice versa. There may also be multiple ideologies of 'partnership' in the locality around different political agendas, engendered from different sources. An alternative 'value system' (Bosso, 1994: 184) influencing the political strategy of local authorities in the 1990s is the concept of 'sustainable development' (Lafferty, 1995: 223). A comprehensive international policy statement on sustainable development, Agenda 21, was produced at the 1992 Earth Summit held in Rio. This statement defines a key role for local authorities in devising and implementing sustainable development policies. Chapter 28 of this document, has become known as Local

Agenda 21 (UN, 1992: 233). Section III of Agenda 21 identifies key 'stakeholders' who play a decisive role in the process of sustainable development. Among these stakeholders are the business community and industry (UN, 1992: 237). Sustainable development is a vague concept, which has been accorded different, sometimes contradictory meanings (Pearce, 1989, Redclift 1989). While it is plausible that the ideology of partnership may represent an important stimulus to regime governance, it need not, given the contested definition of 'sustainable development', generate a growth oriented agenda (Davies, 1996).

Thus, different ideologies of partnership may result from conflicts between central and local government, from international sources and from the mechanics of putting together project bids and carrying out project objectives. They can be driven both exogenously and endogenously as necessity becomes a virtue both for business and for local authority. The foregoing perspective suggests that while much partnership activity may be top-down in character, extra-local incentives and penalties may not always drive the process (Ward, 1997a: 188). However, while the phenomena generated through a dual ideological commitment to partnerships may resemble regime governance, as an explanatory framework ideological commitment would more closely resemble the structures proposed in advocacy coalition frameworks which are centred on shared belief systems, rather than on material interdependence (Sabatier, 1988; Sabatier and Jenkins Smith, 1993). Ideology is not commensurable with the resource dependence identified in regime theory, unless belief itself is accorded the status of a governance resource.

Evolution in Partnership Governance

The arguments set out above suggest that regime governance should be treated as a specialised aspect of partnership governance and as a specialised form of networking. Given these distinctions, can the process of partnership building in pursuit of governmental funds itself generate local interdependence between local authority and business sector of a sustainable kind? There is no reason why partnerships established for this purpose cannot evolve into networks (Skelcher *et al*, 1996: 2). Just as necessity can become virtue, so symbolic co-operation can become necessary (Cochrane, 1999: 113-114). This perspective is analogous to Stone's notion

of 'structuring' (Stone, 1989: 10) and to Hay's idea of a 'dialectical' relationship between structure and agency (1995). More concretely, the process of developing and implementing a challenge fund project through a formal top-down public-private sector partnership may lead to a variety of spin-off projects which become 'necessary' to both parties and which require the linkage of resources. The concept of need is, therefore, dynamic rather than static. By extension, the form of cooperation between the agents may become more sophisticated as each discovers what the other can offer. Partnership, or networking, may later be taken for granted. There is implicit support for this position in literature which argues that government promotion of partnership is not only about 'leverage', but also about facilitating a dynamic interaction between the partners within the arrangements it is funding (Hastings, 1996; Lawless, 1991; Bailey *et al*, 1995; John, 1997). The question of dynamics internal to partnership is of particular interest given Stone's caution about the difficulties in urban regime creation:

The creation of a regime from scratch is imaginable but not likely. The cost of coordination would be enormous - hence the strong relevance of the problem of collective action to regime formation (1989: 236).

While Stone is writing about the US, this view serves as a caution that regime governance is built only with difficulty. If he is right, regime governance could be a long term outcome of many different partnership building exercises, driven exogenously and endogenously, some of which may fashion long term networking arrangements, while others do not.

Conclusion

It remains to summarise the claims made in this chapter. Box 4 identifies variables considered likely to explain partnership formation in the UK and potentially to predict the development of regime governance, the concept developed in Box 3. The three main exogenous variables identified here are: economic globalization and capital mobility; entrepreneurial and partnership ideologies; and government policy. These variables may combine to create significant pressures for local collaboration, but it is unlikely that they will result in regime governance. Additional endogenous factors, such as the enhancement of local partnership ideologies and the development

Variables	Hypotheses	Contra-indicators
<i>Resource Constraints</i>	The reduction in real levels of local authority expenditure constitutes an indirect pressure both on local authority and on local business to engage in partnerships to make good service deficits.	Budgetary constraints do not either force or encourage local authorities and businesses to engage in partnership.
<i>Government Policy</i>	Most public-private sector partnerships are established to bid for and are sustained by governmental funding initiatives. Variable of lesser impact than notion of fiscal dependence in regime theory. Likely to be a major 'cause' of partnership formation, but unlikely to explain regime type phenomena.	Governmental funding does not constitute a strong motivation for partnership formation, even in areas in need of regeneration. Urban partnerships are not as common as might be expected in areas eligible for governmental aid. Most partnerships are formed for purposes other than bids for governmental funds (possibly predicts regime governance).
<i>The Ideologies of Partnership and Enterprise</i>	The enterprise culture of pragmatism is leading local authorities to seek and engage in partnerships with business groups in a range of initiatives including, but not only those sponsored by governmental funds. The process of ideological change may be driven externally and/or internally. Less likely to represent a motivation for business, but there are exceptions. Variable incommensurable with regime theory - closer to advocacy coalition framework. Likely to be a secondary 'cause' of partnership and could explain regime type phenomena. Process of partnership building generates support for the principle of partnership. Possibility that regime governance could emerge from this process. Variable commensurable with regime theory.	The ideology of partnership does not represent a strong glue to public-private partnerships. Without governmental funding, partnerships either never form, or they disintegrate. The influence of ideology in the locality is over-exaggerated, both in local authority and in business.
<i>Economic Globalization</i>	Globalization of production techniques and of capital place pressure on territorially dependent businesses to seek partnerships with local authorities. Economic globalization has no direct impact on the core business of local authorities but local politicians may be susceptible to ideologies of globalization. Unlikely to represent strong cause of partnerships and unlikely to explain regime type phenomena. Variable commensurable with regime theory.	The globalization thesis is inherently flawed. There is no relationship between economic globalization and the degree of dependence between local authorities and business groups or the attitude of one sector toward the other. Economic globalization is a cause of fragmentation, not cohesion. The importance of locally dependent capital is exaggerated. Economic globalization has a negative impact on the core activities of local government, stimulating processes of coalition building.
<i>Evolving Interdependence</i>	Partnership activities generate resource dependence between agents. Regime governance could emerge from this process. Variable commensurable with regime theory, where internal governance capacity is generated.	Partnership activities demonstrate to agents the incompatibility of their objectives. Hinders 'governance' and leads to fragmentation.

Box 4: The Factors Influencing the Formation and Development of Public-private Partnerships At the Urban Scale in the UK

of material interdependence, could also be crucial in partnership development. It is also recognised that other variables, which have not been highlighted in this review, may play a greater or a lesser role in the processes under consideration. This exposition is not, therefore, presented as an exclusive explanation. It does not, furthermore, seek to inter-relate the explanatory variables it has identified, what Wendt (1987: 368) describes as the 'structure-structure' problem of attributing causal priority between independent variables. In chapter 10, however, priority is attributed to the explanatory variables identified in the case studies, where the material allows. The speculative nature of the framework is also recognised with the posing of contra-indicators. The contra-indicators acknowledge the possibility of unanticipated effects arising from those variables which have been identified here, from variables which have not been identified, and from the process of partnership working itself. Box 4 sets out variables which, if realised, could represent stimuli toward both regime governance and 'anti-regime' or 'anti-governance' in the UK (De Leon, 1992). The hypothesis which is derived from this review is that in Labour authority areas, exogenous factors are likely to have generated the material and the ideological grounds for partnership formation. However, regime governance requires the pre-existence, or the emergence, of a local commitment to partnership on the part of local authorities and within elements of the local business sector. It also requires a common agenda between local authorities and businesses, the realisation of which depends on the combination of resources from both parties.

The insights which one can draw from urban regime theory in explaining urban partnerships in the UK are likely to be limited, based on this perspective. The conceptual distinction drawn between regime governance and regime theory is illustrative of this point. Regime theory is unlikely to explain the development of urban partnerships in the UK. Moreover, to the extent that these partnerships exhibit the distinctive characteristics of regime governance, these characteristics are unlikely to be explained by urban regime theory. It is in blurring the distinctive aspects of regime theory and in treating an overly broad range of partnership phenomena as 'regimes' that adaptive approaches reduce its explanatory power. More important, the explanatory tools used in regime theory, based as they are on a schematic split between state and market at the urban scale, seem inadequate to the task of explaining UK style urban partnerships. The search for an explanatory

regime theory in the UK is therefore considered to be mistaken. As noted above, Ward (1997b) argues for the development of a series of abstractions capable of explaining regime formation in the UK. A different approach is taken here. Rather, a series of abstractions are deemed necessary, capable of explaining urban partnerships regardless of the extent to which these resemble regime governance. To achieve this objective, it is necessary to move away from an approach which seeks to make regime theory fit. The cognitive task of policy science is to create patterns that make sense of the phenomena subject to explanation. Regime theory does not itself provide such a pattern, beyond the limited explanatory notion of interdependence. Instead, it is better to ask in what ways, if any, resource dependence between local authority and business is a relevant factor in developing an explanation for partnerships in the UK. The framework developed in the last part of the chapter seeks to answer this question schematically. The empirical component of the study which follows attempts to answer it empirically. Chapter 4 now sets the context for the material reported in the case studies.

Chapter 4. The Case Studies in Context

Introduction

This chapter paints a basic contextual picture, highlighting factors which relate to the key themes set out in the case studies. The objective is not to present a comprehensive empirical account of non-local forces which may have influenced partnerships, but to highlight policies and processes which were identified at the local level as influential in determining partnership approaches. A discussion of this nature could describe every initiative at every supra-local level of governance, leading to a lengthy list of influences on local partnership processes which are not supported by corresponding empirical material within the case studies. Instead, a brief resume is provided of issues and initiatives relevant to the material covered therein. Much of the material which follows is secondary in character, but interviews were undertaken with personnel involved in urban policy at the regional and the national levels of government. The focus of the chapter is on developments in urban policy since the 1970s. Comparisons are drawn between different periods during 18 years of Conservative Government and recent developments under 'New Labour'. It is suggested that Labour is following a similar policy trajectory, though there are important differences in emphasis, particularly the changed climate for central-local relations and a more 'holistic' approach to local regeneration initiatives.

The chapter is organised into two main parts. The first part outlines the key issues in the development of urban policy and partnerships since the 1970s, highlighting their relevance to the case studies. The second part considers the definition and evaluation of added value, an important empirical task in the case studies.

Partnership from the 1970s to the Present Day

This part of the chapter is organised into four main sections around four phases in urban policy since 1970: public-public partnerships, privatisation, public-private partnerships under the Conservatives, and 'joined up' partnership strategies under New Labour. This latter section also outlines tentative steps taken by New Labour toward English regionalism and considers the developing framework for partnerships in the arena of education, both of which form an important backdrop to the material presented in the case studies.

Public-Public Partnership in the 1970s

The Local Government Grants (Social Need) Act 1969 introduced urban assistance in the form of grants. Under the Act, government gave out grants to local authorities on the basis of 'special social need' in urban areas. This act introduced the Urban Programme which was designed to encourage investment through land and building improvements, to provide business training and to support revenue costs for social projects. The Urban Programme survived as a key tool in urban policy until it was finally phased out in 1994, replaced first by City Challenge, and then by the SRB, discussed further below (Parkinson and Wilks, 1986).

Bailey *et al* (1995: 43-48) attribute the origins of urban partnerships to the 1970s. Following a review of urban policy in 1976, funding to the Urban Programme was increased from £30 million to £125 million and allocated to several designated 'partnership' areas, including Liverpool, Lambeth and London Docklands. The Inner Urban Areas Act, passed in 1978, divided the urban programme into three categories of urban deprivation, and the worst seven were allocated 'partnership' status. The seven Inner City Partnerships (ICPs) which resulted encapsulate the partnership approach of the Labour Government in the late 1970s which was driven by the perceived failure of the Urban Programme (Parkinson and Wilks, 1986: 291). This failure was, in part, believed to have arisen from an absence of co-ordination between central government departments on one hand and between centre and locality on the other:

Partnership was an innovative, ambitious attempt to close the political and administrative gap between the two worlds of central and local government and help reconcile the diverse

and conflicting goals of local autonomy and national purposes within an increasingly complex set of welfare state policies and institutions (Parkinson and Wilks, 1986: 291).

The original intention for the Inner City Partnerships was that they should involve a closer collaboration between government and private sector. However, they failed in this objective, falling instead under the control of Whitehall, government ministers and local government officials (Bailey *et al*, 1995: 45). According to Barnekov *et al* (1989: 157):

Neither the central nor local government officials had direct experience with promoting local industry or commerce; business and trade unions were not invited to be formal members of the partnerships; and representatives of the private sector had only peripheral involvement in the new economic programmes.

Hence, the ICPs proved to be public-public and central-local partnerships driven by collaboration within and between different levels of government. Indeed, a key reason for establishing them was to try and overcome the problem of co-ordination between departments and levels of government which had impeded efforts to tackle urban deprivation (Lawless, 1981: 93). But the ICPs were perceived as having failed in this regard too. Co-ordination proved impossible to achieve, marked by an unwillingness within central and local government departments to behave more flexibly or to act in a spirit of partnership (Lawless, 1991: 19). Crucial to the partnership process was the objective of 'bending' government programmes to meet the specific needs of inner cities.

According to Parkinson and Wilks (1986: 294/5):

The concept of 'bending' was simple, easily understood, potentially very effective and in practice impossible to deliver ... At the local level a similar process of departmental imperialism and conflict similarly limited the reorientation of mainstream programmes.

The partnerships were undermined by one other crucial factor: the election of the Conservative Government in 1979. By 1981, the new government was being criticised for the lack of resources injected into the Urban Programme and the Inner City Partnerships. It had a new agenda for urban policy and the ICPs withered on the vine.

The Era of Privatism - 1980 to 1990

The new Conservative Government was greeted by serious urban riots in 1981, notably in Brixton, Toxteth and Handsworth (Bailey *et al*, 1995: 46/7). The riots ushered in a period which Barnekov *et al* have described as an era of 'privatism' when British politicians and civil servants looked

overseas, particularly to the United States, for policy initiatives involving and driven by the business sector. The first major initiative of the 1980s was the Urban Development Grant (UDG). As was highlighted in chapter 3, Wolman's (1992) study shows how the UDG was inspired by the American Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG). In 1981, Michael Heseltine, in his first spell as Secretary of State for the Environment, set up the Financial Institution's Group (FIG), consisting of representatives of major financial institutions. The Group was charged with examining potential policies for inner city regeneration in the aftermath of the riots. It undertook a study tour of the US in autumn 1981 accompanied by civil servants, seeking ways of involving the private sector in urban regeneration. It recommended the adoption of a British version of UDAG which the Government brought into being as UDG in 1982 (Wolman, 1992: 31-32). The objective of the UDG, like UDAG, was to lever private sector funds into inner cities by means of government grant (Boyle, 1985).

Throughout the 1980s, the role of business groups in urban policy was enhanced and that of the local authority diminished. The Urban Development Corporation (UDC) was the 'flagship' urban policy during this period (Burton and O'Toole, 1994: 162). UDCs were noteworthy for their dominance by private sector interests, for the exclusion of local authorities from participation, and for the curtailment of local authority planning powers within the UDC area (Batley, 1989, Wilson and Game, 1994; Harding, 1998). The absence of a role for local government in urban regeneration was confirmed by omission in the Government's statement on urban policy *Action for Cities* (HMSO, 1988). Lawless identifies this statement as the 'high tide of anti-collectivism towards the cities' (1994: 1304).

By 1990, in its review of *Action for Cities*, the Government had changed its position, calling for a 'spirit of co-operation, of partnership between all of those involved in central and local government, including local business' (DoE cited in Lawless, 1994: 1304). A notable, if exaggerated, feature of central-local relations in the mid 1980s had been conflict between certain Labour authorities and the Conservative government. By 1990, however, 'municipal socialism' as conceived by the 'urban left' during that period (Boddy and Fudge, 1984; Cliff and Gluckstein,

1988) was exhausted. As chapter 3 argued, this struggle was ideological and political, a battle for hegemonic control of urban governance (Stoker, 1990: 167).

While government policy by 1990 was based partly on a new confidence in the compliance of local authorities, the exclusive approach to urban policy had also been subjected to criticism from at least three different sources. The Audit Commission considered urban regeneration programmes to be poorly co-ordinated. Business leaders involved in Business in the Community, on the other hand, were committed to working in active partnership with the public sector, therefore opposing exclusive approaches to regeneration. Thirdly, the Government's own supporters in the Carlton Club criticised it for a lack of co-ordination and for excessive bureaucracy (Le Gales and Mawson, 1994: 84). By 1991, the exclusive approach to regeneration was perceived to be failing (Le Gales and Mawson, 1995: 222).

Public-Private Partnerships from 1991-1997

The establishment of City Challenge in May 1991 can therefore be regarded as something of a watershed in terms of government policy, marking both a shift in attitude and the development of initiatives in which local authorities were encouraged to establish partnerships to compete for targeted regeneration funds (Oatley and Lambert, 1998: 111):

The City Challenge initiative is underpinned by the proposition that substantial and lasting urban regeneration requires efficient, entrepreneurial delivery mechanisms that promote effective collaborative relationships between all the key players (DoE, 1992: 3).

City Challenge placed local authorities back at the centre of urban policy initiatives. It had an important effect in changing the attitude of local authorities toward partnership. For David Curry, funding streams of this kind were important stimuli to partnership development processes, particularly within Labour authorities. He pointed to political change inside the Labour Party and to a raft of local government reforms, including CCT, performance indicators and Value for Money which had forced local authorities into a change of culture compatible with the competitive realities in the outside world and, therefore, compatible with a partnership approach to governance. As partnerships developed,

people in local government who were Labour discovered that people who worked in the private sector may just have been born on the same planet and didn't eat children raw for breakfast. And people in the private sector discovered that there were intelligent people in local government who were capable of thinking in terms of outputs and value for money ... You now find civic leaders and local businesses hand in glove (Curry, 3.4.98).¹

For the Conservative Government, then, local partnerships were a response to economic 'realities'. While he thought it too early to judge the effectiveness of partnerships in delivering regeneration outcomes, Curry believed that partnerships are now embedded in the local political culture (Curry, 3.4.98).

Perhaps the key urban policy initiative under the Conservatives was the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). The SRB was established in April 1994 combining twenty programmes, including City Challenge (Stewart, 1994). David Curry saw his main activity, under the guidance of Michael Heseltine now in his second term at the DoE, as the development of the SRB, the new 'flagship' regeneration programme. Government thinking behind the SRB had three strands: partnership, integration of economic and social issues, and competition. It thus represented a move away from the City Challenge approach which was concerned primarily with generating market investment, and a move toward a recognition that economic and social ills had to be tackled in tandem. SRB rounds 1 to 3 were conducted under the Conservative Government. Up until this point, the guidelines and objectives for the SRB had remained broadly stable, concerned with generating local partnerships to address economic and social difficulties (Curry, 3.4.98). Labour was elected in May 1997 in the middle of round 4.

New Labour and 'Joined Up Thinking'

Supplementary national guidance to SRB round 4 was issued following the general election in May 1997 asking for a stronger emphasis to be placed in bids on social 'need' based on criteria defined in the Index of Local Conditions (DETR, 2.6.98) or on special local circumstances. The supplementary guidance stated that the government will give higher priority to bids which express

¹ The reference (Curry, 3.4.98) denotes a personal interview with David Curry MP, former Minister with responsibility for Local Government, Housing and Regeneration, held on 3 April 1998.

need in this way. It also demanded a greater emphasis on tackling 'needs of communities in the most deprived areas' and greater collaboration between bidding partnerships and regional offices (GOYH, July 1997). Subsequent guidelines for SRB5 went further, demanding a 'strategic' or a 'comprehensive' approach to addressing regeneration needs, calling on bids to address a range of issues identified in the findings of the Government's new Social Exclusion Unit (DETR, 3.2.99).

This approach to the SRB is centred on a wider government agenda based on the idea that regeneration activity is enhanced when 'regeneration problems are tackled in a comprehensive and cross-cutting way'(DETR, 6.5.99).² Regional guidance for SRB Round 5 enhanced the new emphasis on 'extensive and multiple deprivation', with a formal commitment to allocate 80% of resources to those areas falling within the worst 50 local authorities in the 1998 Index of Local Deprivation (DETR, 2.6.98; DETR, 3.2.99), a development which arguably begins to undermine the challenge element of partnership funding.³ The discussion below shows how important education is within this expansive approach to regeneration and that it forms part of the government's urban policy agenda, interpreted in its broadest sense (LGA, 21.1.99).

The government inherited a number of problems associated with the SRB. The four case studies which follow this chapter amply demonstrate the view that the SRB has been restrictive, an example of the deleterious effects of strong governmental control. It is too early to evaluate whether new Government policies, particularly the establishment of Regional Development Agencies discussed further below, will make any difference to this evaluation. Both Richard Caborn and Alan Meale, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the DETR, recognised the problem faced by local partnerships in having to match partnership outputs to governmental criteria such as those set out in SRB guidelines. Mr Caborn conceded that government might have

² The reference (DETR, 6.5.99) denotes the date of a written response to questions by Alan Meale MP, Parliamentary Undersecretary of State at the DETR.

³ The production of regional guidance for the SRB is an initiative of the Labour Government.

used local partnerships as implementation agencies for central policy. He perceived a need for balance between flexibility and decentralisation on one hand and for monitoring and management of public money on the other (DETR, 7.7.99).⁴ Alan Meale also emphasised that Ministers are keen to ensure, while maintaining accountability, that bureaucratic processes do not impede regeneration schemes and wide community activity within them (DETR, 6.5.99).

From the Government's perspective, two main problems with partnership working were identified. First, a lack of community capacity was highlighted. There are not enough 'quality' people engaging in the partnership process at present. To alleviate this problem, 10% of the SRB has been top-sliced to local capacity building initiatives (DETR, 7.7.99). Richard Caborn accepted that it is difficult in some areas to get businesses 'fully committed and involved', though he suggested that some business leaders have recognised the value to themselves in partnership processes (DETR, 6.5.99). Second, he felt that the focus on local initiatives had, in the past, led to an absence of strategic thinking, contributing to uneven economic performance between the regions. One reason for establishing Regional Development Agencies was, he said, to try and ensure a greater degree of evenness in economic performance (DETR, 7.7.99).

How committed is New Labour to the empowerment of local authorities and partnerships in the urban regeneration process? A common thread in government initiatives is the signalling of a new central-local partnership and the end of what Caborn described as the adversarial policy of the Conservative years (DETR, 7.7.99). The theme of a central-local partnership has been highlighted by Hilary Armstrong, Minister for Local Government and Regions who commented: 'it is vital that we lose the skills of battle and find the skills and organisation of partnership' (cited in Stoker, 1999: 17).⁵

⁴ The reference (DETR, 7.7.99) denotes a personal interview with Richard Caborn MP, Minister of State for the Regions, Regeneration and Planning, held on 7 July 1999.

⁵ As chapter 1 comments, a formal Central-Local partnership was established in July 1997.

The LGA's *New Commitment to Regeneration* initiative is indicative of this approach. In symbolic terms at least, it is important evidence of a new willingness on the part of government to experiment with policy initiatives developed within local government (LGA, 2 April 1998). *New Commitment* is the product of research undertaken on behalf of the Local Government Management Board by Le Gales and Mawson (1994). Le Gales and Mawson believed that Britain could learn something from the French experience of urban policy which is organised around contracts, known as the 'Contrat de Ville', between different levels and departments of government. This initiative has been adapted by the LGA in the form of *New Commitment* and shortly after its election, the new Labour government agreed to participate in a pilot scheme involving 22 local partnerships. The objective of the scheme is to explore different ways of improving partnerships between actors at the local level but more importantly between central and local governments. It is innovative in proposing time limited agreements between partners, each of whom are required to stipulate what they will bring to the partnership. Central government will be a key signatory to these agreements.

In some ways, the *New Commitment* proposals resemble the old ICPs with their emphasis on improving co-ordination between government departments and between centre and locality. There are two main differences. First, the private and other sectors are expected to be involved in local partnerships; and second, each local partnership is expected to be driven by a comprehensive vision statement, addressing the diverse economic and social elements of urban regeneration. The test of *New Commitment* will be whether it can succeed where ICPs failed in involving the private sector in local partnerships and in achieving better co-ordination between central departments and the central and local tiers of government. *New Commitment to Regeneration* can be interpreted as a commitment by central government to work more closely with local authorities. Initiatives like the Beacon Council Scheme also offer rewards in the form of greater powers for authorities which meet stipulated targets (DETR, 12.2.99).

However, it is not yet clear whether New Labour can be characterised as a decentralizing government. For example, the White Paper *Modern Local Government: In Touch With the*

People proposed even stronger powers for Government in the event of perceived failure, including the right to enforce outsourcing (DETR, 30.7.98). Doubts can also be expressed about the degree of commitment by central government to decentralization in relation to local authority involvement in companies. Two of the case studies, Barnsley and Rotherham, examine partnership in joint venture companies. One (Barnsley) is concerned with commercial property development, the other (Rotherham) with the building of affordable housing. The role of these companies, in which local authority and developer both take shares and profit, has proved complex in both cases due to restrictive regulations introduced by the Conservatives. The last government set out its framework for classifying local authorities' interest in companies in the *Local Government and Housing Act 1989* (HMSO, 1990). The arrangements were clarified in the *Local Authorities (Companies) Order 1995*, which distinguished between different degrees of local authority control and influence (DoE, February 1997). The objective of the Order was to regulate venture companies to ensure that local authorities were not using them to finance capital activities which would otherwise fall outside agreed expenditure levels. Hence, it distinguished between those companies which are public sector influenced and those which are private sector influenced. Transactions in public sector influenced companies have the same implications for a local authority's resources as if undertaken by the authority itself. Private sector influenced companies are not subjected to the same controls, thereby encouraging the private sector to carry the majority of the equity risks and to control the majority of voting rights in a company (DoE, February 1997). A Coopers and Lybrand report suggests that around 40% of all local authorities are now involved in venture companies, just under half of which fall under private sector influence or control (Coopers and Lybrand, 1997). The new Government issued guidance on the Private Finance Initiative (DETR, 11.9.98) and stated in *Modernising Local Government* that it would examine the regulations controlling local authority interests in companies (DETR, 30.7.98). As yet, however, apart from a relaxation of the controls over borrowing and investment by local authority airport companies, no changes have occurred, loosening tight central controls over local authority capital expenditure.

It is questionable, therefore, how far the measures being taken in *Modern Local Government* represent decentralization, even of comparatively minor powers and, as the case studies show, it is arguable that such measures as are being introduced empower only those authorities which are wholly in step with government thinking. Future studies could usefully consider how far New Labour initiatives eventually result in the decentralization of power from centre to locality.

Some of the measures proposed in *Modern Local Government* (DETR, 30.7.98), such as cabinet government, elected mayors and supplementary business rating, were beginning to come on line just as the empirical phase of the project came to an end.⁶ Appendix 3 lists central government initiatives currently affecting local regeneration activities (DETR, 19.8.99). Other relevant government papers include: *Cross-cutting Issues Affecting Local Government* (DETR, 8.2.99); the *Report of the Urban Taskforce* (DETR, 29.6.99); *Local Leadership, Local Choice* (DETR, 25.3.99); and the *Urban Exchange Initiative* (DETR, 24.7.98). It will be some time before the impact of these papers feed through into policy and their eventual impact on government and on local partnership processes cannot be evaluated at present.

Regeneration and the English Regions

Another important strand of government regeneration policy which emerged during the 1990s was a new role for the English regions. A system of integrated government offices was established in April 1994 bringing together under one roof the regional offices of Employment, Environment, Transport and Trade and Industry (Riley, 1999).⁷ The rationale for establishing government offices was, according to David Curry, that of efficiency and effectiveness, creating a 'one stop shop' to deal with regional issues (Curry, 3.4.98). The Government Office for Yorkshire and Humberside (GOYH) covers a diverse area, from the coal areas of South Yorkshire, to the ports

⁶ Mixed views were expressed about the likely impact of a local business rate. Some parties felt that it would bind the local authority more closely to the business sector, while others felt that it would re-ignite old rows about the annual rating process. As views were mixed and speculative in nature, and space was at a premium, the question of the business rate was not included in the final editions of the case studies.

⁷ The parent departments are now the DETR, the DTI and DfEE (DETR, 1.4.99).

of Grimsby and Hull and the rural expanses of North Yorkshire. The main role GOYH identified for itself in relation to the case study areas was the adjudication of SRB bids and project management (GOYH, 2.4.98).

As was noted above, Caborn took the view that regeneration policy has been overly localist in character, thereby undermining strategic thinking. He described regionalism as 'the key' to regeneration policy, the means by which strategic thinking could be put on the policy agenda (DETR, 7.7.99). In line with this perspective, the White Paper *Building Partnerships for Prosperity* sought to place regions at the centre of the Government's regeneration project (DETR, 3.12.97). Eight Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) were established in England on 1 April 1999 in the English regions outside London.⁸ The establishment of RDAs is seen by the Government as part of a process of decentralisation in which central government recognises limits in its ability to direct local action. RDAs will be Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) accountable to ministers. They are business-led, comprising Boards of 12 appointed members incorporating a presence from the public sector and a fixed representation of four members from local authorities. The objective in creating RDAs is to:

promote sustainable economic development and social and physical regeneration and to co-ordinate the work of regional and local partners in areas such as training, investment, regeneration and business support (DETR, 3.12.97: 1.1).

The Government has placed no statutory limits on the functions which will eventually be transferred to RDAs, but initially, they will take over responsibility from government offices for administration of the SRB, later taking over English Partnerships' responsibility for promoting physical regeneration, and the regional development functions of the Rural Development Commission.

RDAs are effectively part of the devolution process which is a key aspect of New Labour's agenda for constitutional reform, but their future is dependent on how far the agenda for constitutional reform goes in years to come, something which is by no means certain (Evans, 1999). The

⁸ There are plans to establish a ninth RDA for London in 2000 (DETR, 1.4.99). The Yorkshire and Humberside RDA has been named 'Yorkshire Forward' (GET, 2.4.99).

agencies have initially been given responsibility for preparing regional economic strategies (YHRDA, 22.1.99). Core functions are: to foster regional capability; to attract inward investment; and to market the region. Yorkshire and Humberside is not presently viewed as successful in its pursuit of inward investment, attracting the lowest share of Foreign Direct Investment in the UK and this is a key task for 'Yorkshire Forward' (CityVision, April 1997: 14; YHRDA, 13.1.99). Partnership is a key theme for RDAs. As well as attracting private funds for partnership projects, they will be charged with responsibility for promoting public-private partnership more widely (DETR, 3.12.97: 4.25).

Caborn also viewed regional policy as a key tool for enhancing competitiveness in the global market place.⁹ A key objective in regional policy is to bring local resources into harness, preventing wasteful duplication and competition between areas and organisations. Regionalism can, in theory, prevent localities 'competing with public subsidy' (Curry, 3.4.98) and prevent nugatory effort through the process of co-ordination which GOYH and the RDA will, in theory, provide (GOYH, 2.4.98).¹⁰ The RDA is seen as a form of rationalisation which should, according to the TUC, result in elimination of regional 'clutter' removing 'unnecessary duplication and competition' (TUC cited in DETR, 3.12.97: 5.14) and it will constitute a one-stop-shop for the handling of 'significant internationally-mobile investment projects' (DETR, 3.12.97: 5.9; GOYH, 2.4.98). The regional level of governance was viewed by regional actors as a key interface for mobile capital from overseas, the evidence showing that firms from abroad look not to the local scale, but to the regional or national level for information and for the co-ordination of aid (GOYH,

⁹ While the Government is keen on economic regionalism, its commitment to elected regionalism is weaker. Le Gales and John warn that any delay in implementing 'elected regionalism' could compromise legitimacy and stymie the further development of regional governance processes (1997: 58). This view was shared by the Chief Executive of North East Lincolnshire Council, who viewed Government policy as mistaken. He believed that partial regionalism would result in a perception that regionalism had failed, when, in fact, it had not gone far enough (NELC, 12.6.98b).

¹⁰ A 'concordat' between the RDA and the Regional Chamber, pledging the RDA to 'consult' the Chamber on its Regional Economic Strategy has been agreed (YHRDA, 13.1.99). The Regional Chamber, the first in the country, was launched in March 1998 (GOYH, 27.3.98).

2.4.98; YHDA, 15.12.98).¹¹ This issue is considered in the case studies from the perspective of whether localities and local partnerships have influenced global investment/non-investment decisions. Ultimately, it is questionable whether localities are being forced to compete through partnerships for globally mobile investment if it is the region or the national level to which the potential investor looks in the first instance for support.

Regional partnerships are a pre-requisite for access to European Regional Development Funds (Morgan *et al*, 1999: 182). All the case study areas benefit from ERDF money and South Yorkshire has recently been designated an Objective 1 area. Prior to this designation, all four cases fell within Objective 2 areas.¹² Regional partnerships comprise a key emphasis in social fund regulations and Yorkshire and Humberside's Objective 2 Single Programming Document is administered by a regional partnership, the Programme Monitoring Committee (GOYH, 7.5.97).¹³ This committee is a 'partnership' consisting of a representative from the European Commission and representatives from regional and local bodies, including local authorities, and it is responsible for the distribution of funds (GOYH, 7.5.97).

This brief sketch of developments in the regional regeneration policy agenda is necessary in order to understand why the EU does not appear as a key variable driving partnerships at the local level. The main impact of the EU appears to be at the regional level in relation to partnership. This point is implicitly recognised by the EU itself. New structural fund regulations highlight a need to expand partnerships 'beyond national and regional authorities to include, in a real and meaningful way, local authorities and social and economic partners on the ground' (EU, undated). If Europe has influenced local partnership processes, it is in ways which have not been perceived by local

¹¹ The Yorkshire and Humberside Development Agency has been incorporated within Yorkshire Forward as its inward investment arm (YHDA, 15.12.98).

¹² Objective 1 status is awarded to regions whose development is lagging behind, normally those whose per capita GDP falls beneath 75% of the EU. Objective 2 status goes to restructuring regions which have been seriously affected by industrial decline (EU, undated).

¹³ Objective 2 funding was worth £173 million to Yorkshire and Humberside in 1994-1996 (GOYH, 2.4.98).

actors who did not attribute local responses to European influence and who, as the case studies show, view national government as the main extra-local influence. The relationship between local authority and the European Union is mediated through the regional level of governance and it is at this level that partnership operates in relation to policy formation and resource allocation (Harding, 1998: 77). Regional partnerships could form another interesting study from the perspective of evaluating regime theory, but a regional analysis lay beyond the scope of this study (see Coulson, 1997, Le Gales and John, 1997). However, while the case studies do not evaluate regional partnerships, they provide a view of whether preparations for 'Yorkshire Forward' have influenced local approaches to partnership.

Education and Business

It was noted above that education is an important plank in the government's regeneration policy agenda. As in the sphere of economic development, partnerships between education and business have become an important tool in the implementation of this agenda. The first Education Business Partnerships (EBPs) were established in 1990 with Department of Employment funds, drawing together a range of school and industry projects in a single umbrella organisation (BiTC, 2.7.99; National EBP Network, 5.7.99). EBPs differ widely in terms of formal status, leadership and local commitment, but they have in common a range of goals relating to the enhancement of work readiness for young people. The most prevalent activities are work experience placements, support for GNVQ, pupil mentoring, curriculum support, and teacher/business employee secondments. Research by the Institute of Employment Studies suggests that around one third of employers are involved, at some level, in education business links, with around 25% of this group taking a 'pro-active' approach to partnership activity with a formal policy and, in some cases, a budget for partnership activity (Hillage *et al*, 1995). The National EBP network is concerned about the sustainability of local EBPs, due to variable levels of local commitment, to local turf wars and to the absence of a reliable national funding stream. It argued that government funding could be vital in sustaining EBP activities in future (National EBP Network, 5.7.99).

On 26 November 1998, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment announced plans for the creation of strategic lifelong learning partnerships for post-16 education, as a contribution to the Government's agenda for regeneration and for social inclusion: 'In a world of increasing global competition, education and training are the best economic policy we have'. Learning is 'an essential part of regenerating our communities and bringing a social justice for all our people' (DfEE, 4.1.99). A *National Partnership Protocol* was drawn up in November 1998 to assist in establishing a national framework for partnership, thereby creating the conditions in which local partnerships can develop effectively. The protocol identified the establishment of RDAs, together with the establishment of a National Skills Task Force as a 'timely opportunity' to strengthen partnership working (DfEE, November 1998).¹⁴

The broad objectives for 'learning partnerships' are to 'widen participation in learning, increase attainment, improve standards and meet the skills challenge'. It is claimed that they will not 'impose' another layer of partnership locally, but rather 'subsume' existing arrangements, building on what is already in place. Local authorities and colleges will be responsible for developing a framework, within partnerships, to administer student support arrangements, to ensure co-ordinated transport for post-16 learners, to play a key role in regenerating learning in communities, to increase participation in learning and to drive forward work on targets. Core membership of the partnerships will include FE colleges, local authority, schools, Careers Service and TEC, with local discretion to determine membership beyond this. It was not envisaged that partnership boundaries will correspond to those of local authorities, but to a range of criteria including patterns of education and training provision, travel to work patterns and local labour markets. Arrangements are to be agreed in consultation with Government Offices. The partnerships will be supported by a DfEE partnership fund totalling £25 million over three years to help promote collaboration (DfEE, 4.1.99).

¹⁴ The protocol was signed up to by: DfEE, the Association of Colleges, the Association of Principals of Colleges, the Further Education Development Agency, The Further Education Funding Council, the Local Government Association and the TEC National Council (DfEE, November 1998).

Complicating this picture is the publication of the Government's White Paper, *Learning to Succeed: A New Framework for Post-16 Learning* (DfEE, June 1999). The White Paper proposes the establishment of a Learning and Skills Council for England, to be supported by up to 50 local councils. These councils will, among other responsibilities, plan and co-ordinate post-16 education, assume responsibility for further education funding, take over funding modern apprenticeships and national traineeships (from TECs) and ensure that an effective EBP network exists to support work related learning for the pre-16 age group. A key role is envisaged for employers both on the national and the local councils, with business to comprise the biggest single group on the national body. The White Paper argues that local learning partnerships will complement the local councils. The local councils will be expected to consult with local learning partnerships, avoiding duplication and providing a mechanism for local accountability. The proposed relationship appears analogous to that envisaged between RDA and Regional Chamber, footnoted above (DETR, 27.3.98). The local councils, as arms of the national council, will be appointed by the national council, with each 'local' chair selected by the Secretary of State. They will be managed by appointed chief executives.

This complex background is of relevance to the material presented in the case studies, but the timing of the research meant that in Barnsley and in Rotherham, while the concept of lifelong learning had been built into local regeneration strategies, plans had not been made to accommodate this tranche of initiatives during empirical work. The pace of policy development, in this arena particularly, made the comparison between cases imprecise, even though the research was undertaken over a relatively short time frame. Hence, the discussion of EBPs is relevant throughout the four cases, but Lifelong Learning is discussed only in relation to Hull and North East Lincolnshire.

Partnership and Added Value

An important objective of the case studies is to try to evaluate what kind of achievements partnerships have delivered. The final part of this chapter considers issues associated with

evaluating partnership effects and provides a background to the way added value is treated in the case studies and the following analysis in chapters 9 and 10.

A recent evaluation of the SRB, based on a sample of successful bids in rounds 1 and 2, reported that participants regarded the partnership approach as enabling a more holistic and strategic approach to tackling problems, to which end City Challenge had acted as an important stimulus (Tyler, March 1998). Benefits from the partnership approach included pooling of expertise and resources, enhanced networking, better co-ordination and avoidance of duplication, and a more 'strategic' approach to regeneration. A range of negative factors were also identified, including the level of government bureaucracy associated with challenge funding discussed above, the problem of competition with public subsidy, including conflicting initiatives in the same area (see also David Curry, 3.4.98) and questionable 'additionality' (Tyler, March 1998). Stewart (1998: 79) notes that empirical evaluations of partnership have been few, while the DETR recognises that it is difficult to measure the impact of SRB funding. Scepticism has been expressed concerning the impact of targeted funds on tackling social exclusion and in empowering local communities (DETR, 1997: 4.7). These concerns stand in contrast to the claim made by David Curry (3.4.98) that the SRB has 'mobilised thousands across the country into partnership' and 'mobilised a whole generation of people into civic activism'. Le Gales and Mawson (January 1994: 112) note that it is difficult to produce quantifiable output measures for 'political outputs such as 'solidarity', co-ordination, cohesiveness'. These words are 'motherhood and apple pie' outputs which partnerships are supposed to engender. 'Inclusiveness', for example, which is generally seen to be a positive indicator in partnerships, may generate costs in terms of effective co-ordination and project capacity. If David Curry (3.4.98) is correct, the inclusion of voluntary sector representatives in strategic partnerships represents an impediment to effective project delivery by what he viewed as the key local actors - the local authority and the business sector.

The process of evaluating the added value of partnership was not aided in this study by the absence of systematic thinking among participants about this issue or about the possibility that in some arenas, local government may be better than local governance. Notwithstanding these

difficulties, the study attempts a qualitative evaluation of partnership activity. Stoker (1997a:19) argues that it is necessary to consider not only the 'doing' of governance (inputs), but also the impact of governance, its achievement of social purpose (outputs). For Cropper, the very survival of alliances depends on their ability both to command and create value (1996: 82). He distinguishes between 'constitutive' value, an input related concept reflected in the nature of collaborative effort, articulated as expressions of purpose and capacities; and consequential value, reflected in claims about the efficiency, productiveness and legitimacy of collaboration (1996: 83/4). However, it is also acknowledged that organizations, in this case partnerships, can be valued for what they are and what they represent, for 'direct personal gratification and for group integrity and perpetuation, rather than for what, instrumentally, they can do' (Cropper, 1996: 90). In this sense, added value is intangible and unquantifiable (Huxham, 1996: 177). Values need not, therefore, be evaluated against material outputs. Hastings distinguishes between resource synergy as a materialistic concept and policy synergy, indicative of a process by which new insights or solutions are produced from differing perspectives (1996: 259). Partnership may thus be conceived as added value in three ways: as resource gain ('hard' or 'soft', 'input' or 'output'), as strategic capacity through policy negotiation, and as a thing in itself, a belief that co-operation is inherently good. In the case studies, inputs are often perceived by partners as added value in themselves and it often proved difficult for them to identify outputs corresponding with partnership inputs like 'synergy'.

For these reasons, local governance capacity is judged in this study mainly against partnership objectives and against an evaluation, necessarily speculative in character, of whether these objectives could be achieved by the local authority or by the private sector alone, were extra-local resources allocated instead to one party or the other (see for example Harding, 1998: 71). This definition of added value is commensurate with the notion of 'power to' in urban regime theory (Stone, 1989), which is about governance capacity generated internally through local partnership activities. It also distinguishes between influence by business on local authority views and activities (policy synergy), and added value in partnership outputs (resource synergy) (Hastings, 1996: 259).

It remains to note that any definition of added value is inherently normative. Business input to partnerships may generate different, or new, regeneration approaches and projects, but these approaches and projects cannot automatically be described as 'added value', given that choices have to be made between objectives. Criteria for the evaluation of the more tangible elements of added value, strategic capacity and resource gain, are value laden, because that which constitutes an added value output is dependent on political perspective and 'accomplishment' is not neutral (Grimshaw, 1996: 238). By simply acknowledging this point and focussing on local perceptions, rather than making a positive normative claim about added value, this study circumvents the normative element of the debate about added value. It should be noted, though, that this author, disbelieving the 'trickle down theory' of distribution, is strongly pre-disposed against the pursuit of profit-oriented projects, such as flagship tourist attractions, built at the expense of social projects, such as new housing development.¹⁵

Conclusion

If it shows nothing else, this brief sketch of urban policy initiatives illustrates how active central government has been in this sphere over a period of 30 years (Mossberger and Stoker, 1997). Local Government has been subjected to a continuous raft of initiatives in recent years designed to sustain partnership working. The policy of New Labour represents both continuity and change. It was the Conservatives who made the first move toward promoting local public-private partnerships in the early 1990s and it was they who began the process of encouraging inclusive social and economic regeneration strategies through the medium of the SRB. It is also arguable that they began the latest series of efforts to enhance co-ordination between departments and levels of government by establishing regional government offices.

The initiatives now pursued by Labour are, in many ways, compatible with and advance this previous agenda. It remains to be seen where Labour is going but the most remarkable difference thus far visible between the present period and that before 1997 is the willingness by central

¹⁵ The case studies highlight instances where 'social' objectives have been sacrificed for 'economic' ones.

government at least to consider taking on board a regeneration policy agenda developed locally in the shape of *New Commitment*. The central-local partnership, noted in chapter 1, may represent the beginning of a new era of collaboration between different tiers of government. But while local government is now better able to gain the ear of government, it is also clear from this top-down perspective that the rhetoric of decentralization has not been matched by deeds. As yet, there has been no delegation of the powers and resources necessary for localities to find their own way in partnership. But as implementation theory teaches us, street level bureaucrats have a habit of frustrating the objectives of legislators (Sabatier, 1986a,b).¹⁶ The case studies therefore examine the influence of extra-local and local factors respectively in determining partnership directions.

Whoever and whatever drives local partnership processes and objectives, the over-riding objective of both central and local government must be to derive added value from partnership working. Alliances are, quite logically, driven by the search for added value outcomes. If at the end of the day partnerships do not deliver positive outputs, it is questionable whether they have a future in local regeneration projects (Cropper, 1996). What kind of partnerships, then, have been generated in the locality, how have they been generated and what kind of added value can they be said to have produced?

The four case studies presented in chapters 5 to 8 now explore these issues. The reasons for the choice of case study areas were discussed in chapter 1. The case studies, insofar as the material permits, follow the same basic format and deal with the same issues. They first introduce the local political and economic context, which is vital for understanding the development of partnership in each. They then provide a historical overview of partnership working from the standpoint of the local authority and of the business sector, exploring the factors which influenced each party in deciding whether to become involved. Based on the distinction between policy and implementation partnerships made in chapter 1, each case examines the partnership responsible for setting the local policy agenda for regeneration, though North East Lincolnshire is exceptional in that its challenge partnership does not fulfil this function. Three 'mini-cases' follow, exploring

¹⁶ Street level bureaucrats are, in this context, local actors.

the way regeneration objectives are translated into practice through partnerships. The third mini-case in each instance examines partnerships involving business and education. The review of regime theory undertaken in chapter 2 shows that public-private collaboration exists across different policy arenas, including education. Much of the literature on partnerships in British political science neglects this area, which provides the rationale for incorporating a discussion of education partnerships into the cases. Education partnerships were found to be an interesting and relevant comparator with economic development in all four case studies. Chapter 5 proceeds to report the case of Barnsley.

Chapter 5. Barnsley - A Coal Town

The Economic and Political Context for Partnership

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC), a unitary authority, was created in 1974 when 14 smaller authorities were amalgamated. The Council is dominated by Labour, which holds 63 out of 66 council seats. It is the biggest employer in Barnsley, employing 10,900 people. Next in size is the local hospital with 2,000 employees (www.barnsley.gov.uk). Barnsley suffered badly from the decline of the coal industry and dependant industries, with a net loss of 20,000 jobs since the late 1970s. Mining employment stood at 15,000 jobs in the early 1980s with the last pit closing in 1994 (BRF, 1996). The figures for GDP growth in the period 1982-1997 for Barnsley (9%), for South Yorkshire (19%), for Yorkshire and Humberside (39%) and for the UK (44%) indicate the scale of relative decline. Ernst and Young, in a report on Barnsley's economic future, predicts that the economic gap between Barnsley, Yorkshire and Humberside, and the UK will widen due to continued low growth in the local economy (Ernst and Young, November 1997: 3). The relative economic and social decline in the coalfields is such that the South Yorkshire sub-region is now eligible for EU Objective 1 funding.¹ Nearly £400 million obtained from UK and European regeneration programmes since 1979 has not succeeded in stimulating regeneration in Barnsley, if the replacement of the 20,000 lost jobs and improvement in the town's relative economic position are indicators of success (BMBC, 5.8.99). Barnsley was perceived, if anything, to be in a position of absolute economic decline. Of the four case studies, Barnsley's economic

¹ To be eligible for Objective 1 assistance, a region must fall below 75% of the EU average for per capita GDP. GDP in Barnsley stood at 65% of the UK average in 1996, falling to 59% by 1999 (BRF, 1996; Ernst and Young, November 1997; BMBC, 5.8.99). GDP in South Yorkshire is 73% of the EU average. Objective 1 money could be worth up to £90 million per year in South Yorkshire.

position is by far the worst and the Chief Executive doubted whether the town could ever recover its economic position of 20 years ago (BMBC, 5.8.99).²

The decline of traditional employment in Barnsley revealed structural weaknesses in the local economy. A gap exists between available skills and the developing requirements of employers. The proposed remedy for these economic difficulties is radically to change the profile of the local economy away from traditional manufacturing industries. Ernst and Young (November 1997) argued that inward investment, above all else, has the potential to create a 'step change' in the economic fortunes of Barnsley.³ Envisaging alternative 'New Industrial' and 'Post Industrial' futures for Barnsley, they identified the latter strategy as most likely to succeed in regenerating the area (November, 1997: 36). Diversification was perceived to be necessary if the problems of over-dependence on a single declining industry is to be prevented in future (BRF, 1996: 14). Barnsley is concerned to attract investment from new high-tech industries, many of which will come from abroad. The borough has enjoyed limited success in changing its profile although its overall inward investment record has not improved in recent years (Ernst and Young, November 1997: 19). In the year to September 1995, of nine new companies investing in Barnsley, four were foreign owned (BRF, 1996: 16). Three recent overseas investors, Mion Electronics (400 employees), Kostal UK Ltd (550 employees) and Koyo Bearings (245 employees) are now among the twenty biggest employers in Barnsley (www.barnsley.gov.uk).

Globalization and Economic Regeneration

The collapse of the coal industry was not attributed by the Council solely to global economic pressures, but also to political vindictiveness by the Conservative government and to an energy policy which promoted gas to the exclusion of coal (BMBC, 10.6.98b). The weak economic position of the UK and of Yorkshire and Humberside in the face of an ever more competitive

² 49% of Barnsley's population is economically active, compared with 68% in Rotherham (BMBC, 5.8.99).

³ By which Ernst and Young mean eliminating the disparities between the performance of Barnsley and the wider Yorkshire and Humberside Region by 2008.

global economy represents a 'challenge' for Barnsley (BRF, 1996: 2), but economic 'globalization' was also seen as an opportunity for regeneration. It was argued that Barnsley has 'a good story to tell' footloose companies wishing to locate in the UK (BMBC, 6.5.98; BBEP, 26.10.98a).

The Process of Inward Investment

Ernst and Young (November, 1997: 18) argued that because Barnsley is comparatively small, enquiries are better handled at the sub-regional, or the regional levels. Barnsley was perceived to have limited capacity to achieve regeneration 'from within' (November 1997: 29) and 'South Yorkshire was considered to be a stronger brand than Barnsley' (November 1997: 51). Ernst and Young suggested that foreign investors focus in the first instance on large geographical areas with suitable characteristics and that therefore, in the first instance, neither Barnsley, Rotherham, nor any other place within South Yorkshire was likely to figure in their deliberations (November 1997: 48). They therefore recommended the continuing development of the South Yorkshire Forum (SYF), as a 'strategic' or 'visionary' body with respect to regeneration and inward investment.⁴ A further incentive for pursuing a strategic partnership at the sub-regional level was the prospect of Objective 1 funds. BMBC feared that unless sub-regional administrative arrangements were put in place to the satisfaction of the European Commission, effective control of Objective 1 funds would fall to GOYH, or to the Regional Development Agency (BMBC, 6.5.98). The regional level was central in the process of attracting overseas inward investment to Barnsley. Half of new inward investment in Barnsley comes from overseas (BMBC, 15.9.98) and the Yorkshire and Humberside Development Association (YHDA) handled the majority of overseas investment inquiries. The YHDA was part of the Invest in Britain Bureau (IIB) (www.dti.gov.uk/ibb) funded by the Government (60%), local authority contributions (20%) and private contributions (20%) (BMBC, 15.9.98).⁵

⁴ The discussion of the Barnsley Development Agency below shows why this recommendation was not carried out.

⁵ As was noted in chapter 4, YHDA is now the inward investment arm of 'Yorkshire Forward'.

A recent investment by a US company, H & W Computer Systems, which develops, markets, and supports system and application software products for mainframe and PC platforms, showed typically how overseas investment proceeds. H & W were introduced to Yorkshire and Humberside through the IIB network after indicating a preference for a central site within England. The YHDA invited those authorities it deemed appropriate to provide site specifications, which were passed back to H & W who narrowed their choice to one site in Barnsley and one in the Dearne Valley. Both sites offered major financial packages including Development Area status, tax allowances on building, training packages and a business rate waiver until 2005 (BMBC, 15.9.98). There was a competitor site in Germany seeking to win the investment contract, but this was rejected by H & W in favour of an English speaking country. This criterion was the most important factor in choosing England and local factors were not important at this first stage of consideration (H & W Systems, 20.7.99). H & W exports much of its product through the Port of Hull, lending weight to the impression that, as an American company, it is not overly concerned with location, given good transportation links. Local financial incentives and other elements like the sub-regional labour market only figured in the second 'trawl'. H & W felt that the YHDA had been instrumental in courting them, finding its approach to business to be more impressive than the East Midlands Region, which it said had tried to 'sell you on what they had available', rather than offering a made-to-measure site. The company was sufficiently impressed with the support it had received to become involved in 'championing' the area to three other companies considering locations in the Dearne Valley (H & W, 20.7.99).⁶

Inward investment and local dependence

Global corporations, including Kostal UK and Koyo Bearings are expanding rapidly (BMBC, 6.5.98; Kostal, undated, 22.10.98, Koyo, undated, 4.9.98).⁷ Koyo Bearings, for example, established in Barnsley in 1990, plans further expansion until it reaches an 'optimum' size in around 2003 (Koyo, 4.9.98). However, 'out-sourcing' is also a problem for Barnsley and it was

⁶ The Dearne Valley Partnership is discussed further below.

⁷ Koyo Bearings is a precision engineering company. Kostal produces electronic controls for the automotive industry.

feared that a decision by Dunlop Slazenger to locate the production of tennis balls in the Philippines would result in local job losses (BMBC, 15.9.98). The productive capital of companies like Kostal, which rely on skilled labour, on just-in-time production and on the development of business networks, was considered to be less mobile than that of labour intensive industries. Stockpiling to meet 'just-in-time' demand, which outsourcing would require, is not an option in high tech industries where innovation proceeds rapidly and where team building takes time and resources. Outsourcing is not considered to be an immediate or medium term threat in such operations (Koyo, 4.9.98; Kostal, 22.10.98). Subject to market fluctuations, multi-national productive capital appears secure, although it remains to be seen what will happen when various financial incentives are withdrawn (BMBC, 15.9.98). However, the level of dependence on the town by these companies seemed to be weak. Kostal, for example, obtained its supplies (raw materials) from the parent company in Germany. Its main market, as a supplier, was the UK automotive industry, particularly Japanese companies. Its skilled labour had to be drawn from other parts of the UK (Kostal, 22.10.98). Koyo, on the other hand, perceived the old industrial culture of shift patterns to be an advantage in choosing to invest in the coalfield area. Like Kostal, Koyo obtains supplies from abroad and it supplies a national and international market (Koyo, 4.9.98). Neither company is strongly dependent on Barnsley, though they both appear to be secure investments in the medium term.

The Development of Partnerships in Barnsley

Partnership in Barnsley was perceived to be a comparatively recent phenomenon, driven by the economic difficulties discussed above, combined with a response reflecting political change within the Labour Party locally and nationally. The Council recalled an ideological division where in the past, 'never the twain shall meet' and the only interface shared by the council and local business was discussion of the business rate (BMBC, 10.6.98a,b). A change in attitude was identified over the past 10-15 years, stemming from the period after the defeat of the 1984-5 miners strike and the subsequent realization that public institutions could not tackle the ensuing economic and social problems alone (BMBC, 5.8.99). A study undertaken by Sheffield University (September 1988), which recommended the establishment of an economic regeneration partnership in Barnsley on the

Sheffield model (see Lawless, 1990, 1994), suggests that 1988 was a time of flux in the attitudes of the public and private sectors. A survey of twenty six leading public officials and private sector directors indicated agnosticism with five expressing a preference for partnership working, five a preference against, with ten non-committal (Sheffield University, September 1988: 15). By 1990, Coopers and Lybrand detected a 'spirit of partnership in the area' (July 1990). The earliest example given of the Council seeking business involvement in economic development was an invitation by the Council Leader in 1985 to the then President of Barnsley Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) to sit on the Council's Financial Assistance to Industry Panel (BBEP, 22.10.98) which allocated grants to assist local business (BBEP, 22.10.98). Once economic development became the main priority for Barnsley, the Council's leadership decided that the business community, as wealth creators, needed to be mobilised if regeneration efforts were to succeed (BMBC, 10.6.98b). Economic development initiatives were pursued by BMBC with the private sector during the late 1980s in relation to the development and marketing of sites on the M1, and through the establishment of an Economic Development Committee and its corollary, the Barnsley Development Office (BMBC, 21.9.88, 7.2.89).

BMBC's analysis of the Barnsley Partnership Ltd, its first venture company, illustrates the reasoning for partnership approaches.⁸ The partnership between BMBC and Costain (a large development company), was established in 1990 (BMBC, 24.5.90) to 'get development moving in Barnsley', while retaining a 'degree of control' for the Council over the kind and quality of developments taking place (BMBC 23.6.97). The Council perceived itself as the initiator of a new relationship with business, driven by local economic imperatives and by the related desire 'to demonstrate to the Government the Council's ability to work in partnership with the private sector' (BMBC, 23.6.97) as a means of procuring central government funds. In this respect, the partnership was successful, credited as a significant reason why Barnsley was able to win City Challenge (BMBC, 23.6.97: 1). Barnsley's initiative was in part a response to the perceived threat

⁸ Now the Barnsley Miller Partnership Ltd. See discussion below.

of the Urban Development Corporations.⁹ The Council recognised that it could either work in partnership or face having its economic development functions, including planning, transferred (BMBC, 10.6.98b). Apart from confrontation with government, collaboration with business was the only option open to BMBC. The Council recognised that it could not govern alone and, notwithstanding the generally gloomy prognosis for regeneration in Barnsley, it argued that if everyone pulls together, teamwork can make a difference (BMBC, 10.6.98b). Initial contacts with the business sector brought the Council into a relationship with the Chamber, enhancing informal links with business. It was also felt that the establishment of the local TEC brought the Council into contact with business leaders who had more local clout than those hitherto willing to become active, and provided a structured basis for the interface to occur (BMBC, 5.8.99). BCCI was identified by business leaders as an important medium for the involvement of business in partnership (Yorkshire Traction, 22.10.98; BBEP, 26.10.98a; BCCI, 21.7.99). These links were both perceived as having provided a basis for relationships to improve (BMBC, 5.8.99).

Business in Partnership

Business leaders who were active in Barnsley in the 1980s shared a similar perspective to the Council in respect of the timing and the reasons for the emergence of partnership. They attributed change to the impact of unemployment and to overtures by the then Council Leader, Hedley Salt (Yorkshire Traction, 22.10.98, BBEP, 26.10.98a). The explanation, mirroring that of the Council, was that all organisations have to 'pull in the same direction' if regeneration is to be achieved' (Yorkshire Traction, 22.10.98).

Koyo Bearings became involved in partnership working because its Managing Director was invited to join the Board of the TEC, opening up influence over a key government funding stream (Koyo, 4.9.98). Membership of the TEC led him into activity in other partnerships, including the Barnsley Regeneration Forum (BRF) and, now, the Barnsley Development Agency (BDA).¹⁰ Partnership

⁹ See brief discussion in chapter four.

¹⁰ The BDA is discussed further below.

was also considered necessary in order to 'get the best for Barnsley from diminishing resources' (Yorkshire Traction, 22.10.98). Business involvement was perceived as a duty and business dynamism was viewed to be essential at all level of partnership for the success of regeneration projects (BBEP, 26.10.98a; BMBC, 5.8.99). While partnership was often perceived to be about economic development, rather than about local governance, corporate positions varied. Koyo prided itself on a moral ethic, the 'good neighbour syndrome' (Koyo, 4.9.98). The Managing Director of Koyo, the senior English speaking executive in Barnsley, has managerial discretion to decide company's policy toward local partnership activity. Partnership was not one of his objectives, but his decision to become involved has been encouraged by his Japanese bosses (Koyo, 4.9.98; undated). Similarly, the Managing Director of Kostal had no brief for or against partnership and it was his decision not to become involved, not that of his HQ (Kostal, 22.10.98).

The view of business leaders who were raised locally and who worked locally was different from those who were not from Barnsley (BBEP, 26.10.98a; Yorkshire Traction, 22.10.98). A strong view was expressed that not only was business input into the community a moral duty, it was also necessary across a range of policy arenas including education, if regeneration is to be achieved. Moreover, provided that common objectives are shared, it was suggested that business in Barnsley can provide 'checks and balances' to the domination of Labour in the Council, which the electoral system cannot (BBEP, 26.10.98a). One of Ernst and Young's conclusions was that more 'business leaders' should be brought into partnership directly from Barnsley's private sector rather than through representative fora, the Chamber and the TEC (Ernst and Young, November 1997: 98). This objective was also a priority for BMBC, which, along with private sector activists, pointed out that the same half dozen private sector actors tend to appear in all the main partnership activities in the Borough (BMBC, 6.5.98, 10.6.98b; BBEP, 26.10.98a).¹¹ Barnsley's weak economic base meant that there were few potential business partners and no 'captains of industry', unlike Leeds, for example, which is much bigger and more prosperous (BMBC,

¹¹ When asked how the commitment to 'holism' in Barnsley's IRS was sustainable in an apparently fragmented series of implementation networks, the Leader responded that they were all the same people (BMBC, 10.6.98b).

10.6.98b, 5.8.99). Conversely, the small number of activists within the private sector had enabled the Council to get to know key individuals from the private sector well and to form good personal relationships (BMBC, 10.6.98b; Yorkshire Traction, 22.10.98), a factor believed to have provided extra 'glue' to partnership working. Good personal relationships were viewed as an important factor in stimulating partnership working and the residual ethos of collectivism associated with the coal industry has, it was felt, been retained in the partnership process, articulated as a sense of community (BMBC, 5.8.99).

Meetings take up time and time was cited by business leaders as the most important constraint governing private sector participation in partnerships (BDTEC, 29.9.98, BBEP, 26.10.98a). Clearly, business people cannot become involved in partnerships unless they have 'capacity' above and beyond that required to run their business. A problem for Barnsley in bringing new private sector actors into partnership was felt to be the small number of businesses with sufficient capacity to become involved. More businesses could be encouraged, it was felt, if they had a clearer perception of what is required of them in partnerships and a sense that their input is valued and acted upon (BCCI, 21.7.99).

There was also evidence of cynicism about the partnership process within the business sector. Kostal, with 550 employees and a turnover of £35 million per year did not see partnership as a priority (Kostal, 22.10.98). It believed that any commercial benefit from partnership would require a disproportionate effort and long term input. Kostal, described as 'insular', refused invitations to become involved in the TEC (BDTEC, 29.9.98; Kostal, 22.10.98). As noted above, Kostal has no particular 'dependence' on Barnsley and many of its employees, including the Managing Director, lived elsewhere. Barnsley, its economy and its people were not considered sufficiently instrumental to Kostal to justify a contribution to community activities. But even business leaders who perceived a moral duty to become involved in partnership recognised that economic benefit must be the 'bottom line' (BBEP, 26.10.98a).

It was suggested by the Council that the small active base within the private sector serves to keep private sector partners 'on board'. Inevitably, it was argued, in specific projects, there are compromises where one organisation loses out at the expense of another.¹² However, given that each party is involved throughout the web of partnerships, the potential for loss to be balanced by gain elsewhere prevented each partnership from fragmenting due to tensions of the kind discussed below (BMBC, 22.7.98).

The Development of the Barnsley Regeneration Forum

The first institutionalised partnership involving BMBC, together with Rotherham and Doncaster councils, was the Dearne Valley Partnership, which provided a blueprint for subsequent partnership working in Barnsley (BMBC, 22.7.98; DVP, 9.6.98). The Dearne Valley Partnership is an autonomous sub-regional partnership involving Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster councils. It was formally established in April 1991 (DVP, 9.6.98) originating from the recommendations in a joint report (November 1988) which established the 'Dearne Initiative' as a plan for regeneration of the Dearne Valley. A later report recommended the establishment of a formalised partnership based on the government's vision for private sector involvement set out in *Action for Cities* (HMSO, 1988) and on what it saw as existing models of good practice in Birmingham and in Sheffield (see Lawless, 1990, 1994).¹³ The Dearne Valley Partnership is responsible for managing the Dearne Valley's City Challenge project and the Dearne Valley Enterprise Zone. It viewed its prime responsibility as attracting inward investment and jobs (DVP, 9.6.98).¹⁴

City Challenge and, subsequently, the SRB, played an important role in determining the direction of both the Dearne Valley Partnership and Barnsley's local partnerships (DVP, 9.6.98). If

¹² See the discussion of the Barnsley Miller Partnership (BMP) below.

¹³ According to Census figures, the Dearne Valley has a population of 76,601 or 10% of the three boroughs' populations. The base line indicator for unemployment at the beginning of City Challenge noted 96 vacancies in the area and 4279 unemployed (WMEB, November 1993).

¹⁴ The Chief Executive of BMBC was awarded an OBE for his role in getting partnerships started across South Yorkshire (BMBC, 5.8.99).

partnership was a 'necessary' response to economic collapse, the way it has developed was strongly influenced by central government funding regimes (BCCI, 21.7.99): 'What cemented the partnership was the opportunity to go for funds and our success in doing that' (BMBC, 10.6.98a).¹⁵ Thus, City Challenge represented an opportunity to institutionalise co-operation in the shape of the Barnsley Regeneration Forum (BMBC, 10.6.98b).

The Barnsley Regeneration Forum (BRF) was set up in 1993 'to bring together the major players working for the regeneration of the Borough' (BRF, 1996: 3). It was believed within BMBC that the Forum would be instrumental in the process of obtaining further external funds. More generally, it had become clear that a good working relationship with the private sector was necessary if the Council wanted 'the ear of government' (BMBC, 22.7.98; BCCI, 21.7.99). Originally, the Forum was a tri-partite partnership, established at the initiative of the Council, consisting of the Council, Barnsley and Doncaster TEC, and the Barnsley Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Its objective was to build a more competitive economy in Barnsley and to this end, its initial focus was purely on economic development. Subsequently, Barnsley College, Voluntary Action Barnsley, Barnsley Health Authority, the South Yorkshire Police, the Employment Service and English Partnerships joined the Forum, with GOYH sitting as an observer (BRF undated). The remit of the Forum was broadened in recognition that economic development strategies alone were not working and it was felt that the SRB has placed a greater onus on inclusiveness in partnership than did City Challenge (BMBC, 6.5.98; 10.6.98a,b).

While the Barnsley Regeneration Forum is an institutionalised partnership, including representatives of local elites, it is not an independent company, instead being administered within the Chief Executive's Department of BMBC and chaired by the Council Leader. The Council's leadership of the Forum was viewed as ensuring its democratic legitimacy as a stakeholder partnership. Moreover, the Council, with its tradition of strong civic leaders and its large relative

¹⁵ City Challenge was the Conservative government's first major challenge fund initiative, introduced in 1991. See chapter 4.

size, was perceived to be the dominant institutional actor in the area (BMBC, 10.6.98a, 22.7.98; Koyo, 4.9.98; BDTEC, 29.9.98).

The Forum is responsible for determining strategies and priorities for bids into regeneration programmes, and for the management of regeneration projects. The Council remains the accountable body for the expenditure of SRB funds (BRF, undated). The Forum has two sub-groups, one for SRB projects and one to administer Objective 2 monies. There was little obvious disagreement as to the general path which Barnsley needs to follow. Barnsley's Integrated Regeneration Strategy (IRS) contains four 'strategic goals': wealth creation, social cohesion, lifelong learning and quality of life (BRF, 1996: 4). This document comprises the vision statement for the Borough and the principal policy statement of the Forum. All partners are committed to the revival of the area through wealth creation and each partner agreed that the role of the others is vital to that task. Relationships between the parties on the Forum were viewed as good (BMBC, 10.6.98b; BDTEC, 29.9.98, BBEP, 26.10.98a; BCCI, 21.7.99).

It is difficult to say just by looking at the IRS which agency has the greatest influence on it and with what effect. It was written within the Council, but BCCI claimed to have suggested the idea of a common strategy (BCCI, 21.7.99). The President of BCCI, Vice-Chair of the Forum, described his role as putting forward a commercial position but he did not quantify his influence on the IRS in any way (BCCI, 21.7.99). There were mixed views about whether the partnership has influenced the Council's approach to regeneration issues. The Chief Executive felt that the Council have always been 'municipal entrepreneurs', but was unsure whether the development of a more business like approach to local government had resulted from partnership (BMBC, 5.8.99). The Forum was perceived by the Council officer managing it to have stimulated a change in policy orientation, where the objective of job creation for those with an 'employee mentality' had been supplemented by that of facilitating wealth creation and business growth through individual entrepreneurialism (BMBC, 10.6.98a).¹⁶ Despite this uncertainty as to influence, the approach

¹⁶ This point is discussed in more detail below in relation to the Barnsley Miller Partnership Ltd.

adopted in the Barnsley Integrated Regeneration Strategy (IRS) toward social regeneration issues is indicative of a widespread, if not deeply held, commitment to market led growth. Social regeneration was perceived within the IRS, in part, as the need to generate a community through enhanced personal competitiveness (BRF, 1996: 35; BDTEC, 29.9.98).¹⁷

The Forum is viewed as an overarching 'holistic' partnership, with responsibility for setting the parameters in relation to which partner agencies act as implementation agents for specific elements of the strategy (BMBC, 10.6.98b; BRF, 1996: 2). It was described by Ernst and Young as the emerging 'pre-eminent local body' (November 1997: 29). The full range of local regeneration activities are, in theory, governed by the strategic objectives established by the Forum in the shape of the IRS (BRF, 1996).¹⁸ But neither the TEC nor business leaders viewed the Forum in this way. The Vice President of Koyo Bearings, for example, when asked which partnerships he was involved with, failed to recall that he was on the Forum's Board until prompted. He perceived the Barnsley Development Agency (BDA) as the centre of the partnership network (Koyo, 4.9.98). The Chairman of Yorkshire Traction also perceived the BDA to be the key local partnership in terms of power and influence (Yorkshire Traction, 22.10.98). Barnsley and Doncaster TEC suggested that the Forum has had no significant role in strategic developments in Barnsley but rather that it stitches together different bodies and different elements to provide a broad appeal (BDTEC, 29.9.98). While these elements do not conflict, they were not viewed as 'strategic' in the sense of being generated through common thinking. This attitude was reflected among some senior officers within BMBC. The Forum was viewed, for example, as a body in which people pursue their own 'pet interests and self interests' (BMBC, 15.9.98). If the partners on the Forum share a common agenda, it was questioned whether this agenda has yet to permeate beneath the elites. 'The common agenda exists at the highest level, but not beneath that in constituent organisations' (BCCI, 21.7.99). The Chief Executive, for example, recognised that BMBC

¹⁷ This objective is discussed further below in relation to Barnsley Business Education Partnership (BBEP).

¹⁸ The IRS is discussed below. All Council services are directly or indirectly concerned with regeneration in its broadest sense.

remains a heterogeneous organisation, elements in which could discourage wider participation in partnerships; 'you don't always get the smiling face of John Edwards!' he said (BMBC, 5.8.99). The tenuous nature of the common agenda was articulated by BCCI, which felt that the Council still pursues anti-competitive priorities, arguing for spending on deprived communities, when redevelopment of the town centre holds the key to regeneration (BCCI, 21.7.99).

It was also argued that rather than focussing on the four strategic objectives in the IRS, Forum meetings are bogged down in SRB procedures, rather than concentrating on strategic thinking. According to BDTEC (29.9.98), 'the Forum evolved on the back of the programmes, so it reports back on them ... it is a rubber stamping mechanism which the Government Office approves of'. BCCI argued that 'there is work to be done to regenerate the Regeneration Forum ... Government systems inhibit it because they are labourious' (BCCI, 21.7.99). BMBC's Chief Executive acknowledged that the partnership is encumbered by SRB bureaucracy, but he felt that the Council absorbs much of it, so that it doesn't impinge on partnership activities. There is a tension, he argued, between the flexibility of informal partnerships and the need to maintain 'audit trails' thereby ensuring openness and accountability. He further believed that a partnership structure is an essential means of keeping partnership going, due to a comparatively high turn over of personnel which could impede networking. He felt that the structure gives newcomers a focus to relate to (BMBC, 5.8.99). Institutional partnership structures were, therefore viewed as very important and it was felt that most of the key interfaces between local authority and business occur through the formal media of partnership bodies such as the Barnsley Regeneration Forum (BCCI, 21.7.99).

Added Value and the Barnsley Regeneration Forum

Discussions of added value were characterised by an inability to pin down concrete achievements for partnership. Perceptions of added value were, generally, abstract. Said the Council Leader, 'Simply having better relationships is good for the town' (BMBC, 10.6.98b). The Chief Executive's view concerning added value was 'we must believe it, or we wouldn't do it' (BMBC, 5.8.99). According to the manager of the Forum, without partnership, the likelihood is 'that our

programmes and strategies would have been less relevant to the needs of the area' (BMBC, 10.6.98a). Common aims and objectives in a competitive world 'help Barnsley in relation to competing with other towns and cities' (BMBC, 10.6.98b) and add to the credibility of a community seen to be pulling together (BMBC, 5.8.99).¹⁹ The most obvious sign of competitive success for the Forum continues to be external funding in the form of City Challenge and the SRB, which could not have been obtained without an institutionalised partnership.²⁰ This perception was shared by businesses which identified the SRB as the main indicator of partnership success (Koyo, 4.9.98; Yorkshire Traction 22.10.98). The President of BCCI, however, considered that while the Forum was positive as a body representing community opinion and stimulating cross-sector discussion, it had failed to alleviate Barnsley's problems. A gulf still remains, in his view, between the capacities of the Forum and the need for community leadership which, he argued, is an essential pre-requisite for progress (BCCI, 21.7.99).²¹

Beneath the Regeneration Forum: Partnership Activity in Barnsley

If there are grounds for scepticism about the Council's claim that the 'culture' of partnership is embedded at the strategic level (BMBC, 5.8.99), it was felt in Barnsley that this culture has not been embedded at the practical level (BMBC., 6.5.98, 10.6.98a,b; BDTEC, 29.9.98; BBEP, 26.10.98a). Ernst and Young highlighted continuing differences in 'approach and priorities' between Forum partners (November 1997: 29). They argued that implementation of the Barnsley IRS will require more effective, better co-ordinated institutional structures beneath the level of the Forum. 'Institutional capacity' at the operational level was seen as critical for successful regeneration (Ernst and Young, November 1997: 29). The question of whether new institutional

¹⁹ Duplication of effort is an issue in 'operational' partnerships but not at the strategic level which focuses on ideas, mission statements and fund procurement and management.

²⁰ The Forum is responsible for working up bids and for monitoring their implementation. However, BMBC remains the accountable body for central government funds.

²¹ By community leadership, he seemed to be expressing a wish for greater willingness on the part of the Council to prioritise economic development over social objectives.

capacity has emerged is considered in relation to the three ‘operational’ partnerships discussed below.

Barnsley Development Agency

The Barnsley Development Agency (BDA), established as a limited company in November 1998, is a Council inspired partnership, first proposed in the Ernst and Young report (November, 1997). The BDA is governed by a Board, which includes representatives from each participating agency, the Council, BCCI and the TEC. It is managed by an appointed Chief Executive from the private sector.²² It has brought together the Council’s Development Office and Barnsley Business Link, which is part of the TEC. The BDA is a response to what was identified above as the need for coordination and leadership to drive wealth creation (BMBC, 10.6.98a). It is seen in part as a delivery mechanism for the forthcoming Regional Development Agency (RDA) (BMBC, 10.6.98b), and in part as a means of providing better integration at the operational level of economic development locally, an implementation mechanism for the Barnsley Regeneration Forum (BCCI, 21.7.99). Like Ernst and Young, BMBC considered that beneath the strategy statements of the Forum, there remains too much fragmentation and not enough ‘synergy’ at the operational level (BMBC, 6.5.98; Ernst and Young, November 1997: 29). However, the proposal for the BDA was also perceived as a defensive move by the Council in response to proposals from Rotherham Chamber of Commerce Training and Enterprise for a sub-regional inward investment body, which would involve local councils ceding control of their inward investment offices.²³ BMBC countered by arguing that while there is scope for South Yorkshire relationships on ‘strategic’ economic questions and in relation to Objective 1, inward investment activities are better focussed on the local scale than on the sub-region (BMBC, 15.9.98). It was argued above that the regional and national levels are important for inward investment, and it isn’t possible here to assess whether local or sub-regional offices would make any material differences. What was

²² The Chief Executive of BDA is Hector Birdwisa, Deputy Chairman of Koyo Bearings (Europe) Ltd.

²³ This discussion is elaborated in the Case of Rotherham which follows in chapter 6.

evident is a conflict in perspective between the TECs which tend to operate on a supra-local basis and BMBC which is confined to its local administrative boundaries.

The establishment of the BDA has also been controversial within Barnsley itself (Koyo, 4.9.98; BMBC, 10.6.98a, 15.9.98, BDTEC 29.9.98; BCCI, 21.7.99). Although it involves the Council relinquishing at least part of its control over inward investment activities, it has been perceived as an attempt by the Council to take control of economic development. The TEC's perception was that Business Link already provided a 'one stop shop' which could have served the BDA's purpose and that the Council was trying to impose itself, confident of an enhanced role for local authorities following Labour's general election win (BDTEC, 29.9.98). The Council insisted that this was not true and on the contrary, that it is ceding control of its inward investment arm. It argued that the problem lies with the other bodies, particularly the TEC, which, it said, does not wish to relinquish control over business link activities (BMBC, 10.6.98a).²⁴ This conflict has been described as a 'turf war' (Koyo, 4.9.98). The BDA has been established on these lines for an interim 18 month period, based on a dual accountability arrangement in which the Barnsley Development Office and Business Link will continue to answer to Council and TEC respectively. An SRB funded Community Economic Regeneration Team with responsibility for capacity building in the community is the only element wholly accountable to BDA Board. There was scepticism as to whether these dual lines of accountability can work and about whether they will be superseded by genuine integration in due course (BMBC, 15.9.98, BDTEC, 29.9.98).

Potential Added Value in the BDA

The question of added value is largely speculative in relation to the Barnsley Development Agency. One argument in favour of the BDA was that duplication will be eliminated and responsibilities clarified. For example, when a new investment occurs, the Council offers an 'aftercare service' (BMBC, 15.9.98). The point at which a new investment ceases to involve 'aftercare' and the point at which it falls within the responsibility of Business Link, the

²⁴ BCCI could see both points of view in this debate (BCCI, 21.7.99). It felt that the situation could be resolved, were both organisations to be less parochial in attitude.

organisation which provides support for local businesses, is a grey area which BMBC and the TEC have been arguing about, resulting in duplication of effort (BDTEC, 29.9.98). The BDA should, in theory, eliminate this kind of difficulty with both parties working within the same office (BDTEC, 29.9.98) and it may facilitate 'understanding', provided 'turf' can be agreed (Koyo, 4.9.98). However, the continuation of dual lines of accountability leaves room for scepticism on this point about which only time will tell. The BDA was also considered to be capable of delivering a strong voice for Barnsley, necessary to compete with its large neighbour, Sheffield, for the ear of the Regional Development Agency (BMBC, 10.6.98a,b; Yorkshire Traction, 22.10.98). Fear of being marginalised by bigger, more powerful places was one of the reasons why Barnsley resisted giving up its inward investment function to a sub-regional body and, instead, gave it some autonomy within a local partnership.

Barnsley Miller Partnership Ltd

The Barnsley Miller Partnership Ltd (BMP) between BMBC and Miller Developments, is a venture company established, as noted above, to facilitate commercial development over which the Council has some influence (BMBC 23.6.97). Miller Developments is the commercial development and investment subsidiary of the Miller Group which specialises in providing 'construction and development services in the public and private sectors throughout the UK' (www.eevl.ac.uk).

The BMP represents the second venture company with which BMBC has been involved. The rationale for the first, the 'Barnsley Partnership Ltd' was discussed above (BMBC 23.6.97). However, the partnership failed to deliver due to the property recession and related financial difficulties, events which made Costain, the developer in the partnership, unwilling to take 'normal development risks' (BMBC, 23.6.97). As a result of these difficulties, Costain withdrew from the partnership and BMBC decided in November 1997 to form a new partnership, based on the view that it would help in 'stimulating new investment and job creation in Barnsley' (BMP, 21.10.98; BMBC, 23.6.97: 11). Miller Developments also perceived opportunities in Barnsley for

development and the partnership as a means to that end (BMBC, 23.6.97; BMP, 21.10.98).²⁵ Miller stands to gain profit share from the rent payable by incoming firms in proportion to the financial risk incurred in infrastructural investments such as site clearance and road building. Unlike the Costain partnership, which set itself the objective of creating 5,000 jobs, the Barnsley Miller Partnership was not established with particular targets in mind but as a 'generic partnership' with the long term objective of development throughout the borough (BMP, 9.10.98). The essence of the partnership is the land, planning expertise and access to grant aid which the Council can provide and the private sector funding, expertise and access to development profit which Miller brings to the table (BMP, 9.10.98, 21.10.98; BMBC, 6.5.98). One special benefit of working with Miller perceived by BMBC was that it is a family company, entirely privately funded. Unencumbered by remote central banks and the constraints of the City of London, it was felt that Miller is able to respond to local opportunities with greater flexibility (BMBC, 5.8.99).

While this partnership has straightforward development objectives, it raises broader issues in relation to partnerships and best value. The Council recognised that one risk of partnership working is the problem of 'vested interest'. If a particular business, or business leader is involved in partnership, others could perceive, unfairly or not, that this company is being granted 'an inside track' with respect to development opportunities or to planning issues (BMBC, 5.8.99), thus creating resentment and conflict. This problem has implications not only for Council relationships with the wider business community, but for its commitment to 'best value' practices, which working with the private sector is supposed to encourage. While the Miller partnership has limited exclusive development rights, there had been a perception, acknowledged by BMBC, that the old partnership enjoyed a monopoly position, thus generating hostility from elements within the business sector, particularly among developers excluded from development opportunities. Miller is effectively an 'in house private sector developer' (BMP, 9.10.98). It was for this reason, and due to caution generated by the collapse of the Doncaster 2000 Partnership amid allegations of corruption (Doncaster Free Press, 24.12.97) that the new partnership was subjected to lengthy scrutiny by BMBC's external auditor, delaying the process by a number of months (BMP,

²⁵ The partnership manager was seconded from Miller Developments.

21.10.98). The partnership tried to counter such perceptions by emphasising publicly the long term nature of the partnership and Miller's commitment to it. The partnership agreement runs for five years and, in theory, even if it were to achieve all current objectives, Miller would still remain committed to it.

The commitment for Miller involves, at the minimum, financing 2/3 of the partnership overheads (BMP, 21.10.98). It was emphasised that long term commitments also mean investing substantial resources in projects which could prove fruitless, notably the Oakwell City Challenge project (BMP, 21.10.98), to which Costain seconded an employee two days per week and substantial resources in terms of time and expertise. This scheme collapsed because of a failed compulsory purchase order (CPO), turned down by parliament. The decision was described as 'bizarre' by the partnership manager, given that the project had been an integral part of Barnsley's City Challenge project. The rejection of the CPO meant that £0.8 million in public money, together with Costain's input, went 'down the drain' (BMP, 21.10.98).²⁶

More fundamentally, the Council feared that if schemes do not quickly come to fruition, pressure will develop, driven by the profit motive, for Miller to pursue short term high-yield projects which comply neither with its re-industrialisation strategy nor with its broader objectives for regeneration. A possible conflict between profit and job creation was recognised where the profit objective might result in pressure on the partnership to bring in a low job density scheme quickly, rather than waiting for a high density employment opportunity to arrive (BMBC, 23.6.97: 13). The partnership manager agreed that within the partnership there was always a tension between the Council's objective for labour intensive developments and Miller's profit interest. He offered as an example of Miller's commitment to the partnership, the company's pledge to retain part of the Fields End Business Park, a 30 acre Enterprise Zone in the Dearne Valley (BMP, 9.10.98) for development as a labour intensive call centre (BMP, 21.10.98).

²⁶ This is the extent of the challenge faced by *New Commitment to Regeneration*. Barnsley is one of the 22 pathfinder groups in this initiative, chosen in July 1998.

Added Value in the Barnsley Miller Partnership

The partnership manager highlighted a recent development by Kenpak Europe Ltd, an American manufacturer of sterile medical packaging, to demonstrate both the commitment by Miller Developments to the partnership and the 'added value' it has generated. It is thought that Kenpak will deliver more than 100 jobs. The development was perceived to be the result of long term negotiation over 18 months which overcame serious problems with land contamination. In the view of the partnership manager, without the partnership agreement, Miller would not have 'stuck with it' in which case the development could have gone elsewhere (BMP, 21.10.98). If the main objective of this partnership for the Council is job creation, rather than profit share, then the down side may be that it has to allow developments which are not labour intensive, like the GEFCO distribution centre, a warehouse taking up a lot of space, but offering few jobs (BMP, 21.10.98).²⁷ In short, while specific developments have been facilitated by the partnership it is not possible at this stage to quantify the balance of achievement in relation to added value, whether defined as job creation or as industrial development more generally.

The Barnsley Business Education Partnership

Each of the strategic goals in the IRS, including that for 'Lifelong Learning' are linked to the economic development agenda.

The growth of a flexible labour market demands that individuals have to commit themselves to ensuring that their skills and knowledge are current and are in line with the needs of employers. For the individual, personal competitiveness will have a major bearing in economic success (BRF: Autumn 1996: 35).

This position closely mirrors that of the TEC, which identifies a 'lack of commitment' to learning among local people, serving to 'inhibit the development and personal competitiveness of the individuals' thus restricting 'the regeneration of the wider economy' (BDTEC, undated). Thus, the objective of 'improved access to learning opportunities' is, to an extent, based on a market driven philosophy of education. Ernst and Young shed further light on this thinking, arguing that because an 'employee mentality' tends to prevail among the workforce, the 'promotion of

²⁷ GEFCO is a subsidiary of Peugeot.

entrepreneurship' is an important objective (Ernst and Young, November 1997: 21). The views of Kostal illustrate a business perspective on this issue:

There is a gap in the attitudes of the local community ... There is a lot of theft, crime, not the work ethic there should be. There are high absences and high turnover because there has been a lot of unemployment here for generations (Kostal, 22.10.98).

'Lifelong learning' shows in a practical way how the economic development agenda has affected the wider thinking of BMBC. Priorities for schools reflect the entrepreneurial attitudes discussed above in relation to economic development. However, the LEA suggested that local autonomy in determining priorities is strictly limited; 'we put together the education development plan, based on a series of options given us by the Government. We just choose one' (BMBC, 13.8.99). It is difficult, therefore, to determine whether those elements of local policy oriented on competitiveness were developed locally or nationally. Nonetheless, the LEA believed that since schools have a responsibility to prepare young people for adult life, and the business community is part of adult life, then business should be involved with young people's learning (BMBC, 3.9.99). The involvement of business in education was viewed as an important element in preparing school children for work (BMBC, 13.8.99). The Barnsley Business Education Partnership (BBEP) represents a concrete example of this approach.

BBEP is a registered company comprising four partner organisations, BMBC, BCCI, the TEC and, recently, Barnsley College. The partnership was launched in April 1990 as part of a government initiative to improve education and business links nationally (BBEP, undated). The objective of the Partnership is 'to unite business with education and create a coherent thriving community where young people can realise their potential in the world of work' (BBEP, April 1998). Declining educational achievement in Barnsley was attributed to demoralisation and to despair arising from economic decline and unemployment. The 5% fall from 77% to 72% in 1995 among the year eleven cohort remaining within the education and training system provides a stark indicator of increasing disillusionment, which, it was suggested, often sets in at the beginning of secondary education (BDTEC, undated; BBEP, 26.10.98a). Only 29% Barnsley pupils obtained five or more GCSEs at grades A-C in 1995 compared to 43.5% nationally (BRF, 1996: 7), placing Barnsley in the bottom ten LEAs nationally. This figure had risen to 29.8% by 1998, placing

Barnsley 12th bottom (The Guardian, 1.12.98).²⁸ The role of the BBEP is to mobilise the business sector in an attempt to reverse this position, making the youth of Barnsley prepared for work (BMBC, 3.9.99). In practice, the partnership manages a range of projects designed to facilitate bi-lateral links between schools and businesses (BBEP, 26.10.98b).

While there is no formal co-ordination mechanism at present, and the role of the BBEP was not viewed as having a key role in determining the learning needs of people in Barnsley, the BBEP's mission statement is compatible with the borough regeneration strategy and with the objectives of the Barnsley Regeneration Forum (BBEP, 26.10.98a; BMBC, 3.9.99), seeking to support:

the economic regeneration of Barnsley, the raising of achievement levels in Barnsley, the preparation of young people for the world of work, the development of the work-related curriculum, personal and professional development of staff from education and business (BBEP, April 1998).

BBEP is based on a formalised partnership agreement, originally the Barnsley Compact (BCCI and BMBC, June 1990). The 'Compact' provided historical background, highlighting that business-education partnerships had existed in Barnsley since 1974, normally involving officers from Barnsley Local Education Authority (LEA) sitting on BCCI committees such as the Education Forum (BCCI and BMBC, June 1990). The Compact stated that it was BCCI which, in August 1989, approached the LEA with a proposal to establish an 'Industry Education Partnership'. A Working Party was established in November 1989 to develop an action plan and a vision statement for the partnership (BCCI and BMBC, June 1990). The objective of raising aspirations and preparation for the changing world of work were evident in this document.

The activities of the partnership focus on specific small scale initiatives, including the mentorship of students, teacher placements, recruiting business governors and contributing to those aspects of the school curriculum associated with 'industry activities'. It is chaired by a semi-retired businessman, who was Managing Director of a local company until 1994 (BBEP, 26.10.98a). As a former president of BCCI, he was instrumental in establishing closer relations with the Council

²⁸ The Guardian's figures reveal extreme discrepancies in achievement between schools, the lowest success rate being 13% and the highest 64%.

during the 1980s, believing that ‘businesses can make a real impact at no cost and with minimum disruption to the working day’ (quoted in BCCI, March 1998). This remark was underpinned by a critical attitude to a perceived lack of commitment within the business community to partnership work (BBEP, 26.10.98a). The Chairman of BBEP was emphatic that business representation through quasi public bodies such as BDTEC is not the answer to partnership problems and that ‘real’ business people should be willing to come forward, in their own long term interests and in those of the community. Beyond the Chairman, who is paid for his efforts, there is no business involvement in the activities of BBEP (BMBC, 3.9.99). The Chairman argued, however, that business expertise can play an important role, ensuring a match between what schools are doing and what business wants. While the national curriculum is not negotiable at the local scale, it was felt that presentation, responsiveness, respect, punctuality and reliability are attributes which schools must teach so that pupils understand some of the disciplines of work in advance. The projects of BBEP are organised to achieve this end (BBEP, 26.10.98b).

The overheads of BBEP are funded exclusively by public monies from the SRB, DfEE and BDTEC (BBEP, 26.10.98b). The contribution of the private sector, in the person of the Chairman, was perceived to be restricted to his time and to expertise (BMBC, 3.9.99). He felt that one of the key roles he played as chairman was to mediate tensions over ‘turf’ between local authority and TEC. He said that it had proved very difficult to get businesses, particularly small businesses, to give time to activities such as mentoring or governorship, and he argued that public funds should be put aside to convince ‘big hitters’ who have experience, an ‘extra dimension’ to bring to education, to get involved. These problems were attributed partly to the lack of a substantial business base in Barnsley, but also to a lack of commitment on the part of the local authority (BBEP, 26.10.98a). The concern was that once external funds run out, the EBP will fail because private sector support for local projects is otherwise unsustainable. In this sense, there was a perception that commitment is ‘superficial’ both among business and in the Council (BBEP, 26.10.98a). This perception was lent added weight by the Local Education Authority’s perspective on the BBEP and the history of education business partnerships more generally. Conceived as an important means of bringing private sector influence to bear on public sector

thinking and management, it argued that 'now there are very few public sector organisations that are not run on business principles ... one of the rationales for having EBPs has essentially disappeared' (BMBC, 3.9.99).

Partnership Added Value

Added value arising from the BBEP was perceived entirely in terms of soft, input related factors. The main benefit identified was the different perspective which business has brought to education matters on the partnership board. Business acumen in relation to project development and fund raising was perceived to be vital. The key to partnership added value and to synergy, it was suggested by the Chairman, has been the bringing together of differing approaches to an agreed agenda, shared by the parties on the BBEP Board (BBEP, 26.10.98a). The LEA was more sceptical about added value. Ultimately, it argued, 'all activities could have been achieved by other means'. Added value in education business links was perceived to emanate from individual project activities and the links which 'come naturally from those organisations involved' (BMBC, 3.9.99). As such, it was suggested, BBEP would be better absorbed into a larger organisation, like the LEA or the TEC, which would release money from partnership overheads for education business link projects (BMBC, 3.9.99).

Case Summary

Barnsley is a small local authority area, which has been decimated by economic decline and social fragmentation. If it is to have any chance of success in its regeneration project, Barnsley will have to diversify and diversification means attracting high levels of overseas capital to the area. Barnsley's partnership strategy was driven by the perception that it had no options in the aftermath of the pit closures. Its relationships with the private sector have developed incrementally since the mid 1980s. The institutionalisation of partnerships, however, was driven primarily by the funding opportunities associated with City Challenge and the SRB. Relationships are good between partners on the Forum, but there are doubts whether commitment to the partnership agenda survives beneath corporate elites, especially within the public sector funded organisations, BDTEC and BMBC. Furthermore, the Forum was viewed as overly bureaucratic, a problem attributed to

the rigours of government funding, and there was scepticism in Barnsley as to whether the IRS is genuinely strategic in character.

The story of operational partnerships, in one way or another involved in implementing the IRS, was very varied. The BDA was born out of turf wars and a concern that Barnsley should be heard amid the clamour for RDA resources emanating from more powerful neighbours. The Barnsley Miller Partnership illustrates the potential for long term co-operation between developer and local authority, at the same time highlighting potential tensions between best value and partnership on one hand and profit and job creation on the other. The Barnsley Business Education Partnership appears to be a partnership with little future. Its responsibilities for managing local education business link projects are viewed as outdated. Overall, business involvement in the partnerships has been very limited, strongest where a direct commercial interest could be identified. The explanation for this situation lies partly in motivation and partly in the structural weakness of the local business sector. The added value in partnership working was perceived, by and large, to reside in the different inputs which business could bring to the table. These inputs were principally 'soft' in nature, characterised in terms of expertise, knowledge, synergy and networking capabilities. Indeed, concrete examples of added value were few. It was felt that some partnership activities would enhance co-ordination, thereby eliminating duplication, but the major added value perception of the partnerships, particularly the BRF and the BDA, was the procurement of governmental funds. The exception to this rule, the Barnsley Miller Partnership, provides a rare example of a convincing claim that partnerships can generate outcomes which could not have been achieved without the partnership arrangement. The evaluation of added value requires time, but there was little sense of optimism that partnership will play a major role in reversing the continuing decline of this stricken mining community.

Chapter 6. Rotherham - A Coal and Steel Town

The Economic and Political Context for Partnership

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) became a unitary authority in 1974. Labour holds 65 out of 66 seats, with one Conservative councillor. Rotherham too suffered from the dramatic decline of the coal industry with just one pit, employing around 400 people, remaining in the Borough in 1998 (RiDO, 25.11.98). While it remains a major employer, Rotherham suffered the 'double whammy' of severe cutbacks in the steel industry. The steel industry, the second largest employer in Rotherham after the Council employing 4,000 people, continues to shed employees at a rate of about 5% per year (BSES, 12.2.99). Between 1970 and 1992, around 40% of all jobs in Rotherham were lost, with unemployment peaking at 23.5% in 1986. By October 1998, unemployment had fallen to 7.6% (RMBC, 25.11.98), compared with a UK rate of 4.4%. Rotherham's rate of unemployment declined marginally more rapidly between 1991 and 1998 than that of the region, but the position worsened relative to that nationally (RMBC, 25.11.98). In light of these figures, the objective of reducing unemployment in Rotherham to the regional average by 2000 appears optimistic (RMBC, June 1995: 26). Unemployment was not the only indicator of decline in Rotherham. Average hourly earnings for full time male manual employees fell from 6% above the UK average in the 1970s to 2% below the UK average in 1994 (RTEC, 1995: 11). Rotherham GDP stood at 76.4% of EU Average in 1998 (RMBC, 16.11.98).¹

However, Rotherham appeared to be stronger than its South Yorkshire counterpart, Barnsley, across a range of economic indicators including business survival rates, gross value added per head

¹ Barnsley's GDP stands at 59% of the UK average. Unfortunately, figures are not available comparing Rotherham's GDP growth over the past 15 years with that of Barnsley. Nor are there statistics available for GDP comparable to those of Barnsley.

and educational attainment (GOYH, May 1997).² In the Index of Local Deprivation (DETR, 2.6.98), Rotherham lies in 50th place, below Sheffield (25th), Doncaster (39th) and Barnsley (42nd).³

Rotherham's Economic Strategy

The decline of traditional employment created a gap between labour skills and employer requirements in the Rotherham economy (RCCTE, April 1998), necessitating a 'structural reorganisation of the local business sector in order to improve its responsiveness to new economic opportunities' (RMBC, 1997: 8). The strategy pursued is one of economic diversification, toward the service sector and tourism (RMBC, 1996: 16, REP, 1997a: 13).⁴ Rotherham has had some success in realising its diversification strategy. Growth has occurred in the service and 'high tech' production sectors (RMBC, 1997: 8). Examples include recent investments in two new call centres by One 2 One and Ventura at Rotherham's Manvers Enterprise Zone, creating 2,300 new jobs (RiDO, Spring 1998).⁵ These investments, the largest that Rotherham has seen in decades, are expected to have a marked effect on unemployment in the Borough. Such high profile successes enable Rotherham to put forward a positive message to prospective investors (RMBC, 31.3.98a; RiDO, Spring 1998). The Rotherham Industrial Development Office (RiDO) articulated this optimism:

² Business Survival: Barnsley & Doncaster, 78.6%, Rotherham, 83.1% after 12 months. Gross Value Added Per Head: Barnsley and Doncaster £20,003, Rotherham £22,317 (GOYH, May 1997: 14-15).

³ The ILD was criticised in Rotherham for not picking up small pockets of deprivation in otherwise well off areas (RMBC, 9.6.98). RMBC considered the ILD to be flawed, being 'skewed' in favour of inner city areas and against traditional coal and steel areas (RMBC, 25.11.98).

⁴ The Magna project, worth £37.5 million, is the major tourism venture in Rotherham (Rotherham Advertiser, 23.12.98). This project, supported by the Millennium Fund, is turning the former Templeborough steel works into a major 'leisure and learning' facility, expected to attract an estimated 900,000 visitors per year. The project was described as the flagship regeneration project and the lynchpin of Rotherham's regeneration strategy, creating substantial local and sub-regional economic activity (REP, 17.12.98).

⁵ A further 2,000 jobs have recently been announced by Ventura (RMBC, 23.3.99).

it is not just one of the more attractive parts of the UK ... it is also one of the most dynamic areas for industrial and commercial growth ... There is an excitement within the Rotherham economy that has to be experienced to be believed (www.RiDO.org.uk).

However, the rhetoric of success can be misleading. In 1997 RiDO's publicity claimed that the 120 acre Templeborough site was now 'almost full' (RiDO, Autumn 1997).⁶ Yet one year later, it was estimated that more than 25% this site remained unoccupied (RiDO, 25.11.98). The northern part of the Borough benefited from call centre investments, but the same is not true of other areas, especially the west of Rotherham (RCCTE, 19.1.99). Rotherham Town Centre was described as a 'ghost town' (BSES, 12.2.99) and the local press views with scepticism claims that Rotherham is a 'booming town of the north' (Rotherham Advertiser, 13.2.99).

Globalization and Economic Regeneration

The world economy was perceived to present Rotherham with opportunities and threats (REP, 12.5.98; RMBC, 21.4.98b). For example, LuK UK, a German clutch supplier to Nissan, Ford, Vauxhall and Toyota, located in Rotherham because semi-skilled wage rates are £8 per hour, rather than £17 in Germany (www.RiDO.org.uk, RMBC, 21.4.98b). While this wage rate is low compared to Germany, it is high for Rotherham and the company was viewed as a good catch (RiDO, 25.11.98). On the other hand, RMBC blamed the high level of the pound for recent job losses in the steel industry (www.rotherham.gov.uk). In its bids for government funds, Rotherham emphasises the legacy of decline in coal and steel, highlighting, in SRB1 for example, that of 366 local authority districts, Rotherham lay 363rd in educational attainment based on 1991 ILD figures, 338th for self employment as a proportion of the economically active population and 356th for long term unemployment (REP, 6.9.94).⁷

⁶ Templeborough is a former steelworks.

⁷ The figure for educational attainment is not consistent with that discussed below at GCSE level, where Rotherham, while below the national average, is well above the bottom of the league.

Inward Investment and Indigenous Growth

RiDO is responsible for implementing Rotherham's economic development strategy, which seeks to generate both new inward investment and indigenous expansion. Given that there is some diversity in the local economy, it was argued that growth must also be achieved through expansion of the current business base, RiDO suggesting that 50% of businesses expected to expand in the financial year 1998/99.⁸ While further diversification is a priority, it was recognised that success would not be achieved immediately, and that people need jobs now, not in some distant future. Hence, Rotherham continues to market its traditional strengths (RiDO, 25.11.98). As of November 1998, Rotherham hosted 70 overseas investors, employing around 5,000 people (RiDO, 25.11.98).⁹ It was estimated that overseas investment accounts for 7.1% of the jobs in Rotherham, but it is difficult to assess the extent to which overseas investment maybe growing in importance, as figures were not available over a long time frame. Over a three year period to June 1998, 1,167 new jobs out of 3,619 were created by overseas investors, 32.2% (RiDO, undated).

The Process of Inward Investment and Local dependence

Like Barnsley, the majority of overseas inquiries for new inward investment in Rotherham come via the Invest in Britain network and the YHDA. The local view was that new overseas companies decide on a national location before they choose a locality like Rotherham (RiDO, 25.11.98, RCCTE, 22.1.99). However, other factors being equal, the location of some overseas companies are determined by the market they supply, suggesting a degree of local, or at least regional, dependence. Three Korean firms came to Rotherham in 1996 to supply Samsung's plant in the North East, creating 184 jobs and making re-location unlikely, provided Samsung remains (YHDA, March 1996).¹⁰ British Steel Engineering Steels, the largest manufacturer in Rotherham

⁸ While this figure may look impressive, it would be wrong to draw any inference from it without comparison with figures from periods of economic expansion and recession.

⁹ It is not known over what time frame these investments have occurred. The bulk of the 650 jobs yet to be created by the One 2 One investment are not included in this figure (RiDO, 25.11.98).

¹⁰ The three companies were Fine Electromechanics, Sung Kwang Electromechanics and Poong Jeon Co. Ltd which, in total, created 156 jobs. Kwang went into receivership in 1998.

is also unlikely to relocate. While it had proved vulnerable to global competition, continuing to shed jobs, the company is capital intensive and dependent on skilled elements of the local workforce for half its labour. The plant was not viewed as mobile, but neither was it considered safe from global competition (BSES, 12.2.99).

As well as overseas capital investment, indigenous expansion and domestic investments were considered important in Rotherham. Over the past 3 years, 67.8% of new jobs have been created by indigenous companies (RiDO, undated). LuK UK, chose to expand in an investment worth £9 million, despite competition from Hungary to 'host' the expansion, because of its view that Rotherham has produced a 'skilled, hardworking team'. The decision to expand was further influenced by an expansion of Nissan's operations in the North East and by the fact that there was room for expansion on the site (LuK UK, cited in www.rido.org.uk; RiDO, Spring 1997; YHDA, July 1996).¹¹ Local factors therefore proved important in relation to attracting a secondary investment. Unsurprisingly, new and expanding domestic investors enquire directly to Rotherham, knowing the characteristics of the area and the availability of incentives, if not in Rotherham, then in the South Yorkshire area (RiDO, 25.11.98). Here, the size and quality of available sites has proved to be important. Laycast UK, for example, invested in a £13 million expansion, involving relocation from Sheffield to Rotherham because the 16 acre site and the infrastructure were suitable (Laycast, cited in www.rido.org.uk).¹² RMBC believes that the regional brand is the key to inward investment and that 'parochialism' over whether an investment should be on one side of a Council border or the other is destructive. Despite competition for regeneration funds, it was argued, Rotherham has to build on the back of success in Sheffield. 'If Sheffield is doing well, we are doing well' (RMBC, 21.4.98a; RCCTE, 22.1.99).¹³

¹¹ As suggested by RiDO, LuK UK is 'insular' in character refusing, as a matter of company policy, to participate in this research (LuK UK, 14.12.98).

¹² This relocation did not involve 'competition' between Sheffield and Rotherham because there were no net job losses to Sheffield (RiDO, 25.11.98).

¹³ This view was not shared by those who regard Rotherham town centre as a 'ghost town' laid to waste precisely because of developments like the huge Meadowhall shopping centre in Sheffield (BSES, 12.2.99; Rotherham Advertiser, 13.2.99).

The Development of Partnership in Rotherham

There was broad agreement that the Council has been involved in co-operation with industry since the early 1970s. Economic co-operation was identified as far back as 1972 with the establishment of the Rotherham Area Development Company, the forerunner of RiDO. This was a joint inward investment board, seen as 'very innovative in its day' (RMBC, 21.4.98b). Partnership working was seen and continues to be seen as functional to economic development. The Council argued that it has always been pro-active in this regard:

A very simple example, which amazes some people when I've said it over the years is ... we will do any deal which will create jobs whether it is selling the land, leasing it or whatever (RMBC, 31.3.98a).

The award of an Enterprise Zone to Rotherham in 1983 (DoE, 1.2.83), at a time when, it was claimed, neighbouring authorities saw it as 'not the right thing to do politically' (RMBC, 31.3.98a), was cited by the Chief Executive as indicative of this attitude. The Council Leader, more cynically, stated that the award of the Enterprise Zone was due to the personal relationship between the former Leader, Sir Jack Leyden, and the then Minister for Local Government, Lord Bellwin, rather than to any special local factors, 'it's the old boy network I'm afraid'. However he agreed with RCCTE that RMBC had always been business friendly and that the Council had been 'working toward partnership since 1974' (RMBC, 21.4.98a; RCCTE, 22.1.99). So, its approach to economic development predisposed Rotherham, a 'pragmatic' authority, toward co-operation with the private sector, and the Enterprise Zone was heralded as vindication of this approach (RMBC, 21.4.98b).¹⁴

There was also a common impression that co-operation was initially founded on a strong sense of local community, described as 'close knit' with a common sense of identity and of 'wanting to do something for Rotherham' (RMBC, 31.3.98a, Aizlewoods, 6.1.99). Community identity was

¹⁴ The Rotherham Advertiser stated that employment rose from 531 to 4225 in the 10 year period of the Enterprise Zone (Rotherham Advertiser, 5.8.94). The perception of 'success', however, was not universal with Rotherham Unemployed Centre arguing that there was no genuine added value because jobs came in from other areas without Enterprise Zones. It also argued that the cost of supporting a single job in an Enterprise Zone was greater than supporting the same job through council spending (RUC, undated, 2).

described as a 'glue' to partnership in Rotherham and, latterly, partnership as a 'glue' to community identity (Aizlewoods, 6.1.99). While respondents insisted that a positive attitude toward the private sector and the economic development agenda is nothing new, a distinction was made between informality in the 1980s and structured partnership represented today by the Rotherham Economic Partnership and the Dearne Valley Partnership (RMBC, 31.3.98a, 21.4.98a,b). Formality was perceived to have been driven politically through the demands of government programmes because 'that is what the government said we've got to do' (RMBC, 31.3.98a). The Council Leader believed the development of formal partnerships to be driven by the 'threat' of an imposed Urban Development Corporation. While co-operation with business has been long standing, it was political restrictions on the scope and funding of local authority activities, including the establishment of Training and Enterprise Councils, which required the Council to collaborate with 'quasi public bodies', including RCCTE. In this sense, partnerships were considered to have more to do with bringing together the fragmented public sector than with building new links with the business sector (RMBC, 21.4.98a). This argument was, in part, supported by RCCTE, which claimed that while the Council always enjoyed co-operation with the private sector, the relationship was 'paternalistic' in character with consultation viewed by the Council as a rubber stamping mechanism. It believed that a 'real' understanding of the private sector was only stimulated through the establishment of TEC which has challenged this paternalism (RCCTE, 22.1.99).

Council 'pragmatism' in relation to partnership was not, however, universal. One officer identified continuing hostility among politicians to partnership initiatives, perceiving co-operation as grudging, rather than willing:

Some members have been on the Council for 25 years or more. They are retired coal and steel workers who take the view that any development in the borough should be financed by the Council. They don't see any merit in sharing costs and opportunities with other sectors. Some are still in a position of power (RMBC, 31.3.98b).

This perception was underlined by a leading councillor, who described himself and other colleagues as 'pragmatic old labour' in relation to partnerships (RMBC, 22.1.99). The Council Leader himself felt that many of his colleagues tolerated partnerships with the private sector only

because of the financial rewards for doing so (RMBC, 21.4.98a). RCCTE argued in the same vein that the Council could not be viewed as homogenous and that the relationship between it, RCCTE and the private sector varies between departments and between levels of management (RCCTE, 22.1.99).

Business in Partnership

As in Barnsley, the level of business activity within partnership is low. At a conference of local stakeholders organised by the Rotherham Economic Partnership, of 120 people attending, only 7 attended from the business sector and the Chairman of the Rotherham Economic Partnership could identify only 4 key private sector players in the area (REP, 17.12.98). Moreover, as in Barnsley, those active in one partnership tend to be active in others. The Chairman of a local building materials firm, for example was on the Boards of the REP, the Magna partnership, the Dearne Valley Partnership and RCCTE. He had also, in recent years, been President of the Chamber of Commerce and Chairman of the TEC (Aizlewoods, 6.1.99).¹⁵

A number of explanations were offered as to why partnerships developed and as to why businesses participate. A sense of duty was perceived to 'put something back into the community we trade in', based on the sense of community 'identity' noted above. This sense of civic duty, described as 'Cadburyish' (Aizlewoods, 6.1.99), was related to longstanding local connections among private sector actors with most of these actors being local people who trade in companies with a strong local base (RMBC, 31.3.98a). Different types of self interest were also offered as explanations for participation in partnership. It was suggested that when unemployment in Rotherham peaked in the mid 1980s, there had been a danger of social unrest, and that business decided to take some action to try and prevent this happening. More importantly, it was recognised that companies, to a greater or lesser extent dependent on Rotherham for labour and for markets, would benefit from a regenerated economy and might benefit indirectly from the

¹⁵ Rotherham TEC and the Rotherham arm of Sheffield and Rotherham Chamber of Commerce and Industry had merged, together with Rotherham Business Links and Rotherham Enterprise Agency.

procurement of regeneration funds (Aizlewoods, 6.1.99). In this sense, business could only stand to benefit from regeneration partnerships and, through mechanisms like the REP, to gain leverage over the way money is spent. In order to achieve regeneration, it was argued, business, like the Council, requires co-ordinated efforts between public and private sectors. 'Unless you work in partnership, you get nothing. Business has as much interest in this as the Council' (REP, 17.12.98). The perception of good relationships with the Council over a long period was shared by much of the business sector, and in this sense, a culture of partnership was identified in Rotherham based on the Council's perception that the private sector has an important role to play in addressing social deprivation (REP, 17.12.98).¹⁶ However, formal partnerships were considered sustainable only insofar as they have control over significant resources. Indeed, were regeneration funds to be returned to local authority control, it was felt that the private sector would no longer have a stake in the governance of the area and the local authority, while it might consult business, would treat the money as its own (Aizlewoods, 6.1.99).

A general reluctance by business to become involved, particularly among SMEs and overseas investors, was identified by RMBC, the typical response being 'don't bother me, I'm too busy. ... But if you've got any money to offer, we'll have a look' (RMBC, 31.3.98a). It was suggested that part of this attitude stems from a continuing belief that the Council makes all the decisions and that partnership is a waste of time when business is faced with so many competitive pressures (REP, 17.12.98). The Council, while recognising a willingness by business to respond to consultation, perceived only limited commitment to active participation in partnership (RMBC, 21.4.98a,b). One Council officer suggested that with the demise of the coal and steel industries, the potential to attract industrial leaders to partnership had disappeared. He expressed a 'gut feeling that new investors don't have a stake in the area' (RMBC, 31.3.98b).

The merged Chamber-TEC (RCCTE) was perceived as the 'voice' of business in partnership. The merger was viewed as a positive step, creating a stronger business organisation which could make better efforts to promote both SME activism and business participation more generally

¹⁶ The Managing Director of British Steel could detect no change (BSES, 12.2.99).

(REP, 12.5.98, RMBC, 21.4.98b, Aizlewoods, 6.1.99, RCCTE, 22.1.99). As a consequence of the merger, more leading employers had joined and RCCTE claimed to have one of the highest membership penetration rates in the UK comprising 25% of employers representing 75% of all employees (RCCTE, 22.1.99). Business therefore finds itself on a more equal footing, able to engage in meaningful partnerships with the Council through RCCTE. It claimed that the establishment of the TEC had brought more senior business players to the table (RCCTE, 22.1.99).

The Council and RCCTE were invariably identified as the 'big players' in partnership (REP, 12.5.98; 17.12.98). Hence, the perception that influence within partnerships is restricted to 'public or quasi-public bodies' (RMBC, 21.4.98a; BSES, 12.2.99). It was claimed by the most prolific business activist in Rotherham, that his involvement has cost him a fortune (Aizlewoods, 6.1.99), though he didn't regret it. Time was highlighted as the most important constraint on business involvement, a problem becoming more acute as competitive pressures grow. It was argued that there are few 'big hitters' of the kind which the Borough needs, and only a small business base (RMBC, 21.4.98a; REP, 12.5.98). In the absence of a 'Richard Branson' or a 'Christopher Haskins' it was felt that business would be more likely to join up in support of a big, confidence inducing, 'flagship' project like Manchester's Olympic bid, or a strong regional partnership, like the North East Development Agency (Aizlewoods, 6.1.99). A bonus of this kind would, it was suggested, give the partnership process 'momentum'.¹⁷ A further problem was identified in involving companies with Head Offices outside Rotherham, some of whom 'get 100 letters per day from partnerships'. The strategy, therefore, was to ask for individual involvement, rather than for a 'corporate signature'. It was felt that this approach is helpful in bringing individuals on board, but that it doesn't unlock corporate resources (REP, 12.5.98). Those involved in partnership reported a positive corporate approach to partnership work, with local managerial autonomy to determine whether to get involved, including limited discretion over resource commitments (REP, 17.12.98; BSES, 12.2.99; Keepmoat, 5.8.99).

¹⁷ Lord Haskins is Chairman of Northern Foods.

Business participation in partnership was perceived by some to be symbolic in character ‘The words are used, but it is difficult to see any tangible output’ (BSES, 12.2.99). Business leaders were vague about their role, giving responses such as ‘I attend committees’ or ‘I give my time’. Those with a clearer idea saw themselves providing specific ‘expertise’ in the development of regeneration projects (REP, 17.12.98). In addition, business representatives regard themselves and were regarded by RiDO as ‘champions’, having an important role to play in convincing potential inward investors about the virtues of Rotherham. With respect to ‘championing’, the absence of ‘big hitters’ was viewed as a problem (REP, 12.5.98; Aizlewoods, 6.1.99; RiDO, 25.11.98).

The Rotherham Economic Partnership

As with the Barnsley Regeneration Forum, the Dearne Valley Partnership (DVP) provided a model upon which the future Rotherham Economic Partnership developed.¹⁸ The key difference perceived between the pro-active relationships with the private sector that preceded the DVP and the structured relationships which followed was that the local authority no longer perceived itself to be ‘pre-eminent’ and it did not automatically expect to ‘lead’ partnership initiatives. The key political and ideological change identified by RMBC in the period leading up to the establishment of the Rotherham Economic Partnership in 1993 was the recognition, forced upon it by declining resources and developments in government policy, that other agencies, especially the TEC, would also lead regeneration activities in Rotherham in future (RMBC, 31.3.98a). The Council Leader, however, still views formal partnerships as necessity rather than virtue. He insisted that ‘we could have done it with the correct Rate Support Grant’ (RMBC, 21.4.98a).

As a direct result of the levels of unemployment in Rotherham in the mid 1980s, the Council invited representatives from the business community and the local trade unions to discuss a plan of action (RMBC, 21.4.98b). Consequently, the Rotherham Economic Forum, a partnership between the Chamber of Commerce, the Council and the trade unions was established to promote economic development in Rotherham. This informal body was the precursor to the Rotherham

¹⁸ The history of the DVP was outlined briefly in the Case of Barnsley.

Economic Partnership. The failure of Rotherham's bid for City Challenge Round 2 was the immediate catalyst for the establishment of the Rotherham Economic Partnership after the Forum was criticised for being 'too much of a 'talking shop' (RMBC, 21.4.98b) and for its 'lack of structure' (Aizlewoods, 6.1.99). In addition, there had been political hostility to the newly formed Rotherham TEC and it was decided, following the failure of Rotherham's City Challenge bid in 1992, and in light of continued industrial decline, that the Council and the TEC would work better in a partnership situation, where others could 'hold the ring' (Aizlewoods, 6.1.99; RMBC, 22.1.99; RCCTE, 22.1.99).

The Rotherham Economic Partnership was launched by David Hunt MP, Secretary of State for Employment, in November 1993 (Rotherham Advertiser, 19.11.93). The partnership was originally chaired by a 'leading' figure from the private sector, in the person of Sir Gordon Jones, then Chairman of Yorkshire Water, who was perceived as a powerful figure in the region (REP, 17.12.98; Aizlewoods, 6.1.99). The REP is an institutionalised partnership, and like the Barnsley Regeneration Forum, it is not a limited company. It is, however, an 'arms length' partnership in three senses. Its offices are located independently of the Council and the TEC, it is managed by a member of staff seconded from the Department for Education and Employment with a private sector background, and it is chaired by a business leader, the Regional Manager of Marks and Spencer, successor to Sir Gordon Jones (REP, 12.5.98, 17.12.98).¹⁹

The partnership was, in the first instance, clearly associated with the Government's objectives for economic regeneration.²⁰ Its mission statement was to 'work for the economic well-being of Rotherham, raising its profile and attracting and generating investment'. The partnership developed a 'strategic' vision, which set out an optimistic picture of what Rotherham could look like ten years on (REP, 1995a). A key task was to develop a cohesive strategic framework for

¹⁹ That the Chairman of the Partnership is from outside Rotherham was indicative of the lack of a business 'big hitter' in Rotherham. Lord Haskins of Northern Foods in Hull was initially asked to become Chairman of REP after Sir Gordon Jones retired (RMBC, 21.4.98b).

²⁰ According to David Hunt MP, 'our aim in proposing partnership is simple: to strengthen industrial competitiveness' (cited in REP, 1995a).

Rotherham through which a thriving economy could be built (REP, 1995b). Since 1993, the scope of the partnership has widened, with a focus on 'social' issues and a written strategy statement, focussed on seven activities, mirrored in the Council's economic development plan (RMBC, 1997; 21.4.98b).²¹ The 'Regeneration Strategy for Rotherham' comprises a 'ten year mission' to 'strengthen the Rotherham economy, produce additional jobs, and help make Rotherham a place where people feel proud to live and work' (REP, 1997a: 1). As in Barnsley, the social agenda had an economic basis, a key principle being 'the need to encourage greater self reliance and ambition amongst Rotherham businesses and citizens if the problems of the past are not to be repeated' (REP, 1997a: 2). The SRB and other funding mechanisms were credited with having driven the partnership toward dealing with broader issues of social exclusion (REP, 12.5.98; RCCTE: 22.1.99).

Influences on and Within the Rotherham Economic Partnership

One business leader suggested that the partnership had lost its 'helicopter' vision as a consequence of the sheer weight of work associated with managing the SRB bid and management process (Aizlewoods, 6.1.99), a factor which has generated resentment against the 'mind boggling' demands of the Government Office (RMBC, 21.4.98a).²² An even stronger view was that bidding for 'pots of money' specifically discourages strategic thinking in the partnership and that there had arisen a tendency to engage in the pursuit of external funds, regardless of local need and the burden of work associated with this pursuit (RiDO, 25.11.98: RCCTE, 22.1.99, BSES, 12.2.99). Rather than contributing to an emergent 'local governance' the SRB was perceived by some to have generated a change from 'local government' to 'local administration' in partnerships perceived as 'gloss' (RMBC, 21.4.98a; BSES, 12.2.99).²³

²¹ These are business support, inward investment, technology, tourism, education and training, community based regeneration, and the town centre (RMBC, 1997: 1).

²² As in Barnsley, the accountable body for SRB funds is the Council.

²³ The SRB was not the only 'funding stream' financing REP projects. Others included the ERDF and the National Lottery. The SRB was the most significant pot of money over which the partnership had control (REP, 12.5.98).

The overall objectives of the partnership, set out in *A Regeneration Strategy for Rotherham* were agreed by the main partners, and there was no evidence of disagreements over ‘policy’ in this broad sense:

The detail is where tensions exist, there is no conflict over where we see ourselves going. We’ve been through a very bad time, so it was all hands to the pump. Conflict exists in the practicality, the detail of how to carve things up. Everyone understands where we are going (RMBC, 21.4.98b).

Notwithstanding numerical domination of the REP Board by business representatives, there was a perception that the Council drives policy development. The private sector felt that the Council is the ‘final arbiter’, given its budget, its democratic mandate and given the time which council officers in their ‘day jobs’ are able to put into the process of partnership development (REP, 1997a; 17.12.98; Aizlewoods, 6.1.99). A stronger view was expressed by the Managing Director of British Steel, a Board member, that the partnership is not a ‘major part of the Council’s thinking’ and, despite rhetoric to the contrary, that were it not for external funds, it ‘wouldn’t care’ (BSES, 12.2.99). Insofar as there is a dynamic within the partnership, it was perceived to be between the Council and RCCTE, described as ‘the professional civil service’ (BSES, 12.2.99), rather than between the Council and the private sector (RMBC, 21.4.98a). But any tensions that exist were viewed to be less about policy than about organisation.

Added Value in the Rotherham Economic Partnership

Given that one of the reasons the REP was established was as a means to bring the Council and Rotherham TEC into a pro active relationship, it was felt that the process of partnership had rendered the Council less fearful of ceding ‘turf’ to other bodies (Aizlewoods, 6.1.99; RCCTE, 22.1.99). Nonetheless, there remain tensions over organisational remit in arenas such as inward investment and education and training, in relation to which the TEC was described by the Council Leader as ‘the old training arm of the Council’ (RMBC, 21.4.98a).²⁴ The merger between Chamber of Commerce and TEC created ‘paranoia’ within the local authority that it might be

²⁴ This relationship is discussed further below with respect to Rotherham Business Education Links (RBEL) and to partnership and the inward investment function.

marginalised (RMBC, 21.4.98b, 22.1.99).²⁵ Describing the relationship between the Council and RCCTE, the Chairman of the REP drew an analogy with a phenomenon he called ‘carpet wars’ in Marks and Spencer. In these carpet wars, different sections within a store compete for floor space, when for example, food lines extend onto territory normally occupied by clothing over the Christmas period. These changes cause tensions between retailers of food and clothing, mediated by the manager, who is concerned with maximising the performance of the whole store. Similarly, a constantly changing social and political agenda means that organisational responsibilities are changing in Rotherham, a factor which has led to interorganisational tensions, mediated by the partnership which keeps its eye on the ‘big prize’ of regeneration. In this respect, the Chairman of the REP saw himself mediating the partnership equivalent of ‘carpet wars’. As in the store, tensions are aired within the partnership and agreement reached, a perspective supported by the Council, which felt that the main problems occur when one organisation cut across the territory of another (REP, 17.12.98; RMBC, 21.4.98b).

However, the most common response to the question about ‘partnership effects’ was a pause, followed by speculation that the ‘end result is greater than the sum of the parts’ (RMBC, 21.4.98b). When pressed about what the REP can do which the private sector and the Council cannot achieve separately, it was agreed that the principal benefit to Rotherham has been in the form of regeneration funds from Government sources (RMBC, 31.3.98a, 21.4.98a, REP, 17.12.98, Aizlewoods, 6.1.99). Beyond this concrete gain, the availability of business expertise in support of regeneration projects was viewed as beneficial. It was suggested that the business sector provides ‘flair and imagination’, where councillors and officers may not possess the necessary ‘business acumen’ or, specifically, the ‘discipline of the bottom line’. But it was recognized that such subjective claims cannot be substantiated (RMBC, 31.3.98a; Aizlewoods, 6.1.99). Ultimately, in the view of RCCTE, claims for added value rest in the ‘huge positive synergy’ perceived to exist in Rotherham, the benefit of which cannot easily be measured. However,

²⁵ A point re-iterated below in the discussion about education business links.

... if you were to ask me how many jobs that had created for Rotherham, the answer would be none. We can create ambition, can help fund, can perhaps claim that some jobs came to Rotherham rather than elsewhere (RCCTE, 22.1.99).

Others were more cynical. The manager of Rotherham Industrial Development Office, for example, questioned the added value generated by the Rotherham Economic Partnership:

I don't know what one partnership ... which meets six months per year - I don't know what that partnership achieves. I know what I achieve, what we achieve, but not what the Rotherham Economic Partnership achieves. They look very nice, but what do they actually achieve? (RiDO, 25.11.98).

He criticized the partnership for symbolism, believing that it has not honestly addressed the question of what added value it brings. He regarded the REP as something of which the Government Office approved, but as a diversion from the real business of partnership building, which, he felt, occurs best informally. This cynical view was shared by the REP Board member from British Steel, who viewed the partnership as a 'fashionable' gesture to funding agencies, 'servicing a dogma', while generating no added value. He felt that his presence on the REP Board makes no difference and, therefore, he makes little effort to attend meetings (BSES, 12.2.99).

Beneath the Rotherham Economic Partnership: Partnership in Action

The debate about the 'strategic' capacity of the REP also relates to the operational level, specifically the way in which the implementation side of economic development policy is organised. The key to successful partnership, according to the Chairman of the REP, is the taking and sharing of responsibility for projects at the operational level. The following sections examine one formal partnership, the Rotherham Housing Partnership Ltd (RHPL), and two policy areas where co-operation occurs, or has occurred, industrial development and education business links.

Partnership and Industrial Development in Rotherham

In comparison with Barnsley, with its new Development Agency, inward investment activities are 'fragmented' within Rotherham. The Rotherham Industrial Development Unit was 're-branded' as the Rotherham Industrial Development Office (RiDO) in 1995 (RiDO, 25.11.95). This exercise was perceived as marking a change from a 'reactive' to a 'pro-active' approach to industrial development with a stronger emphasis on marketing. At the time of its re-branding, RiDO

reported to the REP, and was a partnership body funded jointly by RMBC and the then TEC. However, in 1996, RCCTE withdrew support from RiDO perceiving it to be inflexible, and as having failed to meet obligations implicit in the restructuring process concerning the linkage between training and site assembly: 'We were at best sticking money on the table, rather than engaging in the wider process ... It is the only time we've given up and gone home' (RCCTE, 22.1.99). So, RiDO once more became an arm of the Council, reporting to its Economic Development Committee, no longer a partnership and no longer having a direct link to the REP (RMBC, 21.4.98b).

The whole process of collaboration in inward investment was perceived to be difficult, described by RCCTE as the 'buggeration factor' in partnership building. The economic development arm of the Council, which included RiDO, was perceived to be poorly managed and funded and as having a poor relationship with RCCTE. The Council was accused of trying to service the whole inward investment process itself (RCCTE, 22.1.99). RiDO accepted that the Council may have been defensive in attempting to focus inward investment activities at the local level (RiDO, 25.11.98), but there was also a genuine difference of opinion concerning the respective roles of locality and sub-region in the inward investment process. When RCCTE left RiDO, it joined with three other TECs to establish a body called 'Invest in South Yorkshire'. The main reason for this initiative was to enhance economy of scale in relation to employer training needs (RCCTE, 22.1.99). RiDO expressed misgivings about this approach, arguing that a 'South Yorkshire' inward investment brand would be a mistake, defeating the message of the region (RiDO, 25.11.98). RCCTE, however, denied that this was its objective, agreeing that creating a visible 'Yorkshire and Humberside' image is difficult enough in distant Asian countries without cluttering the field. The argument was simply that each of the multiplicity of inward investment activities are best organised at a different geographical scale: land assembly at the local level, labour market at the sub-regional level and marketing at the regional or the national level. Each body needs to recognise its place in the process, it was argued, and collaborate accordingly (RCCTE, 22.1.99).

The end of formal organisational links with RCCTE and with REP did not concern RiDO. On the contrary, the Manager claimed that there are still close links between RiDO and RCCTE. The absence of a formal partnership had not, he said, prevented 'true' co-operation on the ground. RiDO's expertise in marketing, identifying potential investors and in site assembly was viewed as complementary to RCCTE's expertise in education and training and in providing private sector 'champions' to assist in promoting Rotherham. The value of informal 'networking', as opposed to formal 'partnership', was perceived to be that it focusses on bringing together resources from organisations, as and when they are required. The process of informal links were felt to require less bureaucracy, making them more efficient (RiDO, 25.11.98).²⁶

If the perceived 'threat' of TECs undermining local authorities at the sub-regional level contributed to Barnsley's push for a development agency, it had the opposite effect in Rotherham, where it was recognised that institutional partnerships are not always effective. Rotherham shared Barnsley's fears about the potential for the RDA to ignore towns in favour of Leeds and Sheffield and agreed that it has to 'respond' accordingly (REP, 12.5.98, 17.12.98; RMBC, 31.3.98a). To this end, and to take account of the governments social inclusion agenda, discussions are taking place to agree changes to the structure of the REP (RMBC, 23.3.99). However, both RCCTE and RiDO agreed that creating an autonomous development agency would be a symbolic gesture (RiDO, 25.11.98; RCCTE, 22.1.99).

Added Value in Industrial Development Partnerships?

The demise of RiDO as a partnership indicates an absence of added value in this particular collaboration. Neither party felt that it had lost out through the end of RiDO as a partnership organisation. Whether partnership or not, RiDO was not viewed as an unqualified success by all participants. The Director of British Steel was critical of what he perceived as a failure to promote manufacturing in Rotherham. He regarded manufacturing as the key to successful regeneration in Rotherham, as opposed to 'low quality' jobs in call centres (BSES, 12.2.99). This

²⁶ These views do not accord with RCCTE's opinion, expressed above, that the Council has a poor relationship with it in the economic development arena (RCCTE, 22.1.99).

remark highlights the contentious nature of achievement and the difficulty of evaluating regeneration outputs, even where these can be attributed with confidence to partnerships.

Rotherham Housing Partnership Ltd

The Rotherham Housing Partnership Ltd (RHPL) was established in 1994, when a need for 'low cost affordable housing' was identified in Rotherham, emulating the troubled 'Doncaster 2000 Partnership' (Doncaster Free Press, 24.12.97; RMBC, 7.12.98; Keepmoat, 5.8.99). The partnership was established as a consequence of restrictions on the powers of local authorities to build houses and because other bodies, such as housing associations, were considered unable to make up the deficit. Therefore, the objective of the partnership was to bridge a gap in creating housing developments, mainly for first time buyers, which 'without the partnership would either not happen at all or would take much longer to come about' (RHPL, 1994: 4-5). The partnership was formed with a developer, Keepmoat Holdings plc.²⁷ The company board consisted of one Council representative, three representatives of Keepmoat Holdings plc and two others nominated by, but not on, the Council. However, the partnership was managed on a day to day basis by a Management Liaison Group consisting of council officers (RHPL, 1994: 6-9) which reported to the Board on a quarterly basis. The partnership was therefore 'effectively run from the council' (RMBC, 7.12.98). The Council provided land and planning permission to the partnership, while Keepmoat provided commercial and development skills, human and financial resources (Keepmoat, 7.12.98). The concrete objective of the partnership was to build and to sell 100 homes per year, a target which was achieved in each of three years until the partnership was 'run down' in 1997 (RMBC, 7.12.98). A further achievement claimed for the partnership was the creation of jobs by virtue of the agreement with Keepmoat which specified that the employment of local people on development sites would be 'a priority' (RMBC, 1997: 29; RHPL, 1994: 3).

As in the Barnsley Miller Partnership, a contradiction was perceived between the principles of best value and partnership. There was argument within the Council about whether the land used for

²⁷ Keepmoat a local company, based in South Yorkshire was also the developer in the Doncaster 2000 Partnership.

partnership should be sold on the open market at its maximum value, rather than at the lower rate which could be realised through low cost housing projects. Keepmoat were chosen as partners on the basis of their perceived track record in partnership with Doncaster. In essence, they were given unrestricted rights to build on land designated for affordable housing by the Council without facing competition. RMBC was conscious of resentment on the part of local developers, 'whingers' who 'missed the boat'. One case, which generated local hostility, was a 'negative value' site profitably developed by RHPL with a dereliction grant of £168,000 from English Partnerships (RMBC, 7.12.98). Instances of this nature helped to foster a local impression that Keepmoat enjoyed an 'inside track'. Further cynicism of this nature arose following the Auditor's damning report on Doncaster Council, though no allegations of wrongdoing have been made against RHPL (RMBC, 7.12.98). The business view was that, as long as local authorities were unable to meet their own housing needs, the conflict between best value and partnership is inevitable. Given that the private sector is expected to make a profit and that some kind of partnership agreement is necessary as a guarantee against investment of time and expertise in projects which might not come to fruition, site by site agreement simply is not in a developer's interest (Aizlewoods, 6.1.99; Keepmoat, 5.8.99). However, in response to these criticisms, RMBC determined that wherever agreements were reached with developers in future, companies will be invited to submit 'expressions of interest' on a competitive basis for medium or long term schemes covering more than one site (RMBC, September 1998). Second, it sought to make the point publicly that Keepmoat did not get a 'free ride' from development projects and that the partnership conferred responsibilities on them. The Council highlighted an SRB2 project, in which the partnership was involved, for the regeneration of the Eastwood and Oakhill areas of Rotherham (REP, September 1995), showing that Keepmoat had put time, effort and expertise into it without any guarantee that the bid would be successful, or that the development would take place (RMBC, 7.12.98).

Following the legal difficulties experienced by the Doncaster 2000 partnership, resulting in allegations of corruption against councillors, RMBC sought legal advice which suggested that the company was *ultra-vires*, the Council having no express power in law to 'establish', as opposed

to 'participate' in, a company (RMBC, 7.12.98; 26.6.97). Consequently, the Council's (former) Chief Executive decided to run the company down, though it remains 'on the backburner' (RMBC, 7.12.98). This decision did not meet with approval, either from the Council's Director of Housing, who considered the former Chief Executive too timid, or from Keepmoat, whose own legal opinion gave the company 'one hundred percent tick' (RMBC, 7.12.98; Keepmoat, 5.8.99).²⁸

Added Value in the Rotherham Housing Partnership Ltd

In Keepmoat's opinion, the partnership met its objective to make developments happen more quickly than they would otherwise have done. It attributed this success to the capacity engendered in the partnership to solve problems concerning land assembly more quickly. It also considered that housing had been built on one or two estates which could not have happened without the partnership. Keepmoat also felt it had won additional business from the partnership, while the Council obtained housing and a share of £500,000 in profit (RMBC, 7.12.98; Keepmoat, 5.8.99). However, this profit was not always achieved in line with the original objective to build low cost, affordable, housing. The first development was on a 'desirable' site on the edge of the Borough, judged 'too good' for 'affordable' housing. Rotherham workers were employed on the project, but, according to the Director of Housing, the houses were sold predominantly to people from Sheffield. Later developments, he said, particularly those nearer to Rotherham town centre, were sold to people from Rotherham and 78% of occupants on the last three sites developed by the partnership, totalling 109 houses, were first time buyers. However, RMBC offered no practical definition of 'affordable', conceding that the partnership principle of building 'affordable housing' is determined more by the market than by any measurement of 'need', which would not be the case, were RMBC able to build and to subsidise its own properties (RMBC, 7.12.98). Since the concept of added value cannot be fixed in relation to affordable housing, evaluation from this standpoint cannot reliably be made.

²⁸ In light of the regulations discussed in chapter 4, from a lay-person's perspective, the Counsel's opinion is perplexing, a feeling shared by the Director of Housing (RMBC, 7.12.98).

There was one further downside to the partnership, another more practical reason for winding it down. The Council's housing analysts found that in facilitating the development of new housing for first time buyers, it was 'stagnating' the second hand market. 'You could drive around the estates and see former right to buy properties boarded up'. In building new homes which netted the Council a profit, an unanticipated problem with the dereliction of older housing in Rotherham arose, which provided an additional incentive for putting the RHPL on the 'back burner' (RMBC, 7.12.98). Arguably, the partnership was a zero sum game, if the profit element is taken out.

Rotherham Business Education Links

The development of an improved skills base in Rotherham was identified by the REP as the single most important component of the regeneration strategy (REP, 1997a: 16; 17.12.98). Schools were accorded a key role in raising education standards, particularly within the under 16 age group, in order to 'strive for an improved and more economically competitive workforce' (RMBC, 1997: 44). The task facing the Borough was perceived to be ensuring that students leave school 'job-ready', a project beginning with primary school children (REP, 17.12.98; RMBC, 22.1.99; RCCTE, 19.1.99).

Education standards in Rotherham improved between 1992 and 1997 with the proportion of students attaining 5 or more GCSEs at A-C grades increasing from 30% to 37.4% (www.RiDO.org.uk, RMBC, 1997: 15). This improvement faltered, against the national trend, with the pass rate falling to 36.8% in 1998 (The Guardian, 1.12.98). This pass rate is higher than in Barnsley (29.8% in 1998), it approximated closely to the regional pass rate, but it falls well below the national pass rate of 43.5% in 1996 (BRF, Autumn 1996: 7; GOYH, May 1997: 34).²⁹

The mission of Rotherham Business Education Links (RBEL) is to play a part in addressing this shortfall in education standards and lack of work readiness. Education was perceived to have a key role in the 'social regeneration' of Rotherham and RBEL seek to influence the process of

²⁹ The figure also disguises pockets of relative success and failure, with the same pass rates varying in Rotherham schools between 11% and 53% (Guardian, 1.12.98).

schooling by supplementing the formal academic curriculum with the development of a 'work ethic' and a 'culture of citizenship' in schools (RBEL, 7.12.98b). Rotherham Training and Enterprise Council established the Rotherham Business Education Partnership (BEP) in 1993 in partnership with the then Chamber of Commerce and the Council (RBEL, 7.12.98b). The partnership, a registered company, was chaired by a senior executive from the steel industry who also sat on the TEC Board.³⁰ Its objectives were to maximise employer investment in formal education activity, while ensuring that school students gained the skills and understandings necessary for future employment (RTEC, 1994: 89).

The BEP folded in 1996 when the Council withdrew its financial support (RCCTE, 19.1.99). RBEL suggested that a negative attitude by the LEA was behind the collapse of the partnership (RBEL, 7.12.98a), which the Council confirmed, arguing that the initiative was 'exhausted' and that there was insufficient commitment on the ground to making it work, either among BEP staff or among local employers (RMBC, 22.1.99). According to the Local Education Authority, business education links are important, but the BEP served little purpose, people did not know what it was and it produced no added value (RMBC, 3.8.99). Comparison was drawn between Rotherham and Barnsley, the latter perceived to be a better entrenched partnership, enhanced by a high level of local authority commitment and 'established within the framework of service provision to Barnsley's young people'.³¹ The BEP was perceived to have been a partnership 'in name only' as a consequence of 'political axes being ground'. RMBC and RCCTE were described as 'two dogs with a bone' (RBEL, 7.12.98a).

Rotherham Business Education Links (RBEL) was established in its current form in April 1997, after the BEP folded (RBEL, undated).³² The staff of RBEL are employed directly by RCCTE, which provides the bulk of the funding for their activities. Essentially, RBEL pulled together a

³⁰ Now retired.

³¹ This perception was not shared in Barnsley.

³² RBEL was funded by SRB money, by RCCTE and by DfEE.

series of initiatives and presented them as a single package, providing for a 'holistic' relationship with schools (RBEL, undated; RCCTE, 19.1.99). The Business Education Advisory Group (BEAG) was established to provide a strategic overview of RBEL. BEAG includes representatives from RCCTE, the Council, one head teacher employed by Rotherham LEA and a local businessman who chairs it (BEAG, 22.7.99). The aim of BEAG is to develop a strategy for the achievement of national targets for education and training within which education business links can be developed (RMBC, 1997: 45). BEAG has no targets or objectives and the main difference with the BEP is that it has no budget, nor direct control over project management. Rather, it was perceived as a consultative group, liberated from financial concerns, to advise on strategic issues related to links between schools and employers (RMBC, 22.1.99, 5.8.99).

The Chairman of BEAG viewed his contribution as giving the partnership agenda a 'business edge', a view of the employment world. He became Chairman through his position as a director of RCCTE, because of a personal interest in business education links and because he wanted to be a 'good corporate citizen'. He said that his partnership activities are also driven by an instrumental agenda, to learn things which might help his business, for example, information on good sources of new employees (BEAG, 22.7.99). For the LEA, business chairmanship of BEAG prevents the private sector from being marginalised (RMBC, 3.8.99). Business involvement in business education links, though, had proved difficult to build in Rotherham. This problem was perceived to be a consequence partly of the lack of capacity within SMEs to participate in projects which do not provide instant returns and in part because the few large corporations in Rotherham are not interested. Some larger firms in the Rotherham area suggested to RBEL that since they were 'downsizing', they did not have the staff capacity to release for mentoring or for work experience supervision and training (RBEL, 7.12.98b).³³

³³ AVESTA is a stainless steel firm. It had pulled out of project Trident on the day of the interviews at RBEL. The company has laid off 400 out of 1200 employees, 200 of these at its Sheffield plant (Avesta, 28.10.98).

Business participation also proved difficult to maintain in some arenas. For example, an RBEL steering group administers some SRB funded education and training projects. Educationalists, including staff from RCCTE, were felt to dominate the steering group in a way which alienates employer representatives, unfamiliar with the professional discourse of education, resulting in non-attendance and a corresponding failure among the steering group to recognise the pressures on businesses when making demands for time and resources (RBEL, 7.12.98b). In turn, the 'professionals' representing the LEA considered that effective control of LEA policy lies in the relationship between school governing bodies and the Government. Consequently, the Council did not perceive itself to be in any position to exercise significant influence on the direction of education business links. (RMBC, 22.1.99). However, outwith the formal setting of BEAG, the LEA felt a stronger relationship existed with business leaders who, it said, are interested in discussing education and in building bi-lateral links with schools. Business leaders have, it was felt, provided an overview of the local economy, likely trends and potential labour market needs which can be fed into BEAG discussions (RMBC, 3.8.99).

Added Value in Education Business Links

The disaggregation of the strategic and the operational elements of education business links, makes it easier to comment on added value in both dimensions. After the BEP folded, RCCTE effectively took control of project delivery, claiming to provide a 'one-stop-shop' for education business links, a situation regarded by both Council and RCCTE as an effective economy of scale (RBEL, 7.12.98a, RMBC, 22.1.99). The operational element of partnership has broken down, but this situation suits both main parties and relationships were perceived to be good. The BEP was a case of partnership fragmentation, a situation in which joint management of education business link projects was perceived to have failed. Added value cannot, therefore, be attributed to the BEP. Education business links were perceived to have improved without it.

As far as the Council was concerned, the BEP's successor, BEAG, is a consultative mechanism rather than a partnership. As a consultative mechanism, however, BEAG may have had some influence. The LEA, being 'pragmatic old Labour' (RMBC, 22.1.99) resisted the Government's

Education Action Zone (EAZ) initiative, failing to bid in Round 1, to the dismay of RCCTE and the BEAG Chairman (RCCTE, 19.1.99, BEAG, 22.7.99). The LEA was subsequently put under pressure by DfEE and is moving toward a position in which it will embrace future EAZ initiatives (RMBC, 22.1.99; RCCTE, 19.1.99). From the point of view of the Chairman, BEAG has been instrumental in this change of mind and he offered the Council's changing perspective as evidence of the influence exerted by the partnership in relation to strategic decisions about education business link projects (BEAG, 22.7.99). It is conceivable, then, that the EAZ bid is a local governance output, though DfEE has exercised some coercive influence (RMBC, 22.1.99). From an 'internal' perspective that education business links are good, BEAG was viewed as having played an important role in keeping business education links on the policy agenda, particularly with the REP (RBEL, 7.12.98a, RMBC, 3.8.99).

At the level of bi-lateral links between schools and employers, RBEL claimed that it has removed the burden of administration which would otherwise fall on schools involved in education business link projects and that it provides a means by which placement and mentorship schemes are co-ordinated and distributed. According to RCCTE, some teachers have reported positive outcomes from work experience projects in terms of improved pupil attitudes. Such reports suggest, according to RCCTE, that Rotherham Business Education Links may have begun to meet its objective of helping to produce school leavers better equipped to meet the demands of employers (RCCTE, 19.1.99). The negative side of this evaluation however, was the big picture, the absence of any guarantee that learning will generate jobs (RMBC, 3.8.99).

Case Summary

Rotherham is a town which, like Barnsley, suffered badly from the demise of its staple industries. There was evidence, however, that Rotherham has proved better able to cope with the problems it has faced, though claims about economic dynamism seem exaggerated. Rotherham is pursuing a mixed growth strategy, seeking to nurture local strengths, while relying on labour intensive developments, specifically call centres, from inward investors. Collaboration with the business sector was identified in Rotherham from the early 1970s and a good relationship has existed

between local government and private sector for many years, though not everyone in Rotherham agreed that partnership initiatives have succeeded.

The institutionalisation of partnerships proceeded as a consequence of funding opportunities, stimulated by the failure of Rotherham's bid for City Challenge. From the early 1990s, the interface between RMBC and business moved onto a new footing, characterised more as a relationship between equals than before. The partnership structures engendered by onerous Government initiatives were perceived, however, to have reduced the Rotherham Economic Partnership to a symbolic role in local policy development and notwithstanding a leading role for the private sector on the partnership, the local authority is viewed as pre-eminent. Tensions between the local authority and RCCTE were identified at all levels of partnership, primarily over organisational responsibilities. These tensions, articulated in relation to responsibilities for inward investment, led to the fragmentation of the partnership which ran RiDO, and its reversion to Council control. Collaboration, where necessary, has since been carried out through networking. Business, however, is marginal to industrial development activities, as it was when RiDO was a partnership between Council and RCCTE.

The Rotherham Housing Partnership Ltd shows the potential for profitable bi-lateral operations in home building, but influenced by legal uncertainties and concern about corrupt practices in a similar initiative in Doncaster, the partnership has been suspended with questions being asked about whether it succeeded in building affordable homes and whether investment in new housing stock is having a deleterious effect on the second hand market. Education business links are complex. The BEP, responsible for funding and managing local initiatives, folded due to a perceived absence of added value. Despite the ensuing split between strategic and operational elements, embodied in BEAG and RBEL, business involvement has proved difficult to build and maintain at both levels. Business activity overall is limited to a handful of organisations, mostly those with local roots, whose main input consists of business expertise and acumen. There were indications that partnerships may have generated tangible outputs in terms of strategic agreement (BEAG), housing developments and profit (RHPL) and employability (RBEL), but the strongest

concrete indicator of added value is funding levered from government sources through the REP. The fragmentation of institutionalised partnerships, RiDO and the BEP, suggest that added value can be generated not only from working in partnership, but also in reducing the frequency and intensity of interfaces between organisations which cannot agree or which are pursuing different agendas. Partnership in Rotherham has generated negative value as well as synergy.

Chapter 7. Hull: The City of East Yorkshire

The Economic and Political Context for Partnership

Kingston upon Hull City Council (KHCC) attained unitary status in April 1996. Previously, Hull was administered by the City Council and by Humberside County Council jointly. The city has a population of around 268,000 with a periphery bringing the total to 325,000 (HTEC, September 1998a: 30). Hull is described as the 'regional centre of East Yorkshire' (KHCC, 1997: 9). The Council is dominated by the Labour Party which holds 50 of 60 seats (www.hullcc.gov.uk). Hull differs from Rotherham and Barnsley in that while serious economic decline has occurred, the City has not suffered a major structural failure. The fishing industry declined gradually and unemployment within the city itself is comparatively low. However, there has been a prolonged period of job losses in deep sea fishing and in the port industries. Between 1981 and 1993, the number of full time jobs in Hull fell from 84,100 to 75,100, a decline of 11%. In December 1997, unemployment in Hull stood at 8.6%, 3% above the national average (KHCC, March 1998: 10; HTEC, September 1998a: 105).¹

Hull is characterised by the presence of large scale industries. Out of a workforce of around 110,000, 18,000 are employed in the port or in businesses supporting the port operation (KHCC, March 1998: 19). Throughput in the Port of Hull increased from 5 to 10 million tonnes between 1984 and 1997 (ABP undated).² The Council is the second biggest employer, after the combined port industries, with 12,550 staff (www.hullcc.gov.uk). The economy of Hull is reasonably broad based, with the port, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, food and education sectors all employing large

¹ Hull and North East Lincolnshire became unitary authorities in 1996. One consequence of the previous two-tier system is that some statistics are available for Humberside only, rather than for Hull and for North East Lincolnshire.

² The Port of Hull is owned, along with 22 other ports including Grimsby and Immingham, by Associated British Ports (ABP).

numbers (CRSSG, undated 2). However, Hull was perceived to be weak in areas of employment such as banking, government offices and information technology (KHCC, 16.4.98).

Hull's GDP performance, higher than the UK average in the late 1980s, declined to 96.9% of the UK average by 1996 and to 89.97% of the EU average (CityVision, 1997: 17). GDP per head continues to grow more slowly than in the rest of the UK (HTEC, September, 1998: 18-19). Hull was ranked 31st out of 366 local authorities according to the 1991 Index of Local Deprivation, (CityVision, 1997: 33), declining to 26th in 1998 (DETR, June 1998). Severe pockets of deprivation exist on the outskirts of the city, where people do not enjoy access to local jobs or to the comparative prosperity of the inner city. Hull has a particular problem with peripheral housing estates built in the 1960s, up to 7 miles out of the city centre. Unemployment is very high in these areas, affecting up to 35% of men, and infrastructure is very poor, creating a 'Chinese wall' between the relatively prosperous inner city area and the poverty stricken outer areas (KHCC, 28.4.98).³

Hull's Strategy for Growth

Inward investment is not the key priority for Hull. The Council's Economic Development Strategy focuses on the expansion of local companies because the city economy is tightly bounded with finite land resources available for new development. Furthermore, Hull is not perceived by government, comparatively, to have huge economic problems and, consequently, it does not enjoy Enterprise Zone or Development Area status.⁴ Following a 'bench marking' exercise, it was decided that Hull could not compete for inward investment against areas like Wales, Scotland and the South Yorkshire coalfields, able to offer substantial financial incentives (KHCC, 28.4.98, HCC, undated: 9). The prospect of South Yorkshire gaining Objective 1 status reinforced this attitude (HTEC, September 1998a: 77).

³ These problems of peripheral exclusion are blamed partly on planning policies dating back to the 1960s.

⁴ Hull qualifies as an Assisted Area, the second tier of Regional Selective Assistance.

The City's preferred approach is to develop support packages around companies in Hull. This strategy seeks to use local company networks to 'pull in supply chain investment'. It was estimated that 75% of new jobs in Hull will come from company expansions, particularly among SMEs (KHCC, 24.4.98; KHCC, March 1998: 8).

The fact that Hull does not depend on attracting major new inward investment was perceived to reduce some of the pressures associated with competing with other areas.⁵ The city has not suffered too badly from overseas companies 'parachuting in and out' as financial incentives come to an end.⁶ In fact, 'that has been one of the saving graces of not being at the forefront of inward investment' (KHCC, 28.4.98).⁷ Additionally, the Port of Hull, the core business in the City, suggested that despite difficulties experienced by UK exporters, its 'core ports business is resilient' (ABP quoted in Hull Daily Mail, 23.2.99). The port performed particularly well in 1998, achieving an 18% increase in turnover and a 9% increase in profits, its best result in 34 years (Hull Daily Mail, 23.2.99).

Globalization and Local Dependence

Humberside TEC identified a high proportion of businesses in all parts of the sub-region as having a primarily local market and 'a lot of local economic interdependency' (Humberside TEC, September 1998: 23). The suggestion, then, is that much of Hull's economic activity is locally entrenched. Northern Foods, a firm employing 19,000 people in the UK, has its HQ in Hull. This operation employs around 100 people in managerial, professional and IT based occupations. The great majority of these people live outside Hull because 'people would rather drive for an hour than live in Hull' (Northern Foods, 17.2.99). The Port of Hull is dependent, largely, on labour

⁵ YHDA/IIB was accused of failing to pass on inward investment inquiries to Hull because it lacked capital incentives, thus preventing it from entering the arena of competition in the first place (KHCC, 28.4.98).

⁶ Citizen, a Japanese Company which located in and left neighbouring Scunthorpe, was offered as an example of this kind of behaviour.

⁷ For these reasons, the Hull Inward Investment Partnership is currently inactive and it is not discussed further here.

from the Hull Travel to Work Area (ABP, 10.3.99). Sumitomo, which took over a local engineering plant also commented that the local skills based was satisfactory and that the company would not be tempted by subsidies elsewhere in the UK unless it lost labour force flexibility (Sumitomo, 22.3.99). Smith & Nephew employ most of its 1200 staff from within Hull, though managerial and specialist staff are drawn from further afield. 80% of its Hull based output is exported through the Port of Hull (Smith & Nephew, 15.3.99). The company thus considered itself committed to the area. Birdseye Walls, with factories in Hull and Grimsby, believed that 'outsourcing' would not be economical for the company, given proximity to local suppliers and to the port facilities (Birdseye, 15.3.99).

The process of local economic development is not immune from the pressures of the global market and, because many firms operate on a multi-national basis, the world economy is seen to be particularly important (HTEC, September 1998a: 15). A number of 'branch plants' of multinationals are located in Hull, but few head offices. Smith & Nephew which originated in Hull, now has its HQ in London. A decision to invest £42 million in the company's wound care and castings 'centres of excellence' (Hull Daily Mail, 22.10.98), was made, 'without nostalgia and sentiment', following bids from Smith & Nephew sites around the world. While the competing bids from France and the USA were seen to be superior in other ways, the final decision was based on the skills and commitment of the local workforce and on the fact that production in the relevant areas was already taking place in Hull (Smith & Nephew, 15.3.99).

The main problem for Hull, with its low cost base and easy access to continental Europe, was perceived to be not global economic forces, but companies being attracted elsewhere in the UK by grant regimes (KHCC, 28.4.98). Nonetheless, in common with other parts of the Country, Hull has not been immune to the effects of a high pound, or the 'Asian crisis' (KHCC, March 1998: 8; Northern Foods, 17.2.99). The Port business was described as 'necessarily global'. It relies for 20% of its business on BP, whose Hull site had benefited from recent investment which, had it gone elsewhere, would have decreased port throughput significantly. The port also faces competition with the super ports of Rotterdam and Antwerp on one hand and smaller competition

on the east coast of England on the other. If a cargo bound for the UK cannot be handled in Hull or Immingham, it could be 'transhipped' at Rotterdam into smaller vessels, which would then use smaller ports and wharves at a lower cost and nearer to its destination (ABP, 10.3.99).

The Development of Partnerships in Hull

The Leader of KHCC pinpointed the beginning of local government decline to the 1972 Local Government Act, which took responsibility for fire, police and health services away from local authority control. The creation of a two tier system in 1974 further eroded the power of local authorities, creating divisions and tensions between tiers. These developments began to force local authorities into co-operation with a range of agencies, perceived by the Council Leader as a step on the road to partnership, across the range of local authority responsibilities (KHCC, 16.4.98). However, there was little evidence of a significant interface between the Council and business before the early 1990s and it was perceived that until this time, there was a 'them and us attitude, public versus private', business and local government only meeting at the Council Leader's annual address to the Chamber of Commerce and Shipping (ABP, 10.3.99; KHCC, 16.4.98). Smith & Nephew illustrated this point, complaining of an absence of support within the City in the early 1990s, at a time when the company was deciding where to re-invest, contrasting this attitude with aggressive place marketing in France and in the USA (Smith & Nephew, 15.3.99).

The development of the City Regeneration Strategy (CRS) in 1994 marked a watershed in Council-business relations (HERCCS, 22.2.99). The CRS arose from a 'loose' partnership called 'Action 90s', which fronted a bid for City Challenge Round 2 (Davidson, 1998; Smith & Nephew, 15.3.99). The bid failed because of perceived 'warring factions' within the county and the district, which the private sector found unacceptable (KHCC, 16.4.98; Northern Foods, 17.2.99). Hull lost millions as a result of the corresponding decline in Urban Programme funds. However, it was argued that despite the failure of City Challenge, the 'partnerships' formed during the bid process had been maintained and developed (CityVision, September 1996: 2). City Challenge 'fired people up' (KHCC, 6.8.99) and a new partnership was launched in January 1994 to develop the CRS.

The City's first bid to the SRB was made by the 'City Regeneration Strategy Steering Group' in September that year (CRSSG, September 1994: 8). The Steering Group was originally part of the Council's committee structure, operating as a consultative forum (KHCC, 9.5.94, 6.6.94, 4.7.94, 23.1.95). The partnership changed its name to CityVision on completion of the CRS and was established as a limited company in March 1995 (CityLearning, January 1997: 2; CityVision, 28.4.98a). Since City Challenge, the Council has perceived itself (KHCC, 16.4.98) and is perceived to be (HERCCS, 22.2.99; Northern Foods, 17.2.99) 'pragmatic' and it was felt that afterwards, KHCC had driven the partnership building process (KHCC, March 1998: 2; ABP, 10.3.99).

There was a perception within KHCC that the Council now benefits from a 'strategic understanding' of the importance of private sector wealth creation, 'even among old Labour' councillors. Hence, private sector investment is seen no longer to be about generating income for the Council through rents and rates, but about creating jobs through private sector initiatives (KHCC, 28.4.98). There was almost universal approval for the approach of the Leader, who, it was argued, had been instrumental in bringing the Council to the partnership table. Yet, it was also felt that he represented something of a lonely figure, unable to win enthusiastic support for this strategy from colleagues, who were viewed with 'despair' by Smith & Nephew (15.3.99). Smith & Nephew could have been referring to the Chairman of the Council's Economic Regeneration Committee, who believed that the Council could better undertake the initiatives carried out in CityVision, were it allocated the resource to do so (KHCC, 20.8.99). The establishment of CityVision was perceived as a response to government demands to 'get your act together' in terms of producing a single set of objectives and a 'vision' for the city (CityVision, 28.4.98a), and as a response to the priorities of policy makers and funding bodies focussed on the development of local regeneration partnerships (CityVision, September 1996: 5). The partnership was constituted as an 'organisation with responsibility to prepare, promote, deliver and renew the CRS' (CityVision, 19.11.97: 7). It is funded with money from the SRB, from KHCC and from Humberside TEC. The partnership manager argued that there needs to be a more 'equal partnership' in terms of funding commitments from other partners (CityVision, 19.11.97: 7).

Business in Partnership

A distinction was made between partnerships in which business had a direct commercial interest, and those, such as CityVision, in which it participated without direct commercial benefit. Unsurprisingly, the private sector was more inclined to participate in profitable ventures than in 'good cause' activities (HERCCS, 22.2.99). In terms of the latter, KHCC expressed 'disappointment' that the private sector is not, generally, pro-active and that it has been a struggle to get business interested in key projects, such as 'Hull 700'.⁸ The Council Leader complained that his idea for a major private sector exhibition in support of the city's 'pioneering' theme had come back to him 'like a boomerang' (KHCC, 16.4.98). This view was also reflected within the business community and it was acknowledged that there is a low level of business activism in partnerships involving, to a greater or a lesser extent, around 30 large and well-established medium size firms in joint commercial and not-for-profit initiatives like CityVision (Northern Foods, 17.2.99).

Time was the main reason cited for non-partnership activity (Sumitomo, 22.3.99). There was no evidence of involvement being discouraged by company HQs located elsewhere. ABP and Smith & Nephew highlighted a positive corporate approach to community work. However, much of the involvement by major companies was seen to be dependent on the activism of individuals. Notably, the Company Secretary of Northern Foods stated that he had been given a large amount of discretion to get involved in CityVision, the Chamber and the TEC, but that he had received no official encouragement from his Chairman, a major business player in the national political arena, who, he said, displayed 'absolutely no interest in local affairs' (Northern Foods, 17.2.99).⁹ One of his colleagues suggested that to address the problem of remote, disinterested, corporate HQs, the Government should seek an agreement with the heads of major companies, committing them to local community projects in places where they operate (Northern Foods, 20.8.99).

⁸ The year long festival to celebrate the award of Hull's Royal Charter in 1299.

⁹ The Chairman of Northern Foods is Lord Christopher Haskins, a close ally of 'New Labour'.

It was felt that most businesses in Hull, together with the wider community, were unaware of CityVision or of other partnership activities (CityVision, 5.1.95; HERCCS, 22.1.99). Sumitomo, for example, a major overseas investor, displayed no knowledge of the Partnership (Sumitomo, 22.3.99). Smith & Nephew suggested that efforts to get other local businesses involved in regeneration projects had been 'like pushing water up hill', though it perceived the beginnings of a change in attitudes (Smith & Nephew, 15.3.99). The Council Leader attributed this lack of business activity in partnership to a 'dependency culture' based on paternalistic expectations of local government. It was suggested by business, however, that excessive local authority influence had created a barrier to business participation through the culture of meetings and bureaucracy which public officials are used to. Partnership meetings were considered to be overly complicated with huge, bureaucratic agendas, resembling those of Council committees (Northern Foods, 17.2.99; HTEC, 5.3.99; KHCC, 6.8.99) and it was agreed that agendas could usefully be simplified for employer consumption (CityVision, 28.4.98a). This issue was related to a more general problem of the amount of time required of those involved in CityVision. This aspect of partnership, in part blamed on the Council's culture and in part on the SRB, made partnership work unattractive for many businesses (HERCCS, 22.2.99). 'Businesses have often been brought to the table in good faith and then not got what they were expecting ... it is difficult to retain some of them over time' (HTEC, 5.3.99).

The Hull and East Riding Chamber of Commerce and Shipping was acknowledged to be comparatively weak with around 12.5% of 8,000 businesses registered (HERCCS, 22.2.99). It was felt within the Council and CityVision that it is difficult to get the Chamber, in its representative capacity, to 'feed into the process' and that many key business individuals are not involved in a way which would bring them into contact with partnerships (KHCC, 16.4.98; CityVision, 28.4.98a). As was true elsewhere, SME activity was minimal to non-existent. The Chamber stated that in the great majority of cases these organisations simply couldn't afford the time to become involved with the Chamber's representative work, let alone in the broader network of partnerships in the City (HERCCS, 22.2.99):

It's been accepted that large companies have the capacity to do that. We have to engage micro companies. We have to overcome perception that all jobs will be provided by big companies, whereas 85% of the economy is made up of companies under 25 employees (HTEC, 18.3.99).

In terms of concrete resources, business contributions to the partnership process were described as 'pitiful' (KHCC, 16.4.99). Birds Eye Walls was the only company which highlighted its financial contribution in a positive way (Birds Eye, 15.3.99). The main contributions by business to the work of partnerships were perceived to be acumen, expertise and 'networking' capacity (Northern Foods, 17.2.99; Smith & Nephew, 15.3.99). Northern Foods was the most visibly active company with at least three of its senior staff involved in key partnership bodies. The Company's community affairs budget, however, was described as 'tiny' (Northern Foods, 20.8.99). From the Council's perspective, business brought a rigorous examination of processes, offering challenges to the way things were done in the past (KHCC, 6.8.99).

Notwithstanding these negative views, KHCC's Chief Executive perceived a change of attitude toward partnership within the private sector. He felt that some businesses at least had 'grasped' the point that regeneration issues are as relevant to the business sector as they are to the Council (KHCC, 6.8.99). Among those businesses which are active in partnership, it was suggested that 'opportunism' is giving way to 'altruism' because they now feel welcome around the partnership table (KHCC, 16.4.98). Northern Foods and Smith & Nephew were perceived as particularly good civic citizens, who had provided 'expertise and very senior people' in the partnership process (CityVision, 28.4.98b).¹⁰ It was also suggested that companies with a history in Hull were more likely to become involved in partnerships than newer, overseas companies (HTEC, 5.3.99, Sumitomo, 22.3.99). The evolution of partnership approaches within Smith & Nephew illustrated the point made by KHCC about changing company culture. Despite its cynicism about the efficacy of partnership work in Hull, Smith & Nephew had developed a positive attitude toward community affairs since the 1980s, which it described as the era of 'selfish society'. This 'turn' to 'face the city' was based on a strategic view that if people are impressed by Hull, they will want

¹⁰ The TEC was sceptical about Northern Foods, suggesting that he brought little more than his time to the table (HTEC, 5.3.99).

to visit again. It believed, for example, that a high profile in schools, selling the notion of excellence, would encourage the most talented young people to join the company, rather than a competitor (Smith & Nephew, 15.3.99).¹¹ A similar attitude to partnership existed in the Port of Hull, which views itself as the ‘guts’ of the community. It perceived a duty, at an informal level, to ‘encourage relationships with the Community’ notwithstanding its infrequent participation at a formal level in partnerships with the Council (ABP, 10.3.99).¹²

Influences on and within CityVision

CityVision was perceived, principally, to articulate central government priorities. It was felt that the private sector does not have sufficient organisational strength for direct influence on policy and Stakeholding on CityVision was viewed to be about consultation, rather than partnership (HERCCS, 22.2.99).¹³ The hand of central government in CityVision was considered most visible in the SRB process. Hull has been relatively successful in winning £52.7 million from the SRB and a further £20 million from various EU funds (Hull News, April 1998: 1). The process of bidding for the SRB was considered to dominate the activities of CityVision, leading to initiative fatigue, particularly among business people (KHCC, 16.4.98, 6.8.99; HERCCS, 22.2.99; Northern Foods, 20.8.99). Government demands on partnerships bidding for SRB funds were considered to impede locally inspired initiatives and to prevent the development of a ‘City Vision’ at the strategic level (KHCC, 16.4.98; Northern Foods, 17.2.99). Complaints had been made to the Deputy Prime Minister about the bureaucracy imposed by the SRB on CityVision, which, it was argued, despite claims to the contrary, is still a ‘grant chasing’ organisation. Said HERCCS, ‘the reality is that all we do is bid for money and not always in the priority areas we would choose’ (HERCCS, 22.2.99). It was claimed that CityVision had put in bids for projects that it did not really want because those that it did want wouldn’t have been funded (Northern Foods, 17.2.99).

¹¹ A specific project, the Children’s University, is discussed below.

¹² CityPort is a formal partnership of the Council, the Port of Hull and port related businesses. It is discussed further below.

¹³ For this reason, according to KHCC, the Chamber refused a seat on the CityVision Board until recently (KHCC, 6.8.99).

Essentially, it was felt that the whole CityVision process is driven by the SRB and that the SRB, while it has served to bind partners together in a formal organisation, has dis-empowered local decision makers. In this sense, the partnership was perceived as 'practical and pragmatic ... effective with government office, but not with the people of Hull' (Davidson, 1998: 7/11). The Government agenda was seen as responsible for encouraging 'lip service' and tokenism with respect to business in partnership (HERCCS, 22.2.99). KHCC's chief executive felt, however, that without some kind of partnership structure, partnerships tended to 'drift' and lose their focus. A balance therefore needed to be struck between overly rigid structures, essentially created for the SRB, and loose networking arrangements in which he felt it would be difficult to maintain a common direction and focussed activity (KHCC, 6.8.99).

The top priority for Hull's City Regeneration Strategy (CRS) is the creation of prosperity, a process believed to require job creation, image enhancement and improved education, training and skills (CRSSG, 1994: 40). There are four 'strategic' objectives in the CRS: economy, lifelong learning, people and communities and fabric. Key to these strategies, in the eyes of KHCC, are a linked commitment to increasing competitiveness and support for the development of lifetime learning (KHCC, March 1998: 1). Economic development objectives in the CRS drive objectives for social regeneration 'Almost all the fabric objectives will have an impact on economic prosperity. Economic threads, therefore, permeate the whole strategy' (CRSSG, 1994: 17). There was broad assent to the principles set out in the CRS. Council aims and objectives (www.hullcc.gov.uk), and the TEC Strategic Plan (HTEC, 1998) were perceived to be in keeping with the thrust of the CRS (CityVision, 12.1.98: 10).

Despite agreement on the CRS, dissension is common. The governance of CityVision has been a source of conflict since it was established. Initially, it was intended that the Board should function as a managerial body, responsible for project approval, delivery, monitoring and evaluation. Policy, including revisions to the CRS, was to be determined by a steering group with a much wider membership (CityVision, April 1997: 6). As early as 1995 (CityVision, 5.1.95), it was perceived that the 'Steering Group' was not working, that it didn't 'steer', but rather

'listened, received and endorsed'. Attendances were poor and different people attended each meeting (CityVision, 5.1.95, 4.6.97; 19.11.97). Problems with the Steering Group persisted (Northern Foods, 17.2.99). Its policy development function was therefore 'usurped' by the Board, which has been enlarged from 6 to 12 members, though still elected by the newly constituted 'Stakeholder Group' (CityVision, June 1998). The problem, in striking a balance between 'efficiency and inclusiveness', was that apart from those on the Board, there were insufficient numbers of activists to keep the Stakeholder Group working as intended. One Board member described it as 'useless' and 'sterile', arguing for its immediate disbandment (Northern Foods, 17.2.99). CityVision itself perceived that there is little 'community' involvement in partnership (CityVision, 1997: 36). This lack of community involvement underpins a row, 'simmering since day one', in which the Council has, according to KHCC, been accused of using CityVision as a front organisation (KHCC, 6.8.99).

It was agreed to a greater or a lesser extent that the Council exercises a pre-eminent role within CityVision, both with respect to policy development and management (CityVision, 28.4.98a; KHCC, 16.4.98; ABP, 10.3.99). CityVision has been chaired by the Council Leader from the outset and the professional staff share local authority and TEC backgrounds as public employees (CityVision, 28.4.98a). The main explanation offered for this state of affairs was the absence of an alternative 'big hitter' available to chair the partnership, due to an absence of commitment among high profile business leaders such as Chris (Lord) Haskins of Northern Foods (Northern Foods, 17.2.99; KHCC, 6.8.99). The Council was also perceived as having 'a democratic mandate and a unique overview of the City's affairs and, as such, an overview of the CRS' (HERCCS, 22.2.99). As to whether his company had gained influence over the CRS through the CityVision process, a Board member on CityVision, HERCCS and on HTEC stated:

If I said hand on heart whether I've fashioned the CRS, even though I've been on the Board for 5 years, I would have to say no. To the extent that we have a strategy, it will always be the Council's ... The Leader would deny it and say 'what more could I have done', but the agenda is inevitably set by the Council because they have a city overview (Northern Foods, 17.2.99).

There was also criticism by businesses of KHCC's role in economic development, particularly with respect to planning refusals (ABP, 10.3.99; Smith & Nephew, 15.3.99). The Council in turn

stated that on occasion, businesses seeking planning permission had tried to threaten it over jobs (KHCC, 16.4.98). It was also felt within CityVision that there remains a major problem with organisational rivalries in the economic regeneration sphere between the Council, Humberside TEC and HERCCS. It was suggested, as noted above, that while the Council Leader and Chief Executive are sincere and very supportive of the partnership approach, lower ranks, both members and officers were less than enthusiastic (CityVision, 28.4.98b; Smith & Nephew, 15.3.99). HERCCS, for example, felt that private sector relationships were good with the Hull Economic Development Agency (HEDA), but less so the further away one moved from the local authority economic development function (HERCCS, 22.1.99). It was suggested by HTEC that there had been tensions between CityVision and KHCC over matters of organisational jurisdiction (HTEC, 5.3.99). CityVision, for example, argued that HEDA should relinquish some of its powers to avoid duplication and disagreement (CityVision, 28.4.98a). The Chairman of the Council's Economic Regeneration Committee in turn felt that CityVision had usurped HEDA's role and that it wanted to take over all economic development activities in Hull. Rather than producing added value, he perceived CityVision as another industry, a grant oriented quango absorbing resources which could better be spent on economic development by the Council. A better approach to partnership, he felt, would be to invite private sector representatives to sit as advisors on a committee within the Council (KHCC, 20.8.99). Relationships between KHCC and HTEC were themselves characterised as full of mistrust and jealousy (CityVision, 28.4.98b). The TEC recognised that there was a history of mistrust between it and the Council, but countered that there were no disagreements on matters of principle, arguing that relationships are characterised by a 'pragmatic attitude' and the capacity to 'talk about the issues openly' (HTEC, 15.3.99). HTEC was considered to have been 'peripheral' to CityVision until very recently because the Chief Executive, described by one party as a 'maverick' (CityLearning, 22.3.99) was unhappy at his exclusion from the CityVision Board (Northern Foods, 17.2.99). Diplomatically, HTEC suggested that this absence had been down to 'personalities', highlighting that it had been fully involved at all levels of CityVision beneath the Board, contributing, for example, £100,000 to fund three policy staff at CityVision (HTEC, 15.3.99).

Despite the 'holistic' message emanating from the CRS, it was argued that there remains an absence of co-ordination between different objectives. One example cited by two Board members was that of a planning application by ASDA, to whom the Council had agreed to sell land, enabling the development to go ahead. This project, it was argued, will undermine a CityVision project on Ferensway, a retail area of the City Centre, which has been earmarked for business developments with which ASDA would be in competition (Northern Foods, 17.2.99, Smith & Nephew, 15.3.99). Supporters of the ASDA scheme, on the other hand, argue that up to 700 jobs are at risk if the development does not proceed. Following approval by the Council, however, the scheme has been 'called in' by the DETR (Hull Daily Mail, 3.3.99b). The Council, a Ferensway Partner itself, urged other partners to the scheme, including Northern Foods and Kingston Communications, to drop their opposition to try and avert the DETR inquiry. The Council, embroiled on both sides of the conflict, has been accused of a conflict of interest (Hull Daily Mail, 23.3.99). ABP too highlighted an absence of co-ordination within the Council, arguing that the introduction of a cabinet system into local government could improve the situation (ABP, 10.3.99; DETR, 30.7.98). One such conflict perceived by business to exist within the Council was that between HEDA and the Planning Department, the latter department perceived as hostile to development (ABP, 10.3.99; Smith & Nephew, 15.3.99). Similarly, business was perceived as lacking commitment to parts of the CRS seeking to bring long term unemployed people back into the labour market. Companies were viewed as eager to 'cherry pick' from schools, but not to re-train older people who had been out of full time employment for a number of years (KHCC, 28.4.98).

CityVision and Added Value

The Manager of CityVision, while upbeat about the partnership, recognised that agreeing priorities and actions takes patient effort, that networks take a long time to build and that, while he felt CityVision has worked well over 2-3 years, it will be 10 years or more before it is 'truly effective' (CityVision, 28.4.98a). This view was also expressed in a recent stakeholder survey, which indicated a belief that limitations are slowly being overcome (Davidson, 1998: 13). It was argued, despite the weight of criticism expressed above, that the SRB had 'opened doors' to leverage from

the private sector which had not been available previously, though it was felt the partnership hadn't been as successful in unlocking private sector money as it would have wished (HTEC, 5.3.99). Added value, from the Council's perspective, was assessed principally in terms of the credibility partnership purchased with the government and consequent success in obtaining grants (KHCC, 16.4.98; 6.8.99). One business leader suggested that this was the only 'added value' generated and that CityVision had not addressed honestly the question of what it had achieved as a partnership (Northern Foods, 17.2.99). This view was also held by ABP, which acknowledged that it had not really been engaged in CityVision since it started. The company said that it had attended no more than three meetings in 18 months and was 'not up to speed' with many current discussions:

To be honest, a lot of the discussion is old hat. There is nothing new or ground breaking from our point of view as an employer ... I can't hand on heart say that it does a lot for us ... CityVision is self perpetuating. What are its objectives except a wish list? (ABP, 10.3.99).

The engagement of new actors in the regeneration process was itself perceived as added value (HERCCS, 22.2.99; HTEC, 5.3.99; KHCC, 6.8.99) and the opportunity to air differences within an umbrella organisation enabled open discussion and facilitated understanding, even where agreement could not be reached. For ABP, this process had the knock on effect that informal contacts had increased, typified by regular meetings with the Leader and the Chief Executive. 'The real worth of CityVision is in facilitating connections, networks' (ABP, 10.3.99). More concretely, Smith & Nephew assisted the Council, through CityVision, in examining the local supply chain to identify new opportunities for local firms to bid for work from the Port (KHCC, 16.4.98).¹⁴ Hence, there was evidence, as KHCC's Chief Executive suggested, that once stimulated, people had got a taste for different kinds of partnership working, outside the CityVision arena (KHCC, 6.8.99).

This question was addressed in the CityVision Stakeholder Survey, which identified broad agreement that the partnership adds value to regeneration in Hull, without agreement about what

¹⁴ Although ABP, dependent on extra-local business activity was against this initiative (ABP, 10.3.99).

this added value consists of. The principal benefits identified were the partnership process itself, resulting in greater 'synergy', and the procurement of funding. A small minority of respondents believed that the partnership generated added value 'because it achieves things which otherwise would not occur' (Davidson, 1998: 15). Davidson suggested that added value was an area where 'hopes and practice become intertwined'.

Beneath CityVision: Partnership Activity in Hull

If there were reservations about the effectiveness of CityVision in Hull, 'partnership vehicles', 'issue based partnerships' or 'spheres of influence' were considered to play an important role in the partnership structures of the City. The following mini-cases examine three implementation oriented partnerships. The first mini-case examines partnership issues in relation to economic development and the City/Port partnership. The second mini-case examines CityImage, a project allied to CityVision. The third mini-case examines the relationship between education and business in Hull.

Partnership and Economic Development

Hull Economic Development Agency (HEDA) set out its mission statement as follows:

To help create, through partnership, a competitive environment in which new and existing business can succeed and invest, thereby safeguarding existing jobs and creating good quality new jobs for a local workforce whose skills are geared to the needs both of local companies and prospective inward investors (www.hullcc.gov.uk).

HEDA itself, despite the label 'Agency' is a department of the Council, viewed by Northern Foods as a protected part of the Council's province (Northern Foods, 17.2.99). As noted above CityVision considered that HEDA's autonomous approach to economic development was 'unsustainable' in the way it separated itself from the partnership process (CityVision, 28.4.98a). Unsurprisingly, given the views of the Chairman of the Council's Economic Regeneration Committee, HEDA had no plans to link itself to an autonomous development agency in response to the RDA, or to link itself formally with CityVision. He preferred collaboration through council structures (KHCC, 20.8.99). HEDA's newsletter, *The Business City Newsletter* underlined the impression of a powerful, somewhat paternalistic Council-led organisation which nonetheless takes

links with the private sector seriously (HEDA, October 1998; December 1997). HEDA has initiated 'sector' partnerships encouraging the private sector to take a leading role, with some success (KHCC, 28.4.98):

We tend to start them off resource heavy on the public sector. After a year or so, we encourage the private sector to take more ownership. We make a decision to withdraw or reduce commitments to certain partnerships in consultation with the partnership. ... As we raise activity with one partnership, we lower it with another.

Thus, if the Council is strongly protective of its economic development functions, it nevertheless carries out many activities in partnership. The following section examines the Hull City/Port Partnership, held up as a good model of a 'sector' partnership in practice.

Hull City/Port Partnership

Uniquely among the business community, the Port of Hull was described by KHCC as a major player in the governance of Hull (KHCC, 16.4.98). The City/Port Partnership, established in 1995, is a 'sector based initiative', involving ABP and other port related companies, aiming to maximise the benefits of the Port of Hull to traders and investors (KHCC, 1997: 13). Like CityVision, the Partnership arose out of the improvement in relationships engendered by challenge funds. The relationship between ABP and the Council was 'complicated' by problems associated with industrial militancy in the 1970s and 1980s (KHCC, 16.4.98), but improved thereafter. A further complication was the two-tier system of government in Humberside prior to 1996, which, in the view of ABP, weakened its competitive position. Humberside County Council began promoting the Port, but it also promoted small competitor ports and wharves outside Hull, which meant in effect that ABP was assisting its competitors in what it regards as a cut throat business. Unitary status meant that partnership could focus on the City and the Port of Hull (ABP, 10.3.99; Eimskip, 12.8.99). The port was critical of the way in which Humberside County Council had managed City/Port, suggesting it was 'too local government oriented'. After unitary status, the City Council decided to 'stand back' (KHCC, 28.4.98). As a consequence, the private sector now plays a strong role in the partnership with a shipping agent chairing a small executive body which meets to discuss promotional ideas (ABP, 10.3.99; Eimskip, 12.8.99).

The partnership is activity based, a marketing consortium, whose commitment is to create new wealth for the city and the port by expanding trade, promoting the port within Europe and in global markets, making commercial contacts and increasing business for Hull companies. Its job was to approach potential customers saying 'here is a partnership promoting our city and port. The members of the partnership can offer every facility you would need, if you were thinking about using the port' (Eimskip, 12.8.99). City-Port is thus presented as a package, each partner offering specific services. The partnership is funded by subscriptions whose levels are based on company turnover. The subscriptions are matched by HEDA money, the combined total being matched by EU funds (ABP, 10.3.99; Eimskip, 12.8.99). The partnership uses this money to put on road shows, primarily in Northern Europe, to encourage business use of the port and, to a limited extent, inward investment in Hull (ABP, 10.3.99). It was noted above that there is little land available for new inward investors in Hull, but the port has some brown field land which it wishes to sell for development. The City/Port Partnership seeks to market this land to firms interested in port related developments. In relation to promotional activities, the Chairman felt that the partnership was best presented as a formal body. Networking with potential customers, was viewed as an important follow-up process (Eimskip, 12.8.99).

While the promotional activities of the City/Port partnership were viewed in positive terms by the leading partners, there remains conflict over land and development issues between KHCC and ABP. On ABP land stands a derelict building which was once the headquarters of a local trawler company, 'Lord Line'. This building is an eyesore on the main road into Hull and has been a bone of contention between ABP, which wants it demolished and the site redeveloped (ABP, 10.3.99), and the Council, which is not willing to allow this to happen without an agreeable development scheme first being put forward by ABP.¹⁵ The issue is complicated by a pressure group called 'STAND' led by the Bishop of Hull, which is campaigning for any new development to restore the Lord Line building in order to commemorate the fishing industry in Hull (Hull Daily Mail, 17.12.98). The issue, which, like Ferensway, is now subject to a DETR led public inquiry, has

¹⁵ The Chief Executive of KHCC confided that he couldn't understand the attachment of some members and local people to the building (KHCC, 6.8.99).

been the source of acrimony and insult between the Council's Planning Committee and ABP's subsidiary development company, the Grosvenor Waterside Group (Hull Daily Mail, 18.1.99). The Council was not insistent upon maintaining the building, but it argued that more burger bars and bingo halls were not appropriate for such a 'prestigious' site (Hull Daily Mail, 23.3.99). The Port, with its property development hat on, viewed the Council as obstructive, incapable of taking a coherent position from department to department (ABP, 10.3.99). This issue has not been brought to the partnership, which, as a promotional organisation, saw this conflict as beyond its remit (Eimskip, 12.8.99), but it seemed strange that such a significant issue, which has raised local passions, has not been debated in CityVision either.

Added Value in City/Port

The most concrete added value identified in the City/Port Partnership was the funding it had generated to support promotional activities through Objective 2. While the partnership was not funding driven, it was reliant for much of its work on the public subsidy it obtained (Eimskip, 12.8.99). Were external funds to dry up, it was felt that the work of the partnership would be curtailed, but that City/Port would stand a greater chance of surviving and of persuading partners to increase their subscriptions than would CityVision (ABP, 10.3.99). There was also a perception that the partnership has been effective in generating port business and it was claimed that one promotional event had produced 120 new jobs (KHCC, March 1998: 19). It was felt that the key to generating concrete outputs from the partnership was the credibility it had engendered in presenting Hull as a united front between port businesses and the City Council (Eimskip, 12.8.99). However, partners in City/Port recognised that it would be very difficult to quantify partnership outputs (ABP, 10.3.99; Eimskip, 12.8.99). For example, it could be years after a promotional event that a foreign business recalled that ABP could handle its trade. Nonetheless, the partnership was compared favourably with CityVision by ABP, of which, as noted above, the company held a negative view. Overall, it was felt that resources were better combined in this partnership than utilised separately (ABP, 10.3.99).

CityImage

"From Hull, Hell and Halifax, Good Lord deliver us!" (16th Century Proverb)

The pressures of competition with UK cities, to attract corporate headquarters, for investment, for big events and for tourism, have resulted in attempts to develop an image for Hull. The Council Leader expressed bitterness about what he saw as a stereotypical outsider view of Hull as a fishing village (KHCC, 16.4.98), but Wolff Olins research concluded that Hull had no image at all to speak of (KHCC, 6.8.99). An integral part of the CRS, therefore, is to re-create Hull as a 'Top Ten' city (CityVision, 19.11.97: 5; Wolff Olins, June 1997). To this end, CityVision established CityImage, an 'Issue Group' charged with responsibility for developing and implementing an image strategy for Hull. CityImage has since been re-constituted as a limited company with its own Board, but it still reports to the parent body, CityVision (CityImage, 27.7.99).

A CityImage report to CityVision was critical of marketing strategies, identifying uniformity of presentation as a negative consequence of global competition:

Every city, it would appear, has the friendliest people, the best-trained workforce, the best shopping centres, the best transport routes and the greatest centres of excellence (Wolff Olins, June 1997).

Thus, it was argued, Hull needed to market itself in an 'imaginative, accurate and compelling way'. The job of promoting Hull was perceived not only to be about marketing Hull to the outside world, but also to be about raising the aspirations and self-esteem of people within the city (CityVision, 28.4.98a; KHCC, 16.4.98; CityImage. 27.7.99). Unitary authority status was perceived to have facilitated this project, the Council now representing a single local government focus for the city (KHCC, 6.8.99).

The Image Enhancement Programme was seen as integral to the CRS. This segment of the strategy depends for finance directly on the input of the private sector. The former Bishop of Hull, James Jones, together with a representative of Smith & Nephew, championed a 'CityVision Bond' scheme, where firms buy a stake for between £500 and £5,000 in the image programme to match

SRB funding (CityVision, 28.4.98a; Smith & Nephew, 15.3.99).¹⁶ Purchase of the bond buys access to 'key decision makers ... a hotline to major movers and shakers', for example, breakfast meetings at which shareholders are informed of major proposals or developments in the City by the Council Leader and Chief Executive (CityVision, 28.4.98a; CityImage, 27.7.99; KHCC, 6.8.99).¹⁷ The Bond, renewable each year, had generated an annual income of £70,000 as of April 1998, a sum 'hypothecated' to the image programme, specifically to the appointment of a Marketing Director and to the funding of the Wolff Olins report. The money was also used to lever in SRB and EU funds worth around £270,000. Donors to the Bond scheme include HERCCS, ABP, KHCC, HTEC, Northern Foods and Smith & Nephew, all contributing £5,000 per annum. The Marketing Director of CityImage said that he was 'looking for exponential growth' from the Bond scheme, 'we are at the tip of the iceberg', he said (CityImage, 27.7.99). From the Council's perspective, private sector leadership within CityImage was vital to the credibility and the future success of the Bond scheme and of the image programme more generally. It was felt that companies were much more willing to deal with a business-driven organisation than the Council when it came to convincing potential donors to join the scheme (KHCC, 6.8.99).

CityImage has had some impact locally. The Hull Daily Mail enthusiastically adopted the theme of 'pioneering' (Hull Daily Mail, 4.2.99b, 19.2.99a,b, 25.3.99). The support of the press was perceived to be critical in promoting the image project and the paper's editor was in the process of becoming more directly involved in the partnership (KHCC, 6.8.99). 'The Deep', a millennium project, was perceived as central to the image building project (KHCC, 16.4.98). It is not a direct output of CityImage, but it was considered to be an indirect output of the new ambition among local elites, driven by the image building process (CityImage, 27.7.99). The Deep, due to open in 2001, will be a science attraction and research facility, which it was hoped will attract 300,000 visitors per year (CityImage, 27.7.99). The local press described it as a flagship project in the

¹⁶ The Rt Rev James Jones, chosen personally by Tony Blair to be Bishop of Liverpool, was described in The Independent as 'New Labour's Bishop' (The Independent, 7.11.98).

¹⁷ The Chief Executive of KHCC and the Marketing Director of CityImage both emphasised that access to movers and shakers did not mean access to competitive advantage (KHCC, 6.8.99, CityImage, 27.7.99).

attempt to locate Hull among England's top ten cities (Hull Daily Mail, 4.2.99b). Smith & Nephew and Northern Foods both claimed that they had been influential in persuading the Council, which had originally designated the project site for housing development, to support The Deep. The Council disputed this claim, but agreed that the private sector had been instrumental in enhancing its aspirations for the project, expressed in the appointment of a renowned architect to design the building (KHCC, 6.8.99).¹⁸ The project, costing £40 million, procured £18.6 million from the Millennium Commission and was viewed as an example of the ambition needed in Hull if it were to improve perceptions of Hull among the local community and further afield (Smith & Nephew, 15.3.99).

Added Value in CityImage

Leaving aside the concrete added value generated through CityVision Bond, there were mixed feelings about the achievements of CityImage. ABP, in particular, was negative about the whole image project, arguing that employing consultants had been a waste of time, that the pioneering theme was 'astonishing' in its irrelevance and that the money it had put into the Bond was wasted. It claimed that, on presentation to the CityVision stakeholder group, the idea had been received in silence by all but one or two in the audience and that it was widely felt to be wrong for Hull. ABP described the activities and aspirations of CityImage as 'flights of fancy' (ABP, 10.3.99). Smith & Nephew, on the other hand, was positive about the theme of pioneering, which it felt captured the essence of its own history and aspirations. The Bond was viewed as 'a commitment by us to the City and in theory, it buys us the right to state our view and to challenge or influence some of the decision making processes'. Smith & Nephew argued that the appointment of a Marketing Director to promote Hull, funded from Bond income, was a good return in itself, a view shared by the Council (Smith & Nephew, 15.3.99; KHCC, 6.8.99). The mixed feelings however, undermined the claim made by the Marketing Director that partners on CityImage are 'totally singing from the same hymn sheet' (CityImage, 27.7.99).¹⁹

¹⁸ Both Council and business sector claimed ownership of this particular game.

¹⁹ This remark was made by the Marketing Director of CityImage. Perhaps understandably, given his role, his account of city-image was more positive than any other.

Education Business Links in Hull

The Council Leader in his annual 'State of the City Address' to HERCCS, identified education as the most pressing problem facing Hull, the biggest task being to create a 'culture of learning' (quoted in HERCCS, February 1999). Likewise, Humberside TEC suggested that in the medium term, enhanced learning and skills may be 'a greater source of economic competitiveness than more grants, sites, industrial estate roads and place marketing for inward investment' (HTEC, September 1998a: 3). GCSE results in Hull are the worst in England. 18.7% of pupils obtained GCSE grades A to C in 1993, compared to an average of 41% in England (CRSSG, undated: 13). The figure stood at 22.8% in 1996, 2nd bottom among 114 education authorities, but representing a marginal relative improvement in relation to England as a whole, whose GCSE pass rate stood at 44.5% (CityVision, 1997: 31). However, with the same pass rate of 22.8%, Hull's GCSE performance was again the worst in England in 1998 (The Guardian 1.12.98). Within Hull itself, GCSE pass rates varied from 100% and 82% at the top end to 3%, 5% and 6% at the bottom end, (CityVision, 12.1.98: 8).²⁰

The CRS argued that 'low and outdated skills' prevent Hull businesses from competing effectively. The problem was seen to be convincing people at school that 'learning has relevance and a value in their lives' (CRSSG, 1994: 19). The negative attitude to learning was perceived to be exacerbated by low expectations of what learning can contribute to a young person's life (CityVision, 12.1.98: 1). This perception, within Hull, was articulated by the Financial Times:

One big local employer says that in Hull, at least, there is a cultural reluctance among male teenagers to take school-work seriously, an attitude that perhaps has its roots in the inherited memories of easy access to unskilled work in docks and fisheries. Those jobs are - mostly - gone, but their legacy is an instinctive ... mistrust of the education that these days is an essential qualification for access to work (Financial Times, 17.4.96).

Thus, according to the CRS, Hull people are often unable to compete for skilled jobs to which people are recruited from elsewhere (CRSSG, 1994: 20). There are a number of interrelated

²⁰ The figures look particularly bad as a consequence of the City boundary, drawn as part of the 1996 move to unitary status for KHCC. A wider boundary, encompassing some of the more affluent outlying areas where 'middle class' children live, would have made the figures more comparable with other cities (HERCCS, 22.2.99; Northern Foods, 20.8.99).

partnership strands in Hull's response to these difficulties, including the Humberside Partnership, CityLearning and direct links between the LEA, schools and business through the Business Education Forum and the Children's University. The following paragraphs examine these elements.

CityLearning

CityLearning was established in 1995 as an informal organisation of leaders in the field of education in Hull, comprising the LEA, the University of Hull, the University of Humberside, Humberside TEC, the Humberside Partnership and a Personnel Executive from Northern Foods. The group was established to discuss turning Hull into a 'great learning city' (CityLearning, 1997: 6). CityLearning was affiliated to CityVision as an Issue Group in 1996, reporting through the Stakeholder Group and the Board, and it was charged with responsibility for re-writing the Learning Chapter of the CRS (CityVision, 24.7.96). It was felt that the original chapter overemphasised the economic agenda, specifically in relation to developing the local labour market. This agenda, while valid, was not considered sufficient for a comprehensive learning policy. It was therefore re-written with a greater emphasis on social inclusion which 'didn't dilute the economic argument, but added social inclusion ... we want a society of natural learners, which is linked to the objective of economic regeneration' (CityLearning, 22.3.99). The new learning chapter, based on a 'cradle to grave approach' highlighted the benefits to Hull of a city based approach, including references to identity, place, and an enhanced capacity to deliver services which had been fragmented under the two-tier system and to integrate service delivery within strategic planning (CityLearning, 1997: 3).

Together with this re-write, the major achievement claimed by CityLearning was that of convincing CityVision to adopt a 'thematic' rather than an 'area based' approach to SRB Round 4, initially favoured by the LEA. The argument, articulated through CityVision, was based on a tension between the new LEA's operational objective to focus on the 5-16 age group and on government driven statistical outputs, and CityLearning's 'tendency to strategize'. An 'impassioned plea' to CityVision by the Chairman of CityLearning, combined with the prospect

of extra money for learning convinced the LEA after which it led on the bid 'with enthusiasm'. This event was perceived to mark a turning point in the relationship between the LEA and CityLearning, which had hitherto been characterised by some suspicion and conflict of objectives (CityLearning, 22.3.99; Northern Foods, 22.7.99). The Council now perceived 'good will' in CityLearning, the ability to thrash out issues and bury differences (KHCC, 27.7.99a).

The new Learning Chapter was intended to counterbalance the functional and economically driven approach to learning adopted by CityVision earlier (CityLearning, 22.3.99). Yet, in a subtle way, the CityVision bid for SRB4 reflects this economic functionalism:

Disaffected, marginalised or excluded youth is a serious social problem creating individuals with no significant stake in society ... The disaffected young make undesirable employees and neighbours and damage the image of their neighbourhood, inhibiting economic regeneration (CityVision, 12.1.98).

The 'themes' within the bid back up this interpretation. Theme 2, for example, 'Improving Awareness and Attainment', focuses specifically on science, technology and engineering, employment priorities in the CRS, with no mention of the arts, drama, history or music (CityVision, 12.1.98: 14).

Northern Foods, representing the business sector in CityLearning, was more cynical about the CityVision and CityLearning partnerships. The process was found to be frustrating, lacking any clear sense of what the partnership will have achieved in ten years time. The company representative was an infrequent attender at CityLearning meetings, viewing herself to be outside the key education networks in the city, consisting of colleges, schools, LEA and TEC. She felt that CityLearning had diminished, rather than gained in capacity since it started, that those now attending are of lesser seniority than they were in the early days and that the original strategic agenda had narrowed (Northern Foods, 22.7.99). While these views were not corroborated, they are indicative of a fairly common private sector perspective on the practice of partnership in Hull (Northern Foods, 22.7.99).

With the institution of DfEE's 'Lifelong Learning' partnerships (DfEE, 4.1.99), CityLearning was due to undergo dramatic changes. It has been agreed that CityLearning will become Hull's lifelong learning partnership. The consequence of this move will be that from being a body concerned entirely with strategic matters, it will take on a range of responsibilities for government targets in the 16-19 age group and also for some post 19 education activities. Indications had been received from government sources that a range of other activities will eventually be added to these responsibilities, which will be government funded, to avoid creating a raft of different partnerships involving the same people. According to the Chairman of CityLearning, this development has caused a 'policy maelstrom'. Decisions by Lifelong Learning partnerships in relation to the provision of 16-19 year old education will now have a bearing on the fortunes of all the further education colleges in Hull, who could find themselves in competition for resources. As a consequence, organisations which felt no wish to influence the strategic debate within CityLearning were clamouring to join in order to gain influence and to compete for the one seat on the Board available to the FE sector in the forthcoming partnership. Hence, CityLearning agreed to changes in its governance, establishing a 'Senate' which any organisation can join through a subscription scheme like CityVision Bond. From this body, a steering group will be elected. A surge of applications for membership had been received in anticipation of 'Lifelong Learning'. According to the Chairman of CityLearning, now that 'money is involved, everyone wants to be on board'. He feared, along with Northern Foods, that as a consequence of these changes, the partnership could lose its strategic vision, being forced to focus exclusively on delivering Government programmes and targets for post-compulsory education (Northern Foods, 17.2.99; CityLearning, 22.3.99). This perspective was shared by the Council, which perceived central government to be increasingly influential in the sphere of education policy, thereby restricting local policy initiatives. Said the Deputy Director of Education: 'We are very much centrally driven. There is some leeway, but the general context is centrally set. In many ways, I could be working for DfEE - I wouldn't notice the difference really' (KHCC, 27.7.99b).

The Humberside Partnership

A second strand in the network of education partnerships in Hull was the Humberside Partnership. As its name suggests, this partnership operated across the four Humberside local authority areas. The partnership brought together three separate projects: the Humberside Education Business Partnership (EBP) established with government funding in 1993, the Careers Service and management of the Humberside Centre for Learning. The partnership evolved from a voluntary and informal grouping called the Humber Forum. When TECs and EBPs were established by the Government nationally, the Forum became the Humberside Partnership, a formal limited company owned by Humberside County Council and Humberside TEC (Northern Foods, 20.8.99). Northern Foods viewed the formalization of the Humberside Forum and the creation of EBPs as a mistake. The original, voluntary partnership had worked, it said,

because it was informal ... When it was replaced by the EBP, Whitehall became involved and there were rules. It wasn't as flexible as it used to be ... Part of the tragedy is that when national things take over, they can destroy what we had locally (Northern Foods, 20.8.99).

It was felt that informality, the capacity for businesses to operate outside the legal rules governing local authorities, enabled the private sector to maximise its contribution to partnerships, a contribution constrained by the rules of formal partnerships (Northern Foods, 20.8.99).

The objective of the Humberside Partnership was to develop a 'strategic' approach to the development of these services. It was governed by a Board, comprising Humberside County Council and Humberside TEC. As a sub-regional body, the partnership was TEC driven (HTEC, 18.3.99). It was perceived by HTEC to represent part of the infrastructure designed to support economic development in the sub-region and by CityLearning to address the linkage between learning and economic prosperity (CityLearning, 1997: 7).

Following the establishment of unitary authorities, the Board of the Humberside Partnership was restructured to comprise two representatives from each of the four local councils and eight representatives from HTEC (HTEC, 18.3.99). The demise of Humberside County Council saw tensions emerging between the 'strategic' objectives of a sub-regional body and the 'operational' focus demanded by the new unitary authorities, which, particularly in Hull, were under pressure

to deliver higher education standards (HTEC, September 1998b: 52). The business sector argued that this problem was, in part, attributable to unitary status. The creation of unitary councils was felt to have removed some of the duplication and rivalry between district and county, but KHCC now related to a TEC representing Humberside and a Chamber of Commerce and Shipping covering Hull and East Riding, which it was suggested, created problems in developing 'clear' and locally committed relationships (HERCCS, 22.2.99; Northern Foods, 20.8.99). According to Northern Foods, the local authorities lost interest in the EBP because the county based partnership had lost touch with the new reality of unitary authority status. The company blamed HTEC for failing to understand that Humberside had been an unpopular administrative creation in the first place and for thinking regionally and nationally, while missing what was actually happening in local schools (Northern Foods, 20.8.99). The TEC, however, viewed the issue as a clash between principles of quality and quantity. It argued that the education process needed to be 'driven by quality, not by numbers', a process which had not, it said, been facilitated by pressures on unitary authorities from the Government. The TEC felt that the EBP had failed to deliver either 'synergy' between the different components, or value for money in terms of programme delivery because of this lack of strategic perspective on the part of the local authorities (HTEC, 18.3.99). As a result of these difficulties, the EBP folded and education business link programmes were, in future, to be managed through contracts between Humberside TEC and the four LEAs (HTEC, 5.3.99). This arrangement had not been finalised between Hull LEA and HTEC at the end of the research period, but it was anticipated that it would comprise a contract for service delivery, rather than a partnership. Said HTEC 'they had a chance at the strategic level and failed' (HTEC, 22.3.99). This dispute, rather than a bureaucratic disagreement over organisational territory, was about strategic tensions between the imperatives of sub-regionalism and localism. Essentially, the old county-wide arrangement became superfluous in the new institutional landscape (KHCC, 6.8.99).

The collapse of the EBP can be perceived as the new unitary authorities voting with their feet. The Chairman of CityLearning felt that as soon as the unitary authorities were established, they began undermining the sub-regional partnership with bi-lateral processes (CityLearning, 22.3.99). An example of this process is the Hull Education Business Forum, established shortly after Hull

became a unitary authority. The Forum is chaired by the Training Manager of Northern Foods and the objective is to involve the private sector in developing a curriculum which is relevant to children, particularly those who are underperforming and who perceive no benefit in academic school learning. It is, therefore, a relatively informal body which develops project ideas oriented on work related learning, by matching the work going on in Hull companies to the school curriculum. Northern Foods, for example, produced a package on food, using its expertise on food technology (Northern Foods, 20.8.99; KHCC, 27.7.99b). The curriculum packages are diffused through the local school system by the LEA, according to demand by schools. This mechanism was perceived to be much more successful in making use of private sector expertise for local purposes than the bureaucratic, locally insensitive EBP.

The Children's University

The Children's University is a bi-lateral business education links initiative developed by Birmingham City Council, which has now spread to 4 local authority areas, including Hull (Birmingham City Council 13.4.99). This initiative was regarded by all parties as an example of good practice in partnership (KHCC, 16.4.98; HTEC, 18.3.99; Smith & Nephew, 15.3.99; CityVision, 12.1.98). At the first CityLearning conference after unitary status came into effect, speakers from outside Hull, including Professor Tim Brighouse, Director of Birmingham LEA, and Ann Wood, Director of the Children's University in Birmingham, were invited to share their experiences of what could be done, given the parlous state of Hull's pre-16 education. Shortly after, in an unrelated gesture, two local firms, Reckitt & Colman and Smith & Nephew expressed a wish to provide money and support to a primary school initiative, prompted by a challenge to business from Prince Charles during his visit to a local housing estate. The two companies called a meeting to discuss their offer with the LEA, where the Birmingham scheme was put forward by representatives of CityLearning and adopted following a visit to Birmingham (Smith & Nephew, 15.3.99, CityLearning, 22.3.99). The Children's University was perceived as a 'classic example of policy transfer, conferences working at their best' (CityLearning, 22.3.99).

The Children's University is effectively an after school club, run by volunteers from local companies, by parents and by university students. Its objective is to make up for a lack of out of school facilities available to deprived children (CityVision, 12.1.98: 14). The funding came from SRB4 in the sum of £40,000 and from the National Lottery in the sum of £1 million. On the employer side, it was driven by Smith & Nephew, which contributed 40 volunteers, and by Reckitt & Colman, which allocated £150,000 (Smith & Nephew, undated b), indicating a relatively substantial added value resource commitment from business. The scheme, which began in November 1997, was in the process of expanding to a further 29 primary schools in Hull when the research concluded (Hull Daily Mail, 4.2.99a). The project is managed by a partnership consisting of KHCC, representatives from two primary schools, the University of Hull and Business in the Community, acting as a 'broker' for the two companies (Smith & Nephew, undated b; BiTC, 2.7.99). It had no formal links, either with the now defunct EBP, or with CityLearning, though the latter body took credit for the 'strategic' thinking which led to the idea being adopted and for suggesting it to the two companies involved. The Children's University was perceived by CityLearning as a partnership which, on one hand indicated that KHCC wanted strong education business links, but on the other indicated that it wanted these on its own terms, rather than through the medium of the Humberside EBP. In this sense it was, like the Education Business Forum, perceived to have undermined the credibility and effectiveness of the EBP as a co-ordinating body, contributing to its downfall (CityLearning, 22.3.99).

Added Value in Education Business Links

In a very general sense, it was felt that schools are now paying more attention to the world of work than they did 20 years ago. This change may, in part, be attributable to local education business links, but it was also believed to have arisen from changing approaches in central government (Northern Foods, 20.8.99). The Humberside EBP worked in its earlier incarnation as an informal body, based on collaboration between organisations situated at the sub-regional level. However, it failed as a government driven partnership attempting to manage different geo-strategic priorities. CityLearning was due to undergo changes when the research took place, so claims for added value were qualified. However, it was considered that in addition to the

procurement of SRB money, CityLearning had driven Learning up the policy agenda in Hull, when it 'wasn't on anyone's mind five years ago'. It was questioned though, whether the profile of learning had been raised with those who needed it most, living on Hull's 'sink' estates (Northern Foods, 22.7.99). The Deputy Director of Education questioned the doctrine that lifelong learning produces prosperity, cautioning that people would only believe that learning is good for you, if it related to a job market. He felt that the economic difficulties experienced in Japan, whose learning culture was once held up as a paragon of virtue, undermined the contention that learning necessarily enhances economic regeneration (KHCC, 27.7.99b). Like other parts of the regeneration agenda, the culture of lifetime learning was perceived as a long term objective and 2020 was identified as a likely yardstick of progress (CityLearning, 22.3.99).

The Children's University is a new initiative. Smith & Nephew regarded the project as part of its overall objective to enhance the learning culture at an early age (Smith & Nephew, 15.3.99). It was perceived as a 'key development tool for its employees' in terms of motivation, self esteem and enhancement of work related skills, such as listening and coaching. Longer term benefits were perceived to be the development of employees who were confident learners with better core skills and an improved impact on the local community for the companies concerned. However, it was felt that it will be 'very difficult to measure impact and attribute success in the pilot period' and evidence, such as it is, is anecdotal in nature (Smith & Nephew, undated a), based, for example on the reporting of positive comments by teachers in the local press (Hull Daily Mail, 3.3.99a).

Case Summary

Hull, with the economy of a city rather than a town, though blighted by the decimation of the fishing industry, had sufficient strength in depth to avoid the kind of structural economic failure witnessed in Rotherham and Barnsley. Its social problems seem more acute, however, if judged by standards of educational achievement and by the exclusion from city life of people living on peripheral, dilapidated estates. Its strategy for economic regeneration is founded on the expansion of business opportunities for companies already operating in Hull, particularly those of port related businesses, since the city does not have the capacity to sustain large scale inward investments.

Hull's approach to partnership has been laggardly, generated solely by the need to win external resources for its regeneration effort. There remains substantial cynicism among both Council and businesses about the strength and efficacy of partnership working. CityVision, Hull's flagship partnership, has been dogged by conflict and many feel strongly that it has not succeeded beyond the narrow aim of winning government funds. The potential for a strategic focus is compromised, both by perceived government dominance and internal conflict.

The City/Port partnership and CityImage have been more successful in terms of generating a combined, public-private sector approach to place marketing. There are elements who are cynical about the credibility of Hull's image building project, but some leading businesses have proved willing to put money into it. The scope of partnership working in Hull is much wider than in the other cases, notwithstanding dissatisfaction with CityVision. This breadth is visible in Hull's education business links and the variety of partnership forms involved in promoting the learning agenda. Much of this local activity was stimulated by the establishment of the Council as a unitary authority, lending it a sense of focus and local purpose. Levels of business activity are generally low, the core business contributions coming from three large companies with local roots. In general, financial contributions from business to partnership activities are low, though contributions have been forthcoming through CityVision Bond and subscription schemes associated with promotional partnerships, which have proved most successful in generating business interest. Business thinking has enhanced aspirations among Council elites, influence visible in Hull's flagship project, 'The Deep'. It is hard to identify concrete added value in CityVision beyond the success it has had in generating government funds. It is, however, felt to have generated partnership activity in other arenas through the culture of partnership practice. It is in City/Port and CityImage that it is easiest to identify governance outputs which could not occur without partnership. Promotional activities are believed to be much more effective, both as economy of scale and in terms of credibility with the target audience, if carried out by a partnership comprising the key public and private sector players in the area. These claims are tentative, however, and it will take many years before it can be said whether regeneration activities have succeeded and whether success or failure can be attributed to partnership working.

Chapter 8. North East Lincolnshire - A Port Economy

The Economic and Political Context for Partnership

North East Lincolnshire Council was constituted as a unitary authority on 1 April 1996. The new Council merged the former Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes districts and took over responsibilities from Humberside County Council, which was abolished (www.lgce.gov.uk). The population of North East Lincolnshire was estimated to be 159,900 at the end of 1996, of whom 90,000 lived in Grimsby (HTEC, September 1998a: 101). North East Lincolnshire Council (NELC) is Labour controlled. Of 42 seats, Labour holds 32, the Liberal Democrats providing the main opposition with 7 seats. NELC is the biggest single employer in the area, with around 7,000 staff (www.nelincs.gov.uk). North East Lincolnshire (NEL) has suffered from economic decline, especially in the fishing industry which, since the 1970s, has contracted to nothing. Unemployment reached a high of over 20% in the mid 1980s standing at 8.1% in August 1998, compared with a national rate in October 1998 of 4.4% (NELC, 29.9.98; RMBC, 16.11.98). NEL has obtained funds from SRB rounds 1 to 4, totalling £17.5 million and a further £10 million from European programmes in the same period (NELC, 2.6.98a). However, The Council's view was that deprivation in the area is far worse than is recognised by Government (NELC, 12.6.98a). The Council decided that a major lobby on the social and economic problems facing the area is needed, on the scale of the Coalfields Community Campaign, due to the severity of local conditions (NELC, 2.6.98a). These conditions include: the highest unemployment rate in the region; the sharpest predicted population decline over the next 20 years in the country; and the "least improvement" in unemployment of areas in the region between 1993 and 1998. NELC described these figures as 'chilling' (cited in GET, 24.2.99a), especially since government had reduced mainstream funding to the area in accordance with projections for population decline.¹

¹ According to HTEC, the population of NEL declined by 2% in the period 1991-1996 (1998a: 101).

There was a strong feeling of 'peripherality' within North East Lincolnshire (NELC, 8.4.99a). According to the Grimsby Evening Telegraph, 'when your address is North East Lincolnshire, it is very hard to convince people we have the same problems as Doncaster, Barnsley and Rotherham' (GET, 28.4.98). The Council was very concerned that the Regional Development Agency (RDA) would pay insufficient attention to the problems of the area. The decision to name it 'Yorkshire Forward' further exacerbated the fear of isolation (NELC, 8.4.99b). The fear, expressed by the Leader, was that the identity of North East Lincolnshire would be 'swamped' by Hull, which is part of Yorkshire (quoted in GET, 2.4.99). Humberside TEC acknowledged this sense of peripherality, recognising that the closure of its office in Grimsby had caused resentment locally (HTEC, 5.3.99). A feature of the local economy which caused particular concern in the Council is the contrast between the profitability of business and poverty within the local community (NELC, 12.6.98a). In 1995, North East Lincolnshire topped the Dun & Bradstreet profitability league with 89.5% of businesses showing a positive return. At the same time, Grimsby was the 10th poorest authority in the UK in terms of low wages, giving rise to headlines such as 'Boomtown that lives on the dole' in the Yorkshire Post (14.3.95).

North East Lincolnshire's Strategy for Regeneration

The mainstays of NEL's economy are the food, chemicals and port industries employing respectively 12%, 5% and up to 50% of the workforce (HTEC, September 1998a: 104; NELC, 8.4.99b). The Financial Times described this economy as 'diverse', citing diversity as a characteristic of all top 10 places in the profitability league (Financial Times, 14.3.95). This view was not necessarily shared locally. Recent redundancies in the area were blamed on over dependence on food and chemicals (GET, 28.4.98; Birds Eye, 15.3.99).

Inward Investment Strategy

As a consequence of these problems, NELC's growth strategy is oriented towards new inward investment. It seeks to build on attempts since the 1980s to repackage Grimsby, the fishing town, as 'Europe's Food Town'. This branding exercise did not have the confidence of all concerned. There was uncertainty about the sustainability of the food sector, exacerbated by the decision to

relocate the University of Lincoln 'Food School' from Grimsby to Lincoln. This decision was taken, notwithstanding protests from businesses, because the supply of students from the food sector in Grimsby had fallen to a level considered 'unviable' by the University (NELC, 12.6.98a; PPD, July 1998: 24). Recent redundancies compounded the view that the local food economy is 'very fragile' (GET, 26.3.98) and concern was expressed that the continued marketing of Grimsby as 'Europe's Food Town commits NELC to promoting an industry in decline (Birds Eye, 15.3.99). The Council was uncertain of its capacity to influence major inward investment decisions which would promote diversity (NELC, 8.6.98b). Birds Eye perceived this uncertainty as a dilemma. 'Do they have realistic chance of developing the economy, or do they manage economic decline. The jury is still out' (Birds Eye, 15.3.99). Tioxide, on the other hand, felt that the only chance NEL has for achieving economic regeneration is to concentrate its efforts on the manufacturing sector (Tioxide, 27.9.99).

The choice of strategy is recognised as a problem in NELC's Inward Investment Strategy, which notes that since much inward investment is capital intensive, producing low job growth, continuous investment is necessary even for employment levels to be maintained (NELC, October 1997: 2). Over £3 billion has been invested in NEL in the past 8 years (GIPP, undated). But this investment has been described as 'job fee growth' (NELC, 8.4.99a), re-inforcing the perception of a prosperous business area co-existing with local poverty. As a low employment economy, it was felt that the future of NEL is dependent on the success of initiatives, such as the RDA's promotion of Yorkshire and Humberside within the EU. But, as noted above, the Council already feels peripheral to this body fearing that it will turn out to be no more than a Leeds based quango (NELC, 12.6.98b).

Economic Globalization

Within the overall culture of pessimism and uncertainty pervading NEL, economic globalization was perceived, on balance, to be a threatening phenomenon, while generating some opportunities (NELC, 8.6.98b). Estimates over an indeterminate period suggested that 39% of recent inward investment in NEL came from overseas and 61% from the UK; 26% of inquiries came from within

North East Lincolnshire itself. The USA, with 14%, provided the highest proportion of overseas investment, followed by Europe with 9%. German investment in particular was on an upward trend due, it was felt, to recovery from economic problems associated with reunification. It was predicted that most investment in future would come from within the UK and a large proportion from companies already based in the area (NELC, 8.4.99a).

The main explanation offered for the failure to attract new inward investors was not 'globalization', but competition with other regions within the UK (NELC, 30.6.98). The absence of a favourable grant regime in North East Lincolnshire was considered to have cost the area at least two major investments in recent years (NELC, 8.4.99a; ABP, 12.3.99). Competition from grant favoured regions in the UK was identified as a particular 'threat' in a local SWOT analysis (NELC, October 1997: 8). It was perceived by the Council that a number of companies had located in nearby Scunthorpe in preference to Grimsby because Scunthorpe had full Development Area and Enterprise Zone status. South Yorkshire, with Objective 1 status, was also viewed as a threat (NELC, October 1997: 12; NELC, 8.6.98b). An investor, it was argued, would be likely to choose a grant favoured location like South Yorkshire in preference Grimsby. US companies have a very different perception of space from those used to the confined environment of the UK and immediate proximity to a port is not always important for export businesses. Hence, 'you get nice little anecdotes' from US companies like 'we went to Cambridge because it is close to Plymouth' (NEL, 8.6.99a). Grimsby's poor image was considered to have contributed to the sense of isolation in the area, negatively influencing business location decisions (GET, 11.4.97). The Council also perceived that poor image contributed to a lack of recognition of NEL's industrial capacities. The Council believed that inward investment bodies like IIB, automatically directed enquiries to grant favoured areas (NELC, October, 1997: 15). While economic globalization was not perceived as the main problem for the area, it felt 'more like a threat than an opportunity' due to the branch plant nature of the big business economy. With HQs based either elsewhere in the UK or abroad, decisions about where to place future rounds of investment were made by people without a direct connection with the area. This problem is compounded,

it was argued, by the fact that some factories ‘look rather dated’, making them less attractive for re-investment (NELC, 8.6.98b).

The textile firm Courtaulds, employing more than 800 people in NEL, was recently purchased by the Dutch company, Akzo Nobel. Like Courtaulds, Akzo had a fibre production operation and it was decided, following the buyout, to demerge fibre activities into a wholly owned subsidiary, Acordis (Azko Nobel, 27.11.98). It was feared locally that this demerger placed the future of productive capacity in the Grimsby plant in danger (GET, 20.7.98). The company accepted that the plant may be at risk, but denied that the process of buy-out and demerger had caused this risk. Rather, said the site director, normal processes of competition would be to blame if it were to close. De-merger was therefore viewed as a measure to re-organise production in light of global competitive pressures (Acordis, 20.5.99). The globalization issue for ABP was expressed in the same way as it was in Hull. The company explained that it was dependent on the investments and successes of companies importing and exporting from the UK. Similarly, it highlighted competition from smaller ports in the UK and bigger ports in Europe. Rotterdam, for example, is much cheaper for large cargoes, and smaller ports and wharves for small cargoes in the UK (ABP, 12.3.99).

Local Dependence of Business in North East Lincolnshire

The evidence suggests that while productive capital may be relatively ‘immobile’ in North East Lincolnshire, major companies rely to a variable extent on local labour, supplies and markets. Novartis, a large employer with 900 staff, mostly from the local area, is not dependent on the local area for materials or for markets. However, as it exports 90% of its products to Switzerland, its proximity to the port was considered very important. Birdseye, employing 800 staff, operates the largest pea processing plant in the world. It obtains a large proportion of its peas from farms in the East Anglia area. Despite 450 job losses in Hull and Grimsby in the past year, Birds Eye regards itself as committed to the area with little likelihood of locating pea processing elsewhere (Birds Eye, 15.3.99).

Neither Birds Eye nor Novartis saw the inability to recruit specialist staff locally as a problem. Both recruit nationally and run schemes for training and developing their own staff, particularly those recruited at graduate level (Birds Eye, 15.3.99; Novartis, 18.3.99). Any activities which were out-sourced would be contracted locally, rather than to cheap labour abroad (Novartis, 18.3.99). Figures provided by Humberside TEC suggest that the bulk of materials in NEL are supplied and sold locally: 78.6% of firms sell goods locally compared with 70.3% in Hull; 11.3% of firms sell outside the UK compared with 14% in Hull (HTEC, September 1998a: 109).²

The Development of Partnership in North East Lincolnshire

It was broadly agreed that the partnership agenda in North East Lincolnshire has developed over the past 15 years (ABP, 12.3.99; NELC, 12.6.98b). During this period, the Council claimed that it has tried to 'win the confidence of industry' in order to survive in a more competitive environment (NELC, 8.6.98b, 8.6.98c). It claimed that it has been 'pro active' since the mid-1980s, when an Economic Development Unit (EDU) was established in Grimsby (Independent, 15.3.95). Collaboration was considered to be a function of the economic development brief in Grimsby, established to address the severe economic decline in the area associated with the fishing industry (NELC, 12.6.98a).

Prior to the establishment of the EDU, relations were, according to ABP, characterised by hostility toward the Port by the district council. 'We were the Aunt Sally ... there was always something wrong in the docks, we were the Rachman driving the industry down' (ABP, 12.3.99). From NELC's standpoint, the private sector had a 'what's Local Government got to do with us attitude', proving suspicious when the EDU initiated trade exhibitions (12.6.98a). By 1989, the business sector was perceived more favourably. NELC's Leader, then Chairman of Grimsby District Council's Economic Development Committee, described a joint dock regeneration project as 'a very happy partnership'. She was quoted as saying that business attitudes had changed toward the Labour Council because of successful regeneration projects and because of a

² This statistic does not indicate the volume of product sold locally or internationally.

transformation of Grimsby's image from that of an ailing fishing town to that of 'Food Town of Europe'. This optimism was reflected in the headline 'Grimsby sails on tide of prosperity', a perspective in sharp contrast to the pessimism and uncertainty characterising the debate today (GET, 17.3.89). The change in attitude within the local authority involved an 'appreciation of the role which wealth creators play', reflected in a more positive attitude toward potential investors (NELC, 8.6.98c; 12.6.98a). It was claimed that Labour in Grimsby, and later in NEL, had thus become 'very pragmatic' (ABP, 12.3.99) and that it had adopted a partnership approach long before it was fashionable within Labour Councils. Said the Chief Executive of NELC:

This has always been an entrepreneurial council. When I came to Grimsby 14 year ago, there was such a high level of economic decline, it became the overriding issue and the Council came to decide that the best way to deal with it was through the private sector ... We were well ahead of the game, and we were in partnership with the private sector well before the others (12.6.98b).

The relationship between the Council and key private sector players was considered very positive by both parties (NELC, 8.6.98b; ABP, 12.3.99; Novartis, 18.3.99). NELC perceived a feeling of confidence within the private sector, which Novartis described as a strong relation of trust (NELC, 8.6.98b; Novartis, 18.3.99). The Chamber perceived the agenda for collaboration to have developed over a slightly shorter time frame than NELC, but agreed that relationships were now characterised by greater understanding than they had been in the early 1990s (HHCCS, 25.8.99). It was felt that now there is a strong 'tradition' of working well with the private sector and that the relationship has become 'wider and deeper' (NELC, 8.6.98a). Within this positive relationship, the Council saw itself as the community leader, embracing partnership without reneging on the leadership role which local authorities, with their democratic mandates, should exercise (NELC, 8.6.98b). One business leader, operating at a sub-regional level, compared NEL favourably with Hull, where he said the process of building relationships had been much more difficult (Birds Eye, 15.3.99). A positive picture was also painted of relationships between NELC and HTEC, despite the sense of peripherality from TEC activities (HTEC, 5.3.99; NELC, 8.4.99a). Both NELC and ABP were agreed that ABP is the main private sector partner locally (NELC, 16.2.99, ABP, 12.3.99). ABP identified a special 'synergy' with NELC because, like the Council, it has diverse interests and responsibilities, not only as a trading company, but as a

landlord and as a company with a high level of responsibility for the general economic well-being of the area (ABP, 12.3.99).

The Council took a broad view of partnership and governance, defining 'every organisation with a resource to bear on our problems' as 'governance resources'. The Chief Executive's view was that partnership working is 'easy' and that NELC has developed a 'mature and sophisticated approach' to it (NELC, 12.6.98b). Unitary status, it was felt, had clarified things, pulled together a natural community divided between three authorities, generating stronger relationships in terms of openness, building links and networking (NELC, 12.6.98b; HTEC, 18.3.99; Novartis, 18.3.99). Both Council and business perceived a culture of partnership in the sense that 'people are not backward in picking up phones'. Informal networks were considered very important and it was felt that by some that networking and more informal partnerships would survive, were formal and funded partnership initiatives to come to an end (Birds Eye, 15.3.99, NELC, 8.6.98c). Novartis appeared to agree with this assessment, citing the instance of a visit to the Grimsby site by the Company's Swiss bosses:

The Mayor came out with all his chains and took them around the Heritage Centre. Very impressive. It demonstrated to people instrumental in new capital investment that there is this strong partnership. I found it very helpful. In some areas, there isn't strong partnership. I know that it did have a good impact. It made a difference. Networking is vital (Novartis, 18.3.99).

Notwithstanding this positive perspective on the relationship between Council and key private sector players, partnership activity was perceived by some within the Council, notably the Leader, to be very limited. She said that there were very few partnership players, and that these were not as active as would be desirable (NELC, 12.6.98a). There was also resentment that much of the private sector appeared to have misconceptions about the role of the Council, expecting it, for example, to keep their premises safe from burglars, despite efforts to get them to take security measures of their own. It was felt that there is a dependency culture to be tackled, not only within the wider community, but within the business sector (NELC, 12.6.98a). The Leader considered that business had let local people down:

Our gripe is that the profit centre of the UK could not sustain its community ... profits were not going back into the community. Business didn't say that it was taking a lot out and

therefore that it would put a lot back in - not like Rowntree's in York. Your multinationals are here as long as it suits them. ... But in terms of putting tangible inputs in, there is nothing there.' (12.6.98a).

Birds Eye Walls agreed that business involvement in partnership was often symbolic. It felt that while the quality of relationships between NELC and business was good, businesses were suffering from partnership fatigue, and that 'partnership' had become an 'overworked phrase and facility' (Birds Eye, 15.3.99). The theme of partnership overload was also raised by NELC. 'We have partnerships coming out of our ears ... I don't know where the government is coming from' (NELC, 8.6.98a).

NELC maintained that key decision makers are located elsewhere and that the area was of little significance to multi-national corporations (NELC, 8.6.98a). It was felt that firms needed to see immediate benefits and real control over resources if key players were to be attracted to partnership work (NELC, 12.6.98a). There was also a feeling within NELC that the private sector was unable to make sound judgements about social issues, having no understanding of matters they don't need to know about in their day jobs and placing no value on the public sector ethos:

I think local government is better at understanding the economic dimensions of running a business than business has of understanding the social context in which local government works and in which these partnerships have to work (NELC, 8.6.98b).

HTEC, which was critical of the Council's domination of partnerships, implied that responsibility for the absence of multi-national corporations from the partnership table may lie with NELC for not building a strong enough relationship with them. It highlighted the Leader's cynicism about 'footloose multinationals' in support of this argument (HTEC, 5.3.99).

Despite these issues, there was no sense of tension or conflict between partners. HTEC sensed an environment in which everyone knew that they had to collaborate and, therefore, accepted that they have to 'get on with things' in a pragmatic spirit (HTEC, 5.3.99). ABP felt that since all were agreed that partnership is a sensible strategy, 'you only get winning players ... it is a case of

use and get used' (ABP, 12.3.99).³ With NEL's issue and sector based approach to partnership, there was no specific forum in which the private sector was able to exercise direct influence over the area's political strategy. Such influence as existed seemed to be exercised through processes of consultation on council policy documents, such as NELC's Economic Development Strategy (Birds Eye, 15.3.99). However, as in Hull, the maintenance of land for industrial development was cited as a success, against pressures on the Council to build housing (ABP, 12.3.99; Novartis, 18.3.99). ABP argued that without the imperative to build partnership bodies in order to procure regeneration funds, housing might have been built on development land 'for political gain', a theme echoed by the Chamber. Partnership funding regimes were felt to have forced NELC to consider a broader agenda, not just votes (ABP, 12.3.99; HHCCS, 25.8.99).

Added Value in the Partnership Approach

There was broad consensus that partnership working is a good thing. Birds Eye felt that while things 'could have happened anyway', it was doubtful 'whether it would have been so successful'. In particular, the appearance of partnership, token or otherwise, lent 'credibility, having an impact with Government if business was associated with it' (Birds Eye, 15.3.99). NELC viewed added value in general terms:

Partnership gives you a great deal of extra influence and more soldiers. It is about a community tackling its own problems, the bottom up approach to communities solving their own problems, rather than the dependency culture (NELC, 12.6.98b).

Partnership 'enables us to do more with less, creates better understanding of us by the private sector, and makes the Council aware of changes which the private sector face' (NELC, 12.6.98a). Furthermore, it has facilitated the co-ordination of activities and the avoidance of duplication (HHCCS, 25.8.99).

³ HTEC was criticised both by NELC and by ABP for not spending enough on business development and inward investment. It was felt that the TEC trains people for jobs which aren't there, because they are 'ticking boxes ... driven by machinery rather than by what is right' (ABP, 12.3.99 NELC, 8.4.99a).

It was also felt that business offered 'more creative solutions', but also that 'the private sector is not as creative as we are sometimes led to believe. They have a big block about public funding, a much narrower focus than people would expect' (NELC, 8.6.98a). It was suggested that 'genuine' partnerships could generate added value, but doubted whether most partnerships are genuine. Rather, they were perceived as grant led, needing greater involvement from participants, not just signatures on a piece of paper (NELC, 8.6.98b). This view was supported by Birds Eye, which viewed many partnerships as symbolic (Birds Eye, 15.3.99). The Leader, wanting to see further research, felt that there had been very little serious study on the rationale for local authorities working with business 'if you really got to the bottom of it, it may turn out that the whole idea of partnership is bad. I don't think it is, but it might be' (NELC, 12.6.98a).

Business in Partnership

It was felt, given that HTEC is a sub-regional body, that the Chamber is the main mechanism for representation of the private sector (HTEC, 5.3.99). But, the Chamber was felt to be very weak, run by retired members without the input of the most important business actors. It was felt that the key input of the private sector was through sectoral initiatives (NELC, 8.6.98a; ABP, 12.3.99). Only the larger firms in NEL were considered able to get involved in partnerships by virtue of the time commitment necessary for activities beyond informal networking arrangements (HHCCS, 25.8.99). Within this context, it was felt that there is little business activism in partnership and that the private sector is not as active as it might be (HHCCS, 25.8.99). The Council identified a potential pool of 10 to 12 business partners among large corporations, which places additional pressure on the few people who participate (NELC, 8.6.98b). This state of affairs was considered to arise partly from business culture and partly because firms have limited capacity for partnership activity (NELC, 12.6.98a; Novartis, 18.3.99; Acordis, 20.5.99; HHCCS, 25.8.99). Tioxide was critical of the majority of business which 'still hides its head in the sand', when a co-ordinated business input to community affairs could, it said, reap benefits for all employers. But at the same time, the company was discouraged by what it perceived as an unreasonable level of demand on its resources and by the lack of greater input from industrial colleagues (Tioxide, 27.9.99).

Novartis explained the process through which it decided to become involved in community work and in partnerships. It said that 'for years and years, we had a profile lower than this table. We would get on with our own business and keep our nose clean. The world out there could do what it liked' (Novartis, 18.3.99). Now, it was claimed, the company is strongly supportive of community work for example holding an annual worldwide community partnership day for charitable works (Novartis, December 1998; 18.3.99). Within this company philosophy, it is up to the Site Director to determine priorities, as was also the case for Acordis (20.5.99), Birds Eye (12.3.99) and Synthomer (21.5.99). The Chief Executive of Novartis Grimsby identified partnership as a big priority for him.

I'm conscious that this is a chemical factory, ... we work with potential hazards. So we need a good understanding with the Local Authority in the area and with local people because ultimately, they give me the licence to operate. ... So we have lots of open days etc to keep people aware. But the other side of it is, is the company a faceless entity? Or are there real people here, real concerns. Of course the answer is yes and so I believe as a company we need to participate and show the real face of the real people. We are not wicked scientists, we are real people doing much needed and important jobs ... we are here long term, not just to make a fast buck and pull out. So we need to be accepted in the community (Novartis, 18.3.99).⁴

Tioxide was more instrumental in its motivations for becoming involved, having decided to launch what was described as a propaganda offensive against environmentalists. These people were, it was argued, giving the company an unreasonably bad press which Tioxide believed had proved influential in local schools. Later, the company came to view the principle of partnership more positively, viewing the community as a 'part of our licence to operate'. It felt it has no right to complain about local politics unless it is willing to get involved. To this end, it has a small community budget, but perceives the input of 18 to 20 of its staff into local schools, together with curriculum aids and donated second hand computers as the most important contributions it makes to the partnership process. Ultimately, Tioxide viewed its commitment to partnership as an 'investment issue', a means in the long term of gaining a better return (Tioxide, 27.9.99).

⁴ An Observer report placed Novartis Grimsby eighth in a list of the worst 'solid toxic and other special waste' pollutants in Britain (The Observer, 30.5.99: 7).

ABP too puts money into community, the objective being to raise the profile of the company and show that:

we're not such bad people ... We justify that by judging how we've changed the perception of the local authority and other people toward our company in order to do better business in future. It results in less interference and more support. So we've got an equation, subjective, but its there (ABP, 12.3.99).

The regional manager of ABP, as well as being involved on the Grimsby and Immingham Ports Partnership and being Deputy Chairman of the North East Lincolnshire Regeneration Partnership, was also a Director of HTEC and a past President of the Chamber (ABP, 12.3.99). ABP, Novartis and Birds Eye are the core business activists in North East Lincolnshire, forming the mainstay of business participation in the range of local partnership activities.

The North East Lincolnshire Regeneration Partnership

The case of North East Lincolnshire differs from the first three cases in that it has no 'strategic' vision for the area, no strategy document encompassing all facets of the regeneration agenda, and no flagship partnership claiming to provide a holistic approach to the development and implementation of regeneration policy. Instead, partnerships are organised around specific issues or sectors (NELC, 12.6.98b). This state of affairs partly arises from the history of the area as a small town, fragmented into two district authorities and Humberside County Council, and partly from a feeling within NELC that issue specific partnerships work better (NELC, 8.4.98a; ABP, 12.3.99). NEL's four SRB projects are managed by the North East Lincolnshire Regeneration Partnership (NELRP), on which the main partners are NELC, HTEC and ABP. The Council is the accountable body for the funds and for the day to day management of the SRB through a Strategy Group consisting of NELC officers (NELRP, 1996).

The question of partnership strategies for the new authority has been subject to a debate in which there were very different views about the way forward. The debate has been influenced by two external factors. First, the establishment of the RDA has resulted in a discussion about whether an overarching regeneration strategy would enhance NEL's profile. Since strategy and partnership 'run side by side', any strategic development would naturally result in changes to partnership

structures (NELC, 16.2.99). The second, related, factor was that NELC has recently come in for severe criticism from Government Office for the way in which its SRB partnership operated, criticism described as ‘torrid’ (NELC, 17.5.99a), as a ‘big smack’ and as ‘an ‘absolute tirade’ (HTEC, 5.3.99).⁵ Yorkshire Forward, successor to GOYH in running the SRB, claimed that the partnership lacked focus and common purpose and that it doesn’t involve people from different organisations, nor mobilise resources. It was perceived to be driven by Council officers, with the private sector, in the guise of ABP, having little or no involvement, a perspective shared by HTEC which described it as a model of consultation rather than partnership (HTEC, 5.3.99).⁶ Yorkshire Forward argued that a much broader, inclusive agenda needed to be established to encourage business participation. The bulk of the criticism was levelled at NELC as accountable body for SRB resources and because it ran the partnership. However, it was recognised that other partners, especially HTEC, should have been more pro active and critical, arguing that things could be done differently (Yorkshire Forward, 6.5.99). The RDA view has gained qualified acceptance from the Council (NELC, 14.5.99). Neither HTEC, nor ABP offered to share blame for the criticism. The ‘smack’ delivered to NELC from Government Office (HTEC, 5.3.99) was anticipated in delivery plans for the SRB going back three years, which recognised a ‘low base of community involvement and activity’ (NELRP, 1996, 1997). ABP, as Deputy Chair and the only business on the partnership Board acknowledged that it had not really been involved, participating only in decisions concerning port related projects. It said that it had not attended a meeting for ‘months and months’ instead identifying its contribution to the partnership as the development activities within the port which counted as leverage in SRB Round 2 (ABP, 12.3.99). Within NELC, it was also acknowledged that the partnership was not operating inclusively, or effectively (NELC, 17.5.99a). However, it was felt by the partnership manager that critics had failed to recognise the quality of networking between Council, business and other sectors (NELC, 14.5.99).

⁵ The problem is related because the RDA is now responsible for administration of the SRB.

⁶ Though, unlike GOYH, HTEC did not intend its comment to be critical.

Control and Bureaucracy in the North East Lincolnshire Regeneration Partnership

The criticism by the Government Office has generated a debate in North East Lincolnshire about regeneration policy and partnership strategies. If there was acceptance that the partnership could be improved, there was also a feeling within NELC that the Government was responsible for its problems 'Pulling down edicts from everywhere, telling us how much we can and can't spend' (NELC, 8.6.98c). It was considered 'very patronising for central government to legislate, telling us what to do in local government'. They should 'get off the kick ... that unless people are told exactly what to do, they can't do it. We have more partnership experience than the Government', said the Chief Executive (NELC, 12.6.98b). The SRB process was perceived as highly bureaucratic and it was argued that the RDA will have to devolve more responsibility locally (NELC, 8.6.98c, 17.5.99a). ABP's views of the SRB were also very negative. It suggested that 'Funding initiatives generate a hunt for something to spend it on'. It argued that criticism of the partnership was unfair and that Government office was too concerned with ticks in boxes, presentation and ground rules, 'manipulation rather than what is really appropriate' (ABP, 12.3.99).

The debate on strategy and partnership in North East Lincolnshire

According to Yorkshire Forward, North East Lincolnshire needs to develop a more holistic, strategic approach to regeneration. It argued that the establishment of the RDA is an important factor, generating the need for a common agenda among local stakeholders and for a local vision of where NEL wants to be in five years and how it proposes to get there. Such an approach would, it suggested, require a partnership linking together a range of funding streams. Without this approach, it warned, in the current policy environment, bids for external resources would be much less convincing (Yorkshire Forward, 6.5.99).

Despite the pressures associated with the RDA and the SRB, key players remained unclear about which direction to take. It was recognised, in light of the criticisms discussed above, that North East Lincolnshire might have to adopt a more 'cohesive strategy' and that there were a number of issues which needed linkage (NELC, 14.5.99). The Deputy Chief Executive, however, felt that

the economic position of the area is unlikely to change very much for the better and, if so, the Council needs to address the question of social regeneration independently.

Broadly speaking, our position will stay the same. Does that mean that our social conditions and quality of life similarly have to reflect our economic position? I don't see why it should and from that position stems my view that you can't tackle social ills through an economic route (NELC, 8.6.98b).

He believed, in light of local experience, that the benefits of economic regeneration don't necessarily feed through into social regeneration and therefore that integration of these streams could be counter-productive (NELC, 8.6.98b). But the Head of Economic Development viewed the organisational split in NELC between economic regeneration as 'infrastructure' and community regeneration as 'people' as misguided, hindering councillors from identifying overlaps. From the point of view of regeneration and partnership, though, she felt that an inclusive strategy statement would be too general (NELC, 8.6.98a).

As suggested above, the debate about partnership strategies was viewed as inseparable from the debate about partnership structures. The Chief Executive of NELC was critical of what he described as the 'big bang' approach to policy and partnership and he criticised the LGA's *New Commitment to Regeneration* initiative for 'bureaucracy', arguing that NEL's selective approach to partnership was better (NELC, 12.6.98b). Concern was expressed as to whether the Council would be able to find a leadership role within the context of a flagship partnership and flagship partnerships were viewed as undemocratic because they are 'exclusive'. If one business is invited in, it was suggested, another will be excluded (NELC, 8.6.98b,c, 12.6.98b). There was a common view within the Council that these partnerships are very bureaucratic and wasteful. This route could, it was argued, jeopardize the partnership systems which work well in NEL (NELC, 8.6.98a, 12.6.98b). ABP agreed, perceiving a risk of tokenism: 'The danger is that you end up in some trendy way producing words, but does it impact in the real world?' (ABP, 12.3.99). Part of the unease about establishing a strategic partnership came from negative views about CityVision itself. It was felt by one senior officer that, as chapter 7 suggests, the partnership in Hull is beset by tensions and that it has no real power. The partnership had not, it was felt, achieved genuine integration, particularly in relation to the separation of powers between the Economic

Development Agency and CityVision (NELC, 8.6.98a). The Leader, however, disagreed with most of her colleagues, believing that strategic partnerships are good for democracy, provided that the roles of stakeholders are clear. 'My feeling is that we should be aiming for that kind of partnership' (NELC, 12.6.98a). The problem she identified was getting it off the ground in a new unitary setting.

It was considered on balance within NELC that political opposition made the prospects for a flagship partnership, underpinned by a holistic regeneration strategy, unlikely, unless it were imposed from outside. However, the overall impression is that some move in this direction is likely (NELC, 17.5.99a). Whatever choice is made, the problem upon which all were agreed is that the same people get involved in NELC's two or three partnerships and that a flagship partnership would be simply unsustainable, notwithstanding political arguments for and against. Given that the same people are 'recycled' on partnerships under different names, it was felt that there is no point in having another (NELC, 8.6.98a, 8.6.98b; 8.4.99a; Novartis, 18.3.99).

Sector and Issue-based Partnerships in North East Lincolnshire

The following sections, following the same structure as the other cases, examine three implementation oriented partnership initiatives: the Humber Chemicals Focus, the Grimsby and Immingham Ports Partnership and Lifelong Learning in North East Lincolnshire.

The Grimsby and Immingham Port Partnership

There is no broad economic development partnership in North East Lincolnshire. General inward investment issues and company specific inward investment requirements are discussed as and when required with local companies and suppliers respectively (NELC, 30.6.98) NELC's Inward Investment Strategy, discussed above, was not compiled in partnership, but through a consultation process similar to that undertaken for its Economic Development Strategy. NELC opposed the establishment of a formalised Inward Investment Partnership or of an Economic Development Agency comparable with the Barnsley model. Barnsley's approach was criticised as 'bureaucratising', seen as a 'static' response to the RDA. It was argued that local flexibility is

the most important asset in NEL and that if partnerships are needed on specific issues, they are established for as long, and no longer, than is necessary for the job in hand (NELC, 12.6.98b). The Grimsby and Immingham Port Partnership was held to represent an example of this approach.

The combined ports of Grimsby and Immingham are the largest in the UK (NELC, 8.4.99b). Throughput grew from 26.05m tonnes in 1986 to 46m tonnes in 1997 (ABP, 1998). Encouraged by this growth, ABP is developing a new Humber International Terminal with a capacity for vessels laden with up to 100,000 tonnes. The development will, it was anticipated, enable the Port to compete more effectively with the European ports of Rotterdam and Antwerp. It was estimated that it will create 300 construction jobs and 100 permanent jobs in ABP (GET, 30.6.98). Despite the relative importance of Immingham as the busiest port in the UK, it was felt to be unknown outside the shipping world as a major international facility. The poor image of the area was identified as a major weakness for the Port (MDS, January 1998: 69). Like the Hull City/Port Partnership, the Grimsby and Immingham Ports Partnership is concerned with promoting the ports to potential customers and with attempting to draw in new inward investment through marketing. Promotional activities were carried out by Humberside County Council prior to its abolition, but ABP was not involved with these due to disputes with smaller wharves in the sub-region (NELC, 8.4.99b).

Notwithstanding the focus which unitary status may have brought to partnership activities, it was felt to have caused complications in Council relationships with ABP. Prior to unitary status, Cleethorpes and Grimsby district councils were characterised by different political approaches, the former a hung council, the latter Labour controlled. The Council officer managing the partnership felt that Cleethorpes District Council had a much more positive approach to relationships with ABP, hosting dinners and other events for 'the movers and shakers' in the area. Grimsby, she felt, didn't believe in this approach and had comparatively poor relations with ABP. Now NELC was controlled by Labour, relationships weren't as close, she said, as they had been in Cleethorpes. She suggested that some senior officers had carried over the 'old culture' of Grimsby into the new authority (NELC, 8.4.98b). ABP shared this perspective up to a point, acknowledging the

different political perspectives in the old authorities and the problems which had existed with Grimsby, but on balance felt that unitary status has simplified things (ABP, 12.3.99).

The partnership was launched in August 1997 with the support of around 20 companies. Based principally on subscriptions from NELC and from ABP it was described as an informal, non bureaucratic grouping (NELC, 30.9.97), a programme based partnership with a loose structure and few meetings (NELC 8.4.99b; ABP, 12.3.99). Formally, the partnership is run by a small steering group, but day-to-day decisions are made by the Council. The Council chairs both the steering group and a wider partnership group comprising all subscribers, which meets infrequently (NELC, 8.4.88b). The partnership was perceived by ABP as part of a commitment by the Council to the economic development of the area and to providing support for potential inward investors (ABP, 1998: 72). At present, the partnership focusses its efforts on promotional events in North Western Europe. It recognised a need, when the Humber International Terminal is complete, to market the Port globally (NELC, 8.4.99b). The anticipated costs and benefits of the partnership have been identified by NELC. Box 5 identifies these respectively for NELC and ABP, as the key players in the partnership (source: NELC, 2.9.97).

	Costs	Benefits
<i>NELC</i>	Commitment of staff and resources, data and information about economy, contacts and influence	Jobs, improved local economy, inward investment inquiries, safeguarding existing jobs
<i>ABP</i>	Information about the port, pays own expenses when attending events	Trade, port awareness, potential clients and contacts

Box 5: The Costs and Benefits of the Grimsby and Immingham Ports Partnership

NELC claimed that the partnership had generated 67 jobs in the preceding 12 months through increased trade, though there had been no evaluation of whether the partnership itself had been responsible for this success, or for raised awareness of the ports and the area (NELC, 8.4.99b). It was also claimed that there had been some interest expressed in establishing new shipping lines

to Grimsby and Immingham at the first promotional event. However, audiences at the promotions were perceived to be small, for which NELC could find no explanation (NELC, 30.6.98).

Added Value in the Grimsby and Immingham Ports Partnership

In terms of added value, the partnership was perceived to bring ‘credibility’ to the promotional operation. ABP’s main influence on the partnership amounted to advising on where to target promotions through providing access to its national marketing network, estimated to be worth £80,000 per year to the partnership. NELC’s view was that the sum of the partnership is greater than its parts. While some of the companies involved are competitors, the partnership has brought them together to market the area, and they can compete with each other for the trade benefits this approach brings (NELC, 8.4.99b). ABP felt that it is difficult to quantify added value within the partnership. It re-iterated the point that success has not been forthcoming in the field of inward investment, and that this is the benchmark of success and failure for the partnership ‘if we could see more businesses coming in - big businesses - you’d have something to hang your hat on’ (ABP, 12.3.99).

The Humber Chemicals Focus

The Chemicals industry is concentrated within the Humber area, particularly on the south bank in the North East Lincolnshire area (NELC, 8.6.98b). The Humber Chemicals Focus (HCF), another sector initiative, seeks to draw together strands in the development of this industry, including inward investment, training, lobbying and business development (NELC, June 1997; NELC, 29.9.98). Like the ports partnership, the Humber Chemicals Focus (HCF) was originally a Humberside County Council initiative, lacking private sector participation. Its objective was to attract inward investment and it did promotional work, according to NELC, without much success (NELC, 8.4.99a). Following the establishment of the four unitary authorities in Humberside, it was decided to continue with a sub-regional partnership under the leadership of NELC, because of the particular concentration of chemicals in that area. Research commissioned by NELC suggested that a new approach was needed to promoting the chemicals industry and that the HCF had to be private sector driven and led, if it were to succeed (PPD, June 1998: 3). Initial

approaches by the Council did not generate much support within the industry, which expressed concerns that the partnership would become a bureaucratic talking shop, arguing that it didn't wish to contribute money, or lose more time from core businesses (NELC, 8.4.99a; Acordis, 20.5.99). Synthomer, representing the most cynical element of the local chemicals industry, argued that the partnership was a waste of time and more generally, that partnership efforts involving the local authority would have no positive effect on the decisions of potential multi-national investors. The Site Director's view was that business had no need of local authority assistance beyond that associated with statutory planning processes and that local authorities still had no real understanding of business needs (Synthomer, 21.5.99).

Despite negative feedback of this kind, NELC pursued the issue. It highlighted the positive role it had played in this partnership process, arguing that it had refuted the stereotype of a bureaucratic, slow moving local authority. The Council had been, it claimed, imaginative, positive, enthusiastic and ambitious, whereas the chemicals industry had 'dragged their feet' (NELC, 8.4.99a). On the basis of positive examples from other areas and with a warning that without a collective voice at regional, national and international levels, NEL and Humberside would lose out, the Council began to draw in representatives from the private sector. Leading for business was Acordis, participating in joint presentations which helped to bring other companies on board. Initially reluctant because of uncertainty about added value, the site director had been convinced to become involved on the understanding that the partnership would 'add value' to the activities already in place, that it would involve a minimal administrative structure; and that it would be objective, not funding driven (Acordis, 20.5.99). Hence, according to NELC, the partnership will not be a 'bureaucratic talking shop demanding excessive staff or financial resources' (NELC, June 1997).

As of May 1999, there were 12 companies involved, plus HTEC, each contributing £1,000 per year (NELC, 8.4.99a). The partnership had yet to decide how it would be constituted and managed. If the new partnership were to be successful in a bid for £250,000 from ERDF funds, a full time chief executive would be employed to run it. The big chemical companies, including

Novartis, BP, Tioxide and Acordis had acted as an informal steering group up to this point, but they needed the legitimacy of formal authority from other parties to continue (NELC, 8.4.99a).

The HCF was perceived as a response to an ad hoc and individualistic approach to problems in the chemical industry, including skills training, promotion and investment. NELC argued that if agreement could be reached on these issues and the industry brought together, it would co-ordinate and rationalise activities, improving efficiency and reducing costs and labour time (NELC, 8.4.99a). The main partnership objective was to be the establishment of an 'effective focus' for training in the chemicals industry, bringing together a partnership which, it said, HTEC had so far failed to achieve, leading to a 'vacuum'. Tioxide went so far as to argue that the HCF was only necessary because the TEC had failed to do its job properly (27.9.99). It was argued that there had been a serious lack of definition and communication of training needs between suppliers and clients, between suppliers and suppliers and between clients and clients, leading to a failure to develop adequate training concepts or courses with industry-wide applicability. Competition between training providers had, it was argued, mitigated against the long term supply of a comprehensive training capability. The HCF was identified as the mechanism to catalyse discussions about these issues at the 'strategic' and 'tactical' levels (PPD, July 1998: 30). The disappearance of traditional training routes has been compounded, according to Novartis, by aging of the workforce. It estimated that in no more than 10 years, most of its skilled workers will have retired. The fact that many skilled tasks are outsourced means that the company has no control over training, which smaller contractors had proved unable, or unwilling, to address (Novartis, 18.3.99). Even Synthomer was less cynical about the training element of the partnership, recognising that co-ordination of skills training must be a high priority for the industry over the next few years (Synthomer, 21.5.99).

Future Added Value in the Humber Chemicals Focus

Clearly, none of the above objectives could be carried out without the full participation and leadership of the private sector. But since the partnership had not commenced operations, discussion of added value is speculative. However, the potential gains from the partnership have

been analysed by consultants, PPD Technical. Their report argues that co-ordinating initiatives for training, inward investment and the local supply chain would not be undertaken by the chemicals sector without outside help. On the other hand, the public sector could not undertake these tasks alone. Consequently, a partnership is required to fill the gap (PPD, June 1998: 38). NELC identified the example of new health and safety legislation, requiring one day of training per person in certain chemical companies. These firms had, hitherto, been undertaking this training on an individual basis. The HCF should, it was argued, be able to arrange a training package for all Humberside chemical companies, producing considerable savings (NELC, 8.4.99a). Both NELC and Novartis saw the initiative as helping to provide a better skilled workforce, enhanced awareness of the area and better access to governmental decision makers (NELC, June 1997; Novartis, 18.3.99). Acordis suggested three questions which, if answered positively, would indicate that the partnership was working: 'have you heard of it, do you know what it does, has it been useful?' (Acordis, 20.5.99). Funding was also regarded as important to the future work of the HCF, though as noted above, it wanted to avoid being grant driven. However, it was hoped that external grants, particularly from Europe, would assist in meeting the objective of promoting the industry and of attracting new supply chain investment (Novartis, 18.3.99, NELC, 8.4.99a). The Business Services Manager of Tioxide was less impressed with the potential in the Humber Chemicals Focus. While the company has joined the initiative, it perceives that it will be a talking shop 'enough to satisfy the report writers, but it means bugger all on the ground' (Tioxide, 27.9.99).

Education and Business in Partnership

According to NELC, the role of education in regeneration is only 'now beginning to be understood' and the focus on job creation is treating the symptom of economic problems, not the cause (NELC, 12.6.98b). NELC has been slow to integrate the learning agenda into its objectives, only adding 'learning' to its list of priorities in 1998 (www.nelincs.gov.uk).⁷ In the LEA's view, raising aspirations and achievements is the motor of achievement, in other words, the learning

⁷ This hesitancy might reflect uncertainty as to whether it is worthwhile to link social and economic issues

agenda underpins the economic agenda (NELC, 17.5.99b). It was felt that little value is placed on education in a community where little education or training had been necessary when generation followed generation into the fishing industry (NELC, 12.6.98a). NEL is in the bottom quarter of schools for its GCSE performance. In 1994, 29.9% of pupils obtained GCSE passes at grades A to C. In 1996, this figure had improved to 32.4%, declining to 30.7% in 1997 and jumping to 33.3% in 1998 (HTEC, September 1998a: 44; The Guardian, 1.12.98). Pass rates in 1998 varied between schools from 8% to 88.8% (The Guardian, 1.12.98). NELC's strategy for education business links is oriented on addressing these problems (NELC, December 1998).

Education Business Links

The demise of Humberside EBP was discussed in the case of Hull and it is not repeated here. It is worth noting, however, that Tioxide, which was represented on the Board of the Humberside EBP, cited its collapse as an example of why the company does not believe that a culture of partnership exists in North East Lincolnshire. The company's representative on the Board recounted that he had no inkling that the partnership was about to founder and that when it did, he received no explanation and was never aware of why the collapse had occurred (Tioxide, 27.9.99). It is also worth noting that under the Humberside EBP arrangement, North East Lincolnshire firms were the least likely to seek support from organisational sources like the EBP (HTEC, September 1998a: 81). HTEC explained this fact by virtue of the strain which a commitment to offer every school child a placement placed on local businesses. The culture, it was suggested, is different in Hull, where more firms are involved and there are stronger bilateral relationships between schools and business (HTEC, 18.3.99).⁸

It became apparent, however, in NELC's Education Development Plan (December 1998) that there is truth in the claim by HTEC, noted in chapter 7, that local authorities are obsessed with targets and outputs and that this approach to education, whatever its merits, does not sit comfortably alongside that of people who argue that 'vision' is more important as a starting point

⁸ Notwithstanding the fact that partnerships in Hull developed later than in North East Lincolnshire.

than outputs (NELC, 17.5.99b). Despite problems with the EBP and a recognition that business contributions in school may be 'too promotional' at times, NELC claimed to be committed to education business links and it now organises projects from within the LEA, supported by a TEC funded officer (NELC, 17.5.99c). Under this arrangement, a two week placement has been promised to every child in local schools who wants work experience. There is no partnership element in the organisation of education business links, but a contract relationship between HTEC and NELC called 'Raising Aspirations and Achievements', regarded as a potential 'sub-set' of lifelong learning, discussed below (HTEC, 18.3.99). Tioxide viewed the collapse of the EBP with concern, perceiving the need for a new agency to coordinate where those responsible for company recruitment can link up in a systematic way with education providers to ensure that industrial input to schools is maximised. It viewed its input to education as its most important contribution to partnership and perceived that business input has declined since the EBP wound down, saying 'its all gone to hell on a handcart' (Tioxide, 27.9.99).

Tioxide was presented by HTEC as a blueprint for education business links in practice (HTEC, undated). The company, which manufactures pigment and has been in Grimsby since 1949, feels that it has a 'social responsibility for putting something back' into education (Tioxide, 27.9.99). It claimed that it supports schools and colleges to produce individuals who are better prepared for the world of work. Education links give the company an opportunity to 'enthuse' to young people about career opportunities it has to offer. They also serve as a means of self development for graduates and other young employees. HTEC's case study of Tioxide highlighted the example of an exchange placement between a young female engineer and a teacher from a local school. The engineer prepared a lesson pack linking into geography and mathematics, incorporating work on weights and measurements, the packaging of pigments as well as a map of Tioxide sites around the world and export destinations. As well as developing her presentational and communication skills, the exchange helped her to attack the stereotype of a male dominated engineering profession which, it was felt, exists among school students. The benefits to the company of these links were listed as: improvements to employee presentation, communication and time management, the breaking down of career stereotypes, and 'immeasurable goodwill', strengthening the company's

standing in the local community and creating 'pride' in the workforce (Tioxide, cited in HTEC, undated). Tioxide viewed education as the most important facet of the regeneration agenda, saying that if young people are not 'enthused' about wealth creation, then manufacturing industry, North East Lincolnshire's only hope for jobs, cannot be resurrected. It felt that there is a greater responsibility on the business sector to get involved in this process than has currently been realised (Tioxide, 27.9.99).

North East Lincolnshire and Lifelong Learning

Until recently, North East Lincolnshire had no formal education partnership beyond its involvement in the Humberside Partnership (see chapter 7). NEL's SRB4 bid, based on the concept of 'lifelong learning', sought to tackle the undervaluing of education which, it says, leads to low aspiration, expectation and achievement (NELC, 2.6.98b: 186). According to NELC, the project is important if the area is to meet government targets for literacy and numeracy. Business was identified as a key partner, 'vital' if the project is to succeed (NELC cited in GET, 21.11.97). To these ends, following the Government's Lifelong Learning initiative, a 'Strategic Steering Group', a 'shadow' Lifelong Learning Partnership, has been established and 'approved' in principle by Government Office. But important decisions were awaited on the final form the partnership will take and on related government proposals on FE funding, announced within the White Paper *Learning to Succeed A New Framework for Post-16 Learning* (DfEE, June 1999; HTEC, 18.3.99; NELC, 17.5.99c).

The partnership Steering Group had been established for the North East Lincolnshire area. But NELC predicted that Government Office will insist that it is finally constituted on a sub-regional basis, due to the fact that the local authority area lacks higher education facilities, the nearest being in Lincoln and Hull (NELC, 17.5.99b,c).⁹ The lead 'Lifelong Learning' officer in NELC was very cynical about the Government's agenda for Lifelong Learning. She argued that government messages about local priorities reflecting local needs were rhetorical. Her perception was that

⁹ If the partnership does become sub-regional, it is envisaged that it would be South Bank based, involving Lincoln.

government has been prescriptive in the education planning process, indicative of 'local administration, not governance'. Proposals for lifelong learning have added to the debate within NELC about future partnership strategies. One issue concerns the future management of SRB4, a lifelong learning project, and the relationship of lifelong learning to the wider regeneration process. A senior officer in the LEA argued that the 'political rules of regionalisation' have produced a situation in which North East Lincolnshire has no choice but to integrate different agendas within an area partnership and, as such, there should be an organisational relationship established between the North East Lincolnshire Regeneration Partnership and the Lifelong Learning Partnership (NELC, 17.5.99b).

The view of the NELC officer co-ordinating the Steering Group was that business input will be very important in explaining the changing needs of a major employer and in explaining whether schools are 'churning out' the kind of people they need. Business was perceived to have a role not only in identifying employment needs, but also in promoting the learning process in schools and in relating it to employment opportunities (NELC, 17.5.99c). However, business has not played a major role in the process so far. Birds Eye, sits on the Strategic Steering Group and, while it demonstrated only a vague idea of what the process is about, it felt the partnership would be instrumental to learning processes and relevant to its employees (Birds Eye, 15.3.99). The perception that business is marginal to this process was confirmed by Tioxide, which had only the vaguest notion of what Lifelong learning partnerships are about, despite its comparatively high profile contribution to education business links. This absence of information contributed to a feeling that the company is 'disenfranchised' and that it has 'no ownership of these things at all' (Tioxide, 27.9.99).

Added Value in Education Business Links

It was acknowledged that the question of added value had yet to be addressed in relation to Lifelong learning partnerships, beyond the attainment of objectives stipulated by government. NELC argued that given education business links are now purely operational in character, Lifelong Learning would have to take more of a strategic overview of post-16 education. However,

strategic input was considered unlikely to come from the business community which, it was suggested, was interested not in strategic educational matters, but in doing 'worthy things and raising awareness of their business within schools'. This tendency was perceived by NELC as a problem felt, in part, to arise from the international character of business managers in locally based multi-nationals, who, while they are interested in links with education had little interest in partnership management and governance (NELC, 17.5.99b). Tioxide felt that the real value of education business links over the past decade had been the level of understanding gained between schools and businesses in an environment where local authority influence over education policy has continually diminished. It felt that school leavers are more 'employable' than they were, and that education is now a better 'preparation for life in commercial endeavour'. However, it would not speculate on how far these effects derive from local efforts or from changes in the environment in which education takes place, deriving from the national curriculum and GNVQs (Tioxide, 27.9.99).

Case Summary

North East Lincolnshire is a small, relatively isolated local authority area, which has suffered badly from the demise of its fishing industry. It is a capital rich area, but local companies do not provide enough jobs for the large numbers of unemployed. North East Lincolnshire is uncertain about how to address its problems, an uncertainty underpinned by pessimism about its prospects for achieving regeneration. Partnership between business and the local authority is viewed as a phenomenon which has developed since the late 1980s, based on the Council's decision to play an active role in facilitating economic growth and its recognition that the private sector had to play the key role in this process. North East Lincolnshire partnerships are project, rather than strategy, driven. As such, its challenge fund partnership, the North East Lincolnshire Regeneration Partnership has no wider strategic purpose. It is a local authority driven partnership in which business plays a symbolic role, one reason for the criticisms made by GOYH. The ensuing debate about what kind of partnership strategy to adopt had not concluded at the end of the research period, but it was being driven by considerations about how to relate to Yorkshire Forward and about how far to move in the direction of a joined up partnership model of the kind represented

by the Barnsley Regeneration Forum, the Rotherham Economic Partnership and Hull City Vision. The debate is underpinned by philosophical differences within the Council about the prospects for economic regeneration in North East Lincolnshire and the relationship, consequent on the position taken in this debate, between economic and social aspects of regeneration.

North East Lincolnshire is more confident about the role of its sector partnerships, the Grimsby and Immingham Ports Partnership and the Humber Chemicals Focus. These partnerships have a clear rationale and, after initial difficulties, have gained significant, if not universal, support from the business sector. With the demise of the Humberside Partnership, education business links in North East Lincolnshire ceased to be partnership based, except through the bi-lateral links existing between individual schools and businesses. The Council is uncertain as yet about which direction Lifelong Learning will take them in, but it is perceived by some as an additional government control mechanism. The role of business in the partnership steering group has been peripheral, but the views of employers on the relationship between schools and the world of work are perceived to be important. On the whole, private sector participation in partnerships is low, at its strongest in commercially oriented sector partnerships. There has been a change in culture among some larger businesses, predisposing them toward partnership working, but many firms lack the capacity or the inclination to get involved in partnerships. The added value in partnership is based more on speculation than in the other cases, given that key initiatives are just getting off the ground. The absence of a genuine partnership makes the question rather redundant in relation to the North East Lincolnshire Regeneration Partnership, while concrete added value in the sector partnerships is more anticipated than it is realised. In principle, partnership was perceived to enable partners to do more with less, to give North East Lincolnshire credibility with government, to generate bottom up solutions and to engender a culture of understanding between sectors. The case of North East Lincolnshire concludes the empirical phase of the study. Chapter 9 moves on to provide a detailed comparative analysis of the findings reported in the four case studies.

Chapter 9. The Emergence and Characteristics of Local Partnerships: A Comparative Analysis

Introduction

The two final chapters comprise the third part of the thesis in which the case study findings are analysed and linked to the theoretical discussions set out in chapters 1 to 3. This chapter provides a summary of the key themes occurring in the case studies on a comparative basis. The findings are examined thematically, identifying factors which can be generalised and those which cannot. They are summarised in boxes 6 to 11.¹ The core argument advanced is that there are a range of economic and political reasons why local authorities and businesses are pursuing partnerships, but that a global-local dialectic is not visible except potentially in promotional and image building initiatives associated with 'place marketing'. Challenge partnerships tend to be symbolic in character, lacking local autonomy and significant business involvement. However, in specific implementation oriented initiatives, there is greater business input and evidence of some, limited, local governance capacity.

The chapter is structured into four main parts. The first part evaluates the local context for partnership working in the four cases and the second compares the different backgrounds to the emergence of partnership approaches. The third and fourth parts examine the practice of partnership in the present day, looking first at the objectives and capabilities of the main challenge partnerships in each area and second at operational, or implementation oriented partnerships.² The

¹ Box 6 summarises the economic context for partnership and Box 7 the process of partnership development. Boxes 8, 9 and 10 summarise the different partnership types identified in the case studies, while Box 11 provides an overview of the partnership types discussed, both within and between the four cases.

² The distinction between challenge partnership and implementation partnership is based on Skelcher's distinction between policy oriented mechanisms and programme oriented mechanisms (Skelcher et al, 1996: 5).

chapter concludes with an overview of partnership activities, comparing the practices found at different levels within and between the four case studies.

The Local Context for Partnership

This part of the chapter compares the different contexts for partnership identified in the case studies. It is divided into three sections: inward investment and local growth; mobile capital and the global-local dialectic; and global-localisation, local dependence and secondary investment. Box 6 summarises and compares the key elements found in the case studies.

Inward Investment and Local Growth

Each of the four case study areas can be characterised as ‘deprived’. Barnsley and Rotherham suffered the total closure of their coal industries, Rotherham also losing most of its steel industry. Hull and North East Lincolnshire find themselves in a different position, where although economic decline has had serious effects, it has been more gradual. The capacity within the local economies to respond to these difficulties varied. Barnsley was almost wholly dependent on the coal industry, meaning that it has no industrial base upon which to rebuild. Barnsley’s economic strategy is focused, therefore, on attracting new inward investment to the extensive brown field sites in and around the area. Hull, at the other extreme, has a more diverse industrial and manufacturing base, cushioning against and providing for a different response to the demise of its fishing industry. Hull’s main strategy for growth is to facilitate growth within its existing industrial base. Between these extremes sit Rotherham, with a residual manufacturing base enabling it to pursue a twin inward investment and indigenous growth strategy, and North East Lincolnshire which is dependent for jobs primarily on the port and food related industries. NEL’s main emphasis, however, is the pursuit of labour intensive inward investment because the chemicals industry, a major local investor, is capital intensive and the food industry, a major source of work, seems to be in decline.

The findings show that responses to economic decline have varied and that the pursuit of mobile capital is not a constant across the four cases. An area, like Barnsley, with little local industry left

and with large expanses of derelict land nearby, is under a stronger economic compulsion to pursue inward investment, than is Hull, which has a continuing industrial base to nurture and which lacks the sites and cash incentives available in South Yorkshire to attract large scale newcomers. Local approaches to new inward investment vary, but each area had little choice about the direction it has pursued due to inherited socioeconomic and geographical factors. The evidence from Barnsley, Rotherham and North East Lincolnshire, those areas actively pursuing new inward investment, shows that overseas capital is of variable importance. It was of most significance in Barnsley, least so in North East Lincolnshire. The bulk of new jobs have come from domestic sources including local growth and the evidence suggests, in all areas except Barnsley, that they will continue to do so. Limited evidence from Rotherham suggests that overseas investment may be of growing importance, but apart from Barnsley, all agreed that regeneration depends more on local and national capital than on overseas capital.

Mobile Capital and the Global-Local 'Dialectic'?

All areas agreed that locality is important only in the last instance in overseas inward investment decisions. Companies, particularly from beyond Europe, focus first and foremost on broad geographical areas, looking at the political, legal and economic landscapes. Distant corporations may be unaware of sub-national areas until a range of suitable sites are presented to them through the Inward Investment Bureau and its agent in Yorkshire, the Yorkshire and Humberside Development Agency.³ With the exception of Hull, seeking to re-invent itself as a 'Top Ten' city, the regional and sub-regional levels were perceived as the key to promoting economic development, confirming the view expressed by the Minister for the Regions, Regeneration and Planning, that the regional interface with global markets is of greater strategic importance for economic growth than the local (DETR, 7.7.99). North East Lincolnshire perceived the new RDA, 'Yorkshire Forward' as its only hope for success, while Barnsley, as part of the South

³ Now part of Yorkshire Forward, the Regional Development Agency for Yorkshire and Humberside.

Yorkshire coalfields, perceived the sub-region as a useful supplementary brand.⁴ Again, with the exception of Hull, the regional brand was viewed as the key to future success, though NEL did not feel confident of its position within Yorkshire and Humberside.

In terms of the attractions offered to investors by specific localities, the main incentive to firms, both those investing for the first time and those expanding existing operations, was financial assistance. Hull and North East Lincolnshire, for example, both feared that Objective 1 funding for South Yorkshire will impede their own growth. This feeling was especially strong in North East Lincolnshire, which felt that it had lost investment opportunities to areas with more favourable grant regimes, partly because, all things being equal, they are favoured by investors, and partly because of the perception that as an area without grant opportunities, NEL is automatically 'filtered out' by IIB/YHDA at the enquiry stage. Insofar as localities are able to compete, competition from other areas within the UK with public subsidy was seen as a greater problem than competition from abroad. In short, the evidence suggests that localities have only a marginal capacity to compete for inward investment and that the characteristics of particular localities become important only in the last instance. Economic globalization therefore appears to 'bite' at a higher geographical scale than the locality, undermining the notion that global-localisation is a key 'dialectic' in the state-capital interface (Harding and Le Gales, 1997). One possible counterfactual, identified by North East Lincolnshire, is the potential growth of the European Union, particularly Germany, as a source of investment. Ignorance of the internal geography of the UK is less likely to be a factor for EU nations, which could result an enhanced role for place marketing, if Europe were to become more important as a source of investment. In summary, it can be argued that investment from distant parts of the world, like Asia, has not directly enhanced the importance of locality for attracting mobile capital. Localities have little capacity to influence the competitive playing field. These findings do not necessarily undermine the possibility of a global-local dialectic existing in relation to larger, or 'global' cities (Sassen, 1991, Fisher and Kling, 1993). London and New York, as 'brands', may be as accessible to an

⁴ There was a 'turf war' in Rotherham over inward investment between RCCTE and RiDO. This was articulated as a dispute between local and sub-regional approaches.

Asian investor as are the UK or the USA. The relevance of global-localisation to larger and smaller cities and towns respectively is unclear. Why, if the nation state is declining in relation to a new global capital-global cities interface, does it not seem to be declining in relation to smaller places? In other words, is it only in relation to global cities that the nation state is losing influence? Harding's research findings (1996a,c, 1997), discussed further in chapter 10, undermine his research hypotheses concerning global-localisation outlined in chapter 3 (Harding, 1994, 1996b), but the findings in this study beg the question of whether place is a mediating factor, or whether supposed changes in the economic capacities of the nation state are constant in relation to different sub-national units.

Global-localisation: Local Dependence and Secondary Investment

While global-localisation may not be a key factor in the struggle for new investment, it is more relevant to global companies with existing operations in an area. Both Rotherham and Barnsley host multi-national corporations, but these comprised a comparatively small segment of their economies. Branch plants comprised a much more important theme in discussions with Hull and North East Lincolnshire. Site directors at these branch plants revealed variable levels of dependence on and commitment to local areas. Outsourcing of production to countries with cheap labour was identified as a problem for 'low-tech', labour intensive industries such as tennis ball production in Barnsley, but among the profitable and capital intensive Humberside chemicals companies, none indicated that relocation or outsourcing of production to low wage economies is feasible. Local skills deficits and the fact that supplies and markets are often found either elsewhere in the UK or abroad made little difference to this evaluation. Export companies require access to a port and, for this reason, proximity has helped to entrench long term commitments to the area. On balance, the message was that the productive capital of the multi-national companies is not footloose, particularly in capital intensive industries. But what about investment capital?

Secondary Investments, Buyouts and De-mergers

None of the above is to suggest that economic globalization and capital mobility was not everywhere perceived as an important factor. It appeared most important in relation to secondary

investments, buyouts and de-mergers, activities which require a more immediate interface between locality and corporation. In terms of a developing dynamic between global capital and locality, secondary investments were more important than new capital investments. On one hand, the company looking to re-invest already knows about the potential for investment in an area. On the other hand, secondary investment is more likely to go to an existing plant with appropriate infra-structural support than to brand new or substantially new operations, for reasons of economy of scale. For branch plants in all areas, internal competition with 'sister' plants in other countries was perceived as threatening. North East Lincolnshire and Hull in particular complained of remote HQ operations making investment decisions. However, there was no evidence, or reason to think, that the proximity or otherwise of an investment decision maker to a potential investment opportunity makes any difference to her decision. Secondary investments in Rotherham and in Barnsley were influenced by economic factors and by the availability of land for expansion. The major investment in Smith & Nephew's Hull plant was agreed in London, said the company, without any sentiment for its local roots. The investment was courted by smaller operations in France and in the USA, whose place marketing was viewed as superior to that in Hull but whose plant infrastructure was felt to be inferior. The investment went to Hull because of the local skill base and because production was already taking place there. Both Hull and North East Lincolnshire viewed buyouts and de-mergers as potential threats, although the representative of a company involved in this process denied that the process had any negative effect on the viability of production in particular plants. This was an ideologically charged account, but it suggested that competitive pressures, not globalizing tendencies in company structures themselves, produce job losses and rationalization.

Summary

The partnership process cannot be a straightforward response to competition for new inward investment by globally mobile capital. This particular global-local dialectic was not visible, except in the case of secondary investments where place marketing could, more plausibly, influence an

Factors	Barnsley	Rotherham	Hull	North East Lincolnshire
<i>Economic and Social Problems</i>	Closure of coal industry High unemployment, low expectations, poverty and demoralisation resulting in the absence of a learning culture	Closure of coal industry, severe decline of steel industry	Closure of fishing industry	Closure of fishing industry Jobless growth in chemicals sector
<i>Economic Assets</i>	Industrial culture of labour.	Engineering. Industrial culture of labour.	Relative diversity. Port of Hull. Large manufacturing employers.	Port. Large manufacturing employers, mainly chemicals.
<i>Strategy for Economic Growth</i>	New inward investment. Create enterprise culture through education	New inward investment and indigenous growth. Create enterprise culture through education	Indigenous growth. Education and skills training	Inward investment and indigenous growth. Education and skills training
<i>Dependence on Mobile Capital</i>	Necessary for growth.	Degree of necessity for growth.	Low due to local growth strategy.	Necessary for growth.
<i>Predicted Sources of Economic Growth</i>	Overseas investment	Local, but new and overseas investment important	Mainly local due to diversity.	Mainly local, due to pessimism about success of inward investment
<i>Key Interfaces for New Investors</i>	Europe, national state and region.	Distance from US/Asian investors marginalised locality.	Capacity of locality to compete pro-actively is minimal.	
<i>Key Interfaces for Secondary Investors</i>	Limited evidence suggests global-local relationship between multi-national and branch plants. Capacity to compete pro-actively remains weak			No evidence.
<i>Capacity for Local Place Marketing to Overseas Investors</i>		Very Limited	Limited, but enhanced by city status	Limited, but enhanced by largest port in England.
<i>Local Dependence of Productive Capital</i>	Recent high-tech investment relatively stable. Outsourcing of labour intensive production problematic Limited dependence of productive capital on localities for skills, for materials and for markets. Mixed views about benefits of industrial culture on working practice. Evidence of some supply networks for large manufacturers.	Recent high-tech investments relatively stable. Has benefited from major new investment	Large industry stable, due to capital intensive production. Ports enhance dependence of import/exporters Limited dependence of productive capital on localities for skills, for materials and for markets. Perceived threat to productive capacity from buyouts and mergers. Denied by business. Rationalisation is the logic of competition, not of globalization.	Ports enhance dependence of import/exporters

Box 6: The Economic Context for Partnership in Barnsley, Rotherham, Hull and North East Lincolnshire

investment decision. Inward investment need not be a priority in every area and, indeed, it cannot be. The capacity of smaller urban areas to compete directly for mobile investment is limited because of their anonymity. Even were they not anonymous, the key factors of competition which influence investors appear to be outside local control. Overseas capital, while it may be growing in importance, is still perceived as a secondary source of growth in all areas but Barnsley. Competitive place marketing is oriented more towards impressing grant making bodies than courting overseas firms, a finding which undermines Mayer's (1994) perspective, discussed in Chapter 3. Box 6 summarises the economic factors which form the backdrop to partnership development in the four case studies. The following sections discuss the processes and rationale for partnership building in the four cases.

The Development of Partnership Approaches

This part of the chapter examines the reasons why partnerships have developed in the way they have. It begins by looking at the history of partnership working, showing that while partnership is now broadly accepted by officer and member elites, commitment diminishes further down the hierarchy. The third section identifies networking as an important, but secondary, theme in partnership processes and the final section considers the nature of different motivations for business activity in partnerships.

The History of Local Partnership

The evidence suggests different starting points, pathways and trajectories, and also different end points in the partnership building process. However, there is also evidence of similarities between all the cases. This chapter examines the reasons why partnership working has come to exist in its present form before moving on to examine its impact on policy and its implementation. Partnership was perceived to have developed within different time frames. Rotherham felt that there had been a positive relationship between the council and the business sector, if not formal partnership, going back to the 1970s. Rotherham, however, distinguished between formal partnerships and co-operation, the latter a feature of government programmes and of measures resulting in the fragmentation of local government. Structured partnerships, stimulated by the

failure of a City Challenge bid, were viewed by RCCTE to have changed the character of co-operation with business from paternalism, to 'real' understanding. The case of Rotherham shows a Labour authority willing to co-operate with business without precipitous economic decline and without government incentives and penalties. In this sense, it was exceptional, making the point that conflict with the business sector was not endemic in Labour local authorities during the 1980s.

Barnsley, Hull and North East Lincolnshire, on the other hand, were initially characterised by a negative, or a non-relationship between the Council and the business sector beyond statutory interfaces. An agenda for co-operation developed over a period of between five years in the case of Hull and 15 years in the other cases. A clear association can be made between severe economic conditions and the move by the local authorities toward a more co-operative relationship with the private sector.⁵ A common characteristic in all the cases, leading to the partnership road, is that of political 'pragmatism' which produced the 'logic' of partnership, a recognition that the private sector, as wealth creator in a market economy, has to be central to the economic development process. For Hull, this road was the coercive logic of financial penalties represented in the failure of its City Challenge bid; for Rotherham it was long term political pragmatism, given impetus by economic collapse and, later, by the failure of its City Challenge bid, which provided the incentive for a more formal partnership; for Barnsley, it was the logic of economic collapse combined with financial incentives which later provided the opportunity for institutionalised co-operation; and for North East Lincolnshire, it was the logic of economic collapse, leading to an economic development agenda and co-operation with ABP, which provided the basis for more positive relationships today.

The parlous state of the local economies, and the evolution of an economic development agenda appear to be the dominant explanations for the emergence of partnerships. Hull shows, however, that economic problems had no 'necessary' or immediate effects on political ideology, it being

⁵ Hull, which was much slower on the partnership uptake, found itself in a better economic position than the other areas, though it cannot be stated with certainty that this is the reason why the Council did not develop a partnership agenda earlier.

coerced down the partnership road. However, in Barnsley and in North East Lincolnshire, where relationships were previously poor, the decline of the economy had a direct effect on the thinking of local councillors who felt compelled to establish links with the private sector. In Rotherham, it is difficult to assess the effect of economic conditions on a partnership process going back to the early 1970s. What can be said is that the ideology of co-operation, if not of formal partnership, preceded the complete demise of the coal and the steel industries. Local politics were an important mediating factor in interpreting local economic conditions. Hull showed the importance of government policy instruments in bringing recalcitrant authorities to heel, but political changes in the other cases preceded the central government partnership agenda, discussed in chapter 4. In the cases of Hull, Barnsley and Rotherham, the competition for extra-local resources, initially through City Challenge, pushed partnership processes toward formalization.

There is no uniform 'logic' driving local authorities into partnership arrangements. The cases indicate politically mediated responses to local economic circumstances. From different starting points, and through different processes, the local authority elites now share the view that the contribution of business to wealth creation must be a key factor in their strategies for economic development. This ideology, which produces a 'logic' of co-operation for any local authority active in economic development, provides a rationale for partnership working. But as the cases of Rotherham and Hull show, the process was also influenced by government incentives and penalties. Partnership approaches are 'necessary' in the four areas to the extent that local politicians view the free market economy as the key to generating wealth, not wishing, or not believing any alternative approach to be feasible. This situation is not a necessary response to the market, but the logic of a belief in the permanence of the market.

Local Authority Heterogeneity

Differences of emphasis, if not differences in view, concerning the nature and quality of the relationship with business can be discerned between senior officers and senior members, between council departments and between elite managers and middle ranking managers. The scope of the research did not permit systematic exploration of this issue with 'backbench' councillors or with

lower ranking officers, but comments from within the elites highlighted the reluctance of some labour councillors to commit themselves to partnership with the private sector. Evidence from Rotherham and from Barnsley suggested that among officers beneath the corporate management team, there is a cynicism about the partnership process. The Chief Executives in Rotherham and North East Lincolnshire were more positive about and committed to partnership than their political counterparts in the Council leadership, who in turn were more committed than some of their senior colleagues. In Barnsley and Hull, the Chief Executives and Leaders appeared to share similar views. However, in Hull, the Leader was viewed as being particularly isolated from his colleagues in his pursuit of the partnership agenda.

Networks or partnerships?

A constant theme throughout the four cases was that of networking between sectors. Networking processes were viewed as having developed recently, alongside partnerships. There was a tendency to counterpose networking favourably to the formal partnership process which was especially salient in Rotherham and in North East Lincolnshire. Emphases differed between those who felt that networking facilitated the more formal processes of partnership, (see Skelcher et al, 1996), and those who felt that the partnership process had facilitated informal networking. In Hull, where it was felt that strong partnerships would take longer to develop fully, the emergence of good networking was perceived as a positive result of the CityVision process.⁶ Rotherham, on the other hand, viewed this as a two way process. The theme of networking was most prominent in North East Lincolnshire, whose small size, small business base and geographical isolation it was felt, if nothing else, promoted good relationships with business. A similar view was taken in Barnsley, also a small town with a small business base, where networking through good personal relationships was perceived to be a glue to the partnership process. Given the continuity of membership across the borough's partnerships, each core actor had to make a strategic estimation of the costs and benefits of involvement at a general level and compromise in particular situations. This suggestion was not followed up empirically, but it indicated a set of strategic interests in

⁶ This point is discussed further in relation to the question of added value produced through the CityVision partnership.

collaboration which are not fully expressed in any institutionalised partnership setting, a supra-institutional dynamic between the core actors which could be described as networking.⁷ It was not possible to measure the significance of networking, or to make strong generalizations about the relationship between networking and partnership processes. It is clear, however, that the respondents believed that insofar as key decisions were made in partnership, they were made through institutionalised processes. Networking processes can, therefore, be described as essentially supplementary to the process of partnership decision making and there is evidence that these processes have facilitated one another. On balance, as might be expected, the business sector was most vocal in its pleas for a reduction in the bureaucracy associated with formal partnerships, but formal decision making was viewed within the local authorities particularly as critical for the maintenance of accountability, both to local community and to funding bodies. There was broad agreement that something needs to be done to limit bureaucracy in the Challenge partnerships, discussed further below, but there was also concern that a clear focus is harder to maintain in less structured partnership arrangements.

Business and Partnership

A dominant theme in all four cases was that a very small proportion of local businesses involve themselves in partnership. The private sector as a whole is inactive, particularly SMEs, and the capacity for partnership resides almost entirely in larger companies. Even where large companies are involved, 'big hitters' are not. This point was reinforced by the universal opinion that levels of participation by firms in the representative work of chambers of commerce are small. TECs were perceived to have boosted business involvement in partnership and TECs and chambers were identified as the main vehicles promoting business involvement in partnership. This factor was less important in North East Lincolnshire, which felt isolated from HTEC, and where a strong bilateral relationship exists with ABP, its principal partner. Local business networks are not strong, even where an obvious common interest can be identified over an issue like training. The Humber

⁷ However, given the scale of government influence, discussed below and in chapter 10, it cannot be described as governance, where this term refers to autonomous, self-organising networks (Rhodes, 1996).

Chemicals Focus, discussed below, shows how North East Lincolnshire Council has had to struggle to bring businesses into collaboration, not only with it, but with each other.

The most obvious constraint on business activity in partnerships is that of time, a commitment which only larger corporations can give. Some people saw their time commitment in terms of hours spent in meetings, so a related de-motivating factor is what the private sector widely saw as bureaucracy in partnership working, associated with a local authority culture and public sector domination of the partnership agenda.⁸ There was also a general view that government and local authorities expect too much of the business community. The terms 'initiativitis' and 'partnership fatigue' were used frequently by private sector participants to describe a feeling that among business activists, a limit to their capacity for partnership activity has been reached, if not surpassed. Government would do well to heed these warnings, notwithstanding its capacity building initiatives (DETR, 7.7.99).

Among those companies declining to get involved in partnership, there was a perception that there is no added value in partnership work. Partnership activity was felt to require effort disproportional to the potential gain and neither company perceived significant ties with the locality which could make working with the local authority relevant to it. Synthomer was particularly negative, suggesting that NELC has no idea about private sector needs and that it cannot influence the inward investment decisions of major companies. These negative views could be representative of the reasons why a wider segment of the private sector has not become involved in partnership. Companies with low levels of local dependence have no incentive to engage with their local communities, thereby making business less likely to engage in partnership. Dependence on local factors may not be the key issue determining the mobility of productive capital, but it was important in relation to whether companies were interested in partnership. Negativity could also be indicative of what Hull and North East Lincolnshire councils described

⁸ This criticism was most salient in discussions about the dominance of SRB related activities in partnerships discussed below. It should be noted that this criticism is shared by the local authorities, which blame government and its regional offices for the bureaucracy.

as a 'dependency culture' within business, depicted as expecting the local authority to do things which it should do itself, such as safeguard its premises against crime, in which an old fashioned attitude toward the role of local government as service provider remained. If we are living in an era of local governance, the cases suggest that the wider business community has not realised its responsibility as local stakeholder.

However, there was no evidence, even in the companies who expressed a negative attitude about partnership working, that multi-nationals have impeded community work or representation by their branches on partnership bodies. Indeed, there were instances where site directors reported positive encouragement from their HQs. At the level of community projects, representation on partnership boards, and limited financial contributions, local managers had discretion to determine their contribution or non-contribution. It was in terms of making a major contribution to the locality in terms of investment and job creation that multi-national corporations were viewed as remote by NELC, though as noted above, there is no reason to think that the proximity of investment decision makers influences investment locations in any way.

On the positive side, there were major business players involved with partnership who believe that a community profile is good for their businesses. In the case of education partnerships, discussed below, a company may influence a child's development and interest her in future employment. In the case of potentially dangerous chemicals, a community profile may ease local fears and show that the company is committed to enhancing quality of life.⁹ At a more general level, there was evidence that some business leaders have travelled a similar ideological road to that travelled by local authorities in developing a favourable stance toward partnership working. Novartis and Smith & Nephew both identified a period in the 'selfish' 1980s when they had been inward looking whereas now, they perceive a moral responsibility to the community as well as the benefits of partnership for their business. If any explanation can be attributed to this change of attitude, it is a sense of difference by these companies concerning the respective priorities of the 1980s and the

⁹ Though, as The Observer report referred to in chapter 8 shows, the rhetoric is better than the reality in the case of Novartis.

1990s. The cases also suggest, as noted above, that companies with local roots are more likely to become involved in partnership because the local director is more likely to feel a sense of civic responsibility. All the business activists interviewed were British and the companies they represented also tended to be British, or British in origin. The remoteness of multi-nationals did not influence investment decisions, but it did influence business amenability to partnerships. Unsurprisingly, an important motivation for business involvement in partnership was the prospect of gaining leverage over resource expenditure. Challenge funds have provided an important strategic incentive, even where participants did not stand to benefit directly.

There was a degree of uncertainty in the answers to the question of what it is that the business community brings to partnership. The most common answers were time, expertise and a different view, followed by access to wider private sector networks, for example, through local companies 'championing' the area to prospective investors. There was also evidence of private sector leaders trying to convince others of the benefits that involvement in partnership schemes could bring. In Barnsley, it was suggested that partnership represents an avenue by which 'checks and balances' can be achieved on Labour councils which comprise few direct business interests. Material resource commitments tended to be marginal, though they were of greater importance in the implementation oriented partnerships than in the challenge partnerships.

In summary, business participation in local authority partnerships is weak. However, as it is the larger businesses which have time and the inclination to become involved, half a dozen activists may represent a significant segment of the local economy. There was evidence, albeit limited, of a shift by some companies toward partnership with local authorities based on the view that partnership is necessary for regeneration, and that community work is good for business. Among those who are involved, the commitment to providing 'soft resources' outweighs the willingness or the ability of local managers to commit 'hard resources' to the regeneration process. Expertise represents an important added value input, but it may not translate into an added value output in relation to the implementation of policy objectives. These issues are considered further below in

	Barnsley	Rotherham	Hull	North East Lincolnshire
<i>History of Local Government Business Relations</i>	Conflict until late 1980s.	Co-operation in economic development from early 1970s. Perceived as 'paternalistic'.	Conflict until early 1990s.	Conflict until mid to late 1980s.
	Partnership now perceived as a positive activity by all local authorities and a few leading businesses in each area.			
<i>Council Rationale for Partnership</i>	Pragmatism			
	Economic collapse mediated by new ideological commitment to market led economic development.	Ideological commitment to co-operation with business in economic development, strengthened by economic collapse.	Change in approach prompted by failure to win City Challenge.	Economic decline, mediated by new ideological commitment to market led economic development
<i>Reasons for Institutionalised Partnership Approach.</i>	To compete for external resources	Failure to win City Challenge. To compete for external resources.	Failure to win City Challenge. To compete for external resources.	No flagship partnership. Regeneration Partnership established to compete for SRB resources.
<i>Business Activism in Partnership</i>	Limited to a few major players in all areas. Companies tend to be British based.			
<i>Business Motivations for Partnership</i>	Chambers and TECs perceived as important vehicle for business activity in partnerships in all areas. Commitment of site manager most important factor in the case of multi-nationals. Prospect of a degree of control over public resources. Sense of civic responsibility.			
	Rejected insularity of 1980s. Partnerships good for business.			
<i>Impediments to Business Activism in Partnership</i>	Initiative fatigue, partnership fatigue and time constraints			
	No added value perceived.	Company insularity.	Perceived dependency culture of business	No added value perceived. Perceived dependency culture of business.
<i>Business Contributions to Partnership</i>	Strong emphasis on 'soft' resources: expertise, networking capacity, time, a different view, championing the area, mobilising other private sector actors. Weak emphasis on 'hard' resources including cash.			

Box 7: The Development of Partnership in Barnsley, Rotherham, Hull and North East Lincolnshire

the evaluation of specific partnership practices. Box 7 summarises the factors which proved relevant in influencing the development of partnerships in the four cases.

The Characteristics of Challenge Partnerships and Regeneration Strategies

This part of the chapter is organised into five sections, examining the characteristics of the challenge partnerships, the influence of the SRB in determining the form and agenda of the partnerships, partnership and area regeneration strategies, the influences and the relationships within partnerships and, finally, the question of added value.¹⁰

Partnership Characteristics

Barnsley, Rotherham and Hull are characterised by partnerships tied to the development and implementation of ‘holistic’ regeneration strategies, comprising economic and social elements. These partnerships are characterised as flagship partnerships by virtue of their concern with linking a series of policy agendas to an overall vision for the regeneration of the locality. North East Lincolnshire is exceptional among the cases, having neither a flagship partnership, nor an area strategy. Its challenge partnership is concerned only with the bidding and project management processes.

The Barnsley Regeneration Forum and the Rotherham Economic Partnership both drew on the inspiration of the Dearne Valley Partnership (DVP). However, they are very different structures. The BRF is a semi-autonomous, council led organisation. It is managed by BMBC within Council offices, and it is chaired by the Leader. The REP, on the other hand, is organisationally autonomous from the Council, although it is not a limited company. It has separate offices, it is managed by a DfEE secondee with a private sector background, and its Board has a private sector majority. As was noted above, Rotherham’s move to a more formal partnership was prompted partly by its failure to win City Challenge funds. A similar failure in Hull, stimulated a process of change from scepticism about partnership toward recognition that without a formal partnership

¹⁰ See chapter 4 for a discussion of the problems associated with identifying added value.

arrangement, further resources would be lost to the area. CityVision has in common with the REP an executive manager and separate offices. It is, formally, fully independent of its constituent members, established as a limited company in 1995. However, it is chaired by the Council leader and its staff comprise public sector secondees from HTEC and from KHCC. The North East Lincolnshire Regeneration Partnership exists exclusively to bid for and to manage SRB funds. It is a product of the new unitary authority, for which reason it post-dates the other partnership bodies. Differing from Barnsley in its narrow remit, it is similar in being managed by a Council officer within Council premises. It stands out from Barnsley, however, as less of a partnership by virtue of the Council's domination of the partnership process.

It was suggested above that economic factors and political interpretations combined, over differing time scales, to produce a local authority commitment to the partnership agenda. This agenda has been moved, through government incentives and penalties toward the institutionalisation of partnerships. This is not to say that without government intervention, partnership formalisation would not have occurred, but this process does not appear to have been driven locally. However, the cases show that the process of institutionalisation has taken a different form in each area. The forces combined to bring flagship partnerships into being do not act uniformly across the case study areas, as North East Lincolnshire showed.¹¹ There is considerable variation in form within the partnership models. There is a continuum from full institutional integration with the local authority to full institutional independence. However, formal autonomy and independence do not in themselves indicate the internal dynamics of the partnership. The REP, an autonomous partnership, is private sector managed and led while CityVision, an independent limited company, is public sector managed and led. Box 8 illustrates this diversity, from which it may be concluded that local politics influence the form which partnerships take.

¹¹ Although as suggested below, they may tend to produce similar institutional outcomes through time.

The Influence of the SRB on Partnership Form and Agenda

The SRB was held to be the most influential factor in all four case study areas affecting partnership structure, partnership objectives, partnership projects and the nature of partnership relationships. Box 8 presents a face-value picture of the institutional form and characteristics of the main partnership bodies. But this picture obscures a series of underlying factors. While partnership agendas are similar, partnership forms differ in their management and in their composition. Each of the flagship partnerships have moved from an economic to a more inclusive agenda. These changes are responses to the SRB, the key funding regime with which each partnership works. Rotherham's changes were voluntary in character, a response to the Government's social exclusion agenda, articulated in new SRB guidelines issued by 'New Labour' since May 1997.¹² In North East Lincolnshire, change is being driven by government office coercion, a response to fierce criticisms about the absence of direction and of genuine collaboration in its challenge partnership. These developments illustrate the importance of central government in shaping local challenge partnerships. A question for further research, then, is whether areas which have never bid for or never succeeded in obtaining challenge funds have developed similar partnership structures, which would be indicative of locally driven governance processes. What this study shows is that rather than acting as a disincentive, failure to procure challenge funds acted as a strong incentive to improve partnerships and to do better next time.

There were differing views concerning the role of the SRB in sustaining partnership work. In Rotherham and in Hull, it was felt to represent a glue to partnership working, providing an element of control over resources which stimulates business involvement. The SRB was a stimulus to formal partnership processes in all areas and a continuing glue to those processes. If the SRB played an important role in relation to the structure and scope of these partnerships, it was universally criticised for its prescriptiveness and for its bureaucracy. This criticism had a particular edge in the flagship partnerships, whose role the SRB was felt to diminish by preventing them from developing locally driven strategic agendas, tying them up instead in complex bids for

¹² See discussion in chapter 4.

projects which do not always meet local aspirations and in evaluation criteria which dominate partnership discussions. The influence of the SRB is therefore contradictory. It was held responsible for maintaining partnership focus and for sustaining partnership activity. At the same time, it has left little room for local autonomy in developing local strategies and project objectives. It has pushed local authorities into structured partnerships and it has offered business an incentive to participate. But it has also disempowered local politicians and visionary businessmen, hampering attempts to develop and implement local strategic visions. While the resources from the SRB may be vital to local regeneration projects, it has impeded the development of governance capacity in the partnerships it has shaped. This situation may be better described as ‘the local administration of national objectives’, than as ‘local governance’.

The situation in North East Lincolnshire emphasises the point. The attack by Government Office on the North East Lincolnshire Regeneration Partnership, together with the establishment of Yorkshire Forward, has stimulated a debate about local strategies for partnership, which is leading toward a broader partnership aligned to some form of inclusive vision statement. To the extent that these developments occur, they will do so in spite of unease and opposition by key actors based on the perception that networking and issue/sector based partnership working is more effective than a flagship symbol of partnership commitment. The debate highlights how far central prescriptions can push local authorities to take symbolic measures for fear of losing resources, a point made in Hull, where government was also blamed for encouraging lip service and tokenism in partnerships. If there is political opposition in an area, symbolism may be a deliberate strategy for minimal compliance. But the case of North East Lincolnshire suggests that political opposition is based as much on local factors as on ‘Old Labour’ principles. There was a view within NELC that flagship partnerships are undemocratic and that CityVision has not been a success in Hull. But pessimism concerning the potential in North East Lincolnshire for economic regeneration suggests a key reason why there is opposition to a flagship partnership and an area regeneration strategy. If economic regeneration cannot be achieved in NEL, then it makes sense to keep the two agendas separate, rather than to make untenable links between them. If NELC does not have the capacity to sustain a flagship partnership, then it is better off without one. If these arguments

have merit, Yorkshire Forward's (6.5.99) insistence that more people can be brought into its partnerships and that partnerships can take on a more ambitious and inclusive agenda, could put additional pressure on a process which, in NEL and in other areas, may already be overloaded. If, on the other hand, Yorkshire Forward is right, a new approach born of necessity could, as David Curry argued of the SRB (3.4.98), win local people over, taking on a virtuous dynamic of its own. But there was no sign of such an endgame in North East Lincolnshire and the danger is that such demands act as an impediment, not as a stimulus, to the generation of internal governance capacity.

Partnership and Area Regeneration Strategies

The three flagship partnerships are responsible for the development of and for ensuring the delivery of area regeneration strategies. Each of these strategies has a set of economic and social objectives, ranging from economic development through to education and learning. In each case, there was wide agreement about the general direction and content of the strategy documents, which are similar in each area. Given that the three local authorities involved in flagship partnerships are broadly agreed about the key role of the business sector in wealth creation, and that central government has a major influence on the composition of strategy documents, agreement about aims and objectives is not surprising. It was argued above that the SRB has curtailed the strategic capabilities in local partnerships. A concrete example of this problem was highlighted in relation to the Barnsley Integrated Regeneration Strategy, described as a set of non-conflicting agendas which have been 'stitched together', rather than as a strategic agreement interrelating priorities and capacities across all the regeneration themes.

Influence within partnerships

It was broadly agreed in the flagship partnerships and also within the NEL Regeneration Partnership that the local authority plays the senior role in policy development and partnership management. This latter partnership is effectively a local authority led consultative forum, a perception driven by partner responses to Government office criticism. Neither HTEC, nor ABP offered to accept any responsibility for allegations of partnership failure. NELC was singled out

for criticism and it was on its own in dealing with these criticisms. If relationships between NELC and business are cordial, the response to this problem by HTEC and ABP shows that in this arena at least, they cannot be described as participants in a full and equal partnership.

In each of the three strategic partnerships, business appeared peripheral to partnership processes, in an environment where public sector cultures and public sector agendas predominate. Council leadership was viewed positively in Barnsley, Hull and North East Lincolnshire by virtue of the democratic mandate held by the local authorities, but business was viewed as peripheral to the decision making process. This was equally true in Rotherham, where, despite the private sector majority on the Board of the Rotherham Economic Partnership and the positive view of private sector leadership, business did not have a strong influence on the partnership's direction. In Hull, CityVision has become more exclusive, not less so, due to the failure of business and wider community activism. Insofar as business participation is concerned, the rhetoric of governance by partnership is currently more powerful than the reality.

The problem of identifying influence in partnerships, be it visible or not, is that people may not be aware of influences and if they are, they may wish to discount them, instead claiming ownership of the game.¹³ Insofar as participants were willing and able to discuss respective influences, they were not attributed to partnership processes. The manager of the Barnsley Regeneration Forum was unique in suggesting that the Council had learned from the private sector that its strategies should focus more on wealth creation than on jobs. Again, this was a general comment which was not attributed directly to processes within the BRF. ABP in Grimsby felt that it has been instrumental in preventing NELC from building homes, for 'political gain' on land earmarked for development. Similarly, Smith & Nephew and Northern Foods claimed that they had been instrumental in convincing KHCC to take a more ambitious approach to regeneration, articulated in the flagship regeneration project 'The Deep'. The evidence is not strong enough to evaluate

¹³ This was clearly true in relation to the Grimsby and Immingham Ports Partnership, whose manager was quite offended by the suggestion, made to the researcher by ABP, that the partnership may have been based on the Hull model.

these claims in relation to the specific mechanisms through which this influence occurred, but KHCC recognised that business had played a role in raising local aspirations. Whether this influence was exercised through the structures of CityVision or not, it can be attributed to an environment of mutual understanding in which business views are taken seriously, engendered by the imperatives of economic development and by partnership thinking among elites in Hull.

Interorganisational relations

There were two distinct perspectives on the quality of relationships within the partnerships. In Barnsley, despite criticisms of the partnership process, there was no evidence of open tensions or disagreements either over policy objectives, or over organisational responsibility within the Regeneration Forum. While there is cynicism about partnerships and while practical partnership processes are weak, interorganisational relationships are positive at this level. This situation in Barnsley shows that abstract statements in regeneration strategies are easy to agree, but that the practicalities engender disagreement. When it comes to deciding whether to put money into deprived communities, or into town centre regeneration, it is much more difficult to get agreement, as the comment from the TEC, that the strategy is stitched together, would suggest. However, disagreements of this kind have not proved disabling to the partnership process. This characterisation is also true in North East Lincolnshire where, although there is debate about which course of action to pursue, the situation cannot be described as conflict, but rather as uncertainty.

The situation in Rotherham and Hull is different. There is no evidence of bi-lateral conflicts between Council and business sector, but there is evidence of inter-organisational conflict between local authority and TEC over domains of responsibility. In Rotherham, there have been tensions between RMBC and RCCTE since the establishment of Rotherham TEC. The partnership has not succeeded in overcoming these difficulties, but it is perceived by the Chairman as a key mechanism for mediating conflicts, providing a collaborative forum in which disagreements can be aired publicly. RMBC recognises, formally at least, that it cannot lead on all initiatives. But this has not prevented it from competing for territory which it regards as 'the old training arm of the

Council' (RMBC, 21.4.98a). CityVision was also characterised by organisational rivalries in the sphere of economic regeneration between HTEC, CityVision and KHCC. At this level, CityVision plays a similar role to that of the REP as a mediator of tensions, though in this case, it is one of the protagonists. In CityVision, as in the REP, agreement on policy issues at an abstract level has not produced a corresponding willingness to give up control of territory. Conflict over responsibilities cannot, logically, produce governance synergy. If co-operation is supposed to engender additional governance capacity, conflict over governance territory will reduce, not enhance, it.

Added Value within Challenge Partnerships

The main concrete perception of added value from challenge partnerships was the procurement of external governmental funds. In each case, challenge funds were perceived as an indicator of partnership success. But challenge funds do not represent governance as self organising networks (Rhodes, 1996).¹⁴ There remain senior figures within Hull and Rotherham councils who believe that monies allocated through challenge fund processes would be better spent by the local authority. For them, formal partnerships remain necessary rather than virtuous.¹⁵ There remains uncertainty about the nature of added value in CityVision and in the REP. It was argued that neither has really addressed the question of what they achieve. The difficulty in demonstrating added value was highlighted in the CityVision stakeholder survey (Davidson, 1998), few of whose respondents felt that it has generated new governance capacity, defined as outcomes which could not otherwise have been achieved. It is easy to assume that partnership generates added value in a political-ideological culture which assumes that it will, just as the CityVision stakeholder survey pointed out in saying that hopes and practices become intertwined where added value is concerned. There exists a tendency to

¹⁴ As the North East Lincolnshire Regeneration Partnership is not, effectively, a partnership, there can be no partnership effects and none were, in any case, claimed for it.

¹⁵ The researcher did not seek to establish the precise amounts of leverage, defined as 'seed capital' in chapter 4, generated from business. Such an exercise would have taken up a great deal of time, only to establish the point already made, that financial and other material resources have been very limited.

	Barnsley Regeneration Forum	Rotherham Economic Partnership	Hull CityVision	North East Lincolnshire Regeneration Partnership
<i>Scope of Partnership</i>	Flagship partnership. Strategy led integrated economic and social regeneration			SRB only. No strategy.
<i>Development of Policy Focus</i>	From economic orientation to inclusive orientation		Inclusive.	Not policy led.
<i>Proximity to Local Authority</i>	Close/arms length	Autonomous	Independent	Close
<i>Partnership Leader</i>	Local authority	Business	Local authority	Local authority
<i>Future Partnership Trajectory</i>	Uncertain. Dependent on 'New Commitment to Regeneration'.	Uncertain. Motivated by RDA and agenda for social inclusion.	Tendency to concentrate decisions within partnership elite.	Possible move toward flagship partnership/area strategy due to fear of losing resources.
	Government driven tendency toward standardization of objectives and composition (social exclusion).			
<i>Influence Within Partnership</i>	Local Authority. TECs to a lesser extent.			
<i>Business Influence on Partnership</i>	Symbolic. But may have oriented Council on wealth creation, instead of jobs.	Symbolic.	Generally symbolic. But claims to have enhanced local ambition.	Marginal. Does not often attend.
<i>Quality of Relationships</i>	Good bi-laterally. Tensions with TEC not articulated at this level.	Good bi-laterally. Turf war between Council and Chamber-TEC over Inward Investment.	Good bi-laterally. Turf war between Council, TEC and CityVision over economic development.	Not important within this partnership environment.
<i>Partnership Sustainability</i>	Internally sustainable.	Grant dependent for infrastructure.	Grant dependent for infrastructure.	Internally sustainable (within Council).
<i>Governance Capacity</i>	Little room for partnership to manoeuvre.	Government influence inhibits local governance.		SRB driven.
	Competition for and management of external resources from governmental sources. SRB plays contradictory role in focussing activities while inhibiting strategic vision and limiting project choice.			
	Soft values: Synergy, feel good factor, the capacity to do more with less, flair, imagination, business acumen. Concrete values: Government Resources, particularly the SRB.			
	Mediates conflict between Council and TEC. Questions of added value not fully addressed. Improved capacity for networking?			

Box 8: The Characteristics of Challenge Partnerships

view partnerships as a good thing without positive evidence, as the Leader of NELC recognised. In Rotherham, RCCTE ascribed to itself the positive role of challenger to the institutional inertia of local government and facilitator of better links with business which may not otherwise have occurred.¹⁶ To the extent better links themselves constitute added value, it is as added value input, rather than as governance output. The main indicators of added value upon which all of the cases were agreed, beyond the procurement of funds, tended to be either vague or soft in nature. These claims have to be accepted or rejected at face value, depending simply on whether partnership is perceived as a positive route to regeneration or not. ‘Synergy’ may be added value in itself (Cropper, 1996; Hastings, 1996), but it is governance potential rather than governance capacity. Barnsley identified a ‘feel good factor’ in partnership, associated with a belief that the Forum represents the correct approach. The consensus in NEL, notwithstanding problems with the SRB partnership, is that in general, partnership is a good thing. It provides for added influence and for the capacity to do more with less. Rotherham agreed that partnerships are good for the town and that common aims help in competition for resources with other towns. It identified added value through the import of flair, imagination, business acumen and synergy to the partnership process. As noted above, networking was a recurring theme throughout the cases and there was a sense that formal partnership activities have generated local networking, just as Skelcher et al suggested that networking generated more partnership (1996: 2).¹⁷ Again, whether this process itself produces added value is debatable, depending on the importance attached to open and democratic decision making processes, on whether networking delivers tangible governance outputs and whether these outputs are viewed as good or bad. CityVision highlighted one final important point concerning added value. Partnership, particularly in Hull and in NEL, is still at an early stage of development and, in keeping with scholarly views (Sabatier, 1986a,b; Marsh and Rhodes, 1992) the manager of CityVision argued for a ten year evaluation period, at which time it may also be possible to evaluate SRB outputs as partnership effects. The characteristics of the challenge partnerships, including added value inputs and outputs, are summarised in Box 8.

¹⁶ It is unlikely, however, that the Council shares this view, given the difficulties between the two parties.

¹⁷ The example of CityImage, discussed below, enhances this conclusion.

Implementation Partnerships

The first part of this chapter examined the development and the ideology of partnership work. The second part examined partnership at the level of policy, strategy and the procurement of funds. This, third and final, part which looks at the way in which implementation oriented partnerships operate, is organised into five main sections. It begins by looking at broad approaches to economic development, moving onto examine the highly specific venture companies and sector based partnerships. It treats CityImage as a unique place marketing project and, finally, it analyses education and business links. The conclusion to the chapter summarises the key themes developed in the preceding analysis. Box 9 summarises the findings within partnerships which, for the sake of convenience, have been labelled 'economic development'. These include all the following partnership activities except education and business partnerships which are summarised in Box 10. Box 11 provides an overall comparison of the different partnership types examined, within and between the four case studies.

Broad Approaches to Economic Development

The Barnsley Development Agency was unique among economic development partnerships in being established as a business-led limited company into which parts of its constituent bodies, BMBC and BDTEC have been integrated. The Council described the BDA as the implementation arm of the economic element of the IRS, which would give Barnsley a 'voice' with the RDA. The BDA is interesting at two levels. First, unlike its 'parent,' it is at arms length from BMBC; and second, it is the only example of an economic development partnership established specifically to mirror the RDA. The emphasis in Barnsley was that institutional capacity is critical to implementation of the economic elements of the IRS, implying that partnership arrangements require further engineering to realise the funding potential embodied in the RDA. The BDA is, in part, Barnsley's interpretation at a time of uncertainty of what the new RDA will expect from its constituents. But it was also recognised both by Council and TEC that the BDA represents a move by the Council to defend its inward investment territory against proposals originating from RCCTE to establish a sub-regional inward investment body. This issue also caused problems in Rotherham, where disagreements over investment strategy caused RCCTE to withdraw from what

was then an economic development partnership in the shape of the Rotherham Industrial Development Office (RiDO). RiDO, originally a partnership organisation reporting to the Rotherham Economic Partnership, reverted to Council control when the Chamber-TEC withdrew, accusing RMBC of trying to service the entire process itself. RiDO accepted that there was an element of defensiveness in its relations with RCCTE over inward investment. These 'turf wars' articulate the absence of strategic thinking, beyond abstract principles, of which both the BRF and the REP were accused.

This comparison shows how the same problem can drive partnership processes in opposite directions. Both Barnsley and Rotherham have in common a wish to 'win' with the RDA. They also have in common a turf war over control of inward investment. In Barnsley, this backdrop has resulted in further partnership formalisation and autonomy. In Rotherham, it has resulted in partnership fragmentation and the re-absorption by RMBC of hitherto shared industrial development activities. But in both cases, the local authority appears to have gained more control over the process; by regaining sole management of RiDO in Rotherham, and more subtly, by undermining the TEC's sub-regional agenda for inward investment in Barnsley, resulting in TEC claims that the BDA is a manoeuvre by the Council to take effective control of economic development. Whatever inter-organisational tensions may have led to these divergent outcomes, the BDA has presented business with a key role in the chair; a role, like that of the Chairman of the REP, perceived as a means to mediate conflict between TEC and Council. The BDA was perceived by business as the key partnership in Barnsley, driving the practical process of economic regeneration. In RiDO, on the other hand, business plays a less visible role, 'championing' Rotherham at promotional events, a situation which the manager of RiDO believes to be more effective than the previous partnership arrangement with RCCTE.

Like the Rotherham Economic Partnership, the BDA is perceived as a mechanism which could facilitate understanding between BDTEC and BMBC, thereby eliminating duplication and clarifying responsibility. It is significant that two agencies have voluntarily ceded functions to a semi-autonomous organisation. But the partnership was born out of a strategic response by

BMBC to conflict with the TEC and it remains to be seen whether autonomy will result in 'synergy', leading to complete independence for the BDA. At a concrete level, the potential added value identified for the BDA was a single, more powerful 'voice' for Barnsley in a competitive regional environment. This view was the opposite of that taken by RiDO, which perceived the exit of RCCTE as a positive step, facilitating better co-operation on an informal basis. For RiDO, networking was counterposed to the REP which was perceived as a failure in terms of genuine added value.¹⁸

Hull and North East Lincolnshire differ from Rotherham and Barnsley in that their economic development agencies have never been partnerships, either in total or in part. While CityVision wants HEDA to integrate more of its activities, the committee Chairman will not permit it, due to his own negative perceptions of CityVision. The Council views itself as a facilitator of specific initiatives in which it likes to take a back seat to the private sector, once they are well established. HEDA takes a leading role in CityVision and it adheres to the CRS in its literature. But in terms of partnership practice, it operates around specific initiatives. Similarly, partners in NEL viewed flexibility as the key to partnership success in economic development and NELC is even more strongly committed in practice to issue and sector specific partnerships than is Hull.

The point made in Barnsley, that the IRS is more a list of compatible priorities than it is a governing strategy document, is lent weight by debates about priorities and organisational responsibilities for economic development activities. Conflicting projects on the ground in Hull further support this view, showing that the strategic capacity within the CRS to produce compatible development projects is limited. What this conflict suggests is that CityVision is not a body in which such problems are identified and addressed and, moreover, that it lacks the authority to address them. There is a gap between the sustainable economic development agenda in the CRS and the reality of competing projects on the ground. This problem illustrates both the problem of competing power centres within the Council, which seems to be supporting both

¹⁸ Of course, RiDO's opinion may reflect the biased view of a Council based employee.

projects, and the extent to which problems within the Council can disable CityVision. CityVision obviously cannot adjudicate planning applications, but it could, in principle, put its weight behind one project, rather than the other. This situation, a polarisation between economic development and planning, is analogous to that identified by Di Gaetano (1997) in Bristol.

The Venture Companies

The study examined two venture companies, one each in Barnsley and in Rotherham. The Barnsley Miller Partnership was concerned with commercial development, while the Rotherham Housing Partnership sought to build and sell 'affordable' homes to first time buyers. The Barnsley Miller Partnership was, unusually, able to identify a clear example of concrete 'added value' in respect of a difficult project which could have collapsed without the joint commitment brought about by the partnership agreement. But the potential downside of the arrangement is in market pressures on the developer to deliver high yield schemes which do not comply with the Council's preference for job intensive schemes. Nonetheless, the partnership showed evidence of developments and of jobs which might not otherwise have occurred. In this sense, it has contributed to the governance of Barnsley.

The Rotherham Housing Partnership, however, appears to have been more of a zero sum game. One of RMBC's objectives was profit, which it achieved. But the objective to build 'affordable' housing was compromised by the inability to fix a meaning to the concept 'affordable' which, instead, was market driven. Ultimately, the project can be judged successful in that the majority of new residences went to first time buyers from within the Borough. However, the consequent depression of the second hand housing market in Rotherham was cited as an unintended outcome of the project, resulting in the dereliction of unoccupied housing stock. This venture highlights the need for strategic thinking in relation to housing as a social need, which the imperatives governing the partnership undermined.

The most interesting issue arising from both these examples concerns the potential for conflict between principles of partnership and of best value. Both local authorities have been made wary

as a consequence of corruption in a similar partnership in Doncaster. The controversy led to intense auditing of the partnership in Barnsley and to suspension of the partnership in Rotherham. The specific problem, highlighted in both partnerships, was that development agreements, to a greater extent (Barnsley) or a lesser extent (Rotherham), give the developer an 'inside track', protecting them from competition from other, perhaps local, companies. It was acknowledged in both cases that the partnership approach had caused resentment locally and soured relationships with elements of the business community. The conflict between partnership and best value was perceived as inevitable, an obvious solution being to allow local authorities to assume the role of developer. This issue highlights a specific angle on the added value question. It may be possible to demonstrate local governance capacity within partnerships of this kind, but there is no guarantee, in a broader sense, that the community will be enhanced, or that an alternative arrangement, partnership based or not, could not have delivered similar results more equitably or at a lower cost.

The Sector Partnerships: Ports and Chemicals

ABP in Hull and in North East Lincolnshire was the only business identified as a key governance player in any of the four cases. The ports partnerships in Hull and in North East Lincolnshire are similar in their objective: the promotion of the port to maximise trade and to increase business. The main difference is that NEL emphasises new inward investment whereas Hull does not. There is also a difference in scale between the partnerships. The Ports of Grimsby and Immingham are five times as big as the Port of Hull and the new supertanker terminal at Immingham will necessitate a global focus on promotions as opposed to the Northern European focus of Hull.

Beyond these objectives, the two partnerships differ. The Hull partnership is perceived as part of the general improvement in council-business relationships engendered by the challenge fund regime, before which the only interface between Council and business was the Chamber's annual dinner. The development of the two port partnerships was initially complicated by the two tier system of governance, under which Humberside County Council organised promotional events. The problem with the county-wide approach in both areas was that ABP felt its position

compromised by a strategy which promoted competitors. Competition between district and county - a turn-off to business - further undermined partnership potential. Unitary status therefore facilitated partnerships, where the geo-strategic, public sector led approach of Humberside County Council failed.¹⁹ The City/Port Partnership in Hull is now private sector led after a period of facilitation by KHCC. NEL's partnership, on the other hand, is public sector led and managed from within Council offices. The partnership in NEL was viewed positively by ABP as a commitment by the Council to economic development in the area.

The Humber Chemicals Focus shares a heritage with the ports partnerships as a public, County Council led initiative. After unitary status, it was agreed between the Humber authorities that a sub-regional chemicals initiative should be maintained, under the leadership of North East Lincolnshire. The Council has struggled for two years to convince key business leaders in the chemicals sector to become involved in an initiative to promote the industry and to address deficiencies in the sub-regional skills and training base. Having succeeded in convincing a business leader to front the partnership, which in turn convinced others to join up, NELC now believes that it can take a light touch approach, facilitating private sector led activity through its diligence and entrepreneurship. The Humber Chemicals Focus and City/Port in Hull have both proved successful in bringing the private sector forward into positions of leadership, where this did not seem to be a priority within the Grimsby and Immingham Ports Partnership.

The key added value themes in these three partnerships were economy of scale and credibility with potential customers. Added value gained from the Humber Chemicals Focus cannot be identified at present as it is a new initiative. But there was general agreement that the industry would benefit from the economy offered by a unified training agenda. A consultant's report argued that the Council couldn't establish an initiative of this nature on its own, and that the chemicals sector wouldn't. Even if, as Synthomer argued, the only potential added value from the partnership is the skills development and training agenda, this case would be an example of governance capacity,

¹⁹ Although one officer from Cleethorpes suggested that the political culture in Grimsby undermined certain approaches to networking.

which would not otherwise have occurred. The deficit in training may in part, however, be the responsibility of HTEC for failing to do its job properly, adding weight to NELC's perception of peripherality in relation to TEC activities.

Without ABP on board, it was felt in both ports partnerships that promotional activities would lack credibility with potential customers. It was also suggested in both cases that new jobs may have come through promotional events. ABP in North East Lincolnshire took a broader perspective on added value, suggesting that the indicator of success was not the capacity to undertake promotional events, regarded essentially as an input, but the arrival of substantial inward investment to the area. In this regard, it was pessimistic about the prospects of success. The problem for NELC in relation to added value from inward investment is that, if the past 8 years are anything to go by, this investment is likely to be capital intensive, achieving high profits for businesses, but delivering few jobs. Each of these three partnerships is involved in place marketing (Griffiths, 1998), if not to mobile capital, then at least to potential customers overseas.

CityImage and Place Marketing

There is no partnership activity in the other cases comparable to that of CityImage. This project is indicative of the difference in scope and ambition between a city and a town. Rather than relying purely on sectoral partnerships for promotional work, Hull is seeking a marketing hook which will differentiate it from other places, convincing potential investors and traders that Hull and its people have the ambition and the drive to make business succeed. The most innovative element of this partnership is the CityVision Bond. This is a scheme, unlike any other in the four cases, resembling the Bond system described by Elkin, used to fund capital schemes in American cities (1987a). It was openly recognised that this scheme allows businesses to buy influence with policy makers in Hull. It was unique in this sense too, particularly in relation to the open admission that this process was taking place. The key feature of the private sector contribution to this scheme is that it is an open ended commitment without short term bottom line gain, beyond perceived access to the corridors of power.

	Economic Development	Venture Companies	Ports	Chemicals	Place Marketing (CityImage)
<i>Direction of Partnership</i>	Institutionalising (Barnsley) Fragmenting (Rotherham)	Continuity (Barnsley) Suspended (Rotherham)	Public to public-private. Formalisation with limited bureaucracy	Public to public-private. Formalisation with limited bureaucracy	Stable
<i>Proximity to Local Authority</i>	Independent. Dual accountability to Board and parent institution (Barnsley) Council leads (Rotherham)	Independent. But Council administered (Rotherham).	Autonomous (Hull), Integrated (NEL)	Growing autonomy.	Formally independent. Governed by CityVision.
<i>Partnership Leadership and Influence.</i>	Local authority in both cases. Business mediates Council/TEC conflict (Barnsley)	Business (Barnsley) Council (Rotherham) Joint influence on project development (both).	Business influence on promotions agenda. Council leads (NEL). Business leads (Hull).	From local authority to joint leadership. Business now taking a stronger role.	Leadership exercised by image consultant, by local authority and by local businesses through networking rights purchased by CityVision Bond.
<i>Quality of Council and Business Relationship</i>	Good.	Good in both cases. Possible conflicting objectives re: profit and jobs (Barnsley)	Good in relation to promotion activities. Conflict in Hull over development issues.	Initial suspicion of partnership within business easing.	Good, though Council often criticised for lacking ambition.
<i>Local Discretion</i>	BDA conceived and developed according to local objectives. RiDO priorities locally determined.	High with respect to project choice. Circumscribed by local authority powers with respect to companies.	Project conceived and developed according to local objectives. DETR to adjudicate conflict over development (Hull).	Project conceived and developed according to local objectives.	Project conceived and developed according to local objectives. Inspired by Bishop of Hull.
<i>Sustainability</i>	BDA internally sustainable. RiDO fragmented.	Internally sustainable.	Internally sustainable. Level of activity grant dependent..		Internally sustainable. Secondary reliance on external funds.
<i>Governance Capacity</i>	Conflict mediation, voice with RDA (Barnsley). Fragmentation engenders efficient networking (RiDO).	Jobs (Barnsley). Zero sum game (Rotherham) Partnership may not produce optimum outputs in either case. Engenders local discontent among outsiders.	Private sector finance. Co-ordination and economy of scale. Job creation. Partnership lends promotional activities credibility with potential customers. Partnership a competitive asset. Cynicism about impact on economic problems (NEL).	Private sector finance. Enhanced scale of flagship project 'The Deep'. Private sector role lends credibility to image building endeavour. Enhanced governance ambition. But, mixed views concerning project value.	

Box 9: Economic Development Partnerships

The main achievement attributed to CityImage, beyond its marketing of the Bond scheme, is the theme of Hull as a 'pioneering' city, perceived as vital to the City's pretensions as a 'Top Ten' city. This objective encapsulates something about Hull's view of the future, differentiating it as a city from the towns in the other three cases, where such a grand project would lack credibility. There were mixed feelings among the Bond holders about the value of the image project. ABP felt that it was a waste of money, that the 'pioneering' theme will mean little to anyone in Hull. It claimed, furthermore, that this view was representative of the general reaction at the launch. Smith & Nephew, on the other hand, viewed the appointment of a Marketing Director for CityImage, funded partly from Bond income, as a good thing in itself. It further described 'The Deep' as an added value project, which would not have been so ambitious in scope, but for business influence. While no direct link was made, this influence may have been attributable to the authority which Smith & Nephew and Northern Foods gained through their £5,000 contributions to CityVision Bond. The scale of the 'The Deep', if not the project idea itself, is clearly an output of local governance processes, possibly of the networking facilities engendered through the Bond scheme. In this case, governance as networking has been produced through formal partnership procedures (Rhodes, 1996). CityImage has succeeded in generating measurable, if limited, governance capacity in relation to the goal of image building in Hull through the financial commitments embodied in the Bond scheme. Private sector leadership was viewed as central to the credibility of the Bond scheme and the image project as a whole, and, in this case, key businesses have proved willing and able to play an important role. Box 9 summarises the findings in relation to implementation oriented economic development partnerships.

Education and Business Partnerships

The context for education and business partnerships in all four case studies is underachievement and alienation among local children from traditional academic concerns. All four areas produced statistics for GCSE pass rates well below the national average, with Barnsley and Hull among the worst in the country. Each area identified an absence of commitment to learning, attributed to a culture of low expectation associated with economic decline. Within the variable set of objectives

for learning identified in the above discussion of regeneration strategy, there was a general commitment to building education business links. However, education business partnerships, the main vehicle for education business links have failed, or are failing.²⁰ This failure can be attributed broadly to the relationship between Council and TEC and the corresponding absence of commitment by the local authority to partnership objectives, not to a failure of the bi-lateral relationship between LEA and business. The problem is also related to pressures on local authorities to deliver targets for education standards. This is the way it was perceived in Humberside, where the abolition of the County Council removed the geo-strategic focus for the partnership and created a clash between the objectives of HTEC and the new unitary authorities. The failure of EBPs can be perceived as an important element in continuing tensions between local authorities and TECs. The absence of genuine strategic capacity, with the onset of unitary authority status, was also identified as a key reason for partnership failure. For Rotherham, the technocratic language used in proceedings dominated by education professionals was perceived as a turn-off for businesses. But whatever the reasons for partnership failure, the collapse of the EBPs has resulted in a situation where education business links are managed almost exclusively by the TECs, as they were when EBPs were first conceived in the early 90s. Education business links have ceased to represent a partnership activity, except in the operational relationship between school and business. Despite its survival, the Barnsley Business Education Partnership is also under threat due to an absence of commitment and an LEA perception that it has outlived its usefulness. If the LEA is correct, the partnership's projects will eventually be re-absorbed within one of the parent bodies, or another partnership.²¹

Hull, unique in relation to CityImage, also proved unique in relation to partnerships in education. While Hull was laggardly in picking up the partnership agenda, it has done so with greater success in relation to education than has been achieved in the other cases. As a group of educationalists, CityLearning prided itself in taking a 'strategic' view of learning in the City, made possible with

²⁰ The Humberside Partnership incorporated a sub-regional EBP.

²¹ See commentary on lifelong learning partnerships in Chapter 4.

unitary authority status. CityLearning was also instrumental in engaging business in the Children's University, another initiative currently unique to Hull among the four cases, drawing in private sector funds and personnel to assist with the project. Business viewed this initiative, along with the Business Education Forum, as an enhancement of bi-lateral links with schools, a development tool for its employees, a public relations bonus for the company and as an investment in the human capital of the future. However, business investment in this kind of project may produce zero sum outcomes in terms of regeneration, if it is an example of what KHCC described as 'cherry-picking' the best school leavers, further entrenching the social exclusion of the previous generation, unemployed people from the fishing industry.

As with the SRB, central government was perceived to be very powerful in the domain of education policy, particularly in Hull and in North East Lincolnshire which were beginning to deal with the implications of Lifelong Learning partnerships as the research concluded. It was feared in both cases that central government proposals, however worthy, can distort local objectives. In Hull, it has been agreed that CityLearning will become the vehicle for lifelong learning and it was feared that as an organisation responsible for government money, CityLearning could lose its strategic vision and its lifelong focus. In this sense, there was a worry that the problems associated in all cases with SRB bureaucracy could be replicated in the strictures of the Lifelong Learning agenda. North East Lincolnshire similarly feels that it will have little control over the form which the local Lifelong Learning partnership will eventually take, one officer describing the process as 'local administration, not local governance' (NELC, 17.5.99b). This instance highlights the extent to which NELC remains at best uncertain of the direction in which it sees itself as being pushed, and Lifelong Learning was interpreted as another pressure toward integrating the economic and social regeneration agendas. It is in areas where there are doubts about compliance that the coercive capacity in government initiatives becomes visible. Hull, with some misgivings, appeared ready to address the Lifelong Learning agenda, whereas North East Lincolnshire did not. Hull can be perceived as a leader in relation to education partnerships, whereas Hull, Barnsley and North East Lincolnshire are comparative laggards. In Hull, business has been much more active in developing business oriented curriculum activities than it has elsewhere. In Rotherham, the

business Chairman of BEAG may have helped induce the Council to accept Education Action Zones. The role of business in education partnerships appeared weakest in Barnsley and in North East Lincolnshire, where one or two businesses are valued for articulating employee needs, but where otherwise, the main links are between schools and employers. Hull's partnership activities were far more extensive than those to be found elsewhere. Again, this fact may be attributable to the size of Hull and the capacity of its businesses to take a leading role in the implementation of projects like the Children's University and the Business Education Forum. The conclusion which can be drawn from the Children's University and from the Business Education Forum is that while partnership at geo-strategic level has failed with the abolition of Humberside County Council, there are strong bilateral education business links in Hull, which were not visible elsewhere.

Added Value in Education Business Links

It is not possible at this stage to consider the benefits which may derive from Lifelong Learning partnerships, since they are in a very early stage of development.²² Similarly, it is too early to evaluate the Children's University as a business education link, though it has been received positively in schools. As far as EBPs are concerned, they must be regarded as having failed as strategic and as managerial bodies, showing that partnerships can result in bureaucratic inertia and in frustration. In general, parties to the former EBPs were happy with the new, non-partnership arrangements for the delivery of education business link projects. All parties continue to be positive about education business links in principle and it was suggested in Rotherham that they have had a positive effect on the reliability and attitude of work experience pupils. CityLearning believed that it has moved learning up the agenda in Hull, though it was questioned whether it had done so with the people who need it most, or whether learning will itself generate new jobs for better qualified locals. The characteristics and processes involved in education business links are summarised in Box 10.

²² For this reason, it was not considered necessary to follow up this issue in Barnsley and in Rotherham.

	Barnsley	Rotherham	Hull	North East Lincolnshire
<i>Scope of Partnerships</i>	EBP manages operational links.	Operational links TEC facilitated.	Extensive, internally sustainable. Operational links TEC facilitated.	Operational links TEC facilitated.
<i>Partnership Trajectories</i>	Possible fragmentation of EBP.	Failure of EBPs led to partnership fragmentation.		
		Establishment of Lifelong Learning Partnerships. Driven nationally. In progress.		
<i>Proximity to Local Authority</i>	EBP independent company.		Bi-lateral (and multi-lateral) links through Children's University.	
<i>Partnership Leader</i>	Business.	TEC leads on advisory group.	Business education link projects revert to TEC leadership.	
			No partnership in management of business education links.	
		CityLearning led by University of Hull. Children's University led by CityLearning.		
<i>Degree of Local Autonomy</i>		High local autonomy concerning organisation of education business links.	LifeLong Learning Partnerships compulsory.	
			Local initiatives: CityLearning, BEF and Children's University. Fear that Lifelong Learning will compromise autonomy of CityLearning.	No partnership in education business links. Lifelong Learning perceived as central government coercion.
<i>Quality of Relationships</i>	EBPs: Varying degrees of conflict between Council and TEC and low commitment from partners causes fragmentation.			
	Good but low level of commitment.	Good but weak bilaterally.	Good bi-laterally. Particularly in Children's University and BEF.	Good but weak bi-laterally.
<i>Influences in Partnership</i>	Local authority and TEC. Business contribution marginal to EBP.	Advisory group influenced by technocrats. Possible business influence over EAZ process.	Business marginal to CityLearning processes. Instrumental in curriculum projects through Children's University and BEF.	No partnership in business education links. Peripheral business involvement in early stages of lifelong learning process.
<i>Local Governance Capacity</i>		Education business link projects facilitate employment skills.		
	None identified through EBP.	Negative value perceived in EBPs. Added value in partnership fragmentation.		
			Bi-lateral links between LEA and business. Private sector finance for Children's university. Intellectual input to BEF. CityLearning raises profile of education in Hull.	

Box 10: Education Business Partnerships

Conclusion

The three flagship partnerships have developed broadly the same approach to regeneration strategy, in contrast with the situation in North East Lincolnshire where, under Government Office pressure, there is uncertainty about whether and how to link economic and social objectives into a broader vision for the area. Locally, the local authority and, to a lesser extent the TEC drive the regeneration agenda to which the private sector is by and large marginal. If partnerships represent 'governance', they do so in a symbolic fashion in which the partnership structure is more impressive than the interactions within it. Rotherham and Hull in particular are some way from generating co-ordinated governance at the strategic level due to 'turf wars', though it was felt that the establishment of cabinet government in Hull, about to happen at the conclusion of the study, could ease the problem of co-ordination within the departments of KHCC. Furthermore, if practical conflicts are not addressed, then co-ordinated governance cannot be delivered at the level of project implementation either. None of the four challenge partnerships revealed a strong internal governance dynamic and the role of business within them was largely symbolic. The evidence isn't sufficient to state whether there is a tendency toward the development of an internal governance dynamic in challenge partnerships at this time. There are elements in place for such a dynamic in that there is commitment from within each local authority and from some businesses to a partnership agenda, a vague but widespread feeling that partnership is a good thing, though the scope and depth of business commitment would have to increase significantly. There is also agreement, with the exception of NEL, over general policy statements and directions. But this agreement has not translated into a fusion of resources, intellectual or material. An ideological commitment to partnership now exists to a greater or a lesser extent in all areas. However, the more detailed the examination of the leading partnership structures, the less substantial partnership appears to be.

Economic and extra-local political pressures, combined with local ideological imperatives have generated local authority commitment to partnership working with businesses in a range of activities and policy areas. But the dynamics of business participation are often weak. The private sector is not under the same compulsion to adopt the partnership agenda, and across the range of

partnership activities in each area, a handful of core activists could be identified. The glue to partnership varied. At the strategic level, it was the incentive of extra-local resources, combined with local networking capacities. At the implementation level by comparison, the partnerships were sustainable through internally generated ideas and internal resources, although more ambitious strategies relied on successful bids for extra-local funds.²³

In relation to the first part of this chapter, which examined economic strategies, inward investment patterns and local business dependence, three things can be said. First, the underlying economic dynamics associated with economic globalization have not created an environment in which local authorities are obliged to compete, either alone or in partnership, for mobile capital resources. Second, to the extent that local authorities and businesses do perceive a need to pull together for regeneration, this is about enhancing local capacity to compete for governmental resources rather than for mobile capital. The port partnerships represent a challenge to this broad conclusion, suggesting that promotional activities have gained credibility with potential customers and investors which they would not have had without the appearance of unity between port and host authority. Flagship partnerships have not been generated by local responses to perceived supra local economic pressures, but by political engineering, including financial instruments and institutional fragmentation. Third, the proximity to the locality of the decision makers within a multi-national corporation seemed to make no difference, either to inward investment decisions, or to decisions about local partnership activity, which are left to the discretion of the site manager. There was, however, a greater pre-disposition for partnership activity among longstanding local firms and firms with British roots and management.

The evidence suggests that the strategic partnership process, rather than creating local governance capacity, has created new instruments for central government to implement its objectives in the locality, tying both local authority and business partners into a policy agenda of its choosing.²⁴

²³ Lifelong Learning partnerships will be dependent on government funds.

²⁴ This point is followed up in more depth in chapter 10.

Partnership formalisation has generated visible links between local government and business, but these are shallow in character, lacking an internal glue in the form of local interorganisational dependence, to bind in either the local authority or the business sector. There is, therefore, a contradictory effect in government policy, from the standpoint of generating local governance capacity. The SRB, undoubtedly helps to sustain expensive structures like CityVision, but its prescriptions and rigours have prevented them from developing a dynamic of their own.

The first thing which needs to be emphasised in relation to implementation partnerships is that their existence across a range of economic development and education activities shows that the ideology of partnership is entrenched within a range of economic development activities and within education. If the challenge fund culture of the strategic partnership inhibits governance capacity at the strategy and policy level, the ideology of partnership has developed at the implementation level, where the demands of government are less immediate. Government measures, together with ideological changes, have helped to produce examples of local governance at the operational level, where they have not at the strategic and political levels. These implementation partnership activities, particularly in economic development, tend to be generated locally for local purposes and they are variable in form and in scope demonstrating, in the case of Barnsley and Rotherham, the capacity for diverse responses to the same problem. In both cases, the implementation of economic development objectives contrasted with the flagship approach. The BRF is Council managed and led; the BDA independent and business led. The REP is independent and business led; RiDO is under full council control. Yet in both cases, the Council is felt to be pre-eminent in the economic development process.

This example illustrates two things: that areas adopt different approaches to partnership at different levels of policy and implementation; and that institutional form is not, itself, indicative of the balance of power between different actors. Hull demonstrated another interesting contrast showing, as a reluctant late comer to the partnership game, the broadest range of partnership activities. Whatever the weaknesses of the parent CityVision partnership, two of its Issue Groups, CityImage and CityLearning, have generated impressive and innovative projects, together with

visible private sector commitment to them. So, while CityVision, at the broad policy and strategy level, may be viewed as a failure, its more practical ‘spokes’ can be viewed as a relative success. Another contrast, visible within CityVision and within the NEL Regeneration Partnership, was the way in which local authority pre-eminence in the challenge partnerships co-existed with an emerging private sector role, in some cases private sector leadership, at the implementation level. This contrast is suggestive of a greater enthusiasm within both local authority and business and a greater capacity within business, for project oriented partnerships, calling into question the necessity of symbolic forms of partnership in policy development and the necessity of challenge funds for sustaining project oriented partnerships. But there are risks in displays of autonomy from government. NEL incurred the threat of financial penalties for running things the way it wanted to, rather than complying with the national agenda.

A key element of the explanation for different approaches lies in the political and inter-organisational history of each area. Local politics are clearly important in relation to the characteristics of economic development. But specific political choices are made possible by the economic and geographical landscapes. Businesses in Humberside are big enough and vibrant enough to engage with sector and issue based partnerships. Sector specific partnerships would be very difficult to maintain in Rotherham and Barnsley where industry is weak showing, by contrast, why it was easier in both instances to take a more generic approach. Furthermore, neither has the weight of Hull as a city, able to engage in promotional activities on the scale of CityImage.

The sector partnerships were perceived much more positively than the flagship partnerships both by local authorities and by businesses. In each case, it was apparent that the partnership activity could not credibly be carried out without both public and private sector involvement. The sector partnerships generated private sector commitment through subscriptions and managerial responsibility for partnership activities. Notably, each partnership could boast between 12 and 20 subscribers, a comparatively high level of involvement. Interestingly, and in contrast with the flagship partnerships discussed above, none of these partnerships described funding from the SRB

or from the EU as 'added value'. Funding was strictly seen as a means to an end, and the added value was expressed in terms of actual or potential project outcomes, rather than in terms of income generated from elsewhere. These 'voluntary' partnerships further illustrate the ideological commitment to the partnership principle within local authorities. They also illustrate that it is possible to generate a commitment to medium and long term collaborative ventures within certain businesses, if they can be convinced that the expense will eventually generate bottom line results. It is possible that a momentum is being generated, particularly within the Humberside chemicals industry, where major companies feel that if a competitor is in they too have to sign up, and in CityImage where the Bond scheme has attracted several major companies. The sector partnerships and CityImage represent examples of place-marketing initiatives which, if not directly concerned with attracting mobile capital, nonetheless seek to present their businesses and their areas in a positive light to a European and, potentially, a global audience.

The research into education partnerships shows an agenda heavily influenced by government initiatives in the form of EBPs and, in future, Lifelong Learning partnerships. Only in Hull, host to strong education partnerships, was there evidence of locally generated partnership activity. Business participation was perceived as weaker than in the economic development partnerships but Hull proved to be an exception, generating strong bi-lateral links between LEA and multi-national companies in curriculum development projects for primary and secondary schools. Beyond these bi-lateral links, the scope for formal partnerships on the EBP model seems small. The collapse of the EBPs in Rotherham and in Humberside illustrates a broader conclusion, that partnerships can have negative sum effects on governance, as well as zero sum and positive sum effects. Sometimes, fragmentation is necessary for effective governance. TEC management of education business link projects is more effective than a moribund partnership. Governance capacity may be enhanced by partnership failure if it enables the parties concerned to get on with doing their jobs without the distraction of partnership obligations, or if it liberates the potential for productive networking arrangements as exhibited in the semi-formal Business Education Forum in Hull. Another dimension of this issue was illustrated by the potential and actual conflict

	Barnsley	Rotherham	Hull	North East Lincolnshire
Strategic/SRB Partnership		Steered by Government. Local Governance inhibited.		
	Symbolic, Council managed and led.	Symbolic, business managed and led. Council senior partner.	Symbolic. Autonomous management, Council led.	Symbolic. SRB Partnership only. Council managed and led.
Economic Development (Generic)	Outcomes driven by Council responses to conflict with TEC.		Economic Development Agency fully integrated with Council. Engages in issue and sector partnerships.	Economic Development Agency fully integrated with Council. Engages in issue and sector partnerships.
	Local partnership initiative. BDA independent, business led. Marketing role aimed at RDA.	Partnership fragmentation. RiDO Council controlled.		
Ports and Chemicals	Not applicable in Barnsley and Rotherham.		Local partnership initiative. Generates private sector resources.	
Ports Only	Not applicable in Barnsley and Rotherham.		Business led. Enhances promotional capacity. Partnership failure over development issue.	Council led. Enhances promotional capacity. Scepticism about capacity to generate inward investment.
Chemicals Only	Not applicable in Barnsley and Rotherham.		Business leadership emerging. Could enhance promotional/training capacity.	Produces economy of scale. Scepticism about capacity to generate inward investment.
Image Building	No image building partnerships in Barnsley and Rotherham. Barnsley Development Agency to market Barnsley to RDA.		Local partnership initiative. Mixed views. Autonomous, business led. Generates private sector resources and promotional events. Drives ambition.	No partnership. Lobbying strategy, rather than place marketing. Sense of peripherality precludes up-beat message.
Venture Partnership	Local partnership initiative. Tension between partnership/ best-value. May not produce optimum outputs.		No venture companies.	
	Business led. Close external auditing. Delivers industrial development/jobs.	Council managed. Zero sum game. Suspended voluntarily on advice.		
Education (EBPs)	National partnership initiative. Absence of commitment from local authority and from business.		Tensions between local authority and business.	
	Continuing partnership management of EBP. Potential partnership failure.	Partnership failure. Fragmentation of EBPs. Partnership failure. Positive view of bi-lateral links between schools and businesses.		Governance capacity enhanced through
Education (Other)	No evidence of partnership beyond EBP and education business links. No evidence compiled concerning Lifelong Learning. Research undertaken before national initiative.		Local partnership initiatives. CityLearning raises profile of education, marginal business input. Children's University generates private sector resources and good bi-lateral links. Lifelong learning may limit local capacity.	Lifelong Learning perceived as centrally dominated process. Little local autonomy expected. Business articulates employer needs, but no input to partnership development.

Box 11: Different Partnership Types Within and Between the Four Cases

between partnership and best value on one hand and between partnership and stakeholding on the other. Partnership may not produce optimum outputs and it can be exclusive, generating discontent among outsiders and generating the potential for conflict between a local authority and elements of its business sector. Implementation partnerships can be viewed as more 'genuine' than strategic partnerships, because they are voluntary in character and because they are oriented toward specific local objectives.

Overall, there were four important examples of business input into partnership projects: the Barnsley Miller Partnership provided the most concrete illustration of positive governance output; CityImage, the only significant cash input to a non-profit initiative; 'The Deep' represented a visible example of business influence in the partnership process; and the Children's University and the Business Education Forum represented examples of how business can play a key role in developing bottom-up strategic education business links. Bi lateral relationships between local authority and business in these partnership ventures showed how good relationships with the private sector at the level of ideals can be produced in practice.

In Hull and in North East Lincolnshire, the impression was that unitary authority status has been a stimulus to partnership development, particularly at the operational level. Responsibility for education gave CityVision a 'strategic' view of learning, enabling it more effectively to be incorporated within the City Regeneration Strategy; and it simplified matters for businesses. The ports partnerships benefited through the development of a local focus to its activities, which proved unsustainable at the sub-regional level. The downside has been the emergence of tensions between the new authorities and HTEC over local and sub-regional priorities which never arose when education was a County Council responsibility. In short, it facilitated the development of local functional-strategic approaches, but it inhibited geo-strategic approaches.

The over-riding impression from the partnerships is that added value is something for the future. Partnership working is still young. Ultimately, as has been argued above, it is difficult to judge added value on the basis of relatively new partnership projects. Implementation partnerships are

very new, even by comparison with recent flagship initiatives like CityVision. Added value was most commonly expressed as potential or as a series of soft inputs and outputs. At the margins, however, particularly within the implementation partnerships, examples suggested that a harder, more concrete form of added value may be beginning to emerge. Stone's (1989) analysis of Atlanta takes place over a period of 42 years and when set in this context, it is inappropriate to make hasty judgements about the absence of concrete outputs, or the future direction in which nascent partnership processes might lead. Box 11 provides a general overview of the partnership processes discussed in this chapter, both within and between cases. Chapter 10 concludes the study, returning to consider the theoretical implications of these findings for scholars using urban regime theory and for the concept of 'governance' as a characterisation of local partnership processes.

Chapter 10. Conclusion: Urban Regime Theory and Local Partnerships Revisited

Introduction

This concluding chapter reprises the core themes raised in the study. It begins by contrasting the dynamics identified in bringing about urban partnerships with those found in urban regime theory, addressing the question of how far the variables it predicts account for and describe relationships between local government and business in the case studies. With qualifications, it rejects comparisons between urban partnerships and regime governance, identifying the former as instruments of state policy. These findings are then represented as a set of variables, whose potential efficacy in producing regime governance is considered. The conclusion drawn from this discussion is that while regime theory is of little value in explaining local partnership processes or in characterising local partnership practices as they stand, it is invaluable in raising questions about how the relationship between local government and the business sector may be developing and in providing for a contrast to be made between local political processes in Britain and in the USA. The findings are then used to draw a distinction between partnership as a mode of governance and governance as autonomous, self-organizing networks. It is concluded that state restructuring, rather than reducing the centre's capacity to steer, has enhanced its steering ability and broadened the scope of its influence in local politics. Finally, in examining the implications of these conclusions for the study of local governance, it is emphasised that the state remains the key to analysing local political processes. If the central state is seeking to create a form of local governance which resembles the ideal type depicted by Rhodes (1996), then the instruments it is using inhibit rather than facilitate this outcome.

The chapter is organised into five main sections. First, local partnership dynamics are contrasted with those identified in regime theory. Second, consideration is given to how local partnerships should be characterised as modes of governance. The third section expresses the influences on

partnership as a set of independent variables and provides a final evaluation of regime theory from the standpoint of the findings in this study. The fourth section shows how the study contributes to the study of local governance. Finally, the concluding section considers the implications of this project for future research into local political processes.

Local Partnership Dynamics and Urban Regime Theory

The following discussion compares and contrasts the key themes identified in the case studies with those identified in urban regime theory. It considers three broad dynamics affecting partnership development: the philosophy of market led growth, government initiatives and economic globalization.

The Philosophy of Market Led Growth

The first independent variable which can be identified is the logic of collaboration engendered in local authorities which, in response to economic problems, have embraced a private sector led economic development agenda. According to Elkin, this response is the 'rational' response of public officials to whoever controls productive assets (1994: 122). The basis of this rationality differs in this study. In Atlanta and in Dallas, it is based on the interdependence of resources and on ideological commitment, whereas here it is based primarily on an ideological commitment to market led development. Chapter 9 showed how the case study areas arrived at this conclusion at different times as a result of differing combinations of local and extra-local pressures, but also that this ideological position is a point of convergence among local authority elites. The ubiquity of this variable is contingent on three factors: the existence of economic problems; local authority engagement in economic development intended to address them; and a corresponding local authority commitment to market driven wealth creation.

The logic of wealth creation has not, however, produced a corresponding dynamic for collaboration within the business sector. The great majority of local businesses, including business elites, have no interface with the local authority and there remains an element of cynicism about partnership within the business sector, even among those who are key participants. The sources

of influence on the business sector are more difficult to discern than for the local authority. A small number of larger businesses have engaged in partnerships, believing that they can enhance their competitive positions. A more positive view of the local authorities courting business involvement, together with the new representative capacity engendered through TECs, have also been influential factors in bringing businesses to the table. A local authority seeking to enhance the business environment is also, logically, likely to be viewed more positively by business than one which does not. Ideology within some corporations also seems to have changed, resulting in a more outward looking perspective on community matters constituting, as Bassett suggested, 'enlightened self-interest' (1996: 540). The dynamics shaping positive business attitudes toward partnership are weak and diffuse. It remains to be seen whether the Government's agenda for modernisation changes this dynamic through measures such as the partial re-introduction of local business rates (DETR, 30.7.98).

The private sector in these case studies differs in two obvious ways from that described in regime theory. It is not divided into active interests, such as pro or anti-development, locally dependent or non-dependent; and it is not active through representative mechanisms such as chambers of commerce, which remain weak notwithstanding the arrival of the TECs on the institutional scene. The reasons for this position have to be inferred, but the findings tend to support Offe's (1985) view that the collective representation of capital in market societies is weak because its privileged structural position makes representation unnecessary. However, according to Peck and Tickell, business interests are not uni-dimensional and the interests of capital cannot be met unequivocally by the state (1995: 59/60). This perspective implies that there is a rationale for business organising itself, a point borne out in Atlanta where the organisation of business is as much about the prosecution of factional business interests as it is about the representation of capital to the government. If Offe is right in his view, the USA must be an exceptional case.¹ Either way, the obvious factors which undermine business activism in the UK are the absence of material interdependence at the local scale and a weak culture of civic engagement. Without these factors,

¹ Strom also highlights the 'extreme' weakness of the private sector as an organised force in Germany (1996: 476).

it is unlikely that a collaborative dynamic between local government and business in Britain will ever be as powerful as it is in the USA.

These dynamics differ from those discussed in urban regime theory. The difference is that collaboration is not necessary to support the core activities of local government as it is in regime theory (Harding, 1996c, 1997). Rather, collaboration depends on the local authority's perception that it relies on private sector growth for economic regeneration. This perception is compelling as a logic of collaboration and it is embedded in the growth ideologies of local government elites. Thus, as in regime theory there exists a dynamic to collaboration, but it is one sided and it is ideologically, not materially, driven. In regime theory, the dynamic of interdependence motivates both business and local authority around a growth agenda, unless power is pre-empted by other groups. Together with the absence of strong incentives to engender business activism, the potential for business activity in partnership is dependent on inherited socioeconomic factors such as the composition of the local economy. The scope for business activity in a city like Hull is greater than it is in Barnsley simply because the pool of potential business partners is greater. The potential for local regime governance involving the business sector is thus greater in a city hosting a diverse range of large companies, than in a town where major private sector actors are marginal. This conclusion tends to undermine Elkin's perspective, outlined in chapter 1, on the generalizability of his model to smaller places (1987a: 8).

As was noted in chapter 1 there are no empirical claims in this study concerning the manner in which business interests and local authorities might exert influence on government at the supra-local level. However, it is evident that movement within local authorities toward an economic development agenda was not engendered by a local interface with business, but by a wider ideological process. The tension identified by Elkin (1985b) between popular control of government and business control of the economy is not found at the local scale in these cases due to the absence of direct financial interdependence between local authority and business sector. Rather, there has been an ideological synthesis of economic and social objectives in local policies which tends to characterise social regeneration in economic terms. In other words, rather than

seeing a process driven by the private sector, 'we have witnessed the transformation of the public sector through the incorporation of many of the tenets, practices and procedures of the enterprise culture' (Bailey *et al*, 1995: 231). The fieldwork did not examine the extent of popular pressure on the local authorities, but there was no immediate evidence of what Sam Brittan characterises as 'democratic overload', which could have been visible as citizen protests (Brittan, 1975). Anecdotal evidence suggested disgruntlement among backbench Labour councillors at partnership approaches, but economic and social regeneration were rarely counterposed ideologically.² In practice, economic projects have, on occasion, displaced home building, though it was not established whether these decisions were contested, or even known of, beyond discussions between local elites.

What is the nature of the power relations at work here? Stone (1980: 981) describes systemic power as *situational and indirect*, where the superordinate exercises influence over the subordinate without either party necessarily being aware of the process, whose outcome is predictable, but not inevitable. In this study, the influence of the development agenda is predicated on a deduction by the local authority that it has no choice but to pursue market led growth if it wants to achieve economic regeneration. In this case, the power relation is *situational and direct*. Here, the subordinate (the local authority agenda for economic development) has consciously evaluated its position in relation to the superordinate (private sector as wealth creator), but the latter has not exercised direct influence and need not be aware of its position in relation to the subordinate.³ There is a difference here with Stone's scheme in that 'subordination' is the logic of the local authority's political and ideological position, rather than of its economic position. It is, therefore, purely purposive in character. The situational power of business in this case is

² One senior office in NELC was pessimistic about the level of community goods to be derived from economic regeneration. There was also scepticism in Hull and Rotherham about whether the emphasis on employability in education will generate new employment opportunities for local people.

³ For Stone (1980), *situational and direct power* is an 'anticipated reaction' relationship where the subordinate party seeks to interpret the wishes of the superordinate. The subordinate therefore recognises the position of the superordinate party, whether or not this position is recognised by the superordinate.

exercised in relation to policy orientation rather than finance. To re-iterate, this variable, along with the other variables discussed below, is tendential in its realisation. Hull, for example, was very late in arriving at this market oriented policy position and there are still elements within the local authority elites who are resistant to partnership strategies. The ideology of partnership in these cases is much less ubiquitous and less compelling than is material interdependence in regime theory.

The Influence of Central Government

The second major influence on the establishment of local partnerships is central government as a source of incentives and penalties. Government is accorded secondary status as an independent variable by virtue of the fact that collaboration often precedes City Challenge, the landmark government initiative launching the present era of collaboration. The development of partnership approaches is here argued to have had as much to do with political and ideological processes occurring within Labour councils and the Labour Party more widely, as with the Conservative Government's agenda.⁴ In this sense, power is both situationally and intentionally direct, depending on whether the local authority anticipates the position of government, or is coerced through the use of government penalties.

Central government has played a much more direct role in relation to the process of partnership institutionalisation through the use of challenge funds as policy instruments and through a range of specific partnership schemes, such as Education Business Partnerships. The role may be characterised both as coercive and as regulatory. It takes on a coercive character in relation to partnership laggards. Hull was a partnership laggard, pushed by financial penalties from non-partnership to institutional partnership during a two year period. Rotherham, on the other hand, is a partnership innovator. But while it endorsed the ideology of co-operation early on, its approach did not satisfy the Government in relation to City Challenge. The process of institutionalisation in Rotherham was built on a pre-existing partnership agenda in relation to which City Challenge played a regulatory role, a milder form of coercion. The metaphorical

⁴ See chapter 4.

equivalent is that of pushing a cyclist who is stationary and one who is moving. The process of partnership institutionalisation, then, is to varying degrees, the exercise of *intentional and direct* power, that of A over B. In the case of Barnsley, the cyclist was, if success in City Challenge is an indicator, moving faster than in Rotherham. The Barnsley Regeneration Forum was established through its perception of incentives, not penalties. Barnsley anticipated the need for partnership institutionalisation, indicating a *situational and direct* power relation between centre and locality. Hull did not, showing an *intentional and direct* power relation between centre and locality. Different facets of power were exercised in differing situations. This conclusion shows that claims suggesting City Challenge schemes are the forerunner of contemporary regeneration partnerships are true, but that they oversimplify matters (Atkinson, 1999: 63). As far as business is concerned, the mechanism of challenge funds represents an indirect incentive to companies which, if they join partnership boards, cannot benefit directly from project funds. The prospect of resources injected into the local economy, however, was unsurprisingly viewed as a good thing by business. Yet this indirect incentive did not prove sufficient to draw large scale private sector involvement into the partnership process.

This aspect of partnership development is not amenable to explanation by urban regime theory either. Local governance in regime theory is produced by an internal dynamic for co-operation *ie* 'power to'. It is true that the internal governance dynamic in regime theory is a product of the way in which the political-institutional environment mediates the state-market interface, but, according to Elkin and Stone, this environment produces a pre-disposition for the parties to co-operate without command structures around a growth agenda. Partnership institutionalisation, and in some cases partnership development, was in these four case studies a response to external incentives and penalties bestowed by central government.⁵ Where collaboration was not established voluntarily, external pressure was applied. Where business involvement was judged insufficient in North East Lincolnshire by Government Office, the local authority shouldered the blame, not the inactive partners. The process of partnership institutionalisation produced formal

⁵ This is not to say that institutional partnership structures did not occur in other places before external incentives and penalty systems were introduced.

decision making structures. In such structures, the exercise of power is decisional, but it involves deliberation and argument rather than command power. There are two possible effects of this mechanism of partnership regulation. One is that it substitutes for an absence of internal governance capacity; the other is that it is superimposed on a preceding internal governance dynamic operating through networking arrangements. The former proposition is most plausible given the case study findings, but either way, partnership institutionalisation exhibits intentional and direct power forms, which the dynamics in regime theory do not predict. To answer the question of whether partnership institutionalisation has undermined the development of local networks, comparator cases would need to be identified where Government has not been in a position to influence and regulate partnership development, for example, in a Labour authority area which has not been reliant on regeneration programmes. If government constraints were reduced in their potency, would local commitment to collaboration be enhanced or reduced? To answer this question would be to help determine how far the local partnership process is now driven by a ubiquitous or widespread ideological commitment to collaboration. Such a study could also evaluate whether institutionalised partnership formation can be driven locally, whether powerful networks exist side by side with locally driven institutionalised partnerships, and whether in areas where institutionalised partnerships do not exist, collaboration is carried out through networking processes - or not at all.

Partnerships and Globalization

Local dependence and capital mobility are key variables regulating regime governance in Elkin's work (1987a, 1994). Similarly, chapter 3 identifies economic globalization as a potential explanation for the process of coalition formation in Britain and in Europe (Harding, 1994, 1996b; Mayer, 1994). It is important, therefore, to evaluate the kind of impact processes of economic globalization have on the locality and the political responses they generate. If, as Andrew and Goldsmith argue (1998: 103), economic globalization undermines corporate loyalty to place, there is likely to be a growing distinction between the characteristics, interests and conduct of locally dependent capital and non-dependent capital in the UK. Evidence from the case studies suggests that locally dependent productive capital is, as Elkin (1987a) argues, most likely to become

involved in collaborative endeavours. The questions of whether the distinction between locally dependent and non-dependent capital is growing and of just how useful this distinction is in predicting business attitudes toward collaboration, are, however, matters which require further research. Nevertheless, the scale of business involvement in these projects is much smaller than that envisaged in regime theory and the national state and its regional agencies remain the key sites for filtering inward investment inquiries by mobile capital. Whatever the nature and effects of economic globalization, the evidence tends to undermine the idea of an unmediated global-local dialectic between mobile capital on one hand and local government and locally dependent capital on the other. The hypothesis of Harding and Le Gales (1995) and Cox (1995), that unmediated economic factors drive local actors into investment seeking, place-marketing coalitions is not representative of the facts as Harding's empirical findings, discussed below, also show. This is not to say that economic globalization has had no impact on ideology and politics but that its impact on localities is of marginal relevance to the establishment of partnerships. In this sense, there is truth in the claim by Hall and Hubbard (1996: 160) that literature on the 'new urban politics overwhelmingly exhibits a crude conception of the relations of local and global'.

There are, however, qualifications to this conclusion. Most examples of place marketing were attempts to gain the ear and the finance of regional, national and European governments. But in Hull and in North East Lincolnshire, there was also evidence of business oriented place marketing. Hull particularly, through the CityImage project, views collaboration between public and private sector as central to the credibility of its attempts to reinvent itself locally, nationally and internationally. Whether this process is driven ideologically, as Hall and Hubbard (1996) suggest, or economically based on the imperatives of accumulation and competition, cannot be determined from the information gleaned in the case studies. In all probability, local government is influenced by the ideology of globalization, the business sector by its competitive implications. It remains to be seen whether Hull is successful in establishing a direct interface with global actors and what this might look like, but the project involves what Griffiths describes as the commodification of place (Griffiths, 1998: 41). CityImage is also about a 'social control logic' in which image building is not only about making the city attractive for business, but about convincing local

people about the benevolence of entrepreneurial strategies, such as those embodied in ‘The Deep’ (Hall and Hubbard, 1996: 162).⁶ Harding (1997) identifies ten trends which, he says, should be visible in entrepreneurial cities seeking to compete in a global environment. Box 12 compares these trends with the findings in the case studies. His findings suggest that the conclusions in this study may have wider applicability. Harding concludes that there has been no unambiguous shift in governance capacities from centre to locality or from welfare state to productive state. Rather, the current period is perceived as the ‘search for a fix’ which falls short of a decisive shift or resolution (1997: 310).

Trends in Entrepreneurial Cities	Case Study Findings
<i>Demand to Supply Management</i>	Governmental concern with performance enhancement.
<i>Vertical to Horizontal Integration</i>	Local Governance compromised by vertical (state) dominance.
<i>Downgrade Regional Initiatives (Those Concerned with Equity and Balanced Development)</i>	The opposite is happening. New RDAs are part of a Government initiative aimed at levelling up the performance of disadvantaged regions.
<i>Sanctions/Incentives to Enhance Local Mobilisation</i>	Visible in many government initiatives.
<i>Decentralizing Responsibilities, Encouraging Local Institutional Capacity</i>	The opposite is happening in practice. Responsibility is not the same as empowerment.
<i>Oriented on Achievement, More Than Process</i>	Challenge funds create the opposite effect. Bureaucracy rules.
<i>Local Design and Delivery of Policy Initiatives</i>	The opposite is true. Government initiatives are very influential.
<i>Greater Interest in Urban Affairs by Business, Including Lobbying by Locally Dependent Capital</i>	Generally untrue. Increased activity at the margins. Some participants are cynical about partnership.
<i>Formal and Informal Activity Concerned with Gaining the Capacity to Act</i>	Mostly concerned with external funds, not local capacity. Local capacity is visible at the margins.
<i>Input of Material Non/material Resources to Local Production Processes and Consumption Goods Which Support Them</i>	Few material sources except challenge funds. Intellectual resources more significant. Size of place is important in the scale of resource commitment.

Box 12: Competitive Trends in the Case Studies (Adapted from Harding, 1997)

⁶ The case of Manchester suggests that conclusions about the capacity for private sector activity in larger cities drawn from Hull may be true more widely. While still characterised as a ‘grant’ coalition, Manchester’s Olympic bid was supported by an active business elite. The presence of ‘big hitters’ in Manchester made for a more dynamic partnership (Cochrane *et al*, 1996: 1331/2).

There are, therefore, two reasons for scepticism about the diminution of national state influence on local economic development and partnership processes: the legal, geographical, social and economic characteristics of the national state remain key considerations for inward investors and it is the institutions of the state which field their inquiries; and second, to the extent that responsibilities for economic development have been delegated to local partnerships, it is on terms set by the national state, a point developed further below. There is plenty of support within the literature for these conclusions. Painter's research suggests that British local governance is not becoming 'post-Fordist' because the state retains a crucial role in retaining regulatory capacity and agencies of local governance often lack authority (Painter, 1996). For Harding, the State is playing a much greater role in relation to the way in which cities and regions respond to globalizing forces than it did before (1997: 308). Harding and Le Gales (1998: 200) conclude that political change at the national level remains critical in mediating between global pressures and local responses, while Strom argues of Berlin that even with the internationalization of the economy, the nation state remains the critical determinant of the local policy process (1996: 476-477).

Partnerships as a Mode of Local Governance

So, what kind of phenomena do these dynamics produce? A distinction has been made throughout between goal or policy oriented partnerships, and programme or implementation oriented partnerships. Chapter 9 shows how the distinction has proved useful in identifying differing degrees of interdependence between local authority and business sector. This part of the chapter therefore considers further the question of whether partnerships exhibit the qualities of regime governance in terms of generating local governance capacity, or 'power to'.

Synergy in Challenge Partnership Structures?

The basic property of Elkin's and Stone's regime politics, that collaboration will generally involve both public and private sectors, is visible to an extent in all the cases studies. But to re-iterate, the level of strategic autonomy within flagship partnerships is inhibited by extra-local political forces. Local policy agendas and institutional forms are regulated by a range of government policy

instruments, the latest of which is the Regional Development Agency.⁷ The combination of business and local authority within this partnership type has not generated significant business input, or local governance capacity. These partnerships are symbolic, they are not driven by local economic and social imperatives and they have not produced visible governance outputs. Neither do they, at present, exhibit a tendency toward the development of an internal governance dynamic. Rather, both institutional form and strategic objectives are attributable to external imperatives. Local governance through the pooling of local authority and business resources is not occurring and it has been inhibited from developing. The external dynamic at work here, in the shape of policy instruments which have produced similar institutional partnerships and virtually identical area strategies, prevents any internal partnership dynamic from developing. Project realisation thus tends not to be dependent on co-operation within the partnership. These partnerships are contrasted with regime governance in which an internal dynamic drives the process.

Synergy in Policy Development?

The purpose of the flagship partnership, underpinned by an area regeneration strategy, is to generate a co-ordinated approach to regeneration across policy arenas. The analysis of education business links and the wider learning agenda shows how this policy arena has been linked to regeneration agendas, normally with learning in support of economic objectives. Employability is a key dimension in these strategies, emphasising the role of learning in the realm of necessity, but not in the realm of freedom, *ie* arts, cultural pursuits and learning for its own sake. But again, there is little evidence of local business influence on these priorities. While there is a good bilateral relationship between LEA and key local businesses in Hull, it is about producing curriculum aids rather than a strategic agenda. Education business link projects are structured by government initiatives such as EBPs, the soon-to-be Lifelong Learning partnerships and by the imperative of private sector led wealth creation applied to learning, and it is this logic which in turn opens the way for business to influence the education agenda in schools through business education links.

⁷ It remains to be seen whether the RDAs have sufficient autonomy from government for business leaders to exercise influence over regional economic strategies (Yorkshire Forward, July 1999).

It is interesting, however, that a recurring relationship can be identified between each local authority and key business actors across different policy arenas. It is arguable that this situation represents the potential for a local elite consisting of local authority, TEC, Chamber and one or two key businesses to exercise a 'hegemonic' influence throughout a broad cross-section of local policy arenas. In Barnsley, for example, the involvement of one or two business activists in many partnerships was perceived to have given rise to supra-institutional dynamics in the form of strategic considerations about how an action in one partnership will affect standing in another. Were these partnerships empowered and empowering, and were they based on relationships of trust and reciprocity rather than on 'turf wars', they would represent a form of regime governance. But limited local autonomy instead suggests that local governance processes are weak or symbolic in character.

Synergy in Implementation Oriented Partnerships?

If challenge partnerships do not possess the characteristics of regime governance, have they helped to stimulate regime governance in implementation oriented partnerships? The practice of partnership has spread well beyond the challenge process into a range of policy and service arenas, including education and housing. Whether this development is attributable to the stimulus of challenge partnerships is debatable. The evidence suggests that some effect has occurred, if only because they tended to precede implementation oriented partnerships. The depth of partnership penetration varies and the picture of unevenness makes it difficult to give a single label to the range of partnership practices in each area. The ideology of partnership is strong in Rotherham, but the practice is weaker. In Hull, the opposite is true, particularly in education. What can be said is that there is more evidence of local governance capacity and of a trend toward business participation, commitment and leadership at the operational level than there is at the policy level. It is certainly plausible that the culture and practice of co-operation engendered in challenge partnerships, however symbolic, has re-enforced the ideology of partnership leading to the proliferation of other partnership activities. There is evidence that the process of partnership building now has its own dynamic locally and that it does not require extra-local incentives and penalties. There is also weaker evidence that this partnership dynamic can produce local

governance capacity. A handful of business activists are influential across the range of partnership activities and have had a visible impact on the output of partnership activities. As suggested above, this tendency is stronger in Hull and NEL than in Barnsley and in Rotherham where business capacity is weakest. The processes inhibiting local governance in relation to challenge partnerships may be beginning to produce local governance capacity in relation to practice.

On these criteria, there is evidence, at the margins, that the conditions for regime governance may be starting to develop in isolated initiatives but that it has not generalized to encompass the hegemonic influence within or throughout a broad cross-section of local policy arenas associated with regime theory. The fact, for example, that local authorities may be predisposed toward private sector wealth creation does not mean that they support economic growth at any cost. The study did not focus on local authority planning processes and the evidence gathered was weak in this respect. But the exercise of growth control in Hull with respect to the 'Lord Line' building where wider community interests were at stake, is indicative of the fact that in the absence of fiscal pressures local authorities sometimes reject growth options without a direct impact on core service provision (Harding, 1996c, 1997). The ideology of market led growth is not the same as an instrumental subordination to the development principle.⁸ This perception is shared by Di Gaetano, who identifies competing pro-growth and growth management 'regimes' in Bristol (1997). The case of Hull, particularly, highlights the heterogeneity of perspective within the Council and the potential for conflict between objectives. To this extent, local politics matter.

Outputs from Partnership Initiatives

In a limited sense, then, the characteristics of regime governance are visible in specific initiatives pursued within the case study areas. Yet the evidence suggests that partnerships have not been instrumental in achieving their visionary ambitions for regeneration. Partnership working has generated business activism at the micro level in North East Lincolnshire, but it has not generated community benefits from the £3 billion of capital investment into the area over the past eight years.

⁸ Although the DETR can overturn planning refusals. Two such refusals were awaiting adjudication by the DETR as the fieldwork concluded.

There was little optimism either that the decline of Barnsley, Rotherham, Hull and North East Lincolnshire is likely to be reversed relative to the region, to the UK or to Europe by means of partnership governance or by any other means. Stone (1989, 1993) claims that regime governance is about small opportunities, small purposes and achievements, and regime theory shows that collaborative projects need not be very ambitious. But they should make a difference (Stone, 1997: 22). There remain grounds for scepticism that collaboration, to the extent that it involved the interdependence of local resources, does make a difference to outcomes. Perhaps is it not the achievements of local partnerships which would disappoint Elkin and Stone, but the symbolism of local interactions, the difficulty in mobilising local capacity and the way in which central government continues to limit local autonomy.

Trends in Collaborative Structures

Though the emphasis remains on formal, or semi-formal co-operation in partnerships, there is evidence that local partners are seeking a balance between the bureaucratic rigours imposed by central government and the unaccountability and potential corruptibility of informal networks. Local elites are not, therefore, passive recipients for this agenda. But local resistance was not evident and, while this process concerns local elites, government policy announcements in relation to lifelong learning suggest that New Labour is driving the process of partnership institutionalisation still further, notwithstanding Richard Caborn's wishes to the contrary. It is feared that the further institutionalisation of partnership activities, for example, the management of Government funds will kill off what little local autonomy exists.

The Role of Urban Partnerships in the Production of Local Governance

If regime governance is understood as synergism in collaborations across a wide range of governance activities, how do urban partnerships match this conception? With exceptions at the margin, these partnerships are, unlike regime governance, epiphenomenal to most of the decisions affecting the locality, that is, local politics don't matter very much. The conclusions drawn here concerning the impact of central government controls on local governance capacity are shared by Morgan *et al*, suggesting that they may be relevant on a wider scale:

...the presence of regional institutions in Wales presents us with an uncomfortable paradox, namely that the Welsh Office, by virtue of its power and resources, tends to foster vertical networks which have the effect of disempowering local actors from building effective horizontal networks (Morgan *et al*, 1999: 194).

As was noted above, further research would be necessary to determine whether sufficient local synergy exists to produce local governance in places, if such exist, which do not fall under the influence of governmental incentives and penalties. However, the evidence presented here shows that local governance capacity is inhibited in those arenas where extra-local influence is strong.

Governance activities in the locality are subordinate to the policies and the resources determined and allocated at higher levels of government. All political power is instantiated through the actions of agents (Callinicos, 1987: 86) and local actors interpret structural pressures upon them. But it is also true that local politics face powerful extra-local political and economic constraints and that partnerships are marginal in terms of governance outputs. Other levels of decision making, from the sub-regional upward, matter more in terms of policy decisions, resource generation and allocation, and in terms of new capital investment decisions by business. A focus on the relationships between actors within the locality does not encompass the key dynamics of governance. Stone argues that policy setting coalitions (urban regimes) fulfil a policy setting function which arises from the needs and aspirations of a community (1988: 89-90). In Atlanta, this is a job that needs to be done locally. The evidence presented in this study suggests that the local policy setting function has not engendered and does not require a strong, locally based, policy coalition in the current political-institutional environment. Stoker argues that the 'new management' is prone to producing perverse effects which overwhelm or contradict the ambitions of reformers (1997b: 8). Whether intentional or not, whether good or bad, limitations on the local governance capacity within challenge partnerships is predictable if they are analysed in terms of institutional design.

This conclusion corresponds with Ward's speculation that SRB processes show spatial variation between 'regimes' to be 'impossible' (1997b: 1503). Intuitively, as Lowndes *et al* (1998: 327) and Morgan *et al* (1999: 194) suggest, vertical networks are inimical to horizontal networks. In

1995, the CBI commented that private sector contributions to SRB partnerships had been poor throughout the country (CBI, 21.8.95). Ironically, the very structure of the SRB is one reason why that finding is replicated in this study four years on. Unsurprisingly, then, local governance capacity is most visible in initiatives which are furthest removed from central government influence. One answer, therefore, to Ward's quest for the abstract pre-conditions for regime governance (Ward, 1997b: 1494) is the rolling back of central government's influence on local political processes and the reconstitution of local institutions to facilitate local governance.⁹ Elkin, elaborating his constitutive approach to political institutions, warns that too much central control over the finances of local government will inhibit the vital, deliberative city (1987a: 177). Given that the institutions we build must in a sense contain the outcomes we wish to see, if the desired outcome is local stakeholder governance and local governance capacity, current institutional structures will have to be redesigned to facilitate local innovation and autonomous action. It is interesting, for example, that in the USA, while local governments are creatures of the state, they enjoy a great deal of practical autonomy, a point made by Stone in relation to education policy (Stone, 1998b: 2).

Local institutional restructuring, as in regime theory, can only achieve so much. Sustainable, equitable local governance is also conditional on the sustainability of the market economy and on the capacity for local governance to unlock such potential as there may be for regeneration from within the locality. On the former point, however, as in regime theory, there are grounds for scepticism. Stakeholder partnerships may not be capable of producing equitable, sustainable, local governance, however well designed they are because 'the very workings of the political economy that serve to prompt the concern for reform will substantially impede it' (Elkin, 1987a: 181). Ultimately, if liberalism and democracy tend to undermine each other in the USA, rather than each standing in dynamic tension to the other, is the UK likely to be any different?¹⁰

⁹ See chapter 2.

¹⁰ See chapter 2 for an evaluation of the way regime theory treats the question of liberal democracy.

Finally, there are empirical grounds to challenge the central logic of regime theory, that co-operation necessarily produces synergy. Stone (1988: 99) points to the potential for problems of this kind, commenting that in Atlanta, co-operation has given rise to controversy over conflicts of interest involving councillors and developers. Partnership can also produce negative synergy, thereby reducing governance capacity. It can be disabling as well as enabling and may not be instrumental in generating optimum outputs. In other words, there is a risk that partnership drives objectives instead of objectives driving partnership (Corry *et al*, 1997: 45). The evidence highlights the weakness of local partnership dynamics and practices, but it also provides a reminder that some things are done better by one organisation than by many, to use an old proverb 'too many cooks spoil the broth'. Partnership can produce inertia, conflict and non-governance, which Stone (1989: 231) says, can occur in the absence of regime governance. Furthermore, partnerships not only engender resources, they require resources to sustain them (Huxham, 1996: 177). Oatley and Lambert confirm the findings in this study, warning that there is a danger of 'bidding fatigue' setting in as regeneration teams engage in endless and exhausting rounds of competitive bidding (1998: 121). Models, such as that developed by Stoker (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994) and by Bassett (1996) show that local governance is not necessarily a harmonious process. But the local governance debate, while recognising the potential for governance failure (Stoker, 1998b; Rhodes, 1999b), has underplayed the extent to which local governance itself may generate centrifugal, or fragmentary tendencies. Stone (1989: 236) pointed out that regime governance in the USA is difficult to build from scratch. The study shows that while partnership processes are common, local governance by partnership is not. The processes identified in this study support Stone's cautionary note, suggesting that typologies of regime governance in the UK may be premature, prescriptive or predictive rather than descriptive. As Harding observes:

Urban studies ... might wittingly or unwittingly be conspiring in the representation of current events, trends and policies as if they were in some way natural and unavoidable, when in fact a range of other representations and options is possible (Harding, 1997: 292).

Properties of Regime Governance	Regime Indicators	Contra-indicators	Case Study Findings
<i>Participants</i>	Collaboration between local authority and private sector agents.	No identifiable interface between local authority and business beyond statutory processes.	Local authority and business partnerships at a range of levels.
<i>Empowerment</i>	Project realisation requires co-operation. Interdependence of local resources to achieve hitherto unattainable ends. Involves mobilisation of private sector resources for local projects.	Partnership does not facilitate governance outputs. Ends attainable without mobilisation of partnership resources.	Limited evidence of new governance capacity.
<i>Local Discretion</i>	Local politics matter in determining local strategies and objectives.	Local politics irrelevant to governance decisions and outputs.	Very limited local discretion in relation to strategy. Higher levels of discretion in relation to implementation partnerships.
<i>Co-operation</i>	Imperative to co-operate within both sectors. No command structure needed.	Command structure between local agents or on local agents by an external party.	Direct coercion on local authorities to partner with business. Business participation voluntary but weak. No command structure within strategic partnerships, but local authority pre-eminent. Business leadership emerging in implementation partnerships.
<i>Sustainability</i>	Evidence of long term inter-dependence between local authority and business leaders, generated locally.	Dependent on external resources. Short term, instrumental relationships.	Policy partnerships oriented on external funds. Sustainability of partnership structure uncertain.
<i>Sphere of influence</i>	Encapsulates broad range of initiatives. May extend across policy arenas due to dependence of other activities on resources generated through economic development.	No influence.	Implementation partnerships established with local resources. Sustainability uncertain.
<i>Partnership activities</i>	Developed locally. Likely to be aimed at enhancing economic growth.	Determined externally. Alternatively, expands lower class opportunities.	Entrepreneurial policies, but not partnership generated. Same actors appear in different partnership activities

Box 13: Regime Governance and the Characteristics of Local Partnerships in Barnsley, Rotherham, Hull and North East Lincolnshire

Morgan *et al* go so far as to argue that extra-local influences are so powerful that the governing without government thesis is a 'fatal conceit' (1999: 196). Stoker (1998b: 24) argues, following his co-authored study of Detroit (Orr and Stoker, 1994) that governance failure is crucial to understanding the new world of governing. Scepticism about the quality and efficacy of local partnerships is similarly crucial. The characterisation of 'governance' developed by Rhodes (1996) is set out in chapter 3. This study advises caution in attributing the status of *regime* to local partnerships and, in doing so, it also suggests that 'governance' as characterised by Rhodes does not adequately capture the processes at work in local partnerships.¹¹ If governance is self-organizing autonomous networks which are able to resist central guidance (Rhodes, 1996: 667), the partnerships depicted in the case studies are not governance. As a contribution to the governance debate, therefore, this study throws doubt on just how far local governance beyond the world of contracts, boards and committees has developed. At the very least, it suggests that local governance is under-theorised, an issue addressed in the concluding sections of the chapter. The properties of regime governance are compared with the findings in the case studies in Box 13.

Explaining Urban Partnerships

Thus, urban partnerships exhibit the characteristics of regime governance only at the margins, as Box 13 shows. But what is the nature of the explanation for these partnerships highlighted in this study? It remains to express the above conclusions as a set of independent variables and to compare the explanation with the hypotheses set out in Box 4 in chapter 3, although in doing this, the strength and generalizability of the claims made here are qualified. This approach represents a contribution at the intermediate level of theory building. It is a structure and agency approach in which it is assumed that social structures possess generative capacities (Wendt, 1987; Callinicos, 1987; Bhaskar, 1989; Hay, 1995; 1997). These structures are not considered to be static or unchanging, but the way that they are produced, sustained and changed lies beyond the scope of this study. The first step in identifying this explanation as a theory of local partnerships

¹¹ See chapter 3.

is to identify the variables involved and, where possible, to identify the relationship between them. A final evaluation of the contribution by regime theory to this study is then made.

Explanatory Variables and Local Partnerships

Whatever the external influences on local ideological development, the evidence suggests that local economic problems themselves stimulated partnership ideologies among local authority elites. Whereas economic decline is treated as an exogenous variable, the ideology of market development is characterised both as exogenous and endogenous. The study shows a greater predisposition toward this ideology in the areas where economic decline was most severe. The ideology of market led growth is thus an independent variable, (IV2). It is, in part, a response to local perceptions of economic decline (IV1).¹² Economic decline is a contextual variable having predictable, but not certain, effects. On balance, it precedes the ideology of market development.

The ideology of market development, once developed, produced a logic of collaboration. However, the case of recalcitrant authorities shows how the development of this ideology did not necessarily precede partnerships. Partnership can be coerced externally and, where this occurs, the influence of government is independent variable 3 (IV3). Government can also be IV4, exercising a more gentle regulatory role, influencing the trajectory of partnership practices through the incentive of funding and also through the raft of policy initiatives emanating from the DETR.¹³ So far as influence on business is concerned, IV2 and IV3 are marginal, whereas IV1 and IV4 are more likely to be influential. Locally dependent businesses have an interest in reversing economic decline and governmental ideas and incentives can generate a commitment to partnership, if it is seen to work. It has been suggested that the influence of economic globalization in the production of a global-local dialectic which in turn generates partnership activity was marginal, most salient in Hull. This variable, IV5, is weak but the supporting evidence suggests that it may be stronger

¹² Or the social effects commonly associated with economic decline.

¹³ For the sake of simplicity, TECs are here characterised as government influence.

in larger places which are capable, pro-actively, of attempting to generate a global-local interface.¹⁴

At the operational level of partnership, the influence of government as IVs 3 and 4 diminishes. These partnerships tend to be driven by local objectives, established through often difficult negotiations among local actors. IV's 1 and 2 are, however, salient at the operational level in explaining the context, perceptions and actions of local agents in initiatives as diverse as venture companies and education business links. Three further independent variables can be identified at this level, which could have an impact on both local government and the business sector. The evidence suggests that the practice of partnership in challenge fund initiatives generates a deeper ideological commitment to collaboration, facilitating partnership penetration into broader areas of local governance activity. This factor, while lacking much evidence to support the claim, is characterised as independent variable 6. IV6, partnership practice, results in the diffusion and the penetration of partnership ideologies throughout organisations and within the consciousness of individual elite actors. This variable might also be characterised as 'social capital' in accordance with Stone's definition which suggests that small scale instances of co-operative action can nurture habits of reciprocity and trust (1998d: 267).¹⁵ Operational partnerships themselves can take on the characteristic of an independent variable (IV7) in relation to the generation of project initiatives and outcomes. They are indicative of local autonomy and of local governance capacity in relation to small opportunities and achievements, such as port promotions, image building and curriculum development, which could not be attained without collaboration. Partnership activity therefore has a generative effect at two levels, IV6 as partnership practice (inputs) and IV7 as

¹⁴ The variable was weak both in relation to the practice of partnership and evidence of a local ideology of global-localisation. Only one participant conceptualised relationships in this way (HERCCS, 22.1.99).

¹⁵ Where social capital is defined as the ability to gain social ends by co-operation, with minimal reliance on direct payments or coercion (Stone, 1998c: 268). Stone further notes that interpersonal social capital - good personal relationships - does not necessarily translate into group social capital - civic capacity (1998c: 268). The claim by the Leader of NELC (12.6.98a) that, while relationships with business are good, business puts little into the local community is a good illustration of this point.

governance outputs from those initiatives. Finally, independent variable 8 (IV8) represents interdependence analogous to that in regime theory, which may arise from the process of partnership. IV8 is therefore an outcome of partnership processes, a stimulus to new or continued partnership processes. New partnership activities may become core governance activities, requiring the sustenance of co-operation if they are to continue. Image building in Hull may be an example of a core governance activity which could not proceed further without sustained collaboration between business and local authority.

It remains to account for factors preventing partnership development, or the development of governance capacity with partnerships. The ninth independent variable (IV9) is that of endogenous conflict. It is a counterfactual to partnership dynamics, showing how the structural dynamics operating in the locality do not have a determinate, or a necessary impact on local agents. The process of partnership itself (IV6) may augment this counterfactual by institutionalising conflicts and inertia, with governance enabled only by partnership fragmentation. The final negative variables preventing partnerships from generating governance capacity are IV3/4, the government programme in its guise as an inhibiting influence on partnership agendas and institutions. IV9 is the negative synergy in collaboration. Cropper (1996: 82) argues that the survival of alliances depends on their ability to create and to command value and the case studies illustrate the wisdom in this simple point. Negative synergy produces fragmentation. This perspective goes further than the claim made in regime theory, that collaboration is hard to build and sustain, arguing in addition that collaboration, once achieved, can be a cause of governance failure.

As stated above, this is a theory of structure and agency which shows the extent to which actors have the capacity to mediate structural pressures and, through the practices they adopt, to generate new structures whose effects have also to be mediated in the action of agents. Stone's argument (1989) was that agents and structures have a reciprocal action on one another. In this study, the evidence suggested that although the impact of supra-local structures on each locality is different, the supra-local structures themselves are relatively constant. The question of how far

localities in combination affect these structures, through media such as the LGA and the CBI, is beyond the scope of this project but as was noted in chapter 1, extra-local influences may not be constant or immutable. Stone's assumption that local agents can change structures at the margins makes more sense applied to IVs 6 to 8. These variables do not exist in any determinate relationship to one another, they can co-exist in a process of 'structuring'. But they can be perceived as the outcome of independent variables 1 to 5 and the different ways in which these factors are realised in the locality. Factors such as economic decline, government influence and local political interpretations of local problems cannot be assumed to be permanent. In their absence, IVs 6 to 8 may, themselves, prove capable of sustaining partnership working. They are endogenous in character, dependent on the local agents through which they are constituted. IV9 is also a local variable, indicating that whatever the exogenous and endogenous factors explaining positive moves toward partnership, fragmentary pressures are still capable of manifesting themselves.

This is not, strictly speaking, a process of structuration, where supra-local structures are altered by the local structures they generate, but of structural mediation, where, in Bhaskar's terms, explanatory factors are tendencies in things (social structures) which may be 'possessed unexercised and exercised unrealised' as well as 'realized unperceived by people'. Hence, to attribute structural capacity, or 'transfactual activity' to a social mechanism is not to make a claim about the outcome of processes, just as gravity may not be realized given the counterforce of momentum (Bhaskar, 1989: 9-10). One can add to this point that structural capacities vary. Hence, in relation to local politics, variables 1 to 5 are 'hard' non-malleable supra-local structures, where as variables 6 to 9 are 'soft', in the sense that they are constituted locally. The situation described here bears out Stone's argument that changes occur at the margins of enduring relationships (1989: 10). However, the endogenous structures exhibited no obvious influence on the exogenous structures. Hence, the question of whether a new dynamic or process of structuration will emerge in the relationship between endogenous and exogenous variables, resulting in greater autonomy for local partnerships, is an issue for future studies.

It is accepted, then, that independent variables do not have an invariant impact. Is it possible, though, to make any further generalizations about the relationship between the extra-local variables themselves from the empirical material presented in this study? The problem of apprehending the relationship between different structures is described by Wendt as the 'structure-structure problem' (1987: 368). As Becker puts it, what is the 'conjunctural' relationship between the variables (1992: 206)? The anatomy of the extra-local variables has not, to emphasise the point, been explored. However, it is taken for granted here that independent variables produce one another. Thus, variable X only has an effect if variable Y is present. Otherwise, X will have no effect. If, for example, variable X is economic decline, this will have no effect if variable Y, an ideology of partnership, is not present. Finally, the isolation and ordering of explanatory variables is not intended to convey the impression that this analysis is intentionally exclusive, or that it claims to be 'forensic' in character. To re-emphasise the point made in chapter 1 in conclusion, the relationship between variables is fluid, the realisation of variables is uncertain and the findings made here do not preclude the existence of other variables which either support or contradict them. Box 14 summarises the explanation for urban partnerships offered in this study.

Local Governance and Regime Theory Re-visited

Where, then, do these findings stand in relation to regime theory? It was argued in chapter 3 that a test of regime theory in the very different conditions of the UK would be a futile exercise and consequently no attempt has been made to make regime theory fit the facts. The findings tend to justify this approach in themselves. Even if regime theory were abridged to the claim that collaboration between local organisations is necessary for the production of governance, many of the facts presented here would contradict it. There are three levels at which regime theory does not work for the analysis of local partnerships. First, the nature of the explanation is itself very different. As Boxes 13 and 14 show, there are similarities between the independent variables generating regime governance and those generating partnerships, but the process tends to be driven by extra-local factors rather than by an internal dynamic. Second, local partnerships cannot, by and large, be characterised as regime governance. Hence, and third, this explanation is not only

Variables	Hypotheses	Case Study Findings
<i>Economic Decline (IV1)</i>	<p>Reduction in powers and resources force local authorities into partnerships.</p> <p>Local economic difficulties pressure business into collaborating with local authorities on a growth agenda.</p>	<p>Local economic decline has no direct effect on core activities of local government. However, it acts as an important stimulus for economic development related activities, based on the ideology of market led growth. Economic decline acts as an incentive for some locally dependent businesses to enter collaborative projects.</p>
<i>The Ideology of Partnership (IV2)</i>	<p>The ideology of market growth stimulates local authority interest in partnership. Less likely to influence business.</p>	<p>The development of economic strategies and the ideology of market led growth stimulates a logic of partnership within local government. Some evidence of new ideology of partnership in business, but not deeply embedded.</p>
<i>Government Programmes (IVs 3 and 4)</i>	<p>Partnerships are established to bid for and are sustained by government funds.</p>	<p>The hypothesis is true in relation to 'strategic' partnerships, but the influence of government funding schemes is secondary in implementation oriented partnerships.</p>
<i>Economic Globalization (IV5)</i>	<p>Creates pressure on local authorities and local businesses to co-operate in the process of attracting mobile investment.</p>	<p>The hypothesis is a caricature. Global-local interfaces are normally mediated by the state. Place marketing initiatives indicate efforts to establish global-local interface.</p>
<i>The Ideology of Partnership (IV6)</i>	<p>Processes of partnership working generate wider support for partnership activities.</p>	<p>There is evidence that partnership proliferation is being sustained by a growing local commitment to partnership within business.</p>
<i>Governance Outputs (IV7)</i>	<p>No hypothesis in chapter 3.</p>	<p>Developing in specific initiatives.</p>
<i>Evolving Interdependence (IV8)</i>	<p>Processes of partnership working generates activities requiring sustained commitments from both parties over a long period.</p>	<p>Some governance projects require sustained input by both parties.</p>
<i>Negative Synergy (IV9)</i>	<p>Not anticipated in chapter 3.</p>	<p>Partnership fragmentation viewed as positive in some cases.</p>

Box 14: The Factors Influencing the Formation and Development of Urban Partnerships

very different from *the* regime theory, it is not *a* regime theory either. The explanation is also very limited in ways which regime theory is not. It is conceptually sparse, given the richness of the regime theory outlined in chapter 2. It does not, for example, offer an alternative paradigm statement concerning the nature of liberal democratic societies and it does not theorise the motivations driving human behaviour. Furthermore, the applicability of the variables identified will vary much more dramatically from place to place than do those found in regime theory. Given that different findings can be expected in places of different sizes with different political and economic characteristics, this study is more robust in analysing Labour authorities beset with economic problems than in determining the universal relevance of particular variables to British local governance. It is not possible to say that any of the independent variables will be realised in every local authority area in the UK and nor is it possible to say that alternative variables do not influence local tendencies to produce, or not to produce, partnerships. Whether, for example, this explanation works in regional centres like Leeds (John and Cole, 1998) and Manchester (Cochrane *et al*, 1996), or in global cities such as London, New York and Tokyo (Sassen, 1991), cannot be determined from this study, though the contrasts between Hull and the other cases is indicative of potential differences based on size. It is likely, for example, given the constant political and fiscal environment in which local authorities operate, that central government will still be a key influence through its many local initiatives (see Appendix 3), but the dynamics of global-localisation may be very different, given the potential in cities for image building programmes internationally and for integrating 'big-hitters' from multi-national corporations into local governance activities.

Yet, it will be apparent that the study has been strongly influenced by regime theory, interpreted as a theory of public-private collaboration. Without the ideas expressed in regime theory the questions of why, in what ways and with what effect local government and business collaborate would not have been formulated in the same way. Without the conceptual lens offered by regime theory, it would have been much more difficult to develop an alternative framework which contrasts the partnerships found in the case studies with the mode of governance in Dallas and Atlanta. Without the notion in regime theory that regime governance is difficult to build, it would

have proved more difficult to get across the point that sustained governing networks comprising public and private actors within and across broad policy arenas are likely to remain a rarity in British local governance. It is useful simply because it facilitates understanding of how partnerships represent a different mode of governance from regimes and why, in the absence of local interdependence, partnership working does *not* produce regime governance. At the same time, without regime theory, the question would not now be asked about whether the fragmentary governance processes identified in the study might represent a trend, which could grow and generalise within and across local policy arenas and, if they do, what the public-private sector dynamic might be like in such a situation. Regime theory, therefore, is useful merely because it necessitates comparison between different systems of local governance and because this comparison shows that British local governance is still not very much like that in America. If its explanatory capacity is limited here, its capacity to generate contrasts, theoretical and empirical, is immense. It is possible, therefore, to learn as much from challenging an approach as from substantiating it.

Reconceptualizing Local Governance: Decentralization as A Policy Instrument

It is all very well to highlight what an explanation is not, but more difficult to identify what it is. This section locates the account developed in this chapter within the ‘governance’ debate, using it to question the relevance of the governance thesis as characterised by Rhodes.¹⁶ The final section concludes the study by evaluating the implications of this debate for the further study of local governance in the UK.

It has been found that certain government initiatives, notably challenge schemes, inhibit local governance capacity, a conclusion also drawn by other scholars (Lowndes *et al*, 1998, Morgan *et al*, 1999). Expressed simply, this finding is suggestive of a situation in which there is a contradiction, or a ‘dialectic’, between partnership as one mode of governance and the autonomous self-governing network as another. How, then, can the role of central government

¹⁶ See chapter 3.

be assessed in the production of this contradiction? Stoker (1998c: 49) asks whether it is possible for elected officials to exercise some control over the 'partnership networks' constituting local governance. To the extent that central government policy is developed by elected politicians, the answer must be 'yes' because local flagship partnerships and area strategies tend to reflect central political influences, sometimes down to the level of individual projects. If the influence of the centre is indeed as strong as the case studies suggest it is, it can be contended that its influence is expanding, not contracting, vis a vis the locality. In this environment, it seems reasonable to characterise these partnerships as implementation agencies for central government.¹⁷ These local partnerships are powerful implementation tools, responsible for 'bending' central government initiatives to local circumstances (see Brookes, 1999: 46). This interpretation is supported by the government's wish that SRB Round 5 bids must work with the 'grain' of a plethora of regional and national policies and programmes (DETR, September 1998: 7) and by the LGA's *New Commitment to Regeneration* initiative, which seeks to ensure that central government funding streams are sensitised better to local circumstances through strong central-local and local-local partnerships (LGA, 2 April 1998).

This process, while it is not a partnership of equals, cannot be dismissed as the domination of one level of government over another. It is more subtle than that. It is not only about bringing local government and business together to engender local entrepreneurialism (DoE, 13.6.95), it is about drawing local stakeholders, including business, into supporting and carrying out the government's agenda for regeneration in the locality.¹⁸ It could prove, for example, to be a subtle way for government to gain influence over the market through winning the private sector to its view of regeneration, as well as being a means to marketize local politics. As was suggested in chapter 3, government advice plays an important role by incorporating partnership activists into the 'linguistic market and products which dominate urban regeneration, creating an appreciation of

¹⁷ Although this designation is not intended to rule out the possibility that they may fulfil other roles too.

¹⁸ This point is given implicit support by John and Cole (1998: 384), who argue of Leeds that due to new interdependencies, local business is 'more subject to the balance of public decisions than before'.

what is appropriate and likely to be valued' (Atkinson, 1999: 67). Partnership, therefore, is as much about bringing other groups into partnership with the state as it is about bringing local 'stakeholders' into partnership with each other. In a sense, this process is the institutionalisation of civil society, blurring the edges between state and non-state institutions (see Stoker, 1998c: 46).¹⁹ Partnerships are not, strictly speaking, organs of the state, they are policy instruments (Peters, 1998; Pierre, 1998b). Rhodes' concept of the 'hollowing out of the state' identifies one aspect of governance as the loss of functions by the centre to alternative delivery systems, often involving a distinction between policy and administration; and another as the reduced capacity of the centre to steer (1999a: xxiii). The processes discussed here represent a form of 'hollowing out' insofar as central government has, since the early 1990s, delegated responsibilities for economic regeneration to the locality.²⁰ But this is a very particular form of hollowing out, in which the state effectively retains its institutional capacity, though this is disseminated within hundreds of different institutions in the locality. There is a paradoxical process of decentralization and centralization going on in which the delegation of new responsibilities to the locality for regeneration simultaneously acts as a regulatory mechanism on the local policy agenda and on the range of local institutions involved with it. The state therefore has increased rather than reduced its capacity to steer. It may be relinquishing direct control to a limited extent, but in doing so, it is purchasing wider *effective* control, an ability to manage, influence and manipulate policy arenas and institutions more effectively. In short, it is purchasing new institutional capacity in the locality.

¹⁹ Where civil society is defined as that which exists outside the formal-legal institutions of the state.

²⁰ The 'hollowing out of the state' refers to: privatization and limiting the scope and forms of public intervention; loss of functions by central and local government departments to alternative delivery systems, the loss of functions by Britain to the European Union; and limits to the discretion of public servants through the new public management with its emphasis on accountability and clearer political control through a distinction between politics and administration (Rhodes, 1996: 661).

This account is agnostic as to how far this process has gone, to whether it is intentional and as to its likely outcomes.²¹ It is, therefore, partly hypothetical and partly descriptive. These processes may be accidental, they may be part of a cohesive strategy, or they may be the preferred direction of individuals within government. But, given the limitations of business involvement in challenge partnerships, if attempts are being made to mobilise non-state actors to implement a state agenda, the process has not so far been very successful in this regard. The harmonization of local policy agendas with those of government and the incorporation of local stakeholders who agree with these agendas as abstract statements is not, as has been argued, the same as the agreement of more concrete priorities or of interorganisational responsibilities for particular activities. It does not, furthermore, guarantee the desired regeneration outputs.

In summary, this exposition has generated two propositions: that the decentralising or regulatory state is also an acquisitive state; and that the hollowing out of the state does not necessarily result in governance, understood as networks.²² The core theoretical statement of this study, therefore, is that the mode of governance we are currently seeing is the re-distribution and the enhancement, not the surrender, of the institutional capacities of the state. It is therefore a challenge to the 'fatal conceit' of governance theory (Morgan *et al*, 1999: 196) and it represents a contribution to the diverse body of literature produced by scholars who can be categorized as 'governance sceptics'.²³

Conclusion: Implications for the Further Study of Local Governance

What, then, are the implications of these conclusions for the study of local governance? This study has identified key processes which have led local authority elites to pursue a collaborative agenda with the business sector in their quest for resources and for the successful regeneration of

²¹ Richard Caborn accepted that there may be an element of this intent in Government policy (DETR, 7.7.99).

²² The first proposition is lent added credibility by Harding's perception that the state now plays an enhanced role in relation to the response by cities and regions to globalizing forces (1997: 308).

²³ See Painter, (1996), Harding (1997), Harding and Le Gales (1998) and Strom (1996).

their communities. It also suggested an element of discontent within Labour elites and backbenchers. This discontent may be passive and relatively inarticulate at present, but changes, including renewed economic difficulties or dissatisfaction with 'New Labour' among its backbenchers and within local communities, could act as a counter-weight against business involvement in local governance. As was noted in chapter 1, there may be a tendency for local actors to exaggerate the extent of partnership to appease central government (Stoker, 1999) and it is plausible that even this sceptical study could overestimate the embeddedness of partnership practices. Unlike the more extreme post-Fordist analyses (Mayer, 1994), 'governance' is not considered to be an irreversible element of the local institutional landscape, particularly given the questionable added value of the approach and the absence of collaborative commitment from the business sector. Partnership is the buzz word of the 1990s, first as an ideology of market driven growth (Bailey *et al*, 1995; Oatley, 1998), and latterly as a broader ideology of community governance (DETR, 25.3.99). Harding (1998: 87) believes that the 'partnership movement' will continue to 'gain strength' in the 'coming period. But there is no compelling reason why his prediction will come true unless partnerships succeed in generating higher levels of 'stakeholder' activism and in delivering clear and sustainable improvements in the lives of local people.

A key conclusion from this study, then, is not just that partnerships as a mode of governance are distinctive from regime governance as self-governing networks, but also that the dynamics which produce partnerships can undermine local potential for regime governance. In this sense, elements of the two processes are mutually exclusive. The processes described here do not seem to be adequately captured either by the traditional use of the term 'government', or by the narrow characterisation of governance as autonomous, self-governing networks. They are suggestive of the need for a better distinction between different kinds of governance in future studies. Governance, particularly, does not adequately express the possibility that the abandonment of *formal* control by state institutions can result in increased *effective* control of sub-national political processes, impeding local networking.²⁴ Since governance by partnership and governance by

²⁴ Peters recognises this possibility, arguing that partnerships might result in the subversion of private sector goals 'in the name of achieving broad public sector goals' (1998: 29).

regime partly contradict one another, the following distinction between types made in Box 15 cannot be viewed as a continuum in which ‘partnership governance’ is, necessarily, a step toward ‘regime governance’. In fact, the logic of the preceding arguments is that the partnership mode of governance is more an aspect of government than it is an aspect of regime, or network, governance. This too is a perspective that future studies of governance could consider.

Government	Partnership Governance	Regime Governance
High level of decisional autonomy for the legal institutions of government. Few interfaces between local ‘stakeholders’.	Local collaborative institutions as bearers of government agenda. Little local autonomy or collaborative synergy.	Local political autonomy and collaborative synergy generated in coherent, sustainable, self-organising networks of local ‘stakeholders’.

Box 15: Distinguishing Between Government, Partnership and Regime

These conclusions show that research which looks for ‘Stonean’ regimes is likely to be just as fruitless as the characterisation of any partnership as ‘regime’ or as ‘governance’. Such approaches to research are likely to obscure more than they reveal about different influences, trends and processes on and within the locality. Second, the conclusions suggest that locally centred studies in the UK, more than in the USA where local governance processes are stronger, will be distorted if they do not take account of extra-local factors. The fact that partnerships are epiphenomenal as governance capacity does not mean that local studies are not valid, or potentially fruitful in identifying interesting processes and phenomena. But it does mean that extra-local processes, particularly the role of central government, remain critical to a rounded understanding of local politics. The closer local government is to being a ‘district of central government’, says Daland, the more trivial it will be in explaining local political outcomes (Daland, 1969: 20). Hence, locally based research into the partnership mode of governance needs to be embedded in a set of problematized or *a priori* assumptions about the influence of extra-local factors on the local processes concerned (Wendt, 1987).

It is far from certain that the partnership agenda is beneficial to local people or efficacious in mobilising local stakeholders. This factor in itself is suggestive of another empirical route for research into the perception and impact of partnerships beneath institutional elites. Is it credible

to suggest that the raft of initiatives designed to modernise local government (DETR, 30.7.98) and to bring about community governance (DETR, 25.3.99) will do more than institutionalise a different kind of elite governance, unless the process of modernisation delivers tangible results, measurable against the ambitious strategic objectives in local regeneration agendas? Is it not true that participation in governance processes requires optimism, not only that elites will implement the popular will, but that participation will actually serve to bring about a better future?

Finally, this study has tried to steer clear of normative questions, but there are normative agendas which follow from these conclusions and from questioning the credibility of the present government's strategy for community governance (DETR, 25.3.99). At the end of the 1990s, the question remains unanswered as to whether we want governance by autonomous networks of elite politicians, businessmen and other community and voluntary sector leaders. If we do, the question has yet to be answered as to how these networks can be brought into being and made accountable to local people. Furthermore, does the finding that the potential for regime governance is visible only in fragmentary initiatives suggest that the government agenda for partnerships is too ambitious? Perhaps government ought then to draw lessons from Stone's perception that collaboration is about small opportunities. For those of us who see this kind of governance as undesirable, the question equally remains as to what the alternatives might be for generating active, democratic participation by a majority of local people, and what means can be found to achieve it. If traditional representative mechanisms do not work and we do not want partnerships and networks, then what do we want, and how can we bring it about?

In a policy environment where localities are bombarded with new initiatives from government and where change still proceeds apace after twenty years, this study probably serves better as an evaluation of the legacy of Conservative government than as a pointer to the institutional landscape post-Blair. It is highly likely, therefore, that the issues this study addresses and the questions it poses will remain on the agenda of scholars, politicians and activists well into the next century.

Appendix 1. A List of Interviews Undertaken in the Course of the Study

- 13.6.95 Andrew Lean, Regeneration Policy Branch, Department of the Environment
- 21.8.95 Benjamin Seyd, Adviser, Industrial Policy Group, Confederation of British Industry
- 31.3.98 Alan Carruthers, Chief Executive, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- 31.3.98 Tony Preston, Research and Design Unit Manager, Culture and Leisure Services, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- 2.4.98 Alison Biddulph, Team Leader, South Yorkshire Regeneration Team, Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber
- 3.4.98 David Curry MP, former Minister for Local Government, Housing and Urban Regeneration (July 1994 - May 1997)
- 16.4.98 Councillor Pat Doyle, Leader, Kingston upon Hull City Council
- 21.4.98 Councillor Keith Billington, Leader, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- 21.4.98 Steve Wright, Head of Economic Development, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- 28.4.98 Barrie Matterson, Regeneration Manager, Hull CityVision
- 28.4.98 Mark Jones, Business Initiatives Manager, Hull Economic Development Agency, Kingston upon Hull City Council
- 28.4.98 Denise Anderton, Challenge Fund 2 Programme Manager, Hull CityVision
- 6.5.98 Rachel Heatley, Director, Development Programme Area, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- 12.5.98 Tony Clarke, Partnership Manager, Rotherham Economic Partnership
- 8.6.98 Helen Wilson, Head of Economic Development and Tourism, North East Lincolnshire Council
- 8.6.98 Ian Bolton, Deputy Chief Executive, North East Lincolnshire Council

- 8.6.98 Councillor Peter Wheatley, Chair of Development Services Programme Area Committee
- 9.6.98 Peter Johnson, Director, Dearne Valley Partnership
- 9.6.98 Peter Nettleton, Community Regeneration Programme Director, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- 10.6.98 John Woodside, Head of Special Programmes, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- 10.6.98 Councillor Steve Houghton, Leader, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- 12.6.98 Councillor Muriel Barker, Leader of North East Lincolnshire Council
- 12.6.98 Roy Bentham, Chief Executive, North East Lincolnshire Council
- 22.7.98 John Shaddock, Head of Strategic Management, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- 4.9.98 Hector Birdwisa, Executive Vice President, Koyo Bearings (Europe) Ltd
- 15.9.98 Jeff Pickering, Economic Development Manager, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- 29.9.98 Kevin Bennett, Regeneration Manager, Barnsley and Doncaster Training and Enterprise Council
- 21.10.98 (Barnsley Miller Partnership), Nigel Cunis, General Manager, Barnsley Miller Partnership Ltd
- 22.10.98 Alistair Petrie, Managing Director, Kostal UK Ltd
- 22.10.98 Frank Carter, Chairman and Managing Director, Yorkshire Traction Company Ltd
- 26.10.98 Alan Sheriff, Chairman, Barnsley Business Education Partnership
- 26.10.98 Linda Smith, Manager, Barnsley Business Education Partnership
- 25.11.98 Richard Poundford, Director,
- 7.12.98 Steve Hanstock, Team Manager, Rotherham Education Business Links
- 7.12.98 Yolande Tose, Work Experience Coordinator, Rotherham Education Business Links
- 7.12.98 Rex Carter, Housing Area Programme Director, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

- 15.12.98 Martin Liddament, Head of Corporate Affairs, Yorkshire and Humberside Development Agency
- 17.12.98 Ian Fisher, Chairman of Rotherham Economic Partnership
- 6.1.99 Dr Giles Bloomer, Chairman, Aizlewoods Building Materials
- 19.1.99 Graham Fisher, Head of Contracts and Education, Rotherham Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise
- 22.1.99 John Lewis, Head of Economic Regeneration, Rotherham Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise
- 22.1.99 Ian Kelly, Chief Executive, Hull and East Riding Chamber of Commerce and Shipping
- 22.1.99 Councillor Terry Sharman, Chairman of Education Committee, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- 12.2.99 Don Turner, Managing Director of British Steel Engineering Steels
- 16.2.99 Peter Roberts, Regeneration Manager, North East Lincolnshire Council
- 17.2.99 Julian Wild, Company Secretary, Northern Foods
- 5.3.99 John Perkins, Head of Economic Development, Humberside Training and Enterprise Council
- 10.3.99 George Robinson, Deputy Port Manager and with Ingrid Davies, Business and Development Manager, Port of Hull, Associated British Ports
- 12.3.99 Dennis Dunn, Regional Ports Manager, Associated British Ports East Coast
- 15.3.99 Roger Norrington, Regional Manager, Birds Eye Walls
- 15.3.99 David Hawkins, Site Director, Smith & Nephew Wound Management Division
- 18.3.99 Trevor Barningham, Executive Director, Humberside Training and Enterprise Council
- 18.3.99 Keith Saveal, Chief Executive, Novartis Grimsby
- 22.3.99 Professor Graham Chesters, Chairman of CityLearning and Director of the Institute of Learning, University of Hull
- 22.3.99 Neil English, UK Sales Manager, Sumitomo Heavy Industries Cyclo Drive (Europe)
- 8.4.99 Ivan Hinchliffe, Inward Investment and Marketing Manager, North East Lincolnshire Council
- 8.4.99 Kate Walker, Sector Initiatives Officer, North East Lincolnshire Council

- 6.5.99 Telephone John Miller, SRB Team Leader, Yorkshire Forward (Regional Development Agency for Yorkshire and Humberside)
- 14.5.99 Peter Roberts, Regeneration Manager, North East Lincolnshire Council
- 17.5.99 Ian Bolton, Deputy Chief Executive, North East Lincolnshire Council
- 17.5.99 Peter Lacey, Deputy Director of Education, North East Lincolnshire Council
- 17.5.99 Angie Butler, Principal Education Officer, Continuing Education and Training, North East Lincolnshire Council
- 20.5.99 Robert Smith, Site Director,
- 21.5.99 Peter Aukett, Site Director, Synthomer Ltd
- 2.7.99 Deborah Law, Business in the Community
- 5.7.99 Jane Ritchie, Secretary, National EBP Network
- 7.7.99 Richard Caborn MP, Minister of State for the Regions, Regeneration and Planning
- 20.7.99 Scott Wood, Manager, Manufacturing Systems, H & W Systems
- 21.7.99 Gordon Firth, President, Barnsley Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- 22.7.99 Ellen Cockburn, Personnel Executive, Northern Foods
- 22.7.99 Mike Smith, Head of Customer Services, South Yorkshire Transport (Chairman of Rotherham Business Education Advisory Group)
- 27.7.99 Jon Till, Marketing Director, Hull CityImage
- 27.7.99 Simon Gardner, Deputy Director of Education, Kingston upon Hull City Council
- 27.7.99 Eric Reed, Assistant Director of Learning Services, Kingston upon Hull City Council
- 3.8.99 Graham Sinclair, Principal Education Office for Policy Development and Planning, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- 5.8.99 John Edwards OBE, Chief Executive, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- 5.8.99 Mr R Watson, Managing Director, Keepmoat Holdings plc
- 6.8.99 Ian Crookham, Chief Executive, Kingston upon Hull City Council
- 12.8.99 Jeff Catterick, Office Manager, Eimskip UK
- 13.8.99 Heather Scott, Chief Education Adviser, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

- 20.8.99 Telephone Tony Clarke, former Training Manager, Northern Foods
- 20.8.99 Councillor Jim Mulgrove, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Sustainability, Kingston upon Hull City Council
- 25.8.99 Pauline Harness, President, Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce and Shipping
- 3.9.99 Allan Gray, Heads of Work Related Learning, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- 27.9.99 Martin Hinnegan, Business Services Manager, Huntsman Tioxide

Appendix 2. Sample Questionnaires

This Appendix contains four representative sample questionnaires, one each for central government, local government, local business and local TEC. The samples chosen are indicative of the questions asked in all interviews, but sometimes questionnaires differed according to prior knowledge gained from other sources and according to the expertise each individual was known to possess. Attached are the questions asked of Richard Caborn MP, Alan Carruthers, Chief Executive of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, Don Turner, Managing Director of British Steel Engineering Steels, and Trevor Barningham, Executive Director of Humberside TEC.

Questions for Richard Caborn MP, Minister of State for the Regions, Regeneration and Planning, Wednesday 7 July at 17:30

How would you sum up the difference in approach to local partnerships between this government and the last?

Is there a preferred model for local regeneration partnerships, for example, arms length flagship partnerships linked to holistic area regeneration strategies?

Do you feel that relatively formal partnerships with visible decision making processes are better than informal co-operation and networking procedures?

What kind of relationship do you perceive between economic and social regeneration initiatives?

For example, some participants in my research feel that their prospects for economic regeneration are remote and, for that reason, that linking the social agenda to economic regeneration could be counterproductive. Do you agree?

To what extent do you think that we are living in an era where the capacity of central government to make a difference in economic development is diminishing, with a direct relationship emerging between cities and towns on one hand and 'global' capital on the other?

Do you think, to the extent they exist, that national government may be compensating for these tendencies by using local partnerships as policy instruments or as implementation agencies, through which it can continue to exercise influence it may otherwise lose?

How much influence does/should government exercise on the locality through various funding streams, incentives and penalties?

And how much autonomy do you think that local partnerships have/should have to develop regeneration strategies and objectives which may not accord with those of central government?

At a practical level, my research suggests that local synergy in regeneration partnerships is sometimes inhibited due to the prescriptive and bureaucratic nature of the SRB and other funding mechanisms. Do you accept criticism of this nature and, if so, can the problems it highlights be overcome?

What is the ideal role for the business sector in the process of local governance and in local policy development?

Why do you think it has been difficult in some areas to draw business into partnership?

Do you think that local partnerships have brought added value to the regeneration process?

Are there some areas in which partnerships have not been conducive to good local governance?

Do you perceive a potential conflict between the concepts of best value and partnership?

Are there other questions which you feel that this kind of research could usefully address?

Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Questions for Alan Carruthers, Chief Executive, Rotherham Metropolitan Council, 31 March 1998 at 10:00

Who are the key actors in the governance of Rotherham?

What do you understand 'partnership' to mean in the context of public-private relationships at the local scale?

What factors - individuals, institutions or events - have influenced your attitude to working with the private sector?

In what kinds of partnerships is Rotherham involved with the private sector?

How important is networking compared with formal partnership structures?

Are there special or local factors which affect the Council's relationship with the private sector?

Do you know how long Rotherham has been involved in partnership initiatives?

What are the oldest/most recent partnership initiatives of which you are aware?

What are the key factors motivating Rotherham (and local authorities more generally) to participate in public-private partnerships?

What role does business play in partnerships with this authority?

Have relationships with the private sector changed for better or worse in the time you have been working with the Authority?

What does the private sector bring to the partnership table?

What factors encourage businesses to participate in partnerships with local authorities?

What discourages them?

Are there any businesses with which the Council has proved unable to secure partnerships?

Is partnership in Rotherham dependent on governmental initiatives?

What has partnership achieved which could not otherwise have been achieved with adequate resources for local government.

Can you identify partnership effects in Rotherham?

Have you developed any indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of partnerships?

Are there tensions or conflicts between partners in Rotherham?

Are partnerships more important in some policy arenas than in others?

Will the Regional Development Agency require Rotherham to change its approach to partnership working?

Can partnership succeed in bringing about the regeneration of Rotherham?

What is the key to successful regeneration in Rotherham?

Are there other questions which you would like to see academic research of this nature address?

Which other people should I speak to and which documents should I look at in relation to any of these questions?

Are there any other comments you would like to make?

Questions for Don Turner, Managing Director, British Steels Engineering Steels, Friday 12 February 1999 at 11:00

Does the concept of globalization mean anything for your business?

How far is your company dependent on the resources available to you in Rotherham - for supplies, for labour and for markets?

How would you describe relationships between the Council and the business sector in Rotherham?

What do you understand the term public-private partnership to mean?

How and why did you become involved in partnership working?

In what kind of relationships with the Council are you involved?

How important is networking compared with formal partnership structures?

Is it possible to detect a change or a trend in local authority relationships with the private sector since you have been working in Rotherham?

Is there a 'culture' of partnership working in Rotherham?

Would partnerships survive if external funding such as the SRB were allocated directly to the Council?

What role do you play in partnerships?

What do you and your business bring to the table?

Does your company have a policy toward partnership working?

What factors encourage business participation in partnership?

What factors discourage business participation in partnership?

Has partnership increased the level of influence enjoyed by the private sector over the local government policy agenda?

What do you see as the role of the Rotherham Economic Partnership?

Is it effective?

What has the partnership achieved for Rotherham which could not otherwise have been achieved?

Can you identify 'partnership effects' in Rotherham?

Are there tensions or conflicts between partners in Rotherham?

Will the Regional Development Agency require Rotherham to change its approach to partnership working?

Did the establishment of the National Non Domestic Rate help the process of partnership building?

Do you think that re-localisation of the business rate would affect partnership working?

Can local partnership succeed in bringing about the regeneration of Rotherham?

What is the key to successful regeneration in Rotherham?

Are there other questions which you would like to see academic research of this nature address?

Which other people should I speak to and which documents should I look at in relation to any of these questions?

Are there any other comments you would like to make?

Questions for Trevor Barningham, Executive Director, Humberside Training and Enterprise Council, 18 March 1999 at 13:00

What is your role with Humberside TEC?

In which Partnerships with North East Lincolnshire are you involved?

Do you think that Humberside TEC has been successful in drawing the private sector in to public-private partnerships?

Can you give me an example?

How would you describe quality of partnerships between the Council and the business sector in North East Lincolnshire?

How important is networking as opposed to more formal partnership processes?

The North East Lincolnshire Partnership was recently subjected to criticism by the Government Office for Yorkshire and Humberside. What do you think was behind this criticism and how will it be addressed?

Does North East Lincolnshire benefit or lose out from the absence of a CityVision type partnership?

Will they be forced down this route?

Has unitary status affected working relationships between the TEC and the Council?

How is the Humberside Partnership funded and governed?

How do education business partnerships organised at the sub regional level work in the locality?

How does the EBP/Humberside Partnership relate to CityVision and to CityLearning in Hull?

What are the current difficulties you are experiencing with the partnership and how can these be resolved?

Does the private sector have any input into determining the aims, objectives and strategies for education business links?

Who are the main employers involved at this level?

How willing are businesses to participate in EBP programmes within schools?

The TEC's Economic Assessment states that businesses in Hull are more likely to be involved in the 'soft infrastructure' associated with education business links than in North East Lincolnshire. Why might this be the case?

Do you think it is harder to involve business in education partnerships than in economic development partnerships?

Can you identify 'added value' or 'partnership effects' from education business links?

For example, have business education links had any obvious impact on the employability of Hull/Grimsby school leavers?

Can partnership succeed in bringing about the regeneration of Hull and North East Lincolnshire?

What is the key to successful regeneration in these areas?

Are there other questions which you would like to see academic research of this nature address?

Which other people should I speak to and which documents should I look at in relation to any of these questions?

Are there any other comments you would like to make?

Appendix 3. Central Government Initiatives Currently Affecting Local Regeneration Activities

Government Area-based Initiatives

Community Legal Service Partnerships
Crime Reduction Programme - Burglary Initiative
Crime Reduction Programme - Targeted Policing Initiative
Education Action Zones
Employment Zones
Health Action Zones
LGA New Commitment to Regeneration
New Deal for Communities
New Start
Single Regeneration Budget
Sure Start

Government Regeneration Related Initiatives

Local Authority Best Value Pilots
Better Government for Older People Pilots
Coalfields
Crime Reduction Programme
Drug Action Teams
Drug Treatment and Testing Order Pilots
Early Excellence Centres
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships
European Regional Development Fund
Excellence in Cities
Healthy Schools Initiative
Lifelong Learning Partnerships
Local Transport Plans
New Deal for Disabled People Pilots
New Deal for Lone Parents
New Deal for Long Term Unemployed Pilot for Those Aged 25 Years and Over (12-18 Months Unemployed)
New Deal for Long Term Unemployed for Those Aged 25 Years and Over (Over 2 Years Unemployed)
New Deal for Musicians
New Deal for Partners (Compulsory Scheme)
New Deal for Partners (Voluntary Scheme)
New Deal for Young People (18-24)
New Deal for 50 Plus
The Provision of 190,000 Extra Free Early Education Places for 3 Year Olds
Personal Medical Services Pilots - Established Under the Nhs (Primary Care) Act 1997
ONE
Territorial Employment Pacts
Youth Justice Pilots

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