

**The Role of Grassroots Sustainability Associations in Framing
Sustainability Issues to Mobilise Communities for Social
Change**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own, except where work which has formed part of jointly-authored publications has been included. The contribution of the candidate and the other authors to this work has been explicitly indicated below. The candidate confirms that appropriate credit has been given within the thesis where reference has been made to the work of others.

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The findings of the paper are based on data collected as part of my PhD research. The case study presented in the paper (Green Action) is presented in Chapter 6 of this thesis, however, in this thesis I have used a different theoretical framework for analysis and as such, I have presented a different set of findings to those presented in the paper. As the paper was based on findings from one of the case studies conducted for my PhD research, some of the quotes from participants and information about the case study have been used in this thesis. Information in the introduction and literature review of the paper, which sets the context for the work, appears in the introduction and literature review of this thesis, though significant changes have been made. Findings from the paper have also been presented in the literature review of this thesis, to explain what has already been published in the subject area and to set the context for the research presented in this thesis. I am first author on the paper with my PhD supervisor, Dr Lucie Middlemiss, being second author. I collected all the data, conducted all data analysis, decided on the conceptual framework used to present the findings, and wrote the majority of the paper – incorporating the second authors' recommendations.

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Abstract

This thesis examines how and why different grassroots sustainability associations (GSAs) frame sustainability issues to mobilise members of the community to participate in or support the association and to practice sustainably. There was limited existing literature on the role of GSAs in framing sustainability issues and how framing affects GSAs' approach to delivering their sustainability objectives. The research for this thesis took a qualitative approach; semi-structured interviews and document research were conducted to collect data on three diverse GSAs based in the UK. Drawing on literature from social movement researchers on collective action frames it demonstrates how and why different GSAs frame sustainability issues differently.

This thesis focusses on a broad range of internal processes that guide the work of GSAs, including framing processes, rather than focussing on external processes or the outcomes of the collective action of GSAs. In doing so, it makes three contributions to our knowledge of GSAs. First, this thesis increases understanding of how and why different GSAs frame sustainability issues to mobilise members of the community to participate in or support the group and to practice sustainably. Second, it provides an understanding of how the framing of sustainability issues influences the strategies and resources that GSAs use. Third, it provides a framework for understanding the collective action of GSAs that builds on previous work in the social movement literature on framing, strategies, resources, culture, and collective identity. These concepts have not previously been brought together to understand framing processes and collective action. The framework shows that when a GSA draws on one of the elements this constrains the range of other elements that can be drawn on. Therefore, GSAs are constrained in their ability to deliver sustainability. These contributions complement the literature on practice change for sustainable communities, grassroots innovations, and skills for sustainable communities.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	iv
List of Tables	xi
List of Figures	xi
Abbreviations	xi
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
1.1 The role of communities in contributing to sustainable development	1
1.2 Grassroots sustainability associations	2
1.3 Research process and contributions to knowledge.....	4
1.4 Research questions	5
1.5 Structure of the thesis	6
Chapter 2 Literature Review	9
2.1 Sustainable Development: A contested concept.....	10
2.1.1 Conclusion	13
2.2 Frames and framing.....	13
2.2.1 A review of existing literature that uses a framing perspective	13
2.2.2 “Frame” and “framing” in this thesis	16
2.2.3 Collective action frames.....	18
2.2.3.1 Empirical research that has applied the theoretical concepts related to collective action frames	23
2.3 How GSAs have been framed in existing literature.....	25
2.3.1 Practice change for sustainable communities.....	26
2.3.1.1 Summary of the work on practice change for sustainable communities.....	29
2.3.1.2 How the approach taken in this thesis differs from and complements the literature on practice change for sustainable communities.....	30
2.3.2 Grassroots innovations	31
2.3.2.1 Local Food projects as grassroots social innovations.....	35
2.3.2.2 Communal growing projects as grassroots innovations.....	36
2.3.2.3 Grassroots energy and transport projects as grassroots innovations	38

2.3.2.4	A grassroots sustainable energy niche?	39
2.3.2.5	Summary of work on grassroots innovations	40
2.3.2.6	How the approach taken in this thesis differs from and complements the literature on grassroots innovation	41
2.3.3	Skills for sustainable communities	43
2.3.3.1	Summary of work on skills for sustainable communities	45
2.3.3.2	How the approach taken in this thesis differs from and complements the literature on skills for sustainable communities	45
2.4	Existing studies looking at framing and GSAs	46
2.4.1	Energy autonomy in Le Mené: A French case of grassroots innovation	47
2.4.2	Worcester Housing Energy and Community, Worcester, MA	48
2.4.3	The Transition Network, UK.....	50
2.4.4	Summary of work on GSAs and framing.....	51
2.5	Informing concepts: framing, strategies, resources, collective identity, and culture.....	52
2.6	Conclusion	58
Chapter 3	Research Methodology and Methods	60
3.1	Methodology	60
3.2	Grounded theory research approach	62
3.3	Qualitative research approach	62
3.4	Case study approach.....	64
3.4.1	Using the case study approach in this research	65
3.5	Research methods.....	69
3.5.1	Data collection	69
3.5.1.1	Semi-structured interviews	69
3.5.1.2	The use of semi-structured interviews in this research.....	71
3.5.1.3	Sampling interview participants	73
3.5.1.4	Document research	75
3.5.2	Data analysis	77
3.5.2.1	Analysis of interview data	77
3.5.2.2	Document Analysis.....	78

3.5.2.3	Theory Building.....	78
3.6	Validity of results.....	81
3.7	Research ethics	84
Chapter 4	Awel Aman Tawe (AAT)	86
4.1	About Awel Aman Tawe.....	86
4.1.1	Geographic area	87
4.1.2	Origins of AAT	88
4.1.3	AAT's structure	89
4.1.4	AAT's projects.....	92
4.1.4.1	Wind farm	92
4.1.4.2	Community consultation	94
4.1.4.3	Arts and Climate Change.....	95
4.1.4.4	Energy projects.....	97
4.1.4.5	Publications	98
4.1.5	Successes and challenges	99
4.1.5.1	Planning permission	99
4.1.5.2	Funding.....	100
4.1.5.3	Retaining control.....	103
4.1.5.4	Anti-wind farm group.....	103
4.1.5.5	Diversifying	106
4.1.5.6	Project Manager	106
4.2	Understanding the frames used by AAT	107
4.2.1	Diagnostic framing by AAT	108
4.2.1.1	"Impact of mine closures" frame	108
4.2.1.2	"Threat of climate change" frame.....	110
4.2.2	Prognostic framing by AAT	111
4.2.2.1	"Community development" frame	111
4.2.2.2	"Clean energy" and "energy efficiency" frames....	119
4.2.3	Motivational framing.....	121
4.3	Discussion	124
Chapter 5	Congleton Sustainability Group (CSG).....	131
5.1.	About Congleton Sustainability Group	131
5.1.1	Geographic area	131
5.1.2	Origins of CSG.....	133
5.1.3	CSG's structure	134

5.1.4	CSG's projects.....	135
5.1.4.1	Congleton Apple Juice.....	135
5.1.4.2	Beartown's Food.....	136
5.1.4.3	Top Tips and Weekly Watt Watch	136
5.1.4.4	Sustainable Living in Congleton	137
5.1.4.5	Congleton Food4Free.....	138
5.1.4.6	Eco Schools.....	139
5.1.5	Successes and challenges	139
5.1.5.1	Congleton Apple Juice.....	140
5.1.5.2	Carbon Reduction Group.....	140
5.1.5.3	Lack of active volunteers	141
5.1.5.4	Beartown's Food.....	142
5.1.5.5	Dane Valley Renewable Energy Project.....	142
5.2	Understanding the frames used by CSG	143
5.2.1	Diagnostic framing by CSG	143
5.2.1.1	"Impact of climate change on Congleton" frame..	144
5.2.1.2	"Radical hippy" frame	146
5.2.2	Prognostic framing.....	147
5.2.2.1	"Community opportunities" frame	147
5.2.2.2	"Professionalism" frame.....	149
5.2.2.3	"Sensible solutions" frame	152
5.2.3	Motivational framing.....	156
5.3	Discussion	161
Chapter 6 Green Action.....		166
6.1	About Green Action	166
6.1.1	Geographic area	166
6.1.2	Origins of Green Action	167
6.1.3	Green Action's structure	168
6.1.4	Green Action's projects.....	170
6.1.4.1	Green Action Food Co-op.....	170
6.1.4.2	Allotment	171
6.1.4.3	Skills-share workshops.....	172
6.1.5	Successes and challenges	173
6.1.5.1	Lack of active members.....	173
6.1.5.2	Campaigns and protests.....	174

6.1.5.3	Longevity of Green Action	175
6.2	Understanding the frames used by Green Action	176
6.2.1	Diagnostic framing	176
6.2.1.1	“Capitalism is unsustainable” frame	176
6.2.1.2	“No control over food consumption” frame	177
6.2.2	Prognostic framing	178
6.2.2.1	“Alternative to capitalism” frame	178
6.2.2.2	“Practical environmentalism” frame	181
6.2.2.3	“Education” frame	184
6.2.3	Motivational framing	188
6.3	Discussion	190
Chapter 7	Discussion	197
7.1	Definitions of concepts	198
7.1.1	Framing	198
7.1.2	Resources	198
7.1.3	Strategies	201
7.1.4	Collective identity	203
7.1.5	Culture	204
7.2	Recursive elements of collective action in the three case studies	206
7.2.1	Recursive elements of collective action by AAT	207
7.2.2	Recursive elements of collective action by CSG	209
7.2.3	Recursive elements of collective action by Green Action	212
7.3	Recursive elements of collective action by GSAs	214
7.3.1	Framing	216
7.3.2	Strategies	218
7.3.3	Resources	219
7.3.4	Culture	221
7.3.5	Collective identity	222
7.4	Contributions of the framework	223
7.4.1	How the framework complements the literature on “practice change for sustainable communities”	225
7.4.2	How the framework complements the literature on “grassroots innovations”	227

7.4.3	How the framework complements the literature on skills for sustainable communities	228
7.5	A comment on membership structures and organisational structures	229
7.6	Conclusion	231
Chapter 8	Conclusion	232
8.1	Answering the Research Questions.....	232
8.2	Contributions of this thesis.....	238
8.2.1	Contributions to the literature on grassroots sustainability associations	238
8.2.2	Wider implications of this thesis.....	242
8.2.3	Contributions to the social movement literature	244
8.3	Practical uses of the framework for GSAs	246
8.4	Recommendations for future research.....	247
8.5	Reflections on the research process and final thoughts	249
Bibliography	251
Appendices	263
Appendix 1:	Questionnaire used for sampling participants from Green Action.....	263
Appendix 2:	Interview schedule for Green Action Co-ordinators.....	266
Appendix 3:	Interview schedule for Green Action members	271
Appendix 4:	Interview schedule for Congleton Sustainability Group co-ordinators.....	275
Appendix 5:	Interview schedule for Congleton Sustainability Group Members.....	278
Appendix 6:	Interview Schedule for Awel Aman Tawe founders.....	280
Appendix 7:	Interview schedule for Aman Awel Tawe staff/trustees/volunteers.....	285
Appendix 8:	NVivo coding scheme for AAT	289

List of Tables

Table 2.1 Resources and Rules Provided by CBOs	27
Table 2.2 Conceptualisation of Practice Theory	28
Table 2.3 Definitions of Concepts used in this Thesis	52
Table 3.1 Summary of Research Process	60
Table 3.2 Details of the Three Case Studies	67
Table 3.3 Interviews Conducted by Case Study	72
Table 3.4 Documents Analysed	76
Table 4.1 Statistics for Cwmllynfell and Wales	88

List of Figures

Figure 2.1 The Three Pillars of Sustainable Development	11
Figure 5.1 CSG's Top Tips	153
Figure 7.1 Recursive Elements of Collective Action by AAT	208
Figure 7.2 Recursive Elements of Collective Action by CSG	210
Figure 7.3 Recursive Elements of Collective Action by Green Action	213
Figure 7.4 Recursive Elements of Collective Action by GSAs	215

Abbreviations

AAT: Awel Aman Tawe

CSG: Congleton Sustainability Group

GA: Grassroots association

GSA: Grassroots sustainability association

SMO: Social movement organisation

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 The role of communities in contributing to sustainable development

Over the last decade there has been a surge throughout the United Kingdom of people connecting with others in their community to form groups to collectively provide solutions to sustainability problems (Middlemiss 2009). These grassroots sustainability associations (GSAs) provide a wide range of projects and activities such as garden-share schemes, community energy projects, farmer's markets, waste collection services, furniture recycling services, organic vegetable growing classes, and awareness-raising events, to name just a few. Members may also arrange and participate in protests and lobbying to attempt to influence policies. GSAs have emerged in response to perceived state and market failure to address sustainability problems and members tend to believe that the problem of unsustainable development cannot be solved by the state alone, so they provide a "niche" approach to sustainability (Seyfang and Smith 2007). The close proximity of GSAs to their community means that local people often trust them more than government or businesses (Middlemiss 2009).

In delivering their projects, GSAs "are developing radical new conceptions of livelihood and economy" and challenging mainstream ideologies of economic growth and mass consumption (North 2010, p.586). They provide group members and members of the community with alternatives for sustainable consumption. Most consumers have no choice but to consume through mainstream, capitalist systems as there are a lack of other options, or alternative options are out of reach. Attempts at sustainable consumption are constrained by "the material and infrastructural arrangements, such as the spatial proximity of services, which condition 'choice sets'" (Southerton *et al.* 2004b, p.37). In this context, "choice sets" are the different possibilities for consuming; they are a consequence of social structures (Middlemiss 2011). GSAs offer different choice sets for sustainable consumption. As well as being concerned with environmental sustainability, they may also try to integrate local social sustainability issues (Church and Elster 2002).

There is a wealth of literature on the role that GSAs can play in contributing to sustainable development. In the academic literature the main ways that the groups have been approached are as being sources of technological and social innovation (Seyfang and Smith 2009; 2007), providing skills for sustainable communities (Bradbury and Middlemiss 2014; Franklin *et al.* 2011; Newton *et al.* 2009), and stimulating practice change for sustainability (Hargreaves *et al.* 2011; Buchs *et al.* 2011; Middlemiss 2009). Little is known however, about how GSAs frame sustainability issues to mobilise people for collective action on sustainability, and how this framing enables and constrains collective action. Middlemiss and Parrish (2010) found that communities have different capacities for contributing to sustainable development due to their access to different types of resources. This thesis adds to our understanding by examining not the outcomes of the collective action of communities (e.g. practice change or innovation) but rather the internal processes involved in trying to deliver those outcomes. The theory and accompanying framework presented in Chapter 7 complements the literature on grassroots innovations, practice change for sustainable communities, and skills for sustainable communities.

1.2 Grassroots sustainability associations

The type of group that has been researched for this thesis is subject to an array of terminology, and has been called a grassroots innovation (Seyfang and Smith 2007), a community-based organisation (Middlemiss 2009), a community-led initiative (Alexander *et al.* 2007) and a community-led climate change initiative (Creamer 2014). In this thesis however, I have preferred to use my own term *grassroots sustainability association* (GSA) as, for me, it better captures the nature of this type of group and avoids associating my work with one strand of literature in particular. This term was informed by Smith's (1997; 2000) elaboration of grassroots association.

Smith (1997; 2000) uses the term "grassroots associations" or "GAs" to refer to local volunteer groups that provide services and information for members, and often the wider community. "Grassroots associations" captured the key characteristics of the groups to be studied. "Grassroots" was important as it stressed the civil society level from which these groups emerge and operate.

“Community-based” was avoided as it was thought that this may have connotations of geographical communities, when in fact many groups emerge out of other types of communities such as universities and workplaces. “Associations” captured the informal nature of the groups that are not structured or large enough to be termed “organisations” (at least initially) (Smith, 2000). “Innovations” was avoided as the term “grassroots innovations” is associated with a particular set of literature that principally approaches these groups as sources of innovation (Seyfang and Smith 2009; 2007), whereas this thesis does not look centrally at innovation. Also, not all projects run by these groups are innovative. Finally, “sustainability” was added to capture the purpose of the GAs under study, and so the groups that I have researched have been termed “grassroots sustainability associations” (GSAs).

A “grassroots sustainability association” (GSA) then, *is a group of people (initially volunteers) that share concern for sustainability problems and that aim to encourage and enable themselves and others in a community to contribute to achieving local and global sustainability.* GSAs may be independent or they may be associated with a parent GSA, such as the Transition Network which supports Transition Initiatives (See: Transition Network 2014). To be classified as a GSA, the association’s project(s) must have the purpose of contributing to environmental, social, and/or economic sustainability.

Although volunteers are involved with grassroots associations during their “free time”, GAs are about more than leisure and socialising with others. The purpose of GAs is to be “productive and useful” (Smith, 2000, p.12); they set aims and objectives that coincide with their values, and arrange appropriate activities and projects to meet those aims. The GAs in this study aimed to contribute to local and global sustainability, hence giving them the title of “grassroots sustainability association”. They could be viewed as both “member benefit” and “non-member benefit” associations (Smith 2000). They provided projects that enabled members of the GSA and the community to contribute to sustainability. They were also non-member benefit as they had a “focus on sociopolitical issues relating to the common good...” (Smith, 2000, p.74). The benefits provided by the GSAs, through enabling members’ to consume more sustainably for example, could have affected the wider society beyond the community in which

the GSA was situated. If members practice sustainably, this benefits humanity as a whole, as climate change is not constrained by geographical boundaries.

1.3 Research process and contributions to knowledge

When I began the research for this thesis I was mostly concerned with the types of resources used by GSAs and the strategies for mobilising such resources, in relation to how they enabled and constrained GSAs in the process of delivering their sustainability objectives (see section 2.5 for a discussion of resources and strategies). However, early into analysis of the data I found that the way that GSAs framed sustainability issues to mobilise people to participate in or support their aims influenced the strategies and resources that they used. At that point I turned to the literature on social movements and collective action that is concerned with framing processes (See: Benford and Snow 2000; Benford 1993; Snow and Benford 1988; Snow *et al.* 1986). This literature is concerned with how actors construct problems and solutions, and use vocabulary to mobilise people to take action. The concepts of diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing from this literature influenced, and eventually structured my analysis of why GSAs view different resources and strategies as suitable or not suitable for delivering their aims. While there is a limited literature that provides initial evidence of these groups framing sustainability issues (Yalçın-Riollet *et al.* 2014; Coke 2013; Brown and Vergragt 2012) there has been no extensive, or multi-case study research to examine how GSAs frame the issues differently and how this enables and constrains them to contribute to sustainability.

Later, I found that the sense of collective identity within the GSAs and the culture in which they were situated also affected the use of resources, strategies and framing of sustainability issues. In the discussion to this thesis I have used the concepts of framing, strategies, resources, collective identity, and culture to develop a new conceptual framework to understand collective action. I have demonstrated how GSAs draw on the different elements in their collective action, and how drawing on one of the elements both enables and constrains how they can draw on the other elements.

This thesis then, is concerned with the internal processes that occur within GSAs as they attempt to deliver sustainable social change. It makes three contributions to knowledge. The first contribution to knowledge of this thesis is an increased understanding of how and why different GSAs frame sustainability issues to mobilise members of the community to participate in or support the group and to practice sustainably (Chapters 4-6). There is currently very limited literature that exists on GSAs and framing, which consists of one journal article (Yalçın-Riollet *et al.* 2014), a PhD thesis that focusses on Transition Initiatives (Coke 2013), and one working paper (Brown and Vergragt 2012).

The second contribution is that it provides an understanding of how the framing of sustainability issues influences the strategies and resources that GSAs use (Chapters 4-6). There is very limited literature that focuses on the resources used by GSAs. Middlemiss (2009) found that GSAs provide resources and cultural rules that enable practice change in members.

The third contribution is that it provides a framework for understanding the collective action of GSAs (Chapter 7) that builds on previous work in the social movement literature on framing, strategies, resources, culture, and collective identity (See: Smithey 2009; Polletta and Jasper 2001; Benford and Snow 2000; Jasper 1997; Hunt *et al.* 1994; Snow and Benford 1988; Snow *et al.* 1986; Swidler 1986). The framework advances understanding of the internal processes of GSAs as they deliver projects for sustainability.

1.4 Research questions

The title of this thesis is “The Role of Grassroots Sustainability Associations in Framing Sustainability Issues to Mobilise Communities for Social Change”. This stems from the overarching research question: what role do GSAs play in framing sustainability issues to mobilise community members to take action on sustainability? In order to answer this overarching research question it can be broken down into three sub-questions that guided the research process.

- 1) *How do GSAs frame sustainability issues to mobilise members of the community to participate in the association and/or take action on sustainability?*

As previously discussed, there are few sources looking at how individual GSAs frame sustainability issues but no extensive study that has examined how GSAs use different frames.

2) *What effect does framing have on how GSAs approach the delivery of sustainability?*

In their paper on framing and social movements, Benford and Snow (2000) argue that the framing of problems and causes affects the solutions advocated and strategies used by social movement actors. I aimed to examine what effects the framing of sustainability problems had for the collective action of GSAs.

3) *Why do different GSAs frame sustainability issues differently?*

After reviewing the limited existing literature on GSAs and framing, it seemed that the different case studies examined in this work framed the issues differently. By studying three case studies of GSAs I aimed to draw conclusions about why GSAs frame sustainability issues differently.

In the introduction to the results chapters (chapters 4, 5 and 6) and the Discussion chapter, I explain which of the research questions are being addressed. In the conclusion to the thesis (section 8.1) I answer each of the research questions in turn and address the overarching research question “what role do GSAs play in framing sustainability issues to mobilise community members to take action on sustainability?”. This is explained further in the next section on structure of the thesis.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters including this introduction. In Chapter 2 I review the literature on sustainability as a contested concept to provide a background to the results chapters, which demonstrate that GSAs frame and approach sustainability issues differently. I then review the social movement literature on frames and framing, which is central in the data analysis and is used to structure the results chapters. I go on to review the existing literature on

GSA's and explain the main ways that they have been framed, as grassroots innovations, as providing skills for sustainable communities, and enabling practice change. I use the concepts of diagnostic and prognostic framing to demonstrate how the different authors approach the problem of unsustainable development and therefore, how they see GSA's as the solution. I explain how this thesis complements and differs from these three sets of literature. I also review the limited literature that provides evidence of GSA's framing sustainability issues. Finally, I review and define the concepts of framing, resources, strategies, collective identity, and culture in the social movement literature that have been influential in this thesis for understanding the collective action of GSA's.

In Chapter 3 I explain the methodology and research methods used in this thesis. The symbolic interactionism methodology and its emphasis on meaning construction and interpretation influenced how I approached my study. In this chapter I also explain the qualitative, grounded theory, and case study approaches that were used, and the methods of data collection and analysis.

Chapters 4 to 6 are the results and analysis chapters. Each chapter reports the findings from one GSA that was studied. The structure of each chapter is the same: first, I provide background information on the case study; second, I summarise my analysis of the GSA's use of diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing and how this framing influenced the strategies and resources that were used; third, I provide a discussion of why particular frames were used and the implications of using these frames. Chapters 4 to 6 address research questions 1 and 2 which are about how GSA's frame sustainability issues and the effect that this has on how they approach the delivery of sustainability. These chapters also begin to address research question 3 which is concerned with why GSA's frame sustainability issues differently.

Chapter 7 is the discussion chapter, in which I develop a theory based on findings from the three case studies of GSA's. I bring together the concepts of framing, strategies, resources, culture and collective identity from the social movement literature into a framework that I have called "recursive elements of collective action by GSA's". In this chapter I address research question 3. I explain how my theoretical framework complements the existing literature on

practice change for sustainable communities, grassroots innovation, and skills for sustainable communities.

Finally, Chapter 8 is the conclusion chapter, in which, I answer the research questions set out in this introductory chapter, discuss the contributions of this thesis and its wider implications, explain the practical uses of the framework developed in Chapter 7 for GSAs, reflect on the research process, and consider future research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This thesis examines how grassroots sustainability associations (GSAs) frame sustainability issues and how this framing affects members' use of strategies and resources for delivering sustainability solutions. A GSA is a group of people that aims to develop bottom-up, community-level solutions to sustainability problems. The types of projects that GSAs offer include for example, community orchards and allotments, energy retrofitting of community buildings, seed and plant swaps, community currencies, clothes swaps, wild food foraging, energy libraries where members of the community can borrow energy monitoring equipment, and events to raise awareness of sustainability problems and solutions.

There are six sections in this chapter. In the first section, I discuss sustainability as a contested concept, in order for the reader to understand that GSAs may have different understandings of "sustainability". Second, I introduce the concepts of "frames" and "framing" as they are central to this thesis which provides an examination of the ways in which Grassroots Sustainability Associations (GSAs) frame their activities. I begin by discussing how the concepts of frames and framing have been used in various disciplines. I then explain how the concepts are used in this thesis. I go on to discuss the theoretical concepts behind "collective action frames", which are deployed throughout the thesis in order to understand how GSAs frame their collective action. In the third section, I review the existing literature on GSAs and discuss how they have been framed differently by different authors; for example, as "grassroots innovations," enabling "practice change" or providing "skills for sustainable communities". I explain how the approach taken in this thesis complements and differs from these three sets of literature. In the fourth section, I examine the limited existing literature that has found evidence of GSAs framing sustainability issues to mobilise people to take action and/or support projects. In the fifth section, I review the five concepts from the social movement literature that have informed this thesis: framing, strategies, resources, collective identity and culture and explain how this thesis draws on

these concepts to understand the activities of GSAs. Finally, I conclude this chapter by explaining how this thesis builds on, and adds to, the literature on social movements and GSAs.

2.1 Sustainable Development: A contested concept

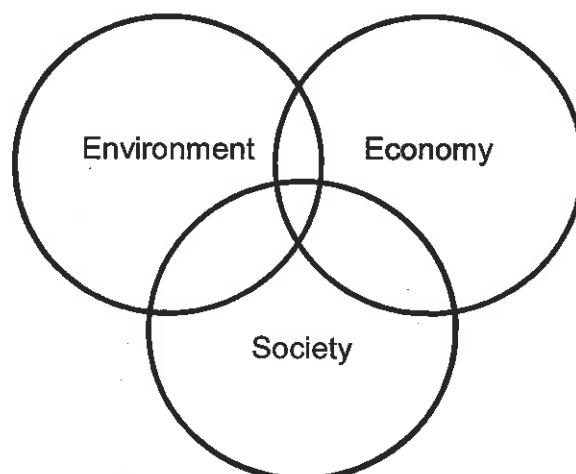
I have termed the groups researched in this thesis “grassroots sustainability associations” (GSAs) as they aim to contribute to sustainable development. However, “sustainable development” is a contested concept open to different interpretations (Jacobs 1995). As such, there are different opinions among society as to how sustainability can or should be achieved. Different GSAs have different understandings of sustainability problems, frame them in different ways to mobilise members of the community, and advocate and deliver different solutions. This section discusses sustainable development as a contested concept.

The terms “sustainability” and “sustainable development” are often used interchangeably (Lozano 2008). In 1987 the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) brought the term “sustainable development” into the spotlight in their publication *Our Common Future* which provides the infamous definition of the concept: “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED 1987). The WCED argues that economic growth in developed countries has led to ‘downward spiral of poverty and environmental degradation’ (1987, p. xii). The concept of sustainable development therefore, has emerged as a result of an increasing awareness of the links between growing environmental problems and socio-economic problems such as poverty and inequality, as well as concern for future generations (Hopwood *et al.* 2005). Sustainable development is often represented by a Venn diagram with three overlapping circles, which represent the environment, economy and society (Connelly 2007) (see Figure 2.1). The three circles are of equal size, demonstrating that they are of equal importance. Where the three circles overlap the three aspects have been successfully integrated, and sustainability has been achieved.

Sustainable development however, is a vague and ambiguous concept that is open to interpretation and contestation (Connelly 2007; Hopwood *et al.* 2005; Giddings *et al.* 2002; Jacobs 1995). Giddings *et al.* (2002) note that interpretations of sustainability problems and solutions can vary between different people and different organisations depending on their worldviews (Giddings *et al.* 2002). In delivering sustainability, projects and programmes often focus on just one or two aspects represented in the Venn diagram are given priority (Connelly 2007). Different GSAs may focus on different aspects of sustainability.

It has been argued that “sustainable development” should be defined in a way that a set of measurable criteria could be developed so that people and organisations with different worldviews and priorities can judge whether the criteria are being met (Beckerman 1994). On the other hand, it has been argued that “it is necessary to acknowledge the intellectual legitimacy of alternative interpretations of the concept, in order to appreciate how and why they can be strongly held and defended—an acknowledgement hampered by approaches that insist that alternatives are not just undesirable (perhaps politically illegitimate) but definitionally incorrect” (Connelly 2007, p.262). The concepts of “sustainable development” or “sustainability” then, have different meanings for different people and organisations including GSAs.

Figure 2.1 The Three Pillars of Sustainable Development



One of the ways that sustainability approaches can be seen to be different is by placing them on a scale from “weak” to “strong” sustainability (Haughton and Hunter 1994). Weak sustainability allows diminished natural capital to be replaced with human-made capital said to be of the same value. “From this perspective, the loss of income-earning potential of a former forest is no problem if part of the proceeds of liquidation have been invested in factories of equivalent income-earning potential” (Wackernagel and Rees, 1996, p.37). However, those who argue for strong sustainability recognise the vital roles of ecological services that cannot be replaced and believe that natural capital stocks should be sustained and accounted for separately from human-made capital (Wackernagel and Rees 1996). Advocates of strong sustainability prioritise the need for environmental protection and social justice over economic development (Connelly 2007). Deep Greens argue further, that non-human species and ecosystems have rights and values (Naess 1989). The debate on strong and weak sustainability however, tends only to concern environmental issues and not socio-economic matters (Hopwood *et al.* 2005). Different GSAs may argue that different levels of sustainability are needed.

Economic growth is also a matter of contestation within sustainability debates. Some authors argue for example, that there are “limits to growth” (Meadows *et al.* 1972) and an alternative economic system is needed (Jackson 2009). Advocates of ecological modernisation however, ignore the “limits” argument and claim that maintaining the status quo of the economic system is compatible with sustainability. The idea is that “income per head could on increasing without additional strain on the environment” (Dryzek 2013, p.171). Ecological modernisers believe that economic growth and environmental protection can complement each other and “green” growth is necessary. Some GSAs may frame sustainability solutions as coming from within the existing economic system while others may argue that an alternative economic system is needed for sustainability to be achieved.

Prioritising different aspects of sustainability in different policies, programmes and projects results in different solutions being advocated and implemented. It has been argued that a “multiplicity of sustainabilities” should be recognised

(Houghton and Counsell 2004, p.73). The GSAs reported on in the results chapters of this thesis (Chapters 4, 5 and 6) frame sustainability problems and causes differently and therefore, offer different solutions. The existing literature on GSAs framing sustainability issues is discussed in section 2.4 of the literature review.

2.1.1 Conclusion

This section has demonstrated that sustainable development is a contested concept. It provides a background to the results chapters which report on three different case studies of GSAs and demonstrate that each GSA frames sustainability problems differently, and therefore uses different types of resources and strategies to address those problems. The matter of sustainable development as a contested concept is referred back to in the Discussion chapter (section 7.3.1) which explains the recursive relationship between the concept of framing and the concepts of strategies, resources, collective identity, and culture in collective action by GSAs. It is also discussed in the Conclusion chapter in the sections called “Answering the research questions” (section 8.1) and “Wider Implications of this thesis” (section 8.2.2).

2.2 Frames and framing

This thesis is concerned with the frames used by GSAs to mobilise people to take action, and which guide members’ collective action on sustainability. In section 2.2.1 I discuss influential pieces of literature from different disciplines that have been concerned with frames and framing. In section 2.2.2 I discuss the concepts of “framing” and “frames” as they are used in this thesis, while relating the discussion to examples of GSAs. Finally, in section 2.2.3 I discuss the existing work on “collective action frames” (Snow and Benford 1988), and how this work informed the research for this thesis.

2.2.1 A review of existing literature that uses a framing perspective

The concepts of frames and framing have been of interest to scholars in many disciplines including the cognitive sciences and psychology (Bartlett 1932), anthropology (Bateson 1955), sociology (Goffman 1974), psychology of artificial intelligence (Minsky 1975), linguistics and discourse analysis (Chafe 1977; van

Dijk 1977; Tannen 1979), media and communications (Pan and Kosicki 1993) and policy (Schön and Rein 1994). Here I discuss some of the key work on frames and framing.

The concept of “frame” comes from the cognitive and brain sciences. In this discipline, “frame” is closely related to the concept of “schema” as used by Bartlett (1932). Bartlett was interested in memory processes and argued that memory is constructive as an individual tends to simply “get a general impression of the whole, and on the basis of this, he constructs the probable detail” (1932, p.206). Building on this work, cognitive scientists found that individuals think in frames. Lakoff provides an example of this:

“A hospital frame, for example, includes the roles: Doctor, Nurse, Patient, Visitor, Receptionist, Operating Room, Recovery Room, Scalpel etc. Among the relations are specifications of what happens in a hospital, e.g., Doctors operate on Patients in Operating Rooms with Scalpels” (2010, p.71).

Cognitive scientists have found when an individual thinks, the relationships between the different elements in the frame are physically defined in circuits in the brain (Lakoff 2010).

Minsky (1975), building on the work of Bartlett (1932), was first to introduce the concept of frame to the discipline of psychology of artificial intelligence. He argues that individuals possess structures which retain information from visual analysis and which provide accurate predictions about objects that are partly observed or not looked at with full attention. He calls these structures “frames”. He extends the argument to claim that frames enable individuals to develop expectations of social events such as birthday parties. Minsky intended his frame theory to be applied to understanding artificial intelligence machines.

In anthropology, Bateson (1955) introduced the concept of frame after studying monkeys playing at a zoo. He found that when playing, a monkey was able to understand that a hostile move was not intended to be hostile because he referred to the frame “This is play”. This frame had different rules and so the hostile move was framed as play. Bateson argues that no communication,

verbal or nonverbal, could be comprehended without reference to the frame (or metamessage) that is applied to the communication.

Goffman (1974) was first to introduce the concept of frame to sociology. Goffman argues that frames enable people to interpret events or situations and "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" them (ibid, p.21). When an individual perceives a situation, s/he adopts a particular frame to interpret that situation and to understand what is going on. An activity such as playing tennis, for example, might be framed as a hobby or an occupation. The way the activity is framed has implications for how it is experienced. While individuals may "adopt" a frame, framing is constrained by social structures. At the same time, framing may reinforce or diminish social structures. There is a recursive relationship between framing and social structures.

Chafe (1977), concerned with language and discourse, showed films to groups of participants who he later asked to recall what they had seen. He wanted to know, after experiencing an event "What kind of processes must this person apply to convert his knowledge, predominantly nonverbal to begin with, into a verbal output?" (ibid, p.41). In connection with Chafe's work, Tannen (1979) presents data from participants who watched a film and then had to tell another participant what they had seen. She is interested in how frames affect what is said. Van Dijk (1977) is another prominent author interested in discourse and who has used the concept of frame. He explains that "a frame organizes knowledge about certain properties of objects, courses of event and action, which TYPICALLY belong together" (ibid, p.159).

In policy research, Schön and Rein (1994) argue that intractable policy controversies are a result of conflicting frames being used, and can be solved by reframing the issues. The authors demonstrate how situations can be framed differently by different actors with the example of the Federal Urban Renewal Program in the District of Columbia in 1954. The authors cite an abstract quoted in Bellush and Hausknect (1967, p.62), in which the planner framed the slum community as one of "disease" with buildings that were "unsanitary or unsightly," and which must be torn down. In contrast to this framing of the community, Schön and Rein (1994) cite Gleicher and Fried's (1967) study of the West End slums in Boston, in which the community was framed as a place of

“belonging” and a “locus of social relationships”, meaning that the community would be dislocated by the Urban Renewal Program. These two different frames would require different policies.

In communication research, Pan and Kosicki (1993) argue that members of the media actively frame public policy issues. The authors present framing analysis as a method for analysing news discourse. They argue that texts need to be conceptualised into “empirically operationalizable dimensions” so that the framing of issues by the news media could be examined (ibid, abstract).

2.2.2 “Frame” and “framing” in this thesis

The use of “frame” and “framing” in this thesis comes from sociology, and particularly from the social movement literature that discusses collective action frames (See for example: Snow *et al.* 1986; Snow and Benford 1988; Benford and Snow 2000). In this section I discuss what I mean by frame and framing in relation to this thesis.

In this thesis, the concept of “framing” is used to refer to the process of “meaning construction” (Benford and Snow 2000, p.614). In other words, framing “is the activity and process of creating and representing frames” (Gray 2003, p.11). Framing, is seen to be an active process that requires agency. I examine case studies of GSAs for evidence of “core framing tasks,” “frame alignment” processes, and “frame resonance” (Benford and Snow 2000), as discussed in detail in section 2.2.3.

A “frame” is an outcome of the framing process. A “frame” can be thought of as an “organizing idea” (Gamson 1992, p.3) or “interpretative schemata that simplifies and condenses ‘the world out there’” (Snow and Benford 1992, p.137). In terms of GSAs, a frame may be the meaning members give to a perceived sustainability problem or the solution that they see as appropriate. Different GSAs may frame sustainability problems differently, as a result of food waste or energy use for example, which has implications for the solutions that they advocate.

Frames are seen to be socially constructed and shared with other actors. Social construction refers to the process in which two or more actors characterise a situation in the same way (Gray 2003). Members of GSAs then, construct

frames through their interaction. In socially constructing frames members of GSAs are involved in “selection and salience” (Entman 1993, p.613).

“To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient...in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman 1993, p.613).

A GSA may, for example, select food waste as the aspect of unsustainable development that they wish to make prominent, which involves the “causal interpretation” that food waste causes unsustainable development, which leads to the “moral evaluation” that food waste is bad, and inevitably to a solution to the problem in the means of the GSA's project that aims to reduce food waste.

While all GSAs are concerned with sustainability, members of different GSAs draw on distinct aspects of sustainability by constructing frames that they think are appropriate for communicating with the community in which they are based and will mobilise people to take action. This results in different outcomes in terms of the projects and activities of the GSAs. Policy scholars, amongst others, have demonstrated how the frame used can affect the outcome. Arts and Buizer provide an example of how framing a problem in a particular way can affect policy outcomes:

“[B]y defining a problem such as worldwide deforestation in a certain manner, while building on existing frames, certain types of action seem more self-evident than others. When it is framed as a problem that is (mainly) globally or locally caused, very different policy options will emerge” (2009, p.342).

We can see from the example above that by selecting a particular frame, actors exclude other possible frames so that “one story rather than another is told” (Snow 2004, p.384). Furthermore, the selection of a frame has consequences for subsequent actions (Snow 2004). This is relevant to our understanding of GSAs because a GSA that frames climate change as requiring radical changes to the economy, for example, is likely to propose different actions to a GSA that frames climate change as being solved within the current economic and social

system. Likewise, GSAs may frame sustainability as a local or global problem, which may also affect the projects they deliver.

The idea of “organisational form as frame” is also important to this thesis” (Clemens 1996). Clemens states that “organizational form defines groups as “people who act together in a particular way”” (ibid, p.206). A GSA that takes the organisational form of a Transition Initiative may, for example, have connotations of members who are white, well-educated, and middleclass (Coke 2013; Seyfang and Haxeltine 2012; Aiken 2012; Barr and Devine-Wright 2012; Smith 2011) and that deliver community-scale projects to address peak oil and climate change (Hopkins 2008).

Clemens (1996) also argues that organisational form creates and constrains the ability to work with other organisations. Co-operatives for example, are likely to work with other organisations that have been framed as co-operatives but may have difficulty when trying to work with some mainstream organisations who perceive them as too radical.

This section has presented the concepts of framing and frame as they are used in this thesis and how they relate to the actions of GSAs. Next, I discuss the literature on collective action frames, which has informed my analysis of the case studies.

2.2.3 Collective action frames

The concept of frame as used by social movement scholars stems from Goffman’s (1974) work (Snow *et al.* 1986). Snow and Benford have led the way in using the concept of frame to understand social movements (see for example Snow *et al.* 1986; Snow and Benford 1988; 1992). These authors developed a framing perspective for studying social movements in opposition to the existing resource mobilisation and psychofunctional perspectives (Snow *et al.* 1986). Snow *et al.* argue that these perspectives are limited because they “neglect the process of grievance interpretation; they suggest a static view of participation; and they tend to over-generalize participation-related processes” (1986, p.465). According to Benford and Snow “collective action frames are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization” (2000, p.614). They justify action

by problematising and contesting existing dominant framings of reality (Snow 2004). Collective action frames are not simply an amalgamation of individual members' values and opinions but are the result of social movement actors "negotiating shared meaning" (Gamson 1992, p.111). They are also properties of the social movement organisation (SMO) and are used in its communications (Snow 2004). Members of SMOs are "framing agents" that actively construct meaning to produce collective action frames (Snow and Benford 1992). There can however, be "frame conflicts" between movement members (Gray 2003, p.19). The purpose of this thesis is to examine GSAs in order to understand how members, as "framing agents", frame sustainability problems and solutions. In doing so, I draw on some of the concepts generated by scholars interested in collective action frames; these are discussed below.

Snow and Benford (1988) argue that there are three core framing tasks for social movement actors in constructing collective action frames: "diagnostic framing", "prognostic framing", and "motivational framing".

- 1) "Diagnostic framing" – this refers to articulating that an injustice exists and attributing blame for that injustice.
- 2) "Prognostic framing"- this refers to the articulation of a suggested solution to the problem. As Benford and Snow point out, "the identification of specific problems and causes tends to constrain the range of possible "reasonable" solutions and strategies advocated" (2000, p.616).
- 3) "Motivational framing" – this refers to a "call to arms" using "appropriate vocabularies of motive" (Benford and Snow 2000, p.617). The "motivational framing" task involves what Gamson refers to as the agency component of collective action frames – the belief that "we" can do something about the perceived injustice" (1992, p.7).

We can relate these three core framing tasks to the framing tasks of GSAs. GSAs exist because of a perceived injustice, and use a "diagnostic framing" to articulate this injustice. They may for example, frame unsustainable development in terms of an injustice that affects the community in which the

GSA is based on an injustice that affects "others" (such as those living in the Third World or future generations). GSAs may attribute blame for this injustice to a range of different actors, institutions, and systems such as the government, consumers, producers, or the economy. In terms of "prognostic framing," GSAs' projects are proposed solutions to the perceived problem of unsustainable development, and the choice of projects is constrained by the diagnostic framing. Finally, with regard to "motivational framing", the very existence of a GSA suggests that "we" (the community) can do something about the perceived problem. The case studies of GSAs presented in this thesis are examined for examples of how members encourage the community to support and participate in their projects by suggesting "we" can have an impact on sustainability.

Snow et al (1986) termed the strategic efforts of social movement organisations (SMOs) to align their frames with those of potential supporters and resource providers as "frame alignment" processes. They argue that frame alignment is a "necessary condition" for participation in a social movement (ibid, p.467). According to the authors, there are four different frame alignment processes that an SMO might use:

- 1) "Frame bridging" – this refers to an SMO's attempts to link to people who share the SMO's framing of a problem but lack an organisation in which they can participate in order to express their concern or act upon it. The authors argue that frame bridging primarily occurs through outreach and information dissemination.
- 2) "Frame amplification" – this concerns the "clarification and reinvigoration" of a frame and its relevance to a particular problem or situation (1986, p.469). Frame amplification may involve the magnification of certain values or beliefs relevant to a perceived problem or situation.
- 3) "Frame extension" - this involves the SMO "extending" its primary frame so that it resonates with more potential participants.

- 4) "Frame transformation" – this involves the SMO using a different frame in order to portray a different meaning to participants or potential participants.

In a particular community some residents may already share an understanding of a sustainability problem. "Frame bridging" in this case will involve making these residents aware that the GSA has a common interest with them and exists to solve the shared problem. In terms of "frame amplification" a GSA may emphasise how certain beliefs or values relate to the perceived problem. GSAs with a "climate change" frame might emphasise certain values or beliefs, such as the belief that climate change is caused by energy consumption. It is possible that a GSA which belongs to an interest community might engage in the process of "frame extension" in order to appeal to other interest communities. A GSA that primarily frames climate change in terms of "energy consumption", for example, may also incorporate the frame of "food consumption" in order to engage a wider range of participants. Another example of frame extension is a GSA that uses a "save energy, save the environment" frame as a solution to the problem of "climate change" deciding to also use a "save energy, save money" frame in order to appeal a wider audience that may not be motivated by the initial value-laden framing. Finally, a GSA may find a frame is not successful in engaging participants and reject the frame in favour of another. A GSA for example, may first use an "energy consumption" frame but find that it does not resonate with the community as well as a "food consumption" frame, and so may reject the "energy consumption" frame.

It has been argued that individual SMOs or specific movements may have their own primary frame that may not "resonate" with targets of other SMOs/movements (Benford and Snow 2000). It cannot be assumed that because a primary frame has helped one SMO/movement to mobilise members that it will be successful for other SMOs/movements (ibid). This argument applies to GSAs as members use frames that they think are most likely to resonate with other members and also members of the community that they hope to mobilise. In some cases there is an assumption that the community is homogenous and members use frames that they think will resonate with "people like us". Benford and Snow (2000) explain why some collective action frames

“resonate” with targets of mobilisation (potential movement participants) and why others do not. They argue that both credibility and salience affect the resonance of a frame. By “credibility” they are referring to the “frame consistency, empirical credibility, and credibility of the frame articulators or claimsmakers” (ibid, p.619).

- 1) “Frame consistency” - this refers to the argument that there cannot be “apparent contradictions among beliefs or claims” made by social movement actors or “perceived contradictions among framings and tactical actions as between what the SMO says and what it does” (ibid, p.620).
- 2) “Empirical credibility” – this refers to how “culturally believable” the claims being made appear to be; in other words, can what is being claimed be true? (ibid, p.620).
- 3) “Credibility of the frame articulators or claimsmakers” – this refers to the status and knowledge of those articulating the frame (ibid).

In theory, GSAs that are credible will successfully gain support and volunteers for their projects. Part of the purpose of this thesis, in examining the frames of GSAs, is to assess their credibility and how well they are likely to resonate with members and potential members.

Snow and Benford (1988) also argue that salience too affects how well frames resonate with the targets of mobilisation. In other words, the more prominent the frame is to the target audience, the more likely it is to succeed at mobilising audience members. The authors argue that salience has three components: “centrality,” “experiential commensurability”, and “narrative fidelity”.

- 1) “Centrality” – this refers to how important the values and ideas of the collective action frame are to the lives of the targets of mobilisation (Benford and Snow 2000).
- 2) “Experiential commensurability” – this refers to how well the frame resonates with the “personal, everyday experiences” of those the movement wishes to mobilise (ibid, p.621).

- 3) “Narrative fidelity” – this refers to the extent to which the frame resonates with the targets’ “cultural narrations” (for example, myths or assumptions).

As with the credibility of frames, salience is thought to be an important factor for gaining support and volunteers for the GSA. Members of a GSA, when framing sustainability problems may, for example, perceive that the problem of “climate change” would not be a “central” concern to some members of the community or resonate with their “personal, everyday experiences” or “cultural narrations” of what is “going on” in the world, if there appears to be a shared concern about local economic development; in which case they may frame the issue in relation to the local economy so that it resonates with more people. This thesis, when examining the resonance of the GSAs’ frames, will consider what aspects of sustainability GSA members choose to make more salient.

In summary, this thesis uses the concepts generated by work on collective action frames to examine the frames used by three cases of GSAs. It examines the cases for evidence of the three core framing tasks, frame alignment, and frame resonance. There will be some overlap here. In examining the diagnostic frame of a GSA for example, there is likely to be evidence of resonance in terms of experiential commensurability. If a GSA diagnoses a sustainability problem in relation to the “local economy” for example, they are likely to link this to the everyday experiences of local residents (unemployment for example) in order for the frame to resonate with them.

2.2.3.1 Empirical research that has applied the theoretical concepts related to collective action frames

The theory and concepts of collective action frames have been discussed. Here, I present two empirical studies by researchers that have examined framing processes in social movements and that have specifically used some of the concepts from the work on collective action frames. This is not a complete review of the literature, rather the review is meant to demonstrate how the theory and concepts have been applied in empirical studies.

2.2.3.1.1 A study of two protest campaigns in West Germany

Gerhards and Rucht's (1992) study was the first to examine framing processes of social movements through empirical research. They examined the Anti-IMF and Anti-Reagan campaigns in West Germany and found that "master frames" brought together different groups with different interests (For a discussion of "master frames" see: Snow and Benford 1992). They describe the master frame of the Anti-IMF campaign as "ideology of imperialism" and the master frame of the Anti-Reagan campaign as "hegemonic power ideology". The authors argue that these master frames contained diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational elements that enabled groups with group-specific concerns to link to the campaigns.

An important finding of Gerhards and Rucht (1992) is that the diagnostic framings of the campaigns articulated not one but several problems. The authors argue that the articulation of multiple problems allows for a range of different groups that focus on one of these problems to engage with the campaign. This leads them to the hypothesis that "[t]he larger the range of the problems covered by a frame, the larger the range of societal groups who can be addressed with the frame and the greater the mobilization capacity of the frame" (p.580). Crucially, the authors note that in discussing the framing of problems they are not arguing that social problems are invented, rather "these situations have to be labeled as problems in order for them to become problems" (ibid, p.580). It was found that the prognostic framing in the campaigns involved advocating a solution that was the opposite of the perceived problem and cause of the injustice; in this case the proposed solution was to change the world economic order. They argue however, that the prognostic framing was weak because it did not articulate *how* the world economic order should be changed. They hypothesise therefore, that "[t]he closer the frames come to giving solutions for the defined problems and ways to reach these solutions, the higher the mobilization capacity of the frames (ibid, p. 582). They note that there was a lack of explicit motivational framing in both campaigns. They argue however, that the diagnostic framing used "value laden" words that were intended to motivate people (ibid, p. 583). Despite the lack of a motivational framing, the authors provide the hypothesis that "the mobilizing

capacity of a frame increases to the extent that it contains explicit or at least implicit motivating elements, such as appeals to generally recognized moral norms” (ibid, p.583). Although all three elements of a collective action frame were found (to some extent), Gerhards and Rucht (1992) conclude that the appeal of the campaigns was limited because the master frames focussed on leftist ideologies and therefore, these would not resonate with people outside of this political spectrum.

2.2.3.1.2 A study of the U.S.-Central America Peace Movement

Another study that has used the concepts of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing is Nepstad’s (1997) study of the Central America peace movement of the 1980s. In analysing the case for evidence of diagnostic framing, the author found that North American missionaries who had worked in Latin America communicated “injustice frames” upon their return to the U.S. by discussing the suffering they had seen with their congregations and those in their parishes. This injustice frame was amplified when several church workers were killed in El Salvador by government agents. This led to the development of a prognostic framing. It is reported that members of the church proposed ceasing funding from the U.S. government to military regimes in parts of Latin America, and called for people to start demanding this change. Finally, the author found that motivational framing came from the personal accounts of residents of Central America who fled to North America to avoid the violence. A network of churches and synagogues provided a means by which Central American refugees met faith communities and told their personal stories, which motivated people to act. Nepstad (1997) concludes that in a cross-national movement where people in one nation are not directly affected by the injustice, framing processes help people “identify the injustice, determine its causes, and offer a prognosis for action” (ibid, p.483).

2.3 How GSAs have been framed in existing literature

Different sets of literature frame the activities of GSAs differently. GSAs have been framed for example, as enabling “practice change,” as a source of “grassroots innovations,” and enabling members to learn “skills for sustainable communities”. Here, I use the concepts of “diagnostic” and “prognostic” framing

to present the existing literature on the role of communities in sustainable development. Analysing the diagnostic framings of the different sets of literature draws out how different authors view the problem of unsustainable development, while analysing the prognostic framings demonstrates how different authors see GSAs as part of the solution.

2.3.1 Practice change for sustainable communities

There is a set of literature on the role of communities in sustainable development that I have collectively framed as “practice change”. This is not a cohesive set of literature as different authors use practice theory in different ways in order to examine the role of communities. The theories of these authors have variously been informed by Giddens’ (1984) theory of structuration, which argues that the actions of an individual are shaped by social structures and vice versa, or Bourdieu’s work on *The Logic of Practice* (1990). Authors that have taken a practice approach are critical of the individualistic approach to sustainable consumption; as Shove argues, this approach “...misses the point that much consumption is customary, governed by collective norms, and undertaken in a world of things and sociotechnical systems that have stabilizing effects on routines and habits” (2003, p.9). They consider an individual’s practices then, as “social, collective phenomena rather than individualised behaviours” (Buchs *et al.* 2011, p.5). This helps us to understand how an individual’s agency is bound up in social structures (ibid 2011).

Within this set of “practice change” literature there is a diagnostic framing that some consumption practices of individuals are problematic for sustainable development and need to change. The diagnostic framing of this literature however, also involves articulating that consumers are not to blame for these unsustainable practices because they are in fact “locked in” to these practices (Southerton *et al.* 2004a). In other words, “the structures of society enable and constrain people to act in certain ways” (Middlemiss 2009, p.18). The prognostic framing by researchers concerned with communities and practice change involves demonstrating *how* communities can have the capacity to stimulate sustainable practices in their members. The work of key authors from this perspective is presented here.

Middlemiss (2009, 2011) concludes, based on empirical analysis of several community-based organisations (CBOs) engaged in some form of sustainable development project, that these organisations enable practice change by providing a range of rules and resources (see Table 2.1). We can take a diagnostic framing from this; unsustainable practices are seen to be a result of mainstream systems failing to provide access to these rules and resources. In relation to this, the prognostic framing is that CBOs can form part of the solution to sustainability, providing that they have sufficient access to these groups of resources in order to enable practice change to occur in their members (Middlemiss 2009). Middlemiss argues however, that the degree of practice change is reliant upon several factors such as the individuals' "sustainable practice histories" and the "nature of the community-based organisation and the activity that it runs" (ibid, p.iii). Individuals who have previously been unengaged with sustainable practices have the greatest capacity to change their practices (ibid).

Table 2.1 Resources and Rules Provided by CBOs

Resources/Rules	Explanation
Organisational resources	Bringing participants together, running activities, providing leadership, creating partnerships, accessing resources for the organisation.
People resources	Participant's access to personal resources and capacity to volunteer.
Infrastructural resources	Providing information, services or facilities for participants.
Cultural rules	Embedding the idea of sustainability within the community; creating a positive association with sustainability.

Source: Middlemiss (2009).

Buchs *et al.* (2011) provide a framework for the "conceptualisation of practice theory" (see Table 2.2). They use this framework to demonstrate how third sector organisations for sustainability (such as GSAs) enable practice change. Although the authors do not use the terms "resources and rules", we can see similarities with the work of Middlemiss (2009; 2011). The elements of the framework are categorised as "meanings and competences," "social structures,"

“artefacts and infrastructures,” and “environmental contexts” (Buchs *et al.* 2011). The prognosis framing provided by Buchs *et al.* (2011) then, is that third sector organisations can facilitate practice change by providing alternative “elements” of practice for their members. Implicit in this argument, is the diagnostic framing that unsustainable practices occur because mainstream systems do not provide the necessary “elements” of practice for individuals to consume sustainably.

Table 2.2 Conceptualisation of Practice Theory

Elements of the Framework	Explanation
Meanings and Competences	Third sector organisations provide occasions for people to consider their existing practices by providing alternative visions and goals. They can create new meanings and identities for participants. Third sector organisations provide skills and knowledge to participants.
Social Structures	Third sector organisations play a role in upsetting social structures, “providing a space within which alternative discourses, norms and rules are reproduced, more supportive to low-carbon practices” (ibid 2011, p.14-15).
Artefacts and Infrastructures	Third sector organisations may provide access to “artefacts and infrastructures” required for sustainable living.
Environmental Contexts	Third sector organisations can shape environmental contexts. “As such they provide opportunities to experience non-human nature and/or to engage in projects to ‘improve’ local environments” (ibid 2011, p.15).

Source: Buchs *et al.* (2011).

Hargreaves *et al* (2011) examine practice change as a result of being an EcoTeams member. EcoTeams bring together people from existing communities, whether a neighbourhood, workplace, school or social network (ibid). EcoTeams then, are interest communities made up of individuals that

want to engage in more sustainable practices. The groups are temporary, usually existing for a maximum of six months. They are facilitated by the environmental charity Global Action Plan and meet for regular discussions with the aim of members changing their practices related to travel, energy, water, waste, and shopping (ibid). Hargreaves *et al* explain that EcoTeams “seek to change multiple elements [that make up practices] simultaneously, to experiment with new kinds of integration, new practices-as-entities, and/or to generate new practice complexes as part of more sustainable lifestyles” (2011 p.9). The authors provide evidence, for example, of EcoTeams using the EcoTeams handbook to help them address the different elements of practice (images/meaning, skills, materials).

“The chapter on energy, for example, as well as containing information about climate change (images/meanings), provides details of more efficient and sustainable domestic appliances such as boilers, kettles and forms of microgeneration (materials), and also makes suggestions for new routines and habits (skills) that EcoTeamers might try to save energy... The group meetings, by discussing these new pro-environmental elements of practice, thus serve as fora in which new pro-environmental practices-as-entities are, at least discursively, constructed” (ibid, p.14).

It is evident that Hargreaves *et al* (2011) also provide a prognostic framing of communities being able to affect practice change. The authors however, argue that groups such as EcoTeams can only have a limited impact on practice change; members of such groups, when trying to perform new practices, are often prevented from doing so by “wider systems and regimes” (ibid, p.14). Similarly, one of the conclusions of this thesis is that GSAs are constrained in their ability to contribute to sustainable development (see section 8.2.1).

2.3.1.1 Summary of the work on practice change for sustainable communities

The diagnostic framing by authors from the “practice change” literature presents the argument that sustainable consumption requires individuals to change to more sustainable practices. The prognostic framing argues that communities

and GSAs can enable this practice change to occur in their members. Authors that have researched this practice change however, have considered the extent to which practice change is possible. Middlemiss (2009) for example, reports that different communities have different capacities for enabling practice change, while Hargreaves *et al* (2011) found that practice change can be limited by existing structures and regimes.

2.3.1.2 How the approach taken in this thesis differs from and complements the literature on practice change for sustainable communities

We can see from the review of the literature on practice change for sustainable communities that authors who use a practice change framing are concerned with elements provided by GSAs (e.g. resources, contexts, and such) that enable practices for sustainable consumption. They are concerned with what people “do” as a result of engaging in a GSA’s project(s). The practice change literature therefore, is concerned with the outcome of GSA’s projects (how the projects contribute to practice change and to what extent); it is not concerned with internal processes to do with how those projects are developed and why.

The practice change perspective is not suitable for answering the research questions set out in the introduction to this thesis (section 1.4). The research questions are concerned with what the group does as a collective to deliver its sustainability objectives, rather than being concerned with individuals and their practice change as a result of engaging with the group. Also, Research Question 2 is concerned with how the framing of sustainability issues affects a GSAs delivery of its sustainability objects; which requires an understanding that those sustainability objectives may differ between GSAs. However, the practice change literature is primarily concerned with sustainable consumption as the objective of GSAs (Hargreaves *et al* 2011; Middlemiss 2009; 2011). In this set of literature, authors tend not to reflect on sustainability as a contested concept or demonstrate that GSAs may be working towards a range of “sustainabilities” (Haughton and Counsell 2004, p.73). Also, as authors who use a practice change framing to examine the role of GSAs are concerned with what people “do,” *why* GSAs do what they do is overlooked. Finally, the practice change literature does not examine how GSAs frame sustainability issues to mobilise

people to engage in the groups' activities in order for practice change to occur. This may be because authors from this set of literature assume that GSAs all use the same framings related to the need for practice change and sustainable consumption. It may also be because authors in this area are concerned with practice rather than reasons for the practices (e.g. values, identity etc.) so are not concerned with why people are mobilised.

This thesis complements the practice change literature as instead of examining the outcomes of people engaging with GSAs (practice change), it examines how GSAs attempt to deliver projects and activities that may lead to those outcomes. It analyses the resources, strategies and framings used by GSAs in the delivery of those projects and activities. Second, this thesis has implications for understanding the variations in projects that aim to have an impact on practice change (for example, due to different sustainability framings, the collective identity of the group and the cultural aspects that they draw on). Third, it demonstrates how GSAs attempt to mobilise people through framing in order to encourage them to change their practices for sustainable consumption. The theoretical framework presented in the discussion chapter (7.3) could be used by researchers who use a practice change framing to examine the internal processes of GSAs delivering projects which could enable practice change. It is important to understand these processes so that researchers can make recommendations as to how GSAs might more effectively use the different elements in the framework to develop projects for practice change. The overall contributions of thesis are discussed in the conclusion chapter (section 8.2), and refer back to the literature on practice change for sustainable communities.

2.3.2 Grassroots innovations

The term "grassroots innovations," and the framing of community action for sustainability in this way, was first used by Seyfang and Smith (2007). "Grassroots innovations" is now probably the most frequently used frame with which to understand the activities of communities attempting to contribute to sustainable development. Unlike the practice change literature, the "grassroots innovations" literature as a whole, is fairly consistent in the approach that it takes – it is usually informed by the ideas generated by Seyfang and Smith (2007). It is therefore necessary to discuss the work of Seyfang and Smith

(2007) in detail. Following a discussion of this work, recent studies that have used a grassroots innovations frame are presented.

Seyfang and Smith's (2007) diagnostic framing suggests that unsustainable development persists because there is a lack of socio-technical innovation, which is needed for the transition to a sustainable society. Mainstream actors are seen to be unable to provide the necessary innovations because they are driven by financial profit-making rather than the aim of meeting social needs. In response to this, the authors provide a prognostic framing by emphasising the innovativeness of grassroots initiatives attempting to address perceived sustainability problems. They argue that these groups experiment with both social innovation and/or green technologies in aiming to provide solutions for sustainable development. They provide an example of co-housing to illustrate this argument.

“Consider the co-housing model. It is a model of community structure whereby residents live in houses around a ‘common house’. This common house contains a large kitchen and dining area for shared meals, and industrialized washing machines and lawnmowers. Cars are kept to the perimeter (and may be shared), allowing for open gardens and footpaths between houses. This structure combines privacy with communal activities (planning meetings, weekly shared meals, easy conviviality, supportive networks of neighbours), and potentially reduces overall consumption. It is essentially a social innovation – a restructuring of the social institutions of housing... However, it opens up terrain for more sustainable technologies. Co-housers can pool resources for the use of small-scale renewable energy technologies, rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling, and more sustainable construction materials and designs unavailable to individual households. In short, social innovations and the diffusion of technological innovations are intimately linked” (Seyfang and Smith 2007, p.588).

Seyfang and Smith (2007), in constructing the “grassroots innovations” frame, draw on the literature on sustainability transitions, which advocates taking a

multilevel perspective (MLP) to understand the relationship between microlevel actors and macrolevel structures (See: Geels 2005). Geels explains that the MLP “views transitions as non-linear processes that results from the interplay of developments at three analytical levels: niches (the locus for radical innovations), socio-technical regimes (the locus of established practices and associated rules that stabilize existing systems), and an exogenous socio-technical landscape” (2011, p.26). Seyfang and Smith (2007) view grassroots innovations as operating at the niche level. They are framed as attempting to provide niche-oriented activities for sustainable consumption and upsetting existing regimes, while aiming to provide landscape change through awareness-raising and the creation of alternative visions of the future that challenge mainstream visions (Smith 2012).

Seyfang and Smith (2007) pay particular attention to the concept of strategic niche management (SNM) from within the transitions literature (See: Kemp *et al.* 1998) to examine how grassroots innovations might diffuse into the mainstream. They differentiate between a “simple” niche that is project specific and a “strategic” niche that aims to contribute to wider social transformations. A key difference between the transition literature and the work of Seyfang and Smith (2007) however, is that while the former tends to focus on technological innovations for sustainability, the latter emphasises the importance of social innovations that are delivered by grassroots initiatives. Seyfang and Smith argue that these initiatives are able to experiment with innovations because they operate in niche spaces where “the rules are different” and innovations are protected from market selection pressures (2007, p.591). Grassroots innovation is seen to be driven by ideology and social need rather than profit-making. It is argued as a result, that there is a qualitative difference between sustainable development provided by grassroots innovations and mainstream actors.

“Grassroots, niche innovations differ from mainstream, business reforms; they practise quite different kinds of sustainable development. There is a qualitative difference between, for instance, a community-supported organic vegetable box scheme and the range of organic products sold at a supermarket; the social, economic and environmental

dimensions of sustainable development are traded off differently" (ibid, p.584-585).

The authors also argue however, that these grassroots innovations "are not a panacea" (ibid, p.595). Rather, they are a "source of innovative diversity," and provide inspiration and a source of learning for mainstream actors (ibid, p.590). It is seen as possible for some grassroots innovations to be adopted by mainstream regimes, organic food is given as an example, although these are likely to be qualitatively different and less radical than the original innovation. Part of the problem of scaling-up grassroots innovations, the authors argue, is that the rules in niche spaces are different to that of mainstream regimes (and often grassroots innovations are developed in opposition to mainstream regimes), which makes translation difficult. Research is needed to understand how these barriers can be overcome.

Seyfang and Smith have used the "grassroots innovation" frame to examine case studies of communities attempting to deliver sustainable development. Seyfang and Haxeltine (2012) for example, have used this frame to analyse the Transition Towns (TT) movement in the UK, and examine its attempts to "grow and diffuse beyond the niche" (ibid, p.395). The prognostic framing in this work is that the grassroots innovation could potentially enable wider diffusion of sociotechnical practices for sustainability. Drawing on SNM theory, they suggest that this could be possible by "enabling replication of projects within the niche, bringing about aggregative change through many small initiatives; by enabling constituent projects to grow in scale and attract more participants; and by facilitating the translation of niche ideas into mainstream settings" (ibid, p.384). After analysing the TT movement using SNM theory, the authors argue that it is appropriate to frame the movement as a grassroots innovation because "system innovation is in effect the *raison d'être* of the TT movement, and so far it seems to be self-generating a strong culture of innovation. Adoption of a grassroots innovation and niche framing has usefully allowed us to analyse the TT movement as an agent of change within sociotechnical systems" (ibid, p.396). Framing the TT movement in this way enabled the authors to make recommendations as to how the movement might further grow and diffuse its ideas into wider society.

Many other authors too, have framed the role of communities in delivering sustainability in terms of “grassroots innovations”. Here I present some of the most recent work on case studies of grassroots innovations. This is not a complete inventory of the work that has used the grassroots innovations frame; rather I aim to demonstrate the variety of community initiatives that have been framed in this way, and to draw out some of the similarities and differences in how grassroots innovations have been framed as a solution to sustainable development.

2.3.2.1 Local Food projects as grassroots social innovations

Kirwan *et al* (2013) frame community initiatives financed by the Local Food programme in England as “grassroots social innovations”. The Local Food programme supports “a variety of food-related projects, with the main aim of helping to make locally grown food accessible and affordable to local communities” (ibid, p.832). The authors use “five dimensions of social innovation” to analyse twenty-nine Local Food programme initiatives (ibid). The implicit diagnostic framing is that innovation is needed in food systems to address the social problems of food inequality and poverty.

Kirwan *et al* (2013) relate their findings about the challenges faced by these initiatives to Seyfang and Smith’s (2007) concepts of “intrinsic” and “diffusion” benefits (the former being of concern to “simple” niches and the latter being of concern to “strategic” niches). Intrinsic challenges relate to the challenges faced by the projects themselves, such as having the required skills available in the community. Intrinsic challenges also include having an income stream, with some groups being entirely reliant on grant funding meaning that they may spend a disproportionate amount of their time applying for grants rather than focussing on meeting their sustainability aims. The authors then turn to diffusion challenges, which include replication, growing in scale, and translation of projects into the mainstream. In terms of replication, they authors point to the large number (500) of projects that applied for Local Food funding. In terms of growing in scale, the authors note that smaller projects are often concerned with a single issue but often they are inspired by existing projects, meaning that funding is often building on existing projects. Finally, in terms of translation of projects into the mainstream, the authors struggle to make a connection. They

do note that some projects are having an impact by forming partnerships. “However, more broadly it is not possible to discern any wider diffusion of the social innovation that has been developed at an individual project level, not least because there is no systematic coordination of their successes or overarching criteria by which the niche as a whole might be judged” (Kirwan *et al.* 2013, p.837).

Following a discussion of the intrinsic and diffusion challenges, the authors conclude that “grassroots social innovation” is a useful way of framing initiatives financed by the Local Food programme. The prognostic framing provided in the conclusion articulates that while the initiatives provide social benefits, these benefits were only apparent at an individual project level, “with minimal impact on wider mainstream processes” (*ibid*, p.837). These grassroots innovations therefore, do not provide complete solutions for sustainable development. This leads the authors to warn that structural-level changes are needed to tackle the issues of food inequality and poverty present in some communities.

2.3.2.2 Communal growing projects as grassroots innovations

White and Stirling (2013) frame communal growing activities (community gardens and Community Supported Agriculture) as grassroots innovations. Again, these authors see these initiatives as a source of innovation for more sustainable food systems – though this time the authors emphasise the “innovative diversity” of these initiatives (*ibid*, p.845). They point out that the innovations of communal growing include:

“the local and communal stewardship of land through jointly growing food, investing in and managing space, and the redistribution of risk between growers and consumers. These involve collective forms of decision making, cooperation and group work to develop a plot, produce food and share risk – representing moves towards more distributed and locally-responsive forms of control over land-use. Furthermore, communal growing offers to address economic, social and environmental pillars of Sustainability” (*ibid*, p.839).

White and Stirling (2013) studied cases of communal growing in Brighton and East Sussex in the UK, in order to understand how actors in the niche respond to change and attempt to sustain the communal growing projects. They collectively term communal growing projects and the intermediary organisations that support them as a “niche”. They argue that if this niche is to have a wider impact on sustainability it must “survive, evolve and thrive” (ibid, p.839). The initial prognostic framing then, is that this niche may have a broad impact on sustainability (rather than impact being confined to the niche) if it can sustain itself in the long-term. The authors found that perceptions of how the niche can be sustained depend upon the perspectives between members of the growing projects and the intermediary organisations that support them. Also, projects link to a diverse range of regimes in order to secure funding to sustain their projects.

White and Stirling's (2013) empirical findings lead them to emphasise the innovative diversity of communal growing in terms of how the outcomes are valued differently by different groups, their funding sources, and the types of intermediary organisations that support them. This in turn leads them to argue that diversity needs to be considered in the development of theories of grassroots innovations. They attempt to link this perceived innovative diversity to the idea of a niche challenging the regime. They argue that “communal growing is best understood in the context of not a single regime, but the multiple provisioning systems with which diverse stakeholder groups identify and link” (ibid, p.845). They support this argument with an example of a communal growing group with aims around education and disability that supports existing health and education systems, while at the same challenging the food regime. A single niche then, is able to align with different regimes. The prognostic framing now is that grassroots innovations may be able to have an impact on multiple regimes. The authors conclude that future research on grassroots innovations needs to consider the diversity of these initiatives and also the diverse regimes with which they may be associated.

2.3.2.3 Grassroots energy and transport projects as grassroots innovations

Ornetzeder and Rohracher (2013) compare three cases of “successful” sustainability initiatives that they frame as grassroots innovations: wind turbines in Denmark, solar collectors in Austria, and car sharing in Switzerland. The authors explain that these three cases of environmental innovation “have gained global reach, gave rise to new industries and have the potential to be crucial elements of more sustainable energy and transport systems. They all had at least part of their roots and foundational phase in civil society and grassroots movements” (ibid, p.865). The authors are concerned with stages in the development, dissemination, and mainstreaming of these grassroots innovations. The aim of the paper is to ascertain how these grassroots innovations gained wider influence in order to draw lessons from the cases. There is then, a diagnostic framing that there needs to be further innovation in energy and transport systems in order to achieve sustainability.

Ornetzeder and Rohracher (2013) found that grassroots initiatives were important in the early development of the innovations; they provided legitimacy and resources such as unpaid working time. They report that one “critical phase” in the development of the grassroots innovations was the move from “loose networks of friends and other interested people to more formalised forms of organisations” (ibid, p.865). They also found that another “critical phase” was the transition from a grassroots innovation model of working to a more professional or profit-making model. They conclude that grassroots actors helped to speed up the development and dissemination process in early phases of the innovation’s development, shaped the design of the innovations, and also influenced the socio-technical development paths. In doing so, they note that the ability of grassroots innovations to deliver sustainable systems of production and consumption have not been given adequate recognition in science or policy making. They also call for research to examine the relationship between grassroots niches and regimes, as they found that regime actors tend to ignore activities in the niche. The prognostic framing then, is that grassroots innovations are important players in the development of more sustainable energy and transport systems, and need to be recognised as such.

2.3.2.4. A grassroots sustainable energy niche?

Seyfang *et al.* (2014) examine the relationship between intermediary organisations at the niche level and grassroots innovations. They study twelve cases of community energy projects in the UK by applying strategic niche management theory (SNM), and assess the extent to which a niche can be seen to have emerged. As well as contributing to SNM theory, this article contributes to our knowledge of the resources important to the work of GSAs. In examining the extent to which a niche has been developed, Seyfang *et al.* assess the resources that flow between grassroots innovations and intermediary organisations. They categorise resources as natural, manufactured, social, human/organisational, financial, and cultural. The authors consider both “upward” flows (how grassroots innovations contribute to developing a niche) and “downward” flows (from intermediary organisations to grassroots innovations to develop a niche).

In terms of upwards flows, they examine the extent to which learning, networking, and shared expectations and visions among different grassroots innovations creates a niche. Learning, networking, and shared visions are important steps in niche formation according to SNM theory. They find that learning is mostly pulled rather pushed “upwards” to intermediaries. In other words, intermediaries extract shared learning from grassroots innovations rather than groups offering to provide shared learning. However, grassroots innovations were more likely to share learning with other grassroots innovations than with intermediaries. Grassroots innovations mostly shared learning about human/organisational capital, followed by cultural capital, then social capital. With regards to networking, the authors find that there is greater reliance on project-to-project networking than with intermediary organisations. The main resources exchanged at both the global and local level are again human/organisational, cultural, and social. Finally, the authors find that, while all the grassroots innovations have sustainability visions, there is “not yet an influential niche able to shape the development of future projects within its overall shared vision, and...the sector currently exhibits characteristics of the ‘inter-local’ phase regarding shared visions and project co-ordination” (2014, p.36).

In examining downwards flows from intermediary organisations to grassroots innovations, Seyfang *et al.* examine the skills and resources offered by intermediaries, skills and resources needed by new projects, and where grassroots innovations get support from. Intermediary organisations provide resources such as handbooks and “how-to” guides for learning. They also provide information to grassroots innovations about policy changes that may affect local energy projects. The authors found that the resources most needed for new projects were social (all cases), cultural (all cases), human/organisational (all cases), and financial (11 cases). Only a few groups needed natural or manufactured capital. While all groups were able to self-generate some resources, all groups also accessed resources from intermediary organisations. Seyfang *et al.* note that the needs of the groups are being recognised to some extent by intermediary organisations working to support the community energy sector. However, grassroots innovations often have to access resources from organisations other than intermediaries. Seyfang *et al.* argue therefore, that this indicates there is not a good fit between the resource needs of grassroots innovations and the support provided by community energy intermediaries.

The findings of Seyfang *et al.* indicate that social, cultural, human/organisational, and (to some extent) financial resources, are most important to the work of grassroots innovations. Both human and financial resources appear in the framework “recursive elements of collective action by GSAs” that is presented in chapter 7 of this thesis, which has been developed based on the three case studies of GSAs examined in this thesis. The concept of “culture” appears as its own category in the framework (rather than as a type of resource) as culture is found to affect the resources used by GSAs. While “social” resources do not appear in the framework, “feelings and emotions” which may include feelings of a social bond are included in the framework as an element of culture that GSAs may draw on.

2.3.2.5. Summary of work on grassroots innovations

A coherent set of literature exists that frames community and grassroots actors attempting to deliver sustainability as “grassroots innovations”. Research has been concerned with whether grassroots innovations can result in regime

change, and the extent to which this is possible. There is a diagnostic framing that argues regime change is needed for sustainable development. In the prognostic framing however, grassroots innovations are seen by some authors as providing mostly local sustainability and having limited impact on mainstream regimes. Some of these researchers have made recommendations as to how grassroots innovations may have more of an impact on mainstream regimes, while others argue that the regime itself needs to change to address environmental and societal problems. Other authors have been more optimistic about the role of grassroots innovations in delivering wider sustainability; Ornetzeder and Rohrer (2013) for example, have shown how grassroots innovations in energy and transport have successfully done this.

2.3.2.6 How the approach taken in this thesis differs from and complements the literature on grassroots innovation

It is apparent from the literature reviewed that authors who use a grassroots innovation framing are primarily concerned with the external process of scaling-up grassroots innovations from the niche level to the mainstream. They may also be concerned with strategic niche management so that a robust niche forms that can challenge the regime. In other words, they are concerned with how grassroots innovations can have a wider impact on sustainability beyond the local level. Some authors also assess the extent to which an “innovation” framing and/or strategic niche management theory can be applied to understand these groups. This set of literature largely neglects the internal processes involved in GSAs delivering their projects to the community in which they are based (the local level).

Some authors coming from the grassroots innovation perspective consider strategies and resources. Seyfang *et al.* (2014) for example, examine the resources (social, cultural, human/organisational, financial, natural, and manufactured) that are shared between different grassroots innovations and with intermediaries. While there is some discussion of resources at the individual group level (e.g. grassroots innovations drawing in skills), this is not the primary focus. The main focus is to assess the extent to which the sharing of resources leads to the formation of a robust niche that can challenge the regime (rather than unconnected groups and intermediaries). The authors also

examine strategies (learning, networking, sharing expectations and visions) that involve the use of some of the resources listed above; however, again the aim is to assess whether these strategies lead to niche formation. Also, Kirwan *et al.* (2013), in assessing the challenges faced by grassroots innovations, find that some of the intrinsic challenges relate to lack of resources such as skills and a steady income stream. However, their overall aim is to assess the extent to whether the aggregate of grassroots innovations can be considered a niche that is able to challenge the regime (rather than being primarily concerned with the resources of individual groups). With this aim, the authors also report on diffusion successes and challenges but they do not discuss these in terms of access to resources.

A grassroots innovations approach is not suitable for answering the research questions set out in the introduction to this thesis (section 1.4) as these are concerned with the internal processes of individual groups, rather than with external matters such as whether the groups are part of a niche or the extent to which they challenge the regime. Also, the research questions are not focussed on the innovativeness of these groups. This thesis then, complements the grassroots innovations literature as it assesses the internal processes of delivering sustainability projects at the local level. It focusses on the frames, resources, and strategies used by individual GSAs in mobilising members of the community and delivering sustainability projects. The grassroots innovations literature also neglects processes that mobilise people to get involved with grassroots innovations, in order for innovative projects to be developed and delivered. This thesis addresses this issue by demonstrating that GSAs frame sustainability issues to encourage people to take action and engage in the GSA, and that their use of resources and strategies are influenced by these framings. The theoretical framework presented in the discussion chapter (chapter 7) could be used by researchers that use a grassroots innovation framing to understand the internal processes that lead to innovative projects at the local level. I would argue that it is important to understand the processes at this level in order to contribute to enabling individual grassroots innovations to become robust so that they are able to contribute to a niche which can challenge the regime. The

overall contributions of this thesis are discussed in the concluding chapter (8.1.2), and relate back to the literature on grassroots innovations.

2.3.3 Skills for sustainable communities

There is a further set of literature that frames communities as being able to provide “skills for sustainable communities”. Newton, Franklin and their colleagues were the first to suggest that members of communities can come together to provide each other with skills and knowledge to consume sustainably (Newton *et al.* 2008; 2009; Franklin *et al.* 2011). Prior to this, work on skills for sustainable communities had focussed on the role of professionals (See: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2004). My colleague and I, based on research undertaken for this thesis, build on the work of Newton and Franklin to provide an empirical analysis of learning in a student group with sustainability aims, and demonstrate how this learning enables sustainable consumption practices (See: Bradbury and Middlemiss 2014). The literature on the role of communities in providing skills for sustainable consumption is presented here.

There is an implicit diagnostic framing in the work on “skills for sustainable communities” that a skills/knowledge deficit is partly to blame for unsustainable consumption. Consumers, therefore, need to be upskilled. There is a prognostic framing then, that communities can deliver skills and knowledge for sustainable consumption. Newton *et al.* (2009) state that the literature on sustainable communities needs to provide “an understanding of how different skills come together in place and the process of how skills and learning are acquired and used” (Newton *et al.* 2009, p. 24). They present a case study of Stroud (a town in the UK) as the context in which to study the emergence of skills and knowledge that promote sustainable consumption. One of their findings was that “learning by doing” or “learning by seeing” in communities was more effective than formal learning for stimulating sustainable practices.

Following on from Newton *et al.*'s (2009) working paper, Franklin *et al.* argue that as well as a lack of discussion in policy materials there has been a deficit of research into how the skills and knowledge of participants actively striving to create sustainable communities can be “sustained and enhanced in practice; how skills and knowledge are shared in place; and whether the policy approach favoured for upskilling members of the professions is applicable to supporting

the capacity building of community residents, or whether a different approach is required" (2011, p. 351). Franklin *et al.* (2011) address these issues by using Massey's (2005) concept of relational space, which leads them to view sustainable communities as "productive spaces of learning" (Franklin *et al.* 2011, p. 353); this may be considered a prognostic framing.

The paper goes on to examine social space in relation to skills and knowledge for sustainable communities. An example is provided of one neighbour talking to another neighbour over the garden fence about her allotment and the other neighbour gradually gaining an interest in this. The authors (quoting Massey 2005, p.94) argue that these types of examples point to the "truly productive characteristics of material spatiality" (Franklin *et al.* 2011, p. 358). They conclude that skills and knowledge need to be understood as products of social relations, which has implications for those attempting to create sustainable communities. The paper, however, is limited in its examination of learning within sustainable communities as it does not unpack the processes that lead to learning.

Based on research undertaken for this thesis, Bradbury and Middlemiss (2014) add to the literature on skills for sustainable communities by examining learning processes in a GSA led by students called Green Action (the same case study is examined in Chapter 6 of this thesis). From the beginning, there is a prognostic framing that members of the group can provide skills/knowledge to other members, and the acquisition of skills/knowledge will lead to sustainable consumption. The student group, or "grassroots association," is treated as being composed of several "communities of practice" (Lave and Wenger 1991, Wenger 1998). We explain that "[t]he concept of "community of practice" is used in distinction to the concept of "community" as it implies a focus on understanding processes of learning in the context of social relations..." (Bradbury and Middlemiss 2014, p.3). We draw on the work of Lave and Wenger (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) on communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) to examine how learning occurs within the different communities of practice, how this learning enables participants to consume sustainably, and how learning contributes to the sustainability of the grassroots association.

Based on a framework provided by Wenger (1998), we explain that learning skills for sustainable consumption in the various communities of practice involves *meaning, practice, community, and identity*. We use this framework to demonstrate how skills for sustainable consumption are learnt within communities of practice. Our findings support the findings of Newton *et al.* (2009) that communities offer opportunities for “learning by doing,” which are important for gaining skills for sustainable consumption. We also emphasise the need for members to share their skills and knowledge with other members so that these remain within the community when they leave.

2.3.3.1 Summary of work on skills for sustainable communities

There is an emerging literature that uses a prognostic framing that articulates that communities can be sources of skills and knowledge for sustainable consumption. There is therefore, an implicit diagnostic framing that a lack of skills and knowledge prevents consumers from consuming sustainably. This literature is optimistic about the role of communities in contributing to sustainable development and emphasises the need for opportunities for community members to learn from each other and to learn by doing.

2.3.3.2 How the approach taken in this thesis differs from and complements the literature on skills for sustainable communities

We can see from the literature reviewed that the literature on skills for sustainable communities has a narrow focus being primarily concerned with processes that enable skills and knowledge to be acquired. This literature is also narrow in its examination of resources, being mainly concerned with human resources (skills and knowledge) to the detriment of other resources. While in earlier work myself and a colleague (Bradbury and Middlemiss 2014) do examine a range of resources (tools, place, etc.), we are only concerned with how the use of these leads to skills and knowledge acquisition; we are not concerned with resources used in other aspects of the GSAs work. The literature on skills for sustainable communities is narrowed further as it is only concerned with skills and knowledge for sustainable consumption, when a GSA’s objectives may be broader than this (rejuvenating the local economy, for example). Finally, there is a lack of understanding as to how people are

mobilised to engage in activities that enable them to gain skills to consume more sustainably.

The skills for sustainable communities framing is not suitable for addressing the research questions set out in the introduction to this thesis (section 1.4) because of its narrow, and therefore limiting, approach to understanding the activities of GSAs. Research Question 2 asks “what effect does framing have on how GSAs approach the delivery of sustainability;” this question is broad so that it allows for all approaches taken by GSAs to be studied, rather than just a skills approach.

This thesis complements the set of literature on skills for sustainable communities as the framework presented in Chapter 7 can be used to understand *why* groups take a skills approach or a different approach (because of their understanding of sustainability problems and solutions as expressed through frames, their collective identity, culture, and the resources/strategies that they therefore see as appropriate). It can also further understanding of how people are mobilised to take action and learn skills that can contribute to sustainability. By taking a broader approach, and not only focussing on skills, this thesis demonstrates that GSAs may take different approaches to one another that do not necessarily emphasise skills-sharing.

The theoretical framework presented in Chapter 7 can be used to understand this particular form of collective action (skills sharing and acquisition), which is discussed further in the Discussion chapter and Conclusion. It can be used to understand how a GSA’s skills-sharing strategy results from, and reinforces, the group’s framing of sustainability issues, its recognition of particular resources as important for sustainability, its collective identity, and the cultural aspects that it draws upon. The framework and theory developed in this thesis complements the literature on skills for sustainable communities, which is currently lacking theory development for understanding the activities of GSAs.

2.4 Existing studies looking at framing and GSAs

Three studies have previously examined how GSAs have framed sustainability issues to mobilise communities to take action or to gain support for projects.

The studies have been of single case studies, and only one study has used the concepts of diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing to explain how a GSA framed sustainability problems and solutions. Here, I review these studies.

2.4.1 Energy autonomy in Le Mené: A French case of grassroots innovation

Yalçin-Riollet *et al.* (2014) examine a case study of a grassroots innovation in the Le Mené region of France. They are concerned with how the grassroots innovation emerged and what innovative processes produced it. In addressing these concerns, they examine the hybridisation between framing and diversity.

The case study ran several energy projects including collective methane production, production of fuel oil, and participatory wind energy. Yalçin-Riollet *et al.* explain that, in order to win support for the projects, members of the group continuously framed the projects and the group itself. One of the framings linked the projects to the history of the region. Members of the group referred to social movements that had occurred in the region in the past and framed the energy projects as having a common cause. A second framing involved the group being careful not to be seen to be taking a political stance or being ecologically-minded as it was thought that this might deter some potential supporters. The third frame that the authors find relates to the global-local and ecological versus economic arguments. To avoid creating bourgeois bohemian identity for the group, members avoided referring to global environmental issues. Instead, an economic framing of the projects was seen to be more acceptable. The fourth frame was related to energy dependency. The group used the term “self-sufficiency” to create a positive vision for the community. Finally, the authors find a fifth frame that relates to the marketplace. Key members of the group did not criticise the market as they thought that this could discredit the group. Instead, the established local “self-sufficiency” system was integrated into the global system. Yalçin-Riollet *et al.* note then, that framing took place in order for the group to create a “pragmatic” image for itself, rather than a “political,” “critical,” “bourgeois bohemian” and “ecological” identity (2014, p.353).

Yalçin-Riollet *et al.* conclude that the case study can be seen to be a successful grassroots innovation due to the use of “several pillars, which combined

diversity and frames” (2014, p.354). These “pillars” included building a common cause by referring to the past; linking together diverse projects through the issues of energy and autonomy; building a collective identity for the different actors involved and creating a unified discourse; and bringing together different aims, which denounced the mainstream system while also relying on it. The authors argue that social innovation came about due to “the hybridisation of actors, socio-techniques, discourses and objectives in relation to energy” (2014, p.354).

In summary, Yalçin-Riollet *et al's.* (2014) paper demonstrates that members of GSAs may engage in framing. The authors however, are not primarily concerned with framing and the concept was not central to their research questions. They are primarily concerned with how grassroots innovations emerge and the social innovations involved. The authors report on only one case study of grassroots innovation and how issues were framed to gain support for the group’s projects.

2.4.2 Worcester Housing Energy and Community, Worcester, MA

Brown and Vergragt (2012), in a working paper, are concerned with how to energy-upgrade the existing residential housing stock in the US. They report on a case in which members of the Marsh Institute at Clark University in Worcester, MA established a GSA (or “grassroots innovation”), Worcester Housing Energy and Community (WoHEC). The purpose of this GSA was to engage with residents of the low-income community that surrounds Clark University and “to design and facilitate a large scale energy-retrofitting of residential houses to a level that would significantly reduce energy use for heating and cooling; create a wide range of jobs; employ local at-risk unemployed youths; enhance vocational training programs; improve the quality of life in the community; improve the market value of houses; and improve indoor air quality (including eliminating lead where necessary)” (ibid, p.12). When WoHEC was established, there were already several GSAs present in the local area that had been involved in housing retrofits and offered free energy audits (ibid), so it seemed that there was demand in the area for this type of project. The authors report that in order to successfully engage local people and organisations in WoHEC’s projects, members considered how best

to frame the projects as it was thought that framing the projects as “energy conservation and climate change alone” would not engage local people who were suffering from social and economic problems (ibid, p.12). Instead, members of WoHEC framed the projects in terms of “community development” (ibid, p.12). This frame enabled members of WoHEC to engage “with the issue of house retrofits from a wider perspective” than simply green technology (ibid, p.12).

WoHEC attracted many different stakeholders, including grassroots and social service organisations that were already working in the local area, as well as stakeholders from local colleges and the Energy Manager for the City of Worcester (ibid). It seemed likely that the wide range of stakeholders involved in WoHEC was because of the way in which the projects were framed. The authors report however, that the “community development” frame of the retrofit project did not resonate with the City, who had acquired funding under the Massachusetts Green Communities Act for community-based energy retrofit (ibid). This programme took a more “traditional” approach and chose to focus on financial aid and information provision aimed at middle-income households (ibid). Attempts were also made by members of WoHEC to partner with the Institute for Energy and Sustainability (IES), which aimed to “promote local economic growth through innovative green technologies” (ibid, p.11). The authors report however, that there was conflict between IES and WoHEC because of the different frames used by each organisation, and at the time of writing, WoHEC had not been able to successfully bring together the two framings. The authors conclude that “In order to restore the bridging function between the two different framings, a new dialogue seems to be necessary, possibly enabled by a new initiative to “re-launch” WoHEC and making more clear and explicit that its mission should be to bring together and bridge the different framings of the concept of “sustainable city”” (ibid, p.14).

We can see from this example that members of WoHEC made a conscious decision to frame the energy projects as community development solutions as they thought that this frame would resonate with more local residents than a climate change frame.

2.4.3 The Transition Network, UK

Coke (2013), in her PhD thesis, provides the most in-depth analysis of a GSA framing sustainability issues to mobilise communities to take action; although this analysis accounts for only one chapter of the thesis (the rest of the results chapters focus on other strategies used by the GSA to deliver its sustainability objectives). She examines the strategies of the Transition Network - an umbrella GSA that supports the work of Transition Initiatives (GSAs associated with the Network). She analyses the diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing constructed by the Network. Coke finds that the diagnostic framing by the Transition Network articulated the “twin threats” of peak oil and climate change (ibid, p. 89). She notes that the Transition Network was the first GSA (or social movement organisation as she calls it) in the UK to address these two issues together. Bringing the two problems together enabled the Network to argue that action needed to be taken not just because it was morally right but because people had no choice as oil was going to run out (ibid). Coke suggests that the Network’s reason for focussing more on the problem of peak oil than climate change was because the problem of peak oil was not on the public or political agenda at the time that the Transition Network was founded. She also suggests that there may have been more of a focus on peak oil because the founder had more interest in this problem. Coke finds that the framing of who was to blame for the problems outlined in the diagnostic framing was more implicit than what the problems were that needed to be addressed. The Transition Network however, blamed people’s “addiction” to oil and energy services. Finally, she argues that bringing together the two problems of peak oil and climate change helped to differentiate the Transition Network from other associations in the UK that only addressed the issue of climate change, and so helped to create an identity for the Network.

Coke (2013) finds that the prognostic framing articulated that there needed to be a “transition” to a relocalised economy that would be less reliant on fossil fuels. She argues that the word “transition” had values attached to it related to the idea of “earth stewardship” where energy and resource use has decreased. She notes that the argument that relocalisation was needed, fitted with another aspect of the prognostic framing, which articulated the need for community-level

action. She also finds that the “12 steps” approach advocated by the Transition Network to mobilise community members to create an Energy Descent Action Plan was intended to be similar to approaches used by self-help groups. This linked back to the diagnostic framing that addiction to oil was to blame for the problems. In analysis of motivational framing, Coke (2013) found evidence of the vocabularies of motive suggested by Benford (1993): severity, urgency, efficacy, and propriety. However, she also finds that the Transition Network used language that expressed desirability. Coke notes that the Network conveyed both the desirability of outcomes and also the desirability of the process, therefore motivating people to participate in Transition Initiatives that were involved in the process of delivering the outcomes advocated in the prognostic framing.

Finally, Coke (2013) argues that the framing of the problems and solutions guided the strategies used by Transition Initiatives delivering the solutions advocated in the prognostic framing. She concludes that “the overarching definition of the desired transition, as advocated through Network framing, is of a community-based approach (its action strategy) to creating a ‘powered-down’ and localised future of reduced energy demand, through the development of low carbon systems and lifestyles that are resilient to peak oil and which mitigate climate change (its generic change strategy)” (ibid, p. 111). Coke argues that these action and change strategies, as she calls them, were expressions of the Transition Network’s values that were expressed in the framing.

2.4.4 Summary of work on GSAs and framing

There is some evidence of GSAs strategically framing sustainability problems and solutions to mobilise communities to participate in or support their projects. However, there is currently a lack of comparisons between case studies of GSAs, and theory development based on such comparisons. Only one study by Coke (2013) has used the concepts of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing. Coke found that the framing of sustainability issues by the Transition Network influenced the strategies that it advocated and which, Transition Initiatives drew on to deliver their projects. This thesis builds on this work by examining not only strategies but also resources that are used as a result of the

framing of sustainability issues. It also examines the role that collective identity and culture play in the relationship between framing, strategies and resources.

2.5 Informing concepts: framing, strategies, resources, collective identity, and culture

While the literature on framing by social movements has been highly influential in my thesis, I also drew on a range of other concepts from the social movement literature to inform my study of GSAs; these concepts were collective identity, culture, strategies and resources. While these have been refined over the course of my studies, I present them here to provide a backdrop for the discussion of results in the coming chapters. My own definitions of the concepts can be seen in Table 2.3. The relationships between these concepts and how they are operationalised in my case studies will be explained in the discussion.

Table 2.3 Definitions of Concepts used in this Thesis

Concept	Explanation
Framing	Framing is the process of GSA members constructing sustainability problems, solutions, and reasons to act in order to mobilise members of the community to participate in or support the GSA, and/or perform practices for sustainability.
Resources	Resources are tangible objects, including people and their human resources, which members of GSAs perceive they can use instrumentally to create sustainable change.
Strategies	Strategies are instrumental choices made by members of GSAs, which they perceive will help them in pursuit of their goals.
Collective Identity	Collective identity refers to how the GSA sees itself and is seen by others, and who is seen as an appropriate member of the association. Collective identity may also refer to how members see the community that the GSA serves, and how that community sees itself and is seen by others.
Culture	Culture can be defined as understandings that are shared by members of the GSA that are drawn from the community in which they are based or from wider society.

Hunt *et al.* (1994) argue that framing processes create a collective identity for a social movement organisation (SMO). Melucci defines collective identity as actors having “a moveable definition of themselves and their social world, a more or less shared and dynamic understanding of the goals of their action as well as the social field of possibilities and limits within which their action takes place” (1989, p.4). Polletta and Jasper provide another useful definition of collective identity as:

“an individual’s cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution. It is a *perception* of a shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than experienced directly, and it is distinct from personal identities, although it may form part of a personal identity” (2001, p.285; emphasis added).

Collective identity is then, constructed through collective action; it is a bond based on the perception of (socially constructed) shared identities that creates a “we-ness” (Smithey 2009). Hunt *et al.* argue that “In the course of framing diagnoses, prognoses, and motives, SMO actors locate their organization and its views within a collective action field or context. This entails making in-group/out-group distinctions and assigning other organizations to ideological, geographical, and tactical “turfs”” (1994, p.193). They suggest that making in-group/out-group distinctions and locating an SMO in relation to other groups can be thought of as “boundary framing” (ibid, p.194), and this framing helps to construct a collective identity for the SMO. Framing of the organisation’s identity helps to recruit movement participants by linking individuals and groups ideologically. In terms of GSAs, they may, for example, frame the collective identity of the association as “radical,” which sets the association apart from mainstream organisations, and excludes anyone who does not share the radical identity from becoming a member. In this thesis, *collective identity refers to how the GSA sees itself and is seen by others, and who is seen as an appropriate member of the association. Collective identity may also refer to how members see the community that the GSA serves, and how that community sees itself and is seen by others.*

Polletta and Jasper (2001) argue that collective identity influences the strategies used by social movement actors. Benford and Snow (2000) have also noted that the framing of problems constrains the range of strategies that are advocated. In the context of this thesis, *strategies are instrumental choices made by members of GSAs, which they perceive will help them in pursuit of their goals*. This definition has been informed by Smithey's definition of strategies as "the conscious decisions and actions activists take to pursue their objectives" (2009, p.658). In this sense, strategies are a means to an ends (ibid). While Swidler (1986) considers strategies as part of the cultural "toolkit" that can be drawn on, I have treated strategies and culture as separate, but closely related, analytical concepts. As Jasper explains, "Strategy usually involves efforts to transform the social world; culture attempts to understand it. Even if every action has some of each, the logics of the two dimensions differ" (1997, p.44). Also, while framing may be strategic, I have treated it as a separate analytic category as doing so helps us to understand why GSAs use specific strategies.

In the social movement literature "strategy" (or "tactic") often refers to actions such as protests that are undertaken to influence elites to change their practices (for example, if a corporation is blamed for causing pollution) or to legislate for change (if the strategies of the movement are targeted at government, for example). The strategies of GSAs differ however, and relate to them delivering the change or "being" the change they want to see. Although GSAs may occasionally engage in protests, these are not their primary strategies for social change. Polletta and Jasper claim that "Strategic choices are not neutral decisions about what will be most effective...they are statements about identity" (2001, p.293). The strategies used reflect the group's collective identity but can also reiterate it (Smithey 2009). Also, the strategies that actors' perceive they can use are constrained by how they perceive their own collective identity (Polletta and Jasper 2001). The link between collective identity and the strategies used has been largely overlooked by social movement researchers (ibid). Smithey (2009) suggests that this is because it is difficult for researchers to separate the two concepts. He argues that the "symbolic capacities" of strategies to convey shared ideology and values should be studied by

researchers concerned with framing and identity construction (ibid, p.664). There is very limited existing literature that is concerned with the strategies of GSAs (See: Coke 2013); therefore, this thesis contributes to the literature on GSAs by studying the strategies used and how they relate to GSAs' use of resources, framing of sustainability issues, collective identity and culture.

Smithey (2009), addressing the gap in the literature on collective identity and strategy, has linked the concepts of collective identity, strategy, framing and culture. After reviewing the literature on collective identity and strategies/tactics in social movements, he concludes that:

“Strategic decision making and collective identity are closely related, especially with regard to tactical choices that are oriented toward others in a field of contention or conflict... [B]ecause tactics can convey meaning through symbols and careful choreography, they also play important roles in the framing battles through which social movements mobilize participants, bring public pressure to bear on opponents, and shape broader culture” (ibid, p.667).

Culture then, is another concept that I have used to understand the collective action of GSAs. The concept of culture has been linked to the concept of framing as it has been argued that the frames used by social movement actors need to have narrative fidelity and cultural resonance (Benford and Snow 2000). Benford and Snow note that “The cultural material most relevant to framing processes include the extant stock of meanings, beliefs, ideologies, practices, values, myths, narratives, and the like” (ibid, p.629). They agree with Tarrow (1992) who argues that social movement actors draw on existing cultural meanings and also create new cultural meanings. The concept of culture has also been linked to the concept of strategy as Jasper (1997) argues that the range of strategies available to social movement actors is constrained by the cultural context in which they are situated. Jasper defines culture as “shared mental equipment and its representations” (ibid, p.48). I share Jasper's interpretation of culture as shared understandings including “beliefs, feelings, rituals, symbols, practices, moral visions and such” (ibid, p.48). Culture is not physical, although it may have physical embodiments, in texts for example

(*ibid*). In the context of this thesis, *culture can be defined as understandings that are shared by members of the GSA that are drawn from the community in which they are based or from wider society*. Culture provides a repertoire from which collective action groups, such as GSAs, can select different aspects to pursue their aims (Swidler 1986). In analysis, it is useful not to think of culture as a resource but to treat it as a separate dimension (Jasper 1997).

We can see from this literature review that there are suggestions of a relationship between the concepts of framing, collective identity, strategies, and culture. The concept of resources is the final concept that is important in this thesis. Authors focussing on framing have primarily been concerned with the mobilisation of human resources (members and supporters of the groups), and to some extent how actors frame issues to mobilise financial resources and the media. Other types of resources have been largely overlooked. I have examined a wider range of resources, for example, a wind farm (AAT), ethical food products (Green Action), and an educational flyer that was intended to encourage members of the community to practice sustainably (CSG), amongst others. As the literature on framing is limited in its approach to resources, I turned to the work of Jasper (1997). Although this work is not concerned with framing, there is an overlap with the other concepts used in this thesis. Jasper argues that culture, biography (which includes identity), strategies, and resources are the “basic dimensions of protest” and can be used to understand collective action (*ibid*). He puts forward the argument that “the four dimensions – resources, strategies, culture, and biography – are irreducible, much as they affect one another” (*ibid*, p.43).

In this thesis, *resources are tangible objects, including people and their human resources, which members of GSAs perceive they can use instrumentally to create sustainable change*. I have drawn on Jasper’s definition of resources as “tools through which humans instrumentally change the objective physical world” (1997, p.43). He explains that resources are “Physical technologies and their capacities, or the money to buy these technologies” (*ibid*, p.44). I have included human resources in my definition; the inclusion of human resources is important as GSAs are, “in the voluntary nature of their activities, reliant on the skills and capacities of the volunteers that are present” (Middlemiss 2009,

p.113). Jasper (1997) argues that examining resources in isolation of the other three basic dimension of protest provides the researcher with little of interest. In particular, resources can only be understood in relation to the strategies for accumulating and using them (ibid). As Jasper explains:

“strategies and resources are intimately related, so that the kind and amount of resources a protest group has at any time is a function of prior strategies; and resources are only significant when they are used as part of some broader strategic initiative (even if that strategy only involves the threatened use of resources)” (ibid, p.47).

GSAAs may, for example, accumulate resources that can be sold to generate a profit for the association; these resources are only recognised as such because of the strategy of selling them. There is limited existing literature on GSAAs and their use of resources other than the work of Middlemiss (2009; 2011).

Jasper explains that *why* particular strategies and resources are used can only be understood in relation to the concepts of biography and culture. With regards to culture, he claims that the use of strategies involves sometimes complying with cultural rules but also sometimes breaking the rules. Jasper’s claim that “we attach moral and emotional values to strategies, above and beyond valuing them for their sheer efficacy” (ibid, p.52), has been influential in this thesis. GSAAs may, for example, use the strategy of consensus decision-making because of the values associated with it; these values have been socially constructed and have cultural meanings (ibid). In terms of resources, Jasper argues that their use depends on cultural knowledge but also that culture relies on “physical embodiments” in resources (ibid, p.47). GSAAs may employ strategies for accumulating financial resources, which are informed by the cultural understanding that financial resources could provide power for the association to deliver its projects.

Jasper’s (1997) concept of biography is related to this thesis in terms of the concept of identity that contributes to a person’s biography. It is worth noting the difference between the concepts of biography and identity. Jasper explains that biography relates to “an inner, subjective self” that consists of “[i]ndividual

constellations of cultural meanings, personalities, sense of self, derived from biographical experiences” (ibid, pp.43-44). Identity is part of an individual’s biography. I have used the concept of “collective identity” rather than “biography” as I was concerned with how members of GSAs collectively produce collective action frames, rather than being concerned with individuals. Also, as discussed above, collective identity has been associated with the concept of framing, and this informed my understanding. Members of GSAs participate in the association because they perceive that its collective identity compliments their own moral personal identity. Jasper argues that moral personal identity comes from cultural contexts; for example, we use cultural values to constitute ourselves (ibid). He also links the concept of biography to the concept of strategy by noting that people develop a taste for certain tactics (ibid). Similarly, as discussed above, Polletta and Jasper argue that SMOs use strategies that complement the organisation’s collective identity. As strategies are closely related to resources, we can assume that the argument will also hold for the concept of resources.

Jasper’s argument that the concepts of resources, strategies, culture, and biography have a relationship to one another has informed this thesis. In the discussion of the thesis, I demonstrate how the concepts of framing, strategies, resources, culture, and collective identity have a recursive relationship and can be used to understand collective action by GSAs.

2.6 Conclusion

My review of the literature demonstrates why this study on the role that the framing of sustainability issues has on the strategies and resources used by GSAs needs to be undertaken. In section 2.4 I highlighted that there has been limited research on how GSAs frame sustainability issues to mobilise members of the community. This gap in the literature has been addressed by research question 1, which is answered by the results chapters (Chapters 4-6). I also noted that there has only been one study that has examined how the framing of issues by a GSA affected the strategies that members used (See: Coke 2013). This thesis builds on this work as research question 2 addresses how framing affects the approach taken by GSAs in delivering sustainability, and is

addressed in the results chapters (Chapters 4-6), which demonstrate the relationship between the framings, strategies, and resources used by the case studies to deliver sustainability. In section 2.2 of this literature review I discussed the concepts of frame and framing, which were central to my approach to examining how different GSAs understand sustainability problems and aim to address them. The importance of these concepts to this thesis is reflected in the research questions (see section 1.4). In section 2.5 I discussed other concepts from the social movement literature that have informed my study – strategies, resources, collective identity, and culture - and how they have been related to the concept of framing in the existing literature on social movements. I noted that, in particular, there is not any existing research that has brought together these concepts to understand why different actors (in this case different GSAs) frame the issues differently. This has been addressed by research question 3, which the results chapters begin to address and which is addressed explicitly in the discussion chapter (Chapter 7). This thesis therefore, contributes knowledge of the role of GSAs in contributing to sustainable development, and also to the social movement literature.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology and Methods

In this chapter I first explain the research methodology of symbolic interactionism that guided the research process. Symbolic interactionism guided the formulation of the research questions and the analysis of the meanings of frames, strategies and resources for GSAs. The symbolic interactionism methodology is apparent throughout the thesis, as it draws on framing theory, which was developed from a symbolic interactionism perspective. Second, I discuss the research approach which included the use of grounded theory, qualitative research, and case studies. Third, I explain the research methods that were used, including semi-structured interviews and document research, and how the data was analysed. Fourth, I explain the efforts made to ensure the findings and theory generated by the research were valid. Finally, I address the ethics of the research process. Table 3.1 summarises the overall research process.

Table 3.1 Summary of Research Process

Methodology	Symbolic Interactionism
Research Approach	Grounded Theory Qualitative Case Study
Data Collection	Semi-structured Interviews Document Research
Data Analysis	Coding and Categorising Theory Building

3.1 Methodology

The methodology that guided the research process was symbolic interactionism. The term “symbolic interactionism” was coined by Blumer (1969), although he drew on the work of George Herbert Mead and others. Blumer explained that symbolic interactionism has three basic premises:

“The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them... The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one’s fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters” (ibid, p.2).

Blumer’s explanation above sets out the ontology of symbolic interactionism; there is an empirical world, but we can only understand the meaning of it, as constructed through social interaction. Meaning and interpretation are therefore, the central concerns of symbolic interactionism and research is preoccupied with these two related concerns (Snow 2001). Symbolic interactionism has a pragmatist ontology with the starting point that “[t]ruth is not the property of things, and *truth is made* through everyday interactions” (Pascale 2011, p.79; emphasis added). While the focus on socially constructed meaning places emphasis on human agency, symbolic interactionism also recognises that human agency is constrained by social structure and culture (Snow 2001).

The aim of researchers coming from the symbolic interactionist perspective is to understand “the world of lived experiences from the perspective of those who live within it” (Andrews 2012). The epistemology of symbolic interactionism means that the researcher seeks knowledge about meanings that are constructed in that world. In taking a symbolic interactionist approach, I sought to understand the participants’ perceptions of resources, strategies, and sustainability problems and solutions as expressed through frames. I was concerned with the shared meanings that they had for members of the GSAs, as constructed in the interactive context of collective action.

This thesis draws on framing theory as developed by social movement scholars (as discussed in section 2.2.3). This theory was based in the symbolic interactionist perspective. In developing their theory, Snow *et al* (1986) were informed by Goffman’s (1974) work *Frame Analysis*, through which he developed a particular type of symbolic interactionism called dramaturgy. In this thesis, members of GSAs are not just carriers of existing meanings but also

“signifying agents” who construct meanings for others, and in relation to others (Snow and Oliver 1995). This construction of meaning occurs through social interaction with others in the group. The verb *framing* is used to refer to the “process of reality construction” (ibid, p.587). The symbolic interactionism perspective, therefore, informed my analysis of framing by GSAs.

3.2 Grounded theory research approach

This thesis used a grounded theory research approach. In *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, Glaser and Strauss define grounded theory as “the discovery of theory from data” (1967, p.1). Instead of testing a particular theory, grounded theory permits the researcher to identify a problem and then allows the theory to develop from the data. This is because starting with preconceived theories is thought to constrain the research process. Instead, the researcher generates a theory about how what they are studying works early on in the research process and then assesses whether the theory can be upheld as more data is collected (Bernard and Ryan 2010). Taking a grounded theory approach to research means that data collection, analysis and theory development are ongoing processes. Data collection is complete when “theoretical saturation” is achieved – no new categories or concepts are being generated by the data (Glaser and Strauss 1967). The research therefore, is an inductive process with theory generation as the end point. By analysing data collected from the first case study I started to develop a theory that the perception of resources and strategies was dependent on the framing of sustainability issues and solutions, which led to me collecting more data from other case studies to develop this theory further. The grounded theory approach, developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), was informed by the perspective of symbolic interactionism (Aldiabat and Le Navenec 2011) so was ideal for use in the research process.

3.3 Qualitative research approach

The qualitative researcher collects data concerning “behaviour, social relationships, social processes, social situations, and, in particular, the meanings people give to their activities, the activities of others, and to objects

and social contexts” (Blaikie 2000, p.232). The qualitative approach is therefore, suitable for researchers drawing on the symbolic interactionism methodology, which is concerned with meanings. I took a qualitative approach to answer the research questions and gain an in-depth understanding of the research problem as I was interested in the participants’ “subjective experiences and the meanings they attach to those experiences” (Devine, 1995, p.138). I could not have understood the meanings that members of GSAs assigned to sustainability problems and solutions, strategies, and resources by taking a quantitative approach, which involves “measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables” (Denzin and Lincoln 1998, p.8).

The benefits of a qualitative approach include enabling the researcher to collect data on the participants’ point of view, producing thick descriptions, focusing on social processes, taking a flexible approach, and generating concepts and theory (See pages 251-253 in Blaikie 2000). A qualitative approach was therefore appropriate for this study as I needed to understand the participants’ point of view about the GSA’s use of strategies and resources, and their interpretation of the collective action frames constructed by the members. I also needed to produce rich descriptions of the collective action conducted by the GSAs to demonstrate the recursive relationship between framing, strategies and resources. Taking a qualitative approach enabled me to focus on the processes through which frames were socially constructed. This approach also allowed flexibility of the research process, which complimented the grounded theory approach. Finally, taking a qualitative approach enabled me to generate concepts from the data and develop a theory; for example, the concepts of framing, collective identity, and culture became central to understanding the use of particular strategies and resources after initial analysis of the data. Importantly for this thesis, Denzin and Lincoln (1998) argue that one of benefits of a qualitative approach is being able to examine the constraints of the everyday social world. From the beginning of the research process, I sought to understand the constraints on GSAs’ use of strategies and resources so it was appropriate to take a qualitative approach.

Qualitative research has been criticised for being unreliable, for producing findings based on interpretations, and for being difficult to generalise (Bryman

1988). I have addressed all of these criticisms throughout this chapter. The problem of unreliability relates to the sampling of participants. In quantitative research participants are usually sampled to represent a population. With qualitative research however, participants are usually sampled to provide a wide range of interpretations (Devine 1995). The sampling of participants for interviews is discussed in detail in section 3.5.1.3. Participants were sampled from each case study to provide a wide range of views and interpretations. The problem related to interpretation of findings is related to validity and the plausibility of the researcher's interpretations (ibid). As already discussed, the findings presented in this thesis were based on my interpretations of the data as evidence of framing processes; however, I used between-method triangulation to increase validity of my findings (see section 3.6). Finally, qualitative researchers must be cautious when generalising their findings. It is unlikely however, that the sample of participants or case studies would be so unrepresentative or the researcher's interpretations would be so deceptive that generalisations would be inappropriate (Devine 1995). Issues related to validity and generalisability are addressed in section 3.6.

3.4 Case study approach

The theory generated from this study was based on case studies of three GSAs based in the United Kingdom. This section discusses the literature on the use of case studies and explains why the case study approach was chosen. It describes the case studies that were sampled for the research and how they were sampled.

Jupp defines the case study approach as “[a]n approach that uses in-depth investigation of one or more examples of a current social phenomenon, utilizing a variety of sources of data. A case can be an individual person, an event, or a social activity, group, organization or institution” (2006, p.20). Case studies therefore, are not a research method but a method for data selection (Blaikie 2000). Research methods are used within the case study approach.

Case studies are beneficial when the researcher is asking “how” or “why” questions, has little control over the events, and/or the subject of research is a

contemporary problem within a real life context (Yin 2009). Yin explains “you would use the case study method because you wanted to understand a real-life phenomenon in depth, but such understanding encompassed important contextual conditions – because they were highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study...” (ibid, p.18). The case study approach was beneficial to this thesis which aimed to answer “how” and “why” questions about how GSAs frame sustainability issues and why they use certain frames, strategies and resources. This required an understanding of the contextual conditions in which different GSAs operate. The case study approach enabled me to compare the findings from three different GSAs in order to develop a theory.

Criticisms of a case study approach tend to be similar to criticisms of a qualitative approach as researchers that use case studies usually take a qualitative approach (Blaikie 2000). The main criticisms of a case study approach therefore, relate to validity, reliability and generalisability of findings. These issues are addressed in sections 3.3 and 3.6.

3.4.1 Using the case study approach in this research

Schofield (2000) recommends using several heterogeneous case studies rather than homogenous case studies. Although the characteristics of the case studies may vary, the researcher will aim to find “a set of common elements that prove to have great explanatory power” (Collier 1993, p.112). A finding that emerges in numerous case studies is likely to be an indication of a sound working hypothesis than a finding from just one case (Schofield 2000). This was the approach I took in this thesis. I conducted an internet search to find suitable case studies; the case studies selected for research had to fit the definition of a GSA (see section 1.2) and be based in the United Kingdom. I also selected case studies that appeared to be active in the community at the time of research. Some potential case studies that were contacted were not selected because they were not active at the time of research or did not fit the definition of GSA. Three case studies were selected overall and were sampled based on different membership structures as it was thought that this may have an effect on the different resources that the GSA possessed, which was important for answering the research questions and generating a theory. For example, it was expected that a GSA with staff members might believe financial resources to be

more important than a GSA that was entirely volunteer-run because they would have to pay staff members. Similarly, it was thought that a GSA that had members who were representatives from other organisations in the community may have access to different resources than a GSA whose membership did not consist of representatives from other organisations.

The three case studies selected were Green Action (Leeds, England), Congleton Sustainability Group (Congleton, England), and Awel Aman Tawe (Cwmlllynfell, Wales). Green Action's membership structure consisted of individual volunteers (students) from the University of Leeds; Congleton Sustainability Group consisted of both individual volunteers from the community and representatives from other organisations within the community; and Awel Aman Tawe consisted of staff members, trustees, and occasional volunteers. While membership structure was used for the sampling criteria, the case studies selected also had other differences including how long the GSA had existed, the types of projects ran, and organisational structure (who the GSA was run by). Details of the case studies can be seen in Table 3.2. Background information on each case study has been provided at the beginning of each of the results chapters.

The decision of when to stop recruiting more case studies was based upon "theoretical saturation" (Glaser and Strauss 1967); when it was thought that no new categories would be generated by researching another case study. Examining a small number of case studies allowed for the cases to be studied in-depth while selecting multiple case studies that were varied in structure allowed for generalisations to be made.

Table 3.2 Details of the Three Case Studies

	Description	Year formed	Aim(s)	Projects	Organisational Structure	Membership Structure
Green Action	Student society based in the student's union at the University of Leeds.	Interviewees thought that Green Action had been formed in the 1980's but could not give an exact year.	Green Action aimed to "be a working practical example of an/the alternative autonomous lifestyle that we hope to move towards" (Green Action 2011).	Food co-op, allotment, alternative library, skills share workshops.	Aimed to be non-hierarchical with decisions made by consensus. Each project had a co-ordinator (e.g. for the co-op and allotment).	Students from the university. Entirely volunteer-run. Membership cost £2 per year.
Congleton Sustainability Group (CSG)	Run by local residents from Congleton, a market town in East Cheshire. CSG was formed by members of its parent	2009.	According to the Chairman, the aims of CSG were "to put together some environmentally sympathetic projects" and "to get the message across that our current way of life	Congleton Apple Juice (making and selling apple juice from fruit that would otherwise go to waste) was CSG's main project.	Chairman and deputy chairman. Sub-groups included Eco Schools, food, hydro energy, carbon reduction, and commenting (on plans). Each sub-group had	Local residents and also some representatives from local organisations (such as Congleton Cycling Campaign and Astbury Mere

	group Congleton Town Partnership.		is unsustainable".	Members had planted a community orchard and some mini orchards in local schools.	a co-ordinator.	Country Park). Mostly volunteer-run except for one paid member of staff to run the Beartown's Food project.
Awel Aman Tawe (AAT)	AAT was formed by a group of local residents who wanted to erect a community- owned wind farm. Serves fourteen local villages.	Residents first came up with the idea for a wind farm following a Local Agenda 21 meeting in 1998.	AAT aimed "to bring clean electricity, jobs and regeneration to the villages near the Mynydd y Gwrhyd" (AAT 2011).	Planning permission for a wind farm, energy efficiency projects, education project with school children, Arts and Climate Change projects. Advising other groups on renewable energy.	Four staff members at the time of research and a board of trustees (all volunteers). Occasional volunteers from the community.	Members were mostly from the local area although some trustees were from further afield. Run by staff and trustees who worked with occasional volunteers from the community.

3.5 Research methods

This section begins by explaining the methods of data collection. Semi-structured interviews and document research were conducted to collect data on the three case studies. These qualitative research methods were compatible with the grounded theory approach and symbolic interactionism methodology as they were used to collect data on meanings relevant to participants' lived experiences. This section explains why semi-structured interviews were used. It also presents some criticisms of the method. It then explains how semi-structured interviews were used for data collection in this study and how participants were sampled. It goes on to explain why document research was conducted and what documents were used in the research. Finally, it explains how the data from the interviews and documents was analysed.

3.5.1 Data collection

3.5.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

In this project, the rich data needed for grounded theory was generated by conducting in-depth interviews about people's experiences and the social processes involved. Semi-structured interviews were used as this method is most suitable for collecting in-depth, qualitative data. Interviewee's views are more likely to be captured with semi-structured interviews rather than standardized interviews (Flick 2002). An advantage of semi-structured interviews is that they allow the researcher to expand questions to gain a more in-depth response from the participant or to follow up on an interesting point made by the participant and to go beyond the priorities of the researcher (Mitchell and Jolley 2010). Structured interviews do not allow this because the researcher is required to stick strictly to the interview schedule.

There can be some difficulties when conducting semi-structured interviews. One difficulty may be that the researcher needs to mediate between the development of the interview situation and the interview guide that she has prepared, which requires a certain amount of skill (Flick 2002). Also, the researcher faces difficulty in deciding on their level of involvement with the interviewee. While it is necessary for the researcher to win the trust of the

interviewee so that they talk openly about their experiences, the researcher should avoid becoming over-familiar with the interviewee (Devine 1995).

A potential limitation of interviews is that interviewees may give responses that they perceive to be desirable to the researcher. This criticism could however, be applied to other methods such as structured questionnaires. To avoid this problem the researcher must attempt to ask neutral questions so as not to direct the interviewees' responses (Devine 1995). While semi-structured were used in part because they allow the researcher to follow-up participants' responses, Mitchell and Jolley (2009) criticise the use of semi-structured interviews arguing that responses from follow-up questions are difficult to interpret because not all participants will be asked the follow-up questions so responses cannot be compared.

According to the symbolic interactionist view of question-answer practices such as interviews, the researcher encodes the question that is then decoded by the respondent; the respondent's answer is then encoded before being decoded by the researcher (Foddy 1993). There are many opportunities during this process for either the respondent or the researcher to interpret information from the other party incorrectly. However, as several participants were interviewed for each case study, any contradictions in answers could have indicated that the questions or answers had been misinterpreted. A similar criticism has been made of the qualitative research approach; as qualitative research is interpretive, the researcher cannot be separated from the research process so reflexivity is required in a discussion on the role of the researcher (Creswell 2003). In this thesis, I have, for example, interpreted the data in terms of "frames," which was dependent on the meaning those frames had for my research. My own perception of what constituted a "frame" enabled this interpretation. In the discussion chapter of the thesis (Chapter 7), I have explained that the theory generated about the recursive relationship of strategies, resources, framings, culture, and identity was based on my perception of the different elements and their relationship.

3.5.1.2 The use of semi-structured interviews in this research

As I took a grounded theory approach, the original interview schedule needed to be flexible. It became more focused when more data had been collected to emphasise particular topics relevant to the development of theory (Dey 1999). Open-ended questions were used to allow the interviewee to discuss their views and experiences at length (Devine, 1995). The interview questions were also intended to be neutral to avoid leading the participants' responses; as this has been identified as a potential criticism of interview methods. Questions asked included, for example, "What were your motivations for joining?" and "Can you tell me more about the project that you're responsible for and about your responsibilities?". All of the interviews were conducted face-to-face and were conducted in familiar settings for the participants. The interviews started with questions that were intended to put the participants at ease; for example, "Can you tell me about when you first joined Green Action?". These were followed by questions which may have required more thought on behalf of the participants.

In total, thirty-two interviews were conducted with thirty-three participants, as one interview involved two participants being interviewed at the same time at the request of the participants (see Table 3.3). Fifteen participants from Green Action were interviewed, eleven from CSG, and seven from AAT. Participants with different roles in the GSAs were interviewed, this is shown in the column "who was interviewed" in Table 3.3. For example, "Co-ordinators" were participants who had responsibility for leading a sub-group, whereas "volunteers" had more casual involvement in the GSA. Participants were also sampled for diversity; this is discussed in section 3.5.1.3. Members who were heavily involved in the running of the GSAs were interviewed first (such as a long-term member of Green Action who occupied an official role as required by Leeds University Union, the Chairman of CSG, and the Technical Officer in AAT). In addition to the interview questions that other participants were asked, these participants were asked to provide background information about the GSA, such as information about its origins and scope (see appendix for interview schedule).

Table 3.3 Interviews Conducted by Case Study

Case Study	When interviews were conducted	Who was interviewed	How many interviews were conducted	Total number of hours (rounded to the nearest hour)
Green Action	December 2011 October 2012	4 Co-ordinators 11 Volunteers	13 individual interviews 1 joint interview (involving two co-ordinators)	11 hours
CSG	April 2012	1 Chairman 4 Co-ordinators 6 Volunteers	11 individual interviews	12 hours
AAT	October 2012	4 Staff members 3 Volunteers (Trustees)	7 individual interviews	6 hours
		Total number of Participants = 33	Total number of interviews = 32	Total number of hours = 29

3.5.1.3 Sampling interview participants

Different sampling strategies were used to select participants for the different case studies. I will discuss each of the sampling strategies in turn and explain why they were different for each case.

3.5.1.3.1 Sampling strategy for Green Action interview participants

I sampled for diversity among participants in order to collect data on a wide range of views and experiences that would enable theory development. In the case of Green Action, I used a questionnaire as a sampling tool (see appendix for questionnaire). The questionnaire was given out to potential participants in order to collect information that would enable sampling for diversity. The questionnaire was used to gain personal information about their gender and age as well as background information such as how long they had been a member of Green Action and how they had been involved with the association. It also asked the participants to indicate whether or not they were willing to be interviewed, and if they were willing they were asked to provide their contact details. The questionnaire also collected information that would help to tailor the interview questions to individual participants (e.g. to avoid asking a Green Action volunteer questions about the allotment if they had not experienced the allotment). Members were informed that if they completed the questionnaire then they could be entered into a free prize draw by the researcher to win some fair trade/organic goods. The purpose of the prize draw was to entice more Green Action members into completing the questionnaire, giving a wider pool of participants to sample from.

The questionnaire was emailed to members, left at the Green Action Food Co-op, and handed out at a Green Action meeting. Twenty-nine questionnaires were collected in total from Green Action members, of which thirteen participants were selected for interviews. These interviews were conducted in December 2011. However, fifteen participants were interviewed in total. Two more participants were interviewed at a later date (October 2012) as after initial analysis of the thirteen interviews more data was needed on the allotment project. I therefore contacted one of the allotment co-ordinators who had not already been interviewed and asked them to participate in the research. The co-

ordinator agreed to be interviewed but requested that it be a joint interview with another allotment co-ordinator. After this additional interview there was sufficient data to begin developing a theory.

3.5.1.3.2 Sampling strategy for CSG interview participants

To sample for interview participants from the CSG case study, a set of questions was emailed to the Chairman who then forwarded the questions to CSG members via email. Members then returned their answers via email. The questions asked for information about gender, age, the projects that members had been involved in, their level of involvement, and how long they had been a member. Again, the aim was to sample for a diverse range of participants to enable a theory to be developed from the data. Members were told that if they completed the questions they would be entered into a prize draw. Nine members responded to the questions and due to the small response rate all nine respondents were interviewed. Two other participants were also interviewed after getting in contact via email but they did not answer the questions. The smaller response rate from CSG members was expected because CSG had less active volunteers than Green Action. The questions were still valuable as the answers provided contextual information about the participants' involvement in CSG so I could make sure that the questions asked in the interviews were relevant to each individual participant. The eleven participants did represent a wide range of experiences in terms of the projects they had been involved in and their level of involvement; for example, I interviewed the Chairman and four sub-group Co-ordinators who were highly involved in the activities of CSG, and also six volunteers who were more casually involved in the activities of CSG.

3.5.1.3.3 Sampling strategy for AAT interview participants

I telephoned the Project Manager of AAT to gain permission to conduct research. I asked if I could send him a questionnaire by email for him to then circulate to members of AAT to use as a sampling strategy. The Project Manager explained that AAT had previously been contacted by researchers at other universities and volunteers working with AAT had declined to participate in the research. He suggested that he recruit participants on my behalf as he

thought that this approach would enable me to get a larger sample of participants. I explained that I needed to sample a diverse range of participants who had different experiences of being involved in AAT. Although the Project Manager did not want to contact casual volunteers who had worked with AAT in the past due to them previously declining to participate in research, he recruited three volunteers who were trustees for AAT and who had a wide range of interests in the association. He also recruited all members of staff that were working for AAT at the time of research (four staff members including the Project Manager). The members of staff had diverse roles and had worked on a range of different projects; these roles were: Project Manager, Technical Development Officer, Arts and Climate Change Officer, and Finance and Personal Officer (who had also previously been employed as a consultant by AAT to work on a community consultation and later volunteered with AAT). Relying on the Project Manager as a gatekeeper to recruit participants meant that he could have recruited only members that would give favourable opinions of AAT. However, I used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to be able to follow-up participants' responses and ask about their concerns and challenges faced by the association. Overall, the diversity of the participants was sufficient to be able to collect data on a wide range of experiences and perspectives.

3.5.1.4 Document research

Document research is not as popular in the social sciences as other forms of research (Bailey 2008; McCulloch 2004). However, when treated as social artefacts, documents can be invaluable to the researcher (Blaikie 2000). Document research was conducted as there were documents available for all three case studies. These documents could embody the frames used by each of the GSAs. Document research was appropriate as I was using a symbolic interactionism methodology and treated the meanings of the texts as constructed by actors engaged in social interaction. Document research is often used by social movement scholars interested in framing (See for example: Benford 1993; Gerhards and Rucht 1992).

Documents produced by the GSAs were analysed after initial analysis of the interview data. I used documents that were available publicly (such as websites

and documents that were posted on websites, such as Green Action's constitution) and also any documents given to me by participants. A summary of the documents analysed for each case study can be seen in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Documents Analysed

Case Study	Documents Analysed
Green Action	Website Constitution (available on website) Manual (available on website) Newsletter Information Booklet (Green Guide)
Congleton Sustainability Group	Website Flyer (Top Tips) Workbook (Sustainable Living in Congleton) Newsletter Facebook page
Awel Aman Tawe	Website Facebook page Academic publications written by members of AAT

Participants from the case studies provided access to different types of documents, also all case studies had websites and two had Facebook pages that they used which could be accessed freely (AAT and CSG). The aim of document research was to find evidence to support the emerging theory that GSAs framed sustainability problems and solutions, and so it formed part of the triangulation of research (as discussed in section 3.6).

Although different types of documents were available for the different case studies, the decision was made not sample only comparable documents (e.g. only sample websites because all three case studies had websites). Instead all documents that were available were analysed. This was because the aim was not to compare documents across the case studies but rather to examine them for socially constructed frames. Analysing more documents meant that more

data could be collected in order to gain a richer understanding of the meanings that had been constructed. There was a limitation however, as more evidence of motivational framing was found in the case of CSG. This may have been because CSG provided more documents than the other case studies, rather than because members made more of a conscious effort than in the other case studies to construct this type of framing.

3.5.2 Data analysis

3.5.2.1 Analysis of interview data

Data analysis of participant interviews occurred after each set of interviews had taken place (i.e. after each case study). This was because concepts that were developed after each set of interviews directed the next set of interviews. As Corbin and Strauss explain: "In order not to miss anything that may be salient...the investigator must analyze the first bits of data for cues. All seemingly relevant issues must be incorporated into the next set of interviews..." (1990, p.6). This "constant comparative method" of data analysis allowed for issues that were perceived as important to be incorporated into the interview schedule (Silverman 2000). This was an advantage of using the grounded theory approach. In the case study of Green Action, interviews were spread out over several weeks so it was possible to analyse the first few interviews before conducting more interviews in order to incorporate emerging themes into the interview schedule.

Coding of the interview data was conducted to "organize and make sense of the data" (Blaikie 2000, p.241). NVivo software was used to aid with the coding process. The first stage involved coding the data to create concepts (e.g. skills, knowledge). The second stage of coding involved pulling concepts together to create categories (e.g. skills and knowledge were pulled together to create the category of human resources). An inductive approach was taken to analysis of the interview data, meaning that the categories that emerged during analysis were constructed from the data rather than from preconceived theory (Dey 1999). For example, the research was not initially concerned with framing but "framing" emerged as a category from the data, which then led to a review of the literature on framing theory, and categories from this literature further

influenced the data analysis (e.g. coding for diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing). Creating categories however, is not a completely neutral process (Blaikie 2000). I had some idea of what to look for when creating some of the categories (e.g. Middlemiss and Parrish 2010 had written about personal resources, which influenced the category that I called “human resources”).

3.5.2.2 Document Analysis

A qualitative approach was taken to analysis of the texts, extracting qualitative data (sentences or paragraphs) that provided evidence of framing (rather than a quantitative content analysis approach which would mean counting how many times a frame was used). As a grounded theory approach was used, there was a cycle of comparing the analysis of interview data with the analysis of documentary data to generate theory. At the point of document analysis the category of “framing” had been generated from coding the interview data and I continued the inductive approach to look for concepts (frames) that came out of the data. Following this, a deductive approach was taken; having reviewed the literature on collective action frames, the categories of “diagnostic”, “prognostic” and “motivational” were used to further code and organise the data. Data from the documents has been presented in the results chapters along with interview data to provide evidence to support the findings. The documents that were analysed provided crucial insights into the meanings constructed by the GSAs, which aided theory building.

3.5.2.3 Theory Building

After analysis of the documents and interview data had been conducted, the aim was to create theory from the coded data by demonstrating how the categories (resources, strategies and framing) related to each other. The research for this thesis was therefore concerned with “substantial relations” (Dey 1993); these being the relationships between the high-level categories of resources, strategies, and framing. To develop a theory, I used the strategy suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967) which was to generate hypotheses from the first set of data and to see how they hold up against other cases; this is the process of the grounded theory approach. Glaser and Strauss (1967) argue that this process ensures internal validity of the research findings.

After analysing the data from the first case study, I thought that the way the GSAs framed their community influenced the strategies and resources used. At this point I turned to the literature on framing and found Snow and Benford's work and the concepts of diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing useful for interpreting my data (Snow and Benford 1988; Benford and Snow 2000). This led to further analysis of the interview data to test my theory that the framing of sustainability problems and solutions affects the resources and strategies used by GSAs to deliver their aims. Examining two further case studies led to the hypothesis that culture and collective identity were important concepts for understanding the relationship between framing, strategies and resources. This was then tested against the first case study, and led to a review of the social movement literature on collective identity and culture in order to better understand how the concepts relate to one another and develop a theory. The resulting theory is discussed in Chapter 7.

To aid the theory building processes, a file was created in NVivo for each of the case studies. The process of coding the data was the same for each case study. I started out coding for resources and strategies as these were the main concerns of the research. I created high-level nodes called "resources" and "strategies" and then created a second level of sub-nodes to list the different types of resources for the specific case study. In analysing the data to generate a theory about what influences the use of particular strategies and resources the concept of "framing" was found to be of importance. I then created a high-level node called "framing". Having turned to the literature on framing and social movements (e.g. Snow *et al.* 1986; Benford and Snow 2000) I then created second-level sub-nodes under the "framing" node called "diagnostic" and "prognostic". Under the "diagnostic" node I created third-level sub-nodes that I labelled after the sustainability problem that was found to be framed by the case study. In the case of CSG for example, the sustainability problem was framed in terms of "impact of climate change on Congleton," so this was the label that was given to the node. Under the "prognostic" node I then created third-level sub-nodes for the solutions articulated by the case study. In the case of CSG, for example, one of the solutions advocated was "community opportunities," so this was how I labelled the node.

I did not create a node for “motivational” framing; the interview data was not analysed for this type of framing because motivational framing is found in the documents developed by GSAs. To analyse the documents for motivational framing, I printed out the documents and coded them by hand where I found evidence of language that conveyed severity, urgency, efficacy, propriety (Benford 1993), desirability (Coke 2013) or another type of motivational framing not found in the literature.

To build theory from the coded data, the next stage was to add another level of nodes under the prognostic sub-nodes for each case study (e.g. under the “community opportunities” node) to assess how framing affected the strategies and resources used by the case study. These fourth-level nodes were labelled based on the resources and strategies relevant to the particular prognostic framing (e.g. “community opportunities resources” and “community opportunities strategies”). Then, under these nodes, I coded the relevant resources and strategies (e.g. under “community opportunities resources” I had a node called “apples”). At this stage I noted that the resources and strategies also contributed to the framing of the issues, and hence, framing, strategies, and resources had a recursive relationship.

In developing the theory presented in the discussion chapter to this thesis, I turned back to the social movement literature to better understand the relationship between framing, strategies and resources. The concepts of collective identity and culture that appear in this set of literature (Smithey 2009; Polletta and Jasper 2001; Jasper 1997; Hunt *et al.* 1994) seemed appropriate for understanding the recursive relationship that I had found between framing, strategies and resources. Thus, high-level nodes were created in the NVivo file for each case study called “collective identity” and “culture”. Under these high-level nodes, second-level sub-nodes based on types of collective identity and culture relevant to the case study were created (e.g. a node called “community narrative” was created under the “culture” node in the case of AAT because the association drew on narratives about the community in which it was based). I did not create sub-nodes for “resources,” “strategies” and “framing” under the “collective identity” and “culture” nodes as I already had a good understanding of the resources, strategies, and framings used by the case studies from my

previous analysis. Instead, I was able to look at the resources, strategies and framings that I had already coded and examine how they related to the concepts of collective identity and culture.

The final stage was to cluster the types of resources, strategies, framings, collective identities and cultural aspects that were specific to the individual case studies into broader categories so that they could be applied to other case studies beyond those examined in this thesis. For example, under the “collective identity” node for the CSG case I had a sub-node called “residents of Congleton” and for AAT I had a sub-node called “ex-mining community;” these were clustered to make the broad category of “place-based” collective identity. Nvivo was not used for this stage of theory building as I had analysed each case study individually so it would have been difficult to compare case studies against each other. Instead, I wrote out lists of all the specific types of resources, strategies, framings, collective identities and cultural aspects that I found in the three case studies (e.g. the list of resources contained all of the resources found across the three case studies) so that they could be compared and broad categories could be developed. As I had already classified “framing” broadly using the concepts of “diagnostic”, “prognostic”, and “motivational” framing from the social movement literature (Snow *et al.* 1986), I did not categorise these further.

The NVivo coding scheme for AAT has been included in Appendix 8. Analysis and theory building occurred the same way for each case study. Theoretical frameworks for each case study have been presented in the Discussion chapter of the thesis to demonstrate how these were built on to develop the overall theoretical framework that is presented in section 7.3.

3.6 Validity of results

According to Lewis and Ritchie validity refers to the “‘correctness’ or ‘precision’ of a research reading” (2003, p.273). They explain the difference between internal validity and external validity; internal validity being researching the phenomenon that you report to be researching and external validity being the extent to which the theoretical constructs are applicable to the wider population

beyond the cases studied. They argue that external validity and generalisability are linked since generalising involves asking whether a finding can be applied to the wider population. External validity and generalisability were ensured by sampling multiple heterogeneous case studies. It could be assumed that if they findings and theory held up for the three different case studies then they could be applied to other case studies of GSAs external to the research.

In order to further ensure validity, I used five criteria suggested by Lewis and Ritchie:

- *Sample coverage*: did the sample contain any known bias; were the criteria used for selection inclusive of the constituencies known, or thought, to be of importance?
- *Capture of phenomena*: was the environment, quality of questioning sufficiently effective for participants to fully express/explore their views?
- *Identification or labelling*: have the phenomena been identified, categorised and 'named' in ways that reflect the meanings assigned by study participants?
- *Interpretation*: is there sufficient internal evidence for the explanatory accounts that have been developed?
- *Display*: have the findings been portrayed in a way that remain 'true' to the original data and allows others to see the analytic constructions that have occurred? (Lewis and Ritchie 2003, p.274).

I have already discussed *sampling coverage* of case studies in section 3.4.1, and explained that I sampled case studies based on different membership structures. In terms of *capturing phenomena*, participants were interviewed in their homes, at the base of the GSA (e.g. office or students' union), or in a social setting of their choice (such as a cafe), so the participants would be comfortable in these "everyday" settings and would be able to fully express their views. Participants were also interviewed individually and were told that their responses would be confidential to encourage them to express views that they

might not want to express in front of others. Only one interview involved two participants, this was in the context of the Green Action case study where participants requested to be interviewed together. In terms of *identification and labelling*, I labelled the frames that I refer to in the thesis based on meanings used by the participants; for example, I have labelled a frame “sensible solutions” in the case of CSG as the term “sensible solutions” was used on CSG’s website. With regards to *interpretation*, I have presented quotes from participants and extracts from documents as internal evidence to support my interpretation of events. Finally, I made a conscious decision to *display* the findings case study by case study in order to remain “true” to the case study data; therefore Chapter 4 presents the findings from the case study of AAT, Chapter 5 presents the findings from the case study of CSG, and Chapter 6 presents the findings from the case study of Green Action.

I also used data source triangulation and method triangulation strategies to validate my findings. Data source triangulation was used as three different case studies were examined in order to develop theory. This type of triangulation has been recommended by Denzin (2009), who argues that the selection of dissimilar groups for research purposes can be regarded as both a sampling strategy and strategy of triangulation. As already discussed, the three GSAs that formed the case studies were different as they had different membership structures. The findings were valid as they held true for all three case studies, rather than being unique to each case study. Denzin (1970), taking a symbolic interactionist perspective, argues that using multiple research methods as a means of triangulation could enable the researcher to understand different aspects of reality. He calls the use of dissimilar methods *between-method triangulation* (ibid). In my research I used both semi-structured interviews and document research as a means of between-method triangulation (these are discussed in section 3.5.1). Evidence of framing was found via both methods of data collection and so the use of these different methods helped to validate the findings.

3.7 Research ethics

Participants had agreed to participate in the research out of their own good will and as the researcher I had a responsibility to ensure that the research process would not cause them harm. Harm includes physical, psychological, social and economic damage (Israel and Hay 2006). Also, research ethics were considered as research that was ethically questionable may have led to individuals withdrawing and even a whole GSA withdrawing their permission to be used as a case study (ibid). Ethical review was sought by the AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee at the University of Leeds before any data collection took place. The research ethics reference number assigned to the research was LTEARS-002.

The participants all gave informed consent and signed a consent form (two copies – one for them to keep). Informed consent means that the participants need to understand and agree to the voluntary nature of their participation in the research and why they have been asked to participate (Israel and Hay 2006). Deception of participants was avoided by providing information about the research project prior to any data collection taking place. Deception occurs when a participant believes that the purpose of the study is different to the actual purpose of the study (Creswell 2003). All participants were asked to read an information sheet about the purpose of the research and their role in it before they signed the consent form. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions about the research and my contact details were provided. They were told that they were free to withdraw at any point in the research project, for any reason, and there would be no negative consequences. They were also told that they were free to decline to answer any questions that they did not want to answer.

Participants were guaranteed anonymity as their name would be changed in the thesis. Anonymity and confidentiality agreements are important for establishing trust between the researcher and the participant so that the participant would be forthcoming in their responses and be open and honest about their experiences. However, after writing the results chapters it was clear that some participants were identifiable through their role in the GSA (e.g. Chairman or Project

Manager). If any participants could be identified in this way, they were contacted by email and asked if their real name could be used and if they were happy that they could be identified by the reader; all participants that were contacted confirmed by email that they were happy with this.

Ethical implications were considered before deciding to offer participants the opportunity to be entered into the prize draw if they completed a questionnaire. It was decided that as there was no guarantee that respondents were going to win the prize, it was unlikely they would answer questions that they were uncomfortable with just to get a prize. It was decided that it was ethical to offer the prize draw and this was approved by the Ethics Committee.

Chapter 4 Awel Aman Tawe (AAT)

In this chapter I report on the case study of Awel Aman Tawe (AAT) based in Wales. This is the first of three case study chapters. It begins by providing background information on AAT. It then presents evidence of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing of sustainability issues by members (addressing Research Question 1), and the strategies and resources used as a result of this framing (addressing Research Question 2). Finally, it discusses the implications of these framings and the relationship between framing, strategies, and resources. This chapter begins to contribute to answering Research Question 3 about why different GSAs frame sustainability issues differently; this is discussed in section 4.3. The other case study chapters have been structured in the same format as this chapter.

4.1 About Awel Aman Tawe

This section provides background information to the case study, AAT. It explains the geographic area in which AAT was based and the communities it served, the origins of the association, AAT's structure, and projects that AAT had embarked upon. I also explain the successes and challenges that AAT had faced at the time of the research. The purpose of this is to demonstrate that the process of GSAs delivering sustainability projects can be complicated and to give recognition to members of AAT for the success they had achieved despite the challenges they had faced. As staff members of AAT were identifiable in the quotes provided I have used their real names; these were: Dan McCallum (Project Manager), Jenny Carlisle (Technical Development Officer), Carl Richards (Finance and Personnel Officer), and Emily Hinshelwood (Arts and Climate Change Officer). I have used pseudonyms for the trustees and given them gender neutral names to anonymise them. Where there was a chance that a trustee could still be identified I have called them "a trustee".

4.1.1 Geographic area

AAT's scope covered fourteen villages that surround Mynydd y Gwrhyd, the mountain on which AAT proposed to build a wind farm. These villages were Tairgwaith, Gwaun cae gurwen, Cwmllynfell, Cwmtwrch isaf Cwmtwrch uchel , Ystradowen, Rhiwfawr, Garnant, Glanaman, Upper Brynaman, Lower Brynaman, Rhosaman, Rhyd y Fro, and Cwmgors. Approximately 20,000 people in total live in these villages. AAT's office was based in one of the villages, Cwmllynfell. Cwmllynfell is on the edge of Brecon Beacons Nation Park and is approximately seventeen miles from the city of Swansea and approximately seven miles from the nearest town, Pontardawe. The site for the proposed wind farm was on Mynydd y Gwrhyd to the east of Cwngors and Gwaun Cae Gurwen, to the south of Tairgwaith and to the west of Rhiwfawr.

The communities that AAT served were ex-coal mining communities. One of the participants explained:

“It's a mining community; of course all the mines have gone now. In the top part of the Swansea Valley you probably had about a dozen mines...within sort of a 4 mile radius” (Pat).

As with many other ex-coal mining communities, the communities that AAT served suffer from poverty and deprivation (The Alliance No date). The Project Manager for AAT explained the circumstances of the villages that AAT served:

“[E]ducational school levels are generally quite low...You know, there's no industry or business round here really. It's a lot of people on the sick and a lot of elderly. Quite a lot of the young people have moved out now” (Dan McCallum).

Table 4.1 gives some statistics related the village of Cwmllynfell (where AAT had its office) compared to the national average for Wales. These statistics corroborate the Project Manager's description of the local area. They show that, on average, residents of Cwmllynfell have a lower income compared to the average for Wales, fewer qualifications, and have more health problems or disabilities.

Table 4.1 Statistics for Cwmlllynfell and Wales

	Cwmlllynfell	Wales
Average Weekly Household Total Income Estimate (Households) in £ (model based estimates for 2001-2002)	380	410
Degree (16 years and over) (2011)	11.0%	14.1%
No qualifications (16 years and over) (2011)	27.4%	25.9%
Economically inactive, long-term sick or disabled (2011)	7.2%	6.3%
One Person in Household with a Long-Term Health Problem or Disability (2011)	35.1%	30.4%

Source: Office for National Statistics (2013).

4.1.2 Origins of AAT

AAT was formed by a group of local residents as an outcome of a Local Agenda 21 consultation meeting held in 1998. A local resident suggested “wind farms not open cast” in reference to the open cast mining that was taking place in the local area.

“We knew nothing about wind farms at all because it was just in a Local Agenda 21 meeting that someone had put “wind farms not open cast”...then a group of us thought well that’s a really good idea” (Emily Hinshelwood).

“[T]here was a meeting and the local residents realised that if they developed a community wind farm then the profits from that would come back into the local community and then help them meet their sustainability aims and regeneration, which is quite key to this area ‘cause it’s quite a poor area...” (Jenny Carlisle).

In a journal article published by two of the founders of AAT they explained that the wind farm would address poverty in the local area by being “a community development project – not just a wind farm” (Hinshelwood and McCallum 2001, p.6)

When AAT started out it was supported by a local community development organisation called Aman Valley Enterprise (AVE). AVE allowed AAT to use its charity number so its members could apply for funding.

“One of the things that really helped us was that [AVE] let us use their charity number...’Cause Aman Valley Enterprise was a community development organisation that had lots of different projects...so they said okay we’ll have the wind farm as a project for Aman Valley Enterprise, which meant that we could use the charity’s number in order to apply for funding; which made a massive difference...It also caused problems, ‘cause of the controversy...a lot of people who were anti-wind farm complained to the charity commission, which then meant Aman Valley Enterprise had to be investigated...[P]eople within Aman Valley Enterprise that were anti the wind farm...it was causing more hassle for Aman Valley Enterprise” (Emily Hinshelwood).

Due to the problems described in the quote above, members of AAT decided to separate from AVE and establish AAT as its own legal entity; it thus became a company limited by guarantee. Another reason members decided to separate from AVE was that they felt that it was not clear who would run the wind farm project or how it would be run (Hinshelwood 2001). AAT became a not-for-profit organisation and members could not receive any of the profits as profits had to be used to further the aims of the organisation.

4.1.3 AAT’s structure

At the time of research, AAT employed three full-time members of staff; a Project Manager, a Technical Engineer, and a Finance and Personnel Officer. It also employed a part-time Arts and Climate Change Officer. AAT had a board of trustees (who were all volunteers) and regularly worked with volunteers from the local communities that it served.

The Project Manager was responsible for overseeing the development of projects; for example, with the wind farm project he liaised with the landowners and applied for funding.

“I’ve got several kind of different jobs within it; the first thing is dealing with our community wind farm project sort of overseeing that as we try to get all the permissions we need to secure bank finance for it and then sort of development for new projects as well. For example, we’re doing a renewable heat for domestic houses project at the moment so that’s been some work kind of like getting the funding and setting the process up for delivering it” (Dan McCallum).

The Technical Officer was responsible for overseeing the engineering of the wind farm and her salary was covered by a contract from the Welsh Assembly Government. She started out as a volunteer with AAT.

“I volunteered for Awel Aman Tawe when I was in Swansea Uni and that’s how I got involved, just because I was interested in community wind. I was interested in wind and just what AAT were doing, I thought that was a really positive thing so I came up here probably for about six months once a week just giving time. I was an engineering student then so I gave [advice]...on the technical side of the wind farm...” (Jenny Carlisle).

The Finance and Personnel Officer was initially trained and employed by AAT to help with a community consultation into the wind farm. He later became a volunteer with AAT before taking up the position of Finance and Personnel Officer. He explained about his current role:

“Officially it’s a Finance and Personnel Officer... But it can involve anything from sort of doing the accounts to sticking public notices up on lampposts; it’s very varied” (Carl Richards).

The Arts and Climate Change Officer was one of the founding members of AAT. She initially worked on a research project funded by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and afterwards became a volunteer with AAT.

“My two...passions were environmental issues and the arts and I thought why not kind of marry the two and run a kind of arts and climate change event so that’s when we started the Arts & Climate Change aspect of our work. I’ve been running...projects to engage people in issues of climate change then for the last three years” (Emily Hinshelwood).

The interviewees were asked why AAT needed staff rather than being run by volunteers.

“I suppose some community groups run on people who have retired and they’ve got the experience from their professional career and they bring that to their volunteering role, they can use those skills they’ve learnt and apply them...[I]n this area because is quite deprived...there isn’t a lot of retired professionals... whereas maybe in a more affluent area you would have that base of volunteers” (Jenny Carlisle).

“Just the amount of time involved really. It was mainly myself and Emily that were putting in a lot of hours kind of writing up funding proposals and things like that and then when DTI said yes they were interested in a piece of research Emily was employed at Swansea University and I was employed at Aman Valley Enterprise...it was a nine year funding thing from DTI so we just decided right you know, I would do it as a consultant basically and Emily was seconded from the university – they paid her wage at the university. I just remember the first few days where suddenly we had all this time instead of just trying to squeeze it in at the end of the day. Actually being able to focus on it was a real relief...it can be so demanding of your time” (Dan McCallum).

AAT was legally required to have a board of trustees to oversee the running of the organisation and to whom the staff were accountable.

“[W]ell I mean it’s a legal requirement that charities have trustees...and it’s basically overseeing the fact that money is spent appropriately and that the charity is sticking to its principles... In terms of what it involves practically...we have trustee meetings one evening every few months at the moment but there will be times particularly in the construction and early period of the wind farm...I think the demands will be greater...”
(Leslie).

The trustees came from a range of backgrounds; some were local residents while others were linked to institutions such as the Countryside Council for Wales and Swansea University.

Volunteers from the local community got involved in a variety of AAT activities, usually non-skilled work.

“[P]eople are quite prepared to let Emily organise some events in the arts centre, people will help out and sort of do stuff. And some people will help do painting or a leaflet drop etc... [W]e’re different from a charity shop or something like that where, you know, you can get a volunteer to help in the charity shop and it’s quite well understood what they need to do, whereas a lot of our work is just too technical and you have to have too much background to be able to pick it up...” (Dan McCallum).

The technical nature of the wind farm project however, meant it was difficult for volunteers from the local area to get involved.

4.1.4 AAT’s projects

4.1.4.1 Wind farm

AAT had been granted planning permission for a two-turbine wind farm in the local community. The Project Manager explained that AAT was the first community organisation in the UK to submit a planning application for a wind farm. The wind farm would be:

“[A] £6million asset that will bring low carbon energy and construction contracts to the area, together with an annual income stream from the sale of electricity of some £200,000 that will help to fund local projects” (Awel Aman Tawe 2014).

A private developer had initially intended to build a wind farm in the same area but withdrew due to vandalism on the test site. A representative from the company helped members of AAT with their plans in the early stages of the development.

“National Wind Power had done some wind speed testing up on the site and we were really lucky, the guy who had been in charge of that...he came here to meet with us and just talked, whether they could give us the data and was really willing to help and support in any way he could...” (Emily Hinshelwood).

Members of AAT had initially intended to have five wind turbines erected but were denied planning permission. They therefore had to reduce the number of turbines to two to get the plans accepted. At the time of the research AAT was waiting for Common Land Consent before the wind farm could be built.

“We’ve got overall planning permission but we’ve been caught on what’s called a Section 194 because some of the workings are on common land you have to have extra permission and that’s tied then with Section 147 so any common land you use you have to provide the commoners with land of equivalent value” (Carl Richards).

“One of key criteria in Section 194 applications is public access and enjoyment of the common. To achieve this, we’ve secured landowner agreement to use the proposed wind farm access track as a cyclepath, bridleway and disabled access. At present, most of the track exists, but is in poor condition” (Hinshelwood 2012).

The founders of AAT were attracted to the idea of a wind farm as the income raised from selling the generated electricity could be used to fund community

projects, pay staff salaries, and other needs of the organisation. This would mean that AAT would not have to rely on grant funding.

“Once we have the wind farm built then that will bring a revenue stream in. So we are aiming to get to the point where we will be self-sustainable...” (Jenny Carlisle).

“I liked the fact that I thought it could be sustainable...lots of community enterprises fail after a couple of years but I thought a wind farm, because it could attract bank finance and you know, be built commercially, would actually sustain...and allow us then to development things that may be good things to do but need financial input” (Dan McCallum).

Members of AAT were cautious of being reliant on grant funding so being self-sustaining was important to them. AAT had some problems with grant funding in the past (this is discussed in more detail below in the section 4.1.5.2).

4.1.4.2 Community consultation

Members of AAT decided to conduct a community consultation to get feedback from local residents and decide whether the wind farm should go ahead. Local residents were trained and employed by AAT to help with the community consultation. Residents of the eleven villages closest to the proposed site for the wind farm were consulted. AAT’s website explained:

“The consultation lasted from March 2000 – March 2001. Over 300 people visited wind farms on coaches, public meetings were held in each village, structured interviews and semi-structured interviews, open days, work with schools and leaflet drops to every house” (Awel Aman Tawe 2014).

During the interviews members of AAT’s staff were asked about the community consultation:

“[Members of AAT] fully consulted before they did actually go to planning or do a lot of work on the technical side to make sure that everyone was happy with the idea because it’s quite a controversial subject” (Jenny Carlisle).

“We really did consult...We did quantitative surveys around the area sort of randomly selected and then we did semi-structured interviews and we did focus groups and we did open days and public meetings and trips to wind farms and it was really full on...” (Emily Hinshelwood).

One of the outcomes of the consultation was that some local residents said that they wanted AAT to also run energy efficiency projects as well as developing a wind farm. The energy efficiency program also gave AAT a project that it could turn to while they were waiting to receive funding for the wind farm. This was important as it allowed AAT to maintain a presence within the community after the consultation phase had ended.

The consultation ended with a referendum giving local residents the chance to vote on whether or not the wind farm should go ahead. AAT had not initially planned to have a referendum but some residents raised the issue during the consultation. The referendum was administered by the Electoral Reform Services.

“[I]t was a really high turnout in the referendum so in terms of...giving them the opportunity to vote I think...it was a good idea to, to do that...[We] hadn't started out thinking that we'd have a referendum but then quite quickly it became apparent that people wanted a vote and so we had to raise extra money to do that but it was a good idea to do because you know obviously it did demonstrate quite clearly that, you know, people wanted [the wind farm] to go ahead...And it made us feel more confident that we had judged it correctly...” (Emily Hinshelwood).

Almost half of everyone eligible to vote in the referendum did vote (48.5%) (Awel Aman Tawe 2014). The majority of votes were in favour of the wind farm so AAT decided to go ahead with the project.

4.1.4.3 Arts and Climate Change

AAT's Arts and Climate Change programme began in 2011. The Arts and Climate Change Officer aimed to run “arts projects that reflect on Climate

Change and engage people in creating works that make an artistic response to our changing world” (Awel Aman Tawe 2014). The Arts and Climate Change Officer had run a wide range of art projects.

“For the first year...I did an animation project, film project, poetry theatre – which went down really well, print-making, and then the poetry competition...and did lots of workshops with poets – bilingual as well...[W]e did a big kind of community event with theatre and art prints and music and involved lots of different community groups...” (Emily Hinshelwood).

The two bilingual (English and Welsh) poetry competitions held as part of the Arts & Climate Change programme had been successful with the first competition attracting 350 entries and the second 672 entries. The poems were judged by highly regarded Welsh poets and published in anthologies.

The most recent Arts & Climate Change project at the time of research was called Green Routines. It aimed to change consumer behaviour.

“I think the arts is important as a way of exploring the issues but...they don’t necessarily lead people to change their behaviour...With this digital arts projects, well it’s called Green Routines so I’m looking at...whether identifying a routine or a rule or something in your life whether that makes it easier to keep a low carbon lifestyle...[I]f it’s a rule, if it becomes a routine that you to stick to is it easier then [to] gradually change your behaviour?...So that’s what this project is about...” (Emily Hinshelwood).

AAT held a Green Routines exhibition in May 2013. At the exhibition there was an installation made up of photographs of people who were “adopting some form of green behaviour” in order to motivate others to do the same (Awel Aman Tawe 2014).

The Arts and Climate Change Programme engaged volunteers from the local community but was organised and led by the Arts and Climate Change Officer.

“Most of the voluntary work has been helping at events...And that’s usually quite... a lot of people but for an intense short

period whereas I guess I'm the one that kind of project manages and gets the project going throughout the year and then there's a sort of burst of input from volunteers rather than volunteers working throughout the, the year" (Emily Hinshelwood).

The Arts and Climate Change programme was one of the ways AAT was able to involve local residents in the organisation, unlike plans for the wind farm which required technical expertise.

4.1.4.4 Energy projects

AAT had run a Renewable Heat project in conjunction with the Energy Saving Trust and the Department for Energy and Climate Change.

"Awel Aman Tawe is able to offer a number of renewable energy grants to community buildings and private home owners to install a variety of renewable technologies" (Awel Aman Tawe 2014).

The project focused on four technologies: ground source heat pumps, air source heat pumps, biomass boilers and solar hot water panels.

"With the scheme the client has to pay upfront but then they will be reimbursed, there's a grant of up to £3000. But some of the technologies cost up to about ten [thousand pounds]" (Carl Richards).

Members of AAT invested in an "energy unit" called the "EDUcan" which they took to events to raise awareness of how much energy different appliances use.

"Yeah it's got its own solar panels, it's got a small wind turbine so...you can boil a kettle in there, stuff like that just to show people this is what energy is and this is how you can get renewable forms of energy" (Jenny Carlisle).

Members of AAT had also run several one-off renewable energy-related projects in the local area, such as installing the UK's largest PV system on a school, installing solar hot water panels on community centres, and installing a small wind turbine for a local disabled person. They also carried out some energy

efficiency projects, such as delivering the Warm Wales project. Warm Wales was established in 2004 by the National Grid to meet its corporate responsibility and help people living in fuel poverty (Warm Wales No date). Through the Warm Wales project people on certain benefits could receive free cavity wall and loft installation.

After the research period, members of AAT founded a solar photovoltaic co-operative called Egni. Shares cost £250 and investors could expect a four percent return on their investment (Egni 2014). The money raised went towards putting solar PV panels on community buildings.

4.1.4.5 Publications

Members of AAT wanted to share their experiences with others. Two members of AAT's staff published reports and journal articles based on their experiences of working for AAT. The report *Consulting Communities: A Renewable Energy Toolkit* (Hinshelwood and McCallum 2001) provides a guide for renewable energy practitioners who want to do a community consultation. "Specifically it gives advice about how to consult effectively with communities and to identify the key factors to consider when planning and implementing a community consultation" (ibid, p.5). The article *Power to the People: community-led wind energy – obstacles and opportunities in a South Wales Valley* (Hinshelwood 2001) tells the story of AAT starting out and the challenges that the organisation faced (this is discussed further in the section 4.1.5). It also provided recommendations for support organisations as to how they might help organisations similar to AAT. The second article *Making Friends with the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework* (Hinshelwood 2003) explains how members of AAT used the Department of International Development's (DFID) Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) to guide their work (this is discussed further in section 4.2.2.1). The SLF encourages those working in community development to utilise and strengthen human, social, financial, physical and natural capital in the community (DFID 1999).

4.1.5 Successes and challenges

4.1.5.1 Planning permission

Getting planning permission for the wind farm was the “biggest problem” that AAT faced (Carl Richards). AAT formed in 2000 but the founders had been working on plans for a wind farm since 1998. AAT’s wind farm had still not been erected at the time of research, largely due to problems with planning.

“Well originally we had a five year plan...and people said to us in the beginning “God that’s a long time...” So it’s been a load slower...and I think a lot of that comes down to...[the] snail’s pace at which planning works” (Emily Hinshelwood).

“Each planning application kind of reduced the size of [the wind farm]. So it was five [turbines] and then four and then two” (Dan McCallum).

“Initially it was five turbines and then that got refused and now it’s two turbines basically so it took a while to get that through. I think it’s just the nature of wind development essentially, it’s very controversial so the local authority’s quite nervous about granting planning permission” (Jenny Carlisle).

Even after AAT got planning permission for a two turbine wind farm, permission still had to be sought from the Commoners Association as the wind farm would be built on common land.

“So many obstacles were put in the way through planning and through the Commoners Association and landowners; the thing hasn’t really materialised so it’s been a long time with nothing coming of it...” (Pat).

It was difficult for staff of AAT to find the motivation to persevere with plans for the wind farm after being refused planning permission.

“[W]e had the public enquiry and we were refused planning and it was really hard to keep going because people were so demoralised by it...” (Emily Hinshelwood).

One asset that AAT had been granted planning permission for was a car park, which AAT staff never intended on having.

“It’s so ironic that the only thing that we had planning for was to build a car park. Basically what happened was...if we were going to develop our office to be an eco centre, which is what the ultimate plan is, the Council said well you’ve got to have space for a car park. So we bought the chapel site and that was knocked down...in order to build the car park for the eco centre, which still we haven’t got money to build...I find it so ironic that that’s all we’ve got planning for” (Emily Hinshelwood).

The council insisted that AAT needed to have a car park and were happy for AAT to change the local landscape by demolishing a chapel in order to build the car park.

4.1.5.2 Funding

Members of AAT struggled to secure funding for initial projects and tasks such as the community consultation and wind speed testing. Funding was eventually secured via seven separate donors (for a further discussion on the challenges of securing funding see Hinselwood 2001). At the time of research, members had successfully attracted some large amounts of funding. AAT was selected to receive Objective 1 funding in the amount of £250,000. The purpose of Objective 1 funding was to help communities where the GDP was 75% or less than the European average (Welsh European Funding Office No date). In 2010 AAT was awarded £373,000 by DECC’s Low Carbon Communities Challenge (LCCC). The purpose of LCCC was for communities to develop low-carbon and energy related projects. The funded projects had to demonstrate that they had plans to engage with the local community on behaviour change activities (DECC 2012).

Being able to access funding had been a challenge for AAT at times however, and the association had been very fragile because of this. After AAT was denied planning permission following the public enquiry there was no funding to pay the salaries of AAT’s staff. Some staff left, while the Project Manager and

another member of staff decided to train to provide energy performance certificates to bring in an income.

“[AAT was] really struggling for money ‘cause the cost of a public enquiry’s massive...but all the staff who were continuing to work on it, there was no funding to pay for that so we lost quite a few staff... Dan trained to be an energy surveyor so you know, all the household energy surveys...in order to keep the project going... [He] did these energy surveys but he absolutely hated it...” (Emily Hinshelwood).

“So we’ve gone in ups and downs...in terms of being able to employ people...I was signing on [to receive state benefits] as was Carl, then we went into energy efficiency surveying...doing EPCs [energy performance certificates]...for houses and for businesses...and that was just giving us enough to tick over and keep going with the wind farm but it was quite borderline really the whole thing” (Dan McCallum).

AAT had successfully gained some contracts that enabled the association to keep working, such as the Ynni’r Fro contract. The Ynni’r Fro contract was linked to the Welsh Assembly Government’s Community Scale Renewable Energy Generation Programme (CSREG):

“Using funding from the Convergence and Competitiveness & Employment European structural funds programmes, the CSREG programme aims to promote sustainable business growth and new business opportunities by enabling the establishment or further development of social enterprises based on community scale renewable energy installations” (Smith No date).

The Ynni’r Fro contract brought in £90,000 for AAT and paid the salaries of the two Technical Development Officers (one of whom was the Project Manager for AAT). The Technical Development Officers advised people from other communities in South Wales on how to establish community renewable energy projects.

“The Ynni'r Fro contract...is a Welsh Government scheme to support community organisations to get...community scale renewable energy. So we cover Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Bridgend and Heads of the Valleys [an area that covers the local authority areas: Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Blaenau-Gwent and Torfaen] so it's quite a bit of the South Wales area. We just advise community groups on how to essentially do what we've done in getting their own renewable technologies, so wind, hydro and anaerobic digestion we cover” (Jenny Carlisle).

“So this big contract called Ynni'r Fro, which is to support communities developing renewable energy projects...that's a kind of two salaried post...So that's been an absolute godsend 'cause it's a salaried position rather than continually trying to find pots of money or you know, do [energy] surveys you know, just to get a little bit of money here and there” (Emily Hinshelwood).

At the time of research, AAT's plans for its own wind farm were on hold while staff worked on the Ynni'r Fro contract and applied for further funding to keep the association going.

“So our wind farm is on hold really...We're kind of responding to funding quite a lot so...the government puts out a funding call and we write an application...” (Dan McCallum).

The staff and trustees were keen for the wind farm to be built so that they would no longer have to rely on short-term funding streams.

“I'm really looking forward to [the wind farm being built] because...it'll be so exciting to stop having to think about staying alive and thinking about “okay, we're going to have this block of money coming in now as the turbines start to generate electricity, what are we going to do with it?...For the first time we'll be proactive instead of being passively being driven [by funders]” (Sam).

“I think the wind farm is very important. If that doesn't go ahead we may struggle as an organisation to keep going unless we keep getting more contracts, you know, with European funding but it's quite difficult to keep winning those really...” (Dan McCallum).

AAT was depending on the wind farm going ahead as the income gained from selling the electricity generated would allow the association to become self-sustaining.

4.1.5.3 Retaining control

Members of AAT had fought to prevent external organisations taking control of the wind farm project. In a paper published by a member of AAT, it was explained:

“[T]here were several instances where the steering group struggled to maintain control of the project. In many ways it is ironic that external companies who are interested in the project because of its (innovative) community-led nature should try to take control (thereby destroying what is novel about it). Nevertheless, this has happened with two RE [renewable energy] organisations” (Hinshelwood 2001, p.100).

According to the paper, the renewable energy companies wanted members of AAT to give a “substantial level of control to ‘outsider’ engineers” (Hinshelwood 2001, p.101). Members of AAT were determined for the wind farm to remain community-led to ensure that it would lead to community development. Also, the Project Manager explained that as the wind farm had been promoted as a community-led project in the community consultation it should remain community-led so not to appear to deceive local residents. He also explained that going into joint venture with a renewable energy company could be “complicated and costly” (Dan McCallum).

4.1.5.4 Anti-wind farm group

Not everyone in the local communities that AAT served had been supportive of the wind farm development and an anti-wind farm group had formed.

“We had a about core group of sort of six or seven people that were really organised and dead against it, mainly focused around one village... Yeah, and then with planning it wasn't just local people that proposed it, there's like national pressure groups against wind farms so we had like letters from all over the UK opposing it...which is really frustrating when we had done the consultation really carefully and had an independent referendum...” (Dan McCallum).

“Well I think most people are...in favour but you are always going to get some people who don't like what you're doing essentially and wind is a controversial one, you have people who are for it or very much against it. And they can be quite loud...So sometimes it seems like you've got a massive anti group when it's just a small group of people, usually up to ten people, who are really driving a sort of anti campaign...” (Jenny Carlisle).

“You're bound to get opposition to most things...the scare stories we had, you know, the turbines would affect people in so many ways...” (Pat).

Two of the founders of AAT who were not originally from the local area (they were both English) had suffered from verbal abuse from members of the local anti-wind farm group. AAT's stance had been to not engage with the group.

“We've been shouted at down the street and things like that... [W]e made lots of friends but we made lots of enemies as well. And I think the fact that although the group that originally set it up were sort of half and half from the local area and not, because Dan and I...weren't from the village originally we got it in the neck a bit” (Emily Hinshelwood).

Some of the opinions of those opposed to the wind farm related to their experience of the coal mines and the miners' strike of 1984.

“[T]he fault lines that developed during the miners' strike were replayed during the consultation so that people that were on

one side of the fence during the miners' strike...were, I don't know, sort of trusted and believed or followed what each other said when it came to deciding about the wind farm as well" (Emily Hinshelwood)."

"[One of the villages] is quite a different village from the other villages in the area, it's mainly English speaking and immigrants basically from the 1950s and 60s from Scotland and North of England around the mining industry so it's always set itself a little bit apart from the other villages...I can remember one conversation in [the village] where this woman said to me "what does Mrs Jones think of the wind farm?" and I said you know, "she's in favour" and she said "well I'm dead against then"..." (Dan McCallum).

Some peoples' opinions on whether the wind farm should be built related to whether they supported or were opposed to the miners' strike in 1984. The quote above from Dan McCallum demonstrates how the divisions in the communities affected peoples' opinion.

The local anti-wind farm group appeared to have quietened down. Those involved in AAT had different theories about why this had happened.

"It has [quietened] now because Awel Aman Tawe has gone quieter and it's been knocked back about twice on public enquiries so they think that's the end..." (Pat)

"I think the anti's were very vociferous but the referendum told a different story you know. We won the referendum..." (Carl Richards).

Some members of AAT thought that the anti-wind farm group had scaled back because AAT had not got all the consents in place for the wind farm and so the plans were on hold. If this was the case then the anti-wind farm group may pick up again if AAT gets permission to build the wind farm. On the other hand, some thought that the anti-group felt defeated after the majority of local people voted in favour of the wind farm.

4.1.5.5 Diversifying

Members of AAT had to diversify their activities while they waited for permissions for the wind farm to be built. As previously explained, AAT had run renewable energy and efficiency projects, had an on-going Arts and Climate Change programme, and had carried out some one-off projects. Many of those involved in AAT believed that diversifying in this way had been beneficial for the association.

“I think it’s doing incredibly well in light of the sort of planning difficulties and barriers that have been placed in its way and in continuing to develop sort of other areas, you know, through Ynni’r Fro, through...consultancy, through education...There’s no way that you would say that Awel Aman Tawe had been a failure were we to be refused...this last planning consent. It’s done a huge amount up until now anyway” (Leslie).

“You know, at the start it was just wind farms and now it’s all kinds of renewable and energy efficiency... And now also looking at behaviour change and engagement in issues of climate change. So I’d say it’s a different organisation to what it was and I think it’s got a lot of credibility in the world of renewable energy. It has gained a lot of respect, and locally as well; a lot of people just sort of thought...AAT would sort of start up and then be gone and I think a lot of people have seen that it’s stuck through years, and years...and a lot of people have respect...for that...” (Emily Hinshelwood).

Diversifying had allowed AAT to make an impact in the communities that it served without the wind farm and to gain the respect of the local residents, as well as some people in the renewable energy sector.

4.1.5.6 Project Manager

Many of the interviewees said that the success that AAT had experienced and the fact that the GSA was still active was to do with the perseverance of the Project Manager.

“I think having time and the commitment from at least one person to really take the thing forward is really important. And Dan’s really tenacious you know...which I think is what you need because I would have given up years ago” (Emily Hinshelwood)

“Dan doesn’t see any problems, if he does, he overcomes them. He’s got the right personality to take something on I feel...” (Pat).

The Project Manager was highly valued and respected by the other interviewees who described him as “tenacious” and “motivated”. He said himself that one of the most important qualities that was needed was persistence.

“[P]ersistence is one of the things...because often you can’t see a way through but almost by plucking away for long enough something turns up” (Dan McCallum).

The Project Manager was extremely committed to AAT. As mentioned earlier, at one time when there was no funding for his salary, he continued to work for the GSA as a volunteer.

4.2 Understanding the frames used by AAT

In this section I analyse the activities of AAT and documents produced by the association for evidence of framing by members. First, I present the diagnostic framings used (the framing of sustainability problems). Second, I present the prognostic framings (the framing of solutions to the problems), and the strategies and resources used by members of AAT in relation to the prognostic framing. Third, I present evidence of motivational framing (language used to mobilise people) by members of AAT. Finally, I discuss the framings found in the case of AAT in relation to the literature on collective action frames (e.g. Benford and Snow 2000). I also discuss the relationship between framing, strategies, and resources.

4.2.1 Diagnostic framing by AAT

In this section I present my findings of two diagnostic frames constructed by AAT that I have called “impact of mine closures” and “threat of climate change”. The former frame was used in relation to residents’ concerns about the local economy since the mine closures of the 1980s. The latter frame was used to make the audience aware of the problem of climate change and to motivate them to take action to prevent the problem.

4.2.1.1 “Impact of mine closures” frame

Members of AAT were concerned about widespread socio-economic problems in the local area, such as unemployment and poverty (as discussed in section 4.1.1). They framed the problem of socio-economic deprivation in relation to closure of local coal mines by the Conservative Government in the 1980s. The AAT website explained that “The end of deep mining saw widespread unemployment and hardship in an area built on coal” (Awel Aman Tawe 2014). I refer to this as the “impact of mine closures” frame.

Residents were likely to be aware of the impacts that the mine closures had on the local communities but members of AAT amplified this frame and placed blame firmly with the Thatcher Government. A quote from AAT’s website explained:

“Drastic changes came [to the local area] in the wake of the year-long miners’ strike of 1984. The bitter industrial dispute under the Conservative Government of Margaret Thatcher, which pitted the miners led by Arthur Scargill against the National Coal Board led by Sir Ian MacGregor, heralded the end of deep mining as an industry and was followed by widespread unemployment. AAT is working to rejuvenate the local economy and bring jobs, training and regeneration to the area as well as clean energy and a low carbon lifestyle” (Awel Aman Tawe 2014).

Members of AAT actively selected the “impact of mine closures” frame to diagnose the current problem of local socio-economic deprivation, which AAT hoped to solve. They could have framed the deprivation differently and placed

blame with other actors; for example, they could have placed blame with the present Coalition Government for not helping the local communities or with private companies for not investing in the area. The “impact of mine closures” frame however, seemed to resonate with local residents. One of the participants, for example, discussed unemployment in the local area in relation to the mine closures:

“Well I’ve been brought up in this area and I’ve seen the area go from full employment to an area of high unemployment virtually overnight... Up until about ’81, somebody unemployed in this area would’ve been fairly rare... By in large the area was an area of...full employment and that’s because you had the [coal] mines in full swing... So in the last say, thirty years the area has declined rapidly” (Carl Richards).

The participant went on to place blame with Thatcher for the socio-economic problems that the communities still faced:

“Thatcher did a lot of damage. You know, they just turned off the economic tap without turning another one on... And in a sense, this area’s been in recession for the last twenty years” (Carl Richards).

Another participant, who had lived in the local area all his life, also made reference to the mine closures when he was interviewed about the circumstances of the community:

“We’ve come from...a coal mining community to a very sort of bleak community where it’s only really a dormitory area and people have got to move out of the area... [W]hen it was a coal mining community everybody worked within the village...” (A trustee).

The “impact of mine closures” frame supported local residents’ stories about socio-economic changes in the communities. The Project Manager of AAT explained that most residents in the villages had lived there since before the mine closures. It is likely then, that this frame resonated with the majority of people that AAT hoped to engage with.

4.2.1.2 “Threat of climate change” frame

There was a second diagnostic framing in which, members of AAT used a frame that I have called “threat of climate change”. The “threat of climate change” frame seemed to be introduced as a problem because of AAT’s plans to build a wind farm; wind farms are usually seen as a solution to climate change.

“[AAT] works to...fight against the *threat of climate change*...”
(Awel Aman Tawe 2014; emphasis added).

The “threat of climate change” problem seemed to be given less importance than the “impact of mine closures” problem. Members of AAT seemed to perceive socio-economic problems to be a more central concern of local residents than the problem of climate change. The “threat of climate change” frame was used most explicitly in the Arts and Climate Change programme, which encouraged participants to “reflect on climate change” (Awel Aman Tawe 2014). The Arts and Climate Change Officer, for example, encouraged participants to write poetry about climate change.

The two participants who were motivated to volunteer with AAT because of the “threat of climate change” frame lived outside of the communities served by AAT. Also, they worked on climate change or environmental issues in their professional lives.

“I often feel I’m looking at, you know, global scale effects of climate change, and yet on a local scale and what I’m actually doing about it is nothing at all. So I’d like to be able to put some effort and some expertise into helping on a local level” (A trustee).

“I mean my original motivation was the kind of [the] whole climate change [problem] and also the kind of renewable energy and the problems that as a society we’re going to face as energy becomes much more difficult to get hold of...” (A trustee).

These participants explained that they were motivated to volunteer because they wanted to “do” something about the threat of climate change. As discussed

in section 4.2.2.2, members of AAT framed some of their projects as solutions in the “fight against the threat of climate change” (Awel Aman Tawe 2014).

4.2.2 Prognostic framing by AAT

In this section I present findings of members of AAT constructing three frames that were used prognostically; these frames were “community development,” “clean energy” and “energy efficiency”. Members of AAT used these frames to advocate solutions to the problems presented in the previous section. I discuss the “clean energy” and “energy efficiency” frames in the same section as both frames relate to the “threat of climate change” problem. I demonstrate how the framing of the solutions affected the strategies and resources used by AAT to deliver those solutions.

4.2.2.1 “Community development” frame

AAT aimed to provide projects to solve some of the socio-economic problems that had occurred since the closure of the coal mines. AAT’s website explained:

“AAT is working to rejuvenate the local economy and bring jobs, training and regeneration to the area as well as clean energy and a low carbon lifestyle” (Awel Aman Tawe 2014).

Members primarily framed AAT’s projects and activities as solutions to address the “impact of mine closures,” and in doing so adopted what I have called a “community development” frame. Secondary to this, was the framing of AAT’s projects as delivering solutions to the “threat of climate change”. Note in the quote above from AAT’s website that “clean energy” and “a low carbon lifestyle” were mentioned after “local economy,” making them seem less important. Some founders of AAT had previously worked on community development projects and introduced the “community development” frame. The “community development” frame juxtaposed previous “outsider” development in the local area by mining companies and government. “Outsider” development was seen to have contributed to the socio-economic problems that the communities faced.

Two members of AAT who had lived in the local area all their lives explained that they were motivated to volunteer for AAT because of the “community development” frame.

“[T]his is the only project that I can see attempting to...alleviate some of the problems [in the local area]... I don't see any other project that's trying to bring some money into the area” (Carl Richards).

“You've got to be looking at sort of moving forward [following the mine closures]... You've got to support that community in one way or another” (A trustee).

These quotes demonstrate that the “community development” frame resonated with these local residents who saw the need for socio-economic development of the local area.

The wind farm was a project to which members of AAT applied the “community development” frame. The wind farm was not primarily framed as a “climate change” project, as is usually the case with commercial wind farms; rather it was mostly framed in terms of community development and solving the problem of socio-economic deprivation. Members of AAT emphasised the benefits that the wind farm could bring to the communities.

“Jobs as well as clean energy are on the agenda for AAT as it plans to build a community *asset* that will bring in £200k a year” (AAT 2011, emphasis added).

“[The wind farm will be] a £6million *asset* that will bring...an annual income stream from the sale of electricity of some £200,000 that will help to fund local projects” (AAT 2011, emphasis added).

Community development was the proposed solution then, with the wind farm framed as a community development *resource* (or asset) that could enable AAT to provide training and employment opportunities for local residents. Also, in framing the wind farm as a community development resource, members of AAT communicated their *strategy* to sell the energy generated and to spend some of the income on community development projects. The Technical Development Officer explained that once the wind farm was built it would act as “a visual reminder” of AAT's community development aims (Jenny Carlisle).

“[O]nce it’s built I feel it be a visual reminder, so people will be able to link seeing those turbines with what we’re delivering and the benefits we bring to the community...” (Jenny Carlisle).

In the interviews, members of AAT explained that, while a lot of emphasis had been put on the need to get the wind farm erected, the wind farm would not be an “end” in itself but a resource for community development.

“The outcomes, it’s not about the technology; you know, it’s not about the wind farm...it’s trying to create local jobs or people running the local economy...and training local people in doing stuff. [The wind farm is a] means to an end there really...” (Dan McCallum).

“The wind farm is always the number one issue on the agenda and the wind farm feels like an end in itself but of course it isn’t” (Sam).

Framing the wind farm in terms of community development helped to gain acceptance for the project. It is likely that this frame influenced the majority of residents to vote in favour of the project going ahead, given that wind farms are often opposed by local residents. One of the participants explained:

“I want to see that [the profits generated by the wind farm] going back out to the community...to regenerate the community” (Pat).

Within the “community development” frame was the implicit message from members of AAT that community development should be bottom-up and come from the communities themselves, as residents know what solutions are best for their communities. Indeed, the very existence of AAT as a GSA, framed the communities as having the capacity to take bottom-up action in order to develop themselves. This implicit message was evident in the decision to carry out a community consultation in order to allow local residents to have a say in the development of their community. As a member of staff explained, members of AAT rejected suggestions that they should erect the wind farm without the complicated and time-consuming process of consulting with the community:

“[W]e had a lot of positive feedback from the fact that we were consulting...[T]his area because of the coal industry...there’d

never been any consultation really so there was an element of if you...consult people they're going to say no because of their experience of big projects... Something that's going to make a difference to the landscape...their immediate instinct is to say no... And a lot of people said put them [the turbines] up, no-one will even notice; why bother consulting?" (Emily Hinshelwood).

Having used a "community development" frame, members of AAT thought a community consultation was the right action to take. Interviewees reported that the community consultation was well-received by local residents.

There were two unintended consequences of the community consultation; some residents said that they wanted AAT to provide energy efficiency projects as well as renewable energy and also, some people requested a referendum so local residents could vote as to whether the wind farm should go ahead.

"[S]ome of the people that are against the wind farm have said "what about energy efficiency and micro renewable?"... So we then sort of broadened Awel Aman Tawe into all of those..." (Dan McCallum).

Although AAT had not initially planned to provide energy efficiency projects or have a referendum, staff decided that they should provide these to be consistent with the "community development" frame. This frame articulated that local residents should have a say in the development of the community.

"[O]ne of the things that came out of the consultation was that people wanted to focus on energy efficiency as well as renewable energy so we really enhanced that side of it and ran quite a big energy efficiency program with sort of helping with cavity walls... [T]here were three energy efficiency advisors employed... [We were] responding to...what people had said that they want, you know, in the consultation..." (Emily Hinshelwood).

"[I]ndividual households have taken part in the...energy efficiency survey. A few of them got these smart meters in their homes that have come via Awel Aman Tawe..." (Leslie).

In the process of developing the wind farm project, and to ensure that they used strategies and resources consistent with the “community development” frame, members of AAT drew on the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) which was developed to aid community development processes (For a discussion of this see: Hinshelwood 2003). The SLF recommends using and building human capital in the community. The Project Manager explained that he had a *strategy* of working with local people where possible and avoiding using external companies.

“I always try to...keep thinking about local, you know. Doing things like using local people to distribute leaflets or design things. Trying to avoid bringing external companies in unless we really have to...” (Dan McCallum).

Local residents were involved in the Environmental Impact Assessment required for the wind farm, enabling them to develop their skills. AAT’s website explained:

“Wherever possible, local community groups and people were involved in the surveys. For example, local amateur historians took part in the archaeology assessment and a local school will be involved in the next stage of the ecology assessment” (Awel Aman Tawe 2014).

Local residents, who did not necessarily have the appropriate skills at the time, were trained and employed to carry out the community consultation rather than using external consultants.

“[W]hen we were doing all the consultation and stuff we were training up local people on how to do consultation...We looked always at the process of what we were doing to build up local capacity” (Dan McCallum).

“I found out that Dan was looking for some researchers and I was looking for some extra work so I got in touch...I was trained up to carry out interviews and run focus groups...” (Carl Richards).

The “community development” frame meant that local residents were recognised as a *resource* and were employed to carry out surveys, interviews and focus groups with other local residents in order to get their opinion on proposals for the wind. Valuing local residents’ human resources was important as many residents had been unemployed since the mine closures. The *strategy* of sending local people out into the community to consult with other local residents may have served as a demonstration to other residents that they too could be employable. The strategy of employing local people to carry out the consultation may also have helped to foster community support for the wind farm if residents saw that some local residents were already employed. Working with local residents was consistent with the “community development” frame; if the Project Manager had employed outside companies to do the work, he could have affected the credibility of the “community development” frame, which may have meant losing support for the wind farm project. Also, the diagnostic framing problematised “outsiders” doing development in the local community, so this framing may also have been affected if outsiders were used to carry out work that could be done by local people.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework recognises that social capital can be mobilised in community development (DFID 1999). It also emphasises the need for community development projects to begin with an analysis of the strengths of the community in question (ibid). Despite the socio-economic problems faced by the communities, members of AAT recognised that there still seemed to be a feeling of community spirit and strong social networks, both of which could be mobilised in community development. Some of the participants explained about this social capital:

“Certainly there were a lot of [community development] groups set up in these valleys after the miners strikes in the 80s... And there were quite a few...that were dotted in the mining valleys... [T]here is...strong community spirit” (Dan McCallum).

“[I]t is such a strong community...there is that sort of capacity I suppose for people to work together. People already work together...every year there's a Christmas party in the village

and all the children go...So there's already...strong networks"
(Emily Hinshelwood).

Residents of the local area were used to working together for the benefit of the community and were familiar with community development organisations. Members of AAT recognised that both factors could be an advantage in terms of attempting to deliver community-scale projects. Some members of AAT explained the importance of there being strong social networks to the work of the organisation:

"Local networks I think are really strong here...[M]oving here was such an eye-opener in terms of how...messages get through the community..." (Emily Hinshelwood).

"[T]here's very good social networks because a lot of people haven't moved so if you talk to the old aged and you get on well with them they will have a big influence on the rest of the community because they're related to half of them" (Dan McCallum).

As many of the local residents had stayed in the area after the mine closures the social networks that had developed remained. Members of AAT used these networks to spread messages around the community about their work.

Mobilising social capital in the local communities was crucial for gaining acceptance for the wind farm project. The *strategy* of AAT's staff was to take older residents to see an existing wind farm first hand. This strategy was used as staff members understood the influence that they had on others in the local communities. Their influence may have been because there used to be several generations of one family working in the same mine (Strangleman 2001). The strategy of taking older residents to experience a wind farm was hugely important for AAT.

"[W]hen we were doing...the planning of the wind farm we took like old aged groups to go and see wind farms...and they helped spread the word" (Dan McCallum).

Enabling the older residents to see an existing wind farm up close helped to dispel some of the rumours about the negative impacts of wind farms (such as

noise and causing harm to wildlife), that were being spread around the community by the anti-wind farm group. This information was then passed on from the older residents to other local residents. One of the residents who had been taken to see the existing wind farm explained that this experience influenced his decision to support AAT's wind farm project and to get involved with AAT:

"I got sold on the project when...Dan was organising coach trips up to...see an actual wind farm in operation. And that's when I thought "yes this is a good idea"" (Carl Richards).

By mobilising social capital for community development, AAT could be seen to be reinforcing this social capital. The community consultation, for example, brought members of the community together to work towards a common cause. The Arts and Climate Change programme also brought together local residents and local community groups to work on the same project. The Arts and Climate Change programme was a project that everyone in the community could engage with, unlike the wind farm project which required technical expertise. Community-led solutions to the "impact of mine closures" were appropriate given that there was already a perception of an abundance of community spirit and strong local networks. It should be noted however, that if the wind farm project does go ahead it could exacerbate fractions in the community as some residents had voiced their opposition to the wind farm being built.

AAT had a *strategy* of being self-sustaining that was also linked to the "community development" frame and being economically sustainable. The staff and trustees at AAT seemed cautious of relying on government aid, probably because of their mistrust of government after the closing of the coal mines. They were keen to for AAT to become self-sustaining, build-up an asset base, and retain control of the wind farm (as discussed in section 4.1.5.3). Staff explained that if the wind farm did go ahead the income generated would allow AAT to become self-sustaining; this *strategy* was identified so that the GSA would not need any external funding. According to the Project Manager "the whole idea of the wind farm" was to build an asset base for the community. As previously mentioned, the wind farm had been referred to as an "asset" in AAT's communications.

Members of AAT decided to buy a building to house their office as part of the aim to develop an asset base and be economically sustainable. They secured a preferential mortgage to buy a building.

“So there was some sort of mortgage available for charities...so we went for that really. [We were] just developing an asset base... [W]e’re paying off a mortgage rather than paying rent” (Dan McCallum).

“Well essentially the...rent and service charge kept on rising ... But here now we have much more freedom and we actually have an asset” (Carl Richards).

Members of AAT identified the need to become self-sustaining and build an asset base in order to ensure they could deliver the advocated solution of community development.

To summarise, members used the “community development” frame to articulate their solution to the communities’ socio-economic problems that occurred following the mine closures. The “community development” frame undoubtedly helped to gain local support for the wind farm project. The “community development” frame also influenced the strategies and resources used by members of AAT in trying to alleviate some of the socio-economic problems.

4.2.2.2 “Clean energy” and “energy efficiency” frames

In the prognostic framing, members of AAT used two frames that advocated solutions to the “threat of climate change”. They identified “clean energy” and “energy efficiency” as solutions. The AAT website explained for example:

“[AAT] works to raise awareness of the importance of *clean energy* in the fight against the threat of climate change through a sustained programme of information, communication and consultation and, more recently, through an innovative range of arts activities related to climate change that often reach people at a deeper level” (Awel Aman Tawe 2014; emphasis added).

“AAT is working to rejuvenate the local economy and bring jobs, training and regeneration to the area as well as *clean energy*

and a low carbon lifestyle” (Awel Aman Tawe 2014; emphasis added).

Members of AAT advocated changes in energy use as a solution to climate change. The wind farm allowed the climate change frame to be introduced but would also be a *resource* in “the fight against the threat of climate change” (Awel Aman Tawe 2014). As well promoting clean energy members of AAT used an “energy efficiency” frame and delivered energy efficiency projects.

The “clean energy” and “energy efficiency” frames were locally appropriate given that AAT worked with ex-coal mining communities. It was more fitting for members of AAT to use frames related to energy consumption when articulating solutions to climate change than say, a “food” or “waste” frame. The “clean energy” frame was also locally appropriate because residents were able to make the distinction between “clean” energy (which had positive connotations) and “dirty” energy (that had negative connotations) from the coal industry (which had been associated with the communities’ socio-economic deprivation). Staff members explained that these connections were made by some residents during the community consultation:

“[O]ne of the comments in the [community] consultation was we’ve always used energy here, once it was coal and now it’s wind farms” (Dan McCallum).

“[S]ome people...said “well you know we’ve had coal and the dust and the dirt for years, let’s have something clean”” (Emily Hinshelwood).

Staff at AAT educated local school children about energy and climate change via a programme called RE-Think. To help get across to school children the framing of “clean energy” and “energy efficiency” as solutions to climate change, members of AAT invested in a *resource* called the EDUcan (a trailer), which was towed by The Veggie Car, a vegetable oil powered car. The EDUcan was powered by solar and wind energy. It was used to engage with children as it provided energy technology that might have been considered unusual, such as a solar-powered radio, lantern and cooker. It also had examples of hot water solar panels and different types of “environmentally-friendly” insulation. The

strategy of educating local school children means that they might have taken home what they learnt and shared this with others in their household. This strategy was also consistent with the community development frame as it galvanised community spirit for AAT's projects by involving everyone in the community, including children.

The Arts and Climate Change Officer also made use of the "energy efficiency" frame. Through the Green Routines project for example, she aimed to educate participants about how they could adopt and maintain a "low carbon lifestyle" (Emily Hinshelwood). As part of a pilot project, local residents were asked to submit a photograph with a caption such as "we're cutting our carbon", which was added to an installation (Hinshelwood 2013).

In summary, members of AAT used "clean energy" and "energy efficiency" frames to articulate the solutions to the "threat of climate change". These frames were locally appropriate given that AAT worked with residents of ex-coal mining communities. In connection with these frames, members of AAT delivered energy-related projects. By using these frames and delivering energy projects they may have been able to have a positive impact on local fuel poverty as well as on climate change. Indeed, during the community consultation residents asked members of AAT to provide energy-efficiency projects to help alleviate fuel poverty.

4.2.3 Motivational framing

In this section I present findings of members of AAT using motivational framing to mobilise members of the local community. There were few examples of motivational framing found in terms of there being a "call to arms" using "appropriate vocabularies of motive" (Benford and Snow 2000, p.617). AAT's website and Facebook page were analysed for vocabulary that expressed severity, urgency, efficacy, propriety (as suggested by Benford 1993) and desirability (as suggested by Coke 2013).

Dramatic language such as "drastic changes" (Awel Aman Tawe 2014) was used to describe the "impact of mine closures". The use of the term "drastic changes" (rather than "changes") emphasised the severity of the socio-economic situation of the local communities, compared to before the mine

closures. Also, on the website it was reported that the impact that the mine closures had was “widespread unemployment and hardship” (ibid). Use of the word “widespread” emphasised the severity of the problem by giving it a scale (ibid). These were the only examples of language that conveyed severity being used in relation to the impact of mine closures frame and no evidence was found of language that conveyed urgency of the problem. There may have been a lack of motivational framing when articulating the severity or urgency of this problem because of a perception that local residents were already aware of the problems facing the communities. Following directly on from the language used to convey the severity of the problem, and in stark contrast, was language that conveyed the desirability of AAT’s projects. Terms such as “rejuvenate the local economy” and “regeneration” were used to describe AAT’s aims and to create a positive vision for the future (ibid).

Language to convey desirability was used in an attempt to motivate local residents to support the wind farm proposal. On the website the project was framed as “A wind farm that will change lives” (Awel Aman Tawe 2014). The language used in this framing suggested that the wind farm would be momentous and life-changing for residents of the local communities. This statement also conveyed efficacy, in that the wind farm “*will* change lives” (rather than “*may* change lives” for example). It suggested that, by supporting the wind farm proposal, local residents could make a difference to their local communities. This motivational framing was not consistent on the Facebook page. When staff used the Facebook page to ask people to send emails of support to the Planning Division of the Welsh Government, for example, there was no call to arms or reminder about the life-changing benefits of the wind farm to encourage people to do this.

Unexpectedly, there was a lack of language that conveyed urgency, severity or propriety when articulating the “threat of climate change” (Awel Aman Tawe 2014). Although, the word “threat” may have suggested to some that action needed to be taken. A lack of motivational framing may have been because this was a secondary problem that was seen to be less important than the impact of mine closures.

The Arts and Climate Change Officer made some attempts at motivational framing to encourage participants to take action to address climate change. A post on AAT's Facebook page about a Green Routines exhibition asked people to submit photographs with a caption such as "we're cutting our carbon" (Hinshelwood 2013). In this example, the *strategy* of encouraging individuals to demonstrate "we're cutting our carbon," along with the use of language, was intended to motivate others to reduce their carbon emissions. The aim was to convey efficacy by explaining that as one of "thousands of people" cutting their emissions they could make a real difference (ibid). A similar use of language was used to motivate participants to submit photographs as the post assured them that their photograph would go alongside "hundreds of others" (ibid). Based on the post on the Facebook page however, it seemed that limited attempts were made to motivate people by using language to convey *why* they should act (e.g. severity, urgency, or propriety). Indeed, the post did not make an explicit reference to the problem of climate change, which cutting carbon emissions would address. Even so, it was reported on AAT's website after the project that "The overwhelming response to the pilot exhibition was that people went away feeling more motivated to cut their carbon emissions" (Awel Aman Tawe 2014).

Other examples of motivational framing used by the Arts and Climate Change Officer were found in relation to the poetry anthologies that were published by AAT. The blurbs about the anthologies provided on AAT's website used emotive language, and the poems published in them were intended to appeal to the readers' emotions. The blurb about the first anthology titled *And this Global Warming, A'r Cynhesu Byd-Eang Hwn* explained:

"Our world is in the throes of change. While facts and figures, targets and quotas are argued over, how do we find words to express our angers, our fears, our hopes about climate change? How do we imagine our future? ...We all have different ways of telling climate change. This is a selection of the best" (Awel Aman Tawe 2014).

Publishing this anthology then, was a *strategy* to appeal to readers' emotions in order to motivate them to take action on climate change. It appealed to peoples'

emotions in terms of their “angers,” “fears,” and “hopes”. The term “throes of change” suggested that climate change was already happening.

A blurb for the second anthology titled *Heno, wrth Gysgu, Tonight while Sleeping* explained:

“One of the strengths of this bilingual collection is that each poet takes us on a journey from the big global picture down to the small personal detail. Each poem enables us to feel. To feel something about the often abstract and alienating concept of climate change... The range of responses – from blackberries to bankers, from hoovers to hunger – reflect the extent to which climate change is not an ‘issue’ but part of our everyday lives” (Awel Aman Tawe 2014).

Evident through the text on the website, the Arts and Climate Change Officer used the poems in an attempt to make the reader “feel” that the threat of climate change was real and appealed to their emotions in order to motivate them (rather than providing facts).

The examples of motivational framing provided were the only examples that were found. A limitation of analysing the motivational framing undertaken by AAT was that analysis was based only on the website and Facebook page as no other documents were provided by participants.

4.3 Discussion

I have analysed the activities of AAT and how these have been framed. Here, I reflect on the frames that were used and in doing so, I draw on literature on collective action frames. I discuss how the frames used by members of AAT influenced the resources and strategies used, while simultaneously using such resources and strategies contributed to AAT’s framing of the solutions.

In the diagnostic framing members of AAT used an “impact of mine closures” frame in relation to the problem of local socio-economic deprivation. This frame seemed to resonate with local residents who had lived in the local area since before the closure of the local coal mines, and for whom the frame had

“centrality” (importance) (Snow and Benford 1988). The reason that the frame had centrality for these residents was because the “impact of mine closures” affected their everyday experiences, so the frame had “experiential commensurability” (Snow and Benford 1988). It also had “narrative fidelity” as it supported residents’ stories about the communities in which they lived, and their beliefs about who was to blame for the socio-economic problems of the communities (Snow and Benford 1988). Staff at AAT were successful at “frame bridging” – making these residents aware that the organisation shared their concerns and that they could participate in AAT to voice their concerns and act upon them (Snow *et al.* 1986). It should be noted that, in arguing that members of AAT actively framed the problem of socio-economic deprivation, I am not saying that this problem did not exist; many local residents were experiencing the reality of unemployment and poverty. Rather, members of AAT emphasised the problem and placed blame with actors in a way that was consistent with the beliefs of local residents.

A “threat of climate change” frame was used in the second diagnostic framing. Despite the wind farm being AAT’s flagship project, the “threat of climate change” frame was not as prominent as the impact of mine closures frame. Members of AAT seemed to perceive the problem of climate change to be less central to the lives of local residents. They may have formed this opinion because the communities were experiencing long-term poverty, whereas the effects of climate change may not have been so evident. They may also have formed this opinion because staff themselves were more concerned about socio-economic problems than climate change, and so assumed other local residents would feel the same. A member of staff explained, for example:

“You know environmental sustainability is important but I think environmental sustainability won’t happen without social sustainability... So for me I think the driver is poverty reduction and social equality” (Emily Hinshelwood).

The frames used diagnostically influenced the frames used prognostically, and also affected the strategies and resources used by members of AAT. A “community development” frame was used to articulate the solution to the impact of mine closures. This was used to convey bottom-up development

coming from the communities themselves, and in opposition to “outsider” development, which was seen to have caused socio-economic problems for the communities. The “community development” frame was applied to the wind farm project with the wind farm seen as a resource that could be used strategically to generate an income for AAT. Commercial wind farms are usually framed as having environmental and economic benefits but AAT aimed to also provide social benefits, and made certain that this was conveyed to local residents by using the “community development” frame. Members seemed to think that the community development frame would resonate well with local residents and help to gain acceptance for the wind farm. Indeed, two participants who lived in the local communities served by AAT explained that they were motivated to volunteer with AAT because of the community development frame.

The strategies and resources used by AAT were an outcome of the “community development” frame and also contributed to the construction of this frame. Valuing the human resources of local people and the strategy of employing them, for example, can be seen as an outcome of the community development frame. Simultaneously, mobilising these resources and putting the strategy into action helped to construct the frame and convey the message that community development was an appropriate solution.

One member of AAT hinted that the “community development” frame used by AAT was actually used to get approval for a project that was essentially a solution to climate change:

“[T]he community aspect is a bonus really; it’s much easier to justify [the wind farm] you know, to the local residents who are living with this sort of change to their landscape if there’s...local benefit as well as global benefit” (Leslie).

This quote seemed to suggest that the potential for community development that could come with the wind farm would be a convenient extra, rather than being the main purpose of the wind farm. This view however, was only expressed by one participant.

With regards to the problem of climate change, members of AAT articulated the solution only in terms of energy use, which was a locally appropriate topic. Resources and strategies were used that enabled and encouraged people to lower their energy consumption. The use of these resources and strategies contributed to the framing of “clean energy” and “energy efficiency” as appropriate solutions to climate change; therefore, framing, strategies and resources had a recursive relationship. Members of AAT may have avoided advocating other solutions to climate change to avoid putting people off the idea of the wind farm. As a member of staff explained:

“[W]e’ve had to be really careful about the way we talk about climate change because...it can really put people off... [I]t’s quite uncool really...doing things for the environment. It’s got real connotations, you know, sort of hippies...” (Emily Hinshelwood).

The two AAT volunteers that were motivated by wanting to help to provide solutions to climate change were from outside of the local communities and already worked on environmental issues.

There were some problems within AAT related to how members framed activities as being related to “community development” first, and “energy” solutions related to the “threat of climate change” second. Members of AAT claimed that “All profits from the scheme will go into local regeneration” (Awel Aman Tawe 2014). This was how the idea of the wind farm was presented to local residents during the community consultation. One of the interviewees however, explained that there had been tension within AAT to how the profits should be spent:

“Dan would love to see the money going to further green projects but there’s so much that needs doing in the community as well you know” (A trustee).

According to the participant, some members of AAT thought that the income from the wind farm should firstly go towards projects to alleviate socio-economic deprivation in the local communities, while the Project Manager would have liked to use the money to run projects that address climate change. The

participant went on to explain that there had also been different views within AAT as to who should decide how the money would be spent:

“[W]hen it [the wind farm] gets going how do we...use the money?... [There's] certainly different views within the group. The group wanted to control it and my own feeling was the group should only manage it and the community should decide, you know, on the projects that would go ahead, not the group. It is a community project at the end of the day; the community's got to decide what the money's used for” (A trustee).

The participant believed that, in line with the prominent “community development” frame that members of AAT had used, the appropriate strategy would be to allow members of the community to decide how the money should be spent rather than members of AAT. It could be problematic for AAT if local residents are denied the opportunity to say how the money is spent, and if the money is seen to be spent on climate change projects. To be credible, there should not be “perceived contradictions among framings and tactical actions” (Benford and Snow 2000, p.620). Residents voted in favour of the wind farm project going ahead based on community development frame; if members of AAT are not consistent with this frame the credibility of AAT may be affected and it may generate opposition to the wind farm. If members of AAT make the decision to use the profits from the wind farm to invest in more “energy” projects they should predominantly use the “community development” frame to legitimise these; for example, they could invest in more energy-efficiency projects and emphasise that this could be a solution to fuel poverty as well as climate change.

Overall, it seemed motivational framing was given little attention by members of AAT both on the website and Facebook page. In general, the Facebook page was rarely used by members of AAT. On the website, diagnostic and prognostic framings were more evident than motivational framing. The website mostly provided factual information; for example, it had information about different types of renewable energy. There may have been several reasons why members of AAT made limited use of motivational framing. One reason may have been that for much of the work, a call to arms was not necessary as

volunteers were only needed sporadically. Another reason may be that AAT was a standalone GSA that was not trying to motivate other GSAs to become part of a movement or network (as with the Transition Network for example). AAT did need to motivate people to support their projects but members seemed to mostly put their efforts into the diagnostic framings and prognostic framings, and delivering the proposed solutions (ensuring that their strategies and resource use were consistent with the prognostic framings).

To conclude, this discussion has demonstrated that there was a recursive relationship between the frames used by AAT and the resources and strategies mobilised in delivering the advocated solutions. The framing of the problems as “impact if mine closures” and “threat of climate change” and framing of solutions as “community development,” “clean energy,” and “energy efficiency,” influenced the resources and strategies that were used. At the same time using these strategies and resources aided the construction of these frames and reinforced them. It is not possible to disentangle AAT’s framing of sustainability issues from the strategies and resources used; hence framing, strategies and resources have a recursive relationship. Selecting particular frames, strategies, and resources that reinforced one another (that could all be understood as promoting “community development” for example) led to specific types of sustainability projects and activities being delivered in the community.

While Benford and Snow (2000) have noted that the framing of a problem by social movement actors affects the strategies used, and Smithey (2009) has argued that strategies contribute to framing, it has not been argued that framing and strategies have a recursive relationship. As discussed in the literature review (section 2.5), the relationship between resources and framing has been largely overlooked. The finding then, that there was a recursive relationship between the frames, strategies, and resources used by AAT contributes to our knowledge of collective action and the internal workings of GSAs delivering their projects in the community. It also adds to our understanding of how GSAs mobilise communities and take action on sustainability issues.

Section 4.2 of this first results chapter has begun to demonstrate how GSAs frame sustainability issues to mobilise members of the community to participate in the association and/or take action sustainability (addressing Research

Question 1). The other two results chapters demonstrate that different GSAs use different frames to mobilise people. This section has also addressed Research Question 2 about the effect that framing has on the delivery of sustainability by demonstrating that framing affects the strategies and resources used by the GSA. The discussion section of this chapter (section 4.3) has taken this argument further by explaining that framing, strategies and resources have a recursive relationship.

Finally, this chapter has begun to address Research Question 3 about why different GSAs use different framings. Members of AAT used frames that they believed would motivate members of the community, and which were based on how they thought sustainability issues ought to be addressed. As we will see in the following two results chapters, different GSAs have different understandings of their community and of how sustainability problems should be solved and therefore, use different frames.

Chapter 5 Congleton Sustainability Group (CSG)

In this chapter I report on the case study of a GSA called Congleton Sustainability Group (CSG). The structure follows the same format of the previous chapter; first, I provide background information on CSG; second, I present my findings on how members of CSG framed sustainability issues (addressing Research Question 1) and the effect this framing had on the strategies and resources used (addressing Research Question 2); finally, I discuss the implications of the frames used and the relationship between framing, strategies, and resources. This chapter further addresses the issue of why different GSAs frame sustainability issues differently (Research Question 3); which is discussed in section 5.3.

5.1. About Congleton Sustainability Group

In this section I provide background information on CSG including information on the community in which it was based, the origins of the association and its structure, projects that members had run, and the successes and challenges they had faced. Where participants were identifiable from their quotes I have used their real names; these were: Peter Aston (Chairman), Mike Taylor (Carbon Reduction Group Co-ordinator) and Patti Pinto (Eco Schools Advisor). The other participants have been given pseudonyms.

5.1.1 Geographic area

CSG was based in Congleton, a market town in East Cheshire, England. Congleton is approximately twenty-six miles south of Manchester city centre, close to the Peak District National Park. According to Congleton Town Council (2011), Congleton Town covers an area of 8.7 square miles and has a population of almost 28,000 people. Congleton has a history of manufacturing, with approximately 9,000 people (32.14%) still working in that sector in 2011 (ibid).

Congleton has a mixture of residential areas including affluent suburbs and a large social housing estate close to the town centre. Substantial differences had been found in the local population in terms of education levels. While 23% of

residents aged 16 to 74 were educated to degree level there was still a large number of the population with low literacy and numeracy attainment (Congleton Town Council 2011). Congleton had high rates of economic activity with 59% of the population being of working age and 79% of those being economically active (ibid). A report by Congleton Town Council explained the Experian 2008 Mosaic Consumer Classification showed that Congleton had almost twice the national average of people in the “Symbols of Success” category, which included people with rewarding careers who live in sought after locations and who could afford luxuries and premium quality products (ibid). There were differences however, in unemployment levels within Congleton. Congleton Town Council reported that Congleton Town had the highest level of unemployment for 13 years at 3.3% with the North Ward having unemployment levels of 4.1% (ibid).

A Corporate Business Plan published by Congleton Town Council (2011) explained that Congleton had an abundance of “civic pride”. Many of the participants talked about there being community spirit in Congleton and said that volunteering was the norm.

“It’s a very community-minded town; extremely community-minded. It very much embraces the whole concept of volunteering...[W]e try, as a town through a whole host of voluntary organisations, to do things to try to improve things...” (Chris).

“It’s a strange town...because there’s an awful lot of can do attitude here” (Stuart).

I asked the participants why Congleton had an abundance of community spirit but this question could not be answered simply. Several different suggestions were given. One participant suggested that volunteering was popular in Congleton because the small size of Congleton meant that it was limited in leisure activities.

“You see for example, if you’re close to Manchester you’re more likely to consume culture, to you know, become part of the

project of the big city but we're a little bit further from Manchester, and there's nothing there..." (Rachel).

Only one person suggested this as a reason, however. Another participant thought that it was the "mix" of people in Congleton and the history of people working together that led to there being a lot of voluntary organisations.

"I think that Congleton was a manufacturing town...one of [the companies] was ICL, computers and IT and electrical...and the other one was Barclay's Bank at Knutsford...and then the other influence, significant influence has been ICI...pharmaceuticals and they got a research facility at Alderley Park and they had a manufacturing plant...Now that will draw in people who have had a pretty reasonable education but mixing with the local people who were manufacturing folk, it's created...a real mix" (Mike Taylor).

Others were not able to give an explanation as to why there was a sense of community spirit and a norm of volunteering in Congleton.

"People do just seem to volunteer [in Congleton]" (George).

"Congleton has got a fantastic community spirit. Why? I don't know" (Edward).

It seemed that establishing CSG as a voluntary organisation was a "normal" action as many residents already volunteered.

5.1.2 Origins of CSG

CSG formed in 2009 as a sub-group of Congleton Partnership (which was made up of council representatives, fire services, police services, community groups and businesses). Congleton Partnership was "a non political community based organisation drawing on the skills and expertise of residents and businesses" (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014b). It had an executive of twenty-two members who are predominantly residents who volunteered their time, and a co-ordinator. The Partnership formed in 2008 to apply for funding from the Countryside Agency to support rural communities following the outbreak of foot and mouth disease. In order to apply for funding the Congleton Partnership had

to hold a series of focus groups on the topic of how the town could be improved. The Partnership developed to have several working groups including Congleton Sustainability Group, Marketing (Congleton Beartown Ltd), The Business Support Group (later The Congleton Means Business Legacy Group), Strategy and Finance, Youth Forum, and an Art Group. The Partnership's website is called My Bear Town (Bear Town is what local people call Congleton) and it hosted pages for CSG (see: mybeartown.co.uk).

Congleton Partnership put together a Town Strategy but Peter Aston, who was to become a founder and the Chairman of CSG, argued that the strategy was "a bit light environmentally" (Peter Aston). As a result Peter Aston and Margaret Williamson (the Chairwoman of the Partnership at the time) formed CSG, initially inviting people they knew and relevant organisations with environmental interests. Later other volunteers joined the organisation. According to Peter Aston, the aims of CSG were "to put together some environmentally sympathetic projects that would capture the imagination of as many people as possible in the town" and "to get the message across that our current way of life is unsustainable". CSG had achieved Transition Town status and was affiliated with Cheshire Low Carbon Communities and Cheshire and Warrington Sustainability Alliance.

5.1.3 CSG's structure

CSG members included local residents, church representatives, a country ranger, an Eco Schools co-ordinator, town councillors, the Chair of Congleton Partnership and representatives of local organisations including Congleton Cycling Group, Plus Dane housing association and two charitable trusts. All CSG members were volunteers except for one paid position for the association's Beartown's Food project. CSG had a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman and a Treasurer. The purpose of the Chairman was to ensure that CSG was "heading in the right direction" (Stuart).

"[The Chairman is] the key focal point...Where would we be if he wasn't there? I don't think the group would move forward..."
(Mike Taylor).

CSG was organised into several sub groups, each with its own specific projects. These groups included a Carbon Reduction Group, an Eco Schools Group, a Commenting Group (commenting on planning applications), a Hydro Group (attempting to secure funding for a hydro power project on the River Dane), an Apple Juice Group, a Food4Free group (planting fruit and vegetables around the town so people could help themselves to food) and a Food Group to support the association's 'Beartown's Food' website, which sold local produce. Each of the sub groups had a co-ordinator to oversee their group's projects and organise the other volunteers. The co-ordinators were usually people with relevant skills and/or knowledge. The co-ordinator of the Hydro Group, for example, was an engineer. Some of the other co-ordinators had more generic skills that they were able to bring to the role, such as the co-ordinator of the Carbon Reduction Group:

"All these techniques we used to use in performance improvement. You can do the same thing, you know, in carbon reduction..." (Mike Taylor).

The co-ordinator of the Carbon Reduction Group thought that some of the skills that he had acquired as a supervisor in his professional life could be useful for leading the group so he volunteered for the role.

5.1.4 CSG's projects

5.1.4.1 Congleton Apple Juice

CSG's first large-scale project was Congleton Apple Juice. Local residents donated apples to CSG, which then turned them into apple juice to sell in order to generate an income for further projects. Residents that donated a bag of apples received a bottle of Congleton Apple Juice in return. The Chairman explained how the project came about:

"At the end of [a seed swap] we had two large boxes of very unremarkable apples that people had left...so we said we ought to juice the apples somehow...We campaigned in what was left of harvest and we eventually got 250 kilos which we took to Eddisbury Fruit Farm and they made 106 bottles of apple juice for us and we sold all of that at the Christmas Light's

Festival...and that started Congleton Apple Juice. The following year...we campaigned much harder, did leaflets and produced 1820 bottles...This year we've taken 7 tonnes of apples from residents and turned it into 4000 bottles of apple juice and the apple juice is sold all over town..." (Peter Aston).

Profits from the Congleton Apple Juice project had been used to plant mini orchards at some of the local schools and to fund a community orchard at the local park.

5.1.4.2 Beartown's Food

Following on from the success of the Congleton Apple Juice project, CSG started taking orders from residents of Congleton that wanted to buy local produce at Christmastime. Customers could get a wide selection of local produce (including Congleton Apple Juice) delivered to a location for them to collect, rather than having to go to each producer separately. Many local producers signed up to the scheme, as did many customers. This led to the establishment of CSG's Beartown's Food website (see: Congleton Sustainability Group 2014a). A volunteer involved with the Beartown's Food project explained: "its purpose is cutting down on food miles, which is a good message" (Anna). The Chairman hoped that CSG could eventually open a shop to sell local produce.

5.1.4.3 Top Tips and Weekly Watt Watch

The Carbon Reduction Group made flyers to display at the Congleton Apple Juice stall. The aim was to tell people "How to spend nothing but save money and the Planet!" (Congleton Sustainability Group 2009). The flyers provided thirteen "Top Tips" for actions that could be done in the home.

"We made a list...you know, turn your thermostats down a degree and you know, put your washing on the line rather than the washing machine and we made a whole list of the different headings; transport, food, waste and we sort of categorised them as how important they were to climate change and how easy it was for people to implement and what would be the effect of implementing them. Because some may be easy but

they have very little effect and other things would have a great effect but so difficult to implement..." (Stuart).

At the time of the interviews the Carbon Reduction Group were working on ideas for other forms of communication such as banners and toppers for the apple juice bottles with tips on how to save energy.

A member of the Carbon Reduction Group developed a sheet for monitoring energy usage with the aim being for individuals to try and lower their usage. This came to be branded "Weekly Watt Watch" and was endorsed by CSG. The Weekly Watt Watch sheets were given to members of CSG and administered to local residents at events in Congleton.

5.1.4.4 Sustainable Living in Congleton

In 2013 CSG started a new project called "Sustainable Living in Congleton (SLIC)". SLIC was a course that participants attend over several weeks or months with workbooks to compliment it. The project was an outcome of a Carbon Reduction report compiled by CSG in 2011, which suggested actions that could be carried out in Congleton to reduce CO₂ emissions. The SLIC project was led by the Carbon Reduction Group.

"The purpose of the course is to encourage people to live more sustainably in whatever ways they decide. Groups run the course themselves facilitated by Sustainability Group members, guided by a "Workbook" which suggests ways to economise on energy, water, food, travel, waste and lifestyle" (Congleton Sustainability Group 2013a).

"The prime reason for SLIC is to reduce CO₂ emissions which likely cause climate change and also hopefully help people save some money, in the scheme of things" (Taylor 2013).

CSG initially used the Transition Streets material to teach residents how to live more sustainably, but later decided to re-write the material to be Congleton-specific. Rather than use the "Transition Towns" name, the Carbon Reduction Group decided to use "Sustainable Living in Congleton" to "make the subject more relevant to Congleton" (Taylor 2013). Participants received a workbook with information about issues such as utility suppliers and waste removal, as

well as information about CSG projects such as Congleton Apple Juice and Congleton Food4Free. CSG provided participants with energy monitors and books to compliment the course.

The Carbon Reduction Group ran two pilot studies; the first was with residents of Congleton. Nine people signed up and attended seven two-hour sessions over the course of six months. The meetings were held in residents' own homes. The Carbon Reduction Group decided that six months was too long for the course as some participants stopped attending the sessions. The second pilot study was done with members of The University of the Third Age (U3A). This pilot study ran for seven weeks with six people attending one-and-a-half-hour sessions; the co-coordinator of the Carbon Reduction Group thought that this course was "well received" (Taylor 2013).

5.1.4.5 Congleton Food4Free

The "Blueberry Project" commenced in the summer of 2012. Initially volunteers planted blueberry bushes around the town and local people could help themselves to the fruit. Congleton was known locally as Beartown and the group tried to tie the blueberry project to this because "bears love berries" (Congleton's Future? 2013).

The project quickly expanded to include other edible and pollinating plants, and was re-branded as "Congleton Food4Free".

"Congleton Food4Free's aim is to encourage, inspire and educate people to grow more of their own food either communally (for sharing) or on their own ground (for themselves). Growing food benefits physical and mental health, encourages all age groups to take pride in and help care for public spaces, brings people together and develops community bonds" (Congleton's Future? 2013).

Other organisations in the town became involved and planted edible plants in their grounds. In November 2012 for example, Congleton Inclosure Trust awarded the group a grant of £250 to plant edible and pollinator plants at the front of Congleton Leisure Centre. As of May 2013 the group decided to have a

set day each month for volunteers to help with the project (the first Sunday of the month).

5.1.4.6 Eco Schools

An Eco Schools Co-ordinator was a member of CSG, and she worked with local schools to help them become more sustainable. She explained that “Eco Schools is an international programme to help schools become more sustainable” (Patti Pinto). The Eco Schools Officer and other members of CSG worked with school children to deliver projects for CSG. School children, for example, helped to plant mini orchards in their school’s grounds and planted nineteen fruit trees for a community orchard at Astbury Mere Country Park.

“So right at the beginning when I started working with all of the Eco Schools I wanted to plant orchards in the schools and so I managed to get some funding...and I went into all the schools and planted four apple trees in each of the school grounds to start their orchards off. The following year I did the same again; managed to get funding via Congleton Sustainability Group and planted another four in each of the schools... So now we’ve planted so many trees in the schools now we wanted to do a community orchard as the next step. Now the ranger at Astbury Mere was interested in doing that with us; he sits on the Sustainability Group as well... A group of volunteers including myself went along and we dug the holes and put some compost in...Seven schools sent children down who were on their eco councils or whatever and helped me plant the trees there...”
(Patti Pinto).

5.1.5 Successes and challenges

Here, I discuss the success achieved by CSG and the challenges that the association faced at the time of research. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate what has worked well for the association in delivering the sustainability aims and to also show that there can be difficulties.

5.1.5.1 Congleton Apple Juice

The Congleton Apple Juice project had been important for generating publicity for the association and engaging with local residents about the topic of sustainability.

“Without [the apple] juice I don’t think anybody would know anything about the Sustainability Group” (Rachel).

“We did try...right at the beginning to invite people to learn about sustainability and, like, for one person from the public to come. It was hopeless. But now...making the apple juice and selling it...people go “oh what’s that? It’s the Sustainability Group”. It’s slowly, slowly that we have to get more people involved” (Patti Pinto).

The Congleton Apple Juice project won several awards including being a joint winner of the Environment & Culture award from Action for Market Towns and an award for Highly Transferable Project, also from Action for Market Towns

5.1.5.2 Carbon Reduction Group

Some members of the Carbon Reduction Group felt that the group were disappointed by the progress that they perceived to have been made by the Group. They were frustrated that the group seemed to get involved in high-level debates about climate change rather than producing projects that could contribute to sustainability.

“Well I think it makes it a bit of a talking shop really in some ways...The Carbon Reduction Group is a meeting, it’s not really achieved anything in itself...To me it hasn’t achieved as much as I’d kind of hoped” (Keith).

“The Carbon Reduction Group...probably hasn’t progressed as quickly as I would have liked to have seen it done...[S]ometimes you can talk about things too much rather than actually getting on and doing something...” (Chris).

Some members of the Carbon Reduction Group were also disappointed that CSG had not run more projects.

“Well considering it’s [CSG’s] been going...3 to 4 years I think it’s very disappointing” (William).

“I mean, it’s a bit frustrating in a way; in 18 months the apple juice...is the only real tangible thing really. To me it [CSG] hasn’t achieved as much as I’d kind of hoped” (Keith).

Several participants said that they were disappointed that since CSG began the only project to have taken off was the apple juice project. Since the interviews however, the association started another large-scale project called Food4Free and the Carbon Reduction Group had begun to offer the SLIC course.

5.1.5.3 Lack of active volunteers

Several participants said that having a lack of active volunteers in CSG was a challenge for the Group.

“The more events and the more things that you create...the more pure work there is to do, and you can’t press gang volunteers...They either will do the work or they won’t... Meaningfully attracting volunteers is something that we’ve not been as successful as we’d like to be... People come, work hard with us for six months and then move onto other things” (Peter Aston).

“[The Carbon Reduction Group] is limited by the number of people involved. There’s only eight of us and there’s a limit to what eight people can do. And this is one of my points, unless we do grow and get other people in our resources are going to be very limited” (Keith).

One member explained that while representatives from organisations in Congleton were members of CSG and attended the monthly meetings, they were not active volunteers with CSG.

“People who go to the meetings are not people who do work. There are a lot of people who go there for very good reasons but they go because they’re involved with other groups that have an interest...in this field but they don’t actually get

involved very much in the work of the group. For example, there are people that are involved in cycling groups and there are people that are involved in organisations that have funds but...they're not activists and they're not doing work for the group" (William).

5.1.5.4 Beartown's Food

The Beartown's Food project had not had much success as the website had not received many orders.

"We did create a web based local food distribution system called Beartown's Food but despite a lot of work it didn't catch on at all. Face to face people seemed very interested but not enough people ordered stuff to make it work" (Aston 2013).

Plans to open a Beartown's Food shop had been halted. CSG had employed a shop manager and found a volunteer to draw up business process maps for the shop, but the Chairman felt that the shop space that CSG had been offered on a social housing estate was not suitable. One of the participants explained that the Chairman thought that the shop was not visible enough and the products would be too expensive for residents of the social housing estate. The Chairman wanted to bring in £100,000 to start a shop somewhere else in Congleton.

5.1.5.5 Dane Valley Renewable Energy Project

One of CSG's first ideas for a project was to have a hydropower project. The plan was to have a turbine with a digital display on the River Dane. A bid was submitted to the Rural Carbon Challenge Fund for European funding.

"[The group is] called the Dane Valley Renewable Energy Project... and the first project that we focused on was this hydro plant to be on the River Dane right near the mill...[I]t's highly visible so if you're going to develop a project that is gonna spawn other projects it seemed a great place because everybody would see it" (George).

CSG was awarded £225,000 for the project and had plans for spending the income that would be received from selling the energy generated by the hydropower plant.

“The surplus money that was generated from it was going to be used in two ways; fifty percent was going to go into home insulation grants, which again gives you additional CO² savings, and then fifty percent of it was to...fund local community projects” (George).

The group however, was forced to return the money because their plans to generate money from a feed-in tariff went against state aid rules. The Office for Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM) ruled that renewable energy projects that received European Union funding of over £160,000 would not be eligible for feed-in tariffs. The Rural Development Fund refused to reduce its grant from £225,000 to £160,000 so CSG had to hand back the grant because it needed to generate a feed-in tariff to make the project viable in the long-term.

5.2 Understanding the frames used by CSG

Here, I analyse the activities and communications of CSG for evidence of framing strategies. I first present evidence of diagnostic framing by members of CSG, and discuss the frames used. I go on to present the prognostic framings, and the strategies and resources used by members of CSG that were consistent with the prognostic framing. I then present evidence of motivational framing by members of CSG. Finally, I discuss the frames used by members of CSG in relation to the existing literature on collective action frames and also the relationship between the frames, strategies and resources used.

5.2.1 Diagnostic framing by CSG

In this section I report my findings on diagnostic framing by members of CSG. I found that members used two frames that I have called “impact of climate change on Congleton” and “radical hippy”. The former frame related to the sustainability problem that CSG hoped to address, while the latter frame problematised radical approaches to delivering sustainability solutions.

5.2.1.1 “Impact of climate change on Congleton” frame

In the diagnostic framing, members of CSG used a frame that I refer to as “impact of climate change on Congleton”. Members then, were primarily concerned with the problem of climate change. CSG’s homepage on the Congleton Partnership website explained:

“It [CSG] has been formed by people interested in finding lots of...community opportunities to address the *impact of Climate Change on Congleton*” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014b; emphasis added).

As evident in the quote above, members framed climate change as a problem concerning the local community (rather than “others”).

“We love our town and we want to do what we can to make sure it stays this wonderful way!” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014a).

The quote above, taken from the “sustainability” page on the Beartown’s Food website, suggested that climate change might affect how “wonderful” the town was. Neither of the webpages explained what specific impact climate change would have on the community. This may have been because members did not want to dwell on the “doom and gloom” of climate change (for a discussion of this see section 5.2.1.2). Members of CSG however, did attribute the problem to carbon emissions. They argued that the carbon footprint of the town was contributing to the problem.

“Our community is encouraged to seek out methods for reducing our carbon footprint as well as reducing our reliance on long supply chains that are totally dependent on fossil fuels” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2011, p.1).

The problem of the “long supply chains” of food was of particular concern to CSG; this was evident in the solutions advocated and CSG’s projects such as Beartown’s Food and Congleton Apple Juice, which encouraged local residents to consume locally produced foods. The Food module in the SLIC workbook also explained: “about a fifth of our carbon footprint in the UK is due to food”

(Congleton Sustainability Group 2013f, p.2), although it also placed the blame more with production processes than supply chains.

While CSG was a member of the Transition Network, which used a “peak oil and climate change” frame, members of CSG did not frame peak oil as a problem for their target audience (For a discussion of framing strategies by the Transition Network see Coke 2013). The workbook used for the SLIC course explained that while other sustainability problems such as peak oil existed “climate change is by far the most important” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2013b, p.5).

“CSG runs the SLIC course to help Congleton people to respond primarily to climate change. But there are other sustainability issues. Oil is an example of a resource which is finite so one day it will run out. This is the event known as Peak Oil, the anticipation of which brought the Transition movement into being. Peak Oil may not come as soon as was once thought but clearly it will come eventually. The same applies to many other resources that we continue to use at an increasing rate without regard for the consequences. The atmosphere, oceans and the land have been used as dumping places, but they too are finite resources. There are also issues such as loss of biodiversity, air and water quality and unsustainable land use.

Of these **climate change is by far the most important**, so we will deal with it first. In fact most, but not all, of the course will be about our response to climate change” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2013b, p.5; bold in original).

Members may have chosen not to focus on peak oil because they thought that the problem was not as urgent as climate change.

The climate change frame was used as founding members and other core members were concerned about the problem. In the interviews some members explained that they were motivated to volunteer with CSG because of wanting

to take action to prevent climate change. One member said he volunteered “To do something about climate change” (William). He went on to explain:

“I thought it was a way to engage with more people in Congleton about climate change and what we ought to be doing about it” (William).

Another participant explained that he was previously concerned about climate change:

“I’ve always had interest in what goes on in the world both politically and economically and geographically as well... I joined something called The University of the Third Age...another group started up under...[a member of CSG]. He did climate change, I thought that’s really interesting so I went along to that...and a few months later [he] emailed me and said look I don’t know if you’re interested but they’re thinking of setting up a Sustainability Group in Congleton... I get a lot out of it [CSG] because I think we’re going to shorten our time and all these plants and animals are going to spend on this planet...” (Mike Taylor).

One member explained that he was motivated to join the Carbon Reduction Group because of the climate change frame:

“[C]limate change is probably my main interest so carbon reduction is very relevant to me” (Keith).

The participant perceived carbon reduction to be important for someone that was concerned about climate change.

5.2.1.2 “Radical hippy” frame

There was a second frame used in the diagnostic framing that I have called “radical hippy”. On CSG’s homepage, the way in which sustainability has been framed as a topic of interest for people with an alternative identity and associated with hippies had been problematised. While the term “hippies” was not used, words that were consistent with a hippy frame and radical approaches

to sustainability - “sandals, whole nuts and mucky mulches” – were used (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014b).

“A group of us has grown tired of the negative portrayal of 'Sustainability' - sandals, whole nuts and mucky mulches in the garden -that we have banded together to create the **Congleton Sustainability Group**, part of Congleton Partnership” (ibid; bold in original).

Members perceived that the “radical hippy” frame gave a “negative portrayal” of sustainability. Hippy approaches were seen to be problematic as they discouraged people from engaging with sustainability issues by being too radical. Members also blamed radicals for discouraging people to engage with sustainability issues by focussing on the negative impacts of unsustainable development. The CSG homepage emphasised:

“Sustainability isn't anything to do with doom or gloom - it's about living!” (ibid).

It is likely that members of CSG problematised “radical hippy” approaches because founding members were not activists or people with “radical” identities, but retired professionals brought together in a professional partnership (Congleton Partnership). CSG was established to offer less-radical solutions to climate change than those advocated by hippies.

5.2.2 Prognostic framing

I found that in the prognostic framing of sustainability solutions members of CSG used three frames; these frames were “community opportunities,” “professionalism,” and “sensible solutions”. Here, I discuss each of these frames in turn.

5.2.2.1 “Community opportunities” frame

As members of CSG framed the problem as climate change having an impact on Congleton, they advocated that solutions should come from within the community of Congleton. I have called this the “community opportunities” frame.

“[CSG] has been formed by people interested in finding...*community opportunities* to address the impact of

Climate Change on Congleton” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014b; emphasis added).

Members of CSG conveyed that all members of the community could be part of the solution to climate change. Indeed, CSG was made up of a wide range of stakeholders from within the community (see section 5.1.3). CSG’s projects utilised the community spirit that was perceived in Congleton (as discussed in section 5.1.1). Members of CSG ran some projects that engaged members of the community and brought them together (rather than say, just energy projects that would require technical skills or projects such as Weekly Watt Watch, which could be considered as an individualistic solution).

The flagship Congleton Apple Juice project served as an example of how the community could be part of the solution. Members recognised that the abundance of apples in the community could be a *resource* and local residents could get involved through the *strategy* of donating their unwanted apples to the project. The project would not have been a success without the engagement of members of the community. This type of project required greater involvement from local residents than some other environmental projects might; for example, if CSG was to subsidise home insulations which required little input from residents other than to sign up to the scheme. There was also the *strategy* of branding the product as “*Congleton Apple Juice*” emphasising that the juice was a product of the community. Members of CSG recognised that the perceived community spirit in Congleton could be mobilised to develop community opportunities to address sustainability problems. The Congleton Apple Juice project also reinforced this community spirit.

“[CSG has] had projects that have captured the imagination...of the town. The apple juice [project] is definitely one...it’s a good vehicle to sort of get involved with people who probably aren’t as interested in the subject matter [climate change]” (Chris).

By emphasising that profits from the project would go towards other community projects, members of CSG reinforced the framing that community opportunities were important solutions.

While not all residents who donated apples or bought the apple juice may have been aware that the project was intended to be a solution to climate change, members of CSG tried to engage them in conversations about climate change.

“We use the apple juice as a way of having conversations with people...and then you can get into more conversations about “Well do you do anything in your home? Have you thought about more sustainable travel?”” (Peter Aston).

“[CSG volunteers] appear at various events selling apple juice and they take the opportunity then to...push climate change. So we’re preparing leaflets and posters...” (William).

Other projects that could be considered “community opportunities” included the community orchard at Astbury Mere (a local park), which all members of the community were allowed to access, and the mini orchards planted at the schools in Congleton as part of the Eco Schools project.

“One of the things about Eco Schools is that you’re going to take the eco message into your own community by the children going home and telling their parents...” (Patti Pinto).

The *strategy* of working with school children was important as children learnt about sustainability issues, but also because there was a possibility that their parents would learn from them. It was hoped that this strategy would lead to messages about sustainability being spread through the community. In this sense, the school children were *resources* that carried messages for CSG.

The SLIC course was also intended to bring members of the community together to support each other in “sustainable living”. The title of the course was changed from Transition Streets (as the course was based on the Transition Streets course run by Transition Town Totnes) to Sustainable Living in Congleton to emphasise that it offered solutions relevant to the community.

5.2.2.2 “Professionalism” frame

As radical approaches to sustainability had been framed as giving a “negative portrayal,” members of CSG advocated that the community should take a different approach to delivering solutions and framed the Group as being

different. Following a list of CSG's proposed projects (solutions) posted on the homepage it exclaimed "There - no sandals in sight!" (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014b), reiterating that members of CSG were not hippies. Although on the website it was not made clear how CSG offered a different approach to hippies, I found a "professionalism" frame from my observations and analysis of the interview transcripts. It was not surprising that this frame existed as CSG was largely composed of professionals and retired professionals. The Chairman was described as having "business acumen" by another member (Keith).

An example of the professionalism frame in CSG was that the group had a Chairman and the monthly members' meetings took place in a boardroom at Dane Housing (rather than in a more informal setting). The Chairman was seen to be a key *resource* of CSG. Indeed, the chairman was seen as the "driving force" (Keith) and the leader of CSG (rather than just being there to chair the meetings). One of the participants believed that "If it wasn't for Peter chairing the overall group, nothing would happen" (Anna).

Another example of the professionalism frame was found when interviewing a member about how she came to volunteer for CSG. Although the member was a volunteer, the Chairman wanted to ensure that her professional skills were utilised.

"Peter...asked what I did [for work]...So Peter was clever in the way an employer would be, he assessed what skills I had and he decided how he was going to allocate his jobs..." (Anna).

As a result, the Chairman decided that the member's skills would be useful for professionalising the Beartown's Food project and asked her to make plans for how the shop would operate.

"What it was doing was [Peter Aston] needed procedures and process maps doing so I worked as a business consultant before, understanding how organisations work...so I wrote all the flow charts...So on Thursday morning go to Town Hall, collect order forms, go to this office...So literally, what is it that that person has to do? ...Peter knew from my background, we'd

talked a bit, that I could do that and that was something that needed doing..." (Anna).

In order to get backing for the blueberry project (now Congleton Food4Free) volunteers were required to be consistent with the professionalism frame. Initially, there was a lack of enthusiasm for the project from other CSG members. The initiator of the project, along with some other volunteers, wrote a detailed plan. The plan included, for example, how the project could generate an income for CSG (using the berries to make juice and chutney to sell to customers alongside the apple juice). This plan was an important *resource* and led to the project gaining support from others in the group and funding from CSG. In allowing the blueberry project to go ahead following the plan, members reinforced the professionalism frame. Being consistent with the professionalism frame enabled the volunteers to get what they wanted, and so had implications for their agency.

In line with the professionalism frame, members of CSG attempted to professionalise the Congleton Apple Juice project by making it a commercial enterprise. The Carbon Reduction Plan stated that CSG wanted to: "Develop Congleton Apple Juice and other abundance schemes and attempt to get them on a *commercial* and carbon neutral footing" (Congleton Sustainability Group 2011, p.5; emphasis added). Generating an income through the *strategy* of selling the apple juice allowed members of CSG to plant some orchards so that they had more apples for the Congleton Apple Juice project and to fund new projects.

"Congleton Sustainability Group is a group of volunteers and the profits we make we put back into the community. So, the small profits from last year's apple juice helped plant 4 apple trees in each of the schools in Congleton. This year's profits will go towards planting more apple trees in schools, care homes and any spare ground where we can get permission from the owner. We are open to suggestions!" (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014b).

In line with the professionalism frame, the Chairman of CSG had been considering the entrepreneurial *strategy* of selling on the Congleton Apple Juice project for someone to take it on as a business. The purpose of this would be that CSG could use the money to start new projects. The professionalism frame meant that members saw growth (profit-making) as compatible with sustainability. This was relayed to local residents by explaining that profits could be used to implement more sustainability projects in the community.

5.2.2.3 “Sensible solutions” frame

Members of CSG focussed their efforts on promoting and providing solutions rather than educating local residents about the “doom and gloom” of climate change. They advocated “sensible” solutions to the “impact of climate change on Congleton”. Sensible solutions were juxtaposed with radical solutions and alternative lifestyles that were seen to be advocated by hippies. I have called this the “sensible solutions” frame.

“It [CSG] has been formed by people interested in finding lots of good, practical, *sensible* community opportunities to address the impact of Climate Change on Congleton” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014b; emphasis added).

Sensible solutions were framed as those which required only simple actions by consumers. Members of CSG did not advocate major lifestyle changes; rather, they attempted to “nudge” local residents into doing simple actions that were seen to reduce the community’s carbon footprint.

“In June 2009 Congleton Sustainability Group formed to *nudge* the Town towards a greener and more climate change friendly way of living” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014b; emphasis added).

“Experts tell us we are running out of fossil fuels, fish and minerals; the world is warming up due to our actions; so we are working to *nudge* the town towards a more sustainable future” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014a; emphasis added).

“[CSG aims] to *nudge* the town to make the transition to a low carbon, sustainable, ethical future” (Congleton Partnership 2013, p.2; emphasis added).

Nudge approaches that appeal to consumers through the message of “save money” do not require them to make ethical judgements (Dobson 2011). “Nudging” then, may be considered a *strategy* used by members of CSG.

Some of CSG’s projects attempted to nudge local residents into adopting the advocated simple, sensible solutions. Take, for example, the Carbon Reduction Group’s Top Tips flyer. The flyer, a *resource* produced by the group, offered tips for saving energy and money that required little effort.

Figure 5.1 CSG's Top Tips

Do:	Saving:
• Use washing line instead of tumble drier	£££
• Fill a kettle with water only for what you need	££
• Turn central heating down one degree C	££
• Switch equipment off when finished using it	££
• Use low temp <30 deg C washing clothes	££
• Cook only what you can eat	£
• Keep windows closed in winter	£
• Walk more/cycle more	£
• Share your car	£
• Use cold water tap only use the hot tap when you must	£
• Avoid leaving tap running when cleaning teeth	£
• Grow your own food	£
• Buy local – look out for our local food scheme	£

Source: Congleton Sustainability Group (2009)

The “£” signs next to each tip were a nudging *strategy* employed by the group to indicate how much money could be saved by implementing each of the “sensible” solutions, therefore attempting to motivate the reader to implement the tips. The flyer had the caption: “How to spend nothing but save money and the Planet!” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2009).

The Weekly Watt Watch project was also emphasised as being “easy” and “simple” for people to engage with.

“Weekly Watt Watch is an easy way to monitor use of gas and electricity over the year on a single sheet of paper – to help find opportunities to cut down, year on year. This helps reduce global carbon dioxide, a major contributor to climate change, while making massive energy cost savings” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014b).

“The elegance of this simple system on a single sheet of paper, allows the individual or group to decide how they can use less and thus save money” (ibid).

The Carbon Reduction Group linked Top Tips and Weekly Watt Watch to the 1010 campaign that was running at the time, which encouraged consumers to reduce their energy consumption by 10% by the year 2010 (See: 10:10 UK 2014). Arguably, reducing one’s energy consumption by just 10% should not require radical lifestyle changes but simple actions. In producing the Top Tips and Weekly Watt Watch resources, the group was reinforcing the framing that climate change could be solved with simple, “sensible” solutions. As a member of CSG explained:

“I think with the Watt Watch and the Top Tips it’s simple, easy, practical measures to save money...but to realise that resources are scarce and arguably are getting more expensive... [We’re not] saying you have to fundamentally change the way that you live but be more informed...when you make choices...” (Chris).

The SLIC course also advocated sensible solutions and aimed to help participants “make simple, practical changes” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2013b, p.4).

“Welcome to the Sustainable Living In Congleton (SLIC) course. We hope this course will help you to live a greener life, reduce your carbon dioxide emissions and quite probably save money too. This workbook has been developed to help you to make *simple, practical changes* to your home and to your habits. It brings together many energy saving actions” (ibid, p.4; emphasis added).

The introduction to the Energy module explained, for example:

“Each action is explained on the following pages. These actions are the *basic things* you can do in your home. They are *relatively easy and cheap* and the savings, in energy, emissions and money, are worthwhile and immediate. At the end of the section are several other actions that you may wish to consider, once you’ve done the basics. Some of these are more expensive but will still save money in the long run” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2013c, p.3; emphasis added).

In the Energy module, the recommended solutions were “basic” and “easy”; suggesting that it was sensible to implement them. The nudge strategy was used in the course as it offered money-saving incentives to motivate people to implement the suggested actions. In the quote above, for example, it was argued that “the savings...in money, are worthwhile and immediate”. The recommended solutions were also labelled with how much they cost to implement, the financial savings that would be made, the effort required, and the amount of CO₂ saved. It should be noted however, that the SLIC course was adapted from the Transition Streets course offered by Transition Towns Totnes which used the same labelling.

Consuming local food was also seen as a simple action that could be taken to improve sustainability. It was one of the Carbon Reduction Group’s Top Tips and was also recommended on CSG’s homepage.

“Consuming a high proportion of locally produced food is a *simple approach* we can all take. And there is a wealth of

delicious food produced locally” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014b; emphasis added).

CSG’s projects, such as Beartown’s Food, Astbury Mere Community Orchard, and Congleton Apple Juice, were created as solutions to enable consumers to take this simple action. The Beartown’s Food website explained that CSG had been “devising local food schemes to reduce food miles and connect the town with the wonderful food growing capability around us” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014a). The solution was to reduce food miles in order to reduce the carbon footprint of the community, which was seen to be problematic.

The sensible solutions advocated and made possible through CSG’s projects were seen to enable local residents to decrease their carbon footprint, which was problematised in the diagnostic framing.

5.2.3 Motivational framing

I have analysed CSG’s webpages and publications for evidence of motivational framing using language that conveyed severity, urgency, efficacy, or propriety as proposed by Benford (1993) or desirability as proposed by Coke (2013).

There was a lack of motivational language used in relation to the urgency or severity of climate change on CSG’s webpages or the Beartown’s Food website. On the Sustainability page of the Beartown’s Food website however, there was language used to convey the certainty of the cause of climate change and the responsibility of individuals to act.

“Experts tell us we are running out of fossil fuels, fish and minerals; the world is warming up due to our actions; so we are working to nudge the town towards a more sustainable future” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014a; emphasis added).

There was certainty conveyed in this statement as it used the words “experts tell us,” which implied that the argument was credible. It therefore conveyed that it was certain that climate change was caused “due to our actions”. “Due to our actions” suggested that it was “our” responsibility to take action; rather than the responsibility of government, for example.

There was some evidence of language being used to express that implementing the advocated solutions would be beneficial. To motivate people to consume locally produced food, for example, the Beartown's Food website explained:

"We LOVE local food; it's tastier, fresher and happier.

We love knowing where our food comes from and who produces it. And we love knowing that by going local we are taking steps towards a locally resilient and future-proof Congleton - supporting our local businesses and residents and reducing our carbon footprint" (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014a).

The words "tastier" and "fresher" were used to suggest that local food was better and therefore, desirable for the individual. The terms "locally resilient" and "future-proof" implied that consuming locally produced food would be desirable for the community.

The nudge strategy required use of language that expressed that the recommended solutions would be personally desirable. Language such as "save money" and "massive energy cost savings" was used on the webpage about Weekly Watt's Watch (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014b). Communications other than the website also used the language of "save money" (Top Tips, for example).

Motivational language was used on CSG's webpages and the Beartown's Food website to convey that volunteering with CSG was enjoyable. Under a photograph of CSG volunteers selling Congleton Apple Juice there was a caption that said:

"Oh, by the way this is how we look selling the juice, we do *enjoy ourselves* come and find us at Rode Hall. And, yes, this is an apple hat on my head!" (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014b; emphasis added).

The Beartown's Food website listed CSG's projects and advocated solutions, followed by the statement:

“And if all of that sounds dull and boring..... Well it isn't because we *play hard* too, we aim to make our campaigns *fun* for people - average westerners aren't the happiest people on the planet after all!” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014a; emphasis added).

Most examples of motivational framing were found in the workbooks used for the SLIC course, which used several types of motivational language. Motivational language was used to encourage participants to implement the recommended solutions to climate change. One of the ways CSG members tried to motivate SLIC participants was to express the urgency of climate change.

“Climate change is *happening now* and is *getting worse* all the time. It is man-made, driven by our lifestyles, mainly the burning of fossil fuels which have increased the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere from 280 parts per million to almost 400 in 2013, most of this in the last 50 years. None of this is in doubt; it is recognised by most governments, by the Royal Society in the UK and a host of equivalent scientific bodies in other countries, and almost unanimously by working climate scientists” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2013b, p.6; emphasis added).

“The solution is also well known, notwithstanding that the governments of the world have so far not committed to it. It is to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from the present global average of about 5 tonnes per person to something like 1-2 tonnes. Only when this is done will the climate begin to stabilise. *The sooner it is done the better*” (ibid, p.6; emphasis added).

In the first quote provided above, the certainty of climate change was expressed as well as its urgency; this was expressed with the phrase “none of this is in doubt”. In the second quote, the certainty of the solution was also expressed with the phrase “the solution is also well known”.

In addition to expressing the urgency of climate change, members of CSG also articulated the severity of the problem if action was not taken to mitigate it.

“The effects [of climate change] will, of course, include higher temperatures which may be welcome in some places but not in most. The *seriousness* of other effects will depend just how much warming we allow to happen. There is a consensus that if we can limit the rise to 2°C then we might just avoid the most dangerous changes, but we are currently on track to exceed that. More heat waves, drought, flooding and storminess are already occurring and can be expected to increase. Sea level is rising and will continue for centuries even after warming stops. Species will decline and become extinct as their habitats vanish. Food production will at first increase in some places and decline in others; the decline will be mainly in places where there are already shortages. As temperatures increase further food production will decline globally” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2013b, p.6; emphasis added).

“Over-centralisation of food systems through supermarket chains has meant the loss of local distinctiveness, traditional varieties, and a sense of local food culture. Moreover, money leaks out from local economies as it is siphoned off by distant food businesses” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2013f, pp.6-7).

In the first quote provided above, members of CSG articulated the “seriousness” of climate change. In the second quote, terms such as “loss” and “leaks” conveyed the seriousness of the problem of long supply chains. Articulating long supply chains as a “local” problem rather than “global” problem may have been an attempt to make the problem resonate with local residents.

In the SLIC workbooks, members of CSG expressed that “individual actions” to mitigate climate change would make a difference, and individuals could be “part of the solution” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2013b, p.7).

“The government’s job is to ensure an ample supply of low carbon electricity. This will be less difficult if the amount of energy required is minimised, which is why we are being encouraged to be more careful and efficient in our use of fossil fuels and electricity. This is where *individual actions become important*. The transition will all happen more easily if we can reduce our demand for energy for transport, heating and electricity. Reducing demand is as good as building new power stations, probably cheaper, and by far the greenest option” (ibid, p.7; emphasis added).

“This course is about helping us to reduce our demand for energy, and looking at our buying habits and our diet which also affect our greenhouse gas emissions; helping us to become *part of the solution* instead of part of the problem” (ibid, p.7; emphasis added).

The motivational language used in the quotes above conveyed the efficacy of taking action.

There was also language used to convey propriety in the SLIC workbooks. In the introduction, for example, it expressed that participants had a duty to contribute to ensuring the target of a two degrees rise in atmospheric temperature is not exceeded.

“It would be good to achieve the 2oC target and *we should be striving to do that*” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2013b, p.6; emphasis added).

The workbook on waste explained that there was a duty to achieve a zero waste economy to prevent climate change.

“Every year England produces about 228 million tonnes of rubbish – this causes environmental damage - for example, waste sent to landfill produces methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. *We need to move towards a ‘zero waste economy’*” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2013e, p.2; emphasis added).

Finally, language was used in the SLIC workbooks to convey desirability of changing one's behaviour in line with the recommended solutions. Sometimes this related to the desire to save money, but it also included other personal advantages, such as increased health.

“[T]he savings...in money, are *worthwhile and immediate*” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2013c, p.3; emphasis added).

“Eating local food from a nearby farm is more likely to be healthy, fresh and in season – when it *tastes best!* It can be *cheaper* to buy food locally. You get [to] *know shop keepers*. Also, box delivery schemes can *save you carrying heavy loads of shopping*” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2013f, p.8; emphasis added).

“Walking keeps your *weight down, your heart strong, reduces blood pressure and increases bone density*” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2013d, p.8; emphasis added).

I found one example of language used in a SLIC workbook to convey that implementing the recommended action was desirable for the local community.

“Local food is about food that is produced and distributed in ways that *contribute positively* to local communities. Locally organised food systems can help their communities to *thrive...*” (Congleton Sustainability Group 2013f, p.8; emphasis added).

I found evidence then, of language that conveyed severity, urgency, propriety, efficacy, desirability and also certainty in a range of CSG's communications.

5.3 Discussion

Having analysed the frames used by members of CSG, I now consider the implications of their use and discuss them with regards to the literature on collective action frames. I explain how the frames, strategies and resources used have a recursive relationship.

In the diagnostic framing, members of CSG used an “impact of climate change on Congleton” frame, rather than simply a “climate change” frame. The problem

of climate change was probably framed as having a local impact (rather than global) in an attempt to motivate local residents. The framing of climate change in this way was also consistent with Congleton Partnership's aims to address local problems. In using the "impact of climate change on Congleton" frame, members of CSG emphasised that climate change should have been a central concern to the community. This was appropriate as the town was perceived to have civic pride. The frame may have aligned with residents' values related to civic pride. Some members of CSG said that they were motivated to volunteer with CSG because they were concerned about the future of Congleton.

"I remember Congleton of old, you know, the fifties and the sixties... I remember what it used to be like and it's had a few hard knocks since then" (Stuart).

"I grew up in Congleton and I do care about the town... So I care about its future and its legacy, if you like, for future generations.... There's part of me that says look, we need community input in this, we need people who care about the town who can bring a much more objective view and a real interest in the town" (Edward).

Early members of CSG could be seen to have been successful in "frame bridging" with these residents who wanted to protect the town. The "impact of climate change on Congleton" frame helped to mobilise members of the community and created human resources for CSG.

It was unlikely that the "impact of climate change on Congleton" frame would have had credibility in terms of "experiential commensurability" (related to the everyday experiences of local residents) as at the time Congleton was not suffering from the impacts of climate change in any obvious way. Members of CSG made little attempt to explain what impact climate change would have on Congleton and the everyday experiences of local residents. This may have been because members of CSG did not want to dwell on the "doom and gloom" of climate change (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014b). None of the interviewees said that they were motivated to volunteer because of the impact that climate change was having on their personal experiences. Blaming the

problem on carbon emissions and consumers' carbon footprint was likely to have "empirical credibility" as this connection already existed in the public domain (as reported by the media, for example).

Despite using the "impact of climate change on Congleton" frame, one member of CSG who volunteered because of wanting to "do something about climate change", did not think CSG offered solutions to the problem.

"Well I don't think it's [CSG's] been concentrating on the right things. I mean, as far as sustainability is concerned unless you crack the climate change issue you might as well not bother with the rest" (William).

At the time of the interview, CSG's main project was Congleton Apple Juice, which the interviewee did not perceive to be addressing the problem of climate change. This may have meant that others did not make the link between the project and the diagnostic framing.

In using the "radical hippy" frame in the diagnostic framing, members of CSG assumed that others found this frame problematic and aimed to align themselves with others that shared this thinking. In doing so, CSG appeared to only invite people "like us" (not hippies) to engage with the Group. Indeed, there did not appear to be any members of CSG that could be considered to have a radical identity.

The prognostic framings were related to the diagnostic framings. The use of the "community opportunities" frame in the prognostic framing was appropriate given that the problem of climate change was framed as having an impact on the community. It was also appropriate because residents of Congleton perceived the town to have an abundance of community spirit, which could have potentially been mobilised. As one of the participants explained:

"[W]hile the subject matter [articulated by CSG] might not be the most appealing initially, the approach is a Congleton-type thing" (Chris).

Members of CSG used strategies and resources that were consistent with the "community opportunities" frame. Simultaneously, using these strategies and

resources helped to construct the frame and convey that members of the community should participate in CSG's projects and contribute to sustainability.

The "professionalism" frame was used to convey *how* CSG should deliver its solutions. The use of this frame created a collective identity for the Group and all members were expected to work within this frame. It distinguished members of CSG from hippies. The "professionalism" frame may have helped the credibility of the other frames used by CSG if local residents perceived the Group to be professionally-run. This credibility may have been increased because professionals that were well-known in the community were members of CSG. Some members of CSG were councillors, for example, and the Chairman was "sort of admired" in the community (Keith). However, there was a risk that this frame could have deterred non-professionals from volunteering with the Group. Members of CSG valued strategies and resources that were consistent with the professionalism frame. Indeed, I found that this frame existed by examining the strategies and resources used by members. There was therefore, a recursive relationship between framing, strategies, and resources.

The sensible solutions frame was used in the prognostic framing as a direct result of the radical hippy frame used in the diagnostic framing. Members of CSG were consistent in their use of this frame; they did not advocate any radical solutions. They also used strategies and resources that were consistent with this frame (such as the nudge strategy and Top Tips resource). This was an important finding as Benford and Snow (2000) have argued that consistency is crucial for the frame to resonate with the targets of mobilisation. The use of these particular strategies and resources helped to construct the prognostic framing and convey the message that "sensible solutions" to sustainability problems were needed.

Members' attempts at motivational framing via CSG's webpages and the Beartown's Food website did not include use of language to convey the severity or urgency of the "impact of climate change on Congleton". Again, this may have been because they did not want to focus on the "doom and gloom" of sustainability problems as it was thought that this deterred people from engaging with sustainability issues (Congleton Sustainability Group 2014b). Language that conveyed desirability, propriety, and certainty of the problem was

used. Certainty has not previously been recognised as a type of vocabulary of motive used in collective action frames.

A range of vocabularies of motive was used in attempts at motivational framing in the SLIC workbook, including language that conveyed urgency and severity. Members may have thought it was appropriate to express the urgency and severity of sustainability problems to SLIC participants as their participation in the course indicated that they were already motivated to take action.

To conclude, we can see that CSG's framing of sustainability problems influenced the solutions advocated and the strategies and resources used in delivering those solutions. Members used strategies and resources that were consistent with the prognostic framing, while at the same time, mobilising these strategies and resources contributed to the framing of appropriate sustainability solutions. The framing of sustainability issues and the strategies and resources used cannot be understood in isolation to each other; therefore, framing, strategies, and resources have a recursive relationship. This relationship led to certain types of projects and activities for sustainability that varied from the other case studies examined in this thesis which used different frames, strategies and resources (see Chapters 4 and 6).

Section 5.2. of this chapter has addressed Research Question 1 about how GSAs frame sustainability issues. We have seen that CSG framed the issues differently to AAT (see Chapter 4), and in the following chapter we will see that CSG also framed sustainability issues differently to another GSA called Green Action. In section 5.2. I have also addressed Research Question 2 about the effect that framing has on the delivery of sustainability. It is evident from the case of CSG that framing influences the resources and strategies used by the group. Finally, this chapter has begun to address Research Question 3 about why different GSAs frame sustainability issues differently. The combination of resources and strategies used by CSG contributed to the framing of sustainability problems and solutions. This finding elaborates current understanding of the internal workings of GSAs as they deliver sustainability projects at the local level.

Chapter 6 Green Action

This chapter reports on the case study of a GSA called Green Action. It is the final of the three results chapters. The structure of this chapter follows the same format of the previous chapters; first, background information is provided on Green Action; second, I present my findings on how members of Green Action framed sustainability issues (addressing research question 1) and how this framing affected the strategies and resources used (addressing research question 2); finally, I discuss the implications of the frames used and also the recursive relationship between framing, strategies, and resources. In discussing this recursive relationship, this chapter begins to address research question 3 as the use of particular resources and strategies goes some way to explaining why a GSA frames sustainability issues in a particular way.

I have published a co-authored paper based on data collected from this case study during my PhD research: Bradbury, S. and Middlemiss, L. (2014) The role of learning in sustainable communities of practice, *Local Environment*. In this thesis however, I have used a different theoretical framework for analysis and as such, I present a different set of findings to those presented in the paper. For a discussion of the paper see section 2.3.3.

6.1 About Green Action

This section provides information about the case study, Green Action. It provides information on the area in which Green Action was based, the origins of Green Action, the structure of Green Action, Green Action's projects, and the successes and challenges faced by the GSA.

6.1.1 Geographic area

Green Action was a student society based in Leeds University Union in the city centre of Leeds in the north of England. The University of Leeds hosts approximately 30,000 students. Being a member of a society and volunteering was a normal experience for students at the University. Within the students' union there were over 250 clubs and societies, of which fifteen were volunteering societies and eighteen were political and campaigning societies

(Green Action was categorised under “political and campaigning” although it has many volunteers). Of these societies, three could be considered to have been concerned with environmental sustainability (Green Action, People and Planet, and Conservation Volunteers). Both the University and the students’ union actively encouraged students to volunteer during their time at university.

“You could volunteer for one of LUU's student-led volunteering societies, volunteer in the local community with one of LUU's community projects, search for opportunities with local charities and community groups via the University's Volunteering Hub or, set up your own volunteering project!” (Leeds University Union 2014).

Establishing a society like Green Action and volunteering with a society, was a normal part of student life.

6.1.2 Origins of Green Action

Very little was known about the origins of Green Action due to the quick turnover of its members (as students usually graduated after three years), and because the founders were no longer actively engaged with the group. At the time of research (December 2011), some participants thought that Green Action had existed for approximately fifteen to twenty years, while it was believed that the Green Action Food Co-op had been established for “over 15 years” (Green Action 2011).

Green Action was formed by a student campaign group called Earth First!, which no longer existed at the time of research.

“[A]s far as I know Green Action was founded...between 13 and 15 years ago...because the People and Planet and the Earth First! group I think they wanted to...merge. People and Planet stayed...independent...but Earth First! did not constitute a proper group so Green Action was born” (Jennifer).

One of Green Action’s first projects, in the early 1990’s, was to provide a recycling service in the LS6 postcode area (where most students lived), before the Council offered a recycling service.

6.1.3 Green Action's structure

Green Action was run entirely by volunteers. It aimed to be non-hierarchical, meaning that there was no leader as such but there were co-ordinators for the Green Action Food Co-op and allotment project. It was the responsibility of the co-ordinators to ensure that the volunteers knew what they were doing and that all the necessary jobs were completed.

"[A]s food co-op co-ordinator, what I do is make sure that people know what they're doing on each day... Like, there are days the order comes through, days which the order needs to be done, days in which...the veggie box comes, and so I make sure that people know how to deal with the different tasks and if new people come at a certain point of the year, know how to explain this task to other people. So, I've been doing inductions about this at the beginning of the year and doing surgery inductions on this at any time when requested... I set up co-op only meetings, so meetings that are only just like co-op volunteers... I make sure that all the shifts are covered" (Jennifer).

"So first of all it's [Green Action's] non-hierarchical... That said, you need to appoint people to get things done otherwise nothing will ever get done really. And because the allotment has got precise, specific requirements...it requires planning because you have to plant at a certain time, you have to go regularly to do the weeding, you have to be there to harvest... So I think what allotment co-ordinators do is, first of all go there regularly...and then creating activities or creating...a working day... So we're thinking of having one [working day] on the last Sunday of every month... So in that respect it's people that are slightly more committed than others [that tend to be co-ordinators]" (Caitlin).

"I'd say the most important thing for us [co-ordinators] to do is not so much organise everything, as to help other people to

organise everything. The whole point of...co-ordinator roles is that we are responsible; we make sure it happens, but it's not supposed to be that we just do it, that we just decide everything... [Y]ou do need someone to make sure things come together and things happen and people talk to each other" (Rosanne).

The co-ordinators also tried to motivate other members and encourage them to get involved with Green Action projects.

"[Volunteers] come, they're well-meaning but they don't feel that confident...I do really self-reflect and think of ways to make it easier for people to engage with it [the allotment]..." (Rosanne)

"I think the people who do the co-ordinating are really crucial in getting people involved..." (Stephanie)

"[M]otivating the others [is part of the co-ordinator role]...'Cause I mean, one person can't, can't do it by themselves. You need to be able to get everyone else to do it. And...making sure things get done and showing that things are done and that will inspire people" (Jane).

Within Green Action there were "hubs," such as the food hub. Hubs were small groups of volunteers, usually three or four people, who took responsibility for making small decisions that affected Green Action's projects. The food hub for example, took responsibility for ordering stock for the Green Action Co-op. The purpose of the hubs was that not every small decision had to go to a Green Action meeting to be discussed. Big decisions however, were discussed at meetings.

Co-ordinators and those involved in the hubs were usually members that had volunteered with Green Action for at least one year, and therefore had experience.

"[A]s lovely as it would be to have three first years do the food hub I think we need to have an awareness of sort of how it's been done before, what kind of things to order in, and that kind of thing..." (Dawn).

As Green Action was a student society, the students' union required the group to have members fulfil the roles of President, Secretary, and Treasurer. However, the participants explained that these roles did not mean that some people had more power because Green Action aimed to be non-hierarchical and consensus-run.

"[Y]ou need those...official roles... I mean, we had to put our names down for some things... But they don't mean anything really because we share responsibilities..." (Jane).

"[W]e cannot write person X run for President and had eight votes and person Y run for president and had four votes, so person X won... [W]e cannot provide the evidence of that because it's not what we do... [W]e do that through consensus" (Jennifer).

Members were reluctant to appoint the official roles required by the student's union as they wanted all members to have an equal say in the running of Green Action.

6.1.4 Green Action's projects

6.1.4.1 Green Action Food Co-op

The Green Action Food Co-op was based in the students' union and sold vegan products such as grains, tofu, and soya products; many of which were organic and/or fairly traded. The Co-op also sold environmentally-friendly household cleaning products and toiletries. It provided organic fruit and vegetable boxes once a week via a local farm. All of these products were sold at cost price, meaning that Green Action did not profit from the sales.

"For the Co-op, for people who are vegan, like me for example...[you can get] food that you wouldn't get otherwise" (Jennifer).

"I manage to get food that I wouldn't be able to find in many... supermarkets... I find that I go into shops and I actually can't find stuff in their natural form...and I find that [at the Co-op] I can get what I want as it is..." (James).

“[T]he Co-op’s cost price for the members... [L]ooking at say, the co-op versus a health food shop, the mark-up is insane in different health food shops...” (Dawn).

“So the Co-op, it’s a great way of eating cheaply at uni... [Y]ou can get anything from the Co-op... Yeah so, it’s cheap and ethical and why not [shop there]?” (Lucy).

Green Action was able to offer these products at cost price because it received small grants from the students’ union, had rent-free space for the Co-op from the students’ union, charged two pounds per year for membership to cover losses at the co-op (for example, as a result of spillages), and was volunteer-run meaning that there were no staff wages to pay.

The Co-op also housed the Alternative Library, which had a range of books and pamphlets on sustainable living, animal rights, development issues, and environmental problems. Members could pay a deposit to borrow the books.

Members volunteered at the Co-op in two hour shifts, usually at the same time every week. They chose their own shifts so that they could easily fit volunteering around their university timetable.

6.1.4.2 Allotment

Green Action had two allotment plots on Woodhouse Moor, close to the university where members could grow fruit and vegetables. Participants could use the allotment either by going along to the weekly group session or, if they wanted to go on their own, they could use it at any time during the week.

“[T]he allotment is there for anyone who wants to use it. There are weekly digs, like big digs...every Sunday 12 to 2[pm]... [P]eople of course can go whenever they want. They just have to come to the Co-op and request the key, just pay a deposit for it. Just bring it back at the end of the year...and if they want people can have their little personal plot... [There are] leeks, potatoes, and herbs...” (Jennifer).

“The work at the allotment is quite varied... [T]urning the ground; sowing seeds, harvesting... [I]t’s not just about growing

vegetables...it's also about using the allotment as a hub for social activities. So just having a bonfire for example..." (Caitlin).

The allotment was loosely based on permaculture principles. Permaculture is an "ecological design process" (Permaculture Association No date). The allotment had an herb spiral made of bricks, for example, which allowed different herbs to receive different amounts of water. Volunteers at the allotment had further plans for permaculture design at the allotment.

"I'm really enthusiastic about permaculture... I know that people in the past have been incorporating ideas into it [the allotment]... Permaculture Association run this group visit scheme where groups of ten or more...can go and visit permaculture sites... So I think that would be a really good thing for Green Action members to do" (Stephanie).

"[W]e are trying to turn this downside, which is the fact that quite substantial parts of the plots are still resting...into a positive side...[by] redesigning the use of the plots...as the permaculture principles state" (Jennifer).

Volunteers spoke enthusiastically about their experiences of growing food at the allotment.

"I think food growing's really important and I think learning those skills [is also important]... [The allotment is] a nice social thing to do as well... When I have been there and been with people it has been really nice. You get to know people, have a nice chat, and get work done; and it's really rewarding" (Stephanie).

"I really love putting time into the allotment...and I really want to put more time into it..." (Joshua).

One of the allotment co-ordinators also said that there was a "great network of people" and "solid support" (Caitlin) for the allotment project.

6.1.4.3 Skills-share workshops

Green Action offered its members many skills-share workshops. Members who had a skill that could contribute to Green Action's aims volunteered to hold

workshops to teach others their skill. Workshops that had been offered included: jam making, soap making, vegan mincemeat making, energy-efficient cooking, skipping (taking food that has been thrown out by supermarkets), wild food foraging, clothes mending, and many more.

“By repairing and reusing items, you are saving them from landfill as well as saving your pocket. When repairing items such as bikes, clothes, mobiles, chairs, etc. why not turn it into a skill-share? ... After all, many hands make light work. Spreading the knowledge will make people’s lives easier, reduce landfill, use people’s creativity and best of all can be lots of fun!” (Green Action 2008, p.7).

The importance of skills-share workshops is discussed further in section 6.2.2.3.

6.1.5 Successes and challenges

6.1.5.1 Lack of active members

Some interviewees talked about there being a lack of active members for some Green Action projects. They also brought up the lack of attendance at meetings as a problem. This could be a problem at the AGM for example, as the student’s union required societies to have a minimum number of members present. Some of the interviewees also said they felt uncomfortable making decisions at meetings when there was low attendance, while others found it demotivating when so few members turned up.

“A lot of members just use the Co-op...I’d say a quarter of the people who I see regularly at the Co-op come to meetings”
(Dawn)

“[W]e have meetings every other week and our membership’s huge, hundreds of people so I hear, they never turn up; only a tiny percentage turn up. We really struggle to get enough people to come to the AGM... I think probably because most members are just members of the Co-op; they just shop at the Co-op” (Stephanie).

“You go to a meeting and there’s three people and you’re like, “Why do I bother?”” (Rosanne).

Another problem was that members felt that “all the attention gets given to the Food Co-op” (Jane), as the Green Action Food Co-op required so much time from members. This meant that sometimes there were few human resources for other projects.

“The Co-op is brilliant but... [it] absorbs a lot of the energy of Green Action I think. It quite dominates it, so other things, other activities, can fall by the wayside a bit as a result of that” (Stephanie).

The allotment had struggled at times to get enough volunteers involved in order to maintain it.

“I’ve felt like having two [allotment] plots is silly, we should just have one that’s more manageable... I’ve felt like saying, unless people take this on, I’m not going to do it” (Rosanne).

“[T]here’s a lot of...people that use the allotment and pitch in...[that] aren’t committed to it... [T]hey can do it every now and again...” (Lucy).

Due to the lack of volunteers for some Green Action activities, some projects were seen to be more successful than others.

6.1.5.2 Campaigns and protests

Initially, Green Action was involved in many campaigns and protests but at the time of research this was a rarity, although the group was still classified under the “political and campaigning” category by the student’s union.

“[Green Action] has been born on a very campaign-focused drive that has now died a bit...” (Jennifer).

“[T]here’s not that much political campaigning stuff going on as there used to be, and that’s probably ‘cause of the...members involved... There’s not the numbers of people that want to do these things...” (Jane).

Some members of Green Action however, were keen to get involved in campaigns and protests.

“In terms of activism...I know a lot of members are more keen to get that side of it more up again... I think Green Action should do more... [In terms of] campaigns...helping with people’s boycotts or petitions, that kind of thing, I’m definitely interested in doing that and so hopefully we can kind of push that forward” (Dawn).

“So I’d say in terms of us being a political and campaigning group, I don’t think we’re doing that at the moment...We’re not part of any big campaigns, we’re not protesting... But this is something that comes up at meetings and people say “Well why aren’t we doing that?” and it’s like, “Well, do you want to do it? I don’t really want to do it”” (Rosanne).

While some members were keen to rekindle the campaigning side of Green Action, the problem came down to active participation and sharing responsibilities, as some of these members wanted the co-ordinators to organise the campaigns.

6.1.5.3 Longevity of Green Action

The longevity of Green Action and the Green Action Food Co-op could be considered a success. Part of the reason for this success was undoubtedly because Green Action had a regular influx of volunteers each year when new students started attending the University. Also, as a student society, Green Action received support from Leeds University Union in terms of funding and space to house the Co-op. An article by Bradbury and Middlemiss (2014), based on research undertaken for this thesis, also attributed the longevity of Green Action to “old-timers” sharing their skills and knowledge with new members so that these human resources stayed within the GSA when they left (see section 2.3.3 for a more detailed discussion of this). Green Action appeared to be able to sustain itself for many years to come.

6.2 Understanding the frames used by Green Action

I begin this section by analysing the diagnostic framings undertaken by members of Green Action. I then present the prognostic framings, which were seen to be the opposite of the problems articulated in the diagnostic framings. I also present evidence of the strategies and resources used as a consequence of these framings. I go on to present evidence of motivational framing based on analysis of Green Action documents. Finally, I discuss these findings in relation to the existing work on collective action frames and explain how framing, strategies, and resources have a recursive relationship.

6.2.1 Diagnostic framing

6.2.1.1 “Capitalism is unsustainable” frame

The diagnostic framing by members of Green Action was implicit in the organisational form of the GSA. Green Action was established as a co-operative; co-operatives are formed because members perceive capitalist systems to be unjust and a cause of sustainability problems. The diagnostic framing then, articulated that the impact of capitalism was unsustainable and so solutions needed to be implemented. I have called this the “capitalism is unsustainable” frame.

Members of Green Action aimed to work based on co-operative principles, which meant working based on an “ecological rather than economic framework,” as expressed in a Green Action newsletter (Green Action 2011). In explaining how Green Action aimed to not work based on economic values it implied that capitalist, economically-driven systems were not environmentally sustainable. This was further implied as Green Action was an associate member of Radical Routes, a network of co-operatives. The Radical Routes website explained that co-operative principles had formed in direct opposition to capitalist principles:

“Our world is shaped by the forces of greed, capitalism and materialism, where maximum production and optimum profits are vigorously pursued, making life a misery for many and putting us and the environment at risk. The system is ultimately controlled by the rich and powerful, the

capitalists and bureaucrats, through the use of many mechanisms such as ownership of the economy (making people slaves to a job) and control of the media (creating a passive culture).

Radical Routes is a network of co-ops and individuals seeking to change all this” (Radical Routes 2013).

Green Action shared the values of Radical Routes, and being an associate member helped to frame the GSA “in terms of its ethics as a particularly radical co-op” (Jennifer). Green Action then, problematised mainstream, capitalist values and blamed capitalist systems for causing unsustainable development.

6.2.1.2 “No control over food consumption” frame

I identified a “no control over food consumption” frame used in the diagnostic framing, which related to consumers not having control over where their food came from and the types of food they could consume. Blame was placed with capitalist suppliers and commercial shops that were framed as being unethical and unsustainable food provisioners. This was implied in the framing of the solutions delivered by Green Action.

“Instead of buying food that we have *no control* over – like that in supermarkets – we’ve created the co-op so we know where our food comes from...Combined with our allotment, where we get on with growing our own, we see this as an educational platform to create the world we want to see” (Green Action 2011).

Not having control over food consumption, and therefore being locked-in to consuming unsustainable foods, was framed as the primary sustainability problem by members of Green Action. As well as problematising the mainstream systems by which food was made available, this framing also problematised certain foods as being unethical and unsustainable. There was some evidence of the consumption of other products being problematised, such as toiletries and clothing but the issues surrounding these products were given less emphasis by members of Green Action.

Another problem articulated in relation to having no control over food consumption was that when ethical food was available from commercial retailers, it was not affordable because these businesses were concerned with profit-making.

“Healthfood and wholefood stores which stock more ethical produce are often quite expensive” (Green Action 2014).

“Buying locally produced or organic food needn't be as expensive as the supermarkets would have you believe!” (Green Action 2014).

Evident from the quotes provided above, foods that were locally produced and organic were seen to be ethical, which in turn problematised foods that were not organic and not locally produced. The diagnostic framing articulated then, that consumers were locked-in to buying these problematic foods because capitalist provisioners were making ethical foods unaffordable due to their profit-making principles.

6.2.2 Prognostic framing

6.2.2.1 “Alternative to capitalism” frame

The prognostic framing by members of Green Action articulated that as mainstream, capitalist systems caused sustainability problems, the solution could not be found within existing systems. The advocated solution to the problem “capitalism is unsustainable” was to create an alternative to capitalist systems of provision in order to be able to adopt an alternative, and therefore more sustainable, lifestyle. I have called this the “alternative to capitalism” frame.

As previously explained, the argument that an alternative to capitalism was needed was implied in Green Action’s organisational form. The co-operative form of Green Action conveyed that it offered an alternative to capitalism. The Green Action website explained that co-operatives were “Good things to support if you don’t like crappy capitalist institutions” (Green Action 2014). The co-operative form had alternative principles associated with it. The Green Action constitution explained, for example:

"We are...moulded in the form of co-op principals: Voluntary and Open Membership, Democratic Member Control, Member Economic Participation, Autonomy and Independence, (Education, Training and Information), Co-operation among Co-operatives, Concern for Community" (Green Action 2010).

The alternative, co-operative form was advocated as a solution to the sustainability problem of having "no control over food consumption," which had been blamed on capitalist systems.

"Through co-operation we can have more control of what we eat as well as how much we pay for it" (Green Action 2014).

The "alternative to capitalism" frame and resulting co-operative form influenced the *strategy* of consensus-decision making, which was seen by members to be an alternative way of working together.

"It has definitely helped how people feel within it. So people really feel Green Action is quite non-hierarchical and fair" (Jennifer).

The strategy of consensus decision-making was consistent with the alternative, co-operative framing of Green Action as it was perceived that "everyone has an equal say" (Dawn).

The Green Action Food Co-op and allotment were framed as being alternatives to mainstream systems of provision (rather than a "shop" and "garden" respectively) that enabled members to take control of their food. One of the co-ordinators explained that the allotment was a means to source ethical foods:

"[W]e're trying to stress and trying to convince people to consume and buy food more ethically and one of the best ways of doing that is [growing]...your own food rather than buying it..." (Caitlin)

Framing the Green Action Co-op as a co-operative (rather than a "shop") emphasised that it offered an alternative to capitalist retail outlets.

"[I]t's quite nice to be able to explain to people who come to the co-op what it is and the fact that it's not a shop. 'Cause it isn't, it

isn't a shop. I don't see it like that; I see it as...a real alternative to shopping..." (Stephanie).

"I often stress to people with the co-op like "We're not a shop". It's definitely not a shop. It's a co-operative..." (Georgia).

As demonstrated in the quotes above, volunteers at the Green Action Co-op often explained to members who "shopped" there that it offered an alternative to shops that operated based on capitalist principles. Several interviewees that volunteered at the Green Action Co-op said that they enjoyed explaining to customers that the Co-op offered an alternative, while one interviewee explained that he thought he had a duty to do this more frequently.

"[P]eople walk by all the time they might say "What is this? What is a co-op?" ... I might have to explain what one is. It's something I like doing and I like you know, telling people what it's about" (Lucy).

"I don't want to put people off by making this whole spiel before they're allowed to buy anything...but I should be more active in sort of talking about what the co-op is...They need to see it as more than just a place to buy food" (Ben).

The decision for the Food Co-op to be entirely volunteer-run was *strategic*, as it meant that members were not profiting from selling the products, which was important as profit-making by capitalists was framed as to blame for unsustainable development. This strategy was therefore consistent with the "alternative to capitalism" frame. In order to encourage volunteers at the Food Co-op, members could pick their own shifts in two hour slots to fit volunteering into their university timetable.

At the Green Action Food Co-op members framed certain foods as being alternative and ethical and chose only to stock these foods. These foods were organic, vegan, local, and fair trade. This ethical food was treated as a *resource* for members that formed part of the solution to the perceived problem that some foods provided by mainstream systems were unethical and unsustainable. In stocking these foods it conveyed to potential members that they should eat these ethical foods as part of an alternative lifestyle.

“You know where it’s [the food’s] from, you don’t have to worry about stressful things and looking around a supermarket, not buying this brand or that brand because it’s an ethical supplier” (Lucy).

Interviewees explained that they perceived Green Action as enabling members to lead an “alternative” lifestyle.

“[Green Action aims] to promote an *alternative* lifestyle...in terms of consumption...and providing the means to do that” (Jane).

“As a group which...engages people in...*alternative* ways of living...it’s doing really well” (Rosanne).

“[Green Action]...aims to provide an *alternative* to...consumerism...” (Jennifer).

“It’s kind of my introduction to a co-operative; it’s really useful in that...[it] shows you an *alternative*...business structure, even though I don’t really see it as a business at all...” (Ben).

The “alternative to capitalism” frame seemed to resonate with members, and provided a motivation for some to support and volunteer with Green Action.

“[Green Action is] just very aligned with my own motivations... I feel like every purchase at the co-op or every bit of veg eaten from the allotment for free is something that I haven’t bought from a massive supermarket... [I]t’s an action that’s outside of the mainstream economy and I’m all up for those!” (Stephanie).

“It’s quite nice to sell something to people and for it to have that anti-capitalist idea behind it...” (Alex).

6.2.2.2 “Practical environmentalism” frame

Members of Green Action used a frame that I have called “practical environmentalism” as this was how one of the co-ordinators described the aims of the group. The “practical environmentalism” frame related to what people should do to achieve the desired “alternative” lifestyle that was not offered by

capitalism. The frame then, articulated that consumers needed to take action themselves to achieve an alternative lifestyle. As one interviewee explained:

“[W]e are actually doing something, not just sitting around like, whining about the environment or something; we are actually doing *practical* things” (Jane).

Indeed, the name “Green Action” framed the organisation as being engaged in practical environmentalism; “Green” had a connotation of “environment” while “Action” suggested that members of the organisation “do things” (rather than say, debating the issues). “Practical” and “Environmental” were two of Green Action’s ethics stated in the constitution (Green Action 2010). Under the title “Practical” it stated:

“This is a working *practical* example of the/an alternative autonomous lifestyle which we are hoping to move towards. Instead of passively buying food that we had no control over in a shop we created the co-op so we know where our food comes from” (Green Action 2010; emphasis added).

The action of establishing Green Action as a co-operative was “practical” and was an example of an action that could be taken by consumers to achieve the desired alternative (sustainable) lifestyle. Evident from the quote above, being “practical” was juxtaposed with being a “passive” consumer.

The allotment offered opportunities for members to engage in practical environmentalism (e.g. being practical by growing one’s own vegetables). Buying ethical foods at the Green Action Co-op was seen as an act of practical environmentalism that enabled the consumer to have an alternative lifestyle. Green Action’s *strategy* to motivate people to take-up and maintain the practice of consuming alternative foods (therefore contributing to Green Action’s aims) was to sell all products at cost price. This strategy was important as the Green Action Co-op was based in the students’ union and students may not have had much money. This was also important because the diagnostic framing blamed commercial shops for making ethical food expensive and therefore, preventing consumers from having access to it.

As well as offering projects that engaged members in practical environmentalism, Green Action also published a “Green Guide Towards Sustainable Living in Leeds” at the start of each academic year. The first page on the 2008-2009 edition stated:

“This booklet has been designed and written by students at Leeds University. Through it we hope to help you understand the impacts that our day-to-day lives are having on the planet, and we offer possible solutions to the problems we are contributing to” (Green Action 2008, p.1).

The guide offered practical solutions, such as where to buy ethical food, rather than just educating readers about environmental problems. In this sense it was a *resource* that encouraged readers to engage in practical environmentalism for an alternative lifestyle.

The “practical environmentalism” frame seemed to resonate with members that volunteered with Green Action at the time of research.

“I feel like a lot of people, not necessarily in Green Action actually but generally in student politics in different groups, don’t really have this idea of like if there’s a problem you just fix it yourself without kind of campaigning... I’ve just always felt more comfortable with trying to just do things on like a small scale to improve it rather than say like, you know, the union should change this and the government should change these things. It’s just been about like, what can we do on a...personal level to improve things?” (Ben).

“[Green Action’s] kind of more *practical* [than campaigning]... I’ve never really been much of an activist or a campaigner... I suppose I could get into it but I think the Co-op’s more something I’m interested in. I mean, I’m really interested in ethical food chains...and so that really feeds into that” (Jane).

“[In] my own country...I did not have the opportunity to do anything that could be considered *practical* action towards [a]

more...sustainable lifestyle... So when I came to Leeds I joined...Green Action” (Alex).

6.2.2.3 “Education” frame

An “education” frame was also evident in the prognostic framing. Education was seen to offer a solution because if people knew about sustainability problems and had the skills to engage in practical environmentalism then they would be able to live an alternative lifestyle. The “education” frame may have been used because education was one of the co-operative principles. It may also have been used because of the University context in which Green Action was situated. “Educational” was one of the ethics stated in the Green Action constitution. This section of the constitution stated:

“We would like to let other people know why we have these ethics and what motives us. This requires education about the issues and our proposed solutions. To create the world we would like to see we need to be a practical example but we also need to let people know about the practical example. So outreach and promotion are essential.

- Share skills
- Make a link specifically between food and peoples lives
- Give people the opportunity to run a food co-op and allotment”
(Green Action 2010).

The first newsletter also explained that Green Action was “an *educational platform* to create the world we want to see” (Green Action 2011; emphasis added).

In the interviews Green Action members explained about the importance of education to the aims of the group.

“[Green Action’s] a community within a community of the University and one that...teaches people...how to do things differently essentially... I think it should be the main aim of it, and then anything else that comes out of it like the Co-op, like the allotment...is increasing and building on that” (Dawn).

"[Green Action members] enjoy like, having access to cheap, good food and stuff but we're also a community of people that want to teach and share skills and ideas..." (Georgia).

"[T]he skills that people come out [of Green Action] with, and like the ideas that people come out with, I think means that it's very, very successful" (Rosanne).

As a result of the "education" frame, an emphasis was placed on members sharing their skills and knowledge in order to enable each other to engage in practical environmentalism (for an extensive examination of learning in Green Action see Bradbury and Middlemiss 2014).

"I think all members...feel like it's part of their responsibility to share their knowledge and skills and ideas" (Georgia).

Green Action offered workshops for members to gain practical skills for an alternative lifestyle.

"[Workshops are important for] empowering people through giving them the *practical skills* to live differently and showing you how simple it can be...to do things that seem like very radical steps towards *alternative lifestyles*" (Ben).

The skills-share workshops often provided members with skills that enabled them to take control over their food consumption. Workshops that had been run for example, included wild food foraging, skipping (taking food out of supermarket bins), vegan mincemeat making, and jam making. Members explained about skill-share workshops that they had facilitated or attended:

"[With] the mincemeat one [workshop]...I'm a big fan of making rather than buying; especially when you can buy the basic ingredients from a supplier like we have. Like we have Lembas in Sheffield because they are an ethical supplier and the apples for it were from Leeds Urban Harvest who go around you know, picking apples... So everything was as local... And you know, everyone gets nice mincemeat out of it and obviously it's vegan..." (Dawn).

“[W]e used the room at what was then The Common Place for a jam making workshop and got a load of people, put up some posters, skipped a load of fruit and...made ridiculous amounts of jam. It was wonderful. It was a great jam making day. And then everyone’s got a skill of something that they’ve learnt how to make their own jam. They don’t just always have to go to a supermarket...They can make it themselves, and I think that’s exciting” (Georgia).

“[T]hey do things like bin skipping [workshops]... So like, opposed to doing it on my own I wanted to...see how other people go about doing it...” (Emma).

The mincemeat and jam making workshops enabled members to make food products rather than having to buy them from mainstream suppliers, and hence, engage in practical environmentalism. The skipping workshop also showed members how to engage in practical environmentalism for alternative food consumption (as skipping was illegal in the UK). At the skipping workshop members also learnt about waste caused by mainstream companies and the sustainability problems it caused.

“[In] skipping workshops...a team’s been taken out to find out about...what kind of waste problem there is with supermarkets and large companies, how you can benefit from that but also what are the sustainable kind of impacts of that” (Georgia).

At the skipping workshop then, the workshop leader used the “impact of capitalism” frame to explain why this act of practical environmentalism was needed.

The skills-share workshops sometimes taught other skills for practical environmentalism that were not related to food consumption. The 2008-2009 edition of the “Green Guide” for example, called for Green Action members who could offer skills-share workshops on the topic of repair/reuse. Members of Green Action were considered *resources* that could deliver the education solution by sharing their skills at workshops. In holding these workshops,

members could be seen to have reinforced the “education” frame that articulated education as a solution.

The “education” frame was evident in the actions of members at the Green Action allotment. The co-ordinators thought that education was important for enabling practical environmentalism and alternative food consumption. They treated the allotment as a “space for learning” and an “educational thing that people get to engage with as an experience” (Rosanne). One allotment co-ordinator explained:

“[The Green Action] allotment is...a great opportunity for students to learn about like sustainable living and to have the opportunity to do that is quite rare I think, to be able to have a space to learn to grow” (Joshua).

Emphasis was put on the need for members to share their growing skills to enable others to engage in practical environmentalism.

“[The allotment] gives people who have been acquiring the skills, like gardening and cultivation skills [the opportunity] to pass these skills to people in a very informal way, at their own pace. So at the other end it helps people [to gain] the skills whenever they feel like it” (Jennifer).

By engaging in practical environmentalism (growing vegetables) at the allotment members learnt skills that enabled them to grow their own fruit and vegetables so they could further engage in practical environmentalism and consume food outside of the mainstream system. Due to the “education” frame, the allotment was treated as a learning *resource*. The *strategy* of having a weekly group dig enabled skills-sharing to occur and reinforced the “education” frame.

Green Action used an “education” frame which articulated that education was part of the solution to the impact of capitalism and not having control over food because people could not engage in practical environmentalism if they did not know how to. This framing was evident in Green Action’s communications. It was also evident in the actions of Green Action members and at the same time influenced Green Action’s projects that were seen to offer a solution by providing opportunities to gain skills for practical environmentalism. Stressing

the importance of education and skill-sharing seemed to motivate members to share their skills to help others engage in practical environmentalism. This sharing of skills and knowledge between members was important because the more members that possessed skills the more members there were to teach new members how to “do” practical environmentalism, therefore increasing Green Action’s capacity to deliver an alternative to capitalism.

6.2.3 Motivational framing

Green Action’s website and communications on the website (e.g. the constitution) were analysed for evidence of vocabularies of motive such as severity, urgency, efficacy, propriety (Benford 1993) and desirability (Coke 2013).

Green Action members used language to convey efficacy in an attempt to motivate people to take action.

“Your choice of food and drink is an area where small changes can make a big difference to you, farmers, the countryside, and biodiversity in general” (Green Action 2008, p.18).

“By changing our shopping habits and buying from companies with sound ethical policies, we can start to make a difference globally” (Green Action 2014).

“We cultivate two [allotment] plots... By producing the stuff that underpins all our other activities - such as learning, doing a shift at the co-op... we can have an influence on the ecological impact of food” (Green Action No date, p.11).

Members attempted to motivate people to engage in practical environmentalism by emphasising that their actions could have a positive impact on sustainability. In the examples above, language such as “make a difference” and “have an influence” was used to motivate people to adopt the recommended solutions. Indeed the framing of Green Action itself as “a working practical example of the/an alternative autonomous lifestyle which we are hoping to move towards” demonstrated the ability of consumers to take action (Green Action 2010).

Another way that members of Green Action attempted to motivate people to take the advocated action was to express the desirability of doing so. To motivate consumers to eat local food (which they could buy at the Green Action Co-op) or grow their own (which they could do at the Green Action allotment), for example, they emphasised that doing so would save the consumer money and the food would be tastier:

“Buying local produce that is in season means that you get fresher, tastier and often cheaper food” (Green Action 2008, p.18).

Members needed to motivate potential members or inactive members (those that shopped at the Green Action Co-op but did not volunteer) to volunteer at the Green Action Co-op as they wanted it to be entirely volunteer-led in order for it to offer an alternative to mainstream shops. They suggested that volunteering at the Green Action Co-op could be “enjoyable” and “productive” to motivate others to volunteer.

“The Green Action Food Co-op is a members’ co-op which means it is collectively run by our members, who...can participate in all the aspects of day-to-day running. This doesn't mean you have to volunteer your time or get involved in anything, but we would encourage you to do so as it's enjoyable, productive and you get to meet new people!” (Green Action 2014).

This type of vocabulary was also used to motivate members to volunteer at the allotment.

“It's cheaper and tastier to grow your own food! You know exactly how it was grown, where it's come from and it's fun!” (Green Action 2008, p.18).

As observed from the quote above, members of Green Action also articulated that practical environmentalism could be “fun”, and therefore desirable.

Overall, there was limited evidence of motivational framing. The few examples found used only language that conveyed efficacy and desirability.

6.3 Discussion

Having presented evidence of framing in the case of Green Action, I now consider the implications of these framings and draw on existing work on collective action frames to further understand these implications. I also discuss the recursive relationship between framing, strategies, and resources.

The concept of “organisational form as frame” was important in the case of Green Action (Clemens 1996). Green Action’s co-operative form had cultural meanings connected with it, which helped in constructing the diagnostic and prognostic framings. In using the “capitalism is unsustainable” frame in the diagnostic framing, members of Green Action made a “causal interpretation” of the problem of unsustainable development (Entman 1993, p.613). This involved “frame amplification” (Snow *et al.* 1986) – the magnification of the belief that capitalism was to blame. Snow *et al.* (1986) argue that members use frame amplification to align with potential members. There was however, no evidence of members trying to align with particular individuals or groups at the University.

The diagnostic framing constrained the prognostic framing because solutions could not be seen to come from within capitalist systems. In framing Green Action as a co-operative, members demonstrated that the proposed solution could work in reality. Members believed that other students were also looking for an “alternative to capitalism” and hoped to be successful at “frame bridging” (Snow *et al.* 1986).

“I think more and more people are interested in alternatives to the consumer-led, neo-liberal economic system that we are in”
(Rosanne).

The “alternative to capitalism” and “practical environmentalism” frames were related as the latter referred to practicing the former (rather than campaigning for an alternative). The “education” frame also related to the “practical environmentalism” frame, as it related to enabling members to engage in practical environmentalism. The frames used in the prognostic framing seemed to resonate with members, several of whom were motivated by them. The members that were interviewed already had “alternative” values and were concerned about sustainability issues prior to joining Green Action so the

frames had “centrality” for these members who therefore, saw the proposed solutions as credible (Snow and Benford 1988). Existing members of Green Action were successful at “frame bridging” (Snow *et al.* 1986) – reaching out to potential members who shared their framing of the problem and conveying to them that Green Action offered the opportunity to act on those concerns. There was no evidence of members that were motivated to join Green Action who did not already share the frames used in the diagnostic and prognostic framings. In arguing that the framings resonated with members, it should be noted that members also co-constructed these framings. The framings may have been articulated many years ago by past members but newer members continued to emphasise their importance and also adjust the framings (putting less emphasis on campaigning, for example).

An important finding was that, as members of Green Action had framed it as alternative, its projects (which could be seen to be advocated solutions put into practice) were perceived to be alternative. The place that sold food was not a shop but a “co-op” that offered consumers “alternative” foods. Activity at the allotment was not perceived as a hobby (e.g. gardening) but as an alternative means of producing and consuming more sustainable food. These projects were consistent with the prognostic framing and at the same time contributed to this framing. In doing “alternative” projects, members of Green Action could be seen to be constructing and reinforcing the alternative to capitalism and practical environmentalism framings.

The strategies and resources used by members of Green Action were products of the prognostic framing. They also served to construct and reinforce this framing. Consensus decision-making, volunteering, and providing cost price “ethical” food were all strategies to offer an alternative to capitalism. These strategies were important to members of Green Action.

“I keep talking about the way that we organise things and the processes but it’s just such a big part of how we achieve our aims. Like, it’s literally how we get to them that matters really I think” (Rosanne).

Members of Green Action also used resources that were seen to be consistent with the prognostic framing, such as vegan food sold at the Co-op that was promoted as alternative (and therefore sustainable). Due to the “education” frame, the allotment was identified as a learning resource that enabled members to engage in practical environmentalism.

Mobilising these strategies and resources contributed to the framing of appropriate sustainability solutions. The use of strategies and resources that had “alternative” meanings associated with them for example, conveyed the message that an alternative to capitalism was needed. Likewise, emphasising that the allotment was a learning resource along with the strategy of having a weekly group dig contributed to the framing that education could be a solution to sustainability problems.

I found evidence of motivational framing as language was used that conveyed efficacy and desirability of taking action. There was no evidence however, of language that conveyed “propriety” (that consumers had a duty to take action). Nor was there evidence of language being used to express the “urgency” or “severity” of the problems articulated in the diagnostic framing.

Several interviewees were concerned that the framings relevant to Green Action were not being communicated effectively. They thought that many people that shopped at the Green Action Food Co-op were unaware of the problems as framed by Green Action and the framing of the Co-op as a solution.

“[T]here are some people who just pass by the co-op and buy a sesame snap just mindlessly just because it’s cheaper than in [another shop]...” (Jennifer).

“Probably some people...who buy something don’t think “...the reason they sell it at retail price and it’s so very cheap is because it’s anticapitalistic...so they probably want to make a difference”. Probably some people, I think, just see a cheap shop...” (Alex).

“People come and buy stuff from it, but do they understand that it’s a co-operative and that we’re running it ‘cause we believe in

certain principles? ... People aren't necessarily engaging with it themselves" (Rosanne).

"A lot of people are buying you know, a piece of cake or whatever...I get the impression that...a large proportion of the people that are using it aren't considering these really kind of radical questions about where our food comes from; they're just seeing nice products..." (Ben).

One interviewee explained that one of the ways that members communicated Green Action's framings was by talking to customers at the Food Co-op. He explained however, that this had been happening less since the Food Co-op moved to a more visible location in the students' union meaning less people were curious about its purpose.

"I get the feeling that people just see it as a food shop, not necessarily vegan, and eventually like say like "Do you have so and so?" Like I don't know, honey as an example or like milk and this kind of stuff, and then it kind of comes to explaining things. But I get the feeling that...it's just viewed more as a shop that is just kind of normal now and it's not like this unique place that has...ideals behind it" (Ben).

One interviewee said that improving the communication of the problems perceived by members of Green Action and the aim to be a solution should be a "priority" for Green Action (Stephanie).

There was a problem in Green Action that related to the "alternative to capitalism" frame that articulated that Green Action offered more ethical and sustainable foods than mainstream organisations. This was to do with the content of the frame and the different foods that members saw as "ethical". The Green Action Food Co-op only stocked vegan foods and as such, these foods were conveyed as "ethical" to people who shopped there. Some members however, did not agree that a vegan diet was the best "alternative" solution to sustainability problems and instead wanted Green Action to primarily promote a diet based on locally produced foods as the best solution. This argument came about because some members wanted the Co-op to stock honey that was

produced by beehives at the University (honey is not considered to be vegan) but through the consensus-decision process this action was blocked.

“Yeah, for the honey question...well if people aren’t going to buy local sustainable honey here then they’ll go somewhere else where that stuff isn’t available and buy something that is much worse for the environment...” (Ben).

“I was on the side of we should get local honey in because it’s more environmentally friendly. People are going to buy it anyway but probably from like New Zealand or something, and I know there’s a vegan argument against using animals in that way but to me the environmental thing...that was more important to me. And a lot of the times I think we should get more local stuff...” (Jane).

“I don’t think being strictly vegan is necessarily a radical thing but I think being strictly local is pretty radical” (Georgia).

Divisions had occurred within Green Action because of this disagreement about the importance of veganism. This had also led to some of those who were keen to stock non-vegan produce to question the consensus-decision making strategy.

“[T]he issue with honey, it was scrapped because three people opposed it... I think there was a lot of confusion... [E]veryone was like...that’s not democratic. Everyone else wanted it, so I think we need to kind of discuss that” (Jane).

It could be problematic if members cease to use the strategy of consensus decision-making. They had articulated that this strategy was used in line with the “alternative to capitalism” frame and so it may be seen to be contradictory if they revert to mainstream decision-making. Some interviewees however, said that in reality some members already had more power than others to make decisions.

“I feel there’s what we officially say [about] how we’re organised and then actually how it plays out... I mean we’re non-hierarchical but ultimately the people who take those positions

of responsibility [the co-ordinators]...do have more power really” (Stephanie).

“I think they [the co-ordinators] do a lot of hard work...it’s kind of a thankless thing a lot of the time... I feel like if you’re really dedicating your time to something...it’s kind of acceptable that you might have more sway” (Ben).

This could be problematic as for the prognostic framing to seem credible there needs to be consistency between what members say the solution is and what they do (Benford and Snow 2000).

In conclusion, members of Green Action were “framing agents” (Snow and Benford 1992); they engaged in diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing of sustainability issues to mobilise members of the University community to take action. The frames used differed from the frames used by the case studies of GSAs presented in chapters 4 and 5. This finding addresses research question 1 about how GSAs frame sustainability issues to mobilise members of the community. While all GSAs engage in diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing, they do not necessarily frame sustainability issues in the same way.

The strategies and resources used by Green Action were not only an outcome of this framing but were also an important part of the framing process; hence, framing, strategies, and resources have a recursive relationship. The use of particular types of frames, strategies, and resources led to Green Action offering certain types of sustainability projects and activities that may not have been developed if different types of frames, strategies, and resources had been drawn on. The finding that there is a recursive relationship between the framings used by the GSA and the strategies and resources used is consistent with findings in the other two results chapters that demonstrated that there was a recursive relationship between these elements. It addresses research question 2 about the effect that framing has on the approach taken by GSAs. This chapter, along with the previous two results chapters, begins to address research question 3, which is concerned with why GSAs frame sustainability issues differently. We can see that the use of particular “appropriate” resources

and strategies helped to convey particular framings. This argument is developed further in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7 Discussion

Middlemiss and Parrish (2010) argue that communities have different capacities for delivering sustainable development. They explain that “capacity” refers to the community’s ability to contribute to social change (ibid). They found that resources contribute to this capacity and access to different types/levels of resources results in the different capacities of communities. I set out to examine both resources and strategies used by GSAs, as strategies relate to the mobilisation of resources. I drew on the work on framing to understand why different GSAs use different resources and strategies when attempting to mobilise communities and contribute to social sustainable change. Thus, up to this point in thesis the three concepts of framing, strategies and resources have been central. The three case study chapters (4, 5 and 6) demonstrated through empirical examples how the GSAs used framing, strategies, and resources to mobilise people and catalyse action for sustainable development.

Following further examination of the case study data in order to develop a theoretical framework for understanding the recursive relationship between resources, strategies, and resources, the concepts of culture and collective identity were found to be important. In this chapter, I present a theoretical framework for each of the three case studies that brings together the concepts of framing, strategies, resources, collective identity, and culture. I discuss each of these elements in relation to the case study in question. This cumulates in an overall framework that I term “Recursive elements of collective action by GSAs,” which can be used to understand the internal activities of other GSAs. Examining the elements of the framework in relation to each other can help us to understand why GSAs have different capacities and how these capacities are enabled and constrained.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: In section 7.1 I remind the reader of the definitions of the different elements of the framework. I present a typology of framing, resources, strategies, collective identity, and culture built on the initial reading of the literature in Chapter 2 and the case studies in chapters 4, 5 and 6. In section 7.2, I present a framework for each of the three case studies

before presenting a generic theoretical framework in section 7.3. In section 7.3 I explain the relationship between the recursive elements of collective action in GSAs with examples from the case studies to illustrate this relationship. Section 7.4 discusses the contributions of the framework. In section 7.5 I comment on the role of membership and organisational structures as these were used as sampling criteria for the case studies. Finally, the conclusion provides a summary of this chapter.

7.1 Definitions of concepts

7.1.1 Framing

In the context of this thesis, framing is *the process of GSA members constructing sustainability problems, solutions, and reasons to act in order to mobilise members of the community to participate in or support the GSA, and/or perform practices for sustainability*. I found the categories of *diagnostic*, *prognostic* and *motivational* framing developed by Snow and Benford useful for understanding framing by members of GSAs (see: Snow and Benford 1988; Benford and Snow 2000). Diagnostic framing is used to describe the process of collective actors constructing and articulating a problem; prognostic framing is used to describe collective actors constructing and articulating a solution to the problem; and motivational framing refers to collective actors using appropriate language to motivate potential members and/or supporters (Benford and Snow 2000). It is important to examine the diagnostic framing and not only the solutions advocated by GSAs, as the diagnostic framing constrains the range of appropriate solutions and strategies that can be advocated and put into action (ibid). As I have used the categories of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing, I have not developed my own categories from the data.

7.1.2 Resources

In this thesis, resources are *tangible objects, including people and their human resources, which members of GSAs perceive they can use instrumentally to create sustainable change*. I have examined the resources of GSAs that both contributed to framing and were an outcome of framing activity. As explained in

section 2.5, authors on framing have primarily been concerned with the mobilisation of human resources (members and supporters of the groups); other types of resources have been largely overlooked. Through my empirical work I have examined a wider range of resources. Middlemiss (2009; 2011) categorised resources and cultural rules that GSAs provide to members to enable them to practice sustainably (this work is discussed further in section 2.3.1 on how GSAs have been framed in existing literature). However, I have not used Middlemiss' typology of resources as my data did not fit into these categories. This may have been because I was not primarily concerned with how GSAs enabled practice change in consumers. I have developed a new categorisation of resources from my case studies of GSAs, including: human, profit-making, financial, sustainable practice-enabling, sustainable practice-encouraging, learning, legitimacy-gaining, and infrastructural resources. Some resources however, may belong to more than one of these categories. Also, not all categories of resources were found in all case studies. Here, I provide definitions and examples of each of these categories of resources found in my case studies.

Human resources include GSA members and/or members of the wider community in the form of their skills, knowledge, time, and leadership. In the case of Green Action, the skills and knowledge of members were seen to be important human resources that enabled education for alternative consumption and practical environmentalism. In the case of CSG, the leadership provided by the Chairman was seen as an important resource.

Sustainable practice-enabling resources are those which aim to enable practice change in members of the GSA or community to more sustainable practices and/or which support practices that are perceived to be sustainable already. In the case of Green Action, certain products sold in the Food Co-op were seen as resources for members to perform practices that enabled ethical/sustainable consumption. I have used the term "practice-enabling" rather than "practice change" because some people may already be performing the practice and the resources enable them to continue doing so; for example, members may have

bought their food from the Green Action Food Co-op to keep up practices related to being vegan if they were already vegan at the time of purchase.

Sustainable practice-encouraging resources are those that are used with the aim of persuading people to perform sustainable practices but which do not provide the artefacts used in those practices. These resources tend to be informational. CSG's "Top Tips" was devised as a sustainable practice-encouraging resource by providing information on practices that can be performed in the household. Likewise, the Green Guide published by Green Action was intended to encourage sustainable practices. The EDUcan that AAT invested in was used with the aim of providing information to children in the hope that it would encourage them to take up sustainable practices.

Profit-making resources are those which members of GSAs perceive as being able to generate an income for the association to be able to sustain itself and/or enable it to provide further sustainability projects. AAT recognised that the wind farm could be used to generate financial resources for the association and CSG recognised that unwanted apples could be sold to generate financial resources.

Financial resources refers to money that members of the GSA perceive that they can spend to help the GSA fulfil its objectives. Both AAT and CSG wanted to accumulate financial resources to spend on sustainability projects.

Learning resources are those that members perceive that they can use to gain skills or knowledge to be able to perform sustainable practices. An example from the case studies was Green Action's treatment of the allotment as a learning resource.

Legitimacy-gaining resources are those which members of GSAs perceive that they can use to gain acceptance for a project. A member of CSG for example, used a plan to gain acceptance from other members for the Food4Free project.

Infrastructural resources are those large resources which members of the GSA perceive as being able to provide security for the association. In the case of AAT for example, the association possessed "assets" such as the building from which members worked and it would eventually own the wind farm. These

infrastructural resources were seen as providing sustainability for the association itself.

7.1.3 Strategies

In the context of this thesis, strategies are *instrumental choices made by members of GSAs, which they perceive will help them in pursuit of their goals*. Coke (2013) categorised the strategies of the Transition movement as mobilising, action, and change strategies. However, I did not find this typology useful for understanding the strategies used by my case studies as my data did not fit into these categories. Instead, I have developed my own typology of strategies. As strategies relate to mobilising the resources identified in section 7.1.2, many of the categories that emerged from my analysis of the data mirror the resources; for example, profit-making strategies, sustainable practice-enabling strategies, sustainable practice-encouraging strategies, learning strategies, legitimacy-gaining strategies, and infrastructural strategies. Other types of strategy include democratic, volunteering, and employment strategies, which involved the mobilisation of human resources. As Jasper explains “Strategies and resources are intimately related, of course: through strategies one accumulates resources...and resources are only significant when they are used as some broader strategic initiative” (1997, p.47). Here, I discuss the categories of strategies found in the case studies.

Profit-making strategies refers to strategies employed by members of GSAs to secure financial resources for the association. An example of this strategy was AAT planning to sell energy from the wind farm to generate financial resources that could be used for further projects. Similarly, CSG had a strategy of selling apple juice to generate financial resources that could be mobilised for other projects.

Sustainable practice-enabling strategies refer to making resources accessible to members and/or members of the community to enable them to practice sustainably. An example of a sustainable practice-enabling strategy was Green Action’s decision to sell products at the Food Co-op at cost price, as expense could be a barrier for some members wanting to consume sustainably.

Sustainable practice-encouraging strategies refer to strategies used by members of GSAs with the aim of persuading people to perform practices that they perceive to be sustainable. CSG's nudge strategy is an example of a strategy used to encourage people to take up sustainable practices. AAT's strategy of educating school children was intended to encourage them to practice sustainably. The Art and Climate Change Officer at AAT also used the strategy of getting people to send in photographs with a caption saying something like "we're cutting our carbon" to encourage people to take up sustainable practices.

Learning strategies are those which GSA members perceive as enabling them to learn *how* to practice sustainably. Members of Green Action for example, learnt together at the allotment because the strategy of having a weekly group session enabled them to do so.

Members of GSAs may employ *legitimacy-gaining strategies* to get others to support their projects and give them legitimacy. AAT, for example, took older residents to see an existing wind farm to gain their approval. Another example was found in CSG where one member strategically wrote a plan to gain acceptance from other members for her proposed project.

Infrastructural strategies refer to approaches for securing infrastructure resources, with the aim of being self-sustaining (or partially self-sustaining). AAT for example, gained a preferential mortgage to be able to buy the building in which they worked.

Democratic strategies refer to strategies that enable members of the GSA and/or members of the community to have their say. Consensus decision-making undertaken by members of Green Action is an example of a democratic strategy. The community consultation conducted by members of AAT may also be considered a democratic strategy.

Volunteering strategies are those, other than framing strategies, which are employed to encourage members to volunteer with the association. Green Action, for example, allowed members to sign up for two hour volunteering slots (rather than full days) so that they could fit volunteering around their university

timetable. Members of Green Action volunteered at the Co-op rather than being hired as staff as profit-making went against the ethos of the association.

Employment strategies are those related to a GSA employing local residents with the aim of providing them with a sustainable livelihood. AAT for example, employed local residents to conduct a community consultation.

7.1.4 Collective identity

Collective identity refers to *how the GSA sees itself and is seen by others, and who is seen as an appropriate member of the association. Collective identity may also refer to how members see the community that the GSA serves, and how that community sees itself and is seen by others.* Categories of collective identity that emerged from an analysis of my case studies of GSAs included place-based, values-based, occupation-based, and consumer-based identities. Here, I provide some examples of these categories from the case studies to demonstrate what I mean by “collective identity”.

Place-based identities refer to the feeling of belonging to a geographic community. Members of CSG for example, had the identity of residents of Congleton, which brought them together. The group had a collective identity as serving the interests of Congleton. The community of Congleton was seen as civic-minded – this was a collective identity of the town. Another example of place-based identities was members of AAT positioning themselves as “insiders” of the community, in relation to previous “outsiders”. They also drew on the existing collective identity of the community as an ex-mining community.

Values-based identities refer to collective identities based on certain values that are shared by members of the GSA. An example of a values-based identity was the alternative values identity of Green Action members and the association. Likewise, members of CSG created an identity for the group by communicating their non-radical values. Green Action also constructed a collective identity as an educational community based on values about the importance of sharing knowledge and skills; as one member said, Green Action was “a community of people that want to teach and share skills and ideas” (Georgia).

Occupation-based identities are those which people gain through their employment, and which they emphasise as a member of the GSA. In the case of CSG for example, members had a professional identity based on their employment or past employment. The recognition of this shared identity led to a collective identity for the group, which guided how the group approached the delivery of sustainability projects. Likewise, some members of AAT drew on their identity as community development workers, which contributed to the collective identity of the group as community developers who supported the community.

Members of GSAs construct *consumer-based identities* for themselves and others in the community as consumers are seen as part of the solution, therefore justifying the GSA's existence. Green Action for example, used a consumer identity to explain who was affected by capitalist systems of food production and that consumers could take control. CSG explained that consumers could reduce their energy consumption to contribute to sustainable development.

7.1.5 Culture

In the context of this thesis, culture can be defined as *understandings that are shared by members of the GSA that are drawn from the community in which they are based or from wider society*. In framing sustainability issues, the GSAs I studied drew on different elements of culture. This is supported by Swidler's (1986) argument that culture provides a "repertoire" from which collective action groups can select different aspects to pursue their aims. Here, I provide examples of elements of culture found in the case studies to further explain what I mean by culture. Cultural elements found in the analysis of framing by GSAs include beliefs, values, narratives, feelings and emotions, ways of working, and end goals.

Beliefs include, for example, beliefs about who is to blame for unsustainable development. Members of Green Action shared the belief that capitalists were to blame for unsustainable development; the belief that capitalists were to blame was shared by others in wider society, including other collective action

groups. Members of AAT believed that the Thatcher Government was to blame for the current sustainability problems of the community; this belief was shared by other members of the community.

Members of GSAs share certain *values* but those values may vary between different GSAs. Members of Green Action, for example, shared alternative, anti-capitalist values. In contrast, members of CSG shared more mainstream values in line with the values of ecological modernisation. These values did not only exist in these GSAs but existed in the broader culture in which they were situated.

GSAs may (re)tell stories about unsustainable development. Members of AAT used the *narrative* of how the community had changed since the closure of the coal mines; this narrative already existed “out there” in the community.

I am mostly concerned with community spirit and social capital in relation to *feelings and emotions*. They can only be seen to exist when there is a shared recognition of them. They are not resources in that they have no physical presence but the feeling that there is a bond between actors in the community can be drawn on by GSAs to fulfil their aims. Members of CSG recognised that community spirit could be mobilised to provide community opportunities for sustainable development.

Members of a GSA share commitment to particular *ways of working* to deliver sustainable development. However, not all GSAs prescribe to the same way of working. The idea of there being a professional way of working, as found in CSG, existed in wider society. Likewise, community development (AAT) and co-operative ways of working (Green Action) already existed “out there” in the society in which the GSAs were based.

Sustainability is the *end goal* for GSAs, whether it is economic, social or environmental sustainability or a combination. End goals are cultural, as Jasper argued: “Do humans not have end goals? And if they do, where would they come from but the world of culture, the beliefs, aspirations, and moral visions that we share with others?” (Jasper 1997, p.52)

7.2 Recursive elements of collective action in the three case studies

In sections 7.2.1, 7.2.2 and 7.2.3 I present a framework for each of the case studies analysed in the results chapters (Chapters 4, 5 and 6). The framework for each case brings together the central concepts (“elements”) that emerged from the case study data - framing, strategies, resources, culture, and collective identity. Each of the elements is represented in the boxes with the categories of each element that were found in the case study data (e.g. in Figure 7.1 the box that represents “resources” lists all the different types of resources that were found in the case of AAT). The types of element have been given broader categories so that they might apply to future case studies. For example, under “resources” in Figure 7.1, instead of listing “EDUcan” which not many other GSAs would have, I have listed “EDUcan” under the category “sustainable practice-encouraging” resources as it is expected that this broader categorisation will be relevant to more case studies. Indeed, this category of resource was also found in the cases of CSG and Green Action (see Figure 7.2 and 7.3).

The elements in a framework are related as mobilisation of one of the elements by members of the GSA has an effect on the other elements (represented by the arrows that connect the different elements). Each framework therefore, explains how the collective action efforts of the GSA aimed at contributing to sustainable development are enabled and constrained. While mobilising certain values (culture) for example, may create agency for the GSA by attracting people who share those values, the GSA is then constrained as members must be seen to construct a collective identity and framings that are consistent with those values, and to use resources and strategies that are compatible with them. By then drawing on this collective identity, framings, strategies, and resources, members reinforce the values that they mobilised, which further influences use of the other elements and so on. It is not possible to understand the use of one element in the framework without reference to the others; therefore, analysis should not give priority to one in particular. The different elements in the framework have been placed within time and space because

they may only be available for use, or be perceived to be appropriate for use, in a particular time and space within which the GSA operates. Certain resources may be available in one community at a given time but not another. Similarly, using certain strategies may be perceived to be appropriate in the context of one community at the time the GSA is conducting its activity but inappropriate in another community.

Section 7.3 presents the overall framework called “Recursive elements of collective action by GSAs” (Figure 7.4). This framework is an amalgamation of the three frameworks from each of the case studies. It can be used by researchers to understand the collective action efforts of other GSAs.

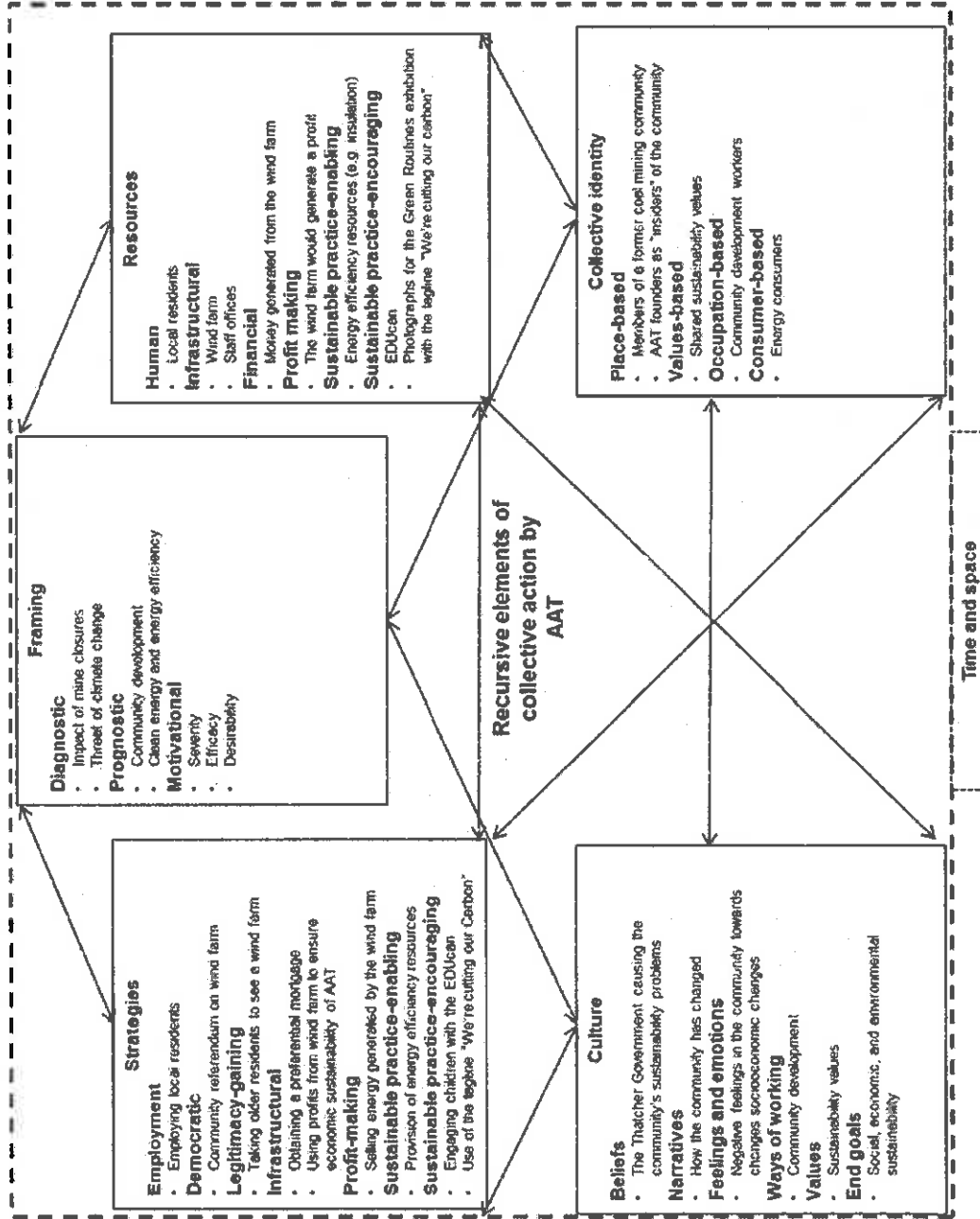
7.2.1 Recursive elements of collective action by AAT

Figure 7.1 below is a representation of the recursive elements of collective action by AAT. GSAs engage in diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing, as seen in the results chapters. The diagnostic frames used by AAT included an “impact of mine closures” frame and a “threat of climate change frame”. The prognostic frames used to articulate the solutions to these problems included a “community development” frame, and “clean energy” and “energy efficiency” frames. There was limited evidence of motivational framing found which included language which conveyed the severity of the problems and the desirability and efficacy of taking action.

Resources used by AAT included human resources (local residents’ time and skills), profit-making resources (the wind farm), financial resources (money raised from selling energy generated by the wind farm), infrastructural resources (the wind farm and AAT’s office), sustainable practice-encouraging resources (the EDUcan) and sustainable practice-enabling resources (energy efficiency resources).

Strategies used in the collective action of AAT included democratic strategies (allowing local residents to vote on whether the wind farm should go ahead), legitimacy-gaining strategies (taking older people to see a wind farm to gain their approval), profit-making strategies (selling energy generated by the wind farm to fund further sustainability projects), infrastructural strategies (getting

Figure 7.1 Recursive Elements of Collective Action by AAT



mortgage to buy the office space and eventually using profits from the wind farm to secure the future of AAT), employment strategies (employing local people), sustainable practice-encouraging strategies (engaging local children with the EDUcan and use of the “We’re cutting our carbon” tagline), and sustainable practice-enabling strategies (providing energy efficiency resources to local residents for free or at a reduced price).

The culture drawn on by AAT included narratives (about how the community had changed since the mine closures), beliefs (about who was to blame for the community’s problems), feelings and emotions (feelings about negative changes in the community), ways of working (community development), values (related to sustainability) and end goals (social, economic, and environmental sustainability; local and global sustainability).

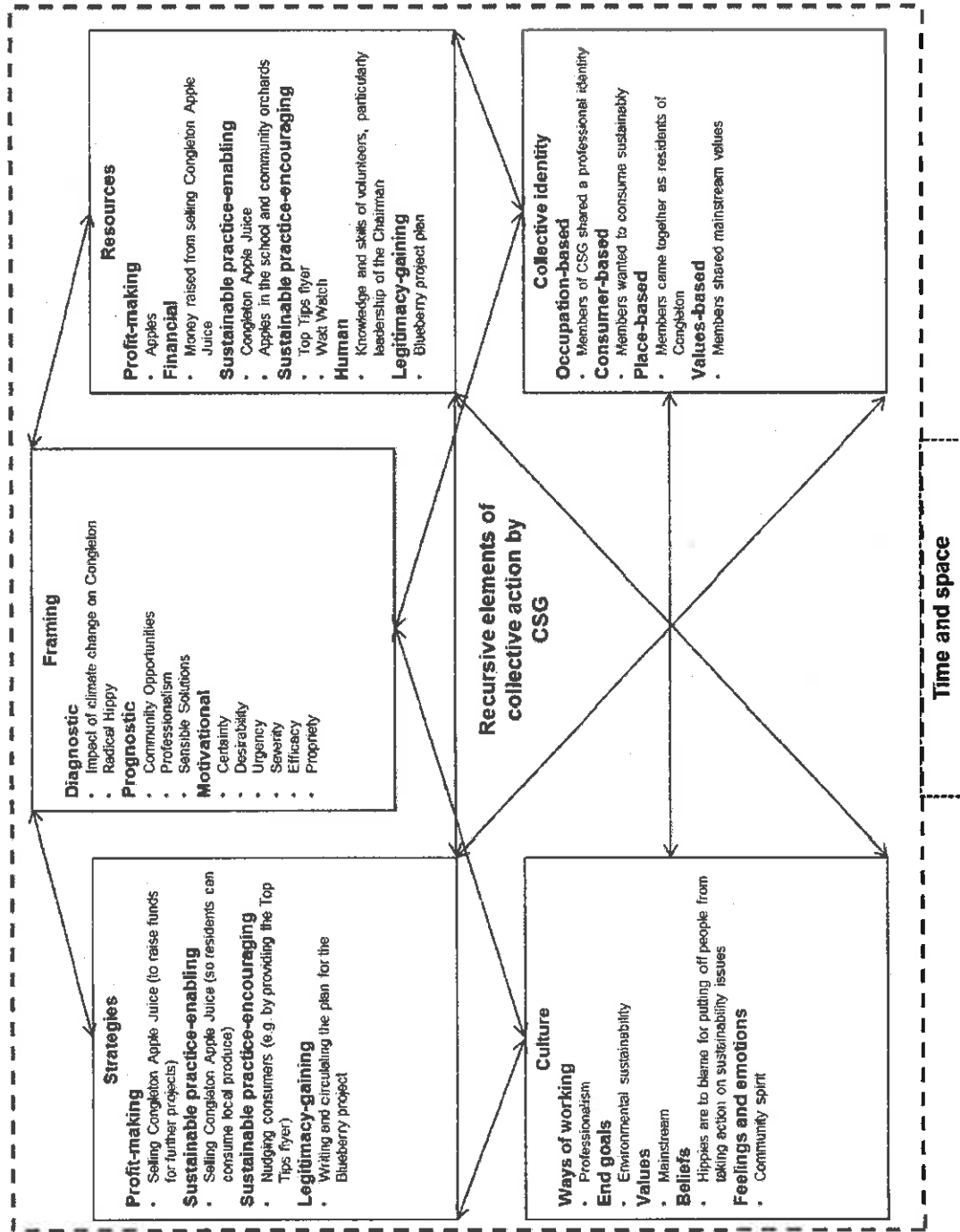
The collective identities found in the case of AAT included place-based collective identities (members of an ex-mining community and AAT members as “insiders” of the community), an occupation-based collective identity (community development workers), a values-based collective identity (shared sustainability values), and a consumer-based collective identity (energy consumers).

The recursive relationship between culture and the other elements is discussed in section 7.3.4, with reference to the case of AAT. Examples from the AAT case study are also drawn on in section 7.3.5 to illustrate the recursive relationship between collective identity and the other elements.

7.2.2 Recursive elements of collective action by CSG

Figure 7.2 below represents the recursive elements of collection by CSG. Each box in Figure 7.2 lists the types of element found in the CSG case study. In the case of CSG, the diagnostic frames that the group used were an “impact of climate change on Congleton” frame and a “radical hippy frame”. Three prognostic frames were found that included a “community opportunities frame,” a “professionalism” frame, and a “sensible solutions” frame. CSG used several types of motivational framing to varying extents including language that

Figure 7.2 Recursive Elements of Collective Action by CSG



conveyed certainty, which has not previously been recognised as being used in motivational framing.

Resources found in the case of CSG included profit-making resources (apples), financial resources (funds raised from selling Congleton Apple Juice), sustainable practice-enabling resources (a community orchard to obtain locally grown fruit), sustainable practice-encouraging resources (Top Tips flyer), human resources (particularly the leadership of the Chairman), and legitimacy-gaining resources (plan for the Blueberry project).

The strategies used by CSG largely reflected the resources used. Strategies included profit-making (selling the apple juice), sustainable practice-enabling (enabling local residents to donate apples that would otherwise go to waste), sustainable practice-encouraging (nudge strategy), and legitimacy-gaining (the action of writing the plan for the Blueberry project and circulating it to the Group).

The elements of culture that were found during further analysis, and which were found to have a recursive relationship were the other elements were ways of working (professionalism), end goals (environmental sustainability; local and global sustainability), values (mainstream), beliefs (about who is to blame; e.g. hippies), and feelings and emotions (drawing on the town's perceived community spirit).

Finally, the collective identities of members of CSG included occupation-based (professionals), consumer-based (members wanted to engage in sustainable consumption), place-based (residents of Congleton), and values-based (mainstream).

The recursive relationship between framings and the other elements is discussed in section 7.3.1 of this chapter, with reference to examples from the CSG case study. The recursive relationship between resources and the other elements is discussed in section 7.3.3, again with reference to examples from the case study of CSG.

7.2.3 Recursive elements of collective action by Green Action

Figure 7.3 below is a representation of the recursive elements of collective action by Green Action. The diagnostic framing by Green Action members articulated that “capitalism is unsustainable” and that consumers have “no control over food consumption”. In reaction to this, the prognostic framing articulated that an “alternative to capitalism” was needed, along with “practical environmentalism” and “education” to teach people about sustainable consumption. Limited evidence of motivational framing was found in the case of Green Action but there was some evidence of using motivational language that emphasised the efficacy and desirability of taking action.

Resources used in Green Action’s collective action efforts included learning resources (such as the allotment as a space for learning), human resources (the skills and knowledge of volunteers), sustainable practice-enabling resources (vegan products), and sustainable practice-encouraging resources (Green Guide).

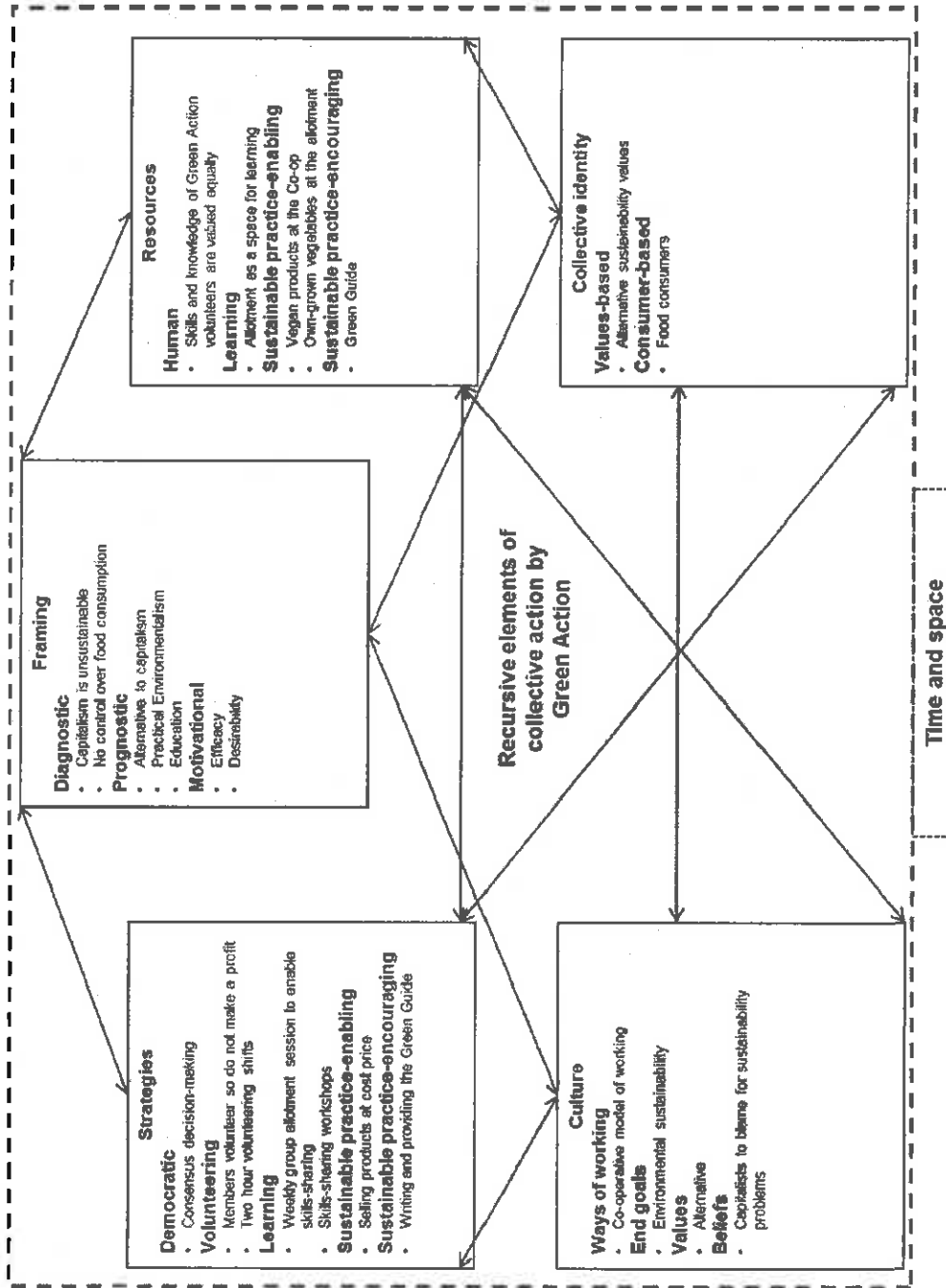
Strategies used in Green Action included democratic strategies (consensus decision-making), volunteering strategies (two hour volunteering slots to fit around students’ timetables), learning strategies (skills sharing), sustainable practice-enabling strategies (selling products at cost price), and sustainable practice-encouraging strategies (writing and providing the Green Guide).

The types of culture drawn on by Green Action included ways of working (co-operative), end goals (sustainability), values (alternative), and beliefs (about capitalists being to blame for sustainability problems).

The two types of collective identity drawn on by Green Action were a values-based collective identity (the group was seen to have alternative values) and a consumer-based collective identity (members were collectively taking control of their consumption practices).

The recursive relationship between strategies and the other elements is discussed in section 7.3.2, which uses examples from the Green Action case study to illustrate the argument.

Figure 7.3 Recursive Elements of Collective Action by Green Action



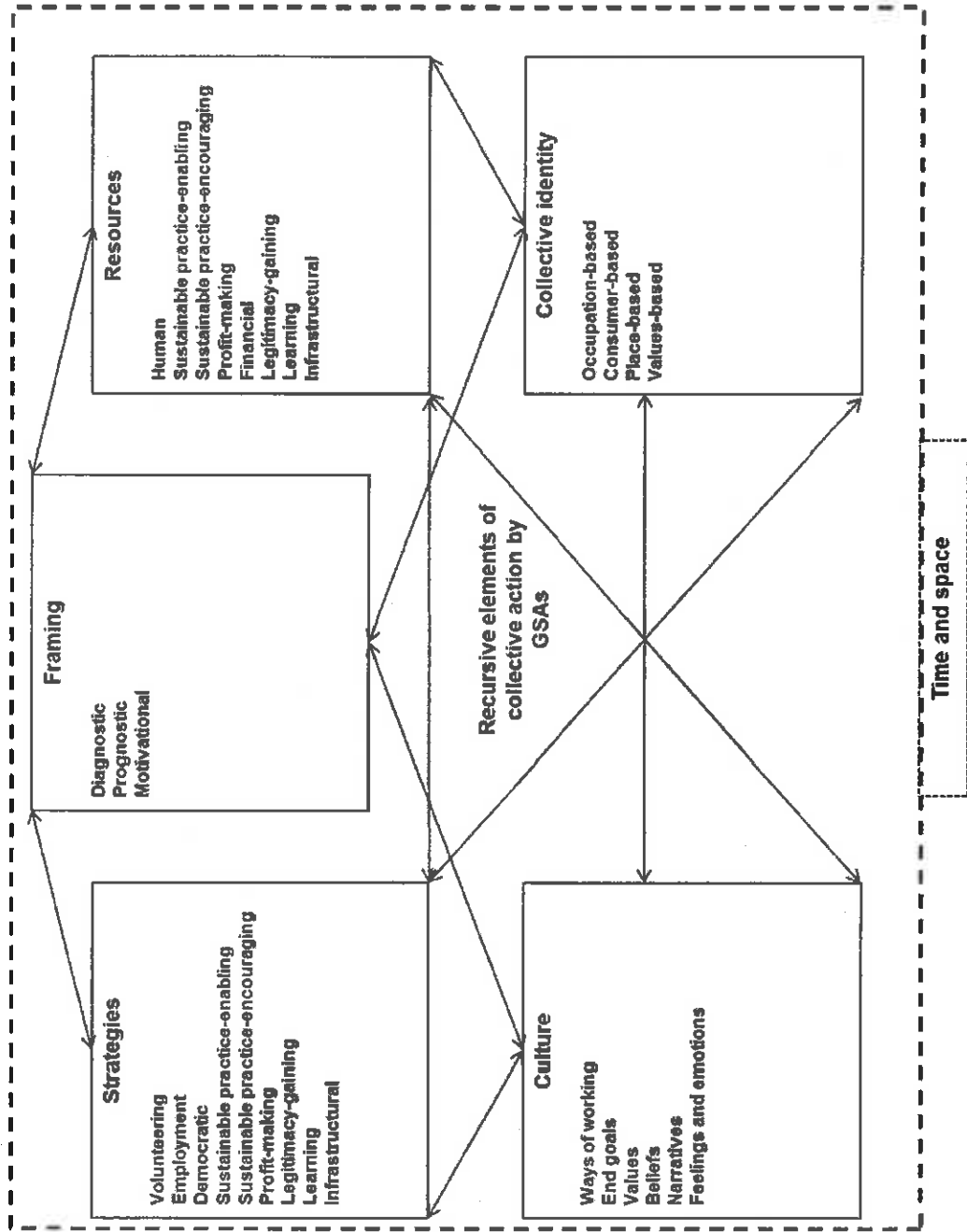
7.3. Recursive elements of collective action by GSAs

Figure 7.4 Recursive elements of collective action by GSAs is an amalgamation of the frameworks for each of the three case studies that have been presented in the previous sections. It is intended to be of use in future research in understanding the collective action of GSAs.

Figure 7.4 is a visual representation of the theory developed in this thesis. It demonstrates that the elements have a *recursive* relationship as they all influence each other and there is no logical beginning to the relationship as GSAs do not draw on each element in turn, rather, they draw on all of them at the same time. The framework brings together concepts from the social movement literature that have not previously been collated in order to understand collective action by GSAs. As discussed in section 2.5 of the literature review, Jasper (1997) has discussed the relationship between resources, strategies, culture and biography (which includes identity) but not framing. On the other hand, various authors concerned with framing and/or collective identity have brought these two concepts together and considered their relationship to culture and strategies, but these authors have not been concerned with resources (see for example: Smithey 2009; Polletta and Jasper 2001; Hunt *et al.* 1994). As such my overall framework both summarises my empirical work, and provides a new theoretical contribution to knowledge in bringing together previously separate concepts.

Finally, it should be noted that, in line with the symbolic interactionism methodology that this thesis has drawn on, the theory discussed in this chapter is based on my own interpretation of why the GSAs in the case studies used the different elements of collective action as well as my perception of how the different elements have a recursive relationship. This theory is grounded in the data collected from the case studies and supported by existing literature on social movements and collective action. The elements in the framework have been discussed as being important by other researchers, but I have brought them together for the first time and found that they have a recursive relationship.

Figure 7.4 Recursive Elements of Collective Action by GSAs



In the remainder of this chapter, I examine each of the elements of collective action in turn and demonstrate how each element is *affected by* the other elements. Although I discuss each of them in turn to aid the reader's understanding, the aim is to demonstrate the recursive relationship between the different elements. I use examples from the case studies to illustrate my points.

7.3.1 Framing

As discussed in section 2.1 of the Literature Review, sustainability is a contested concept and GSAs construct different framings of sustainability problems and solutions. In the case studies analysed in this thesis, the three GSAs highlighted different sustainability problems, blamed different actors for causing sustainability problems, and proposed different solutions. The different framings used by the different case studies can be seen in Figure 7.1, Figure 7.2, and Figure 7.3.

As expected, it was found that members of GSAs frame sustainability problems and solutions and use motivational language to motivate their members/supporters and potential members/supporters to support the association, participate in it, and also to fulfil its sustainability aims by engaging in sustainability practices. Here, I draw on an example from the CSG case study to demonstrate how framing was affected by resources, strategies, culture and collective identity.

The *collective identity* of a GSA influences the framings of sustainability issues. The professionalism frame used by CSG was constructed in part because of the recognition that members shared a professional personal identity (occupation-based), and this became the collective identity for the association. Due to this professional collective identity, in the framing of sustainability issues members problematised radical approaches to sustainability and instead emphasised that sustainability solutions needed to be "sensible" and delivered via a professional approach. Both the professional way of working and the professional collective identity of the association were value-laden, adopting certain *cultural* values, which in turn were expressed in the framing (i.e. values that distinguished members from hippies). Hence, in framing sustainability issues GSAs borrow

from a set of cultural elements; this finding is supported by Swidler's (1986) argument that in collective action social movement actors borrow from a cultural repertoire or "toolkit". In terms of the case studies, cultural elements included beliefs, values, narratives, feelings and emotions, ways of working, and end goals (as explained in section 7.1.5). These cultural elements form part of the reasons that GSAs engage in collective action, including framing processes, in the first place.

The leadership (*human resources*) of the Chairman were perceived as important and the mobilisation of this leadership in CSG's activities reinforced the framing that a professional, non-radical approach to sustainability was needed. Therefore, the resources used by GSA members can contribute to and reinforce the framing of sustainability issues. As previously mentioned, social movement scholars concerned with framing have largely ignored resources other than those that can be defined as human, financial, or media resources but this thesis has addressed a wider range of resources. While Jasper's (1997) work did introduce the concept of resources he was not concerned with the concept of framing; this thesis has brought the concepts together to aid our understanding of the collective action of GSAs. The relationship is explored further in section 7.3.3, which explains how framing affects resources.

The emphasis on *profit-making strategies* can also be seen to have reinforced the message that a professional approach was needed, at least within the association itself. Clearly the member who came up with the idea of the Blueberry project (now Food4Free) interpreted this framing, which influenced her legitimacy-gaining strategy of writing a plan detailing the development of the project including possible profit-making strategies. Through the Chairman and other members giving their support to the project following circulation of the plan, they further reinforced the framing.

This discussion based on the CSG case study has demonstrated that framing processes require agency but the use of frames is enabled, constrained, and reinforced by strategies, resources, culture, and collective identity. Framing also affects these other concepts, as I will demonstrate in the following sections.

7.3.2 Strategies

Examining strategies on their own does not enable us to understand *why* GSAs do what they do. The related concepts of resources, framing, culture and identity can however, shed light on this. Understanding why GSAs perceive and use certain strategies can help us to understand their capacity for stimulating social change for sustainability, how that capacity is constrained, and how it might be increased. Here, I draw on the democratic strategy of consensus decision-making used by Green Action to demonstrate how strategies were affected by the other recursive elements of collective action.

Analysis of the case studies supported Benford and Snow's (2000) argument that the diagnostic framing constrains the use of strategies. Because members of Green Action used the *frame* "capitalism is unsustainable" they could not be seen to use strategies that were consistent with a pro-capitalism framing. The consensus decision-making strategy was seen to be an alternative to decision-making strategies used by capitalist organisations where managers primarily make the decisions. This strategy was also influenced by the perception that the *human resources* of all members should be valued equally, and all members should be allowed an equal say in the running of the association.

The consensus decision-making strategy was also influenced by *culture*. As Jasper argues, strategies are not neutral; "we attach moral and emotional values to strategies, above and beyond valuing them for their sheer efficiency" (1997, p.52). While many Green Action members explained that they found the strategy time-consuming and frustrating they agreed that Green Action should continue to use it because of the alternative values attached to it, which differentiated it from capitalist decision-making strategies. This "alternative" strategy was not new; it was already used by other co-operatives and GSAs that shared Green Action's values (Green Action drew on Seeds for Change's material on consensus decision-making). Therefore, this strategy can be seen to have "put culture into action" (Jasper 1997, p.52).

Strategies also need to be culturally acceptable; the members of the GSA, and to some extent wider society, need to approve of them. Part of the reason that

the consensus decision-making strategy was acceptable to members of Green Action was that it was seen as an alternative strategy that complimented the *collective identity* of the association. The relationship between strategies and collective identity has largely been overlooked by social movement researchers (Polletta and Jasper 2001; Smithey 2009). The strategies used by a GSA have to “fit” with both the personal identity of members and the collective identity of the association, or the GSA risks alienating some members or supporters. Members for whom an alternative (e.g. radical green) personal identity is important are likely to want participate in a GSA that is perceived to use alternative strategies; as Polletta and Jasper (2001) have argued, strategies can be an expression of identity. In the case of Green Action, the perception that many members shared an alternative identity seemed to have led to an alternative collective identity for the association. The GSA then needed to consistently use strategies that could be perceived as alternative so not to alienate members.

7.3.3 Resources

Examining the resources used by GSAs in isolation of the other elements of the framework only enables the researcher to generate categories of resources. As with the concept of strategies, the other recursive elements of collective action also need to be examined to understand *why* certain resources are used by a particular GSA and how members’ perception of resources is both enabled and constrained. Here I draw on examples from CSG to illustrate my point.

Framing influences members’ perception of resources. The radical hippy frame used in the diagnostic framing (which was used to distinguish members of CSG from hippies, therefore creating a mainstream collective identity for the association), along with the community opportunities frame used in the prognostic framing, enabled the perception that apples could be both sustainable *practice-enabling resources* and *profit-making resources*. The “community opportunities” frame emphasised the need for members of the community to work together to address the “impact of climate change on Congleton”. This enabled the perception of apples as a resource because the community had an abundance of apples and it was thought that there could be

a “community opportunity” for a Congleton Apple Juice project if local residents came together to donate unwanted apples. As the framing had established CSG as a mainstream association it was possible for members to recognise that the apples could be turned into juice to generate financial resources for CSG.

The perception of apples as resources was only possible due to the recognition of associated *strategies*. As Ganz argues, “Strategy is how we turn what we have into what we need - by translating our resources into the power to achieve purpose” (2000, p.1010). CSG recognised that they could “nudge” residents into donating apples so there would be enough resources for the project, and they recognised the profit-making strategy of selling apple juice at a marked-up price. The profit-making strategy of selling the apple juice to generate financial resources for CSG meant that the association could plant orchards, therefore, having more apples that they could use to generate a larger profit. We can contrast this example with the case study of Green Action; the “alternative to capitalism” frame and emphasis on the need for “alternative” strategies meant that it was inappropriate for them to be reliant on profit-making and financial resources.

The perception of apples as resources (and therefore the Congleton Apple Juice project itself) was only possible because of the *culture and collective identity* of Congleton, which CSG mobilised. Jasper has argued that resources “are not just interpreted through a cultural lens, but are constituted and defined from the start by cultural contexts” (1997, p.53). The most obvious example of this was that financial resources existed as a powerful resource in the broader culture and in which CSG was situated, and given that many members of CSG were ex-professionals that had worked for profit-making companies it was not surprising that CSG sought apples to turn into financial resources. However, the recognition of apples as a resource was undoubtedly also influenced by the culture of Congleton, as volunteering and participating in civic life was seen to be part of Congleton’s culture. Therefore, apples were seen as resources because this civic pride could be mobilised so that people would donate apples. Without this community culture, people may not have been willing to donate apples to a community project so there would be no resources. Mobilising this

civic pride was dependent upon peoples' collective place-based identity as residents of Congleton. CSG drew on this collective identity to encourage people to donate apples, which was helped by the strategy of branding the juice Congleton Apple Juice (rather than CSG Apple Juice) to emphasise that it was a product of the community's resources.

7.3.4 Culture

In the examples provided so far, we have seen that framing, strategies and resources are affected by culture and in the next section we see that identity is also affected by culture. Here, I argue that culture can also be affected by the other recursive elements of collective action. I draw on examples from the case study of AAT to illustrate the argument.

In their *diagnostic framing* members of AAT mobilised the cultural belief of local residents that Thatcher was to blame for the unsustainable development of the community. In using these beliefs in their framing, they reinforced this belief and reinvigorated the narrative that Thatcher was to blame for the changes that had occurred in the community so that they could further draw on this belief and narrative to mobilise local residents to support AAT. Hence, using these cultural elements in the framing had an impact on them. Also, in the case of all GSAs, the framing of sustainability issues, when it successfully mobilises people, creates a culture of collective action for sustainability in the community.

The *strategies* used by GSAs are often used with the intention of influencing culture. An example of this was AAT's employment strategy of providing work to local residents (linked to the community development framing), which could have a profound effect on the local culture and norm of unemployment and the end goal of social sustainability. As Smithey argues, strategies are "levers of power" (2009, p.658); they enable GSAs to achieve their end goals, goals which are culturally defined. For the strategy of employing local people to be possible, the *human resources* of local people had to be valued. Emphasising that their human resources were important to AAT's aims could change beliefs that local people in the community were not employable, and could contribute to the (culturally defined) end goal of social sustainability. In this example the human

resources of local people and the strategy of employing them were entwined to transform local culture. As Ganz (2000) explains, the use of strategies is how we go from having resources to achieving our goals. Also, bringing local people together to work towards a common aim could strengthen the feeling that there was social capital in the local community. Finally, the *place-based collective identity* of an ex-mining community was used in the framing to mobilise local residents and this identity influenced the strategy and use of human resources discussed above. This in turn had an influence on local culture in terms of local employment and taking the community forward from being an “ex-mining” community (with connotations of socioeconomic problems) to a sustainable community.

7.3.5 Collective identity

The collective identity of a GSA is constructed through framing, by drawing on elements of culture, and through the use of particular resources and strategies. Here, I draw on examples from AAT to demonstrate how the recursive elements of collective action created a collective identity for the association.

The GSAs that formed the case studies for this thesis used “boundary framing” to create a collective identity (Hunt *et al.* 1994, p.194). Through the use of the community development frame, members of AAT created a collective identity as “insiders” of the community, even though two of the initial founders moved there from England. Through this framing, a boundary was created between “insiders” who were community developers and “outsiders” who were commercial developers. The purpose was to convey to local residents that members of AAT were not like outsider developers who had a negative reputation in the community and had been problematised in the diagnostic framing. In reality it is not possible to decipher which came first, the framing of members creating an “insider” identity or the “insider” identity influencing the framing; I would argue that the two processes occurred simultaneously.

The use of a particular *strategy* can construct and reinforce the collective identity of a GSA. This argument is supported by Polletta and Jasper (2001) who argue that strategies contribute to the collective identity of social

movements and Smithey's argument that strategies have "symbolic capacities" (2009, p.664). Indeed, in my role as researcher, part of the reason that I perceived AAT as having an insider/community developer identity was because of the strategies that members used that distinguished the association from being an outsider/commercial developer. For example, the profit-making strategy of selling wind energy to generate financial resources for the community (rather than for the commercial interests of the organisation) distinguished members from previous outside developers who were seen to not have given anything back to the community. Similarly, valuing the *human resources* of local residents also helped to create this identity for the association as outsider/commercial organisations would be unlikely to value and mobilise them in the same way.

Elements of *culture* overlap with collective identities that are mobilised by GSAs. As Jasper argues, "We use culture to constitute ourselves" (1997, p.52). The experiences, beliefs and narratives of the community were drawn upon to create the collective identity of an ex-coal mining community (rather than a poor or rural community for example), where members of AAT were considered as "insiders". This collective identity was drawn on in the framing to mobilise local residents for collective action.

7.4 Contributions of the framework

The theoretical framework "recursive elements of collective action by GSAs" presented in this chapter makes several important contributions to our knowledge of GSAs. By introducing the concepts of collective identity and culture, it demonstrates that it is not just framing that has an effect on the resources and strategies used by GSAs. Collective identity and culture influence members' perspectives of sustainability problems and appropriate solutions, and therefore the resources and strategies that are seen as appropriate to use in delivering solutions. The most substantive contribution here is that I have brought together concepts from previously separate strands of literature by social movement researchers (strategies, resources, frames,

collective identities, and cultural elements) in the framework and demonstrated that these elements have a recursive relationship.

The framework contributes to current understanding of how the work of GSAs is enabled and constrained. For example, the perception by members of a GSA that a particular resource is appropriate to mobilise is enabled by the other elements that are drawn on. At the same time, the recognition of other resources that could potentially be mobilised is constrained by the other elements that have been drawn on. In other words, GSAs use elements that complement and reinforce each other. Furthermore, different GSAs draw on different types of elements and are constrained in different ways. The theoretical framework presented in this chapter therefore, elaborates the academic argument that different communities have different capacities for addressing sustainability issues (Middlemiss and Parrish 2010). Demonstrating how GSAs are enabled and constrained contributes to our understanding of both the plurality of GSAs and how their internal workings differ, and why they take different approaches and embark upon different projects.

Finally, while the recursive elements of collective action have been separated out in the discussion, in reality they cannot be seen to be separate from one another; we can talk about “framing” of sustainability issues but using certain resources, strategies, collective identities and elements of culture contribute to this framing. The framework therefore, expands the limited set of literature on framing and GSAs (Yalçın-Riollet *et al.* 2014; Coke 2013; Brown and Vergragt 2012), which has not previously recognised how framing occurs through use of the other elements. The framework brings together two sets of literature; the literature on framing by GSAs and the broader literature on social movements and framing. The framework also complements the literatures on practice change for sustainable communities, grassroots innovations, and skills for sustainable communities (see literature review section 2.3.). These sets of literature are predominantly concerned with the outcomes of GSAs’ work rather than the internal processes involved. In the following sections, I discuss how the framework complements each set of literature in turn.

7.4.1 How the framework complements the literature on “practice change for sustainable communities”

The literature that frames GSAs as enabling practice change in their members (see section 2.3.1) is concerned with practice change as a result of interacting with a GSA. It is concerned with what elements GSAs provide that enable practice change and how practice change occurs. It is not concerned with how projects that enable practice change come about or why they take different forms. The framework presented in section 7.3 of this chapter complements this set of literature by explaining the relationship between the different elements involved in the internal, collective process of delivering sustainability projects, including those aimed at stimulating practice change. In delivering projects aimed at sustainable practice change, GSAs simultaneously draw on resources, strategies, cultural aspects, collective identities, and use a particular frame or frames. It is important to understand this recursive, collective process to ensure that it leads to successful projects that mobilise people and lead to practice change.

In developing and delivering their projects, members of GSAs use different elements in the framework which complement their own understandings of who they are and what they are trying to achieve; the concepts of collective identity and culture are crucial here. The literature on practice change is concerned with the elements that GSAs provide that enable practice change in members (see Middlemiss 2011; 2009; Hargreaves 2011; Buchs *et al.* 2011). However, different GSAs that aim to stimulate practice change may provide different types of elements (e.g. different resources) in order to achieve that change. The framework, recursive elements of collective action, complements this literature by aiding our understanding of why GSAs with the same aim (practice change) take different approaches and provide different resources. An understanding of *why* these resources are provided in certain projects depends upon an understanding of associated strategies, the group’s collective identity, member’s collective understanding of sustainability problems and appropriate solutions as expressed through the frames they use, and the cultural values mobilised in the use of those resources, strategies, frames, and the group’s collective identity.

The case studies of Green Action and CSG presented in this thesis for example, can both be seen to contribute to practice change in different ways (the former providing vegan food as a resource for consumers to drastically change their eating practices, the latter proving a flyer that encourages small changes to their energy practices). Understanding why these different GSAs provide different resources for sustainable consumption practices depends on understanding their use of the other elements in the framework.

I have examined a broader range of resources than just those intended to lead directly to an outcome (practice change). I have examined resources that have been used to establish projects; for example, members of a GSA may access financial resources that perceive as appropriate and necessary for delivering projects that enable practice change. These financial resources are not used by people who engage in practice change; rather, financial resources may be used to buy other resources that enable practice change (sustainability-enabling resources as I have called them). Researchers coming from a practice change perspective could use the resource inventory shown in the framework as a guide for what to look for in their own research.

Not all GSAs aim to enable or encourage practice change. The framework can help researchers coming from a practice change standpoint to understand *why* some GSAs do deliver projects that are aimed at practice change, as the role of members' perspectives is underdeveloped in the existing literature on practice change. Those GSAs that deliver practice change projects do so because of their understanding of what is needed to enable sustainability as expressed in their framing; because they have a particular collective identity; because cultural elements, such as ecological values, resonate with them; and because they are able to identifying particular resources and strategies for enabling practice change that complement the aforementioned elements.

Finally, examining the role of framing and its relationship to the other elements in the framework aids our understanding of how people can be mobilised to participate in a GSA with practice change aims; an issue which is under-researched by the practice change literature.

7.4.2. How the framework complements the literature on “grassroots innovations”.

The literature that frames GSAs as grassroots innovations (see section 2.3.2) is primarily concerned with processes external to the group (e.g. scaling up, niche formation) rather than internal processes. The framework presented in this chapter therefore, complements this set of literature as it can be used to critically examine the *internal, collective processes* that lead to the development and delivery of innovative projects at the local level. It is crucial to develop our understanding of internal processes to better comprehend how a robust grassroots innovation can be created that is then able to be scaled-up or contribute to a niche. By assessing the resources, strategies, frames, cultural elements and collective identities used or constructed by the group, we may be able to better understand how and why grassroots innovation projects come about, and therefore, how more may be created. Assessing these elements in cases of successful grassroots innovations could help us to understand how success is achieved.

The framework contributes to understanding of the resources used in delivering grassroots innovation. Seyfang *et al.* (2014) are concerned with those resources that are shared between GIs and intermediaries, and which may lead to niche creation. While there is some examination of resources shared within the groups, the authors only observe resources that are involved in learning and networking within the group because these processes are significant for strategic niche management theory. In the framework presented earlier in this chapter, I have however, examined resources that are used within the group to deliver projects that contribute to their sustainability objectives. These resources are based on what the group perceives to be appropriate to use due to appropriate associated strategies, members' framing of sustainability issues, the group's collective identity, and the culture that members collectively draw on. Grassroots innovations might be limited in what they can share with other groups if they see some resources as inappropriate.

Finally, the framework adds to our understanding of how GSAs attempt to mobilise people to participate in the group; an issue which is overlooked in the

grassroots innovations literature. Members attempt to mobilise people by framing sustainability issues in a particular way, using strategies and resources they think are appropriate and will be appealing, constructing a collective identity that they think others will identify with, and drawing on elements of culture that they think will resonate with members of the community. Understanding how GSAs attempt to mobilise people is important as members of the community need to support and/or participate in the group in order for it to succeed. Members of the community may be needed to participate in the GSA to help develop and deliver its projects. In some GSAs however, such as the case of Awel Aman Tawe, it may be difficult for members of the community to get involved (if the project requires technical skills, for example). The GSA may still need to engage in framing in order to gain support from members of the community for the project to go ahead.

7.4.3. How the framework complements the literature on skills for sustainable communities

The literature that frames GSAs as enabling skills for sustainable communities is limited in its examination of the internal processes of GSAs, being concerned only with those processes that lead to skills acquisition. This literature has been largely empirical with a lack of theory development to explain such processes. The framework presented in section 7.3, recursive elements of collective action by GSAs, complements the literature on skills for sustainable communities as it can be used to understand how and why a skills approach has been taken. By applying the framework to the case of Green Action (Chapter 6), which took a skills approach, we can see that this approach was taken because of the group's understanding of sustainability problems and solutions which meant it used an educational prognostic framing, it complemented the collective identity of the group as an educational community, it was appropriate for its collective cultural values, and in taking a skills approach the group perceived resources and strategies that complemented the aforementioned elements in the framework, and which enabled members to acquire skills. This relationship can be seen in Figure 7.3 Recursive Elements of Collective Action in Green Action.

The overall framework, presented in Figure 7.4 Recursive Elements of Collective Action by GSAs could be applied to other GSAs that take a skills approach.

The framework could be used to critically examine what types of skills and knowledge are learnt, how they are learnt (using particular resources and strategies), and why. These issues are under-researched in the literature on skills for sustainable communities. A GSA may focus on knowledge and skills for “alternative” consumption or “mainstream” consumption depending on their use of the elements in the framework. The use of particular elements in the framework is likely to constrain what types and knowledge and skills can be learnt.

Finally, as with the other two sets of literature, the literature on skills for sustainable communities does not address the issue of how GSAs attempt to mobilise people to participate in the group. The framework presented in this chapter addresses this issue. It is important to understand how GSAs attempt to mobilise people to participate in the group, to ensure that this is done effectively so more people learn skills for sustainable consumption and help to create sustainable communities. Also, if more people are successfully mobilised to participate in the group, then there could be a wider range of skills that could be learnt so members could adapt a wider range of sustainable consumption practices.

7.5. A comment on membership structures and organisational structures

As explained in section 3.4.1 the case studies for this research were sampled based on organisational and membership structures. Green Action had a non-hierarchical organisational structure and was entirely volunteer-run; CSG’s organisational structure constituted of a Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and sub-groups that each had a leader, while the membership was made up of representatives of different organisations in the community and local residents. Finally, AAT’s organisational structure constituted of staff, trustees and occasional volunteers. Members were mostly local residents with a couple of trustees from further afield; however, the GSA was predominantly run by the

staff. It was thought that organisational and membership structures might have an effect on the collective action efforts of the GSAs and influence the plurality of resources and strategies used in the different case studies. For example, if I had found that the structure of AAT, as it was run by staff, resulted in an emphasis on the need for financial resources to pay staff wages then it could be argued that organisational structure has an effect on resources.

While financial resources were important to AAT, this was because members wanted to use the money for future community development and sustainability projects. This use of financial resources was influenced by the framing of the issues, the strategy of selling energy from the community-owned wind farm, the collective identity of members of staff as community development workers, and the culture in which AAT operated. The membership structure of AAT, which was constituted partly of staff who identified themselves as community development practitioners, was therefore an important influence. This influence however, has been accounted for under the concept of “collective identity” as this concept is bound with the other elements that appear in the framework Recursive Elements of Collective Action by GSAs. Membership and organisational structures are therefore important influences, but these have been reconceptualised in the framework using the terminology of the study.

CSG’s Chairman formed part of the Group’s organisational structure and in Figure 7.2 Recursive Elements of Collective Action by CSG we can see the leadership of the Chairman has been included under the category of “human resources”. The decision to have an organisational structure that included a Chairman was a result of the need to take a professional approach to delivering sustainability solutions as expressed in the frames used by CSG. This approach drew on culturally appropriate ways of working and complemented the Group’s professional collective identity and the focus on mainstream, profit-making strategies.

The membership structure of Green Action, which constituted entirely of volunteers, has been captured under the category of “volunteering strategies” in Figure 7.3. The decision to structure the GSA in this way was a strategy

introduced in line with framing constructed by members, their emphasis on human resources, the collective identity of the GSA, and the alternative cultural values that the group embodied.

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have developed a framework of “Recursive Elements of Collective Action by GSAs” based on findings from the case studies examined in chapters 4, 5 and 6. The framework has brought together concepts from the literature on social movements and collective action that have not previously been used together. The framework contributes to understanding of the collective action of GSAs as it can be used to demonstrate *why* different GSAs use different strategies, resources, frames, collective identities and cultural elements to mobilise communities and contribute to sustainability. The concepts of culture and collective identity emerged as important concepts for understanding the relationship between framing, strategies, and resources during further data analysis that was undertaken in order to develop a theory about the recursive elements of collective action by GSAs. The framework contributes to understanding of how collective action by GSAs is enabled and constrained; I have demonstrated that the elements in the framework both enable and constrain the GSA to contribute to sustainability. The framework presented in this chapter could be of use to academics in understanding the activities of GSAs and how they might contribute to sustainability, as well as being of use to GSAs themselves in understanding their own activities and how they might more effectively mobilise communities and contribute to sustainable social change. It complements the grassroots innovations, practice change, and skills for sustainable communities literature as discussed in sections 7.4.1, 7.4.2 and 7.4.3. The framework may also be of use to social movement scholars and different types of social movement organisations, given that the concepts in the framework can be found in the literature on these organisations. The contributions of the framework are summarised further in section 8.2 in the concluding chapter to this thesis.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I answer the research questions set out in the introduction. I then discuss the contributions made by this thesis and the implications for the existing literature on GSAs. I go on to discuss the practical uses of the framework developed in Chapter 7, make recommendations for future research and finally, reflect on the research process and present my final thoughts.

8.1 Answering the Research Questions

In this section I answer the research questions set out in the Introduction to the thesis, which guided the research process. I begin by answering the three sub-research questions, which then makes it possible to answer the overarching research question: What role do GSAs play in framing sustainability issues to mobilise community members to take action on sustainability?

Research Question 1: How do GSAs frame sustainability issues to mobilise members of the community to participate in the association and/or take action on sustainability?

This thesis has demonstrated that GSAs engage in diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing as the social movement literature on framing would expect (see: Benford and Snow 2000; Snow and Benford 1988). Diagnostic framing relates to articulating what the sustainability problem is and who is to blame; prognostic framing entails articulating the solution(s) to the problem; and motivational framing provides reasons for people to take action, through the use of a vocabulary of motives. However, different GSAs frame sustainability issues differently; I found this as I took a multi-case study approach to the research. GSAs may highlight different sustainability issues, identify different causes, and place blame with different actors. In the case studies examined in this thesis, for example, AAT blamed the Thatcher Government for the sustainability problems that the community now faced; while CSG blamed hippies and radical approaches to sustainability for deterring people from taking action on sustainability problems. Different GSAs may also frame solutions to sustainability problems differently. For example, members of Green Action

believed that an alternative economic system was needed to ensure sustainability, and expressed this belief through their framing (see Chapter 6). Members of Congleton Sustainability Group however, believed that sustainability problems could be solved within the current economic system, which they expressed through their framing of the issues (see Chapter 5). Members use frames that enable them to take a particular stance or tell a particular story so that some solutions are excluded or seen as inappropriate. This thesis is the first piece of research that shows how different GSAs frame sustainability issues differently. It is understandable that GSAs would frame sustainability problems and solutions differently given that sustainability is a contested concept (see section 2.1 of the Literature Review).

While some evidence of motivational framing was found for all three case studies, this was fairly limited. Surprisingly, there was little evidence of language being used to communicate the severity or urgency of the problems that the groups were trying to address. GSAs, therefore, could play a more active role motivational framing in order to mobilise members of the community.

Research Question 2: What effect does framing have on how GSAs approach the delivery of sustainability?

Through the research undertaken for this thesis I found that the framing of sustainability issues affects the resources and strategies used by a GSA in delivering its projects. The diagnostic framing that articulates the sustainability problem constrains the range of solutions that can be advocated, and the resources and strategies for delivering solutions. For example, as Green Action framed the mainstream capitalist system as to blame for sustainability problems it did not frame solutions as coming from within that system, or use strategies and resources associated with that system. As GSAs frame sustainability issues differently, they use different types of resources and strategies to deliver sustainability solutions.

As explained in the Discussion chapter of this thesis, it is not just framing that affects the resources and strategies used. The collective identities of the GSA, and the culture that it draws on, also affect the resources and strategies used. GSAs use strategies and resources that coincide with the group's collective

identity (members' shared understanding of who they are and what the group is trying to achieve) and the culture that the group expresses through its work (values, beliefs, narratives, and such). In the case study of Green Action for example, as the group had an "alternative" collective identity, expressed "alternative" values, and framed the solution to sustainability problems as an "alternative" economic system, it used resources and strategies that were perceived to be "alternative". This is important as existing theory suggests that in order to be successful in mobilising people, there should not be apparent contradictions between what the group says and what it does (Benford and Snow 2000).

In researching the effect that framing has on the strategies and resources used by GSAs, I found that strategies and resources also affect framing. The use of a particular type of resource and strategy (e.g. alternative), conveys the message that a particular (alternative) solution to sustainability problems is needed. I have brought together the five concepts of framing, strategies, resources, collective identity, and culture from the social movement literature and demonstrated that they have a recursive relationship in the collective action of GSAs (See Chapter 7). Drawing on one of these elements enables and constrains the use of the other elements. In their collective action, GSAs draw on all of the elements simultaneously. The framework provided in the Discussion chapter, "Recursive Elements of Collective Action by GSAs," explains this relationship (see section 7.3).

Research Question 3: Why do different GSAs frame sustainability issues differently?

As explained in answering Research Question 1, different GSAs frame sustainability issues differently. Sustainability is a contested concept (see section 2.1 of the literature review) so it is understandable that different GSAs highlight different problems and solutions in their framing of sustainability issues. The framework presented in the Discussion chapter can help other researchers to understand why different GSAs frame sustainability issues differently. Different GSAs have different collective identities, draw on different cultural elements in their work, and view different resources and strategies as

appropriate to use in addressing sustainability problems. For example, in Chapter 5 of this thesis I examine the case study of CSG which had a professional collective identity (oppose to radical), mainstream values, and thought that resources and strategies that enabled minor modifications to consumption practices would bring about sustainability; this led to a “sensible solutions” frame being used to articulate the solution. GSAs use frames that they think will resonate with members of the community and their own members; members of CSG assumed that, like them, others would be mobilised by the “sensible solutions” frame.

Members of different GSAs have different perceptions of what frames will resonate with members of the community based on their use of different types of elements in the framework. As demonstrated in Chapter 4 of this thesis, AAT predominantly used a frame that communicated the need to solve the community's socio-economic problems over another frame that articulated the need to tackle climate change. This was because of members' shared perception that the former frame would be more effective than the latter at mobilising members of the community. Other GSAs however, may predominantly use a climate change diagnostic framing if they perceive that this will motivate members of the community. Therefore, the role of perception is important in understanding why different GSAs frame sustainability issues differently.

Finally, GSAs use different frames because - in addition to their perception of certain appropriate resources and strategies, the group's collective identity, and the culture that it draws on - some frames are only appropriate to use in a certain time and space. Certain frames will only resonate with some communities at a given time. Using a diagnostic framing that articulates local socio-economic sustainability problems is only appropriate if these problems exist in the community at the time the frame is being used. It would not be appropriate to use this frame if these problems were not apparent at the time the frame was being used. Awel Aman Tawe, for example, used an “impact of mine closures” frame as the community was suffering from social and economic problems caused by local coal mines being closed. It would not have been

appropriate for the other two case studies to use this frame because they were not based in ex-coal mining communities.

What role do GSAs play in framing sustainability issues to mobilise community members to take action on sustainability?

Having answered the three research questions it is possible to comment on the role that GSAs play in framing sustainability issues to mobilise members of the community to take action on sustainability. This role that is played by GSAs has been under-researched; researchers have mainly focussed on their role in delivering practice change, grassroots innovations, and skills for sustainable communities (see literature review). Without GSAs playing a role in framing sustainability issues, people may not be mobilised to engage in projects that aim to deliver such outcomes.

Members of GSAs are “framing agents” (a term borrowed from Snow and Benford 1992). They actively frame sustainability issues to mobilise people in the local community; this thesis has demonstrated that they do this through diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing. The prognostic framing by GSAs argues that the community can deliver the solution. GSAs therefore, not only frame the solution, they deliver it. This is different to many other social movement organisations, in which, actors stage protests to persuade authorities to deliver solutions to a social problem (Taylor and Van Dyke 2004). However, different GSAs, in framing the issues, make different arguments as to the role they and the community should play in delivering the solution and what type of solution is needed. These differences occur because different GSAs have different collective identities, draw differently on culture, and perceive different resources and strategies as appropriate to use – all of which contributes to the framing of sustainability problems and solutions. The framing of sustainability issues affects the projects that the GSA delivers, and therefore, the choice sets that members of the community have for contributing to sustainability.

GSAs embed themselves in the community (whether geographical or otherwise), and members frame sustainability issues in a way that they believe will resonate with members of that community. This assumes some level of homogeneity in the community. There is an assumption that there are people

“like us” that will respond positively to the group’s framing of sustainability issues and agree with how members say problems should be addressed. Of course, communities are not homogenous (Tonn and MacGregor 1998) and so GSAs are likely to only mobilise some people in the community. This is an important insight into the role that GSAs play in contributing to sustainability. One of the ways that GSAs attempt to mobilise the community, is to create a sense of community through their framing of sustainability problems and solutions. Examples of this were found in the three case studies presented in this thesis. AAT drew on the collective identity of the community as an “ex-coal mining community”, with its associated problems, and expressed this through the frames it used in order to construct a collective problem that needs a collective solution. Likewise, CSG drew on the collective identity of “residents of Congleton” in arguing that residents needed to come together to address the “impact of climate change on Congleton”. Finally, Green Action created the collective identity of an “educational community”, within the wider educational community of the University. Through framing, GSAs argue that the community has agency and can enable social change for sustainability. However, a GSA’s framing of sustainability issues can exclude some members of the community. CSG for example, in framing the sustainability problem to be addressed, criticised hippies and their radical approach; therefore, they excluded members of the community with a hippy identity.

This thesis has shown that GSAs frame sustainability, not just by what they explicitly say in their communications, but also through the resources and strategies that they use in their collective action, the collective identities that they construct, and the cultural elements that they draw on in their work. Indeed, framing can be said to be made up of all these different elements. These elements have a recursive relationship as they cannot be separated from one another. An understanding of the use of one of the elements, depends on understanding the use of the other elements as GSAs draw on all of the simultaneously.

Clearly GSAs are mobilising members of their community and delivering projects that could contribute to sustainability, as demonstrated by the three

case studies presented in this thesis. This suggests that they have been successful at aligning their frames with the concerns of some members of the community. However, some GSAs may not need to mobilise large numbers of people to participate in the group, as found in the case study of AAT. Rather, they may need to effectively frame the issues to gain support from the community for their projects to be legitimate and to mobilise people to take action on sustainability as individuals.

In conclusion, GSAs perform an important role in framing sustainability issues to mobilise members of the community. Members have a perception of frames that are likely to resonate with the community, though this perception is based on the group's shared understandings of sustainability problems and appropriate solutions. Understanding how and why different GSAs frame sustainability issues differently can explain why they take different approaches and deliver a diverse range of projects for sustainability.

8.2 Contributions of this thesis

8.2.1 Contributions to the literature on grassroots sustainability associations

(1) This thesis increases understanding of how and why different GSAs frame sustainability issues to mobilise members of the community to participate in or support the group and to practice sustainably.

This thesis has demonstrated that how and why different GSAs frame sustainability issues differently depends upon the interrelated concepts of strategies, resources, collective identity and culture. The strategies and resources that GSAs view as appropriate to use in delivering solutions to sustainability solutions, along with the group's collective identity and the culture that they draw on all contributes to the framing of sustainability problems and solutions. This thesis therefore, makes a significant contribution to the limited literature on GSAs and framing (see section 2.4). It was possible to make this contribution as I undertook the first multi-case study to extensively examine how and why GSAs use different framings.

This thesis complements the existing literature on GSAs and practice change, grassroots innovation, and skills for sustainable communities by demonstrating how GSAs with such aims attempt to mobilise members of the community for sustainable social change. This is important because people need to be mobilised in order for the solution (practice change, grassroots innovation, skills) to be delivered. The existing literature tends to be concerned with how people engage with the resources that GSAs provide rather than how they attempt to mobilise people to participate in or support the group.

It further complements the literature on GSAs and practice change, grassroots innovation, and skills for sustainable communities, as examining how and why GSAs frame sustainability issues uncovers the plurality of these groups. For example, “alternative” practice change may be enabled by one GSA while “mainstream” practice change may be enabled by another, depending on how they have framed the sustainability problem to be addressed.

(2) This thesis provides an understanding of how the framing of sustainability issues influences the strategies and resources that GSAs use.

In being the first study to demonstrate that the framing of sustainability issues by GSAs influences the strategies and resources that they use to create sustainable social change it makes several important insights relevant to the literature on GSAs and practice change, grassroots innovation, and skills for sustainable communities. With regards to the literature on GSAs and practice change, researchers coming from this perspective are concerned with what people do (practice) as a result of engaging with a GSA and what GSAs provide that enables practice change; they are not concerned with *why* the group provides particular resources and strategies for practice change. This thesis demonstrates that GSAs provide particular resources and strategies in their approach to sustainability because of their framing of sustainability problems and solutions. The Discussion chapter (Chapter 7) has gone further to demonstrate that culture and collective identity also influence the strategies and resources used. Finally, this thesis has focussed on a broader range of resources and strategies than just those that directly lead to practice change. It

has examined those that are used by GSAs in delivering projects that are intended to lead to practice change.

The grassroots innovation literature tends to be outward looking, concerned with issues such as the scaling up of grassroots projects to the mainstream. Seyfang et al (2014) for example, examined resources and strategies shared amongst a network of grassroots innovations and intermediaries (external working). This thesis complements the literature on grassroots innovation as it demonstrates how framing affects resources and strategies used *within* GSAs when delivering projects (including innovative projects) at the local level.

This thesis provides insights that are relevant to the literature on skills for sustainable communities by providing an understanding of *why* GSAs take a skills approach and recognise certain resources and strategies as learning resources and strategies. The framing of the sustainability problem influences the framing of skills acquisition as a solution and the need for resources and strategies that enable learning. Unlike the literature on skills for sustainable communities, this thesis is not primarily concerned with what resources and strategies GSAs provide that enable an individual to learn skills. Rather it is concerned with how the members of a GSA collectively use and develop resources and strategies in establishing and delivering their projects and running the GSA.

(3) This thesis provides a framework for understanding the collective action of GSAs that builds on previous work in the social movement literature on framing, strategies, resources, culture, and collective identity.

The Discussion chapter (chapter 7) of this thesis contributes a framework called “Recursive Elements of Collective Action by GSAs” that builds on previous work in the social movement literature on framing, strategies, resources, culture, and collective identity (Smithey 2009; Polletta and Jasper 2001; Benford and Snow 2000; Jasper 1997; Hunt *et al.* 1994; Benford 1993; Snow and Benford 1992; Gamson 1992; Tarrow 1992; Melucci 1989; Snow and Benford 1988; Snow *et al.* 1986; Swidler 1986). In developing a theory following analysis of the role that framing plays in the use of resources and strategies in the three case studies, I found that the concepts of collective identity and culture also play important

roles. The framework presented in the Discussion chapter demonstrates that the elements of framing, resources, strategies, culture, and collective identity have a recursive relationship in collective action by GSAs. GSAs draw on the five elements simultaneously and the use of one of these elements affects the use of the other elements. For example, a GSA that has an “alternative” collective identity is likely to mobilise alternative cultural values, frame the need for alternative solutions to sustainability problems, and use strategies and resources that are seen to be alternative. This contributes to knowledge of how the work of GSAs is enabled and constrained as members view some types of element (e.g. types of resource) as appropriate to use depending on the use of the other elements. Although the concepts of framing, strategies, resources, collective identity and culture are discussed in the social movement literature they have not previously been found to have a recursive relationship.

The framework “Recursive elements of collective action by GSAs” complements research that takes a different perspective to examining GSAs, such as research on practice change, grassroots innovation, and skills for sustainable communities. The literature that treats GSAs as enabling practice change is concerned with what resources GSAs provide that enable practice change rather than what elements are involved in developing and delivering projects that are intended to enable practice change. The framework “Recursive elements of collective action” however, demonstrates the internal collective processes that lead to sustainability projects including those that lead to practice change. Examining the elements of framing, collective identity, and culture that are included in the framework, may explain why GSAs with the same aim (practice change) use different resources and strategies.

As the framework represents the internal collective processes of delivering sustainability projects at the local level it can also inform the literature on grassroots innovation, which has been more concerned with external processes such as niche formation and the scaling up of grassroots innovations to the mainstream. It can be used to understand what different grassroots innovations take different forms.

The framework also complements the literature on skills for sustainable communities, which is concerned with how skills acquisition occurs. By taking a step back, the framework can be used to understand how and why projects for skills acquisition come about. While this set of literature focusses primarily on human resources (skills), the framework can be used to examine the relationship between human resources and the GSA's strategies, framing of sustainability issues, collectively identity, and embodied cultural elements. It can also be used to understand why a particular type of skill (e.g. skills for "alternative" consumption) is being promoted due to the use of the other elements in the framework.

The three sets of literature discussed that take a practice change, grassroots innovation and skills for sustainable communities approach to understanding the activities of GSAs largely ignore the issue of how GSAs attempt to mobilise members of the community to engage in the group or adopt more sustainable behaviours. The framework therefore, fills a gap in knowledge about GSAs as it demonstrates that GSA members attempt to mobilise members of the wider community through their framing of sustainability issues, using strategies and resources that they see as appropriate, constructing a collective identity either for the GSA itself or the wider community, and by drawing on cultural elements such as values, narratives, and beliefs.

8.2.2 Wider implications of this thesis

This thesis has implications for the literature on GSAs which takes a practice change, grassroots innovation, or skills for sustainable communities perspective. It has taken a different approach to these sets of literature by looking broadly at the internal collective processes of GSAs mobilising communities and delivering projects, rather than looking narrowly at processes that lead to skills acquisition or practice change, or focussing on external processes over internal processes as the literature on grassroots innovation does. This has enabled me to contribute the framework Recursive Elements of Collective Action by GSAs that can be used by researchers coming from these perspectives to understand the internal workings of GSAs, as discussed in section 7.4.

An important question that this thesis opens up is “what limit is there to replica GSAs and projects such as those run by various Transition Initiatives?”. As Transition Initiatives subscribe to the same framing and use similar resources and strategies in their work, the Initiatives are likely to only resonate with a particular segment of the community in which they are based (for an analysis of Transition framings see Coke 2013). They exclude other members of the community who do not share the Transition framings of sustainability problems and solutions or agree with the strategies and resources used in delivering the solution. Indeed, a criticism of the Transition Movement has been that it attracts mainly white, middle-aged, middle-class members of the community and excludes others (Trapese 2008). It was clear from the case studies presented in this thesis that the GSAs engaged in “boundary framing” (Hunt *et al.* 1994, p.194), through which they excluded some members of the wider community from participating in the GSA. In the case of CSG, members problematised hippies and radical approaches to sustainability in their diagnostic framing (see section 5.2.1.2), meaning that people with a hippy identity or who identified with radical approaches were unlikely to join the Group. Similarly, Green Action’s prognostic framing of the need for an alternative approach to sustainability (see section 6.2.2.1) may have deterred some members of the University who prefer more mainstream approaches. As sustainability is a contested concept, GSAs cannot appeal to everyone. This leads to the question, “who’s version of sustainable development is being put into practice?” These issues have implications for those coming from the grassroots innovation perspective that argue replication of projects could potentially enable wider diffusion of sociotechnical practices for sustainability (for example, Seyfang and Haxeltine 2012). They also have implications for the literature on practice change and skills for sustainable communities in understanding the types of practice and skills that are being promoted and replicated by GSAs, and who is promoting and replicating them.

Leading on from the discussion above, this thesis also opens up questions about whether there is such thing as a successful frame that can be replicated in different communities. How well a frame resonates depends, in part, on the

community it is addressing. The symbolic interactionist methodology drawn on throughout this thesis is concerned with meaning creation. It can be concluded that some frames will be more successful at mobilising some communities than others because of the meaning that they have for members of the particular communities. In the case of AAT for example, the “impact of mine closures” diagnostic framing seemed to motivate members of the local community more than the “threat of climate change” diagnostic framing because they were more concerned about local social sustainability issues than global environmental problems. In communities where there does not seem to be social problems, a climate change diagnostic framing may have more resonance. Indeed, given the symbolic interactionist methodology drawn on, what one GSA considers to be a “success” in terms of framing may differ to another GSA.

8.2.3 Contributions to the social movement literature

The theoretical framework “recursive elements of collective action by GSAs” developed in this thesis contributes to the social movement literature (see Figure 7.4). It brings together the concepts (or elements) of framing, strategies, resources, collective identity, and culture from a range of social movement literature to form a framework that can be used to better understand the dynamics of collective action. It demonstrates the recursive relationship between these elements as the mobilisation of one element affects how the other elements can be drawn on. The framework can be used by researchers to better understand why actors engaged in collective action make certain decisions, for example, about how to frame a social problem or which strategies to use.

The social movement literature that discusses the different elements in the framework is currently fragmented in its treatment of these concepts as there is a lack of literature on the relationship between these different elements, which limits our understanding of collective action. Researchers are often primarily concerned with how just two of the elements relate to each other; for example, Smithey (2009) is primarily concerned with the relationship between collective identity and strategies and Hunt *et al* (1994) discuss the relationship between framing and the construction of collective identities. A review of the existing

literature found that there have been suggestions of relationships between framing, strategies, culture, and collective identity (see section 2.5) but there is lack of understanding of how such a relationship is recursive. Also, this set of literature overlooks the role of resources in this relationship and how the range of appropriate resources that actors can draw on is enabled and constrained by their mobilisation of the other elements. I drew on the work of Jasper (1997) as, while it is not concerned with framing, there is some overlap with the other concepts used in this thesis. Jasper argues that the “dimensions” of culture, biography (which includes identity), strategies and resources are “irreducible” as they affect one another (1997, p.43) (see section 2.5). The framework I have developed unites different sets of literature on social movements to provide a more holistic understanding of collective action. Placing the elements of the framework within time and space demonstrates that there are constraints on social movement actors in terms of what is available to them and what is seen to be appropriate to use in a given time and space.

Given that the five elements in the framework can be found in the literature on social movements, the framework could be of use for understanding different types of social movement organisations (SMOs), not just GSAs. To borrow Swindler’s (1986) terminology, these different elements make up a “toolkit” from which actors can draw on in collective action. The framework then, can act as a guide for researchers. The framework demonstrates that researchers in the social movement field that are concerned with one of the elements need to also examine the other elements in order to fully understand how and why collective action takes different forms. Researchers concerned with framing for example, need to give consideration to the elements of strategies, resources, collective identity and culture to understand how and why certain frames are used, and the implications of using those frames.

The typologies of each element that I have developed from my empirical findings also contribute to the literature and may act as a guide for social movement researchers to assess their case studies against these typologies. I have contributed to the literature by finding that GSAs draw on a wide range of strategies, whereas the social movement literature is limited as it usually

focuses on strategies for influencing policy-makers and by-standing public; future research may compare the strategies outlined in the framework to the strategies of other types of SMO. This thesis also contributes to the literature on collective action frames as I have developed a typology of resources that could be used to guide future research as the relationship between framing and resources has been understudied. That is not to say that I expect researchers that examine SMOs other than GSAs will find evidence of all of the types of resources and strategies that I have found. Indeed, not all types of resources and strategies were found in every one of my three case studies of GSAs. Rather the typologies offer a starting point for social movement researchers, and they can further develop these typologies through their research.

As the concept of framing has been central to this thesis, it should be noted that this thesis contributes to this strand of social movement literature in particular. While Benford and Snow (2000) argue that the diagnostic framing constrains the prognostic framing and the range of appropriate strategies, I have demonstrated that the relationship between framing and strategies is recursive as the strategies used also contribute to the framing process. Similarly, the resources that are mobilised are an outcome of framing and also contribute to the framing of solutions. This finding makes a significant contribution, as researchers concerned with framing tend to neglect the importance of resources. Finally, it builds on Benford's (1993) work on the use of vocabulary in motivational framing as I found that actors may use language that conveys certainty (of a problem or solution); certainty has not previously been recognised as a type of vocabulary that is used in motivational framing. The framework that I have developed could be used by researchers interested in framing and SMOs to understand how and why actors frame issues in a particular way and to understand why different SMOs frame issues differently.

8.3 Practical uses of the framework for GSAs

While GSAs may be constrained in their delivery of sustainable development, some members of communities are being mobilised and a diverse range of projects that could make a positive contribution to sustainability are being

planned and executed as GSAs draw on unique configurations of the recursive elements of collective action. *Understanding the recursive relationship between the elements of collective action may increase the capacity of GSAs.* If GSAs wanted to further increase their agency and be more successful at mobilising potential members/supporters to engage with the association and to perform practices that could contribute to sustainability it could help to evaluate the current use of the different elements and the meaning that is being created through their use. Similarly, if GSAs wanted to increase their capacity in terms of the resources and strategies available to them it would be useful to consider how the perception of these is currently constrained by the other elements. Comparing multiple case studies of GSAs and their use of the different elements may give GSAs ideas as to how they might use the elements differently and/or more effectively and how they might be adopted to their own circumstances. That is not to say that all GSAs can take the same lines of action; some cultural elements, identities, frames, strategies and resources will not be appropriate for some GSAs. However, it may be possible to modify, transform or extend the use of some elements to mobilise more resources and/or members of the community. Care must be taken to ensure that doing so does not alienate existing members and supporters.

8.4 Recommendations for future research

Examining how and why GSAs frame sustainability issues has raised a number of questions that could be answered by further research. The first set of questions relates to the communities in which GSAs are based. One such question is *how do members of the community interpret and respond to a GSAs' framing of the issues?* While this thesis has analysed interview data from members of GSAs, this new question would require research with members of the wider community in which a GSA is based. It would be beneficial for GSAs themselves to understand how their framings are interpreted and whether the message is decoded as intended by those the GSA hopes to mobilise. This leads on to a second related question: *how can GSAs more effectively frame sustainability issues to mobilise members of the community to participate in the*

GSA and practice more sustainably? By this I mean, what is the perspective of members of the community (or perhaps segments of the community) as to how a GSA in their locality might more appropriately frame sustainability issues?

The second set of questions relates to funding bodies that provide financial resources to some GSAs. The third question that could be addressed by future research has been informed by a discussion that I had with a member of staff at AAT who explained that while he predominantly used a “community development” frame to convey AAT’s aims to the community, he used a “climate change” frame when applying for funding as he perceived that funding bodies were more accepting of this framing. This raises the question, *how and why do GSAs use different frames to communicate with different audiences?* This leads on to the final question to be addressed by future research: *what frames do funders of GSAs use and what implications does this have for the work of GSAs?* Taylor Aiken (2014) for example, demonstrates that the Climate Challenge Fund (CCF) established to support Scottish GSAs used a particular framing of community as the solution to climate change, which then affected the form that GSAs took, their aims and activities in order to successfully secure funding. He concludes that CCF’s framing of community led to funded GSAs becoming homogenised. Hauxwell-Baldwin (2013) also found that the Department of Energy and Climate Change’s (DECC) framing of the role of community in relation to the Low Carbon Communities Challenge differed from how the funded GSAs saw the role of community. He argues that DECC’s framing “offered community members a limited and largely ineffective means by which to encourage pro-environmental behaviour change” (ibid, abstract). Future research then, might consider how the frames used by funders affect the frames used by GSAs, and their strategies and resources for contributing to sustainable development.

Finally, researching more case studies of GSAs might result in more categories of elements being found (more categories of resources or strategies, for example), which could further aid our understanding of the role of GSAs in contributing to sustainable development.

8.5 Reflections on the research process and final thoughts

On reflection, writing this thesis may have been a less time-consuming process if I had avoided using a grounded theory research approach and instead begun with an existing theory to guide my research. Instead, I went through a lengthy cycle of data analysis and theory development as I developed my own concepts from the data. However, this process is one of the strengths of my thesis as not starting off with a preconceived theory to guide the interview questions meant participants were able to tell me their story in their own words. Interviewing participants was, for me, the highlight of the research process. I admired the passion and commitment of the participants who not only recalled their positive experiences but also opened up about their struggles and concerns. The concepts of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing (Benford and Snow 2000; Snow and Benford 1988) have enabled me to present the data collected on these experiences in a structured way, and I would recommend that other researchers use them as a structuring tool.

Although I have used concepts from the social movement literature, I only turned to this literature because the concepts had begun to emerge from my data. Perhaps using the social movement literature alone has meant that I have lost some of the richness that could possibly have been gained by integrating other approaches that have been used to understand GSAs (such as practice theory). However, the set of social movement literature that I have drawn on has been valuable for understanding the *internal processes* of GSAs delivering sustainability projects in the community. Examining how GSAs frame their activities has enabled me to demonstrate the GSAs' own understanding of their objectives, rather than how those objectives been framed by academics.

I have myself been a frustrated member of two different GSAs prior to and during the process of writing this thesis. In both cases the core members had struggled to maintain the motivation of existing members and mobilise potential members. I had witnessed projects come to a halt as resources were withdrawn or ran out and strategies to cope with such stresses were lacking. At the end of

the process of writing this thesis I have a renewed optimism for the role of GSAs in mobilising communities and contributing to sustainable development.

During the research process I met many enthusiastic and committed members of GSAs who were mobilising others in their community and developing creative strategies and projects for contributing to sustainability. However, sometimes they came up against external complications that hindered their progress. Take the case study of AAT for example, where members first developed the idea of a community-owned wind farm in 1998 but due to difficulties securing funding and planning permission had still not seen the wind farm erected by the time I finished my research in 2014. Also, CSG had not been able to go ahead with its hydropower project because members had been forced to return the funding that they had secured because of state aid rules. Both of these projects were intended to generate renewable energy and also financial resources for the GSA to be able to deliver further sustainability projects. While GSAs play an important role in framing sustainability problems and solutions to mobilise people to take action, often large scale community projects require support from policy-makers and funders. Even Green Action, whose members were reluctant to accumulate financial resources, received support from the students' union in terms of rent-free space for the Food Co-op and small grants for projects.

What was particularly inspiring was the perseverance of members in continuing to work with their communities to deliver grassroots projects that could contribute to local and global sustainability despite the setbacks that they faced. It was evident that the GSAs were mobilising some members of the community and there was a feeling of optimism from all of the case studies that they could make a real difference. I hope that this thesis helps other researchers and GSAs themselves to understand how they might mobilise communities and contribute to sustainability in the future.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire used for sampling participants from Green Action

GREEN ACTION MEMBERS: Complete this survey to be entered into a free prize draw to win some fair trade/organic goodies!

My name's Sarah Bradbury and I'm a PhD student in the School of Earth & Environment at the University of Leeds. I'm conducting research into sustainability groups such as Green Action. I'd be very grateful if you could complete this questionnaire about your involvement with Green Action.

Questionnaires and consent forms need to be submitted by **18th November 2011** if you want to be entered into the prize draw. Please email me if you have any questions about the survey or any other aspect of my research:

s.j.bradbury@leeds.ac.uk

If you submit the questionnaire then you must also complete the consent forms (attached). Please note that the first copy of the consent form entitled "Researcher's Copy" must be submitted with the survey. You should keep the second copy of the consent form entitled "Participant's Copy" for your records.

1. Name: _____

Age: _____

Gender:

Female

Male

2. How long have you been a member of Green Action?

Less than 1 month

1-3 months

4-11 months

1-2 years

2 years +

3. Which Green Action projects and activities have you volunteered with? (You can select more than one option).

Food Co-op	<input type="checkbox"/>	Alternative Library	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allotment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign/Protest	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stall at Fresher's Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workshop	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please state): _____

4. How actively involved in Green Action are you?

- a) I am a member but I have never volunteered with Green Action
- b) I have volunteered once with Green Action
- c) I occasionally volunteer with Green Action
(Less than once a month)
- d) I regularly volunteer with Green Action
(Once a month or more)

5. Would you be willing to be interviewed about your membership with Green Action for PhD research?

Yes No

6. Would you like to be entered into the prize draw?

Yes No

7. If you answered yes to question 5 or 6, please provide your contact details below.

Email Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE THE CONSENT FORM OVERLEAF

Appendix 2: Interview schedule for Green Action Co-ordinators

Introductory questions

1. Please can you give me some background information about Green Action?
 - History
 - Projects/how they came about
 - Aims/purpose & Values/ethos
 - Radical Roots gathering
 - Current challenges
 - Ideas & inspiration
 - Organisation (Hubs)
 - Decision making (Consensus) – How do people learn about consensus? Workshop?
 - What purpose does it fulfil for members/non-members?
2. Can you tell me more about the project that you're responsible for and about your responsibilities?
 - How do they feel about the responsibilities – personal costs
 - Learn or get ideas or advice from other groups
 - Assigning members to tasks
 - Why is the project important in terms of the aims of Green Action?
 - Obligations (explicit/implicit)
 - Expectations (explicit/implicit)
 - Co-op skills share - Sustain

Motivations/expectations

3. Why do you think people want to join Green Action? And what about (the project)?
 - Group aims
 - Other reasons
 - What are the benefits?
 - What about expectations that they may have?

4. What were your personal motivations for joining? What about your motivations for taking on the project?
 - Aims/values of the group
 - Resources to act sustainably
 - How it makes you feel
 - Anything else
 - Why? Where did these motivations come from?
 - Why collective action?
 - Expectations? Why did you form these expectations? How did they fit with reality?
 - Have motivations/expectations changed?
 - Intentions about being actively involved
 - Intentions about remaining a member
5. What would you say are the personal costs associated with being a member?
 - Tangible/material
 - Intangible

Resources

6. Can you tell me about the resources that the project (e.g. allotment, food co-op, workshop) needs to be able to meet its aims/purpose?
 - Members
 - Money
 - Equipment/stock
 - Information
 - External contacts
 - Communications
 - Anything else?
 - How important is the space?
7. What do members contribute to (the project) that helps to achieve the aims of the project?
 - What about in terms of accessing resources for the group?
 - What about in terms of managing resources?

- What about in terms of meeting the purpose of the allotment?
- Are members with something specific actively sought out? Why/why not?

8. Can you tell me about the resources that Green Action in general needs to be able to meet its aims/purpose?

- Members
- Money
- Equipment
- Information
- External contacts
- Communications
- Other
- Space – meetings (pub), projects, web, other?

9. What do members bring to Green Action more generally?

- What about in terms of accessing resources for the group?
- What about in terms of managing resources?
- So how do members help Green Action achieve its purpose?

10. How does Green Action make use of members in trying to meet its purpose/aims?

- Ask members about skills/knowledge etc
- Let members assign themselves/Members are assigned
- Encouragement
- Why work this way

11. How important are:

- Financial resources for achieving the aims of Green Action?
- Communications...
- Contacts...
- Members...
- Space...
- Anything else?

Learning

12. Can you tell me about knowledge and skills needed for achieving Green Action's aims?

- The importance of this
 - Where knowledge/skills come from?
- 13. Can you tell me about any learning that takes place that helps the organisation's aims?**
- Anyone responsible for learning?
 - What resources are needed for learning?
 - Procedures for learning (facilitated, promoted, rewarded)?
 - What do members learn from each other? How? How important is this?
 - Does the group reflect on its experiences? At what level?

Attracting/retaining members

- 14. What problems has (the project) had with members in terms of not been able to attract enough members or members leaving? What about Green Action in general?**
- What is done to attract/retain members? At project level & organisation level
 - What would more members mean? Asset or hindrance?

15. Do you have members that do not actively volunteer?

- Such as?
- What stops them being active?

Leadership/People with responsibilities

16. What do leaders/organisers bring to the group that help Green Action to achieve its aims?

- And yourself in particular?
- Anything else?
- In terms of accessing resources for the group?

Meeting the group's aims/purpose

17. Can you tell me about Green Action's ability to meet its purpose?

- Opportunities/strengths
- Constraints/weaknesses
- What else is needed/what changes?

- Resources
- Members

Closing questions

18. Is there anything else that you would like to add?
19. Is there anyone I should talk to who has or who has previously had responsibilities for projects/activities?
20. Is there anything that you would like to ask me?

Appendix 3: Interview schedule for Green Action members

Introductory questions

1. Can you tell me about when you first joined Green Action?
 - How did you find out about Green Action?
 - What was it like?
2. Can you tell me about the projects and activities that you have volunteered for?
 - How you were involved
 - Why volunteer for these projects
 - Self-assigned roles/GSA assigned roles

Organisation

3. Can you tell me about how Green Action is organised?
 - Structure – hierarchy/hubs
 - Decision making (consensus) – well informed/ill informed
 - Ideas/inspiration
 - Do they like this or not? Does it affect the decision to join/stay?

Motivations/expectations

4. Prior to joining, what did you think were the aims & purpose of Green Action? And the Values?
 - And now?
5. What were your initial motivations for becoming a member of Green Action?
 - Motivations other than aims/values of group
 - Resources to act sustainably
 - How you feel

- Why are these their motivations? Where do they come from?
 - Intentions about being actively involved and remaining a member
 - How did you see yourself contributing to the group? And in reality?
 - Why collective action?
6. What did you initially think the benefits were of joining Green Action?
- Resources (inc. information) to behave sustainably (organisational, people, infrastructural)
 - Any benefits that are only available to members
 - Feelings about yourself (sense of purpose, sense of duty, satisfaction, esteem)
 - Other expectations
 - Why did they form these expectations?
 - Did any these have an effect on your decision to join?
 - Expectations met/unmet/exceeded
7. How have your motivations and expectations changed?
- Is there anything that you believe Green Action? that you are obliged to receive by being a member or by actively participating?
 - Explicit/implicit
8. What does expectations does Green Action? have of its members?
- Explicit/implicit
9. What are the costs of volunteering with Green Action?
- Benefits outweigh costs?
- 10. What do you think would encourage more people to become members? Get actively involved?**

Resources

11. What did you think of Green Action's resources before you joined?

- Resources that you would find useful, e.g. to act sustainably
- Finances
- External contacts such as politicians or other organisations
- Members
- Space

12. Did any of the group's resources affect your decision to join or affect how actively involved you are with the group?

- How important are the various resources

Leadership/People with responsibilities

13. What do the people responsible for projects bring to Green Action that enables the group to achieve its aims or purpose?

- Skills
- Knowledge
- Support
- Encouragement
- Other

Learning

14. Can you tell me about knowledge and skills needed for achieving Green Action's aims?

- For adaptation/creativity/other
- The importance of this
- Where knowledge/skills come from?

15. Can you tell me about any learning that takes place that helps the group's aims?

- What resources are needed for learning?
- Procedures for learning (facilitated, promoted, rewarded)?

- What do members learn from each other? How? How important is this?
- Where does learning happen?
- Does the group reflect on its experiences? At what level?

Meeting the group's aims/purpose

16. Can you tell me what you think about how well Green Action achieves its purpose?

- Opportunities/strengths
- Constraints/weaknesses

17. In your opinion, what additional things are needed for Green Action to be more successful in achieving its purpose? What changes need to be made?

- More resources or different types of resources
- Anything about the way members are involved?

18. What other changes or additional things would you like to see?

- Anything in terms of meeting motivations/expectations?

Closing questions

19. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

20. Is there anything that you would like to ask me?

Appendix 4: Interview schedule for Congleton Sustainability Group co-ordinators

Co-ordinators interview questions

Background Info

Can you give me some background info on CSG?

How it started/ Projects/Aims (SD)/organisation/challenges/membership
problems/Support from Dane Housing/Support from Partnership

Meeting in the boardroom – does this affect how CSG meetings are run? What
happens at meetings? Where do sub-groups meet?

Projects

Can you tell me about the projects that you've been involved in?

Can you tell me about your role as co-ordinator? How did you come to take on
that position?

Who else is involved in the project and what do they do? How is that decided?

What's it like working at the orchard/apple juice stalls/commenting group etc?

How do ideas become projects? Is the person with the idea the one who takes
on the project?

Resources

Can you tell me about any resources that the project needs?

Members/money/equipment/information/external
contacts/communications/space/anything else?

How important is it to have volunteers for the project/sub group?

How important is having space to carry out the project?

Human Resources

How do volunteers help CSG to achieve its aims?

What skills and knowledge do people bring to the project/sub group? What about expertise? Generic skills? Are these shared with others? How does this help CSG?

How important are the skills and knowledge of volunteers to CSG?

What else do volunteers bring to CSG other than skills and knowledge?

Particular qualities? How important are those?

Anything else? Contacts or networking/funding/support/friendships?

How do the skills/knowledge needed change over time?

CSG is largely made up of professionals – how does this impact how CSG works? And the projects that it runs?

What about the paid position of manager at Beartown foods?

Out of everything that volunteers bring, what's most important?

What skills/knowledge is CSG currently lacking? Why is this a problem?

Co-ordinators

What does the Chair bring to the group? Why is that role important?

What do co-ordinators of the sub-groups bring to CSG? Do they have any particular knowledge or skills? Particular qualities?

What about yourself?

What are the most important qualities, skills, or knowledge that co-ordinators need?

Why are the co-ordinator roles important?

As a co-ordinator, do you feel obliged to provide anything to other volunteers?

What do volunteers expect from you as a co-ordinator?

What do you expect do you expect from volunteers?

Learning

Can you tell me about any learning that occurs in CSG? What about in the sub-group?

How are skills and knowledge learnt (formally/informally)?

What have you personally learnt? What about in terms of sustainable behaviours? Who did you learn this from? In what context?

Do you share what you have learnt with others in CSG? Outside CSG?

What does CSG teach the wider community? How? What about your sub-group?

Motivations

What were your motivations for joining CSG? And taking on the projects(s)?

Why collective action?

Why did you think that CSG could fulfil those motivations?

Are your motivations being met? What does CSG provide to fulfil those motivations?

Why do you continue to volunteer?

What are the personal costs of volunteering with CSG?

How do you feel about your experience with CSG?

What is CSG obliged to provide you in return for volunteering?

Concluding questions

How well do you think CSG is doing?

What is it about Congleton as a place that makes CSG successful?

Anything else you would like to add?

Anything you would like to ask me?

Appendix 5: Interview schedule for Congleton Sustainability Group Members

Background

Can you tell me about when you first joined CSG? How did you find out about CSG?

How have you been involved with CSG?

Have you been to any meetings? What happens at those?

Motivations

What were your motivations for joining CSG? Learning? Why collective action?

Why did you think that CSG could meet those motivations?

Why volunteer for these particular activities?

Was there anything that you were hoping to get out of volunteering for particular activities?

Are your motivations being met? If yes, is that why you continue to volunteer? If no, then why do you continue to volunteer? What does CSG provide to meet your motivations?

What are the personal costs of volunteering?

What is CSG obliged to provide you in return for volunteering?

Are there any additional things you would like to see or changes made in terms of meeting your motivations?

How do you feel about your volunteering experience with CSG?

Human Resources

What knowledge and skills do people bring to the project? What about expertise? Generic skills? Are these shared with others? How does this help CSG?

Anything else? Qualities? Contacts or networking? Funding? Support? Friendship? How important are those?

What would you say you bring to CSG?

How important are the knowledge, skills, etc of volunteers? How do skills/knowledge/other help CSG?

What do the co-ordinators for the sub-groups bring to CSG? Any particular skills/knowledge? Qualities?

Can you tell me about the co-ordinator the sub-group that you've been involved in? Why is that role important?

Learning

Can you tell me about any learning that occurs in CSG? What about at the project? How does learning occur (formally/informally)

What have you personally learnt? In terms of sustainable behaviours? Other skills/knowledge? Who did you learn from? In what context?

Do you share what you have learnt with others in CSG? What about others outside CSG?

What does CSG teach the wider community? How? What about the projects you've been involved with?

Concluding questions

How well do you think CSG is doing?

What is it about Congleton as a place that makes CSG successful?

Anything else you would like to add?

Anything you'd like to ask me?

Appendix 6: Interview Schedule for Awel Aman Tawe founders

AAT Interview schedule – Founders

Introductory Questions

- What's the English translation of Awel Aman Tawe?
- Can you tell me about your role in AAT?

Projects

- Can you tell me about the group's projects?
- Why these large scale projects?
- Wind farm – has it been constructed? Do you have planning permission? How big is it? Who's idea was it at the LA21 meeting? Are they involved still?
- What are the 5 phases of AAT? Where are you at now?
- How do ideas become projects?

Structure

- How is AAT structured in terms of staff, trustees, volunteers?
- How projects are projects carried out – who does what?
- Sub-groups for projects etc?

Context

- The local situation that led to the creation of AAT (local economy etc)
- Context of opencast mining
- Is there anything about the local area that has made AAT possible (e.g. history of volunteering or of environmental organisations)?
- Building on strengths and capacity of the community – what is meant by this?
- Opposition to wind farm – why did the director of the Council for the Protection of Rural Wales stand against the project?

- Why did the project succeed despite opposition? Was it the year long consultation with community (participant assessment process) – how did this win them over?
- Why was it important to AAT that residents retain control of the wind farm?
- How has the move from the focus on wind to community benefits shaped how AAT works?

Resources

- What resources does AAT need? Tangible? Human resources? Expertise/consultants? Funding – importance of small start-up grants? Support (from Welsh Assembly and local MP)?
- Importance of liaising with a range of institutions (Hinshelwood 2003)
- Links to other groups (benefits and constraints of this in terms of activity)? What skills/knowledge have you gained from other groups that has helped AAT?
- Space? Why do you need an office space? Why choose that particular space for the wind farm (is it just technical or symbolic)? Other spaces?

Funding

- How has funding increased AAT's level of activity? How does funding affect what projects can be delivered?
- In what way did the use of the SLF help the group gain funding?
- Has the time spent applying for funding decreased the time you've spent actively working on projects/activities?
- Was AAT active before winning any large amounts of funding? What were they doing?
- What happened/will happen when funding stops?
- Have you considered any projects that don't need funding (or don't need large amounts of funding)?

Staff

- Why do you need staff? Why not keep it as a volunteer organisation?
Was it always the intention to have staff?
- What resources do staff bring? Do they have particular expertise for their roles? What about organisation, contacts, ideas etc? Experience of applying for funding?
- What about yourself? What expertise do you bring to the role?
- What are the most important human resources that staff bring?
- How does having paid staff affect what projects you can deliver and how active you are? Has AAT been more active with staff?
- Who has the community development experience? How does having staff with community development experience affect what projects are delivered and how they are delivered? Engagement rather than SD? What about in terms of having knowledge of the sustainable livelihoods approach?
- How do the expertise of the different staff members complement each other?
- What effect has gaining paid staff had on your work with volunteers?
- What would happen if a member of staff left? Could the organisation cope?
- Are the finance officer and Arts & Climate Change Officer paid positions?
How are they funded?

Volunteers/Trustees

- What work have you done with volunteers?
- Why do you need volunteers?
- What resources do volunteers bring? (Skills, knowledge, ideas, qualities, networking, funding, tangible resources etc).
- Why do you need trustees?

- What resources do trustees bring? Do the trustees have particular skills, knowledge, contacts etc that is helpful to the organisation?
- How important is it to have a mix of human resources?
- How do the resources of volunteers/trustees complement those of paid staff?
- Have you had any problems with attracting or retaining volunteers?
- What do you expect from volunteers?
- Do you feel obliged to provide them with anything?
- 8 local people trained to do interviews for community consultation – were these volunteers?

Motivations

- What were your motivations for founding the group? How is it you had the time?
- Do you feel motivated to keep AAT going in the long-term? Why?
- Anything that you personally get out of being a part of AAT that makes you want to keep going?
- Why collective action?

Learning

- Can you tell me about any learning that occurs in AAT?
- What have you personally learnt from others involved in AAT? In terms of passing on skills/knowledge of running AAT? In terms of sustainability?
- How does learning occur (formally/informally)?
- What does AAT teach the wider community?

Lack of resources

- Are there any resources that AAT is lacking?
- Any human resources?

Broad questions

- How well do you think AAT is doing?
- What do you think is needed to make an active/successful group?
- What would have made the group more active in the early stages? And now?
- Theoretical model (CMO)
- Anything else you want to add?
- Anything you want to ask me?

Appendix 7: Interview schedule for Aman Awel Tawe staff/trustees/volunteers

AAT Interview schedule – Volunteers/Trustees/Staff

Background

- Can you tell me about when you joined CSG? When? How did you find out about it?
- What does your role entail?
- How often?

Motivations

- What were your motivations for volunteering with the group?
- Why that particular role/those particular activities?
- Anything you were hoping to get out of joining AAT?
- Why collective action?
- Why continue to volunteer with the group?
- How is it you have the time?
- To what extent are your motivations being met? Anything else you would like to see?
- What are the personal costs?

Staff motivations

- Why work for AAT? What attracted you? Why a sustainability organisation? Just a job?
- Was the role created for you or did you have to apply for it?
- Why that particular role?
- To what extent are your motivations being met? Anything else you would like to see?
- What are the personal costs of working for AAT?

- Would you like to stay on with AAT or move on to somewhere else? Why?

Resources

- What resources does AAT need? Tangible? Expertise/consultants? Funding – importance of small start-up grants? Support (from Welsh Assembly and local MP)?
- Links to other groups (benefits and constraints of this in terms of activity)? What skills/knowledge have you gained from other groups that has helped AAT?
- Space? Why do you need an office space? Why choose that particular space for the wind farm (is it just technical or symbolic)? Other spaces?

Funding

- How has funding increased your level of activity? What effect has it had on what projects the organisation delivers?
- Was AAT active before winning any large amounts of funding? What were they doing?
- What happened/will happen when funding stops?
- Have you considered any projects that don't need funding (or don't need large amounts of funding)?

Staff

- Do you think it's important for AAT to have paid staff? Why not keep it as a volunteer organisation?
- What resources do staff bring? Do they have particular expertise for their roles? What about organisation, contacts, ideas etc? Experience of applying for funding?
- What are the most important resources that staff bring to AAT?
- What about experience of community development?

- How do the expertise of the different staff members complement each other?
- How does having paid staff affect what projects AAT can deliver and how active the organisation is? Has AAT been more active with staff?
- Could AAT cope if a member of staff left?
- What effect has gaining paid staff had on AATs work with volunteers? Do they still need volunteers?

Volunteers/Trustees

- Is it important for AAT to have volunteers? Why/why not?
- What resources do volunteers bring? (Skills, knowledge, ideas, qualities, networking, funding, tangible resources etc)
- Has AAT had any problems attracting/retaining volunteers?
- Why does AAT need trustees?
- What resources do the trustees bring? Any particular skills, expertise, contacts etc?
- What about yourself in particular?
- How important is it to have a mix of human resources?
- What do you think you are obliged to receive anything in return for volunteering?
- What do you expect from staff members?

Learning

- Can you tell me about learning that occurs in AAT?
- What have you personally learnt from others involved in AAT? In terms of passing on skills/knowledge of running AAT? In terms of sustainability?
- How does learning occur (formally/informally)?
- What does AAT teach the wider community?

Lack of resources

- Are there any resources that AAT is lacking?
- Any human resources?

Broad questions

- How well do you think AAT is doing?
- What do you think is needed to make an active group?
- What would have made the group more active in the early stages? And now?
- Theoretical model
- Anything else you want to add?
- Anything you would like to ask me?

Appendix 8: NVivo coding scheme for AAT

The screenshot displays the NVivo software interface for a coding scheme. The left sidebar shows navigation options: Nodes, Relationships, Node Matrices, Sources, Nodes, Classifications, Collections, Queries, Reports, Models, and Folders. The main window shows a hierarchical tree structure under the heading 'Nodes'. The tree is organized as follows:

- Nodes**
 - AAT**
 - Resources**
 - Local people
 - Wind Farm
 - Social capital & networks
 - Building
 - EDUcan
 - Financial
 - Staff HR
 - Strategies**
 - Consultation
 - Employing & Training Locals
 - Older Residents to Wind farms
 - Self-sustaining
 - Selling energy
 - Framing**
 - Diagnostic
 - Prognostic
 - Community development
 - CD Resources
 - CD Strategies
 - Clean energy & Energy Efficiency
 - Energy Resources
 - Energy Strategies
 - Collective identity**
 - Ex-coal mining
 - Insider
 - Community Development Workers
 - Culture**
 - Narratives
 - Beliefs
 - Ways of working
 - End goals

