Sheffield Hallam University

A Sheffield Hallam University thesis

ProQuest Number: 10700833

ProQuest 10700833

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

Learning to Work:

The Intermediate Labour Market Response to Social Exclusion

Gordon Frank Parker

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Sheffield Hallam University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

January 2012

Abstract

Since New labour was elected to government in1997, policy-makers' responses to the complex problems of social exclusion have been almost exclusively focused on promoting paid work as the best way to address the issue. Policy measures in areas such as employment, education, and lifelong learning have all tended to prioritise the improvement of labour market supply-side skills as a means of moving people from social exclusion, characterised as long term unemployment and inactivity, towards successful engagement in the labour market.

One measure which has been put in place to address issues of social exclusion is the Intermediate Labour Market (ILM). ILMs are holistic work experience interventions which aim to improve the employability of people who are at some distance from the labour market in order to move them into sustainable employment. They offer a period of temporary, paid employment together with a range of personalised support measures which aim to counter an individual's barriers to work. While focused on improving labour market supply, ILMs also create a 'market for intermediate labour' in which new, temporary jobs are developed, especially in the voluntary and community, or social enterprise, 'third' sectors.

During the years 2001 to 2004, Objective 1 in South Yorkshire financed a large ILM programme (SYCON ILM) which operated across the South Yorkshire sub-region and which was the case study example for this research project. The study developed a realistic evaluation approach, informed by critical realism, in order to assess the 'structures of employment' which SYCON created. It aimed to better understand the roles of individuals who participated in the programme, and to assess the enabling mechanisms which were triggered by their participation.

This study has contributed to knowledge of realist methods and approaches, especially by developing an analytical framework, based on isolating contexts and mechanisms, with which to assess realist data collected from a variety of sources. It has also contributed to academic literature in the field of skills and learning, especially in relation to debates on the value of low level vocational qualifications, and those around aesthetic and emotional labour. The study engaged with discourses of 'the underclass', 'Chavs' and 'NEETS' but found no evidence of a widespread 'benefits culture' among the previously disengaged ILM participants. The implications of the study for policy interventions have been outlined and further research suggested.

1

Acknowledgements

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

"The best defence against social exclusion is having a job". Tony Blair. Forward to *Bridging the Gap* (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999, p.6)

Introduction

Efforts to tackle social exclusion have been at the centre of government policy for a number of years. In 1997, the then new Labour government set up the Social Exclusion Unit (later the Social Exclusion Task Force) to advise the government and assess policy aimed at reducing the phenomenon. For example, in 2008, despite over eleven years of concerted efforts and a variety of initiatives, deep-rooted problems remained: "there are still those in our society who are not enjoying a fair share of the country's overall economic success" (Department for Work and Pensions, 2008b, p.1). Although fairness is often cited in government rhetoric surrounding social exclusion, policy interventions often imply that exclusion is the fault of the excluded, that workless and otherwise disadvantaged individuals are somehow responsible for their own disadvantage (see, for example, Levitas, 2005).

A more recent Coalition government report on poverty and worklessness (Cabinet Office, 2010a) indicates that deep-rooted problems not only persist but appear to be getting worse. The report paints a depressing picture of inequality, worklessness and poor health. It is an all-too-familiar exposition on the cycle of deprivation, generating, as it does, an image that is more indicative of the depression era of the1930s than a snapshot of a twenty-first century advanced western capitalist economy. For example it states that:

> "Whole communities are existing at the margins of society, trapped in dependency and unable to progress. In these areas aspiration and social mobility disappear, leaving disadvantaged children to become disadvantaged adults" (Cabinet Office, 2010a, p.3).

The report conveys a clear intention to move people from 'dependency' into work. However, that would appear to pose a considerable challenge. For instance, chapter three of the report observes that there are:

9

"around 2.6 million people [who] spent at least half of the last 10 years on some form of out-of-work benefit and 1.4 million people [who] have been on an out-of-work benefit for nine or more of the last 10 years" (Cabinet Office, 2010a, p.34)

Bearing in mind those challenges, this thesis will make a contribution to a necessarily renewed effort "to map out issues affecting employability and [will] offer advice on what works in supporting long-term unemployed people" (Lindsay, 2010, p.140).

Background to the study

This research study is one of twelve related doctoral studies that were undertaken at both Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Sheffield. All twelve studies were co-funded and were designed to contribute to the overall evaluation of the European Union (EU) Objective 1 Programme for South Yorkshire. The central aim of this study was originally described[1] as undertaking:

> *"An exploration of the impact of specific training and education activities supported by the EU Structural Funds Objective 1 Programme for South Yorkshire on the ability of disadvantaged groups to access and engage with the labour market".*

The case study for this empirical research project is a large Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) programme: the South Yorkshire Intermediate Labour Market programme (SYCON). The programme was in operation in the South Yorkshire sub region[2] during the period 2001-2004. ILMs are designed to address problems such as those described in the Cabinet Office (2010a) report. They are holistic, labour market interventions which aim to improve the employability of people who are "furthest from the labour market" (Marshall & Macfarlane,

---

[1] Pre-course information

[2] "South Yorkshire is located at the centre of the United Kingdom, lying 260 kilometres north of London and 95 kilometres west of the Humber Ports. It has an area of 1,559 square kilometres, which is the same size as Greater London and more than twice the size of Merseyside. It comprises the four metropolitan centres of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield, and has a population of 1.3 million. The largest area is Doncaster, which occupies over a third of South Yorkshire. Sheffield has 41% of the population. The average population density varies across the sub-region. The most sparsely populated areas are in Doncaster and Barnsley, while Sheffield has the highest population density" (Governement Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 1999, pp.17-18)

2000, p.2). They do so through the creation of a supported 'intermediate' labour market within which "the beneficiaries ... gain employability skills, confidence and self esteem that enables them to compete effectively in the mainstream labour market" (SYCON, 2001, p.4). ILMs are therefore multi-faceted initiatives, offering a period of temporary, paid work and personalised support to address individual barriers to employment.

The study commenced in 2001, and has therefore been in progress for over ten years[3]. However, it is a timely and necessary contribution to knowledge. Admittedly, ILMs have been in existence in the UK since at least the early 1990s and there have been a number of notable evaluations of those initiatives (for example, Marshall and Macfarlane, 2000; McGregor, et al, 1997; Finn and Simmonds, 2003). Nonetheless, in a relatively recent publication, Syrett and North (2008, pp.135-136) argued that although ILMs "have tended to be most effective among young unemployed people ... *more evidence is needed with regards to their effectiveness with more disadvantaged groups*" (emphasis added). Given that at the time of writing "the unemployment rate is the highest since 1996 and the number of unemployed people is the highest since 1994" (Office for National Statistics, 2011, p.1) there might now be an even greater need for this study which contributes to knowledge about the operation of ILM and similar programmes.

Thesis structure

Chapter 2 is an in-depth study of Intermediate Labour Market models of implementation. Although different ILM programmes and projects have tended to share many characteristics, for example that participants are paid a wage and are supported to address barriers to employment, there are a number of different models of implementation. The characteristics of the different models are assessed in detail in Chapter 2. ILMs have 'traditionally' been developed in voluntary or 'third' sector organisations to undertake work of social value (Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000). However, the nature of the voluntary sector has changed during the recent past as organisations are increasingly required to

---

[3] During that period the author was diagnosed with severe depressive effective disorder. As a result, progress towards completing was often slower than foreseen

tender for and deliver public services (Davies, 2011). The implications of these developments for prospective ILM participants are assessed. A Typology of ILMs is developed in order to clarify the discussions and analyses in later chapters.

Chapter 3 is a review relevant literature in three areas of interest: social exclusion, learning, and work. It provides the context for the analysis of SYCON in later chapters. The chapter firstly explores the phenomenon of social exclusion, and assesses the problem of proposing labour market supply side solutions to address it. Levitas' (2005) discourses of social exclusion are explored, especially in relation to discourses of the 'underclass' (Murray, 2001) and criminalising social policy (Rodger, 2008). The social integrationist policy discourses which Levitas (2005) describes provide the contexts for the implementation of interventions such as ILMs which aim to improve individual employability. They also provide the contexts for "a ministerial determination to increase individual employability as *the* central policy in the development of lifelong learning" (Coffield, 1999, p.4). The resulting focus on skills development is assessed, along with an analysis of what Grugulis, et al., (2004, p.6) describe as "a growing tendency to label what in earlier times would have been seen by most as personal characteristics, attitudes, character traits, or predispositions as skills" (Grugulis, et al., 2004, p.6). Theories of emotional and aesthetic labour (for example, Warhurst & Nickson, 2009) are explored and the implications for training considered. Finally, the chapter reflects on workplaces as 'communities of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and considers the ways in which 'skills' developed during episodes of work experience are 'transferred' across boundaries (Griffiths & Guile, 2004).

Chapter 4 describes the methodological approach to the study and the methods selected. SYCON is shown to be an appropriate case study for this research project (and is described in detail in Chapter 6). The objectives of this study are described and the following "intellectual puzzle" (Mason, 2002) outlined:

How and why do socially excluded people with a history of disadvantage and disengagement from the labour market move into employability and employment through ILM interventions?

A number of research questions which addressed wider concerns about labour market supply-side interventions were drawn from that 'puzzle'. Each had a series of sub questions:

1. How appropriate are SYCON projects when compared with the needs of participants? For example:
   - Will moving into employment address the exclusionary issues faced by participants?
   - What barriers to employment are being addressed?
2. What activities prepare participants for the workplace? For example:
   - How do participants 'learn' on SYCON projects?
   - How is work experience managed and 'transfer' achieved?
3. What theoretical frameworks are evident in the development and implementation of SYCON projects? For example:
   - What theories of change are implicit or explicit in the design of the projects?
   - How is the potential range of different outcomes explained?

The implications of the research questions for research design are discussed in the chapter. The study was carried out using a realistic evaluation approach (Pawson & Tilley, 1997) which is in turn influenced by critical realism. The reasons why a realistic evaluation approach (Pawson & Tilley, 1997) was adopted are outlined in this chapter and the methods selected described. Critical realist social science methods are continually developing (Kazi, 2003) and "the problem remains that prior writings come up short of translating critical realist philosophy of science into applied research methods" (Miller & Tsang, 2010, p.140). In this sense, the study contributes to a growing body of knowledge on the development of critical realist methods. Selected tenets of critical realism and realistic evaluation which are relevant to this study are

outlined and problems associated with working within an approach which does not have well developed methods are considered.

Chapter 5 describes the overall research design, associated survey instruments and the analytical framework. Even though a realistic <u>evaluation</u> approach has been adopted, it is not the intention of this study to evaluate the SYCON programme; that was the task of an independent research consultancy (ECOTEC, 2005). Instead, this study aims to develop a better understanding of implicit programme theories, the assumptions which underpin SYCON practice. The transition from the intermediate to the mainstream labour market has been under theorised in past evaluations and reviews. For instance, Figure 1 is taken from Marshall and Macfarlane (2000, P.5) and shows "the ILM concept".

Figure 1: The ILM Concept
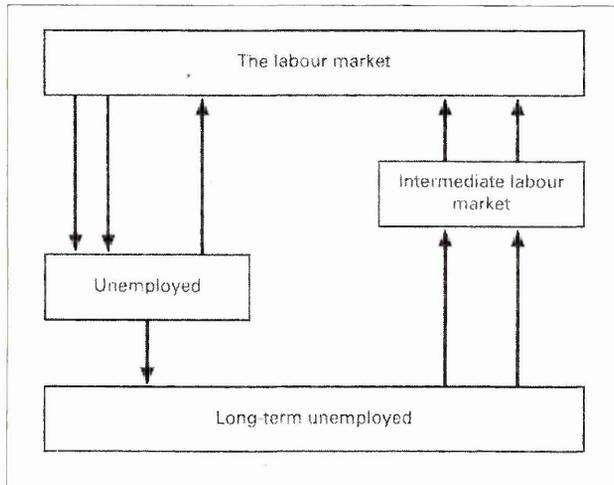
Source: Marshall and Macfarlane (2000, P.5)

Finn and Simmonds (2003) flow chart, reproduced in Figure 2, opens up the ILM experience but, like the previous Figure, implies that participants move sequentially through a series of 'states' towards an outcome.

Figure 2: Flow chart of typical ILM processes

A flow chart of the typical processes used by ILMs in the UK

New Deal participants, mostly joining ETF/VS	Other people through local eligibility criteria. Usually must be ESF eligible.

Recruited to ILM
Either through:
- selection interview; or
- direct referrals through New Deal

Start on ILM
- most sign-off benefits immediately
- others sign-off after trial period
- contracts between 26 and 52 weeks

Settling in period
- getting used to work again
- preventing early drop-out.

Discipline and drop-out
- some may be dismissed
- others drop-out for various reasons

The ILM experience

Working	**Training**	**Personal Support**
• Mostly 3 to 4 days per week • usually of community benefit	• up to 1 day pw • most take NVQs	• job search • wider range of specialist support

Leave to a job	**Other outcomes** eg. NVQ	**Return to benefits or other destinations**

Post-employment support
- some ILMs offer employee and employer support

Source: (Finn & Simmonds, 2003, p.3)

These two figures (Figures 1 and 2) describe ILM programme logic. Astbury and Leeuw (2010, p.365) observe that "programme logic is often used to identify and *describe* the way in which a program fits together, usually in a simple sequence of inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes" (original emphasis). Such concepts of programmes can result in 'black box' evaluations which Astbury and Leeuw (2010, p.364) describe as "the practice of viewing social programs primarily in terms of effects, with little attention paid to how

15

those effects are produced". Marshall and Macfarlane's (2000) 'ILM concept' (Figure 1) depicts a 'black box' view of ILMs, although their analysis does cast some light on the topic. Finn and Simmonds' (2003) flow chart (Figure 2) is more 'grey'. This study aims to unpack those black, or grey, boxes by exploring ILM programme theories; it therefore "attempts to build an *explanatory* account of how the program works" (original emphasis). The author's conceptual diagram of ILMs can be found in Figure 3. It attempts to show that a range of outcomes are possible; 'successful' outcomes being dependent on positive intervention mechanisms being triggered in order to counteract the previously prevailing negative ones.

Figure 3: Generative construct of ILM process

Pre-ILM disabling mechanisms examples:
- Barriers, e.g. substance abuse
- Lack of relevant experience
- Discrimination
- Inappropriate learning/training

Pre-ILM disabling contexts examples:
- Few relevant jobs
- Low wages
- Postcode and other discrimination

Disabling contexts and mechanisms

ILM Experience

Enabling mechanism

ILM worker enters into social relations of temporary employment:

- Contract
- Wage
- Rights and responsibilities
- Reference
- 'Risk reduction'

Enabling mechanism

ILM worker in workplace that is an expansive learning environment:

- Employee AND learner
- Employer support for learning
- Participate in multiple communities of practice
- Legitimate peripheral participation – learns from colleagues and 'masters'
- Boundary crossing
- Reflection
- Discretion
- 'Appropriate' learning/teaching style

Support to address barriers:

- Substance abuse
- Debt
- Child care
- Transport
- confidence

Formal learning:

- NVQ or similar
- Elements of job search
- Work skills

Outcome: Job

Outcome: Training

Outcome: Return to welfare benefits

Outcome: Other, e.g. moved away, prison, etc

In-ILM disabling mechanisms examples:
- Low quality ILM workplace
- Restrictive learning environment
- No discretion

17

The four phases of research which lead to an increased refinement of programme theories are described in Chapter 5. Research instruments include qualitative semi-structured interviews, observations, and a postal questionnaire. The ways in which realistic evaluation has influenced the design are further elaborated in this chapter and the limitations of the design are outlined. 'Gatekeepers' played a key role in enabling access to the field during all stages of the research but the necessity of having to rely on them for continued access, for example to ILM workplaces, was problematic at times. The chapter describes those issues and the steps taken to alleviate them.

Chapter 6 explores the findings of the research carried out with SYCON managers, funders, and employers. It draws on semi-structured interviews with key informants. One of the key ILM mechanisms which emerged during the study is that ILMs are designed to be 'real jobs'[4]. This chapter assesses the ways in which ILMs are constructed as such, proposing that SYCON developed a 'market for intermediate labour' which attempted to replicate the social structures of employment which exist in the wider labour market. However, the chapter also assesses the ways in which ILMs are designed as employment 'schemes' and considers the implication of this for the 'real jobs' mechanism.

Chapter 7 explores the findings of the research carried out with SYCON participants. It draws on semi-structured and non-structured interviews and on observation carried out in ILM workplaces and during a week-long induction period. This chapter is concerned with how participants engage with the different structures of 'employment' and of 'scheme' - and finds that they do so relatively unproblematically. The implications of this and other findings are considered in depth.

---

[4] The phrase 'real jobs' is used throughout this thesis as a shorthand term for a range of characteristics which could be expected of jobs in the wider labour market. They include attributes such a contract of employment, job specifications, defined hours of work, and paid holidays. Interventions which are designed as 'real jobs' are contrasted with employment 'schemes' in this thesis (see Chapter 6)

Chapter 8 summarises these research findings and shows how this work has contribution to knowledge. The chapter includes reflections on the critical realist approach and indicates directions for further research.

Chapter 2: What is an ILM?

Introduction

This chapter will outline a variety of Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) approaches and models. Given that "there is no single definition of an ILM project or programme" (Marshall and Macfarlane, 2000, p.1), this chapter will answer the question "what is an ILM?" by describing the features which many ILMs share. The chapter describes important differences between models and approaches and shows how those differences can influence aspects of ILMs such as the characteristics of the target group engaged and the potential contribution to alleviating social exclusion and enhancing physical regeneration. Consequently a number of different ILM structures are identified and a typology of ILMs is developed.

Before ILM models and approaches to implementation are addressed, it will be useful to clarify how the term 'an ILM' is used in this thesis: Marshall and Macfarlane (2000, p.1) note that "It is important to recognise that reference to 'an ILM' is really a shorthand way of referring to an ILM project or programme, rather than the 'Intermediate Labour Market'". Therefore, a reference to 'an ILM' in this thesis is a reference to an ILM project or programme, rather than to the 'intermediate' labour market in which ILMs operate[5]. However, the concept of a 'market for intermediate labour', that is to say, the labour market in which ILM interventions operate, is also explored during the assessment of SYCON in later chapters.

This chapter will set the context for a later critical realist-based assessment SYCON. In doing so, it makes an important contribution to the literature on ILM theory which has perhaps tended to overlook the importance of why ILMs have been developed or has focused too much on one factor at the expense of others. For example, the surveys conducted by Marshall and Macfarlane (2000) and Finn and Simmonds (2003) both found that helping people back into

---

[5] The phrase 'an ILM' is sometimes used, by practitioners in particular, to refer to an ILM participant. That meaning is not used in this thesis except in direct quotes. As Curtis (2008, p.287) argues such usage tends to de-personalise and objectify the participant

20

the labour market was a main reason for the development of respondents' ILMs. However, neither study fully considers the implications of other factors. For instance, Marshall and Macfarlane found that 77% of respondents rank "getting the LTU [Long Term Unemployed] back into work" as their first priority – with 9% ranking it as second priority (Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000, p.2) but although they address some of the implications of this finding for the model of delivery, possible alternative models which result from the 23% of respondents for whom getting the LTU back into work was not the first priority are not adequately discussed. In effect, the implication of Marshall and Macfarlane's study is that those projects and programmes which do not have 'getting the LTU back into work' as their main focus will 'fail' because they do not conform to the 'ideal type' of ILM (see, for example, Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000, pp.23 and 31). Finn and Simmonds found that 97% of respondents thought that helping unemployed people get back into the labour market was a very important factor in the development of their ILM (Finn and Simmonds 2003, p.55-56). However, they do not directly discuss the implications of this finding, or of the other reasons for establishing and ILM, such as to provide services of benefit to the community. Finn and Simmonds' analysis tends to operate in the empirical domain whereas this thesis aims to go beyond the empirical and assess the domain of the real (see Chapter 4). The thesis's later discussion of the SYCON ILM (Chapter 6) finds that managing agents' main reasons for establishing their ILMs differed across the South Yorkshire sub region, for instance a main priority for ILMs in Barnsley was to build the capacity of third sector organisations, which was not always a priority in other localities. Therefore, it is argued later, SYCON ILMs, although funded and managed 'centrally', were developed to enable different mechanisms to be triggered, and that factor was not adequately taken into account when developing the SYCON programme.

Before discussing ILM models and approaches in more detail, this chapter will firstly discuss what appears to be an anomaly which has arisen over the past decade or more: that despite detailed and consistent research findings that ILMs can be more successful than other employment and training interventions, the UK government has grown less than enthusiastic about directly and fully supporting them. It is argued in this thesis that this situation has had a

detrimental effect on the management of ILMs. For example, it makes budgeting extremely complex and difficult to manage, requires a large bureaucratic input which can deter smaller organisations, and it can result in a 'post code lottery' in which the different funding streams which are available in different localities requires ILM implementation to vary, even on a single programme or sometimes for different individuals on the same ILM project[6]. Following that discussion, and as outlined above, a range of ILM models and approaches are assessed and the history of their development and the key features of each are briefly considered. The chapter then sets out a typology of ILMs which reflects the various approaches and models and at the same time provides a framework for the forthcoming discussion of the SYCON ILM in order to add clarity to the analysis. Finally, the main conclusions are summarised.

The 'promotion' of ILMs and the UK government's response

Independent researchers and government advisors have, for over a decade now, recommended ILMs to government as effective interventions for tackling unemployment amongst disadvantaged. For example, in his high-profile and influential review of benefits conditionality and personalised support, Gregg (2008, p.99) remarked that "the overall consensus is that ILMs have a useful contribution to make to improving the employability of the most disadvantaged individuals". In light of that 'overall consensus', the review recommended that:

> *"The Government should continue to explore the use of Intermediate Labour Markets (ILMs) and therefore:*
>
> - *Providers should be encouraged to provide ILM activities as an option to support individuals who have been out of the labour market for a long time. This could be appropriate for both Work-Ready and Progression to Work groups;*
>
> - *Ongoing support and jobsearch assistance should be built into the full time activity Work For Your Benefit pilots proposed for individuals who have not found employment at the end of the Flexible New Deal. This will clearly distinguish these pilots from a pure workfare style approach. Where appropriate, individuals*

---

[6] The term 'ILM project' in this thesis refers to a single ILM employer although the employer might employ more that one ILM participant. 'ILM programme' refers to a group of projects managed by the same managing agency

*should also have access to these activities before the two year
point; and*

- *Across local and central Government efforts should be made to
build the social enterprise ILM sector (a natural area being to
support green projects)". (Gregg, 2008, p.112)*

At the time of its publication, Gregg's was the latest in a growing series of
exhortations to government to provide the conditions in which ILMs can flourish.
Earlier recommendations include the promotion of ILMs by the Centre for Local
Economic Strategies (CLES) which influenced New Labour's early thinking on
welfare to work and Employment Zones (see Haughton et al., 2000, pp.673-74);
and the following recommendation from the Work and Pensions Select
Committee:

> *"We recommend that the Department for Work and Pensions
> actively explores routes to create flexibility and encourage these
> innovative Intermediate Labour Market solutions to unemployment
> and economic inactivity amongst the hardest to place, like lone
> parents, longer term unemployed, people with health problems or
> disability". (House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee,
> 2002)*

However, despite the positive advice, the response from the UK government
has not always been fully supportive. For example, the Department for
Education and Employment was initially broadly positive about ILMs
(Department for Education and Employment, 1998) and their deployment in
Prototype Employment Zones (Haughton et al., 2000). However, by the time
the 'Fully Fledged Employment Zones' (ibid.) were implemented:

> *"the requirement for zones to provide training and ILMs had
> disappeared and, as partner organizations would have to absorb
> losses, the proposals built in an incentive for them to provide cheap
> rather than appropriate training or other forms of provision"
> (Haughton et al., 2000, p.676).*

In their response to the Work and Pensions Committee recommendation for
government to encourage ILMs (Department for Work and Pensions, 2002a,
pp.10-11) the DWP indicated that, rather than support ILMs as recommended,
they had opted to wait for the conclusions of the evaluation of StepUp[7], a

---

[7] StepUp is discussed in more detail later in this chapter

national pilot programme with some ILM-like characteristics but also crucial differences. In the event, the evaluation findings were not published until 2006, four years after the DWP response. The contemporary Employment Action Plan (Department for Work and Pensions, 2002, p.13) did observe that "The Intermediate Labour Market approach ... has shown to be effective in helping socially excluded individuals back to work", but ILMs are cited as examples of effective active labour market policies in Scotland rather than across the UK as a whole. Gregg's recommendations (see above) were effectively ignored in the government's response to them. They were not mentioned at all in the subsequent discussion paper (Department for Work and Pensions, 2009a) nor in the DWP response (Department for Work and Pensions, 2008a, p.207), although there was a commitment given that "the full-time Work for Your Benefit activity undertaken by participants will provide substantial back-to-work support" (ibid.) which could imply that ILM activity would be considered (see the ILM features in the section below) but it is far from clear.

Therefore, there has been promotion of ILMs as appropriate and successful interventions over a number of years and from a variety of sources but there appears to be little appetite for directly supporting them from government. A Welsh Assembly review of ILMs (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006, p.10) identified three reasons why "the [UK] Treasury is fairly sceptical of the benefits of an enhanced role for ILMs": high gross costs and deadweight are two, and a fear that participants might actually be removed from the labour market, and therefore have reduced opportunities to find paid employment, is the third (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006, p.10). There also appears to have been a growing belief that ILMs should be local programmes, rather than national ones, and therefore should be designed and delivered locally using a blend of local funding (see, for example, Department for Work and Pensions, 2008a and the discussion of 'the empowering welfare state' pp.45-61). Whatever the reasons for the disparity between the advice on ILMs received by government and the government's scepticism, they appear to be entrenched and consistent over a period of years.

24

New Deal and StepUp

Notwithstanding the above, recent Labour governments have supported ILM-like activity through initiatives such as the New Deal and the Future Jobs Fund, as well as in a pilot programme, StepUp. However, there were significant differences between these interventions and ILMs (see below), and now both New Deal[8] and the Future Jobs Fund are being replaced by the current Coalition government. Currently, it is not clear if replacement programmes will include any ILM-type activity.

The New Deal offered two potential routes into ILM activity: the Environment Task Force (ETF), and the Voluntary Service Option (VSO) (Chatrik & Convery, 2000). ETF options provided work experience in activities to regenerate the physical environment or to contribute to energy conservation, VSO provides work experience which has direct 'community benefit' usually within voluntary and community sector organisations. New Deal offered a 'Gateway' period of advice and support for Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants which could last up to four months. After that period, or earlier if appropriate, a claimant who had not moved into employment could be 'signposted' to providers of either VSO or ETF. Both options were intended to provide work experience opportunities which had characteristics of 'real jobs'. For example, VSO and ETF participants would sign off JSA and becomes employed; there should have been a contract of paid employment; full time jobs should have been at least 30 hours a week; and participants had the right to join a union (Chatrik & Convery, 2000). Participants should also have received job search and other employment or personal support. However, there were also significant differences between the New Deal options and ILMs. For instance, unlike ILMs which should have voluntary participation, JSA claimants were required to attend VSO and ETF jobs if they have been referred to them by a Jobcentre Plus advisor. In addition, both New Deal options last for a maximum of 26 weeks whereas ILMs vary in length but often have a maximum duration of 52 weeks and, very occasionally, longer (Marshall and Macfarlane, 2000).

---

[8] New Deal was replaced by Flexible New Deal in 2009

Notwithstanding those differences, New Deal provided the context for much ILM activity. For example, Finn and Simmonds (2003, p.57) found that "the majority of ILMs ... and all of the larger ILMs were based on New Deal". The SYCON programme also engaged New Deal VSO and ETF participants in its provision. If those participants had not moved into employment at the end of the 26 week period they continued seamlessly on the same ILM for the remainder of the maximum 52 week period. The participant would not be aware of the change which was achieved at a bureaucratic level through using different sources of match funding (SYCON manager).

The SYCON managing agencies in Rotherham and Sheffield also managed aspects of New Deal employment services (SYCON manager) and therefore links between New Deal and SYCON were very well developed in those areas. A SYCON manager described the relationship as "a seamless service". However, that was not the case in Doncaster and Barnsley. Managing agents in those areas needed to form partnerships with employment services in order to develop effective referral systems and procedures, a process which was difficult in the early stages of SYCON but which improved as the programme developed (SYCON manager).

The ILM-like intervention, StepUp, was piloted in 20 areas of the UK (Bivand et al., 2006), including Sheffield and Rotherham in South Yorkshire. In those areas it was run by two organisations, the Centre for Full Employment and Phoenix Enterprise, which were also SYCON managing agencies. In Chapter 7 it is noted that people on the New Deal Full Time Education and Training (FTET) option in Rotherham participated in StepUp. This highlights the close links between StepUp 'real jobs' and employment 'schemes' which are addressed in later chapters. The evaluation of StepUp found that, although there were significant impacts on job outcomes for some categories of participant[9], overall "[it] produced a modest improvement in job entries compared to equivalent

---

[9] "StepUp produced a significant impact on job outcomes for the 30-49 age-group [and] a large impact on job outcomes for those with lower levels of employability at first. The largest impact was for those whose subjective employability (jobsearch flexibility, attitudes towards work, confidence, etc.) was higher but whose objective employability (work history, basic skills and education, etc) was lowest (16 per cent of the group)" (Bivand et al., 2006, p.3)

Jobcentre Plus customers, but below the level of statistical significance".
(Bivand et al., 2006, p.3). Whether the 'modest' outcomes of the StepUp pilot
had the effect of limiting further expansion of ILM activity in this country is not
clear. Unfortunately more recent figures for the current numbers of ILM
programmes do not exist. However, given recent calls for ILM interventions as
an apt means of helping workless people into employment, (see for example
Gregg, 2008, p.83), the time might be right for a new survey of ILM activity to be
undertaken[10]. The time is also right for this review of ILM activity which, as can
be seen from the discussion of New Deal, can provide insights into the
operation of mainstream labour market programmes and the assumptions upon
which they are built.

The following sections outline the characteristics of ILMs and the models of
implementation which have developed.

ILM features and models of implementation

Intermediate Labour Market programmes are designed to provide temporary,
supported employment for long-term unemployed or, more recently,
economically inactive individuals. ILM programmes in the UK first emerged in
Glasgow during the 1980s with the Wise Group Programme (Marshall and
Macfarlane, 2000; McGregor, et al., 1997; Rennie, 1999). Since that time, ILMs
have spread to many other parts of the UK. They tend to be situated in areas
where particular social and economic conditions combine to create conditions in
which significant numbers of people become disengaged from the labour
market (Finn and Simmonds, 2003). In South Yorkshire for instance, the loss or
decline of traditional industries such as steel and coal mining, combined with
generally poor economic conditions and a downturn in manufacturing and other
industries, all contributed to creating a problem of high unemployment in the
area (Governement Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 1999). In time, the
resulting shortage of jobs for unemployed people led to long-term
disengagement from the labour market for significant sections of the population.

---

[10] Such a survey was beyond the scope of this study

In the period since their inception, ILM models of intervention, purpose, and funding mechanisms have evolved, leading to a situation in which there is a multiplicity of ILM structures and defining an ILM is a challenging task. There are various attempts at defining ILMs or outlining their characteristics in the documents cited above, not all of which are wholly successful, and none of which are particularly exhaustive. Gregg (2008, p.17) gives some detail, for instance by observing that "the intermediate labour market (ILM) model … differs from a pure workfare model as it offers work placements coupled with additional support and assistance required to help individuals move into mainstream employment", adding later that the additional support helps participants "search for regular employment once their placement has finished" (Gregg, 2008, p.87). He adds the following:

> "Whilst there is no single definition of an ILM or Transitional Jobs programme, the common features are that they:
>
> - Are local initiatives which are targeted at the long-term unemployed or people with other labour market disadvantages;
> - Offer paid work on a contract (although some may offer work for benefits plus some allowance); and
> - Include training, personal development and support for job seeking activities". (Gregg, 2008, p.88)

The following section explores the assumptions behind the features of ILMs described and maintains that "programmatic assumptions are often never made explicit and even on occasions when the underlying theory of a program is surfaced, it is not articulated and/or tested in a particularly robust way" (Astbury & Leeuw, 2010, p.364). The following sections therefore contribute to the task of making explicit the assumptions behind ILM interventions.

ILM features

The term 'Intermediate Labour Market' is reputed to have been coined in 1990 by staff at one of the pioneer Glasgow providers of ILMs, the Wise Group (Watt, 1997)[11]. Watt observed, in his select committee memorandum, that in describing the Wise group ILM, "we are seeking to describe a package of training, work experience and personal development that was unique in its

---

[11] A web-based document without page or paragraph numbers

construction" (ibid.). The 'package' has "a number of important features" (ibid.) which are listed below:

- *Its primary aim is to offer the long term unemployed and those who are furthest from the labour market a bridge back to the world of work*

- *It combines relevant high quality vocational training with a substantial period of work experience and personal development including job search activity*

- *It creates a realistic work environment for the long term unemployed with all the characteristics of employment*

- *A rate for the job wage*

- *A contract with rights and obligations*

- *Quality management and supervision*

- *The work is carried out to a high quality and is of real value*

- *Voluntary participation*

- *A work reference for future employers*

- *It links long the long term unemployed to their communities and the local economy through the provision of useful products and services*

- *It is well managed and has a lifespan beyond the duration of any funding regime*

- *It adds to the supply of jobs particularly where there are weak local economies. (Watt, 1997)*

Marshall and Macfarlane (2000) also provide a list of ILM features. They are set out below:

- *The main aim is to give those who are furthest from the labour market a bridge back to the world of work. It is about improving the participant's general employability. This involves targeting the long-term unemployed (usually over 12 months) or people with other labour market disadvantages*

- *The core feature is paid work on a temporary contract, together with training, personal development and jobsearch activities*

29

- *Although some ILM operators offer the option of a wage or staying on benefits, the majority would say that the wage is an essential ingredient (to help recruitment, retention and progression)*

- *In order to limit job displacement or substitution, the work is in additional economic activities, ideally of community benefit*

- *Projects and programmes rely on the packaging of funding from various sources (e.g. New Deal, European Social Fund, local regeneration funds and project earnings), in a way that provides outputs and 'added value' for each funder. (Marshall and Macfarlane, 2000, p.2)*

Similarly, the ILM characteristics outlined in Finn and Simmonds (2003) are set out below:

- *Temporary, wage-based employment*

- *Usually target long-term unemployed people*

- *Deliver jobs and services to disadvantaged individuals or communities*

- *Typically rely on a combination of funding streams*

- *Most stress the importance of the contribution they make to physical and social regeneration*

- *The primary focus is on improving employability (Finn and Simmonds, 2003, p.4)*

Finn and Simmonds (2003, p.4) define ILMs as "a diverse range of **local** initiatives that typically provide temporary waged employment in a genuine work environment with continuous support to assist the transition to work". The, original, emphasis on 'local' above signifies the differentiation Finn and Simmonds make between ILMs and Transitional Employment Programmes (TEPs) such as StepUp which they consider to be national in scope. There is also another significant characteristic of TEPs which ILMs do not share according to Finn and Simmonds: TEPs "also make extensive use of private sector job placements but unlike conventional employment subsidies the goal of the programme is to offer temporary, realistic work, rather than a contract of employment and continuing employment with a particular employer" (Finn &

30

Simmonds, 2003, p.4). The thesis returns to the topic of private sector employment in forthcoming sections and chapters. For now, two more bullet points can be added to those immediately above:

- *ILMs are local*

- *ILM jobs are not based in the private sector*

For clarity, the characteristics of ILMs outlined in the bullet points above are amalgamated in the table below:

Table 1: amalgamated ILM characteristics

Feature	Characteristic
Aims and Outcomes	• *Its primary aim is to offer the long term unemployed and those who are furthest from the labour market a bridge back to the world of work* • *The main aim is to give those who are furthest from the labour market a bridge back to the world of work. It is about improving the participant's general employability. This involves targeting the long-term unemployed (usually over 12 months) or people with other labour market disadvantages* • *The primary focus is on improving employability* • *A work reference for future employers*
Attributes and activities	• *The core feature is paid work on a temporary contract, together with training, personal development and jobsearch activities* • *It combines relevant high quality vocational training with a substantial period of work experience and personal development including job search activity* • *Temporary, wage-based employment* • *It creates a realistic work environment for the long term unemployed with all the characteristics of employment* • *A rate for the job wage* • *A contract with rights and obligations* • *Quality management and supervision* • *The work is carried out to a high quality and is of real value* • *Although some ILM operators offer the option of a wage or staying on benefits, the majority would say that the wage is an essential ingredient (to help recruitment, retention and progression).* • *Voluntary participation*
Target groups and	• *Usually target long-term unemployed people* • *It links long the long term unemployed to their communities*

areas	and the local economy through the provision of useful products and services • It combines relevant high quality vocational training with a substantial period of work experience and personal development including job search activity • Deliver jobs and services to disadvantaged individuals or communities • In order to limit job displacement or substitution, the work is in additional economic activities, ideally of community benefit • It adds to the supply of jobs particularly where there are weak local economies • Most stress the importance of the contribution they make to physical and social regeneration. • ILM jobs are not based in the private sector • ILMs are local
Funding	• It is well managed and has a lifespan beyond the duration of any funding regime • Projects and programmes rely on the packaging of funding from various sources (e.g. New Deal, European Social Fund, local regeneration funds and project earnings), in a way that provides outputs and 'added value' for each funder • Typically rely on a combination of funding streams,

Source: amalgamated from (Watt, 1997; Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000; Finn & Simmonds, 2003)

The features outlined in Table 1 are discussed further in the following sections.

Aims and outcomes

Interestingly, the features described above appear to indicate that the main or primary aim of ILMs is to offer a bridge <u>back</u> to the world of work. That implies that ILMs target people who have had previous experience of employment which is not necessarily the case. ILMs are appropriate for anyone who has been outside the labour market for some time, including those who have never worked, for example young people who have not been employed since leaving compulsory education.

ILMs are often represented figuratively in ILM literature by a bridge motif. In addition to the quotes in the table above, there are many other examples: for instance, Marshall and Macfarlane's (2000) report carries a colour picture of a concrete bridge on the front cover; McGregor et al's (1997) evaluation of the Wise Group ILM programme is titled, *Bridging the Jobs Gap*; the North West Wales Labour Market Intermediary (NWLMI) describe their ILM projects under

32

the title, "A bridge back to work"; in South Yorkshire, a Barnsley Development Agency Community Economic Regeneration Team *Fact File*; carried a banner with the wording, "ILM a bridge back to employment" and explains that, "put simply, an ILM job represents a 'bridge' back to permanent employment"; and, finally, Phoenix Enterprises, Rotherham, state that, "The Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) was set up to bridge the gap between unemployment and real work" (Phoenix Enterprises, undated leaflet).

Bridges can be conceptualised in two ways, either as a crossing, signifying a passage or journey (transition), or as a link, signifying connection and joining (intermediate). Bridges stand between two extremes and also facilitate a means of transition between them. A bridge can be thought of as either intermediate, transitional or as both intermediate and transitional. *Chambers English Dictionary* (Schwarz et al., 1988, p.745) defines 'intermediate' as, "placed, occurring or classified between others, extremes, limits or stages" and defines 'transition' as, "passage from one place, stage, style or subject to another" (Schwarz et al., 1988, p.1559). That multi-conceptual nature of 'bridge to work' was evident during interviews with SYCON managers and others. Sometimes managers tended to stress the intermediary aspect of ILMs when explaining theories of ILM activity and at other times the transitional element. For example, some managers and ILM employers considered the main purpose of ILMs to be to increase the capacity of employing organisations (intermediary purpose). The aim of the ILM employer is therefore to train the participant to work within the employing organisation at the end of the ILM contract.

Other stakeholders thought that an ILM's main objective was to help people move closer the wider labour market and to operate more effectively within it. In this, transitional, view of ILMs, the participant's ILM employment is necessarily short term and the main aim is to increase the participant's skills, experience, confidence and attitudes in order to enable them to move into more sustainable employment. These two constructs of ILMs are not always compatible. For example, people at the greatest distance from the labour market might not be

33

considered to be appropriate <u>intermediate</u> ILM employees but might be suitable for <u>transitional</u> ILM employment[12]. In all cases the aim of ILMs is to improve an individual's employability. The features of ILMs which contribute to that improvement are described below in the 'attributes and activities' section. The other entry in the 'aims and outcomes' row is 'a work reference for future employers'. This is a more explicit example of a theory about why ILMs have the outcomes they do. It is shown in Chapter 6 that such theories can be developed as context-mechanism-outcome (CMO) configurations (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). In this case a tentative CMO configuration would be that in the context of a person who does not have a recent, or any, employment history, the ILM employer is able to furnish the participant with an up-to-date reference (mechanism). The participant's application is then considered to be more acceptable by the employer and the candidate progresses further through the process than would otherwise be the case (outcome).

The following section assesses the 'attributes and activities' row of Table 1. It is these features which aim to contribute to improving the participant's employability skills. They are therefore aimed at improving the labour market supply but, as is shown below, they do also 'broaden out' (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005) to take account of demand side issues.

Attributes and activities

A key point identified in Table 1 is that ILM employment is undertaken in 'a realistic work environment'. Models of delivery have previously been under-theorised but ILM's offer of employed status to a long-term unemployed or economically inactive person, that is to say a waged position on a temporary contract, is consistently described as a main mechanism (even if the term mechanism is not used). The proposal is that ILMs operate in an environment that is as close to the labour market as possible so that ILM 'graduates' are fully prepared to move into further employment. The phrase 'real jobs' is used throughout this thesis as a shorthand term to signify a range of characteristics

---

[12] The term '*intermediate* labour market will continue to be used in this thesis, firstly because SYCON was an <u>Intermediate</u> Labour Market programme, secondly to avoid confusion with the later SYCON Transitional Labour Market (TLM) programme

which could be expected of jobs in the wider labour market. They include attributes such a contract of employment, job specifications, defined hours of work, and paid holidays. Interventions which are designed as 'real jobs' are contrasted with employment 'schemes' in this thesis (see Chapter 6). However, ILMs need to strike a balance between offering the support required by ILM participants who are often multiply disadvantaged in the labour market, and the requirements of ILM and open labour market employers. Marshall and Macfarlane (2000) found that this was an area of difficulty for some ILM employers:

> "Absenteeism, in particular was not dealt with quickly or firmly enough. Many have come to realise that they must act like employers and require good timekeeping, correct dress and attitude, even on pain of docking wages. Anything less and they are not preparing the person for work in the real labour market" (Marshall and Macfarlane, 2000, p26).

SYCON managers also stressed the importance of the employed status of ILM participants, but from the point of view of the benefit it offered workers rather than from the rather punitive viewpoint expressed above:

> "The employed status of ILM participants, coupled with the morale boost resulting from the fact that ILM participants gain employment through competitive interview, offers a big incentive to the participant to attend and complete the programme, and offers the self-confidence and satisfaction that comes from having a job" (SYCON, 2001, p.6).

A component of the employed status of ILM participants is that, like open labour market jobs, they are paid a wage. But some programmes have opted to offer 'benefits plus', that is to offer benefits plus a top-up payment in order to incentivise the participant (Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000). In SYCON, managers opted to offer a waged post with a participating employer. There were two main reasons given for their preference. Firstly, the receipt of a wage allows for a contractual arrangement between employers and employees that is similar to employment in the open labour market. Secondly, one of the main objectives of ILMs is to move people from benefits into work and therefore paying wages has the effect of achieving that aim, at least during the temporary employment stage, and hopefully beyond. The elements of the SYCON programme which

were designed to ensure that an ILM job was as much like a 'real job' as possible, such as paying a wage, are described in more detail elsewhere in this thesis. For now it is sufficient to note that Marshall and MacFarlane (2000) report that outcomes of ILM programmes were better for waged option ILMs than for those paying benefits plus. For example, they quote figures of a retention rate of 80 per cent of waged ILM participants compared to 41 per cent for unwaged workers in one Manchester programme, and 70 per cent and 30 per cent job outcomes in a Coventry replication of the Wise initiative (Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000, p.28).

The length of ILM employment varies from programme to programme. For instance, the North West Wales Labour Market Intermediary (NWLMI) programme offered a six months contract. A representative of the co-ordinating body, speaking privately with the author, argued that, "if they have not found a job within six months, they are unlikely to do so". Marshall and Macfarlane's (2000) survey of ILM provision found that 23 per cent of respondents were offered contracts of up to six months duration, 71 per cent six to twelve months, and the remaining six per cent contracts of over twelve months. Finn and Simmonds' (2003) survey does not give comparable figures but the authors do state that, "the duration of ILM jobs are mostly between 26 weeks and 52 weeks" (Finn & Simmonds, 2003, p.57). Their survey indicates that the average length of stay on an ILM varies from 65 to 75 per cent of the length of the contract length, which equates to around seven and a half to nine months for a twelve month programme. In the SYCON area, the average length of stay on the programme, which had a maximum duration of twelve months, varied between the four managing agencies: nine months in Sheffield, seven months in both Barnsley and Rotherham, and six and a half months in Doncaster: that is between just over 50 to 75 per cent. The reasons for the difference in rates were unclear to SYCON but may be partly due to differences in the types of ILM employment undertaken. For instance, some ILM participants were working towards a nationally recognised gas fitters qualification which required a longer period of engagement to show that the required levels of competence had been achieved.

36

Target groups and areas

Returning to Table 1, the 'target groups and areas' row of the table shows that there is a strong focus on the local and community elements of ILMs. That focus on locality and community has been a key feature of ILMs since their establishment in the UK by the pioneering Glasgow-based ILM organisation, the Wise Group. However, the Wise Group model of implementation is distinct from other models which have developed over the years and which have been found to be effective "in a number of areas of England where the [alternative] model has been adopted in preference to the Wise Group approach" (Cambridge Policy Consultants, 2002, p.12). Alternative models of implementation are discussed later in this chapter, this section discusses the Wise Group model further in order to compare and contrast it with subsequent developments.

An important feature of the Wise Group model of implementation is that the managing agency also employs the ILM participants. Employment is provided for temporary workers who are trained to work in wholly-owned subsidiary companies. Those companies recruit from the local pool of long term unemployed individuals, pay their ILM participants a wage, and, at the same time, contribute to the physical regeneration of their local area through the activities they undertake. The following section assesses the original Wise Group model and particularly the model's approach to developing 'social value'[13] through linking employability activities to area regeneration. Subsequent sections assess how those features are addressed in later models.

The Wise Group, which is now a social enterprise, was founded as a charitable organisation in 1984 in order to tackle, "two huge and fundamental issues pressing on the city of Glasgow" (Rennie, 1999)[14]. One issue was a rise in the numbers of long-term unemployed people in the city, the other was the poor

---

[13] 'Social value' is used here to reflect its growing use of the term in UK policy, see for example the Public Services (Social Enterprise and Social Value) Bill 2010-11 (http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/publicservicessocialenterpriseandsocialvalue.html). For clarity, 'Social value' is defined as "the creation of benefits or reductions of costs for society—through efforts to address social needs and problems—in ways that go beyond the private gains and general benefits of market activity" (Phills Jr. et al., 2008, p.39).
[14] Please note: the cited article is an internet-based transcript of a speech. It is not numbered, therefore it is not possible to show page or paragraph numbers

quality of Glasgow's housing stock, a great deal of which was "difficult to heat, expensive to heat, [and] were damp" (Rennie, 1999). The innovation introduced by the Wise Group was to tackle worklessness by employing long term unemployed individuals in work activities which were designed to improve the quality of the housing stock, focusing on improving insulation and introducing damp-proofing. Rennie explains the rationale like this:

> "So you have two problems at the same time. What happens if you take the long term unemployed people who are living in these houses and get them to enhance the quality of the housing stock in which they live through a program of energy enhancement, so you are solving two problems with one solution" (Rennie, 1999).

Therefore, in the early Wise Group model, the regeneration activities of ILMs were inseparable from the employment activities. The goals of providing ILM employment and regenerating the deprived localities from which ILM participants were recruited, were inextricably linked.

Early Wise Group subsidiary ILM companies included Heatwise, the first subsidiary developed, and Landwise, the second (McGregor, et al., 1997; Rennie, 1999). Heatwise was founded to tackle the problems of poor housing referred to by Rennie above by providing home improvement services such as supplying draught proofing and insulation and installing efficient heating systems. Landwise also utilised the Heatwise philosophy of linking regeneration work and improving individual employability but by using ILM participants to regenerate the 'back courts', or shared communal areas, of urban Glasgow, again improving the amenity of the temporary workers' immediate environments. For example, the Paisley Road West Project (The Wise Group, 2004)[15] redeveloped the back court area of 1990 – 1995 Paisley Road West. The project's description summarises the Wise Group philosophy and shows again that regeneration, community benefit and employability are interconnected within the model, but this time on communal land rather than in individual dwellings:

---

[15] At the time of writing, the page was no longer available

"The area had long been neglected, and was badly overgrown, open to vandalism and of little practical benefit to residents. Our objective was threefold; to physically transform the area, to bring a sense of ownership to the local community and to train the unemployed to deliver the project" (ibid.).

It can be seen that there was a strong focus on creating 'social value' in the Wise Group model. There is a close interconnection between people and place which is central to the programme's design. The interventions address area deprivation by directly tackling a number of aspects of social exclusion, including poor physical amenity and economic exclusion caused by worklessness. The themes of social exclusion and worklessness in deprived areas are addressed in detail in Chapter 3; the next section assesses further the ways that ILMs are designed to create social value, gained through local regeneration, focusing on whole community benefit, and generating improvements in individual employability skills, is addressed in ILM models. This thesis later explores the notion that conceptualising ILMs as 'real jobs' carries the potential of diluting the key mechanism of bringing 'a sense of ownership to the local community'.

ILMs and 'community benefits'
In the Wise Group model, as is shown above, the community and social benefits, or social value, which derives from ILM activity, is inextricably linked with activities aimed at generating improvement in an individual's employability skills. However this is problematic for a number of reasons. For example, ILM managers might focus on the provision of insulation in poor quality homes or the regeneration of back court areas of tenement buildings, at the expense of moving long term unemployed individuals into sustainable employment. In addition, the skills gained through ILM activity might not be, or might not be perceived to be, the skills which are needed by employers in the wider labour market.

Rennie (1999) addresses the first of those issues directly (the second one is addressed later in this chapter):

"In the east end of London a local authority had a whole lot of money to spend on a physical works program, wanted us to do it. We

39

agreed to it. We shouldn't have done, and we ended up hurrying people through a process to get them ready to go out and do physical work on site and we were losing the human touch and we actually just stopped doing it and said, look, you can take it away. This is no good for us. The agencies that were involved in the intermediate labour market have to understand no matter which part they are buying into, at the heart of it there is this notion of enhancing people's personal lot, moving people on" (Rennie, 1999).

In that example the Wise Group's main priority (moving people on) became subsumed under the Wise Group's lesser priority of completing the works. However, the problem was not that the Wise Group undertook a 'physical works programme', although that appears to be the implication in the quote above, but that the project 'ended up hurrying people through a process'. What needed to be addressed by Wise Group managers appears to be the 'process' through which ILM participants were able to 'do physical work on site'. In other words, managers of the ILM programme, in the example above, appear to have taken insufficient account of how the programme enabled mechanisms to be triggered in order to achieve particular outcomes[16]. Outcomes occur because of the "actions of stakeholders" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.215) and the actions of stakeholders in the case cited appear to have been deficient. In order to complete the project successfully with ILM labour, there was clearly a need to have competent ILM participants. That implies having properly trained and work-ready ILM participants, which in turn implies that ILMs should provide a context "in which successful mechanisms can be fired" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.216). That clearly did not happen in the example cited above. There was a mismatch between the 'hurried' training offered to ILM participants and the immediate employment opportunities which were available.

As well as such training, ILM participants often require personal development and support for 'personal barriers'. There is little or no discussion in Marshall and Macfarlane's (op. cit.) influential[17] review of ILMs about such support, nor is there any discussion in McGregor et al.'s 1997 evaluation of the Wise Group.

---

[16] See Chapter 4 for a discussion of realistic evaluation and Context-Mechanism-Outcome configurations
[17] So influential, it will be shown later in the thesis, that the ILM employment outcomes quoted by the authors were given as baseline outcomes for SYCON in the initial bid

Finn & Simmonds' (2003) review, in contrast, does highlight the need for, and importance of, such support. However, as Figure 4 shows, a significant number of contemporary ILMs did not offer all the support the target groups might need. Support for matters directly related to finding and keeping work, such as job search and careers advice, are almost, universally offered. Other types of support such as housing advice, childcare, and help with substance misuse are offered by fewer respondents.

Figure 4: per cent of ILMs offering different forms of support
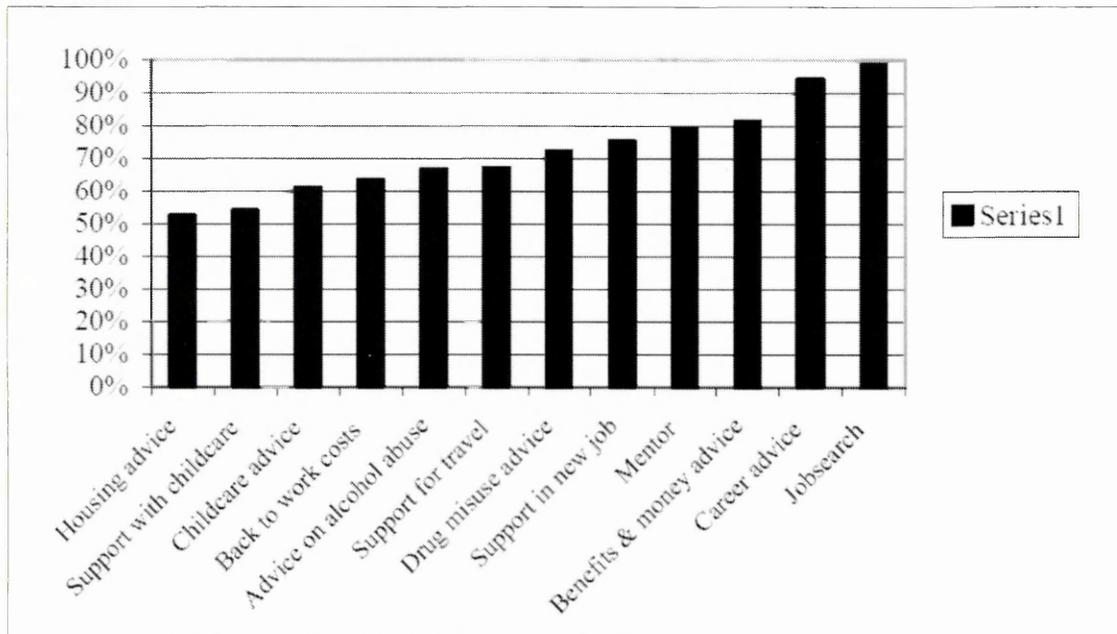
Source: (Finn & Simmonds, 2003, p.40)

The different types of support on offer might be a reflection of the needs of the target groups engaged and the localities in which the interventions were situated (Green & Hasluck, 2009). Within SYCON, which covered a larger geographical area than most previous ILMs, it was recognised that there was a concomitant need for a wide range of support services. SYCON stakeholders were particularly enthusiastic about the quality of the support they offered to ILM participants in two localities, either through 'signposting' to external support services (Sheffield) or through the provision of 'in-house' services (Rotherham). The key point, for this thesis, is that the provision of such support illustrates that, in order for ILM participants to become 'work ready', disabling barriers, or contexts, need to be adequately addressed. In some instances addressing such barriers might be the first priority, for example a newly released ex-

prisoner might need to address housing barriers before being able to focus directly on work-related skills, or childcare or travel barriers might need to be given priority in order for an individual to attend work experience or training. In many cases it might be possible to address those barriers at the same time as improving other aspects of employability.

Labour market need

The matching of 'work skills' to labour market need is the second issue identified at the beginning of this section: the proposition that skills gained through ILM activity might not be required in the wider labour market. The implication in the discussion so far in this chapter is perhaps that ILM participants are building skills in the sense of craft skills: skills to install draught-proofing and insulation in run-down housing stock or ground work skills to develop Glasgow's back courts and areas in the east end of London. However, it is not clear that these are the skills which employers in the wider labour market do actually need. Quoting the results of a survey of 100 employers in Glasgow, Rennie (1999) notes that:

> *"what they actually wanted is the list that you would come up with in your bath at home at night if you thought about it for a minute or two, which is reliability, honesty, time keeping, work ethic, communication, motivation, willingness to learn" (Rennie, 1999).*

If the focus of an ILM project is to move people into employment in the wider labour market, it is likely to be important that these wider employability attributes are effectively addressed. Thus the sector in which ILM employment takes place is possibly less important than the ways it addresses the issues outlined above (however, see Chapter 3 for a discussion of the changing nature of 'skill' and an assessment of its effect on ILM provision and participation).

Whether employability programmes should focus solely on employers' requirements is a contentious issue (see, for example, Gore, 2005). Nonetheless, it is clear that in order for ILM participants to 'move on' from their ILM employment into the wider labour market, they need to possess skills and attitudes which will help them compete for available jobs. Those employers also need to be aware that there is a pool of work-ready candidates to consider.

42

Like other bodies discussed earlier in this chapter, the Policy Action Team on Jobs (1999) also promoted ILMs to government. They also argued that it is important to build partnerships with employers in order to break down barriers to employing people who are long-term unemployed. They note that employers and long term unemployed individuals:

> *"failed to connect: sometimes because the job matching process was not working effectively; sometimes because employers were sceptical about recruiting from deprived neighbourhoods; sometimes because the jobs were inaccessible to the people" (Policy Action Team on Jobs, 1999, p.85)*

The Policy Action Team (PAT) recommended that "intermediary bodies running work experience programmes [such as ILMs] have an important role to play in bridging the divide between low employment/high unemployment neighbourhoods and employers" (Policy Action Team on Jobs, 1999, p.95). But it also noted that "the link with employers is critical. Work experience divorced from the work place is likely to be less effective". The following section focuses on the 'critical' link with employers and the bridge between 'low employment/high unemployment neighbourhoods and employers'. Firstly, however, it can be noted that the PAT recommendation correctly implies that improving an individual's employability requires a focus on the labour market demand as well as on supply. For employment interventions to achieve positive outcomes, 'employability' must necessarily include a "range of factors affecting the ability of individuals to attain 'the character or quality of being employable'" (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005, p.215). The PAT recommendation usefully highlights the need for interventions to address issues beyond perceived (or actual) individual deficiencies and to include addressing other barriers, in this case employer discrimination. However, the tone of the recommendation does rather devalue the activities of ILM participants. The mechanism which is implied is not so much that individuals are building essential skills, knowledge and experience which they can use in the labour market, but that providers and other 'intermediaries' are effectively opening up the labour market in order for them to operate within it more effectively. Intermediaries, according to the recommendation, should be building up a trust relationship with mainstream employers and thereby reducing the risk-factor for employers when they are

recruiting individuals who have been out of work for a period of time, or come from neighbourhoods which employers might be actively discriminating against. The 'risk reduction mechanism' is discussed further in Chapter 6 and appears likely to be an effective mechanism. Therefore, stakeholders need to have a good understanding of labour market requirements in order to ensure that ILM 'graduates' are able to operate in the wider labour market. But employers might have short-term and self-interested views of their needs (Clarke, 2007) which can run contrary to the needs of ILM participants for long term sustainable employment.

While the role of employers is crucial (Green & Hasluck, 2009, pp.34-35), it is also important that ILM employer organisations have good links with the target groups and have knowledge of the barriers they face. That is one of the reasons why third sector organisations make effective ILM employers. Such third sector organisations are often located within deprived areas and their activities are often intrinsically linked with neighbourhood problems which ILMs of the type discussed above seek to address. Neighbourhood issues and worklessness issues are often intertwined and third sector organisations are often well placed to tackle both areas. As Berkley (2011) argues in relation to social enterprise but which is generally applicable to 'third sector' organisations as a whole:

> "There is a role for social enterprise which combines environmental objectives and social objectives and can provide training opportunities for individuals in local communities. There is scope for the social enterprise sector to complement and strengthen public and private provision in addressing deprivation, unemployment and regeneration of urban disadvantaged communities" (Berkley, 2011, p.7)

At the time that the fieldwork was undertaken (circa 2003-2004) the term 'social enterprise' was less ubiquitous than at present and legal forms of entity were being explored (Defourny, 2001; Doeringer, 2010; Nicholls, 2006). One ILM managing agent was dismissive of voluntary and community sector organisations which adopted the term:

> "For me, the essential definition of a social enterprise is that it is social, and it is an enterprise. And i.e. 'enterprise' means that it can

actually stand on its own two feet. And I think there's very, very few social enterprises that are actually, particularly that viable. I think what they are, is actually voluntary sector organisations. The focus on 'enterprise' actually sets up false expectations, somewhere along the line, that they are going to generate enough income to be self sufficient" (SYCON manager).

It is not clear if such a view would prevail in the current climate in which voluntary sector organisations are encouraged to deliver services which were previously delivered by the public sector (Davies, 2011; National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 2005; Treasury, 2002). That is an area for further research and is beyond the scope of this study.

The North West Wales Labour Market Intermediary (NWLMI) proposed that ILMs which increase the capacity of social enterprises are 'true ILMs', as can be seen from the following excerpt from its promotional leaflet (undated):

> *"Such projects can be thought of as 'true ILMs' in that they are able to deliver a service (or product), which is sustainable and demand-led, as well as the associated jobs to provide such a service" (NWLMI, no date).*

By providing employment in social enterprises or third sector organisations, ILMs avoid "job displacement or substitution [because] the work is in additional economic activities, ideally of community benefit" (Marshall and Macfarlane, 2000, p2). However, there was pressure from a number of sources to develop SYCON ILMs outside the perceived 'comfort zone' of the voluntary and community sector (ECOTEC, 2003, p.20) and a SYCON funding representative suggested to the author that the variety of employer organisations involved in ILM delivery could be extended by including private sector employers. The final evaluation of SYCON (ECOTEC, 2005) observes that:

> *"For one [funding] representative there is a definite need to move towards a '...more employer focussed programme which is more focussed on the real labour market rather than the vol/com sector...'. The representative also commented that the programme should '...not be about putting people in Oxfam shops for twelve months...'. Another representative similarly felt that there was a need for the programme to '...move out of the comfort zone of the more traditional areas...' to engage private and public sector organisations such as the health service". (ECOTEC, 2005, p.61)*

45

The view that private enterprise could be incorporated into ILM provision was supported by a SYCON manager who observed that private companies could develop a community 'department' in order to carry out work that had direct community benefits.

Funding

The funding row of Table 1 shows that ILMs are often perceived to be 'high cost' interventions. For example "critics of ILMs often point to the high cost per job of a typical ILM" Bickerstaffe & Devins (2004, p.2) but supporters too describe them as "costly to run" (Gregg, 2008, p.89). In the year 2000, the average direct costs of ILMs were estimated to be £13,860 per participant per year[18] (Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000, p.44), a figure which has been "widely reported as evidence of high cost" (Finn & Simmonds, 2003, p.51). However, a range of factors should be considered in assessing the cost of ILMs. For example, ILMs appear to have a better rate of placing people into jobs than other employment programmes (Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000) and therefore there is a greater return from the investment which should be measured by 'cost per job' or 'value of benefits achieved' rather than cost per participant. Additionally, the figures above should be offset by the increased income tax returns to the Exchequer which result from participants moving from benefits into paid work, as well as by reductions in benefits payable to participants who might not have moved on so quickly, if at all. One more factor which should be considered about Marshall and Macfarlane's and Finn and Simmonds' oft quoted 'cost per participant' calculations, is that those "figures do not reflect the value of any revenues produced from the work undertaken" (Gregg, 2008, p.89). That is a complex area in which to gain reliable evidence. For example, although some ILMs might undertake contracted physical regeneration or similar activities which would be relatively simple to assess at market rate, others might work in settings such as schools, community centres or undertake roles such as city centre wardens and will be less easy to quantify in monetary

---

[18] 'Per participant per year' is an important consideration because a) some participants will move into employment or other outcomes before the end of a full year and therefore the costs will support more than one outcome, and b) some ILMs are designed for periods of less than 52 weeks, therefore the cost per person per project will be considerably less (see Finn & Simmonds, 2003, pp.51-53)

terms. However, there are also 'social value' effects of those jobs which are not addressed in a purely economic assessment of the costs of ILMs. Such effects can accrue to individuals in terms of improved health and well-being (South et al., 2011), to projects in terms of increased capacity (ibid.) and to localities and neighbourhoods.

Social value effects

Although the economic effects of ILMs have been much discussed, there is little available evidence about these social outcomes (Cambridge Policy Consultants, 2007; South et al., 2011). However, there is a great deal of interest in measuring such effects (Nicholls, 2007; Wood & Leighton, 2010) and a large range of tools to help organisations to achieve effective measurement (see for example Department of Health, 2010; Hart & Haughton, 2007; REDF, 2000; Social Enterprise South East, undated). By measuring social value effects, third sector and social enterprise organisations can "increase their own competitiveness and to contribute to more equitable society (Nicholls, 2007, p.2). Thus, by addressing social value, organisations can address barriers relating to perceived high costs, Nicholls argues that:

> *"Cost is still perceived as a barrier by some yet a combination of new approaches to bring down cost and increase recognition that understanding and managing social value is an investment will help, as will the potential overlap between public procurement of social value and social enterprise's ability to provide it". (Nicholls, 2007, p.12)*

The importance of measuring social value could be increased in England if a Private Members Bill (Edmonds et al., 2010), introduced by Conservative MP Chris White, becomes law[19]. The bill aims to "make the concept of 'social value' more relevant and important in the placement and provision of public services" (Edmonds et al., cover page). Providers, such as ILM organisations who wish to bid for the delivery of employment programmes will need to show how they will add social value through the delivery of their programme. In addition, if the

---

[19] At the time of writing the Bill had been amended and had received government support (see http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/briefing-papers/SN06096). It is expected to become law by summer 2012 (Mills, 2011)

Bill is passed into law, ILMs might not be judged so much on their perceived high cost but more on the social value they can be shown to clearly generate.

Funding sources

Table 1 notes that ILM "operators need to be creative and package together different [funding] sources - often referred to as the funding cocktail or jigsaw" (Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000, p.32). Finn and Simmonds (2005, p.32) identified "twenty-one different funding sources across Britain" with most ILM programmes using at least four different sources. The SYCON programme drew funds from over 20 different sources (SYCON monitoring information). There are three consequences of the 'funding cocktail' which ILMs must use which are discussed below: the first consequence is that there are practical difficulties in collecting and reporting monitoring or management information; the second is that there are difficulties for the implementation of ILMs resulting from different local funding priorities; and the third consequence relates to the issue of sustainability of ILMs. These are briefly discussed in the following sections.

Collecting and reporting monitoring information can be a problem, and a significant barrier to participation, for small organisations, and larger ones such as SYCON. There can be difficulties on two levels: passing information from the employer organisations to the managing agency; and from the managing agency to the funding organisation. In SYCON there was another tier of bureaucracy in which managing agents reported back to the SYCON board and the SYCON board reported to funders. The collection of management information and effective reporting were raised as problematic areas by a funding organisation representative and by a SYCON manager during the fieldwork period of this study (2002-2004). The issue was also identified by Ecotec (2005) who reported, however, that "in January 2005 it appears that problems of collection and presentation of MI [management information] had been largely resolved" (ibid,' p.9). As Marshall and Macfarlane (2000, p.38) observed, "some audit trails required by funding sources can be onerous, so a project has to be sure that the amount of money gained is worth the extra bureaucracy".

48

The necessity to secure a 'cocktail' of funding can result in finances only being available for activities which take place in relatively small localities. For some small ILMs that can be a positive feature and managers can develop projects to address local social problems such as poor housing, amenities, or other neighbourhood issues. For other ILMs which work across ward, district or other boundaries, or across a sub-region as in the case of the SYCON programme, the issue is more problematic. For example, in one SYCON area it led to a situation in which some ILM participants could not receive Personal Development Funding, a pot of money which the participant could use for diverse 'personal development' activities including taking driving lessons or attending Tai Chi classes (SYCON manager). The problem was that some individuals were funded from resources which did not finance such activities, while other participants, who were funded from different sources, did receive the necessary finances.

The third consequence of requiring a cocktail of funding relates to the sustainability of ILMs. For example, SYCON drew money from a variety of sources, including European Social Funds, the Single Regeneration Budget, Employment Zones, and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, all of which are time-limited. This is a factor which clearly affects ILMs' potential for sustainability. There are also other issues which affect the continued viability of ILMs such as "annual bidding and late payments (e.g. ESF)" (Marshall & Macfarlane, 2002, p.37) and, for those organisations which earn income from providing services or products, "it also takes time to develop markets and capacity to deliver well in order to obtain service-related income" (Marshall & Macfarlane, 2002, p.37.). Given those problems, it is not surprising that the three most significant problems experienced by ILM programmes include 'securing funds for following years', 'obtaining setting-up funds', and 'managing cash flow', or that the two most desired improvements which ILM managers would like to see were 'more cohesive simpler funding' and 'reduced paperwork' (Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000, pp.14-16).

Alternative ILM models

The discussion of ILMs in this chapter up to now has focused on the Wise Group model of implementation. However, there are a number of other variants in terms of ILM design and operation. For example, Marshall and Macfarlane (2000, p19) describe four basic models or "operating structures

> *Central body manages the work and employs the workers ('Wise Model')*
>
> *Central body manages the programme but other organisations manage the work in distinct ILM projects and employ the workers ('Works Model')*
>
> *Central body manages the programme and employs the workers, but these are on placement with other organisations for their work activity (often only one or two per organisation)*
>
> *As above (central body manages the programme and the workers are on placement with other organisations), but the placement organisations employ the workers (Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000, p.19)*

The 'Works' model is reference to another ILM model which also emerged in Glasgow (Finn & Simmonds, 2003; Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000; Wardrop, 1996). In the Works model, the ILM managing company forms partnerships with employing organisations which, in turn, provide the work experience and, sometimes, employ the workers. Variations of the programme facilitate a number of different operating structures but the key difference to the Wise Group model remains the same: the work experience part of the programme is provided by a partner organisation rather than the ILM managing organisation itself.

Glasgow Works did keep some aspects of the Wise Group approach but innovated in others (Cambridge Policy Consultants, 2002). For example, the Works approach maintains a focus on an ILM job being a 'real job' with wages, contract, etc. and also retains a 'social value' focus by employing people in community-based activities. However, the key difference is that the Works approach is one in which managers act as brokers, placing participants in 'third sector' employment and devolving project management to the employer

50

organisations (Cambridge Policy Consultants, 2002, p.2). There are advantages and disadvantages with this operational structure. One of the advantages is that a vast array of different organisations, and therefore work experience opportunities, is potentially available for prospective ILM participants. Given that there is enough demand in the area, the range of possible opportunities is limited only by the amount of locally-based organisations with the capacity to support ILM participants, and the ability and resources of the managing organisation to recruit ILM employers and participants. One of the disadvantages of this model, this thesis argues, is the diluted relationship to local area regeneration, an aspect of ILM activity built into the practice and ethos of the Wise Group model. The intrinsic link between the ILM worker and the regeneration of the worker's community found in the original Wise Model can be broken or at least weakened. Nonetheless, the community benefit of ILM work remains an important aspect of the activity.

Within the Works model, ILM employment may be provided by or in a wide range of organisations such as a community park, a city centre in the form of wardens, or, indeed, in a charity shop. There is community benefit to be derived from all these activities but they might not necessarily impact directly on the ILM participant's well-being to the degree that the Wise model did. There is potential for Works model ILMs to be closely associated with the ILM participants' immediate community, for instance New Deal for Communities projects have recruited locally in order to regenerate the local area and focus on employing local labour (Bickerstaffe & Devins, 2004). However, such a focus could also have the effect of limiting the opportunities available to participants who might have found employment in a wider area, particularly if support for areas such as transport costs is given. Some jobs lend themselves more readily to local recruitment than others. For example, non-teaching assistant posts in schools can appeal to local parents and have the added advantage, for many parents, of fitting in work with school days and terms. This enables them to continue caring for their own children whilst also participating in local employment. Nonetheless, there is little intrinsic reason that ILM work cannot have a wider focus and include private sector employment. The inclusion of the private sector in ILM provision is explored in more detail in Chapter 6.

51

As well as increasing the capacity of existing organisations, ILM labour can be used to develop new social enterprises. The community benefit in these cases, like the examples above, often derives from the service or product involved. Examples of such enterprises might include community nurseries which use ILM labour to start up their organisation and which employ the worker (should they prove satisfactory) once the ILM has completed. Again, the social enterprise may be locally-based, employing local labour but that is not necessarily the case. However, the pool of potential ILM participants from which candidates can be recruited is necessarily smaller because they often need to be more 'job-ready' as employers are focused on starting up the new enterprise. In other words, these approaches require participants who are relatively closer to the job market. This is especially the case if the participant has a 'customer facing' role. This issue is addressed further in the assessment of the SYCON ILM in Chapter 6 and in the discussion of aesthetic labour in Chapter 4.

The previous sections outlined the main features of ILM activity. These form the basis of the typology of ILMs which is developed in the next sections. The typology draws on 'Wise' and 'Works' models, but also directs attention to the implications of the models for the recruitment of the ILM target group.

A Typology of ILMs

SYCON was not a unified, single, model of implementation; instead it was based on a number of different models. It is important, for clarity, to compare and contrast different types of ILMs in the chapters which follow. The typology of ILMs set out in this section is a tool to assist in differentiating and analysing the implementation of the SYCON ILM in its four constituent areas.

This section draws on the features outlined so far in this chapter. The discussions of ILM models have thus far used accepted terms such as 'Wise Group' or 'Works' models to describe ILM operating structure. On reflection, this is perhaps not so useful for the purposes of this study. For example, the two models quoted have actually developed and changed as they have been

implemented in different localities with different employment and regeneration contexts. A related problem is that assessments of models of operating structures, such as the one in Marshall and Macfarlane (2000), tend to imply that replication is simply a matter of having the 'correct' management structure in place and the desired outcomes will follow. This thesis argues that a range of contexts are important in generating outcomes, and a key aim of the thesis is to explore how different contexts allow positive mechanisms to be triggered in order to generate specific outcomes. For these reasons, the 'Types' in the typology are simply called Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3.

Type 1 ILMs

Type 1 ILMs are based on the original Wise Group model. The managing agency employs the ILM participant, often in one or more subsidiary companies which could be social enterprises or similar organisations. Each enterprise provides a specific service or product which has community benefit. They aim to employ local people in activities which provide benefit to the communities in which they live. In order to maximise additionality and to ensure that they do not compete with private organisations, they are situated in an area of need and address a market failure. Critics of this type of ILM argue that they might focus too much on training ILM participants to become proficient in a skill which is only required by the employing organisation and which is not sufficiently connected to the needs of employers in the wider labour market. Another criticism is that they might focus too much on delivering a service, rather than on improving participants' employability. Supporters argue that because they target people who are furthest from the labour market in work which benefits their community, participants in Type 1 ILMs are able to show potential employers that they are employable, and at the same time take pride in work which improves the immediate circumstances of members of their community. These ILMs are unlikely to become self-sufficient and therefore always rely on some public funding, but they will also earn income from their products or services. They are increasingly likely to operate within a competitive market in which they bid for contracts, potentially against other social or private organisations.

Type 2 ILMs

Type 2 ILMs are a hybrid of Wise and Works group models. Like Type 1 ILMs, employment is provided in social enterprises or similar organisations which offer a product or service. However, the ILM managing agency is a separate body. The enterprises will offer a product or service which responds to a social need. The enterprise sells the product and service and might bid for contracts from local authorities or other relevant bodies. Criticisms of Type 2 ILMs are similar to those of Type 1. Another criticism is that they tend to engage ILM participants in order to build up their capacity; ILM participants might therefore not be being trained for the wider labour market but for undertaking the specific tasks required by the employer organisation. Supporters argue that the skills and attitudes gained are transferable to other workplaces.

Type 3 ILMs

Type 3 ILMs are based on the Works model. Like Type 2 ILMs, employment is provided in an organisation which is separate from the managing agency. Type 3 ILM employers tend to be voluntary and community sector organisations but could conceivably be from any sector, either social, public, or private. However, because of the historical link with the voluntary and community sector, critics of Type 3 ILMs propose that such employment does not provide skills which are required in the wider labour market. Supporters point out that the voluntary and community sector is changing and that they are increasingly required to operate within a competitive market. However, many still rely totally on short-term grant and contract funding and donations rather than earned income. Therefore such employment might be difficult to sustain in the longer term.

The three types of ILMs are outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Typology of ILMs

Type	Feature	Potential ILM priority
Type 1	- This type of ILM is based on the Wise Group model - ILM employment provided in wholly owned subsidiary organisations. - Earn a proportion of their income from selling goods or services	The focus might be on training ILM participants to become skilled at providing organisation-specific

	Might contract with statutory organisations • Will address a market failure by providing a needed service which would otherwise not be available to residents	goods or services • Another focus might be on delivering the service, possibly at the expense of moving the ILM participant into the wider labour market
Type 2	• This type of ILM is a hybrid between the Wise and Works models • ILM employment provided in Social enterprises, either newly formed or longer-standing, but which is a separate entity to the managing agency. • Possibly earn a proportion of their income from selling goods or services. Might contract with statutory organisations	• The focus might be on training ILM participants to become skilled at providing organisation-specific goods or services • Employers might be focused on building the capacity of their organisation rather than moving participants on
Type 3	• This type of ILM is based on the Works model • ILM employment provided in partner organisations • ILM employer partners usually based in the third sector but not necessarily so. Could be private or public sector	• The focus should be on tackling barriers affecting participation in the wider labour market. • Should aim to move people on.

Concluding discussion

This chapter has examined the question 'what is an ILM?' In order to answer that question the chapter has described ILMs' main features. Firstly, however, an apparent anomaly was outlined; it is that despite the frequent and consistent promotion of Intermediate Labour Market programmes from respected sources, including the government's Select Committee of Education and Employment, and the influential 'Gregg review' (Gregg, 2008), governments appear to have grown gradually more cautious of funding them directly. Recent Labour governments did encourage ILM-like activities, for example through the New Deal programme's Environment Task Force and Voluntary Service Options, and in the StepUp pilot programme. However, although these bore similarities with ILMs, there were also significant differences, including compulsory participation

whereas ILMs rely on voluntary involvement. It is not yet clear if recent development such as the present Coalition's Work Programme will support ILM activity, although their potential is assessed later in this thesis.

The policy environment is a key factor because it provides the framework in which employment interventions are designed and developed. It can therefore be conducive to the implementation of ILMs or work against the development of their key features. For example, StepUp was designed to have many of the features of an ILM while simultaneously requiring compulsory as opposed to the voluntary participation. Voluntary participation can be understood as an ILM enabling mechanism. It is one of the features of ILMs which contribute to their 'job-like' status; others include the competitive recruitment of ILM participants, a contract of employment, a wage, and holiday entitlement. Chapter 4 will show that changes in context, such as compulsory rather than voluntary participation in ILMs, is likely to lead to the generation of different outcomes because enabling mechanisms might not be successfully triggered. Recent trends towards compulsion in the welfare system (see Chapter 3) have intensified the importance of these contextual issues.

Other examples of ILM contexts described in this chapter include funding contexts, community engagement and 'social value', and contexts relating to the engagement of the target group. For example, the literature states that ILMs should recruit people who are most disadvantaged in the labour market and who have been disengaged from the labour market for long periods. This chapter has observed that some models of implementation might require a different target group to be engaged. For example, Type 2 ILMs focus on recruiting participants who are more 'job ready'. This has implications for the type of skills and learning which ILM participants might undertake.

In summary, this chapter has begun the process of identifying enabling ILM contexts and mechanisms. The next chapter is a review of selected relevant policy literature relating to learning, work and social exclusion.

Chapter 3: Learning, Work and Social Exclusion

Introduction

The previous chapter described and assessed a number of Intermediate Labour Market models of intervention. It outlined their historical development in the UK, their main features, and identified three main types of ILM. The chapter began the process of identifying enabling ILM contexts and mechanisms, including that ILM are designed and developed as 'real jobs'. However, it noted that contexts are not always conducive to the implementation of ILMs and that therefore enabling mechanisms might not be triggered.

Importance of policy contexts

This chapter will assess the policy contexts in which employment programmes have been developed. It will review relevant literature on three closely associated areas, the three areas contained in the title of this thesis (*Learning to Work: the Intermediate Labour Market Response to Social Exclusion*): learning, work, and social exclusion. The discussion starts from the potentially gloomy premise that ILMs can, at best, be only a 'sticking plaster' solution to the problems of social exclusion. The 'inadequacy' of ILMs to fully address issues of social exclusion is not only an issue of scale or quality, although both are discussed in the analysis of SYCON in later chapters; more precisely the problem is that social exclusion is a product of the unequal nature of capitalist society. As Byrne (1999) explains, "social exclusion derives from inequality. It is a product of the post-industrial social order dominated by globalizing capital and the superclass associated with that globalizing capital" (Byrne, 1999, p.137). Employment interventions such as ILMs are unlikely to address adequately the unequal nature of society. However, while projects and programmes might make only a relatively small difference, often by addressing the most significant problems at a local level, the overall direction of policy can make a much larger one. For example, with reference to income inequality, Wilkinson and Pickett (2010, p.271) argue that "it is impossible for governments not to influence income differences. Not only are they the largest employer in most countries, but almost every area of economic and social policy affects income distribution". While the assessment of 'every area of economic and social policy' is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is important to address the policy discourses which

provide the contexts for ILMs to be developed and implemented because those contexts determine, to a great extent, key factors such as the amount and sources of available funding and other resources and the nature of potential target groups (each with a range of different needs). For example, ILMs can only operate by getting access to a 'cocktail of funds' (see Chapter 2). Potential target groups, such as people who have been long term unemployed, people who previously claimed Incapacity Benefit, or lone parents, need to be able to 'bring' funding which can be used as 'match' in order to finance the intervention. What is at least as important, if not more so, for the long term employability of ILM participants, is that policy should also create the conditions which essentially determine issues such as the nature and number of jobs available and even the level of wages which workers at the lower end of the pay spectrum are able to earn. As Wilkinson and Pickett (2010, p.271) assert:

> *"Influential areas of policy include minimum wage legislation, education policies, the management of the national economy, whether unemployment is kept to low levels, whether different rates of VAT and sales taxes are applied to necessities and luxuries, provision of public services, pension policies, inheritance taxes, negative income tax, basic income policies, child support, progressive consumption taxes, industrial policy, retraining schemes, and many more"*

Thus the overall policy context is critical to the eventual success of employability programmes and projects such as ILMs because "employability cannot be understood without reference to the extent and nature and location of labour demand" (Lindsay, 2010, p.133).

Structure of the chapter

This chapter starts by assessing various relevant discourses of social exclusion. It the addresses 'learning', a term which is used here as a 'catch all' term for 'learning, education and training', including learning at work and work experience, particularly in relation to how learning on work experience is transferred to other situations. This is particularly relevant for Type 3 ILMs (see chapter 2) which aim to 'move people on' to work in other organisations in the wider labour market, although it is important for all Types of ILM as they all intend to inculcate 'transferable skills'. The notion of 'skill' will also be explored,

particularly in relation to the types of skills which are required in contemporary labour markets.

Social exclusion

Social exclusion: shifting from centre stage?

The concept of social exclusion, both in terms of understanding its causes, developing potential solutions, and defining its importance in UK policy, has evolved considerably during the period of this research project[20]. For example, Sealey (2009, p.1) argues that "social exclusion appear[s] to be of declining contemporary relevance in social policy theory and practice." He does not doubt that the concept of 'social exclusion' has been central to policy development in the UK, as well as in Europe and elsewhere, but notes that there appears to be a 'downgrading' of the relevance of the concept for UK policy makers. He notes, for example, that the Social Exclusion Unit, once the centre of New Labour policy was downgraded to become "the much smaller Social Exclusion Task Force (SETF)" (Sealey, 2009, p.2). Further evidence that social exclusion is shifting from 'centre stage' might come from the subsequent incorporation of the SETF into the Office for Civil Society (OCS), a shift which was one of the first actions of the current Coalition government. SETF staff, along with staff from the now disbanded Office of the Third Sector, "are now working on the Big Society agenda [while] lead responsibility for issues of multiple disadvantage now sits within the Department for Work and Pensions [DWP]" (Cabinet Office, 2010)[21]. Such shifts might indeed signal a further decline in the contemporary relevance of 'social exclusion', but there is likely to be a continuing policy focus on the issues of social exclusion, even if the term has become less ubiquitous in policy circles. For instance, it should be noted that 'multiple disadvantage' is used as a substitute for 'social exclusion' and that responsibility 'sits within' DWP. Thus, the terminology has perhaps changed but the relationship between 'multiple disadvantage' and work remains.

---

[20] The research studentship started September 2001 and continued into 2011. It included periods of temporary suspension and extension due to illness and work commitments
[21] Web-based document without page numbers

What is social exclusion?

Many commentators (e.g. Burchardt et al., 1999; Byrne, 1999; Levitas, 1998 and 2005, Percy-Smith, 2000) trace the concept of 'social exclusion' to French social, and socialist, policy of the early 1980s. Although it is a term that has been used a great deal by policy makers, it is a term that lacks consistency of definition. For example Levitas, (2005, p.2) argues the following:

> *"There is no monolithic pan-European definition of social exclusion; rather, there is a range of national discourses which use the idea of exclusion in different ways. "As exclusion becomes an increasingly prevalent term, so there are competing discourses of exclusion within individual countries, as well as within Europe" (Levitas, 2005, p.2).*

In this context, Burchardt et al. (1999) usefully describe some of the 'competing discourses' which have emerged in Britain as follows:

> *In Britain the Blair Government's concern has been focused on workless households [and] for some, social exclusion is simply a currently fashionable way of talking about poverty ... or even about subset of the poor. For others, it is a broader conception, not focusing primarily on low income (as most conceptions of poverty do), but including polarization, differentiation and inequality. Some reject any identification of social exclusion with class or inequality, arguing that the latter concerns people's positions on a vertical axis ("up" or "down"), whereas the former is about a quite different geometrical shape: about being "in" or "out" of a circle" (Burchardt et al., 1999, p.228)*

Thompson (2000), however, argues that social exclusion is indeed related to class and inequality:

> *"At various times in the last thirty years the condition now called 'social exclusion' has been called 'disadvantage', 'deprivation', and, during the Thatcher years, the emergence of an 'underclass'. In this sense, social exclusion is not new. It relates to economic and social class systems in Britain, based on age-old inequalities in the ownership and distribution of wealth, jobs, resources and power". (Thompson, 2000, p.1)*

For Thompson, social exclusion is a result of the unequal ways that power and influence are exercised in society. She argues that:

> *"People who are currently referred to as 'socially excluded' are not only financially poor, they are also from social groups whose*

ethnicity, culture and identity carry the least amount of recognition, influence and power in society. They are likely to be the least well educated and the most disenfranchised when it comes to active participation in civil and democratic society" (Thompson, 2000, p.1)

Thus, this perspective links social exclusion to a lack of citizenship. This perception of the phenomenon can be contrasted with government definitions of social exclusion which are "very much focused on outcomes and makes no reference to the processes that create the problems identified in the definition" (Percy-Smith, 2000, p.4). Percy-Smith is here discussing an early definition of social exclusion taken from a 1997 SEU document (*Social Exclusion Unit: Purpose, Work Priorities and Working Methods*):

> *"Social exclusion is a shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown" (Percy-Smith, 2000, p.4)*

It is interesting to compare this 1997 version discussed by Percy-Smith with a later one[22] from *Preventing Social Exclusion*, (the Social Exclusion Unit, 2001a, p.10). In the 2001 version, the word 'label' has been replaced by 'term'; 'individuals' by 'people'; and 'environments' removed from the phrase 'high crime environments'. Thus the 2001 definition appears to be addressing criticism about 'labelling' individuals as 'socially excluded'. On the other hand, and *contra* to Percy-Smith, the phrase 'high crime environments' in the 1997 quote had the effect of implying that such environments contributed to the production of social exclusion, rather than *vice versa*. The removal of 'environments' perhaps signifies that high crime is a result of social exclusion rather than mechanism which generates it. In the 2001 definition the focus is perhaps even less on the 'processes that create the problems' than the 1997 one. The focus of efforts to combat social exclusion therefore becomes not so much combating inequality, the logical implication of Thompson's analysis, but

---

[22] "A shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown"

on addressing the results of inequality: poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, etc.

A more recent (2008) definition, reproduced here from the Social Exclusion Task Force website[23], develops the earlier versions:

> "Social exclusion is about more than income poverty. It is a short–hand term for what can happen when people or areas have a combination of linked problems, such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime and family breakdown. These problems are linked and mutually reinforcing. Social exclusion is an extreme consequence of what happens when people don't get a fair deal throughout their lives, often because of disadvantage they face at birth, and this disadvantage can be transmitted from one generation to the next" (Social Exclusion Task Force, 2008).

Thus social exclusion is here characterised as a complex issue, partly a result of structural elements (more than income poverty, discrimination), partly a result of perceived individual 'deficiencies': lack of skills, a job, income; and partly a result of inequality (people don't get a fair deal). Differences between the Social Exclusion Unit's (SEU) 1997 definition and that of its more recent incarnation as the Social Exclusion Task Force (SETF) are important. The 2008 definition is recognition of the complexity of the problem. It adds discrimination as one of the linked problems, thereby incorporating some of the power relations explored by Thompson. Curiously it omits poor health. However it does introduce 'fairness', a hint that social exclusion might be a result of inequality. These themes are explored further in the discussion Levitas' (1998 and 2005) analysis.

RED, SID, and MUD
Levitas (2005) has identified three discourses of social exclusion: the redistributionist discourse (RED), social integrationist discourse (SID) and moral underclass discourse (MUD). Each of these is outlined below. These three discourses do not exist independently of each other, although they may emerge from differing political traditions; rather they tend to coexist within policy discussions and interventions with varying degrees of emphasis. Thus, for instance, discussions around perceived problems of worklessness and lone

---

[23] No longer available

parents may simultaneously argue that it is morally wrong for taxpayers' money to fund the lifestyles of lone parents through benefits (MUD); that lone parents should instead engage in paid work in order to contribute financially to society (SID); but that while in work, lone parents should be able to access Tax Credits in order to maintain an appropriate level of income whilst employed in what may be part-time or low-paid work (RED). In the years since Levitas first outlined these discourses (Levitas, 1998) there has been a continued move away from RED: "redistributive social policies are now no longer seriously considered by modern politicians of the centre Left or middle ground" (Rodger, 2008, p.199). However, it will be shown later in this thesis that RED, SID, and MUD permeated through SYCON ILM provision in the early 2000s and policies supporting their implementation. The following section discusses RED in more detail.

Redistributionist discourse

For Levitas, the redistributionist discourse (RED) primarily views poverty as the main cause of social exclusion. She cites the work of Townsend (Levitas, 2003) in arguing that "poverty should not be understood in terms of subsistence, but in terms of people's ability to participate in the customary life of society"[24]. Since Townsend's early contributions to the understanding of poverty, such as his 1962[25] discussion of the meaning of poverty and his later survey of poverty in the UK (Townsend, 1979) there has been a growing acceptance among social scientists [but not necessarily among policy makers (Rosenfeld, 2010)] that "poverty is not an absolute state. It is relative deprivation" (Townsend, 2010, p.99). Thus, there are various methods designed to measure the prevalence of poverty in terms of material deprivation which compare people's relative ability to 'consume' rather than, or as well as, their income (Berthoud & Bryan, 2010). However, measuring the multi-dimensional nature of poverty has proved problematic (Tomlinson et al., 2008). Indeed, identifying "what are the best methods for measuring poverty, deprivation, social exclusion and standard of living" (Anonymous, 2011) is one of the objectives of a major Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) research project which will report in 2013.

---

[24] Web document, not numbered
[25] Reproduced in the British Journal of Sociology in 2010 (Townsend, 2010)

The question of how and what to measure is important for two reasons: it allows data to be collected and trends identified; and such data effectively determines where social policy should be directed and how resources should be targeted. However, the ways that social policy is directed to address an issue is essentially a political decision and is subject to change over time. Thus, Lister (1998) identified a shift in New Labour thinking away from promoting equality to promoting equality of opportunity. Social policy was therefore directed towards "education, training and paid work rather than redistribution of income through the tax-benefit system" (Lister, 1998, p.216). Some redistributionist measures remain, for example, the Labour government's Working Tax Credits (WTC) system, which supplements the income of eligible lower paid workers, is an example of one possible response to social exclusion arising from RED as it supplements the wages of those who are in work but who receive low pay. However, other policy measures, such as the Coalition's increase of Value Added Tax from 17.5% to 20% in January of 2011, might have the effect of undoing gains received through the Tax Credit system, although further research on the effects of the increase are needed to fully assess if that is the case. What the implementation of the Working Tax Credit does signify is that wages at the lower end of the wage spectrum might be insufficient. That issue is addressed later in a discussion of the Social Integrationist Discourse; the next section assesses the Moral Underclass Discourse, a discourse which became dominant under New Labour and, this thesis argues, remains so within the Coalition.

Moral underclass discourse

The moral underclass discourse (MUD) "centres on the moral and behavioural delinquency of the excluded themselves" (Levitas, 2005, p.7). MUD is particularly prevalent in current debates around young people. It is "a gendered discourse with many forerunners, whose demons are criminally-inclined, unemployable young men and sexually and socially irresponsible young mothers" (Levitas, 2005, pp.7-8).

The idea that an underclass was emerging in Britain gained currency with Murray's controversial essays for the *Sunday Times*[26]. Murray has defined the underclass in terms which reflect Levitas' description above, particularly with regard to 'young mothers':

> *"By underclass, I do not mean people who are merely poor, but people at the margins of society, unsocialised and often violent. The chronic criminal is part of the underclass, especially the violent chronic criminal. But so are parents who mean well but who cannot provide for themselves, who give nothing back to the neighbourhood, and whose children are the despair of the teachers who have to deal with them" (Murray, 2001, p.2).*

Thus 'parents who cannot provide' and their children are classed by Murray as being of the same order of 'underclass' as 'violent chronic criminals'. Rodger (2008) argues that there has been a tendency towards 'criminalising social policy' in policy and welfare circles which can be observed in a growing tendency to merge social policy and criminal justice. That convergence is visible in anti-social behaviour policies for Rodger, and also in policies directed towards '"chavs[27]" and 'NEET[28]' young people.

The term 'chav' "represents a popular reconfiguration of the underclass" (Hayward & Yar, 2006, p.10). Similarly, 'NEETs', originally a term used by government[29] to identify problems associated with a particular group of unemployed young people, has also become synonymous with 'the underclass' in popular opinion. For example Winnett (2005), in an article titled *Meet the 'neets': A new underclass*, defines NEETs as:

> *"A class of uber-chavs, they encompass a wide range of people, from the law abiding who have fallen on hard times ... to the truly antisocial neighbours from hell. What they all have in common is*

---

[26] The first, *The Emerging British Underclass*, was published by the paper in 1989; the second, *Underclass: The Crisis Deepens*, in 1993; the later one, *Underclass + 10: Charles Murray and the British Underclass 1990 - 2000*, in 2000. This section is informed by reproductions, the first two reproduced with commentaries in Lister (1996), the later one in Murray (2001) with a commentary by Phillips: *What About the Overclass?*

[27] A pejorative term usually applied to white, working class, often unemployed, young people. (Hayward & Yar, 2006) argue that 'chav' has become synonymous with 'underclass'

[28] Young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training

[29] Widely believed to have originated in *Bridging the Gap: New Opportunities for 16-18 Year Olds Not in Education, Employment or Training* (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999), although that document does not use the NEET acronym

that they are not doing anything productive and are costing taxpayers a fortune". (Winnett, 2005, p.12)

Winnett's article focuses much less on 'the law abiding who have fallen on hard times' and more on the perceived 'anti-social neighbours from hell'. In a similar fashion, a research report commissioned by the Greater London Authority (Research as Evidence, 2007), although it identifies three categories of NEETs varying from 'core NEETs' through 'floating NEETS' to 'transition/gap year NEET', each category with less attachment to NEET features than the former, nevertheless observes that:

> *"Characteristics associated with young people being NEET include poor educational attainment, persistent truancy, teenage pregnancy, use of drugs and alcohol, looked after children, disability, mental health issues and crime and anti social behaviour" (Research as Evidence, 2007)*

Thus, the term 'NEETs', although it continues to be used widely, and, sometimes, legitimately used in policy circles, has become associated with anti-social and criminal behaviour. The use of terms such as 'chav' and 'NEET' contribute to the construction of "a 'regulatory community' against which disciplinary measures can be applied" (Rodger, 2008, p.95). Such constructions have the effect of legitimatising the application of criminal justice solutions in social policy areas as criminal justice and social policy become more closely aligned. Flint's (2009) term 'subversion' is useful here. Subversion, for Flint, has three meanings. It is "a process whereby an individual or population is viewed as challenging, reinterpreting, realigning or redirecting the perceived 'original' purpose of social policy" (Flint, 2009, p.83). It "may also be associated with the failure to act, as in the perceived passive dependency of welfare benefit claimants" (ibid.). Finally, it "extends to the alleged values and orientations perceived to underpin behaviour such as ... the lack of work ethic among welfare benefit claimants" (Flint, 2009, pp. 83-84). ILM projects are developed within policy and welfare contexts which often view the target groups as being pathologically, criminally inclined individuals who are the authors of their own situation. There is therefore "a shift from a concern

66

about structural causes of social problems to a preoccupation with 'choices, lifestyle and the culture of the poor themselves'" (Rodger, 2008, p. 6)[30].

It has been argued that the Social Exclusion Unit promulgated a moral underclass view of young people who are NEET in *Bridging the Gap* (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999). For example, Colley & Hodkinson, (2001), observe the following:

> *Overwhelmingly, [NEET young people] are portrayed as deficient, delinquent, or a combination of the two, as are their dysfunctional families and communities. The young people we meet in this report are at best passive victims of inevitable processes, from which 'few recover' as 'life goes wrong' ... sponging off 'society as a whole' in their costly benefit dependency. At worst, they are deviant perpetrators of criminal behaviour and drug abuse who pose a more sinister threat to the rest of society. Somewhere in the middle are the pregnant teenagers reproducing future non-participants at alarming rates, ready to pass on their misconceived negativity about education, training and employment to perpetuate the cycle of social exclusion (Colley & Hodkinson, 2001, pp.340-41)*

Thus, according to this reading and with reference to Flint (2009), *Bridging the Gap*, views the socially excluded young people as subversives: they are challenging (deficient and delinquent), failing to act (sponging) and lacking work ethic, subverting society by their actions, or lack of actions. Thus the socially excluded are constructed as morally deficient 'regulatory communities' whose "behavioural excesses are explained as the result of a profligate welfare system, which deviants relate to strategically to avoid gainful employments and maximise their opportunities for hedonism and criminality" (Rodger, 2008, p. 45). One result is that there is 'creeping conditionality' (Dwyer, 2004) in the UK welfare system in which the receipt of welfare benefits are increasingly dependent on recipients' demonstrating appropriate behaviour (Deacon, 2004). The problem is often couched in terms of 'benefit decency', with benefits being perceived as being too high rather than wages too low. For example, the "masters of the universe" (Toynbee & Walker, 2008, p.34), the lawyers and bankers whose opinions are outlined in *Unjust Rewards*, exemplify those 'popular' discourses, and also MUD's fascination with lone parents, the so-

---

[30] Rodger is quoting (Deacon, 2004)

called "sexually irresponsible young mothers" (Levitas, 2005, p.8). Toynbee and Walker observe that:

> "There was much talk of the perverse incentives for single parenthood, with one banker complaining that the eighteen-year-old mother on benefit 'doesn't get that much less money than another eighteen-year-old working in a shop'" (Toynbee & Walker, 2008, p.34),

As the authors point out: "it didn't seem to occur to this speaker that the shop worker's pay might also be too low" (Toynbee & Walker, 2008, p.34). The reference to 'low pay' prompts a return to Levitas' (1998) social integrationist discourse (SID).

Social integrationist discourse

SID focuses on the merits of paid work as the best route out of social exclusion. Interventions aimed at people who are not in work therefore tend to focus on improving individuals' employability in order to enable them to be able to compete effectively in the labour market. Social exclusion 'is about more than poverty', but more recent discourses of 'exclusion' appear to be returning to 'poverty' as the issue to be addressed. However, those, more recent, discourses develop familiar themes, for example that "through work people can lift themselves and their children out of poverty by raising their income and expectations" (Department for Work and Pensions, 2008, p. vi). The themes are also evident in the Coalition's "new" approach to child poverty (H. M. Government, 2011), which appears to be essentially an extension of the previous government's social policies rather than a new direction. For example the following from Iain Duncan Smith's[31] foreword:

> "With a focus on fairness and personal responsibility, not cash handouts, this is the responsible choice in this fiscal climate. Our long-term strategy for the decade ahead is to protect the most vulnerable and reform welfare **so work pays** as a sustainable route out of poverty" (H. M. Government, 2011, p.3. Original emphasis).

Thus, there are themes of 'fairness', 'personal responsibility', 'cash handouts' and 'work pays', the latter being concerned with reforming welfare rather than

---

[31] Duncan Smith is Secretary of State for Work and Pensions at the time of writing

improving wages. However, the child poverty strategy paradoxically recognises that the assertion that 'work pays' is untrue for many people on low wages. It notes that:

> *"Many families who do work also experience poverty. Fifty-five per cent of all children living in relative poverty (1.5 million children) in the UK live in a family where at least one adult is in some form of paid employment (H. M. Government, 2011, p.24).*

The 'solution' to this impasse, in which work is meant to pay but many working families sometimes remain in poverty, is not to encourage employers to pay more, or to increase the National Minimum Wage, but to effectively subsidise employers to pay low wages through the Universal Credit[32] which "will support those who do the right thing, who take a full time job [or a part time one of for more than 24 hours per week] to have an income which lifts them out of poverty" (H. M. Government, 2011, p.24). Byrne's (1999) analysis is on the whole perceptive and pertinent, particularly in his analysis of the limitations of redistribution through the Tax Credit system which Universal Credit will replace:

> *"The absolute foundation of these 'innovative' [tax credit] programmes is exactly the same as that of the Speenhamland system. US president Clinton and the UK Chancellor Brown have come to exactly the same conclusion as the Berkshire magistrates did in the 1790s. The post-industrial system now can no more generate a living wage for all necessary workers than the agricultural system could then" (Byrne, 1999, p.128).*

It is not clear that low pay supplemented with tax credits actually does have the effect of lifting significant numbers of people out of poverty. For example, although there has been a decrease in the number children in workless households over the past decade (Dickens, 2011), there does not appear to have been a 'substantial' impact on child poverty. Dickens reports the following:

> *"So despite these increases in work, we do not see a substantial impact on child poverty. What this is telling us is that the sort of jobs that those in poor households have been getting over the past*

---

[32] "Universal Credit is an integrated working-age credit that will provide a basic allowance with additional elements for children, disability, housing and caring. It will support people both in and out of work, replacing Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and income-related Employment and Support Allowance" (Department for Work and Pensions, 2010). It will be introduced in 2013

decade or so do not pay enough on their own to raise households over the poverty line. This is disappointing, since the New Labour strategy, and now that of the coalition government, is to reduce poverty through increases in work. This strategy is likely to fail without improving the wages obtained or pay progression in these jobs (Dickens, 2011, p.R14).

It is not clear then, that work which is available at the lower ends of the pay scale actually does 'pay', even when income is supplemented with in-work Tax Credits. However, there is no indication that there will be a significant shift away from the promotion of 'work pays' as a solution to issues of poverty and social exclusion in the near future. Thus, there continues to be in policy circles a:

> *"fundamental and restated commitment to the basic rationale that formal employment represents the best way out of poverty combined with an acceptance that the primary factors limiting labour market integration of disadvantaged groups and those living in disadvantaged areas relate to the supply side of the labour market"* (Syrett & North, 2008, p.1137).

As Lindsey notes:

> *"The problem is that UK employability policy has become locked into an analysis that sees long-term unemployment as its own cause and largely explained by individual's failings in relation to a narrowly defined set of skills and attributes"* (Lindsay, 2010, pp.125-26).

Those 'skills and attributes' are discussed in later sections following a discussion of Lifelong Learning discourses which, it is argued in this thesis, also promote 'work pays' without recognising that, at the lower paid ends of the labour market, it frequently does not. Before that discussion, the characteristics of RED, MUD and SID are set out in Table 3. It provides a useful contextual reference for the analysis of fieldwork in Chapters 6 and 7.

Table 3: Characteristics of RED, MUD, and SID

The characteristics of RED are that:	The characteristics of MUD are that:	The characteristics of SID are that:
It emphasises poverty as a prime cause of social exclusion.	It presents the underclass or socially excluded as culturally distinct from the 'mainstream'.	It narrows the definition of social exclusion/inclusion to participation on paid work.
It implies a reduction of poverty through increases in benefit levels.	It focuses on the behaviour of the poor rather than the structure of the whole	It squeezes out the question of why people who are not employed are consigned to

		poverty. Consequently, it does not, like RED, imply a reduction of poverty by an increase in benefit levels.
It is potentially able to valorise unpaid work.	It implies that benefits are bad, rather than good, for their recipients, and encourage 'dependency'.	It obscures the inequalities between paid workers.
In positing citizenship as the obverse of exclusion, it goes beyond a minimalist model of inclusion.	Inequalities among the rest of society are ignored.	Since women are paid significantly less than men, and are far more likely to be in low-paid jobs, it obscures gender, as well as class, inequalities in the labour market.
In addressing social, political and cultural, as well as economic, citizenship, it broadens out into a critique of inequality, which includes, but is not limited to, material inequality.	It is a gendered discourse, about idle, criminal young men and single mothers.	It erases from view the inequality between those owning the bulk of productive property and the working population.
It focuses on the processes which produce that inequality.	Unpaid work is not acknowledged.	It is unable to address adequately the question of unpaid work in society.
It implies a radical reduction of inequalities, and a redistribution of resources and power	Although dependency on the state is regarded as a problem, personal economic dependency – especially women and children on men – is not. Indeed, it is seen as a civilising influence on men	Because it ignores unpaid work and its gendered distribution, it implies an increase in women's total workload.
		It undermines the legitimacy of non-participation in paid work

Source: adapted from: Levitas (1998, pp.14-27

Learning

Although ILMs are often constructed as 'real jobs', they are also the site of learning in its broadest sense. For example, there might be informal learning from peers and other workers in the ILM employer organisation, formal learning in areas such as specific job skills, training towards a qualification such as a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), and/or basic skills education.

The discussion of 'learning'[33] in this thesis focuses mainly on post-compulsory, vocational education. It does so because ILMs target long-term unemployed

---

[33] The author recognises Billett's (2010, p.407) observation that learning "is a personal fact and [education] an institutional fact". I.e. that learning is not a synonym for education. However, the 'catch-all' term 'learning' is used here partly for brevity but also to show that the focus is on the

individuals and others who will have been outside the compulsory education age group for a relatively long period. However, it is noted that many[34] young people leave school with few, if any qualifications, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds and poor urban areas (Cassen & Kingdon, 2007), a situation which is likely to have adverse effects on employment prospects. Therefore, an in-depth discussion of educational achievement in schools, beyond where it has direct relevance to ILM participants, as is the case during the later discussion of the SYCON programme, is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The sections below explore discourses of lifelong learning in the UK. They are shown to epitomise the 'work pays' discourses of social exclusion described above. These discourses are important to this thesis. Firstly, one ILM managing agent observed that introducing participants to lifelong learning was a main priority for their ILMs, secondly, and importantly, the discourses promote attitudes to lifelong learning with which ILM participants will engage. It is shown below that the discourses might not always have positive effects.

Lifelong Learning

The previous discussion of the discourses of social exclusion notes that policy responses often promote 'work first' solutions and argue that 'work pays'. For Thompson (2000), writing admittedly for the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), an organisation which promotes adult learning, education is also part of the answer, she remarks that:

> "It is clear that education – on its own – cannot change societies in which there are economic and class systems which encourage huge differences in wealth and access to resources, including access to real jobs, information and democratic participation ... but education can play a part in assisting people in their various struggles against

---

act of learning rather than the act of educating. Distinction between 'learning' and terms such as 'training' and 'education' is made where it adds clarity to the discussion

[34] 5.5% (32,000) of the survey population (557,000) had no GCSE passes; 25% (144,000) no passes above grade D; and 8.6% (50,000) had no passes in at least one of English or Maths (all figures rounded in the report) (Cassen & Kingdon, 2007, p.5)

poverty and unemployment, discrimination, exploitation, inequalities and social injustices" (Thompson, 2000)[35].

However, there is also inequality in access to education which limits its ability to assist disadvantaged people in their 'various struggles'. As Strelitz (2003, p.57) argues: "any pretentions Britain may have to being a fair society are confounded by the reality that equal educational opportunities still do not exist for most people from disadvantaged backgrounds". It is undoubtedly the case that for many individuals and groups there are positive economic returns to learning (Harmon & Walker, 2001; McIntosh, 2002; Walker & Zhu, 2001) and wider benefits in areas such as health (Feinstein, 2002) and, possibly, social benefits such as reduced property crime (Feinstein, 2002). It is not so clear that there are positive returns to learning for those with fewer qualifications. This is discussed in more detail in later sections of this chapter.

There has consistently been a focus on learning and education as a way out of poverty and social exclusion during the recent past which has tended to devalue other important outcomes of learning activity. *The Learning Age*, the Green Paper for Lifelong Learning[36] (Department for Education and Employment, 1998a, p.7), set the agenda for lifelong learning at the time of SYCON's implementation. David Blunkett's[37] Foreword states that:

> *"As well as securing our economic future, learning has a wider contribution. It helps make ours a civilised society, develops the spiritual side of our lives and promotes active citizenship. Learning enables people to play a full part in their community. It strengthens the family, the neighbourhood and consequently the nation. It helps us fulfil our potential and opens doors to a love of music, art and literature. That is why we value learning for its own sake as well as for the equality of opportunity it brings" (Department for Education and Employment, 1998a, p.7).*

In the intervening years, that notion of lifelong learning for the greater good has gradually been replaced by a focus on learning to gain employability skills. For

---

[35] Document pages are not numbered
[36] Although subtitled 'a renaissance for a new Britain, the proposals were specific to England
[37] Blunkett was Secretary of State for Education and Employment at the time

example, Kingston (2008) cites the withdrawal of Individual Learning Accounts[38] (ILAs), a funding programme designed to encourage adult learners into participation, as a 'tipping point' in lifelong learning and the education of adults: "suddenly employability and the needs of employers became the lodestar for the government's adult education strategy" (Kingston, 2008, p.1). Kingston also argues that "the enormous vat of hope and goodwill that flowed after [Blunkett's] words has largely dried up, to be replaced by a cynicism all the more corrosive for the extent of the perceived betrayal" (Kingston, 2008, p.1).

That there ever was an enormous 'vat of hope and goodwill' directed to the Learning Age for its promotion of the 'wider contribution' that learning can make is open to question. The document certainly states that "our vision of the Learning Age is about more than employment" (Department for Education and Employment, 1998a, p10), but it is also suffused throughout with descriptions of the benefits of learning for businesses and the economy. For instance, Chapter 1 *The Individual Learning Revolution* does not announce the ill-fated ILAs as might be expected, that is done in Chapter 2 *Investing in Learning* (which ensures that potential learners are fully aware that they will be responsible for paying for the bulk of their learning, albeit with some government help). Instead, Chapter 1 introduces the University for Industry (UfI), now Learndirect, with a clear remit to "change attitudes to learning and acquiring skills in the new century" (Department for Education and Employment, 1998a, p.20). Thus, the vision of an 'individual learning revolution', turned into a kind of Open University for vocational skills. That link between 'lifelong learning' and vocational training is now so strong in England that the terms often appear to be interchangeable. For instance, the Higher Education Funding Council for England's network to promote vocational higher education is called the Lifelong Learning Network[39]. It is "aimed at those practitioners working in partnership to support vocational progression and the development and delivery of higher level skills" (Lifelong

---

[38] A system of financial incentives paid to people to undertake eligible learning which was withdrawn in November 2001 "because: demand for accounts was much higher than expected; there were concerns about how the scheme was being promoted and sold; some learning providers were abusing the system, offering low value, and poor quality learning; and there were increasing numbers of complaints from learners" (National Audit Office, 2002, p.1)
[39] see http://www.lifelonglearningnetworks.org.uk ; and http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/lln/

74

Learning Networks, 2011). 'The higher level skills network' might have been a more appropriate title. An earlier example of the way that 'skills' and 'lifelong learning' are often used interchangeably is the following 'goal' described in the *Proposals for a National Skills Agenda*:

> *"To successfully instil a culture of lifelong learning in the UK in which all individuals and employers recognise the importance of regular re-skilling and upskilling, and have the confidence and capacity to succeed" (National Skills Task Force, 2000, p.14)*

As Coffield (1999, p.4) notes, the *Learning Age* suggests "a ministerial determination to increase individual employability as *the* central policy in the development of lifelong learning". Blanden et al., (2010) observe that "the focus on the development of work-related skills as the primary driver for participation [in lifelong learning] has faced some criticism". Observing further that:

> *"Aspin et al., (2001) point out that this view of lifelong learning as 'instrumental to an extrinsic [economic] goal' ignores the wider private and public benefits of education; with Wolf et al., (2006) noting a perceived diminution of the role of lifelong learning in 'personal fulfilment or cultural development" (Blanden et al., 2010, p.1).*

Notwithstanding those critics, 'lifelong learning' continues to be associated in policy circles with vocational learning. This contrasts with the European Lifelong Learning Programme[40] which has separate sub-programmes for schools (Comenius), higher education (Erasmus), vocational education and training (Leonardo), and adult education (Grundtvig).

This thesis now turns to an assessment of relevant qualifications. The following brief section outlines the different 'levels' of vocational qualifications which are available. It is followed by a discussion of the benefits which might accrue to learning and education, particularly when measured as economic returns to vocational qualifications.

---

[40] See http://www.lifelonglearningprogramme.org.uk/

Qualification levels

Table 4 outlines a selection of vocational qualifications which are available for individuals who are resident in England[41]. Vocational qualifications sit within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), a system of units and credit-based qualifications[42]. At the time of writing there were 5,116 'qualification titles' within the QCF "that have so far been confirmed as appropriate for public funding" (Skills Funding Agency, 2011). They lead to qualifications from Entry Level to Level 6 and are relevant for a wide range of vocational sectors. There are numerous providers operating in the public, private, and third sectors.

Table 4: English vocational qualification levels, from Entry 1 to Level 5

Level	Explanation	Example of QCF qualifications
Entry 1 **Entry 2** **Entry 3**	For people without prior experience who might not be confident about their learning abilities	• Awards, Certificates, and Diplomas at entry level • Foundation Learning[43] at entry level • Functional Skills[44] at entry level
Level 1	Equivalent to General Certificate of Secondary Education[45] (GCSE) grades D-G Suitable for people who are starting out in learning and/or are new to the subject area. This level covers routine tasks and basic knowledge.	• BTEC[46] Awards, Certificates, and Diplomas at level 1 • Functional Skills at level 1 • Foundation Learning Tier pathways • NVQs at level 1

[41] See http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/110920qualificationsguideen.pdf to compare qualifications across the UK and Ireland

[42] The QCF is a relatively new framework, implemented on 1 January 2011. It was therefore not operational during the fieldwork period of this study. It is shown here for information purposes only. All future vocational qualifications will need to fit the QCF. Courses are delivered in Units which are combined into a qualification. There are three levels of qualifications: Awards (1-12 Credits), Certificates (13-36 Credits), and Diplomas (37 or more Credits). One credit is equal to around 10 hours of learning for the average learner (see, for example http://www.ocr.org.uk/download/teachers/ocr_20859_teach_understand_qcf_flyer.pdf)

[43] A new personalised 'suite' of learning aimed at young people aged 14-19 with low educational attainment. Foundation Learning is being rolled out nationally between 2010 and 2013. Not a qualification as such but a personalised learning plan

[44] Relatively new essential skills qualification in English, Maths and ICT which is taken either as part of existing qualifications such as GCSEs or as stand-alone qualifications at Entry Level, Level 1 or Level 2. Piloted in 2007 and rolled out in 2010

[45] GCSEs are studied in secondary education, usually between the age 14-16 (Key Stage 4).

[46] Business and Technology Education Council, an awarding body

76

Level 2	Equivalent to GCSE grades A*-C. Suitable for people with some knowledge or experience of the area.	• BTEC Awards, Certificates, and Diplomas at level 2 • Functional Skills at level 2 • City & Guilds[47] level 2 • OCR[48] Nationals • NVQs at level 2
Level 3	Equivalent to A-levels[49]. Covers more complex work and will help learners develop supervisory skills.	• BTEC Awards, Certificates, and Diplomas at level 3 • BTEC Nationals • OCR Nationals • NVQs at level 3
Level 4	Equivalent to a Foundation degree. Appropriate for specialists in the area.	• BTEC Professional Diplomas Certificates and Awards • HNCs[50] • NVQs at level 4
Level 5	Equivalent to Bachelors degree undergraduate study	• HNDs[51] • BTEC Professional Diplomas, Certificates and Awards • NVQs at level 5

Source: adapted from http://www.cityandguilds.com and http://www.direct.gov.uk

In general, each higher level demands more from the learner in terms of time and effort. Levels 1 and 2 qualifications generally take about a year, levels 3 and 4 about two years, although people can adapt the learning to suite their own pace of learning and availability.

Returns to learning

This section will assess the returns to learning. It focuses on the benefits which are likely to accrue to an individual who has achieved a given level of either academic or vocational qualification, although the section focuses mostly on vocational ones. There are differences in how much the diverse qualifications

---

[47] An awarding body
[48] Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations, an awarding body, sometimes known as RSA
[49] A-levels are usually taken after the period of compulsory education at ages 16-18, either in sixth forms (in schools or colleges) or in Further Education colleges. The period of compulsory education is being extended in 2013 and 2015. Young people will need to stay in education or participate in training until age 17 in 2013 and to age 18 in 2015
[50] Higher National Certificates
[51] Higher National Diplomas

and levels of attainment reward recipients. For instance, there may not be positive economic returns to Level 1 and Level 2 NVQs for people who have no prior qualifications, although returns vary to some extent depending on gender and employment sector (McIntosh, 2002, pp.3-4 and 16-35). One reason why those qualifications are not rewarded is that, when NVQs are the highest qualification achieved, employers might view them as remedial in nature, believing that they are "sending out a negative signal about the individuals who have acquired them" (Sianesi, 2003, p.14). Thus, when low-level NVQs or similar are the highest qualification held they "seem to be associated with low-paying jobs" (Dearden, et al., 2000, p.14), therefore, "such qualifications can hold little attraction" (ibid.) for learners or employers. In order to attract a wage premium, "the additional returns associated with academic qualifications, taking no account of the time taken to acquire such qualifications, are typically higher than those associated with vocational qualifications at the same level" (Dearden, et al., 2000, p.18).

However, young people who leave school without any qualifications but who subsequently gain either Level 2 or 3 qualifications are more likely to be in employment than those who achieve no post-compulsory education qualification (McIntosh, 2004). The type of vocational qualification achieved is important:

> *There are high returns to academic qualifications across the board, substantial returns to higher level vocational qualifications and smaller but nonetheless significant returns to some but by no means all intermediate and lower level vocational qualifications. [However] we also confirm the non-existent average returns to NVQ2. (Jenkins et al., 2007, p.46.).*

The Level 2 vocational qualifications which were shown to have positive wage and employment benefits for people with few school-based qualifications included BTEC, City and Guilds and RSA (Jenkins et al., 2007). However, these researchers also found that, in general "the analyses of the wage returns to both level 2 and level 3 vocational qualifications suggested that the returns vary substantially across gender, occupation, sector and region" (Jenkins et al., 2007, p.48). For example, returns to NVQs were better in regions where there was a relatively large industrial base. Furthermore, the need for workers to be qualified varies across sectors (Dickerson & Vignoles, 2007) and low pay "tends

78

to be concentrated in certain sectors and occupations, unsurprisingly those which often show very low rates of return on vocational qualifications specific to that sector or occupation" (Keep, 2009).

Taken together, these findings on returns to qualifications have important implications for ILM activity and its ability to contribute to alleviating the effects of poverty and social exclusion. ILMs target individuals and groups who are most disadvantaged in the labour market, and who may have low educational attainment. Although ILMs are not training programmes *per se*, many, including the SYCON ILM, encourage the acquisition of vocational qualifications, often NVQs. If, as the literature suggests, there are unlikely to be positive returns from lower-level NVQs, particularly for people with low attainment, three conclusions may be drawn. Firstly, ILM managers should consider a range of factors before they encourage participants to study low-level NVQs, including consideration of employment opportunities available in the local labour market and what, if any, alternative qualifications are available for people wanting to work in those sectors. Secondly, ILM participants should be encouraged to attain academic qualifications such as English or Maths GCSEs, if not already held, rather than NVQs. Thirdly, as Crighton (1998) suggests, participants should be encouraged to aim for level 3 and above. This latter option has a further implication in that whilst Level 1 or Level 2 qualifications can be gained in one year, the maximum period of engagement permissible with the SYCON ILM, reaching Level 3 is likely to take longer. ILMs generally have a maximum duration of either six or twelve months, although a relatively small number are shorter and an even smaller number have been longer. Working towards Level 1 or 2 qualifications while participating in ILMs requires participants to engage with study whilst working and job seeking, although ILMs often have time allowed for this training. But working towards Level 3 qualifications would almost certainly require participants to maintain engagement for an extended period following full time participation in ILM projects. For many ILM participants, often people with volatile 'learning territories' (Fuller & Unwin, 2004), that is, people with a history of disengagement from learning and education, this level of commitment may be difficult to maintain. In any case,

the main objectives for all Types of ILMs should be to achieve sustainable employment rather than to achieve a qualification.

Qualifications are one mechanism through which those disengaged from the labour market can demonstrate their skills to potential employers. However:

> *"Qualifications only measure part of the skill spectrum, rarely gauging generic or soft skills. In the service sector, employers are increasingly concerned to obtain generic skills such as problem solving, and inter-personal skills such as communication and empathy; also personal attributes such as self discipline, loyalty and punctuality; and sometimes aesthetic skills such as dress sense, deportment, style, accent, voice" (Keep, 2006, p.7)*

The concept of 'skill' is not a given and has changed over time (Payne, 2000). This is a debate with a great deal of relevance for ILMs because all types of ILMs seek to engage participants in the acquisition of 'skills', although some 'skills' might more properly be called attitudes or behaviours, and may therefore imply a different type of learning. The concept of skill is discussed in the following section.

Skill

The Learning Age (Department for Education and Employment, 1998a, p.39), announced the creation of the National Skills Task Force (NSTF) a body tasked with advising the Secretary of State on "developing a National Skills Agenda which will ensure that Britain has the skills to sustain high levels of employment, compete in the global market place and provide opportunity for all" (National Skills Taskforce, 2000, p.11). The products of the NSTF outlined the 'state of the art' in government thinking about skills during the main period of fieldwork activity for this study. They therefore provided the context for the development of skills for participants who were engaged in the SYCON programme. Later developments are discussed in following sections.

The NSTF did not define 'skills' but was "minded to group skills under three headings" (National Skills Task Force, 1998, p.15): generic skills, vocational skills and job specific skills. For clarity, the three skill groups are described in Table 5.

Table 5: NSTF skill groups

	Generic skills	Vocational skills	Job specific skills
Definition	Transferable skills which can be used across occupational groups	Specific 'technical' or sector skills needed to work within an occupation or occupational group. Some vocational skills might be transferable across occupational groups.	Job specific skills (not further defined)
Examples	Generic skills are 'key skills' such as communication, application of numbers, problem solving, team working, IT, improving own learning performance. Also reasoning skills, work process management skills, personal values and attitudes such as motivation, discipline, judgement, leadership, and initiative. Would now include 'Functional Skills', the new qualification in maths, English, and ICT.	Capabilities described in Occupational Standards.	Functional skills (not the new qualification), for example the skills needed to operate a specific piece of equipment, or employer-wide skills such as organisational quality standards or specific working methodologies.

Source: Adapted from National Skills Taskforce, (1998, p.15)

By the time of its Final Report (National Skills Task Force, 2000, p.18) the

NSTF had broadened out its original groupings and identified "six main areas of

skills deficiency", although the 'sixth' is actually a component of the previous five. The six areas are outlined in Table 6.

Table 6: Six main areas of skills deficiency

Skills	Explanation
Basic skills	Literacy and numeracy skills. The report notes that seven million adults in Britain (one in five) are described as being 'functionally illiterate'.
Generic skills	Transferable skills: Communication, including oracy (sic), application of number, information technology, team working, improving own learning and performance, problem solving. Also reasoning skills, scheduling work and diagnosing work problems, work process management skills. Generic skills are needed in all jobs, according to the report, and employer demand for them has increased.
Mathematics skills	The ability to work with numbers and solve problems based on mathematical constructs. Employers consider that learning and practicing maths skills develops more problem solving and systems thinking skills.
Intermediate level skills	Job specific skills at levels 3 and 4. Including craft, technical, clerical and professional skills.
Specialist information and communications technology (ICT)	Professional skills needed by the ICT sector and by ICT specialists in other sectors. Although there has been a growth in people studying for these skills, there is a concern about 'the quality of students'.
Major adult skills gaps	Although there has been a growth in the number of people with qualifications in the workforce, the majority have either no or low level qualifications. The 'growth in qualifications' has been through new entrants to the workforce, rather than the upskilling of existing members.

Source: adapted from National Skills Task Force (2000, pp.18-32)

While it is clear that the report identified a wide range of deficiencies, it is not so clear that all of these relate to 'skills'. For example, the list of 'skills deficiencies' is remarkable for the range of competencies mentioned including , team working and task management activities such as scheduling work, improving own learning and performance. Fifty years ago, it is unlikely that these would be thought of as workplace 'skills' (Payne, 2000). The meaning of 'skill' has changed over the years, from referring predominantly to technical abilities in the 1950s and 1960s for example, through to the introduction of personal qualities and attitudes in the 1970s and 1980s, and towards an increased focus on "'core', 'generic' or 'transferable' skills that would facilitate labour market 'flexibility'" in the 1990s (Payne, 2000, p.358). That focus has continued to

drive vocational education and training (VET) policy (see for example Keep, 2009). The Leitch Review of Skills (2006) also found 'deficiencies' in the UK's skill base. It concluded that although the proportion of adults with no qualifications had fallen, "the UK's skill base remains mediocre by international standards" (Leitch Review of Skills, 2006, p.52). However, although the Review recognised that "the UK's skills problems are most severe at the bottom end" (Leitch Review of Skills, 2006, p.63), it did not appear to recognise that there was little demand or reward for skills 'at the bottom end'. As Keep (2009) argues:

> "Insofar as we do have a skills crisis in jobs at the lower end of the occupational spectrum, it is one that revolves around weak employer demand for skill and poor utilisation of skills once created due to defective forms of work organisation and job design. In other words, the crisis is primarily about a lack of enough high quality jobs that need and can use higher levels of skill, not about an insufficient supply of skill" (Keep, 2009, p.3).

The NSTF focused on labour market supply-side measures in order to create a workforce to "compete in the global market place and provide opportunity for all" (National Skills Task Force, 2000a, p.11). Likewise, in 2008 the then Labour government argued the following:

> "To compete effectively in this new global context, we will need a workforce with world-class skills, from basic literacy and numeracy through to higher-level qualifications. And to reach the aspiration of an 80% employment rate, we need to ensure that everybody, including the most disadvantaged, has the skills they need to compete for the vacancies that exist in the labour market" (Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), 2008, p.7)

Thus, the DWP and DIUS appear to conflate 'world-class skills' and 'basic literacy and numeracy' as if they are the same problem. In addition, there appears to be an assumption that 'the most disadvantaged' are unable to compete in the labour market because they lack 'skills' and that there are vacancies for which the most 'most disadvantaged' can 'compete'. Underlying assumptions surrounding 'skills failure' is the notion that if individuals gain more qualifications, they will achieve positive returns, not only for themselves but also for the economy in general. That is a policy message which has been resistant

to persistent academic critique of the likely effects of labour market supply-side interventions on competitiveness and productivity. For instance, Keep, Mayhew & Payne (2006) note that there has been a policy stasis since an earlier discussion by two of the authors (Keep & Mayhew, 1999):

> *"Policy, by contrast [to academic critique] has tended to remain locked into a traditional concern with addressing the supply of skill and assuming that this alone will be sufficient to produce profound and lasting changes in economic performance. Thus the role of skills as a 'magic bullet' that can address issues of productivity and competitiveness is still being over played" (Keep, Mayhew & Payne, 2006, p.554).*

That the 'stasis' remains can be seen by Keep's (2009) contribution to the inquiry into the future of lifelong learning (Schuller & Watson, 2009)[52]. In this contribution, Keep notes that there is a need to "go beyond restating what tends to be the standard official reading of reality as it relates to the economic case for more adult learning" (Keep, 2009, p.2), mainly because it leads to "deficient policy prescription" (ibid.). Keep notes additionally, as he did with reference to the Leitch review, that "the crisis is primarily about a lack of enough high quality jobs that need and can use higher levels of skill, not about insufficient supply of skill" (Keep, 2009, p.3).The discussion of 'skills' outlined above, has tended to conflate together different skills groups (see Table 5). However, the concept of 'generic' skills, for example, denotes a range of attitudes and behaviours which are materially different than 'technical' skills. The notion of 'skill' as 'attitude and behaviour' is discussed in sections below.

'Skill' as attitude and behaviour

A number of commentators (see, for example: Green, 1998; Keep & Mayhew, 1999; Payne, 2000; Lafer, 2004; Westwood, 2004) support the views of Grugulis et al., (2004) that:

> *"one of the most fundamental changes that has taken place in the last two decades has been the growing tendency to label what in earlier times would have been seen by most as personal characteristics, attitudes, character traits, or predispositions as skills" (Grugulis et al., 2004, p.6)*

---

[52] See http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/default.htm

Payne (2000, p.360) argues further that, "the fudging of skill with behaviour is no more evident than in connection with schemes directed at the socialisation of disadvantaged youth into work". In the case of ILMs, the schemes[53] are directed at the socialisation of all age groups into work (and therefore the 'socialisation' is arguably even more difficult to achieve, not least because patterns of behaviour may have become more entrenched). However, as will be shown in the assessment of SYCON in later chapters, they do include a focus on improving participant's "service-oriented skills and attributes [which] are commonly referred to as 'soft skills'" (Westwood, 2004, p.40). They include 'aesthetic labour' characteristics (Warhurst et al., 2000) and 'emotional labour' (for example, Bolton, 2004; Hochschild, 1979). Aesthetic labour refers to the embodiment of the employing organisation in the 'labourer's' outward appearance and mannerisms: "this embodiment is intended to appeal to the senses of customers, creating effective service-interaction based typically on having employees perceived to be 'good looking' or simply having the 'right look'" (Warhurst & Nickson, 2009, p.386). Thus aesthetic labour is located in the interaction between the organisation and the customer or client, mediated through the body of the employee. Emotional labour, on the other hand, may be located throughout an organisation in interactions between staff, as well as in interactions between employees and customers. Although different concepts, both emotional labour and aesthetic labour are relevant to the discussion of the SYCON ILM programme in Chapters 6 and 7 and are therefore discussed in more detail in the sections below, focusing particularly on the employee/customer interaction.

Aesthetic and emotional labour

The concepts of aesthetic and emotional labour are particularly relevant in terms of gendered work. That is especially the case in post-industrial areas such as South Yorkshire where traditional industries have declined and there has been a growth in service sector employment (see for example Nixon, 2009; Nickson & Korczynski, 2009). In terms of their interaction with customers or

---

[53] SYCON managers and others (Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000, p.25) argue that ILMs are not schemes but are jobs. However, that view of ILMs does not entirely stand up to scrutiny as will be shown later in the thesis

clients, aesthetic labourers are required by their employers to look and act in specific ways. Thus, the ability to look or behave in the 'correct' manner is important in the recruitment of personnel and in the continuation of employment (Warhurst et al., 2000). In other words, their looks and behaviour are commodified; they become part of the exchange of labour. Emotional labourers are similarly commodified, but in this case it is 'feelings' rather than looks which are transformed into labour value; although feelings and looks might be closely associated. For example, a shop assistant might be required to be aesthetically 'pleasing': "pretty attractive looking ... with a nice smile, nice teeth, neat hair" (Warhurst et al., 2000, p.12), and also emotionally positive: "working in such an environment requires more than an ability to operate a cash register; emotional demands are made of employees to constantly be in a positive, joyful and even playful mood" (Burns, 1997). Thus, the shop assistant undertakes 'emotion work', "the act of trying to change in degree or quality an emotion or feeling" (Hochschild, 1979, p.561) in order to interact with a customer or client as required by an employer. The worker is obeying 'feeling rules' (Hochschild, 1979), the employer conventions which 'dictate' how one should express ones feelings during the customer interaction.

Two questions arising from theories of aesthetic and emotional labour are especially relevant to this thesis and are briefly explored below: is the management of looks and emotions by employers discriminatory? And is the adoption of the 'correct' look and attitude a 'skill'?

Aesthetic and emotional discrimination?
Rennie's (1999) description of the opinions of 100 Glasgow employers which is outlined in Chapter 2 can usefully be recalled here. That survey found that:

> *"what they [employers] actually wanted is the list that you would come up with in your bath at home at night if you thought about it for a minute or two, which is reliability, honesty, time keeping, work ethic, communication, motivation, willingness to learn" (Rennie, 1999).*

Warhurst and Nickson (2007) also found that "the skills that matter to employers among their front-line staff during recruitment and selection are the right attitude and appearance" (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007, pp.113-14). If indeed 'attitudes

86

and appearances' are 'skills', it could be argued that the recruitment of people for their attitudes and appearance is no different than an engineering employer engaging an engineer because they have the relevant skill set. Conceptualised in this manner, aesthetic skills are 'competencies', attributes like others which employers can buy and workers can sell. Nonetheless, if employers believe that such attributes tend to reside in a particular sex or age group, then discrimination can take place. In fact, Nixon (2009) notes that class as well as gender are important considerations. For example, apropos the growing service economy in post-industrial areas, he observes that "the masculine work cultures that characterize 'all male shop floor life' are highly inappropriate in many service environments" (Nixon, 2009, p.306). Thus, not only might unemployed working class males not even consider some service sector or 'interactive' jobs, thereby ruling themselves out of participating in some employment sectors, but employers too might consider them to be 'inappropriate' and therefore discriminate against those who they view as embodying negative traits. However, as Williams and Connell, (2010, p.367) observe, "The focus on aesthetic labour encourages workers to blame themselves and not their [prospective] employers for discriminatory labour practices". Therefore job seekers, in this case, are "censuring themselves for not 'fitting' the aesthetic requirements of the job" (Williams & Connell, 2010, p. 367).

Nonetheless, if factors such as being 'pretty attractive looking, with a nice smile, nice teeth, neat hair' are among features employers are seeking, then it does appear that discriminatory practices are taking place - although "discovering credible evidence that an employer has discriminated on the basis of one's looks might be a difficult exercise" (Waring, 2011, p.194). Nonetheless, Waring argues that 'physical features' discrimination should "progressively be incorporated into anti-discrimination law" (Waring, 2011, p.195). However, that might be unlikely in the current context where there is political discussion about relaxing employment laws in England rather than strengthening them. Any future discrimination case might turn on the question of if the employer was buying a skill, and it is to the notion of whether aesthetic and emotional labour is a 'skill' that the thesis now turns.

87

Aesthetic and emotional skill

Whether aesthetic and emotional labouring are the deployment of 'skills' is contested in the literature. Barton (2004, p. 30), for example, appears to believe that emotional labour is a skill: "emotion work can be viewed as a distinctive form of skilled work and employees as multi-skilled emotion managers". Although Williams and Connell (2010, p.352) assert that "the literature stops short of labelling aesthetic labour as 'skill'", that contention is difficult to uphold, albeit that the evidence is rather inconclusive. For example, Warhurst and Nickson (2009, p.388) observe, in their discussion of 'having the correct look', that "it is this other 'skill', as it is deemed by management, that underpins the analytical concern with aesthetic labour". In this way, the writers pass on to 'management' the conception that 'aesthetic labour' is 'skill'. However, in *Aesthetic Labour and the Policy-Making Agenda: Time for a Reappraisal of Skills?* (Nickson et al., 2004, p.3) there is less ambiguity: "aesthetic skills are becoming a key skill required for work and employment across interactive service work [and] the demand for this skill has so far been unappreciated and unanalysed by policy-makers".

Payne is a critic of the view that either emotional labour (see Payne, 2006 and 2009) or aesthetic labour (see Payne, 2000), represent the deployment of skill. His critique his twofold: firstly, conferring the label 'skill' on such labour tends to devalue the notion of 'skill', implying that 'we're all skilled now', see, for example Payne, (2009, pp.362-363) and the following:

> *"The paradox of skill therefore is that we are all skilled now, regardless of the type or quality of the job we do and the level of personal control, autonomy or power we enjoy. This, then, is the most fundamental difference in how skill is officially conceptualised today compared to the past, when to be skilled implied some level of real market power and personal discretion[54] over one's work" (Payne, 1999, p.29).*

Secondly, "the discourse on emotional labour and skill may end up confusing notions of job quality" (Payne, 2009, p.363). 'Customer care' or 'customer

---

[54] But see the discussion of 'discretion' in the work place later in this chapter. The exercise of 'discretion' in the workplace is not limited only to employees in high paying or high status jobs

facing' skills may be highly valued by employers, with the result that specific groups such as women, traditionally marginalised in the labour market (Bolton 2004), and other people whose personal attributes match employer specifications become sought after in certain sectors. But, as Grugulis et al. (2004, pp.11-12) observe, "it is as well to remember that this apparent upskilling of hitherto low-status jobs does not mean that their holders will necessarily be paid more for doing them, or that their overall status will rise in the occupational hierarchy". If emotional and aesthetic labour is skilled labour then the benefits of skilled labour such as autonomy in the work place and wage premiums should follow. However, service sector jobs, in which aesthetic and emotional labour attributes are supposedly at a 'premium', are amongst the lowest paid jobs in the UK. For example, 'waiter', hairdresser', 'bar staff', 'leisure attendant', 'sales assistant', and 'cashier' are all in the bottom ten lowest paying jobs in the UK (Snowdon, 2011).

Whether aesthetic and emotional labour attributes are 'skills' of not, some people might embody them as part of their personality (Williams and Connell, 2010), while others might need to learn how to display them (Bierema, 2008). Williams and Connell (2010) observe that 'upscale retail stores'[55] effectively by-pass the need to train their workers in aesthetic and emotional skills by employing people who embody the required 'habitus'. Similarly, Warhurst and Nickson (2007, p.113-114) who observe that "the skills that matter to employers among their front-line staff during recruitment and selection are the right attitude and appearance" also note that these are "more likely to be recruited rather than trained" (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007, p114). However, they do note that over half of their survey population did receive training in areas such as developing an 'I can' attitude, dress sense and style, and body language.

---

[55] "Victoria's Secret, Barnes and Noble, Gap, The Learning Express, David's Bridal, Whole Foods, Zale's Diamonds, Banana Republic, MAC Cosmetics, Crate and Barrel, Abercrombie & Fitch, Coldwater Creek, Macy's, and Express. We call these stores "highend" or "upscale" to differentiate them from "luxury" establishments, such as Nordstrom's and Saks Fifth Avenue; "mid-range" stores that target the working middle class, such as Sears and J.C. Penney5; and mass discounters, such as Costco, Target, Home Depot, Wal-Mart, Office Max, and Best Buy" (Williams & Connell, 2010, p.356)

While ILMs are often promoted as 'real jobs' they might be better conceptualised as sites of learning. One of the main features of an ILM is the offer of 'work experience' (see Table 1). However, because ILMs aim to be a 'real job', and to avoid any connection with 'schemes' which often have a poor reputation amongst the target group, the phrase 'work experience' is sometimes not used and phrases such as 'temporary employment' are preferred. However, there are exceptions such as the ILMs run by the North West Wales Labour Market Intermediary which offers, "real work experience in a supportive environment" (NWLMI). Nevertheless, all Types of ILMs do offer work experience, even though it might not be termed as such, and aim to instil employability through formal, informal or non-formal[56] learning. The sections below assess the concept of workplaces as learning settings, reviewing in particular literature concerned with the 'transfer' of learning from 'work experience' settings to other workplaces.

Workplaces as learning settings

Learning tends built into ILM provision at every stage, even though the ways in which the learning processes operate in ILMs are often not fully developed. 'Learning', in this sense, includes all aspects of learning that occur during an ILM worker's engagement with the programme. It might include formal training for a qualification, training in a particular work skill, job search skills, or learning how to cope better with barriers to work such as substance abuse. It is also likely to include socialisation or training into the 'correct' attitudes, learning the 'feeling rules' of emotional labour or the correct dress and attitudes of aesthetic labour. Thus, ILM participants engage in learning in a number of different physical settings, including the workplace, a college or other formal setting, or at employment services premises. There will also be the 'embodiment' of learning: "knowledge that engages the body as a site of learning" (Freiler, 2008, p.39). As Bolton (2004, p.20) observes, "occupations which require large amounts of emotion work, such as the increasing array of front-line service jobs,

---

[56] Formal learning is learning gained via a learning institution, and often leads to a qualification. Non-formal learning is planned and structured 'intentional' learning but is not provided by a learning institution. Informal learning is not structured and may be unintentional. Informal learning includes 'socialisation' processes. See (Colley et al., 2002) for a discussion of different discourses of formal, non-formal, and informal education

rely almost wholly on the embodied capacities of the worker". Those 'embodied capacities', emotional and aesthetic labour skills, are often required to be learnt by ILM participants whose lack of 'capacities' is a barrier to employment. The skills are therefore, apropos Warhurst and Nickson (2007), often 'trained' because they cannot be 'recruited' by ILM employers.

With regard to more formal learning, ILM participants will often need to transfer their learning from a formal setting into the workplace or from an ILM workplace into a workplace in the wider labour market. Therefore, ILM participants will need to take their learning 'across barriers' and apply it in a variety of different situations. The process of 'barrier crossing' is assessed below, starting with a discussion of situated learning.

Situated learning
As with all new employees, when ILM participants start in their new post they are entering an already established 'community of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991). People they meet, colleagues, supervisors, mentors, and so on will be more or less proficient, not only in completing tasks, but in 'knowing the ropes'. This might include how to get oneself a cup of tea or 'company' policies such as the preferred way of addressing a client. ILM participants are joining their workplaces as 'legitimate peripheral participants' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) or novice workers in communities or workplaces where 'experts' already exist. Newcomers are 'legitimate' because they have the right to be there but 'peripheral' because they are not yet versed in the ways of the community. Eventually, a 'newcomer' becomes an 'old timer' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) as they take on the skills and attributes of more experienced colleagues. The key point of Lave and Wenger's thesis is that such learning is 'situated learning' in a community of practice.

For Type 1 and 2 ILMs, learning which is geared too much towards becoming an 'expert' in the ILM employer organisation can be detrimental to their future employability. For example, once employed by a new organisation, they could be 'peripheral participants' again, but this time without the level of support offered to ILM participants. Chapter 7 shows that some SYCON ILM

participants had a good deal of 'work experience', in the form of short-term, temporary jobs, but lacked the opportunity to turn this into more sustainable employment. It might therefore be argued that all ILMs should provide opportunities to experience other working environments as part of programmes of learning, a theme discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

ILM participants' communities of practice are extended beyond the workplaces in which they operate. They include a set of learning relationships which they enter into with project officers, job search advisors, NVQ assessors, debt counsellors, ILM employers, ILM and non-ILM colleagues, and customers. The phrase 'transferable skills' is so widespread that it has become a cliché. However, it does not adequately describe the transfer between contexts central to ILM practice, especially for Type 3 ILMs, those constructed as 'transitional'. The phrase 'transferable skills' appears to imply that skills are mobile, and readily available whenever required. However, people are often learning skills, attitudes and approaches, 'feeling rules', which might be particular to the culture and practices of the specific environment in which they operate. For example, a worker in a charity shop learns about retail in the context of that shop. The skills, attitudes and approaches required might be very different from those needed in other retail establishments, such as supermarkets and *vice versa*. Not taking account of 'transferability' might compromise ILM workers' ability to grasp the full range of available opportunities. The 'transfer' of learning is discussed below.

Transfer of learning
Engeström (2004) notes that:

> *"People and organisations are all the time learning something that is not stable, not even defined or understood ahead of time. In important transformations of our personal lives and organisational practices, we must learn new forms of activity which are not yet there. They are literally learned as they are being created. There is no competent teacher. Standard learning theories have little to offer if one wants to understand these processes" (Engeström, 2004, p.151).*

For Engeström, this act of developing new forms of knowledge and organisational structures represents 'boundary-crossing'. Boundary-crossing

can be seen in developments in medical practice which "is not anymore only about treating patients and finding cures. It is increasingly about reorganising and reconceptualising care across professional specialities and institutional boundaries" (Engeström, 2004, p158). It can also be seen in the way ILM practitioners have had to adapt in order to engage 'inactive' clients when they were more accustomed to working with people who were 'long-term unemployed'. Successfully managing this change does not involve a simple transfer of the same practices to a different client group but rather developing new forms of funding, working, and interacting.

Griffiths and Guile's development of the concept of boundary crossing is especially relevant. It is described as:

> "the form of learning in which individuals engage when they cross the boundary between education and work or between one work context and another [which] involves a process of horizontal development, learning how to mediate between different forms of knowledge and performance in different contexts" (Griffiths & Guile, 2004, p.86).

Griffiths and Guile are here differentiating between 'vertical' and 'horizontal' development' Educators and others involved in the provision of learning opportunities often focus on vertical development: the 'acquirement' of ever more complex knowledge or skills. Horizontal development, on the other hand, refers to:

> "the process of change and development which occurs within an individual as s/he moves from one context (e.g. school) to another (e.g. a workplace). Thus, at one level, it could refer to the changes in an individual's sense of identity as a result of the experience of working in a school, factory or community centre. At another level, it could refer to the capacity to develop new mediating concepts to cope with the demands of working effectively in different organisational settings" (Guile & Griffiths, 2001, p.114).

ILM participant's horizontal development operates at both 'levels'. One of the main purposes of all Types of ILM is to change a person's sense of identity. This is sometimes referred to as developing a 'culture of work' to counter what is claimed to be a 'benefits culture' and is common in Social Integrationist and Moral Underclass Discourses of social exclusion. Additionally, ILM participants

93

need to develop 'new mediating concepts' as a result of learning in new communities of practice, often as legitimate peripheral participants. The ways that ILMs provide resources for participants successfully to mediate their learning in new communities of practice is underdeveloped in theories of ILMs. The discussion of the SYCON programme in Chapter 7 expands this theme.

Griffiths and Guile have developed a typology of work experience. These models "embody changing responses to policy, to the learner, to skills needed and to pedagogy" (2000, p.4). Their typology is reproduced in Table 7:

Table 7: Typology of work experience

Model of work experience	Traditional Model	Experiential model	Generic Model	Work Process model	Connective Model
Purpose of work experience	'Bridge' to work	'Co-development' between education and work	Key skills/competence assessment	'Attunement' to work environment	'Reflexivity'
Assumption about learning and development	Adaption	Adaption and self-awareness	Self-management	Adjust and transfer	Vertical and horizontal development
Practice of work experience	Managing tasks and instructions	Managing contributions Plus Recording experiences	Managing action plan and learning outcomes Plus Managing situations	Managing work processes, relationships and customers Plus adding value for employer supporting employability	Developing the connective practices Plus 'entrepreneurial ability'
Management of work experience	Supervision	Arms-length supervision	Facilitation	Coaching	Developing and resituating learning
Role of education and training provider	*Provide*: formal preparation programme	*Facilitate*: briefing for and de-briefing of work experience	*Build*: portfolio of achievements	*Support*: Reflection in and on action	*Develop*: Partnerships with workplaces to create: Environments for learning.

| Outcome of work experience | Skill acquisition

Knowledge of 'work readiness' | Economic and industrial awareness | Assessed learning outcomes | System thinking | Polycontextual and connective skills |

These categories of work experience "are analytical rather than descriptive and have been formulated to identify the dominant assumptions about learning through work experience" (Griffiths & Guile, 2004, p.21). The columns represent more complex understanding of work experience from the 'traditional' to the 'connective model'. ILMs can operate within all of these different models, and often between them. For example, as Chapter 2 shows, ILMs are often conceptualised as traditional model projects, 'bridges to work' with expected outcomes of 'skill acquisition and knowledge of work'. Yet ILM participants are often also required to 'self-manage', for example in emotional and aesthetic labour, and to develop 'key skills and competencies', both features of the Generic Model. Participants in Type 1 ILMs in particular, are required to 'manage work processes, relationships and customers' and to 'add value for employers' (Work Process Model). It is a conclusion of this study that if ILMs aim to operate more as 'Connective Model' work experience programmes, while also maintaining their 'real job' features, then they are more likely to enable participants successfully to 'cross boundaries'.

The evidence that SYCON ILM workers were developing boundary-crossing skills was mixed. Positive examples included a worker who had arranged shadowing opportunities with a professional working in a similar field. Another participant suggested a new business practice to his employer and was given the opportunity to develop it, thereby extending and enhancing the skills, knowledge, and practice of both the ILM worker and employer. This last point is a good example of a key concept in 'boundary-crossing' in work experience and working environment: the ability of workers to use their emerging skills and knowledge to transform the work setting. A key issue here is the degree to which ILM employment opportunities are able to create the conditions in which successful learning can take place. Fuller and Unwin (2004, p.126) argue "that learning environments that offer employees diverse forms of participation foster

95

learning at work". Their 'expansive-restrictive' concept of workplace learning environments is a useful addition to the literature on workplace learning and is discussed in the following section.

Expansive – Restrictive continuum

The scope for learning to occur in a workplace might be either expanded or restricted by available resources. Fuller and Unwin's (2004) 'expansive – restrictive continuum' identifies:

> *"Features of the environment or work situation which influence the extent to which the workplace as a whole creates opportunities for, or barriers to, learning" (Fuller & Unwin, 2004, p.131)*

Selected, relevant elements of the 'expansive – restrictive continuum' are reproduced in Table 8.

Table 8: The expansive - restrictive continuum

Approaches to workforce development	
Expansive	**Restrictive**
Participation in multiple communities of practice inside and outside the workplace	Restricted participation in multiple communities of practice
Access to a range of qualifications including knowledge-based vocational qualifications	Little or no access to qualifications
Planned time off the job including for knowledge-based courses and for reflection	Virtually all-on-job; limited opportunities for reflection
Gradual transition to full, rounded participation	Fast – transition as quick as possible
Vision of workplace learning: progression for career	Vision of workplace learning: static for job
Organizational recognition of, and support for employees as learners	Lack of organizational recognition of, and support for employees as learners
Knowledge and skills of whole workplace developed and valued	Knowledge and skills of key workers/groups developed and valued
Chances to learn new skills/jobs	Barriers to learning new skills/jobs

Innovation important	Innovation not important
Team work valued	Rigid roles

Source: Adapted from Fuller and Unwin (2004, p.130)

Thus, effective workplace learning is dependent, to some extent, on how successful the employing organisation is in providing opportunities for, and encouraging, a culture of learning. But it is also implicit in this continuum that effective learning can only take place if individuals elect to participate. However, participation or non-participation in learning is not always a matter of individual choice, even in an 'expansive' workplace. This is particularly the case in an ILM workplace where not participating in learning, that is to say, not engaging effectively with the ILM, could lead to the participant being required to return to benefits, or having benefits reduced or removed. Fuller and Unwin also note than an individual's 'learning territory' can influence how much, and how well they engage in learning. 'Learning territory' is explained as follows:

> *"Every individual has, and has had, access to a (unique) range of learning opportunities which make up their learning territory. The territory is divided into regions. For example, one region would cover classroom-based learning and qualifications, while another would cover learning at home. A key region for employees is the workplace" (Fuller & Unwin, 2004, p.133).*

Significantly, the authors "argue that the character and scope of the individual's learning territory (as well as how they respond to it) influences how he or she perceives and engages with it" (Fuller & Unwin, 2004, p.133). Thus, not only is the character of the community of practice important, so are individual learning histories. ILMs often engage people with poor learning histories and therefore "expansive learning environments can act as a mechanism for 'smoothing' out individual differences and fostering more even take up of opportunities". (Fuller & Unwin, 2004, p.133). Thus context is important in engaging people in effective learning, even though individual agency also plays a part. However, learning is of no value if the 'products' of learning cannot be exercised, either in the existing (ILM) workplace, or in a subsequent one. For example, in the case of work experience or ILMs, learning is also of little value if it is relevant only to

97

the culture of the current, temporary, workplace. In addition, if people cannot implement their learning, because they do not have sufficient 'discretion', then learning is devalued. The concept of discretion in the workplace is discussed in the next section.

Discretion in the workplace

"Discretion refers to the degree of autonomy and responsibility exercised by workers in the labour processes in which they are engaged" (Felstead et al., 2009, p.24). The authors relate the amount of discretion which individuals are allowed to exercise to relations of trust rather than to job status. In fact discretion is associated with favourable 'productive systems', rather than job hierarchy or sector. The example of 'Making Sandwiches' (Felstead et al., 2009, pp.141-65) illustrates the point well. Felstead et al. distinguish between 'buyer-driven' and 'producer-driven' sandwich making production systems. The former are sandwiches produced for large retail organisations which are packaged in the retailer's brand packaging, the latter are sandwiches made for smaller outlets, packaged with the manufacturer's branding. Within supermarket 'buyer-driven' systems there is little opportunity for discretion in the making of sandwiches. Those sandwiches are produced to appeal to a mass market. However, there is much more scope in 'producer-driven', manufacturer-label, processes: new product development personnel in these organisations, "enjoy a greater degree of autonomy, independence and initiative in devising and developing new products" (Felstead et al., 2009, p161-162). It is not simply a matter of the size of the manufacturing organisation; rather it is the location of the ability to exercise discretion within the productive system. In 'buyer-driven' systems discretion is dislocated from the manufacturer; in 'producer-driven' systems it is located within the system.

This study identified instances of discretion being exercised by ILM participants, and others where it was not. Those examples are discussed in later chapters. The next section draws conclusions from the foregoing discussion

Concluding discussion

This chapter has explored relevant literature on social exclusion, learning, and work experience. It has included concepts such as criminalising social policy,

aesthetic and emotional labour, and discretion in the workplace. The idea that 'work pays', while probably true for the majority of workers, is clearly not true for all: many households with at least one adult in work are classed as being in poverty. Nonetheless, discourses of social exclusion and lifelong learning are imbued with the message that work is the best way out of poverty and social exclusion. Thus, there are sanctions for people on benefits who do not accept job offers. But little emphasis is placed on improving the quality of jobs at the lower end of the labour market, or on introducing effective measures to ensure that such jobs pay an income which does not need to be subsidised through Tax Credits, or their replacement, Universal Credits. Policy interventions tend to focus on improving the employability skills of people in the labour market. In the case of people who have been disengaged from the labour market for a relatively lengthy period of time, there is sometimes a need for intensive, holistic programmes such as ILMs.

ILM participants are long-term unemployed individuals, or others who are disengaged from the labour market. Those groups of people are often constructed in policy discourses as being immersed in 'cultures of worklessness', an 'underclass' whose behaviour is determined by their reliance on the welfare system, rather than their status being a result of inequality. This is not only dispiriting, although that is important because it can affect how participants engage with ILMs, these discourses also effectively determine the contexts in which ILMs operate, by, for example, compelling people to participate when voluntary participation has been shown to be a key motivating principle underpinning ILMs. One of the reasons for preferring voluntary participation is that it contributes to constructing ILMs as 'real jobs'. However, ILMs can also be characterised as paid work experience which also provide opportunities for training and learning. Clearly, 'learning' in its broadest sense, is an important component to ILM activity. However, there is a possibility that learning can be misdirected, either towards qualifications which have little value in the wider labour market, or focusing too much on the work culture of the employing organisation which is not always transferable to other organisations.

99

<u>What</u> ILM participants learn is therefore relevant. For example, evidence from returns to learning indicates that it might be preferable for some, particularly younger, participants to focus on achieving academic qualifications such as English, Maths and ICT GCSEs rather than low level vocational qualifications. This is a view that appears to be confirmed by the findings of the Wolf Report (Wolf, 2011). <u>How</u> ILM participants are expected to learn is also relevant, particularly in relation to non-formal and informal learning. Employers often require aesthetic and emotional skills which are sometimes 'acquired' through socialisation processes rather than 'taught'. It is therefore also useful to take account of the learning context. ILM workplaces which effectively promote learning, 'expansive workplaces', are likely to provide conducive contexts for ILM participants. However, their eventual success is also likely to be dependent to some extent on the participant's 'learning territory'. Thus, policy discourses play an important role, particularly if assertions that 'work pays' and that the acquisition of skills will lead to relief from the effects of poverty and social exclusion, are not reflected in participants' lived experiences.

These issues will be addressed in more detail in the discussion of SYCON in Chapter 7. The next chapter is a discussion of the methodological framework and methods used in the study.

Chapter 4: Methodology and methods

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological approach to the study and the methods adopted. It describes the case study selection process and the reasons for electing to study the SYCON Programme. The advantages of framing the study within a critical realist approach are then assessed, prior to a discussion of the implications of choosing that approach on the methods used. The research design is described in Chapter 5.

Selection of SYCON as the case study

This research study is one of twelve related doctoral studies that were undertaken at both Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Sheffield. All twelve studies were co-funded and were designed to contribute to the overall evaluation of the European Union (EU) Objective 1 Programme for South Yorkshire. The study had a central aim[57], to undertake:

> *"An exploration of the impact of specific training and education activities supported by the EU Structural Funds Objective 1 Programme for South Yorkshire on the ability of disadvantaged groups to access and engage with the labour market"* (Hallam Research Agreement, 2001).

Objective 1 in South Yorkshire funded a large number of training and education activities[58] in the sub-region. In order to assess the range and nature of projects being implemented, the author carried out a scoping exercise of relevant Objective 1 project files and had discussions with four managers at the organisation's headquarters. The review of files, discussions with managers, and subsequent discussions with PhD supervisors highlighted the South Yorkshire Consortium Intermediate Labour Market Programme (SYCON) as

---

[57] Hallam Research Studentship Agreement, 2001

[58] Data for actual spend on training and education programmes is not available. However it was significantly over £200,000,000: "Over £200 million from Europe has supported South Yorkshire's training and skills agenda. A significant portion of the investment was co-financed by the European Social Fund with the Learning and Skills Council South Yorkshire, providing funding that was pre-matched for projects to help transform the lives of many people through education and training. Resources were made available for businesses to assist them to raise the skills of their management and workforce and to support training provision for individuals through mainstream training providers and those in the voluntary and community sector" (Fenoughty & Holmes, 2008, p.37)

being an appropriate case study. The reasons for its suitability are discussed below.

At the time this study began, there was a great deal of interest in Intermediate Labour Market projects and programmes (ILMs) in policy circles because they appeared to be more successful than other programmes in moving people from long-term disengagement from the labour market into jobs (see Chapter 2). Contemporary evaluations of ILM activity (for example, McGregor, et al., 1997; Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000) had described the various ILM models of intervention and expected outcomes but had been less clear on why ILMs were able to have the outcomes that they did. The logic of ILM implementation which one could draw from the policy and evaluation discourses appeared to be that if the 'correct' model was replicated then the same positive outcomes[59] would occur. However, that 'logic' did not fully explain the range of different outcomes which ILMs generated. The implication appeared to be that negative outcomes were a result of an individual participant's failure to engage with the project, or that the model had not been implemented correctly. Those views are premised on a misplaced view of causation; an alternative view of the generation of outcomes is presented later in this chapter during the discussion of realistic evaluation. In summary, the theoretical understanding of ILMs did not appear to be very well developed. This study therefore set out to contribute to improving that understanding.

Suitability of the SYCON programme
The SYCON programme had many features which made it a suitable project for this study. The characteristics of SYCON are described in detail in Chapter 6 during an introduction to the analysis of the programme. Briefly, SYCON aimed to provide "a labour market with which beneficiaries, long term unemployed, gain employability skills, confidence and self-esteem that enables them to compete effectively in the mainstream labour market" (SYCON, 2001, p.3),

---

[59] A 'positive' outcome would be a sustainable job. However, sustainability is assessed in different ways, for example, on some projects it is 'remains in employment 3 months following the intervention', on others it 6 months. In addition other outcomes such as moving into further training or education are also considered 'positive' by many ILM stakeholders. The notion of a 'positive' outcome is therefore not a fixed concept and is open to variation

adding that "the focus of the programme is on developing the skills employers have identified as lacking in the unemployed through a combination of work experience and vocational training" (ibid., p.3). In summary, SYCON "constitutes a curative approach to tackling unemployment and the social exclusion that accompanies it" (SYCON, 2001, p.3). With reference to the central aim of the project[60], SYCON was clearly a training and education programme which was designed to enable disadvantaged groups to access and engage with the labour market. It therefore fit the basic criterion of being relevant to the theme.

SYCON had other features which added to its suitability as a case study project. For example, SYCON was managed in the four South Yorkshire sub-region local authority areas of Sheffield, Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham but aimed to recruit participants from across the sub-region, including deprived rural areas. It was a large project, the first, as far as the author is aware, to be developed on a sub-regional basis. Previous ILMs were "all local initiatives" (Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000, p.49) and SYCON was, in effect, testing the possibility of developing ILMs on such a scale. The SYCON management board was drawn from managers of existing programmes in each of the four areas, all had considerable experience in implementing ILM projects. Because ILMs were already operating, there were many experienced ILM employers and other stakeholders in the area. In summary, there was a wealth of experience in the area, and a large pool of potential informants from which to draw during the fieldwork section of the study. Many of the training and education projects which Objective 1 funded in South Yorkshire were relatively small projects; SYCON, on the other hand, had the resources to fully engage with the study.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were developed from the 'central aim' and operationalised into a series of research questions. Those questions were more fully developed during the scoping period and after the SYCON

---

[60] To recap, the central aim was to undertake "an exploration of the impact of specific training and education activities supported by the EU Structural Funds Objective 1 Programme for South Yorkshire on the ability of disadvantaged groups to access and engage with the labour market"

programme had been selected. In order to develop the methods and methodology for study, the author utilised Mason's (2002) 'difficult questions'. Those 'difficult questions' enabled the author to focus the broad topic of the study (the central aim) in order to "design an effective project with a clear, relevant and intellectually worthwhile focus to explore [the] topic" (Mason, 2002, p.14). The research design is outlined in Chapter 5. The first step in developing the design was to outline what Mason (2002, pp.17-18) calls the "intellectual puzzle". In this case it was:

How and why do socially excluded people with a history of disadvantage and disengagement from the labour market move into employability and employment through ILM interventions?

A number of research questions were drawn from that 'puzzle' which addressed wider concerns about labour market supply-side interventions. Each had a series of sub questions:

1. How appropriate are SYCON projects when compared with the needs of participants? For example:
   - Will moving into employment address the exclusionary issues faced by participants?
   - What barriers to employment are being addressed?
2. What activities prepare participants for the workplace? For example:
   - How do participants 'learn' on SYCON projects?
   - How is work experience managed and 'transfer' achieved?
3. What theoretical frameworks are evident in the development and implementation of SYCON projects? For example:
   - What theories of change are implicit or explicit in the design of the projects?
   - How is the potential range of different outcomes explained?

The next section describes the methodological approach to the study.

Methodological approach

A number of qualitative or quantitative approaches could have been adopted to address the central aim of the study. Bryman (2001) outlines a number of 'fundamental differences' between strategies developed within the two approaches. They are outlined in the Table 9. The implications of these differences[61] are explored in the next sections:

Table 9: Fundamental differences between quantitative and qualitative strategies

Orientation	Quantitative	Qualitative
Principal orientation to the role of theory in relation to research	Deductive; testing of theory	Inductive; generation of theory
Epistemological orientation	Natural science model, in particular positivism	Interpretivism
Ontological orientation	Objectivism	Constructionism

Source: (Bryman, 2001, p.20)

Quantitative approaches

Quantitative or positivist approaches based on deductive theory could develop hypotheses about a problem which would be drawn from existing knowledge of the problem. Such quantitative researchers would use methods drawn from the natural sciences. For example, in relation to ILMs, one might hypothesise that participating in work experience prepares people for the wider labour market, which in turn would lead to sustainable employment. That hypothesis could be tested through the implementation of a survey, or the meta-analysis of existing surveys. The aim might be test if there is a correlation between the independent variable 'work experience' and the dependent variable 'sustainable employment'. That correlation would present a 'fact' about the world and contribute to confirming or negating the hypothesis, and also to developing new hypotheses about the subject. This approach would be 'objective' in the sense that the relationships between the variables were 'independent' of the social actors involved.

---

[61] It is beyond the scope of this thesis to undertake a full explanation of the different approaches. This section is a broad overview and is included in order to explain why a critical realist approach was adopted and why other approaches were discarded

A quantitative approach to addressing the central aim of this study, could explore the impact of training and education on beneficiaries by measuring the number of people engaged who moved into employment. This could be incorporated into an experimental design by comparing the percentage outcomes of SYCON with those of different programmes. The inquiry could also be broken down to identify outcomes for different members of the research population, for example women, men, people with disabilities, or people from different ethnic backgrounds. Studies based on this approach are valuable in testing hypotheses and in formulating new ones from results. For example, if the percentage of men entering employment after participating in work experience was greater than the percentage of women, new hypotheses could be tested. They might include hypothesising, for example, that work experience was less suited to women participants, or that there were fewer opportunities for women in the labour market. Marshall and Macfarlane (2000) draw on quantitative/positivist approaches when they observe that:

> "We can summarise the typical performance of ILMs compared to other programmes for the same target group as:
>
> - Retention on programmes appears double
>
> - Job outcome rates are two to three times better
>
> - The durability of employment is at least 30 per cent higher"
> (Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000, p.47)

This approach is valuable for identifying relationships between variables, but is not as valuable in gaining an understanding of why the programmes generate the outcomes they do.

Qualitative approaches

Qualitative approaches based on inductive theory could aim to generate theory about a problem based on the perceptions of people in the research population. Social scientific methods based on the natural sciences would not be deemed appropriate. For example, in relation to ILMs, one might interview ILM participants who have moved into sustainable employment and ask them about their perceptions of work experience. The concept of 'perception' could be

106

antithetical to natural science because objects of natural science research could not hold views about their existence.

A qualitative approach to addressing the central aim of this study, could explore peoples understanding of how the project helped them to engage effectively with the wider labour market. Their perceptions could then be used to develop an overall theory of SYCON or of ILMs in general. This approach is interpretivist in that it involves social agents reflecting on their experiences. Studies based on this approach are valuable in that they are able to improve understanding of why interventions have the effect they do. McGregor, et al. (1997, p.26) draw on qualitative approaches in their description of residents' views of the quality of ILM participants' "workmanship": "the residents were asked to make their own subjective comparisons with previous work carried out by the local authority". This approach is valuable in gaining an understanding of stakeholders' experiences, but is perhaps not so valuable in explaining how the programme had the outcomes it did.

Although Table 9 shows that qualitative and quantitative strategies have different epistemological and ontological orientations, it has been claimed that mixed methods research is 'a research paradigm whose time has come' (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). These writers describe mixed methods as follows:

> *"Mixed methods research is formally defined here as the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.17).*

For Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, a mixed method design offers a "logical and practical alternative" (ibid.) to an either/or approach to quantitative and qualitative research paradigms. They add that "what is most fundamental it the research question - research methods should *follow* research questions in a way that offers the best chance to obtain useful answers" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, pp.17-18). As will be shown later in this chapter, this echoes critical realist perspectives of the choice of methods. The section below discusses differences between methodology and method as the terms are used

107

in this study. Methodology, it is argued is dependent on the researcher's views of epistemology, methods are not.

Methodology and methods

Silverman (1998) describes 'methodology' as "a general approach to studying a research topic" (Silverman, 1998, p.103) and gives as examples, quantitative and qualitative methodologies. He defines 'methods' as "specific research techniques" (ibid., p.104) and notes that they include "quantitative techniques, like statistical correlations, as well as [qualitative] techniques like observation, interviewing and audio recording" (Silverman, 1998, p.104). One problem with some research and evaluation literature, including literature on critical realism, is that the terms 'methodology' and 'methods' are often used interchangeably. For instance, Kazi (2003, p.5) argues that "whilst realism is developed as a philosophy of science, at the level of methodology this paradigm is relatively underdeveloped at this stage" but Kazi's argument appears to relate to methods rather than methodology. Thus, the same author states that, "realism is *methodological-pluralist*" (Kazi, 2003, p.6, emphasis added) but is actually discussing "the *methods* it can draw on [which] were developed either within the empirical or interpretivist paradigms that may not have the same ontological depth as realism" (Kazi, 2003, p.6 emphasis added). Likewise, Danermark et al., (2002) also argue for "critical methodological pluralism" (see for example pp.150-176) which again can be confusing, not least because these authors set out to oppose a number of methodological approaches and argue for a specifically critical realist methodology rather than pluralism. For example, they argue that "an important methodological conclusion is that we can discard two approaches: methodological individualism and methodological collectivism" (Danermark et al., 2002, p.164) and spend much of their book arguing against positivism and relativism, both of which are methodologies as understood in this thesis.

This thesis argues that it is an error to say that critical realism is "methodologically-pluralist". Critical realism is a *methodology* (but see below, it is also a philosophy of science, although the two terms are closely related) but draws on *methods* that may have been developed prior to the critical realist

'paradigm', if such a paradigm can be said to exist. That is to say, it draws on methods that, as Kazi indicates, have been developed within various methodological frameworks or paradigms, including "the two main streams in social science methodology: quantitative and qualitative method" (Danermark et al., 2002, p151). Unfortunately, there is potential for a great deal of confusion to result from these texts. It often appears that they are either developing an epistemological argument about the nature of knowledge, or an ontological argument about 'the real', but are often actually engaged in developing or promoting appropriate methods at the level of practice. Rolfe (2006) noted a similar tendency in his review of McEvoy and Richards (2006):

> "The real problem with this mixing of terminology is that it encourages us to regard 'focus groups, unstructured interviews, textual analysis and ethnographic case studies' as of the same epistemological order. However, whereas the first two are methods for collecting data, and the third is a method for analysing the data collected by the first two, the final example is a methodology for structuring and rationalising the above methods". (Rolfe, 2006, p.79)

This thesis uses 'methodology' and 'method' broadly as defined by Silverman, the former as a 'general approach' and the latter as 'specific research techniques'. However, a further level of stratification is assumed here. Critical realism is a philosophy of science not just 'a general approach'. The implication is that it is saying something about the way that the world actually is, not simply something about the activity of science. Indeed, Bhaskar developed his critical realist philosophy by attempting to answer "the fundamental ontological question" (Danermark et al., 2002, p.18): "What must the world be like for science to be possible?" (Bhaskar, 2008, p.23).

Critical realist methodology and the realistic evaluation approach adopted for this study are addressed in detail in later sections of this chapter. Before that discussion, the implications of the research being funded by Objective 1 and the need for access to the research field are discussed.

As noted previously, this study was designed to contribute to the overall evaluation of the EU Objective 1 Programme for South Yorkshire. The study was therefore originally intended to have an evaluative function. However, that

109

function ran contrary to the expectations of the SYCON board, an organisation vital to this research programme because it had the ability to provide access to the field of study. The reasons the board was averse to this study becoming an evaluation were two-fold. Firstly, it was in the process of commissioning an independent evaluation of the SYCON programme. Secondly, individual managing agents who were represented on the board had participated in a number of evaluations of previous ILM projects, and most were responding to the DWP's review of intermediate and transitional labour markets (Finn & Simmonds, 2003). In the words of one SYCON board member, they had "been evaluated to death". Thus, the board wanted the project to provide a different type of outcome: "a kind of theory of ILMs" (SYCON board member). The scoping exercise carried out in the early stages of the study had identified that such a theory had not previously been developed and that existing theory of causation, as expressed in Marshall and Macfarlane (2000) and McGregor et al. (1997) needed further exploration. Therefore, the views of the board and the findings of the scoping study coincided. The study therefore aimed to develop a theory-building approach using predominantly qualitative methods but within a mixed methods design. The next section assesses the influence of critical realism on the study.

Critical realism

Critical realism was selected as the "guiding methodological strategy" (Mason, 2002, p.30) of this study for two interconnected reasons: it would offer a new way to assess ILM activity; and it would therefore contribute to a better understanding of ILMs. The selection of a critical realist approach is therefore a strategic choice, not a choice of method: "it is the logic by which you go about answering your research questions" (Mason, 2002, p.30). Given that there were a number of contemporary evaluations of ILM activity, this study was designed to assess ILM activity from a different viewpoint.

Critical realism is a philosophy of science developed in opposition to positivism and relativism that was able to "sublate, that is synthesize and transcend, these

two traditions of thought"[62] (Bhaskar, 2002, p.25). Thus, critical realist approaches incorporate elements of these philosophies or methodologies, but do so in order to 'transcend' or go beyond them. Critical realism therefore draws on a range of methods developed under different traditions or paradigms, but has a different view of the social reality that is the object of research activity. It is not the purpose of this thesis to discuss the philosophy of critical realism in depth, but it will be valuable to describe the tenets which have influenced the development of this study. They are not presented here as a defence of critical realism, or to propose that all social science research should necessarily be conducted within a critical realist framework. They are presented in order to explain why it was assumed that a critical realist approach could bring fresh insights to the research questions and, therefore, to the Intermediate Labour Market response to social exclusion.

Selected tenets of critical realism

Three aspects of critical realism outlined in the following quote are relevant to the development of this study. Bhaskar (1989) explains that critical realists:

> *"Hold that we will only be able to understand – and so change – the social world if we identify the structures at work that generate those events or discourses. Such structures are irreducible to the patterns of events and discourses alike. These structures are not spontaneously apparent in the observable pattern of events; they can only be identified through the practical and theoretical work of the social sciences". (Bhaskar, 1989, p.2)*

The first tenet is that to understand structures at work in society is synonymous with changing them. Secondly, there exist 'structures [which] are not spontaneously apparent in the observable pattern of events' which are 'irreducible to patterns of events and discourses alike'. Thirdly, those structures 'can only be identified through the practical and theoretical work of the social

---

[62] Bhaskar is referring here to "modernism and post-modernism"(Bhaskar, 2002, p.25) and, in other works, uses different labels in order to argue that what became critical realism sublates, synthesizes and transcends other different traditions or positions, e.g. "classical empiricism" and "transcendental idealism" (Bhaskar, 2008, pp.24-25) and argues for the "exact form of the realism required […] to combat both empiricism, as it is manifest in the ideology of the so-called 'new realism', and idealism, of the kinds at work in the temples of post-structuralism" ((Bhaskar, 1989, p.180). However, the important consideration for this thesis is that critical realism aims to 'sublate, synthesise and transcend,' that it is to say, it incorporates parts of these philosophies or methodologies in order to go beyond them

sciences'. These tenets of critical realism are explored in the passages that follow.

Understanding and therefore changing the structures at work

This refers to the 'critical' in critical realism. 'Critical' has at least five different meanings within critical realism (Danermark et al., 2002, pp.200-201) but, by using a *critical* realist methodology to frame the study "the emancipatory traits ... are strongly emphasized" (ibid., p.201). As Danermark et al argue:

> "Social problems do not originate in, for instance, biological or psychological factors, but in social ones ... [an] example is unemployment. The causes of this phenomenon are to be found at the social level, not at the individual psychological level" (ibid., p.201)

And as they argue further:

> "When we lay bare the generative mechanisms at the social level, we thereby also explain in terms of social causes. These are produced by people and can thus be changed by people" (ibid.)

As argued earlier, current (social interventionist[63]) policy and intervention trends appear to prioritise individualised, labour market supply-side responses to unemployment and social exclusion. This tendency often appears to assume that (moral underclass) individuals are disengaged from the labour market for personal reasons: they lack ambition or aspiration, are feckless and irresponsible, or they lack skills (c.f. Murray, 2001). Social causes, for example discrimination, poor housing, or low pay, are often perceived to be the products of social exclusion rather than the causes, even though these are recognised as being important discriminatory factors (Byrne, 1999). This study, in proposing that problems lie with social causes rather than personal, or psychological ones, is one reason why *critical* realist methodology has provided an appropriate framework.

Structures which are not spontaneously apparent

Bhaskar observed that there are 'structures [which] are not spontaneously apparent in the observable pattern of events' and which are 'irreducible to

---

[63] C.f. the discussion of Levitas' (2005) three discourses of social exclusion (RED, SID, and MUD) in Chapter 2

patterns of events and discourses alike'. This is closely linked to the third relevant tenet: that those structures 'can only be identified through the practical and theoretical work of the social sciences'. The following sections discuss this complex relationship.

Bhaskar argues that the:

> "laws of nature, as they are currently known to us, entail the (contingently counterfactual) possibility of a non-human world; that is to say, that they would operate even if they were unknown" (Bhaskar, 1989, p.149).

For instance, when people 'knew' from their observations, that the sun moved round the earth, the earth continued, in fact, to orbit the sun. Upon discovering this fact (that the earth orbits the sun) nothing changed in the objective, natural world, but *knowledge* about the world changed. Facts in the natural world, such as the laws of nature, are objective and intransitive and are not affected by our transitive knowledge of them. This is a relatively unproblematic concept when applied to natural science, but critical realists argue that it is also relevant in the social world. However, social structures, unlike laws of nature, can be changed.

Social structures

Bhaskar's description of social structures is reproduced here at some length:

> "The existence of social structures is a necessary condition for any human activity. Society provides the means, media, rules and resources for everything we do. Far from it being the case that, in Mrs Thatcher's dictum, society doesn't exist, the existence of society is a transcendentally necessary condition for any intentional act at all. It is the unmotivated condition for all our motivated productions. We do not create society – the error of voluntarism. But these structures which pre-exist us are only reproduced or transformed in our everyday activities; thus society does not exist independently of human agency – the error of reification. The social world is transformed in daily life.
>
> All social structures – for instance the economy, the state, the family, language – depend upon or presuppose social relations – which may include social relations between capital and labour, ministers and civil servants, parents and children. The relations which people enter pre-exist the individuals who enter into them, and whose activity reproduces or transforms them; so they are

themselves structures. And it is to these structures of social relations that realism directs our attention. (Bhaskar, 1989, pp.3-4)

For Bhaskar, the existence of society is a necessary pre-condition for human intentional actions and those actions are only meaningful because the structures in which we operate already pre-exist us. Those structures 'depend upon or presuppose social relations' which are also structures and 'pre-exist the individuals that enter them'. This might appear to be a circular argument. However, Bhaskar is drawing attention to the structures of social relations as being the objects of social science and in doing so differentiates critical realism from other philosophies of science. These, he argues, reify social structures, that is to say that they tend to imply that social structures are independent of human agency, sometimes that social structures determine human actions.

Bhaskar argues (in the quote above) that it is to 'structures of social relations that realism directs our attention'. Here he is implying that the structures of social relations are therefore the ontological objects of social scientific study. This raises what Bhaskar (1989) described as:

> *"A question that continually resurfaces in philosophical discussions on the social sciences and reappears, in one guise or another, in methodological discussions within them: to what extent can society be studied in the same way as nature?" (Bhaskar, 1989, p.66).*

This leads to the third tenet of critical realism which is relevant to this study: that social structures 'can only be identified through the practical and theoretical work of the social sciences'. This begs the question: how? What are the appropriate methods that critical realist social scientists are able to draw on?

Practical and theoretical work of the social sciences
In order to consider appropriate methods, and highlight the importance of the third critical realist tenet for this study, it is helpful to discuss critical realist conceptions of social structures and mechanisms in a little more detail. In this respect it is useful to consider Pawson and Tilley's (1997) explanation of generative theory:

> *Generative theory holds that there is a real connection between events which we understand to be connected causally. We can capture the basic idea in the language customarily used in making*

114

many 'everyday' causal references. In such cases we often speak of a 'case', 'system', 'thing', 'person' in transformation. Thus we say that gunpowder exploded, we say that the economy went into recession, we say that the prisoner was rehabilitated. In explaining these transitions we often point to an observable cause (such as a spark, an oil crisis, a boot camp) but we also rely, as part of the explanation, on some internal feature of that which is changed (such as the 'state' or chemical composition of the gunpowder, the 'structure' and level of 'development' of the economy, the 'character' or 'disposition' of the prisoner)" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.33).

Generative mechanisms belong to the "intransitive dimension, in which the object is the real structure or mechanism that exists and acts quite independently of men and the conditions which allow men to access it" (Bhaskar, 2008, p.17). They exist independently of our knowledge of them: gravity attracted heavy objects before Newton was born and the earth revolved around the sun before Copernicus made his calculations.

For critical realists this implies that the world is stratified. Bhaskar uses this analogy to identify three "domains": the real, the actual and the empirical (Bhaskar, 2008, p.56). These domains are shown in Figure 5:

Figure 5: Three domains of the real

The EMPIRICAL: events that are actually observed and experienced

The ACTUAL: events (and non-events) that are generated by the mechanisms

The REAL: mechanisms and structures with enduring properties
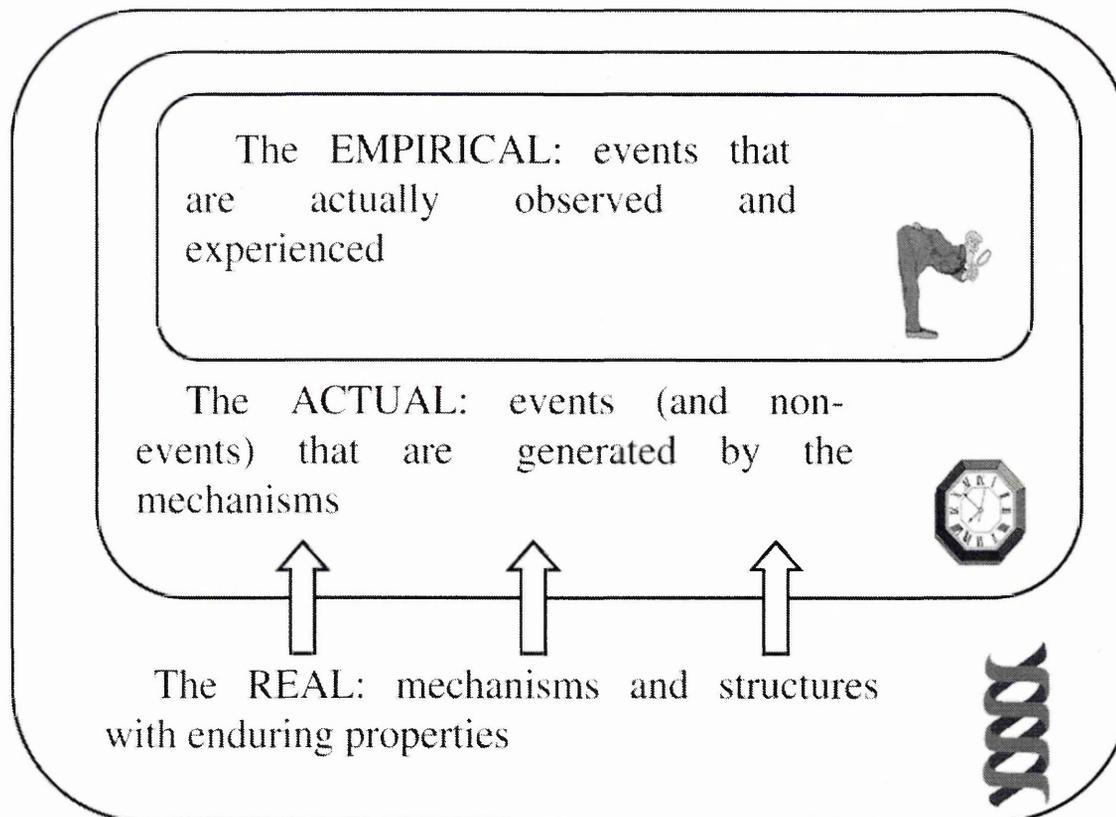
Source: Mingers (2004, p.94)

With reference to Pawson and Tilley's (1997) mention of gunpowder in the quote above, the latent power, or generative mechanism, of gunpowder resides in the domain of the real, the explosion that occurs when lit by a match resides in the domain of the actual, and the conceptualisation or experience of the explosion takes place in the domain of the empirical. In order to recreate, or 'cause' the explosion in a laboratory (or any other) condition, a scientist (or another person) attempts to ensure that competing generative mechanisms are not present (for example the power[64] of water to dampen the powder) and that complementary generative mechanisms are (for example the power of oxygen).

In creating the conditions for exploding the gunpowder, the aim is to create a closed system: the natural scientific experiment. A task of the natural scientist is to identify and describe causal laws, or prior to their identification, to generate theories about events that might follow from a generative mechanism being

---

[64] 'Power' is used here in the sense of latent power or generative mechanism – i.e. not the observable event (water quenching flames, burning wood, etc.)

triggered, and then to recreate the conditions necessary for the triggering of that event. The scientist does not create, or observe, the generative mechanism but creates the conditions in which it can operate and can observe the events that follow. However, the situation in which gunpowder exploded, outlined above, is actually an example of an open system. Open systems occur "when generative mechanisms operate in combination with each other; the more mechanisms involved, the more difficult to anticipate the outcome" (Danermark et al., 2002, p.206). Sometimes the gunpowder does not explode, for instance "if the mixture is damp, if there is insufficient powder, if it is not adequately compacted, if there is no oxygen present, if the duration for which heat is applied is too short, and so on" (Pawson and Tilley, op. cit., p58). However, the aim of experimentation is to create a system that is as 'closed' as possible.

To summarise, for critical realists the world is stratified with the mechanisms, which are the objects of study, operating at a different ontological level to the events that are generated by them and to our empirical observation or experience of them. But, unlike the scientific experiment which seeks to recreate closed systems, the objects of social research operate in open systems and require different methods. But what form should 'the practical and theoretical work of the social sciences' take? As outlined above, some writers and theorists (Danermark et al., 2002; Kazi, 2003, Pawson and Tilley, 1997) argue for methodological pluralism but, as well as appearing to confuse ontology and epistemology, this can lead to unsatisfactory and inconclusive recommendations. Danermark et al. (2002) advise that critical realism:

> *"does not therefore exclude any method a priori, but the choice of method should be governed, on the one hand by what we want to know, and on the other by what we can learn by different methods"* (Danermark, et al., 2002, p.204)

That is no doubt sound advice, but appears trite at the end of a 204 page treatise on critical realism in the social sciences. These writers argue that researchers therefore often "require a combination of several different methods" (Danermark, et al. 2002, p.204) but, even with the proviso that "this mode of combining must, however, be based on ontological considerations" (ibid.) and

117

other factors[65], 'critical methodological pluralism' is actually rather vague. Critical realism is, in the end, rather opaque when discussing method in the social sciences. This situation has led to a plethora of books and articles on critical realist methods in a number of different social science disciplines [see for example Kazi (2003) on health and social work; Mingers (2004) on information systems; Porter (2002) on ethnography; and Pawson & Tilley (1997) on evaluation], as well as more general texts such as Danermark et al. (20002) and McEvoy & Richards (2006). During the development of this study, Pawson and Tilley's (1997) realistic evaluation approach was identified as being appropriate and was influential in the design of this study. The realistic evaluation approach is described below.

Realistic evaluation

Realistic evaluation incorporates critical realist perceptions about society into a system for assessing social interventions. Although this study is not an evaluation of SYCON *per se*, it is an assessment of SYCON programme theories and therefore draws on the realistic evaluation approach in order to 'operationalise' critical realist philosophies into a framework for empirical study.

The section below outlines what Pawson and Tilley (1997) have called "the new rules of realistic evaluation" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, pp.214-219). They observe that:

> *"Methodological rules, like program theories, are under a process of continual refinement. This book [Realistic Evaluation] has attempted to distil the process by acting as go-between, connecting up the ideas of a half-dozen philosophers and a handful of evaluators. The following [new rules of realistic evaluation] will thus only gain currency if many more evaluators adopt the rules by adapting them" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.215).*

---

[65] Danermark et al. (2002, p.204) state that "in this book we have tried to demonstrate, first, what basic ontological conditions should inform the choice and use of method; second, what tools in terms of, for instance, retroduction and theory we need in concrete research work; and finally, how different empirical procedures (intensive and extensive) meet different demands in this work"

The ways in which these 'rules' have been adopted and adapted for this study are discussed below. This section is structured to mirror Pawson and Tilley's outline, taking each of the eight rules in turn.

Generative causation

Rule one is generative causation: "evaluators need to attend to how and why social programs have the potential to cause change" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.215). This was the guiding 'rule' of this study which has always aimed to "understand the conditions required for the programs' causal potential to be released and whether this has been released in practice" (ibid.). As noted above, the critical realist theory of causation implies that the world is stratified: this leads to the next rule discussed below.

Ontological depth

Rule two is ontological depth: "evaluators need to penetrate below the surface of observable inputs and outputs of a program" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.216). The writers argue that "interventions are always embedded in a range of attitudinal, individual, institutional, and societal processes, and thus program outcomes are generated by a range of macro and micro social forces" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.216). This study has attempted to bring these forces to light. It has done this in a number of ways, one is that by assessing ILMs as a response to social exclusion it highlights the social processes and relations in which ILM stakeholders (participants, funders, managers, trainers, staff, etc) enter. Another is that it aims to identify how the programme counters social exclusionary causal mechanisms. This leads to rule three.

Mechanisms

Rule three is mechanisms: "evaluators need to focus on how the causal mechanisms which generate social and behavioural problems are removed or countered through the alternative causal mechanisms introduced in a social programme" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.216). The aim to identify the generative mechanisms through the programmes and the ways that they counteract prevailing, exclusionary mechanisms was the primary aim of this research. In the event this process highlighted a number of different mechanisms and the ways that they interact became a focus of the study. This leads to rule four.

Contexts

Rule four is contexts: "evaluators need to understand the contexts within which problem mechanisms are activated and in which program mechanisms can be successfully fired" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.216.). This was one of the most complex area of the study. Social exclusion is a complex problem, ILMs are complex interventions, and ILM participants often lead complex lives and have complex needs. However, the level of complexity was made more manageable by focusing on the social relations that participants inhabit and the programme theories developed during the study (see rules five, six and seven below).

Outcomes

Rule five is outcomes: "evaluators need to understand what are the outcomes of an initiative and how are they produced" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.217). This is not simply a matter of listing the number of people who found employment, went into learning, went back to employment services, etc. The aim is to try to explain why those outcomes and others were generated by the actions of stakeholders:

> *"They fire multiple mechanisms having different effects on different subjects in different situations, and so produce multiple outcomes. Realist evaluators thus examine outcome patterns in a theory testing role. Outcomes [...] are analysed to discover if the conjectured mechanism/context theories are confirmed" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.217).*

This study could only go part way to assessing outcome patterns. Later recommendations will show how this can be improved by working more closely with project officers to fully identify how context-mechanism-outcome pattern configurations (CMO configurations) operate. This leads to rule six.

CMO configurations

Rule six is CMO configurations: "in order to develop transferable and cumulative lessons from research, evaluators need to orient their thinking to context-mechanism-outcome pattern configurations (CMO configurations)" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.217). The realistic evaluation approach implies that evaluators work closely with other programme stakeholders (primarily funders and managers responsible for their implementation) and bring an accumulation of knowledge to the programme that has been gained through experience of similar, previous interventions and published evaluation studies. This study was

able to achieve that to some extent. However, that ability was limited due to the relative inexperience of the student researcher at the time, and the then unequal nature of the knowledge relationship between the doctoral student and the SYCON management. These points will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter. With reference to CMO configurations, this study aimed to develop these in the first instance from two main sources, existing evaluations of ILMs and associated programmes, and interviews with managing agents. The interviews aimed to take on a teacher-learner relationship. This leads to rule seven.

Teacher-learner process

Rule seven is teacher-learner processes: "in order to construct and test context-mechanism-outcome pattern explanations, evaluators need to engage in a teacher-learner relationship with program policy makers, practitioners and participants" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.217). The unequal nature of the knowledge relationship between the author and the SYCON ILM managing agents alluded to above led to an imperfect teacher-learner process. However, the research design did aim to develop a situation in which:

> *"the research act [involved] 'learning' the stakeholder's theories, formalizing them, 'teaching' them back to the informant, who is then in a position to comment upon, clarify and further refine the key ideas" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.218).*

Although it was not always possible to do this during the time allocated for interviews, the student aimed to supplement those opportunities with other, less formal discussions with stakeholders, the provision of research updates, delivery of conference papers and similar processes. In particular, the student aimed to test and refine emerging CMO configurations with stakeholders whenever there was opportunity.

Open systems

There is one final rule of realistic evaluation, rule eight, open systems:

> *"evaluators need to acknowledge that programs are implemented in a changing and permeable social world, and that program effectiveness may thus be subverted or enhanced through the unanticipated intrusion of new contexts and new causal powers" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.218).*

121

The CMO configurations emerging from a successful realistic evaluation study are the best programme theories or explanations available at the time. This study aimed to contribute to knowledge of ILMs so that they could operate better for participants. One way they can do that, it is argued in this thesis, is to avoid misplaced replication. Replications of interventions and programmes often fail because the contexts in which the 'original' intervention was operational cannot be exactly reproduced (see for example Pawson & Tilley, 1997, pp.115-152). For example, replications occur in different locations; engage different individuals; operate in different local labour markets; and address different local policies. Therefore different mechanisms are likely to be triggered leading to different outcomes. It is difficult to learn from a project and to improve conditions for beneficiaries if "replication is based on 'mere similarity'" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.133).

Realistic evaluation research methods

As noted earlier, there is no single critical realistic method or combination of methods. In fact, critical realist literature tends to argue for 'methodological pluralism'. That is to say that no single method is considered more appropriate than any other. However, that does not mean any method can be used in any situation, rather critical realist methods should be "grounded in metatheoretical consideration" (Danermark et al., 2002, p.176):

> *"The choice of method should be governed, on the one hand by what we want to know, and on the other by what we can learn with the help of different methods. The key issue is that we possess the ability to judge the strength and weakness, respectively, of a method. Such judging is best done from well-grounded metatheoretical assumptions. This often leads us to require a combination of several different methods. This mode of combining must, however, be based on ontological considerations (Danermark et al., 2002, p 204).*

Likewise, there no realistic evaluation methods are prescribed. Pawson and Tilley (1997) observe that:

> *"We cast ourselves as solid members of the modern, vociferous majority in this respect, for we are whole-heartedly pluralists when it comes to the choice of method. Thus, as we shall attempt to illustrate in the examples to follow, it is quite possible to carry out realistic evaluation using: strategies, quantitative and qualitative;*

timescales, contemporaneous or historical; viewpoints, cross-sectional or longitudinal; samples, large or small; goals, action-oriented or audit-centred; and so on and so forth. This, by the way, means not that we are simply pluralists for pluralism's sake, but that the choice of method has to be carefully tailored to the exact form of hypotheses developed earlier in the cycle" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p. 85).

The research design and the methods selected are described in the next chapter. The concluding discussion summarises this chapter and describes the implications of the foregoing for this study.

Concluding discussion

This chapter has described the selection of the SYCON case study and explained why SYCON is an appropriate project for this study. The objectives of the study have been developed into a number of research questions, each with a series of sub-questions. The study has a mixed methods design which is framed within a critical realist/realistic evaluation approach. The chapter has explained that the selection of that approach would enable new insights into the Intermediate Labour Market response to social exclusion. The methodological approach and methods selected were arrived at through utilising Mason's (2002) 'difficult questions' in order to focus the central aim of the project and to develop the 'intellectual puzzle' and, subsequently, the research questions.

The realistic evaluation approach 'operationalises' critical realism in the sense that it develops 'a way of thinking' about the world into a framework for empirical research activity. However it does so in a 'methodologically pluralist' manner. It is argued earlier in this chapter that some writers tend to use 'methodology' in situations when they mean methods. Pawson and Tilley often appear to confuse the two: they are probably 'method pluralist'. They argue that data collection and analysis should be based on a generative theory of causation and that methods should be selected which are appropriate for answering the research question.

One problem with adopting a realistic evaluation approach in this study was that analytical methods for assessing realist data had not been developed. This was particularly true during the fieldwork stages of this project when:

"there [was] a dearth of published examples of realist evaluations in any area of human service practice which can demonstrate the utility of paradigm or the processes and methodologies that can be used to actually achieve an example of 'what works best, for whom, and under what circumstances'". (Kazi, 2003, p.1).

Thus, the realistic evaluation approach was almost as much an object of this study as the ILM response to social exclusion. The findings of that aspect of the study are described in the following chapters. The next chapter outlines the research design and the methods selected to address the research questions.

Chapter 5: Research design

Introduction

The previous chapter described how the philosophy of critical realism has influenced the development of this study. Firstly, it set out the "intellectual puzzle" (Mason, 2002, pp.17-18) or research question that this project sought to address. To recap, it is:

How and why do socially excluded people with a history of disadvantage and disengagement from the labour market move into employability and employment through ILM interventions?

The chapter then outlined the following research questions which were designed to address the 'puzzle':

1. How appropriate are SYCON projects when compared with the needs of participants? For example:
   - Will moving into employment address the exclusionary issues faced by participants?
   - What barriers to employment are being addressed?
2. What activities prepare participants for the workplace? For example:
   - How do participants 'learn' on SYCON projects?
   - How is work experience managed and 'transfer' achieved?
3. What theoretical frameworks are evident in the development and implementation of SYCON projects? For example:
   - What theories of change are implicit or explicit in the design of the projects?
   - How is the potential range of different outcomes explained?

The main part of this chapter describes the research design and its implementation. It describes the 'logic' of the research design and the research instruments used. The ways that the design was developed within a realistic evaluation, and therefore critical realist, framework are explained. The chapter also addresses the topic of 'gatekeepers' and how they have enabled, but also influenced and shaped research activity.

It has been asked if mixed methods social inquiry is a distinctive methodology (Greene, 2008). That is an interesting philosophical question but it is also important to understand how mixed methods can be organised into a research strategy. Greene (2006; 2008) provides a methodology of mixed methods social inquiry consisting of four domains: Domain 1 is philosophical assumptions and stances; Domain 2 is inquiry logics; Domain 3 guidelines for practice; and Domain 4, socio-political commitments (Greene, 2006). Domain 1 'philosophical assumptions and stances' was addressed in Chapter 3, Domain 4 'socio-political commitments' in Chapter 2. To recap, the research is framed within a critical realist view of social relations and structures (Domain 1), and is a "knowledge producer ... located in the midst of contestation, in a position of social critique or advocacy for particular interests and positions" (Domain 4) (Greene, 2006, p.94). This chapter addresses Domain 2, 'inquiry logics', and Domain 3, 'guidelines for practice' or research instruments (Greene 2006; 2008).

Logic of the research design

This study had a number of interconnected phases which are briefly outlined here and explained in further detail below. There was a large element of overlap between the phases. The research started with a wide-ranging review of relevant literature. It included academic articles and reports, and local, regional, national, and European policy documents on topics including learning and training for work, social exclusion and inclusion, area disadvantage, and ILM provision. This was followed by a review of Objective 1 documents such as the Single Programming Document (SPD) (The South Yorkshire Forum, 1999) and those more specifically related to the development of SYCON such as the *Business Prospectus* (SYCON, 2001) and applications for funding. These activities were undertaken throughout the project as new materials became available.

The second phase involved developing a topic guide and interviewing managing agents, interviewing representatives of funding bodies, interviewing ILM employers, and carrying out more informal discussions with project officers and

others as and when the opportunity arose during the fieldwork stages of the study. Interviews with ILM participants were also undertaken later in the fieldwork period. The third phase involved two different kinds of observation: one took place during meetings between project officers and ILM participants; the other was participant observation which took place during a week-long induction at the premises of the Rotherham managing agent. The fourth phase was the design, distribution and collation of self-complete questionnaires to ILM participants. Although the analysis of data was ongoing throughout the study, a final analysis stage completed the fieldwork period.

The logic of the research design is summarised in Table 10. Each row down the table represents increased cumulation: "cumulation is a matter of deepening, specifying, focusing, and formalising our understanding of program mechanisms, contexts and outcome patterns" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.116).

Table 10: Research logic framework

Phase	Aim of approach	Source	Research instrument
1	General programme theories identified	1. Published academic and policy literature 2. SYCON literature and documents 3. EU and Objective 1 literature and documents	1. Literature review 2. Literature and Document review 3. Literature and document review
2	Refinement of programme theories and development of author's understanding of programme	1. SYCON managers 2. Main funders 3. ILM employers 4. SYCON project officers 5. ILM participants	1. Semi-structured interviews 2. Semi-structured interviews 3. Semi-structured interviews; Informal discussions 4. Unstructured interviews 5. Semi-structured interviews and Informal discussions
3	Further refinement and development	1. ILM participants 2. SYCON project	1. Participant observation

			officers 3. ILM employers	2. Participant observation; Unstructured interviews 3. Participant observation; informal discussion
4	Further refinement and development		1. ILM participants	1. Questionnaire survey

Analytical framework

In the first instance, recordings of interviews were fully transcribed ready for coding (see Appendix 6 for an example). However, a more suitable analytical framework, developed by Kazi (2003a) was identified later in the process and was adapted in order to replace the original method. Kazi's method isolates enabling and disabling mechanisms; an example of how the framework was used in this study is shown in Table 11. The prior lack of an appropriate analytical framework for realistic evaluation is a shortcoming of the realist approach adopted for this study. The adapted framework has addressed that deficiency.

Table 11: example of analytical framework

Context	Enabling mechanism	Disabling mechanism
In … New Deal eligible, either 18-24 (60%) or 25+ (40%). Or 'economically inactive – not working for up to a year, seeking employment but not receiving JSA (and therefore eligible for ND) (3[66]) To get them on the programme, make them JSA (4.25). Doing work of social value. Not for profit. Either in public sector –	Training and support. Track after 13 weeks and 27 weeks (15). Job (pays wages) – always refer to it by the job title rather than a programme or ILM or anything like that. Transitional Support Training within it – some of which is compulsory because of funding – but not essential unless person wants it. ND requires	Comfort zone of ILM (13) Training can be detrimental to some individuals because individual wants a job (18) Being long term unemployed. Starting job search too early (19.30) – no job search for 1st 26 weeks of StepUp. Also from employers point of view – won't want someone who

---

[66] Numbers in brackets relate to the time this topic is discussed on the recording

Context	Enabling mechanism	Disabling mechanism
by and large in …, voluntary sector (6).	training to be undertaken (17.30) Confident of being in work – then can do some training (18.15) should be what individual wants – e.g. no compulsory training	has just started a job. (21.25) Sanction someone into employment (e.g. of StepUp – if 6 month unemployed must go on it to get benefit) (25.40)

By using this analytical tool in conjunction with interview transcripts, and as a 'coding' tool in the assessment of other documents, it was possible to a range of isolate contexts and a range of disabling and enabling mechanisms. These formed the basis of developing programme theories or "propositions about how mechanisms are fired in contexts to produce outcomes" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.85). These theories were refined as the research progressed through the various phases.

Research instruments
The following sections outline what Greene (2006; 2009) calls 'guidelines for practice'. They are the research instruments, "the specific tools and procedures - the water bottle, hiking boots, and trail map - needed to enact the journey framed by Domain 1 and mapped by Domain 2" (Greene, 2006, p.94).

Literature and document review
The literature and document review was designed to begin to develop ILM programme theories. The review incorporated a range of associated literature on training, social exclusion and employability as well as documents more specifically related to SYCON and Objective 1. The range of academic and policy literature reviewed can be assessed from the entries in the bibliography. It was at this stage that the author began more rigorously to problematise the links between individualised approaches to enhancing employability and the objective of tackling social exclusion, links that were strongly suggested by much of the policy literature. It was also at this stage that it became clear that the understanding of cause and effect implied in some of the literature appeared to be misplaced. It was therefore decided that a critical realist-influenced,

realistic evaluation approach might throw new light on the emerging research questions and therefore that approach was adopted.

Interviews

Face to face semi-structured interviews were carried out with a number of key people. They included six SYCON managers, two funding body representatives, five ILM participants, and seven ILM employers. Interview topic guides can be seen in Appendices 1 - 3[67]. Each interview was recorded using analogue tape and handwritten notes were also made. Permission to record was requested from all participants and, in the event, each one gave their verbal consent. The analogue tapes were digitised and the digitised sound tracks reviewed using a playback machine. Enabling and disabling mechanisms discussed during the interviews were isolated.

Interview locations and procedures: SYCON managers and funding body representatives

SYCON managers and funding body representatives were interviewed at a time of their own choosing in their own offices. All interviews took place in office hours and all except one lasted between one to one-and-a-half hours. The exception was a shorter interview with a manager who could offer 30 minutes of time. Each interviewee was aware of the purpose of the study and most had been involved from the early stages of its development. All therefore gave fully informed consent. The aim of these interviews was to lay the groundwork for the development of programme theories expressed as context-mechanism-outcome (CMO) propositions. They were semi-structured interviews designed to be "a conversation with a purpose" (Mason, 2002, p.67). The interviews were designed to have a "conceptual refinement function" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.167). Pawson and Tilley describe the realist interview technique as the "the teacher-learner process" (ibid., pp.166-169). It is set out diagrammatically in Figure 6:

---

[67] The format of the topic guides has been changed in order for them to fit on fewer pages. The content has not been changed

Figure 6: Basic structure of the realist interview
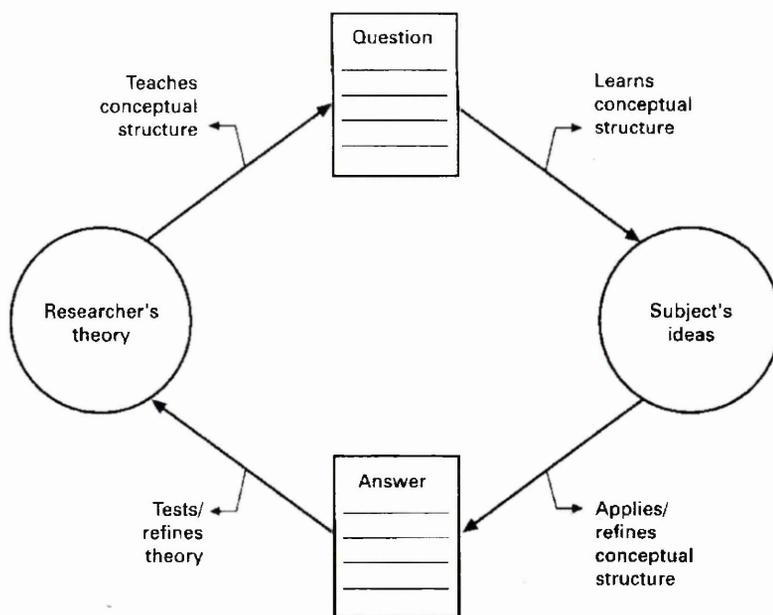
Source: Pawson and Tilley, 1997, p.165

The first stage of the process is to formulate a question or proposition about the programme theory, shown as 'conceptual structure' in the figure above. This question is developed according to the level of the researcher's understanding at that stage. As Pawson and Tilley argue (see, for example, Pawson 5 Tilley, 1997, pp.114-152) an experienced evaluator is likely to have developed some understanding of the programme theory by that stage of the research, possibly based on assessments of similar projects.

During a realistic evaluation interview, questions are asked in the form of a proposition about the programme, a programme theory. These propositions are refined by the interviewee in their answer and the interviewer checks their understanding of the response. The interview progresses until mutual understanding, if not necessarily agreement, is reached. This method differs from other, possibly more conventional, evaluation and research interview techniques. For instance, Silverman (2000) describes two approaches to interviewing; one is described as a realist approach but it is not 'critical realist'. Rather it is realist "in the sense of the literary genre whose aim is to describe the 'gritty' reality of people' lives" (Silverman, 2000, p.122). This approach assumes that the interviewee's answers correspond to "some external reality

131

(e.g., facts or events) or internal experience (e.g., feelings, meanings)" (Silverman, 2000, p.122). In a mixed method design these "facts" can be validated through triangulation designed to ensure that other methods of data collection 'agree' with the information being given. The other approach Silverman describes is the narrative approach which:

> *"claims that, by abandoning the attempt to treat respondents' accounts as potentially 'true' pictures of 'reality', we open up for analysis the culturally rich methods through which interviewers and interviewees, in concert, generate plausible accounts of the world"* (Silverman, 2000, pp.122-123).

This approach focuses on the stories or narratives people use to describe their experiences and behaviours. It is probably most commonly used in ethnographic research.

Both of the methods Silverman describes are appropriate for critical realist research approaches. Neither method fits neatly into the dichotomy that Pawson and Tilley (1997, pp.153-154) describe between structured and unstructured interviews, the former described by the writers as positivist in nature and the latter constructivist[68]. However, the difference is in the subject matter of the interview. Realistic evaluation interviews do not assume that the interviewees have access to privileged information. They do assume that different groups or individuals will know different things about the programme, but it is "the researcher's theory [that] is the subject matter of the interview, and the subject (stakeholder) is there to confirm, to falsify and, above all, to refine that theory" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.155).

---

[68] This is a common problem with critical realist literature alluded to in an earlier chapter. Critical realists tend to develop arguments through the critique of opposites and the literature identifies many of the so-called dualisms: "Let me talk about the problem field of the philosophy of social sciences as it was constituted say in the 1970s [during the formation of critical realist philosophy] and still largely is today. It was riven by dualism and dichotomy. You had the contrast between positivism and hermeneutics, between naturalism and anti-naturalism, between structure and agency, between the individual and the collectivity, between reification and voluntarism. You had the contrast between mind and body, reason and cause, between fact and value, between theory and practice. Everywhere this problem field was rife with dualism" (Bhaskar, 2002, pp.125-126)

Pawson and Tilley note that "the actual form of the interview will ... depend on the precise stage of theory development or testing which inquiry has reached (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.169). At the time that the interviews were undertaken for this study, the author's conceptual understanding was relatively less developed. In addition, although he had undertaken some evaluation research and had a good understanding of realistic evaluation, he was relatively inexperienced in its application. The author's development of ILM programme theory was therefore at an early stage at the time of the interviews. The interview topic guide and the interview technique could now be improved on. However, it was possible to develop CMO configurations and these were further developed during other stages of the research as planned.

Interview locations and procedures: ILM employers
These interviews took place towards the end of the fieldwork session and were designed to refine specific programme theories, in particular, those relating to transfer of learning and work experience. A total of seven ILM employers were interviewed for between 25 and 35 minutes. For reasons of cost and to expedite the process (Chapple, 1999) each interview was carried out by telephone following a semi-structured topic guide (see Appendix 2). It has been observed that, while there has been discussion of quantitative telephone interviews in literature on research methods, there is less consideration of the merits and disadvantages of qualitative telephone interviews (Glogowska et al., 2011; Novick, 2008). However, a number of disadvantages have been identified, including that it can be difficult to establish rapport with the interviewee and that non-verbal interactions such as facial and body expressions cannot be seen (Chapple, 1999, p.90). Nonetheless, they can also provide rich data because interviewees are able to relax within their own settings (Chapple, 1999, pp.91-92): all ILM employers were in their own offices during the interviews while the author telephoned them from his home. In addition, non-verbal data might not be important or helpful in some research situations and other clues such as tone of voice or pauses in conversation might compensate for their lack (Novick, 2008, p.395).

Unlike SYCON managers and funding body representatives, these interviewees had no prior engagement with the study before they were contacted. Therefore, it was important to inform potential interviewees about the project and the purpose of the call (Glogowska et al., 2011). This was done in a two-stage process. Firstly, each employer was emailed with information about the study and informed that the author would contact them by telephone in order to arrange an appropriate time for the interview to be undertaken. Secondly, during the first telephone contact, each potential interviewee was given further information about the study, the expected duration of the interview and topics to be discussed. Topic guides were emailed all interviewees before the final telephone call in which the interview was carried out and which was arranged at a convenient time for the interviewee. Thus all interviewees were able to give informed consent. Each interviewee was informed that the session would be recorded if they gave their permission and none refused. The recordings were made using a device attached between the telephone and an analogue recorder. Recordings were later digitised and then fully transcribed.

Interview locations and procedures: ILM participants

Interviews with ILM participants were carried out in different locations. Eight were undertaken in ILM workplaces and Five in managing agents' offices. Those undertaken in the work place were relatively short, 15 minute, unstructured interviews in which "the style of questioning is usually informal. The phrasing and sequencing of questions will vary from interview to interview" (Bryman, 2001, p.110). Interviews undertaken in managing agent's offices were semi-structured and recorded if the interviewee gave permission. All-but-one gave permission and in that case, extensive notes were taken. These interviews lasted between 25 to 35 minutes.

The issue of informed consent was more problematic in these cases and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7. In the case of the workplace, ILM employers and SYCON staff were present prior to the interview taking place (see below) and therefore the author had to acknowledge "the persuasive influences which operate on people when you ask them to consent to take part in your research" (Mason, 2002, p.80). Similarly, in managing agents' offices, SYCON project

officers were present before the interview. However, the interviews always took place in a private area and participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that no other person would be informed of their involvement or non-participation in the research. In the event one ILM participant refused to be interviewed.

Observations

Two observation methods were planned: non-participant observation during project officer visits to ILM participants at their place of work, and participant observation during a week-long induction period at Phoenix Enterprise, Rotherham. At all times the researcher took an overt role, aiming to act as "complete observer" during project officer visits and as "participant as observer" during the induction week (Walsh, 1998, pp.221-223). In practice this meant that the people being observed knew that the researcher was there to observe, take notes and report on their actions and could, and did, ask questions about the study and the researcher's role in it.

The methods for recording data in the different observational settings (project officer visits to ILM participants, and during an induction week) differed slightly but always involved taking lengthy field notes[69] during the observation period, followed immediately with further notes outlining the observation and teasing out enabling and disabling mechanisms. The difference occurred when, during the induction week, the researcher participated in some learning activities: the resulting materials also formed part of the research data. The data were analysed manually and CMO configurations drawn out or refined. The field notes were what Mason (2002, p.99) described as "development devices for formulating your understanding of your setting, for documenting your 'hunches', and for developing and testing out your analytical ideas". The observation method was unstructured and designed to assess and record incidents: "this means waiting for something to happen and then recording what follows from it" (Bryman, 2001, p.165). The aim was for the author's presence to influence the setting as little as possible.

---

[69] See field note excerpts in Appendix 4

The observations were noteworthy because they involved all three 'key players' in Pawson and Tilley's (1997) map of "who might be expected to know what about the program" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, pp.160-161): subjects, practitioners, and evaluators. Subjects, or ILM participants in this case, are described by Pawson and Tilley as being "far more sensitized to mechanisms" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.160) than to either contexts or outcomes. Practitioners, on the other hand, are "considered the great 'utility players'" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.161), they are likely to have knowledge and experience of contexts (C), mechanisms (M) and outcomes (O), that is to say, they will have knowledge of the following:

> *"what it is within the program that works (M). They are also likely to have experienced successes and failures (O), and thus have some awareness of the people and places (C) for whom and which the program works" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.161)*

What cannot be expected of practitioners, according to Pawson and Tilley, "is any systematic charting of the 'what works for whom in what circumstances' pathways (CMO configurations) associated with their project" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.161). Working with beneficiaries on a personalised basis, according to Pawson and Tilley, focuses practitioners' attentions on "the current personalities involved without necessarily anticipating the needs of the potential target population as a whole" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.161). Furthermore, they argue, other factors tend to preclude abstraction and generalisation:

> *"Institutions are habit forming; actions become taken for granted, and may thus be chosen without an eye on the full range of program possibilities. Institutional goals tend to be immediate and local and set within moveable goal posts" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.161).*

Most practitioners encountered did in fact have a good idea of what would 'work, for whom, and in what circumstances' – although there was some evidence of actions becoming taken for granted, particularly in relation to providing training for ILM participants. However, this study has shown that there were differing views amongst managing agency colleagues about programme theories and that the interrelationship between these theories has

not previously been fully explored. Again, this is discussed in more detail in later chapters.

The other key player, according to Pawson and Tilley, is the evaluator who will, if informed by the realistic evaluation approach, "begin with the expectation that the program will consist of a series of CMO configurations" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.161). Limitations in the researcher's knowledge of ILMs at the time that the majority of the interviews were being undertaken have been discussed above. By the time of the observations, the researcher had enhanced his knowledge of programme theories through discussions with managers and other staff. As noted above, the observations were the only setting that Pawson and Tilley's 'three key players', ILM participants (subjects); project officers, ILM employers, and tutors (practitioners); and the researcher (evaluator) were brought together in one setting. The observations were therefore a major element of the study and very important in enabling the further development of programme theories.

Pawson and Tilley do not discuss techniques of realist observation. However, a number of texts argue that qualitative and ethnographic methods, such as observation and interviews, are appropriate for use in a critical realist research design (see for example Kazi, 2003; Porter, 2002). For example, Porter argues that:

> "Critical realism is able to use ethnographic data to illuminate structured relations, and beyond that, to show how these relations may be oppressive, and to point to the sort of actions required to make them less oppressive" (Porter, 2002, p.65).

Porter's research was concerned with race and racism whereas this study was concerned with all forms of social exclusion. However, the premise that this study might point to the sorts of actions required to make the relations (of social exclusion) less oppressive was, as noted elsewhere in this thesis, a guiding principle in its development.

Pawson and Tilley do address another research technique that was used in this study in their (1997) book: research questionnaires. These are discussed below

Questionnaires

ILM participants were asked to complete a Likert scale questionnaire (Appendix 5) which was designed to assess if the enabling mechanisms identified previously were operating for them. The development of the questionnaire followed a method outlined in Pawson and Tilley (1997). Their example is taken from a project carried out by Pawson in Full Sutton prison which aimed to assess prison education (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, pp.170-173). That questionnaire sets out a list of statements about a course that prisoners have undertaken. Statements include that the course "helps inmates to accept themselves and their feelings more fully" and "helps inmates to experience success" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.171). Four possible responses for prisoners to tick are: 'to a considerable extent'; 'to a moderate extent'; 'to a slight extent'; and 'not at all'. Each response is coded 1, 2, 3, or 4 respectively. Pawson and Tilley argue that "taken as a piece, these formal questions set a clear agenda which represents a body of theory, offering up the researcher's potential explanations for a closely circumscribed set of actions" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.173).

Pawson and Tilley's description of their example has some deficiencies that this study hoped to avoid. For instance, the authors do not discuss the scale's unbalanced nature of three possible positive responses but only one negative one. By having four possible responses, respondents are forced to answer but are not given a 'don't know' or similar option which might be more appropriate. In addition, Pawson and Tilley's scale is analysed using the mean response which is not appropriate for the data produced (Jamieson, 2004). They appear to have assumed that they have interval data. For example, they treat the difference between 'to a considerable extent' and 'to a moderate extent' as the same as between 'to a moderate extent' and 'to a slight extent'. It is not clear that this is the case or that respondents thought that it was. Measuring the mean or average response is not appropriate for a scale such as this. The

138

numbers do not represent an equidistant scale, e.g., like a Celsius thermometer, but are simply codes. A median or mode measure of central tendency would be more appropriate. Pawson and Tilley (1997) do supply a "mid-point axis" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.172) and this is valuable, for instance in showing that the prisoners responded more favourably to statements about "academic-related change" than "items relating to personal character" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.172).

The ILM participants' questionnaire was developed in a similar fashion, setting out a series of statements about ILM programme theories articulated during previous research phases. Unlike in Pawson and Tilley's (1997) example, ILM participants were offered a five-level scale: definitely agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, definitely disagree as follows. The option of 'neither agree nor disagree' was offered rather than forcing respondents to make what might be an inaccurate selection. It was thereby hoped that the survey would achieve a better response rate than a four-point scale.

Statement	☺ ☺ Definitely agree	☺ Agree	☺ Neither agree nor disagree	☹ Disagree	☹ ☹ Definitely disagree

The addition of 'smiley' and 'sad' faces was an attempt to pictorialise the possible responses for respondents who had poor literacy skills. It has been suggested that such smiley and sad faces are effective in enabling people with low to moderate learning disabilities to respond to Likert scale questions (Rojahn et al., 1994). Although there have also been suggestions that a three-point scale is more appropriate than a five-point scale for people with learning difficulties (Fang et al., 2011), the ILM respondents were unlikely to have severe learning difficulties and a five-point scale was considered appropriate for the majority of ILM participants, including any with borderline IQ or mild 'intellectual difficulties (see Hartley & MacLean, 2006).

The survey method used in this study differed from that outlined by Pawson and Tilley in another respect. Questionnaires, as discussed in the book, are

described as a preliminary exercise to a teacher-learner interview with participants. In this scenario, further interviews would be carried out to enable survey participants to reflect on their responses. That was not possible during this study. The survey was designed as a series of statements which described programme theories that were emerging from earlier phases of the research. This meant that the surveys were not ready for distribution until later in the fieldwork period and it was not possible to use them as preliminary exercises for further discussion because of limits on time and problems relating to data protection and the use of resources outlined in the discussion of gatekeepers below. Nonetheless, the aim, to develop a "conceptual structure" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, pp.170-175) in order to enable ILM participants to reflect on statements, remained broadly the same.

In order to address confidentiality and data protection issues raised by managing agents, a method of dispersal of the surveys was planned which would circumvent the author having access to names and addresses. The plan mooted was to provide packs of sealed, pre-stamped envelopes containing an information cover sheet, the survey and a pre-paid, return envelope addressed to the author at the CRESR offices at Sheffield Hallam University. In order to promote the informed consent of survey respondents, the author's university contact details were appended to the form and further information could be requested if necessary. CRESR administration staff who might answer a respondent's call were briefed about the research so that they could answer basic queries or arrange for further contact if the researcher was not present. The author offered to either attend the managing agents' premises, address the package to either home or workplace, or, if the managing agency preferred, to leave the envelopes with them for staff to label and post, thereby ensuring that the author had no access to confidential personal information.

Following discussions with project officers, none of the managing agencies undertook this last method of delivery. In Sheffield the project officer opted to have the surveys left in a box at the offices of Sheffield Futures, an organisation which ILM beneficiaries attended for job search and career advice. In order to maintain informed consent as best as possible in the circumstances, it was

explained to Sheffield Futures personnel that the surveys were voluntary and that the researcher could be contacted for further information if required. In Barnsley, the manager asked the author to contact employers for permission to pass the surveys on to beneficiaries. This was done and the pre-packaged surveys were posted to them for distribution. Again, employers were reminded that completion was voluntary and that the author could be contacted for further details. In Doncaster the managing agency required the author to give the project officer pre-packaged bundles of surveys which were then distributed to employers who then further distributed them to employees, again with additional information about the voluntary nature of participation. In Rotherham, the project officer opted to send the author sheets of printed labels of ILM beneficiaries' home addresses so that they could be attached to the pre-packaged surveys and posted on. Given issues of data protection this was a surprising choice but confidentiality and anonymity were maintained in the latter case because no record of the names and addresses was kept.

Each method of delivery carried with it technical risks and risks regarding informed consent. In all areas except Rotherham, it was the responsibility of a third party to implement the survey to required ethical standards. Some of these were employers or trainers in non-equal relations of power to the ILM participants which might negatively affect the voluntary nature of participation. In Sheffield and Doncaster there were two people in the chain, firstly a project officer, and then the final distributor, thereby making the risks even greater. In order to mitigate these, telephone contact was maintained with project officers to ensure that the surveys had reached their final destination and that ethical and validity considerations were met.

Questionnaire results were input into SPSS for electronic analysis and bar charts and tables of responses were made and analysed. The questionnaires were delivered to all of the ILM participants then in post by various means agreed with staff at the four managing agents. The key role of gatekeepers in the project as a whole, and in the various questionnaire delivery methods, is discussed in more detail below.

Gatekeepers

"Seeking the permission of gatekeepers or the support of sponsors is often an unavoidable first step in gaining access to the data" according to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995, p.74). For this study, obtaining access to the SYCON project and its participants involved engaging with a series of gatekeepers, firstly with Objective 1, moving then to the SYCON management board, the four managing agencies, project officers, other key project workers, and ILM employers. Each stage of the process presented a range of different issues relating to access to data and research subjects, and brought up a series of different ethical considerations. The following section discusses the main issues that had to be negotiated in order to carry out the research.

Objective 1 as gatekeeper

Objective 1 had a number of reasons for their participation and part-funding of this and other, related, PhD research projects. They included the following: to strengthen links between the organisation and the universities in the sub region; to facilitate prolonged study of an element of the programme that might not be possible through other research and evaluation methods; and to contribute to the overall evaluation of the Objective 1 project in a cost-effective way. The first gatekeeping activity Objective 1 undertook was to allow access to information about the range of education and training projects they had funded. In order for the research project to progress Objective 1 needed to facilitate access to a training or education project and the organisation implementing it. In turn, this organisation would need to have the capacity and resources to participate, the prospect of making progress for most of the three years of the study, and a willingness to co-operate with the author. Only a relatively small number of projects, including the SYCON programme, could satisfactorily meet these criteria.

Objective 1 personnel were extremely supportive of this study but, as Hammersley and Atkinson argue:

> *"Even the most friendly and co-operative of gatekeepers or sponsors will shape the conduct and development of the research. To one degree or another, the ethnographer will be channelled in line with*

142

existing networks of friendship and enmity, territory and equivalent 'boundaries'" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p.75).

However, the 'channelling' that Objective 1 undertook was largely benign, supportive, and enabling. As outlined in the previous chapter, the SYCON project was selected following consideration of a number of different training projects and following discussions between the research student, PhD supervisors, and Objective 1. It was becoming clear that the problems of long-term unemployment in many cases needed highly resourced, holistic solutions and that SYCON was a good example of the kind of holistic intervention that might be necessary to tackle the problem.

SYCON as gatekeeper

Once it had been decided that SYCON was an appropriate project for the study, Objective 1 undertook its final gatekeeping activity: introducing the research project to the SYCON managers. In order to progress, it was necessary to obtain the approval of the SYCON board but, in order to meet them, it was first necessary to engage with another gatekeeper, a manager who was the *de facto* chair. An Objective 1 representative organised a tripartite meeting between Objective 1, the 'chair' and the author during which the research project was outlined. That meeting led to a presentation given by the author at a SYCON board meeting at which cooperation with the research project was agreed.

As well as funding this studentship, Objective 1 was the main funder of SYCON. The ILM project would not have gone ahead in the form that it did without their backing. This might have influenced the SYCON board's decision to cooperate with the research project, but, if it did, that was never communicated to the author. However, three main concerns about the project were raised by board members at the meeting. The concerns were firstly that the proposed study might deflect hard-pressed staff from their day-to-day activities, resulting in a degraded project for beneficiaries; secondly, that the study would replicate other planned research and evaluation activities; and, thirdly, there may be problems of maintaining the confidentiality of ILM participants. In the event, the proposed research design had attempted to address these issues in a number of ways at the outset because it was envisaged by the author and his advisors that they

might be problematic areas. With reference to considerations of taking up too much staff time: firstly, interviews were planned to be carried out at a time that was most appropriate for the interviewee, particularly with ILM participants which were carried out during breaks in training. All managers decided to clear some time for interviews which were undertaken in their offices. Secondly, visits to ILM workplaces were organised to take place during project officer visits. In this way neither staff, ILM participants' nor ILM employers' time was imposed upon. With reference to the replication of other evaluations, managers agreed that the approach used in this study would not replicate those evaluations which had completely different aims. With reference to confidentiality, it was decided to ensure that all reports would anonymise all informants, that where possible locations would not be shown, and that no data on individual ILM participants would be held by the author. These measures reassured SYCON managers and the study was able to go ahead.

SYCON managers as gatekeepers

Having received the general permission of the SYCON management board the next barrier was to negotiate with individual managers for access to project officers, projects and beneficiaries in the four geographical areas. Although the gatekeepers were the same individuals who collectively made up a large part of the SYCON board, the amount of access possible in each of the four areas varied. Total and open access to project officers and participants was given in Sheffield and Rotherham; similar access was offered in Doncaster but, due to lack of staff and changes in personnel, was not wholly achieved. The manager in Barnsley was not able to fully cooperate with the project. They allowed a short time to be interviewed (30 minutes) but did not allow access to project officers and ILM participants. Towards the study's later stages, when a different manager was in post, it was possible to arrange telephone interviews with ILM employers and to deliver a survey to ILM beneficiaries in the town.

The sample of ILM participants accessed during observations at project officer meetings is therefore not representative of the whole of the SYCON project. However, the sample is the best that could be achieved at the time and was sufficient to enable this study to develop and refine CMO configurations.

Nonetheless, it was clear that a more complete sample of ILM participants was desirable and to this end, the questionnaire survey aimed to reach as many as possible in all SYCON areas.

In summary, gatekeepers played a vital role in enabling access to the research field. On the whole, appropriate access was achieved but it was not possible to gain universal across the SYCON area or over the whole period of the fieldwork element of the study.

Concluding discussion

This chapter has outlined the research design and has shown how it was informed by adopting a realistic evaluation approach. It has described the logic of the research design and the research instruments used to answer the research questions. The enabling and constraining actions of gatekeepers have been described.

It has been noted in this thesis that appropriate critical realist research methods are not fully developed. Considerable attention was paid to developing appropriate research instruments according to realist criteria. Pawson and Tilley (1997) provide an effective outline to the collection of realist data but the author is not aware of any studies of employment programmes which have been undertaken within this approach. One possible, partial exception is the Final Evaluation of StepUp (Bivand et al., 2006) which uses a similar questionnaire design which appears to be designed to develop realist data. The survey on that study contained statements such as: "The StepUp employer was supportive", "I didn't get the training I wanted", "I felt used by the employer", "The people I worked for gave me help and encouragement to find another job" and "I felt as though I was different from other workers at the company" (Bivand et al., 2006, pp.169-72). There are similarities between these statements and some of the ones used in the ILM participant survey. For example, they include: "I get enough help and support from my employer", "Training is an important part of an ILM", and "My employer treats me just like the other workers". The survey results are analysed in Chapter 7 which also outlines

some benefits of this approach, and will offer suggestions about how it can be improved.

It follows from this assessment of realist data collection that analytical techniques are also not fully developed. Data analysis for this study went through a two-stage process because the original method was considered unsuitable (see Appendix 6). A more appropriate method was identified and adapted later (see Table 11). The next chapter is an assessment of data collected from SYCON managers, funders, and ILM employers which were analysed using the method outlined in Table 11.

Chapter 6: The SYCON programme: managers, funders, and employers perspectives

Introduction

This chapter will explore a range of programme theories, "propositions about how mechanisms are fired in contexts to produce outcomes" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.85) which are explicit or implicit in the development and delivery of the SYCON ILM. It sets out the results of an assessment of a range of documents, including evaluations of ILM activities, project publicity and other dissemination materials, and applications for funding. An analysis of interview data is also presented in this chapter. Those data were collected through interviews with staff representing each of the four managing agencies and the consortium as a whole, funding organisation representatives, and ILM employers. During this chapter, an illustrative selection of programme theories are summarised as Context-Mechanism-Outcome patterns (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). It is argued that SYCON are in effect creating new social structures of employment. This chapter is an assessment of those structures, how they are created, how they are maintained, and how they interact with social structures of unemployment. The next chapter draws on observation data, interviews with ILM participants, and a survey of ILM participants to assess the effects on agents who enter these structures. The next sections outline the development of the SYCON programme, the background to its implementation, and selected outcomes.

Development of the SYCON programme

The South Yorkshire Consortium ILM was part-funded by the Objective 1 Programme for South Yorkshire (Objective 1). It received match funding from over twenty organisations, including New Deal, Employment Zones, the Coalfield Regeneration Trust, the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) and local and regional councils. SYCON managers applied for £11,193,884 from Objective 1 in 2001, to finance an ILM project that was projected to supply 2,374 ILM employment opportunities across the sub-region. However, SYCON was unable to obtain the full match funding initially envisioned, principally due to being unable to attract the full amount of SRB funding foreseen. However, SYCON did receive £8.7 million of Objective 1 grant and further match funding

which gave a total project cost of £24.9 million (Objective 1 Programme Directorate, 2008). The projected number of ILM employment opportunities was also downgraded to 1,650.

South Yorkshire sub-region

The sub-region of South Yorkshire was eligible for Objective 1 funding because the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the region fell below 75% of the average of the European Union Member States at the time (Objective 1 Programme Directorate, no date). The *Programme Complement* (Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 2000) identifies twelve "key messages" (Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 2000, pp.7-10) which show that the sub-regional economy was failing in a number of areas. Those directly relevant to this thesis include the following:

- *"There is a 'jobs gap'"*
- *"There is a 'company gap'"*
- *"The quality of jobs is poor"*
- *"The profitability of businesses is low"*
- *"The South Yorkshire economy is too dependent on industries in decline"*
- *"Skills levels and educational attainment are weak"*
- *"Many communities are suffering continued deprivation and long term unemployment" (Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 2000, pp.7-9).*

These 'key messages' show that South Yorkshire exhibited a range of structural barriers to employment which Objective 1 aimed to address. The investment was designed to counter the 'steep and relentless' economic decline which had beset the sub-region from 1979 to the mid 1990s (Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 2000). During the period in which SYCON was operational (2001 - 2004), two contextual changes are of note: firstly, overall levels of unemployment fell and, secondly, there was "increasing attention being given to the social economy" (Wells et al., 2003). As a consequence of the first change, the ILM target group changed from being almost exclusively people who were long-term unemployed, towards the inclusion of inactive groups such as those claiming Incapacity Benefit (SYCON manager). A consequence of the second change was that the conditions existed for the third sector to change the way that they operated and bid for public sector contracts. This change had the potential to result in new opportunities for ILM employment within a growing

sector. The role of ILM employers is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Objective 1 policy measures

Objective 1 drew down European Social Fund (ESF) monies to finance the programme. Altogether, Objective 1 drew resources from three European Structural Funds during the years of its operation (2000 to 2008): the ESF, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF). The Structural Funds contributed around £820,000,000 to the programme as a whole in South Yorkshire. Comparable amounts of UK public money and private funding were achieved, resulting in an Objective 1 programme total of about £2.4 billion (Fenoughty & Holmes, 2008).

The SYCON project was financed through Measure 16 'Assisting People Back into Work' of Priority 3b 'Promoting Equity, Employment and Social Inclusion'. The aim of Measure 16 was, "to reduce and prevent long-term unemployment by active labour market policies, which assist the unemployed and economically inactive back into work" (Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 2000, p.66). The measure had three objectives:

- *To stem the flow of people becoming long-term unemployed*

- *To provide labour market entry programmes for those already long term unemployed, and*

- *To provide specific help to those at a disadvantage in the labour market including those who are economically inactive (Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 2000, p.66).*

It is instructive to consider the rationale for Measure 16 in the light of Levitas's (2005) critique of discourses of social exclusion (see chapter 3 below for a full discussion). For instance, it states that "the high proportion of economically inactive people and of long-term unemployed within South Yorkshire is a significant barrier to growth" (Levitas, 2000, p.66). This implies that those 'most affected' by low economic performance are to blame for their own predicament: rather than being a product of a poor economic performance the unemployed

and economically inactive are constructed as a 'regulatory community' (Rodger, 2008) as a 'significant barrier to growth'. In Levitas's (2005) terms the rationale appears to be related to the moral underclass discourse (MUD).

Measure 16 did support some labour market demand-side solutions. These included wage subsidies, support to improve labour market access such as dependent care access programmes, and transport access programmes 'as part of ESF funded projects' (Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 2000, p.66). However, the addition of the rider 'as part of an ESF funded project' indicates that these were not solutions in themselves but actions to support other projects or activities. The main thrust of the Measure 16 was to support supply-side activities such as skills training; employability programmes; enhanced guidance, counselling, information and assessment provision; and counselling support and one-to-one guidance for those most excluded from the labour market (Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 2000, p.67). The measure clearly supported ILM activities and it is a sign of the holistic nature of ILMs that they address many of the thirteen 'eligible actions' such as: work placements, interview guarantee schemes and work tasters; counselling support and one-to-one guidance for those most excluded from the labour market; skills training; employability programmes; and, of course, intermediate labour market initiatives (Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 2000, p.67)

Priority 3b aimed to promote social inclusion, and by implication, combat social exclusion. It was focused on remedying perceived deficiencies in individuals rather than structural problems: "in particular, support needs to be customised to the circumstances of individuals and the position they are in, in terms of distance from active labour market participation" (Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 2000, p.66). Levitas (2005, p.25) argues that the discourses of social exclusion that she identifies[70] are "ideal types". Most public discourses of social exclusion are couched in more than one of the 'types' and

---

[70] The redistributionist discourse (RED), the moral underclass discourse (MUD), and the social integrationist discourse (SID)

150

the Programme Complement was no exception. As well as implying MUD, the explanation of Measure 16 in the Programme Complement was also couched in SID, a social integrationist discourse "which stresses the integrative function of paid work" (Levitas, 2005, p.22)[71]:

> "The Measure will support actions which focus on the five individual components of employability outlined in the SPD. The five components are: extent of transferable skills, motivation to seek work and training, mobility in seeking work and training, access to information and networks and personal barriers to work and training" Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 2000, p.66).

To summarise the brief section above, the rationale of Measure 16 (Priority 3b) was confused because it implied a causal relationship between low employability skills and the failing economy in which the former (low employability skills) were a contributory factor in causing the latter (the failing economy). It is unlikely that any of the structural failings outlined in the Programme Compliment's "key messages" (Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 2000, pp.7-10) will be addressed by labour market supply-side interventions. For example, one of the 'five components' of employability is 'motivation to seek work and training'. The motivation of individuals might be increased if there are good jobs, with adequate pay and conditions available in sustainable sectors. Nor does it seem likely that moving into a 'poor job' will promote social inclusion. Stewart (2007, p.529), argues that "a low wage job does not augment a person's human capital significantly more than unemployment". However, Layard (2004, p1) argues that "when jobs are to hand, we should insist that unemployed people take them", arguing further that "where there is low pay, the correct response is in-work benefits". This appears to chime with the main thrust of policy over the past 20 years (see the discussion in Chapter 3).

The SYCON model of implementation
Thus, SYCON was developed within a Measure which aimed to focus on "increasing individual employability through curative and preventative actions"

---

[71] Given that Levitas shows that the origins of this discourse are in the growing importance to Britain of European Union (EU) debates about social exclusion (see for example Levitas, 2005, pp.21-26), it is perhaps not surprising that the EU funded Objective 1 programme should adopt it

and to "move individuals incrementally to a position where they can enter and sustain themselves within the open labour market" (Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 2000, p.66).

Chapter 2 described three Types of ILM model of operation. The author will refer to the typology during this chapter and it is reproduced in Table 12 for clarity.

Table 12: Three Types of ILMs (copy of Table 2, Chapter 2)

Type	Feature	Potential ILM priority
Type 1	• This type of ILM is based on the Wise Group model • ILM employment provided in wholly owned subsidiary organisations. • Earn a proportion of their income from selling goods or services Might contract with statutory organisations • Will address a market failure by providing a needed service which would otherwise not be available to residents	• The focus might be on training ILM participants to become skilled at providing organisation-specific goods or services • Another focus might be on delivering the service, possibly at the expense of moving the ILM participant into the wider labour market
Type 2	• This type of ILM is a hybrid between the Wise and Works models • ILM employment provided in Social enterprises, either newly formed or longer-standing, but which is a separate entity to the managing agency. • Possibly earn a proportion of their income from selling goods or services. Might contract with statutory organisations	• The focus might be on training ILM participants to become skilled at providing organisation-specific goods or services • Employers might be focused on building the capacity of their organisation rather than moving participants on
Type 3	• This type of ILM is based on the Works model • ILM employment provided in partner organisations • ILM employer partners usually based in the third sector but not necessarily so. Could be private or public sector	• The focus should be on tackling barriers affecting participation in the wider labour market. • Should aim to move people on.

152

Although one SYCON manager stated that the ILMs in their locality were "the same as all the others", meaning that SYCON had a uniform model of implementation. However, that was not the case. SYCON was not one single model of implementation; rather it incorporated all three Types. The *Business Prospectus* (SYCON, 2001) makes this clear. It shows that each of the four different managing agencies which made up SYCON[72], "operates its own particular ILM programme, has responsibility for domestic match funding for its programmes, and its own contractual relationships with ILM employers" (SYCON, 2001, p.11). Before SYCON started operations, there were different models of ILM implementation operating in each of the four locations (Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, and Sheffield). These were incorporated into SYCON when that programme commenced. Each of the ILM programmes which pre-existed SYCON are outlined below.

In Barnsley two models of implementation had been used since ILMs started there in 1999: a 'Jobs Pool' model and a 'single employer' model (SYCON, 2001, pp.20-22). In the Jobs Pool model, ILM participants were 'pooled'; supplied to ILM employers by 'second-tier' managing agents who managed features such as the recruitment and training of ILM participants. However, the workplace activities were managed by the employer. 'Single employer' ILMs recruited and trained ILM participants and also managed workplace activities. In either of these cases, ILMs could have been any of the three Types but were mostly Type 2. The main aim of the Barnsley model was to increase the capacity of third sector organisations.

In Doncaster prior to SYCON, ILMs had been Type 2: designed to build the capacity of 'start up' "community enterprises" (SYCON, 2001, p.23). Evaluation of this activity found that

> *"it would be more effective for the ILM element to be not so closely linked to the establishment of new community enterprises. New*

---

[72] Sheffield's Centre for Full Employment, Barnsley Development Agency, Phoenix Enterprises (Rotherham), and Doncaster Chamber of Commerce

153

community enterprises are seeking self-sustainability and there can be issues around them not moving people into the open labour market as quickly as perhaps they might" (SYCON, 2001, p.23, original emphasis).

Therefore, when SYCON started in Doncaster, Type 2 ILMs which utilised existing, rather than new community enterprises were implemented, and new Type 3 ILMs developed

In Rotherham, the ILM model was described as "building on the model developed by Glasgow Works and Glasgow Wise in Scotland" (SYCON, 2002, p26). This is unhelpful because the Works and Wise models are quite different models of implementation (see Chapter 2). All three Types of ILMs were developed in Rotherham during the lifetime of SYCON.

Sheffield had a longer history of running ILMs than the three other centres: there had been ILMs in the city since 1994. Sheffield ILMs had been developed on the Works model; they were mostly Type 3 ILMs with employment being undertaken in third sector organisations. Thus, there had been different approaches to the development of ILMs in the four SYCON areas. The SYCON programme did not seek to develop a single sub-regional model; rather it provided a framework for the implementation of existing models to be extended. Nonetheless, a set of "common characteristics" (SYCON, 2001, p.8) was outlined. SYCON ILMs were to be:

> *"full time, supervised, paid, temporary jobs with planned and supported vocational training through work, with time off allowed for attending and meeting the requirements of accredited vocational training and industry specific training courses. The jobs come with an entitlement of Employee Led Development (ELD) funding"* (SYCON, 2001, p.8)

SYCON ILMs were therefore paid jobs with a large element of learning provision. However, some ILM 'Jobs Pool-type' ILM projects would be better described as 'placements'. These were essentially training programmes with a large element of work experience built in. This type of approach was adopted in deferent employment sectors, including construction, ICT, and administration. Relevant characteristics of SYCON ILMs will be assessed in the main body of

154

this chapter. The next section describes selected outcomes from the programme which are included here for context.

Table 13 reveals that a total of 2,318 ILM participants were recruited, just short of the original target which was predicted to be achieved with more funding.

Table 13: Total beneficiary numbers per managing agency

Managing Agency	Number	Percentage
Barnsley Development Agency	400	17.2
Centre for Full Employment (Sheffield)	941	40.6
Doncaster Chamber	335	14.5
Phoenix Enterprises (Rotherham)	642	27.7
Total	**2318**	**100**

Source: SYCON monitoring information

Forty per cent of beneficiaries were recruited in the Sheffield area and almost 28 per cent in Rotherham. It was noted in the previous chapter that Doncaster and Barnsley managing agencies had fewer resources available and the difference in recruitment numbers possibly reflects this. The percentages in Sheffield and Barnsley closely match the population ratio of those two areas when compared with the population of South Yorkshire as a whole (41% and 17.5% respectively). However, on this measure, Rotherham over-performs (19% of the population) and Doncaster under-performs (22.5% of the population) (Governement Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 1999). Other reasons for the differences could be relate to the characteristics of the target group population in those areas, for example the ratios of long term unemployed people compared to the population as a whole. However, it was not the purpose of this study to identify reasons for these macro project outcomes. As noted earlier, an independent consultant was appointed to address these issues. They are presented here for contextual information. Similarly, Table 14 shows output data for a number of outputs (the sex of participants, ethnicity, age group, disability and whether a lone parent or ex offender) which are presented for contextual reasons.

155

Table 14: SYCON output data

Characteristic	Numbers	Percent
Female	725	31
Male	1593	69
(Self-certified) disabled	139	6
Lone Parents	69	3
Ex offenders	92	4
White UK	1898	81.9
Ethnic minority groups (336 of whom are from Sheffield Managing Agency)	420	19.1
18-24 year old	1503	64.8
25-49 year old	688	29.7
50 years +	127	5.5

Source: SYCON monitoring information

SYCON job outcomes

Table 15 shows the immediate destinations of ILM participants at the end of the project:

Table 15: Total SYCON ILM immediate destinations upon leaving the programme

Immediate destination	Number	Percentage
Full-time employment	913	39.4
Part-time employment	102	4.4
Self-employment	15	0.7
Voluntary work	33	1.4
FE or training	130	5.6
Unemployment	796	34.3
Other destination (e.g. maternity, sickness, left area, not on JSA, prison)	114	4.9
Not known	215	9.3
Total	**2318**	**100**

Source: SYCON monitoring information

Table 15 shows that 1,030, or 44.4 per cent of total beneficiaries, went into full-time, part-time or self-employment immediately after leaving the project. The external evaluation of SYCON (ECOTEC, 2004) proposed that a similar percentage of destination 'not known' beneficiaries could be assumed to have also entered employment. This method would add a further 96 people to the total entering paid employment[73] which would give an overall estimate of 1,126,

---

[73] 215 x 44.4% = 95.5

156

or 48.6 per cent of beneficiaries in jobs immediately after leaving the project. Leaving aside any validity problems that might arise from assuming that the 'not known' beneficiaries might have actually gone into employment rather than to some other destination, the total percentage into jobs is far less that the percentage foreseen at the start of the project: 48.6 per cent compared with 60 per cent forecast in the SYCON *Business Prospectus* (SYCON, 2001). The external evaluation (ECOTEC, 2004) did not adequately address this issue. However, it is interesting that this large, well funded employment project, which was managed and staffed by experienced and expert ILM personnel, failed to achieve its predicted percentage of people into jobs.

While it is interesting that it did not fully achieve its expected outcomes on this measure, from a realistic evaluation or critical realist perspective it is not surprising. Nor is it necessarily a reflection of the quality of the SYCON intervention. SYCON's projection of moving 60 per cent of their long term unemployed beneficiaries into jobs was not drawn from the experience of SYCON members, each of whom was managing at least one, and often more ILM projects at the time of the SYCON bid. The figure was drawn instead from Marshall and Macfarlane's (2000) report. SYCON managers noted that;

> *"In setting the target of 60% of beneficiaries achieving job outcomes we are reflecting the benchmark established in the [Marshall and Macfarlane] Joseph Rowntree Foundation report – this and the comparable cost of our programme to the 37 programmes surveyed, suggests that it is reasonable to take Marshall and Macfarlane's conclusions on performance as applicable to the SYCON programme". (SYCON, 2001, p.15)*

This suggests that the predicted outcome is based on SYCON's similarity with the ILMs outlined in the report. Clearly, given that SYCON is an ILM, there will be similarities with some of the interventions studied but there will also be differences. Pawson and Tilley (1997) remind us that:

> *"If one simply relies on observable similarities and differences between projects, decisions about replication, replicability and generalization become no more than a matter of taste: advocates and critics can in an unfettered way pick and choose cases to suit their arguments" (Pawson and Tilley, 1997, p.133)*

In addition, the benchmark of 60 per cent suggested by Marshall and Macfarlane is itself an estimate. The writers arrived at the figure by discounting the results of a "minority of cases where the full ILM package [...] does not seem to be fully operational" (Marshall and Macfarlane, 2000, p.41). In addition, the job outcome rate appears to be based on projected figures for job outcomes from ILM programmes surveyed rather than actual job outcomes (Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000, pp.40-41) and these may or may not have been achieved. There is little reason to assume that SYCON would have similar outcomes to the suggested "benchmark". The assumption that it would do so ignores, amongst other things, the widely different contexts in which SYCON and all the ILMs surveyed were situated.

Developing programme theories

Developing 'realistic' programme theories can be problematic. For example Farrington (1998), responding to a criticism of his 'Communities That Care' research design, argued that Pawson and Tilley's "proposal to study a large number of context-mechanism-outcome [CMO] configurations seems essentially a correlational design, with all the attendant problems in such designs of inferring causality and excluding plausible alternative explanations" (Farrington, 1998, p.208). He adds that Pawson and Tilley "seem more interested in developing and testing theories (or more accurately, testing specific hunches) than in evaluating a prevention technology" (Farrington, 1998, p.208). This point of view has an element of justification, 'testing hunches' is likely to be of little value, especially if one is starting out from a state of not knowing anything about an intervention. But evaluators of social programmes are likely to have some understanding of previous programmes or similar approaches from which to garner programme theories. Pawson and Tilley (1997, p.115) observe that "if a cardinal purpose of evaluations is to feed into improvements in policy and practice, they ... need to be oriented to cumulation". Thus CMO configurations are aimed at refining existing programme theories rather than testing hunches.

Nonetheless, the problem of where to start with CMO configurations remains. One useful place is an existing evaluation, tentative CMO configurations can be

drawn in the first instance from meta-evaluations of previous studies (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, pp.148-150). Pawson and Tilley are somewhat sceptical about the value of this approach, although they do observe that:

> *"It is possible to envisage a form of 'realistic meta-evaluation' which would be directed at those broader explanatory ends [CMO configurations]. It would involve combing through evaluation studies looking for clues as to possible CMO configurations and seeking prospects for testing them ex post facto" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.149)*

The writers' scepticism about the value of such meta-evaluations is provoked by what they saw as a shortage of examples of realistic meta-evaluations and their overarching mistrust of experimental, or quasi-experimental, methodologies[74] which they argue are "ordinarily used to drive meta-evaluations" (Pawson & Tilley, p.149). However, "even the most outcome-fixated studies do contain *implicit* and *fragmentary* hypotheses about CMO configurations" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.149). Notwithstanding Pawson and Tilley's reticence, the following sections develop tentative CMO configurations from McGregor et al.'s (1997) study of the Wise Group (1997).

McGregor et al.'s (1997) study of the Wise Group is also useful for highlighting issues relating to the 'transferability' or replication of programmes discussed earlier in this chapter. For example, they imply that unseen generative mechanisms might be at work when they argue that "the success of the programme may reflect ... features of the programme which are difficult to identify and so may be lost in the transfer" (McGregor, et al., 1997, p.18). Although they refer to 'features of the programme', the writers do allude to the "reasons and resources to enable program participants to change" (Pawson & Tilley, op. cit., p.215) when they suggest other examples of contextual differences that might affect replication such as "the quality of the staff" and "particular circumstances of the operating locality" (McGregor et al., op. cit., p.18).

---

[74] The writers argue that "experimentalists have pursued too single-mindedly the question of whether a program works at the expense of knowing why it works" (Pawson & Tilley, p.xv)

159

The researchers highlighted a number of differences between Glasgow Wise and the transferred programme in Newham. They include the different funding partnership relationships which were prevalent in the two areas, and, although not specifically related to transferability by the writers, differences in aspects such as the period of employment and recruitment to the programme (McGregor et al., 1997, p.38) and in community consultation prior to regeneration work being carried out (ibid., pp.30-31). They also highlight other differences: including differences in the employed status that ILM participants in the two areas preferred.

McGregor et al. found that, during the three years covered by their survey, ILM participants in Newham increasingly opted to remain on 'benefit plus' rather than to move onto a waged option, whilst those in Glasgow preferred the latter. 'Benefit plus' was when ILM participants received their normal benefits plus, at the time, an extra £10.00 per week rather than a wage. 'Benefit plus' allowed ILM participants to maintain their entitlement to a range of benefits that they might not have been able to receive if they took the waged option, thus avoiding the 'benefits trap' that might occur if they undertook paid work. The researchers identified the higher cost of housing in Newham and the concomitant higher housing benefit entitlement when compared to Glasgow as a contributing factor to the different rates of people opting for benefit plus. Older workers were also more likely to take this option in Newham rather than younger workers, "reflecting their greater household responsibilities and the higher associated benefits" (McGregor et al., 1997, p.20).

McGregor et al. (1997) had therefore outlined a theory about why ILM participants opted for benefits plus rather than a waged option. It is summarised in Table 16

Table 16: 'Benefits plus' CMO

Context	Mechanism	Outcome
Newham residents with relatively high housing costs	Option to stay on 'benefits plus' offered rather than a wage	Participants engage with the ILM programme

160

The identification of the theory enabled Wise Group managers to implement different 'employment status' models as appropriate. For example, in the 'original' model, Glasgow Wise workers were paid 'benefit plus' during an eight-week induction period so that they did not lose entitlement if they found the ILM unsuitable, but were transferred to a waged option for the remainder of the programme, up to 44 weeks. In order to ensure that the programme could recruit from the target client group in Newham, the 'benefit plus' period was extended to six months with the option either to transfer to a waged option or to stay on 'benefit plus' for the remainder of the contract. Interestingly, when the Glasgow model was transferred to Motherwell the induction period was reduced to four weeks, allowing for 48 weeks of waged employment (McGregor et al., 1997, p.11).

Although there were differences between the implementation of the Wise ILM model in Newham and Glasgow, there were similar employment rate outcomes between the two programmes (McGregor et al., op. cit., pp.40-46). The researchers concluded that "the broad message is that the base model has transferred well" (ibid., p.21). However, whilst the writers suggest that the model can successfully be transferred, contexts that are external to the programme are shown to have had an effect on the model. In order for the programme to continue, the model was changed. That is to say, rather than it being the same project being replicated in a new area, it was a programme that was altered to suit different contexts. The outcomes might be similar in many respects, but the "conducive circumstances" (Pawson & Tilley, op. cit., p.215) in which those outcomes were produced were different.

The 'conducive circumstances' might not be immediately apparent to empirical research but can be identified "through the practical and theoretical work of the social sciences" (Bhaskar, 1989, p.2). The next sections discuss the exploration of SYCON programme theories.

Developing SYCON programme theories

The main focus of the following sections is the development of the SYCON intermediate labour market, in the sense of the 'market for intermediate labour'

rather than its usual meaning of a project or programme[75]. Bhaskar (1989) observes that social structures always pre-exist us and while that is true for over-arching structures such as capitalism, new structures are developed which, although they exist within the 'over-arching ones', are newly created. For some theorists this development of new social structures is not possible because "there is a persistent assumption among social scientists that of **social structure** refers to the structure of an entity, that entity can be nothing other than **society as a whole** (Elder-Vass, 2007, original emphases). Elder-Vass (2007) uses the term 'social entity' to differentiate between such specific types of social structure and the 'social whole' of society. In relation to social entities, he observes that "specific types of social entity with identifiable human members and characteristic types of relations between them have causal efficacy. Those types of social entities are organisations and normative communities" (Elder-Vass, 2007, p.467). Similarly, Danermark, et al., (1997) argue that:

> *"Structures not only refer to macro conditions, despite the fact that much of social science literature gives that impression. We can analyse social structures at all levels and in any area: organization structures, small group structures, the social structures of the dyad or tryad, the structures of street life, communication structures, linguistic structures, personality structures, and so on" (Danermark, et al., 1997, p.47))*

Thus, the 'market for intermediate labour' is a specific type of social structure or 'social entity'. The construction of the SYCON market for intermediate labour is assessed in the sections that follow.

The SYCON *Business Prospectus* (SYCON, 2001) describes ILMs as:

> *"A bridge that enable long term unemployed people to move from benefit dependency to employment in the mainstream economy. ILMs offer long term unemployed, disadvantaged, and economically inactive individuals jobs within Voluntary and Community sector (Third Sector) organisations, or employers in other sectors where appropriate, for a period of up to one year. ILM jobs are real jobs, with developed terms and conditions of employment and a real*

---

[75] The phrase "the market for intermediate labour" is used when it is necessary to differentiate between 'the market' and 'ILM'

wage, delivering work of genuine social value. ILM jobs are full time and include time for relevant vocational training and Employee Led Development activity. ILM workers are able to acquire the skills and confidence to compete effectively in the job market, and are able to apply for jobs from a position of already being in employment" (SYCON, 2001, p.2)

Many of those features of ILM operation outlined in the quote above have been discussed in previous chapters. Nonetheless, it is worth rehearsing these important points again prior to the analysis that follows. The quote is unambiguous about the status of participation in the SYCON ILM as a 'real job'. It was contracted and full-time. Although ILMs have mostly been situated in the voluntary and community sector, there was a possibility that other, unspecified, sectors could be appropriate as long as the work is 'of genuine social value'. The target group is clearly identified: long-term unemployed, disadvantaged, and economically inactive individuals who were to move closer to the mainstream labour market, away from 'benefit dependency', a phrase with more than a hint of Moral Underclass Discourse (Levitas, 2005), towards employability. Time should be allowed out of the working week for relevant training and personal development. ILM participants should gain skills and confidence and 'are able to apply for jobs from a position of already being in employment.' This was a key point, reiterated many times during the fieldwork. It was clear from this that the notion that an ILM is a 'real job' was important for SYCON managers. This conception of ILMs is assessed in more detail below.

SYCON ILM as a real job

Low (2001, p.202), himself a SYCON board member, observed that he and his colleagues who deliver ILM programmes, "constantly have to answer the question: are these real jobs and are they sustainable?" He notes further that he "would welcome a debate about what are real and sustainable jobs" (low, 2001, p.203). The next sections of this chapter contribute to part of that debate.

The notion that an ILM is a 'real job' was reiterated many times by SYCON managers. There were a number of reasons given, including the view that it is easier to get a mainstream labour market job if you are applying from the position of already being in a job. The following typifies that point of view:

163

"The real crucial element of the ILM is that overnight it is easier to get a job if you have a job. What happens to these people is that they have employment on their CV and they are looking for a job having gone from a job and are therefore much more likely to be interviewed by employers who look very differently at people in work" (SYCON manager)

As Table 17 shows, a first, tentative 'real job' CMO configuration can be drawn from this statement. This CMO configuration will be further developed later in this chapter.

Table 17: Tentative, preliminary 'real job' CMO configuration

Context	Mechanism	Outcome
Long-term unemployed person without a recent history of employment	Now has an ILM job	Employer sees that someone else has employed this person so they must be OK

The claim that 'overnight it is easier to get a job if you have a job' underestimates the normative function if ILMs. In order to become 'employable' ILM participants enter into a market for intermediate labour which is designed to change their behaviour and attitudes. The claim (that 'overnight it is easier to get a job if you have a job') also implies that employers tend to discriminate against people who are disengaged from the labour market. That issue is addressed in the sections below, followed by an assessment of the ways in which ILMs are constructed to create the conditions for changes in attitudes and behaviour to occur.

Although evidence is unclear about the effects of employers' negative attitudes to unemployed people *per se* (Atkinson and Williams, 2003), when considering attitudes to long-term unemployed target groups, "attitudes harden and willingness to recruit diminishes" (Atkinson & Williams, 2003, p.16). Meager and Metcalf (1988) conclude that "the LTU [long-term unemployed] were at risk of rejection simply because they were LTU in at least half the jobs studied (and a higher proportion of the more 'senior' jobs)" (Meager & Metcalf, 1988, p.18). But there are differences in the type of employer and their location. The writers suggest that "the LTU are recruited more readily by large employers, by

164

employers in high unemployment areas and to lower skilled jobs" (Meager & Metcalf, 1988, p.18).

Numbers of long-term unemployed reduced during the period of the SYCON ILM, following a trend that had started prior to its inception (Office for National Statistics, 2006, p.31). However, evidence of 'hidden unemployment' emerged (for example, Beatty & Fothergill, 1999; Beatty, et al., 2000; Beatty et al., 2007). That understanding of labour market disengagement, coupled with an increase in the number of jobs available (Office for National Statistics, 2006, p.6), tended to shift policy attention towards facilitating the employment or re-employment of 'inactive' people, for example those claiming Incapacity Benefits (Wells et al., 2003). There are fewer studies on employer attitudes to this set of claimants than there are for other long-term unemployed individuals. For example, Atkinson and Williams (2003) did not specifically include Incapacity Benefit claimants in their "key groups of disadvantaged jobseekers" (Atkinson & Williams, pp.12-21). In fact they explicitly excluded people "living with a disability" (ibid., p.12) from their review. When employer attitudes to people with a disability or claiming Incapacity Benefit have been assessed, they tend to find that there are added layers of issues which employers find difficult to deal with (see, for example, FMR Research, 2006; Rowlingson and Berthoud, 1996).

Rennie (1999) showed that the attitudes and behaviours which employers required job seekers to exhibit were 'reliability, honesty, time keeping, work ethic, communication, motivation, willingness to learn' (see Chapter 3). Similarly, Figure 7 shows the relative importance for employers of a set of selection criteria the last time they recruited. This data is rather dated now, it was published in Meager and Metcalf (1988), although it is reproduced here from a later publication (Atkinson & Williams, 2003, p.9). Nonetheless, it is of value. A total of 706 responses were ranked by employers recruiting for "all occupations, but ... predominantly towards the bottom of the occupational hierarchy" (ibid., p.9) and therefore for the type of entry-level employment that ILM participants might be expected to move into.

Figure 7: Relative importance of selection criteria
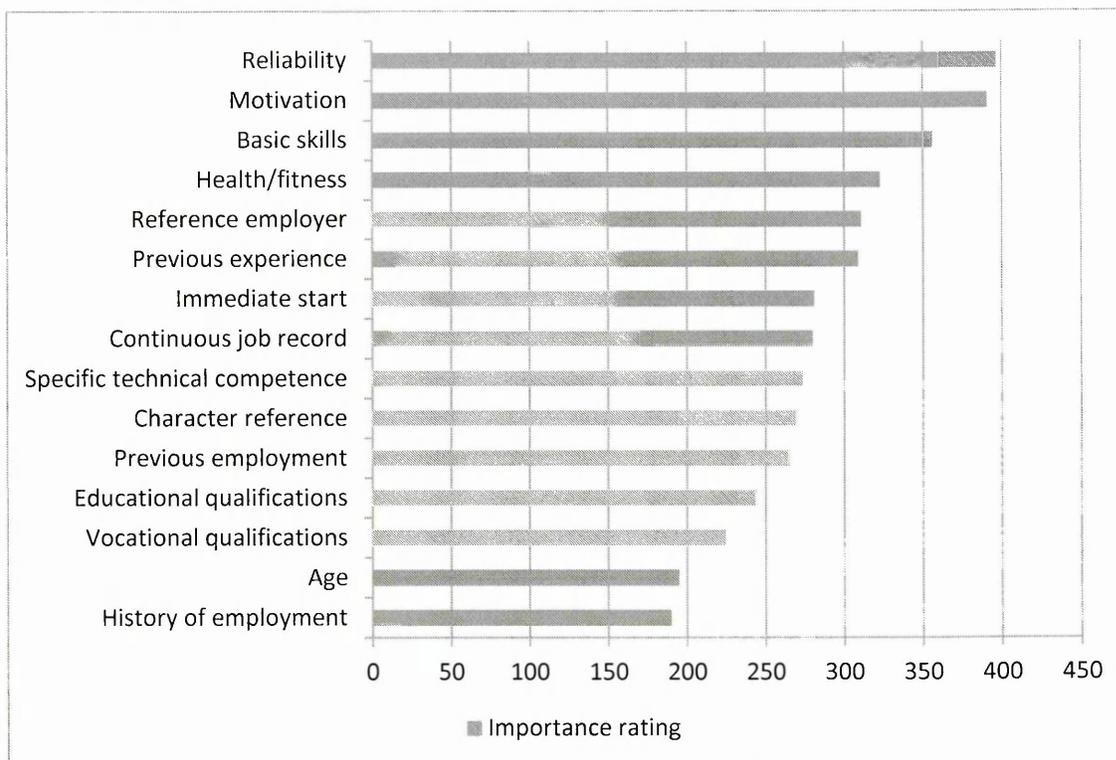
Source: Adapted from Atkinson & Williams (2003, p.9)

The attributes of reliability and motivation are ranked highest in importance. If employers are recruiting from a pool of people who are unknown to them, evidence of those criteria would need to come from a third party, probably in the form of a character or employment reference. History of employment, previous employment, and continuous job record, all factors that might affect longer-term unemployed or inactive people come lower down the list but, paradoxically, 'reference from employer' is higher.

Atkinson et al. (1996) suggest that the recruitment of people who have longer spells of unemployment is seen to be a greater risk by employers than recruiting those with shorter spells. Employers might take the view that long-term unemployed people or others who have not participated for some time have either never learnt the necessary skills and attitudes or have forgotten them. Keep and James (2010, p12) propose that "employers in general may be overstating the importance they place on personal skills and characteristics in the R&S [recruitment and selection] decision-making process". Nonetheless, decisions need to be made and some sort of sifting process will be required.

166

Nonetheless, employers clearly require evidence of a range of characteristics during the recruitment process and ILMs offer disadvantaged people a means of securing evidence of the attributes that employers appear to value (notwithstanding Keep and James' proviso). By taking some of the risk out of recruitment, ILM participants can apply for a job and demonstrate similar credentials as other applicants who are either in work or have recently become unemployed. Table 18 formalises this 'risk-reduction' CMO:

Table 18: Risk reduction CMO

Context	Enabling mechanism	Outcome
ILM worker applying for job	Has relevant work experience for CV	
	Has an employer's reference	
	Has work-related skills	Achieves an interview

In summary, employers will have a range of different criteria by which they select and recruit employees. One of the key SYCON programme theories was that it is easier to get a job if you are in work than if you are not. Therefore SYCON took a number of covert and overt measures to help ensure that ILM workplaces were like a 'real job'. These are assessed in the sections that follow.

How is the SYCON ILM status as a 'real job' reinforced?

This section assesses how the status of an ILM as a real job is reinforced in the SYCON programme. A SYCON manager explained that the ILM's status as a real job was reinforced throughout a person's participation: "we try, as far as we can, to always refer to it by the job title, rather than refer to it as a programme or an ILM or anything like that". It will be shown in Chapter 7 that this was not always successfully accomplished, but the aim was that participants 'learn' that ILMs are 'real jobs' through an early socialisation process. The learning process started prior to ILM employment as prospective ILM participants applied for advertised ILM jobs through an open, competitive recruitment process. This recruitment process aimed to reflect the process in the wider labour market. It was seen as incentivising participants:

"the employed status of ILM participants, coupled to the morale boost resulting from the fact that ILM participants gain employment through competitive interview, offers a big incentive to the participant to attend and complete the programme" (SYCON, 2001, p.6).

In order to reinforce the competitive nature of ILM jobs, SYCON aimed to have three candidates for every ILM vacancy (SYCON, 2001, p.7). However, "the number of jobs developed [would] exceed the number of places available through the programme" (ibid., p.9). In other words, there would be more ILM opportunities available than candidates to fill them. While this aimed to increase the amount of competition from employers for ILM recruits (SYCON, 2001) it did ensure that competition for places was not as fierce as in the wider labour market and the risks of not getting an ILM job were minimised.

As well as those essentially 'covert' processes, overt measures to try to ensure that ILM employment approximated to a 'real job' were also taken. These included that ILM participants were paid a wage, one of the purposes of which was to encourage "self reliance, in order to break the cycle of dependency" (SYCON, 2001, p4). This wage also differentiated ILMs from 'schemes'. For example, when asked about the potential of 'benefits plus' rather than a wage to attract ILM participants who may have been concerned about coming off benefits (see McGregor, et al., 1997), one manager argued:

> *"I actually think the evidence speaks for itself really, purely and simply because of the uptake of the ILM programme. For instance, up until October last year [2001] when New Deal people were not able to access any short, waged employment, the programme was very 'bitty bobby' and very few interested parties - although, ETF [Environmental Task Force] in [location] was seen as last chance saloon, and that these are the people that fail elsewhere – there was a very, very low success rate on the ETF programme. Now they have a lot of people who have come from the ETF programme, have gone into the ILM programme who are sustaining their employment, attending every day and people are actually clamouring to come onto the ILM because it's waged. And I think that actually speaks for itself" (SYCON manager).*

However, it is not clear that 'the evidence speaks for itself'. For example, the contexts were clearly different: if potential beneficiaries viewed the ETF option as 'a last chance saloon' (the interviewee was airing practitioners' views of it), then that in itself might have accounted for the lack of recruits rather than the

168

employed status of participants. Nonetheless, the status of an ILM as a 'real job' was reinforced in a number of ways for ILM participants, such as that it was always referred to by its title, it was paid work, and there was an open, competitive recruitment process.

The SYCON 'market for intermediate labour' was constructed to meet the needs of employers in the wider labour market. It was proposed that this would be done "through the strategising of the development of particular types of job (i.e. childcare), and by building in specific employer needs to some jobs (i.e. specific IT skills, facilitating work tasters)" (SYCON, 2001, p.5). Paradoxically, when considering the evaluation of such ILMs in Doncaster (see the earlier sections of this chapter), it was also proposed that SYCON would "contribute to the development of the 'social economy' [because] encouraging the development of new community enterprises helps to stimulate the local economy and promote entrepreneurial skills" (SYCON, 2001, p.6). The third sector was "an umbrella for projects that cover a variety of other growth sectors, e.g. retail, IT, horticulture, and childcare" (ibid., p.10). In this context it is interesting to see Low (2001) argue that:

> "A rethink of what is regarded as a 'real job' is long overdue. I suggest that the skills and experience associated with jobs in the Third sector, as well as their duration, compare favourably with jobs in other sectors" (Low, 2001, p.191).

There was clearly an intention to design a SYCON 'market for intermediate labour' which was effectively a replication of the social structures of employment in the wider labour market. Despite that intention, there was a great deal of pressure from stakeholders to focus more on 'the real labour market', by which they invariably meant the private and, occasionally, the public sector. For example, there was a view amongst some funders that "there is a definite need to move towards a more employer focused programme which is more focused on the real labour market rather than the vol/com sector" (ECOTEC, 2005, p.61). ECOTEC's report stated further that a funder representative argued that there "was a need for the programme to 'move out of its comfort zone of the more traditional areas' to engage private and public sector organisations such as the health service" (ECOTEC, 2005, p.61). The report's writers found that:

169

"increasing the involvement of both public and private sector providers is something that the programme will concentrate on in the future, though there are differences in emphasis on the degree to which this will be the case on the part of the different managing agents" (ECOTEC, 2005, p.67).

The main impetus for the suggestion that there should be an increased focus on private and public sector ILM employment appears to be motivated by a desire to make ILMs more like a 'real job' in the real labour market. That point of view diminishes the work of third sector organisations which operate within a real labour market and were increasingly delivering public services and operating in a competitive environment at the time of the report and are even more so now (Davies, 2011).

The evaluation of the SYCON Transitional Labour Market, the project which followed this ILM, also recommended that there should be "increased engagement with private sector employers," (Milburn, Trinnaman, La Court, 2008, p.65) which indicates that there has been continuing pressure to do so but some difficulty in putting the aim into practice. Some stakeholders apparently hold the view that private sector ILM employment is a key mechanism for enhancing the employability skills which participants need in the wider labour market. To be clear, these recommendations are to engage private sector organisations as ILM employers, not necessarily as ultimate employers of ILM participants. The next section assesses the extent to which there was support for such a focus on the private sector from SYCON managers.

Third, public, private: does sector matter?
This section considers what might be called the 'private sector' mechanism. One important feature of an ILM job is that it delivers 'work of a genuine social value' or of 'community benefit' (Rennie, 1999, 2001; SYCON, 2001). This was evident when it was noted that ILM jobs "can enable individuals to feel a sense for pride in the work they do due its direct and evident social value" (SYCON, 2001, p.6). Other important features are that the work should be "additional" (Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000) and of good quality. SYCON proposed that the ILM opportunities should not have been "core to the running of the third sector

organisation" and should "not be designed to provide low level labour for organisations that is of little or no benefit to individuals (SYCON, 2001, p.8). It is not clear that those stipulations can always be met by private employers. However, on the whole, managers thought that the trend towards private and public sector ILM employers and the principle of carrying out work of social value were compatible. One manager, for instance, argued that "the very nature of 'work' is a social activity in my book". By this they appeared to mean that "working within the community means that participants come into contact with other community members" (SYCON, 2001, p.6) regardless of sector.

Managers explained that they were expanding into both the private and public sectors. But such a move was not without its difficulties. For instance, taking public sector ILMs as an example, non-teaching assistant ILMs were developed by SYCON, as was an ICT technician ILM in a sub-regional university. This latter ILM was training people to either work in the university itself, or in schools which, at the time, were expanding their IT resources but did not have, nor could they afford, a permanent ICT technician. That was a 'jobs pool' ILM which aimed to develop a pool of technicians who could work across schools in order to supply services at a reasonable cost. Both ILM jobs clearly had social and possibly community benefits, but managers were encountering difficulties in obtaining funds with which to develop the posts. One problem was that SYCON had to rely on a 'cocktail' of funds, many of which had their own target group or geographical requirements. Single Regeneration Budget funding, for instance, would require that 'outputs' contributed to the regeneration of a particular target area, whereas New Deal Environmental Task Force and Voluntary Service Option ILMs required outputs relevant to their prime activity or type of organisation. It proved difficult to match the available funding with individual ILM participants.

Another manager described how ILMs could become self-funding and therefore operate as social enterprises winning public sector contracts. Their suggestion mirrored the Wise Group model of ILM delivery and developed a Type 1 ILM. Although the quote below focuses on construction, the manager also noted that

171

you could have a similar model with other employment areas such as IT, child care, and recycling:

> *"One of the problems that there is out there is there's people interested in construction and they've never ever worked in that field and haven't got the basic practical skills and don't even know whether it's the type of job that they want to do. Also once people have gone through training it can be a bit of time before they build up the speed where they have the confidence to [interrupted] and so you've got people that sometimes do the training and can't get the experience. So we've designed or put together the social enterprise that's doing things like buildings that you would struggle to do if it's not a viable proposition for a developer to actually do but if you actually put trainees and ILMs into it you can actually put back into the community a building or operation that otherwise you might have knocked down, or changed, or altered and it stays there redundant for a number of years. And also connected to quite a number of the other community actions that people want to do like disabled access, you know, widely different construction jobs, so actually helping the social sector but at the same time you are doing training and development at a number of different levels. And if we can do that in the correct way eventually they will start to win and be awarded contracts that continue to deliver that work or activity. So long as you're making it a not-for-profit"*

Thus there was a 'community benefit' element to the Type 1 ILM and the enterprise operated very much like a private sector business winning public contracts. In other words, they offered 'real jobs'.

In the light of this discussion, the tentative 'real job' CMO configuration (Table 15) can now be refined as shown in Table 19:

Table 19: Refined, tentative, preliminary 'real job' CMO configuration

Context	Mechanism	Outcome
Long-term unemployed person without a recent history of employment	Now has an ILM job	Employer sees that someone else has employed this person *in an enterprising organisation* so they must be OK

The addition of 'enterprising organisation' is perhaps significant. The discussion above shows that some stakeholders are not yet convinced that ILMs are real jobs. Low (2001) implies that it is due to their being located within

172

the third sector which is problematic: the sector itself is not an appropriate setting. However, the above discussion suggests that there is potential for ILMs to be perceived as 'real jobs' in either public, private, or third sectors. This, in turn, suggests that there is something other than sector which stops ILMs from adequately replicating the social structures of employment. If the perception that ILMs are not 'real jobs' filters through to ILM participants, it is clearly problematic because that would counter what some SYCON managers suggest is a key enabling mechanism. The next section assesses what characteristics of ILMs might militate against ILMs being perceived as 'real jobs'.

Are SYCON ILMs 'real jobs'

Unlike many 'real jobs', ILMs engage people who are not only unemployed or otherwise disengaged from the labour market, they are also perceived to be lacking in employability skills. They are Rodger's (2008) 'regulatory community', chavs, and NEETs. The SYCON approach:

> "Seeks to develop within beneficiaries the five core components of employability as identified within the SPD [Single Programme Document] and Programme Complement (Transferable skills; Motivation to seek work and training; Mobility in seeking work and training; Access to information networks; Personal barriers to seeking work and training)" (SYCON, 2001, p.3)

In order to develop these attributes ILM participants operate within structures of learning to a much greater extent than would be the case if they were employed in the wider labour market. In addition, some of the learning aspects of ILMs operate in the manner of a 'scheme', which is antithetical to ILM theory as far it has been developed thus far (see, for example, Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000; Rennie, 1999; SYCON, 2001). For example, SYCON ILMs offer intensive guidance and support to participants which would be more appropriate for an employment 'scheme' than a job:

> "Jobsearch support is a continuous process throughout the programme and intensifies during the final 3-4 months of the ILM job. This covers CV development, application filling, interview techniques, guidance on which jobs to apply for, assistance with identifying vacancy sources" (SYCON, 2001, p.8).

The timing at which job search activities take place proved to be a contentious issue. For instance some ILM employers were concerned that job search

173

activities started too early, "from day one" (ECOTEC, 2005, p.19), and that more flexibility should have been given. However, it was a requirement of some funding streams which supported SYCON that job search activities were started early:

> *"Job search under New Deal is required. Job search is required from week one for six hours every week. We constantly get hammered by New Deal for our lack of jobsearch... It's ridiculous. Absolutely ridiculous" (SYCON manager)*

There were clearly tensions between the requirement to offer job search support and operating an ILM as a 'real job'. The manager argued further that:

> *"If you come into a job and me as your employer said to you, 'oh, by the way, on Friday, you're going to have to spend a half a day looking for another job': what are you going to say to us. That is going to say to us two things, 'I'm either going to be out of this bloody job pretty quickly, I've come on for a pretty bad job', or 'this is not a job, this is a programme, it's a scheme'. That's what it's going to say to us" (SYCON manager).*

Interestingly, job search did not start until week 26 on the StepUp Pilot programme. The evaluation concluded it could have started sooner for some people (Bivand et al., 2006, p.5). Thus there are differences of opinion about the timing of jobsearch on ILM or similar programmes. It might be the case that there needs to be flexibility built into provision in order for activities to start at a time that is most appropriate for the needs of the individual but this is an area which needs further research.

Another, interrelated factor militating against SYCON ILMs being 'real jobs' is that participants:

> *"must be eligible for New Deal or Labour Market returners who have been absent from the labour market for more than one year or disadvantaged or disengaged from the labour market, e.g. eligible for early entry to New Deal" (SYCON, 2001, p.7).*

As is shown earlier, employers do not always recruit from this target group. There is one other area in which SYCON was designed to replicate the structures of employment in the local area. It was argued that sub-regional ILM jobs should mirror mainstream labour market travel-to-work patterns:

174

"Cross boundary work on ILM's means that projects more or less closely replicate the real labour market. ILM participants will benefit by experiencing 'real work' conditions in that they will be doing what many people in real work do, i.e. travelling across South Yorkshire to get work in a different town/city" (SYCON, 2001, p.14).

In fact, this study found no evidence that cross-boundary working was either encouraged or achieved. In the opinion of one manager, one of the areas of delivery that never quite got "sorted" was "being able to move people across borders. That was something which was a bit pie-in-the-sky really" (SYCON manager). Nor was there any evidence of steps being taken to facilitate such movement. For instance, much of the promotional literature available for prospective ILM participants was locally based and appears to have been produced for pre-SYCON ILMs. There was no evidence seen during or after the study of any widely distributed SYCON or sub-regional promotional materials aimed at potential participants. The lack of cross-boundary travel to ILM opportunities did not appear to relate directly to area-specific structural problems such as inadequate transport provision. However, as with the problems outlined with matching funding with individuals earlier, there were problems arising from the relatively inflexible funding streams. For example, there were:

"So many different funding streams, a lot of which are geographically specific, so you're only eligible for a certain pot of money if you've got a certain post code. So trying to pull it together within a sub-regional project has been very hard. And obviously Objective 1 covers the whole of South Yorkshire, the money that they're getting from the Yorkshire Forward pot covers the whole of South Yorkshire but other funding sources like SRB or NRF, then they are area-specific. So I think that has caused quite a lot of problems and concerns really" (SYCON manager).

SYCON ILMs therefore had some of the characteristics of a job such as wages and a contract of employment but also elements of support that would fall outside the remit of mainstream employers. In fact, there was evidence that there was tension between 'employment' on the one hand and 'support' on the other within SYCON. For example, some Type 1 and 2 employers in service sectors found that matching their needs for increased capacity with the support needed by ILM participants was difficult to achieve. Such ILM employers required ILM participants to be 'work-ready', to already possess the aesthetic

175

(Warhurst & Nickson, 2009) and emotional skills (Hochschild, 1979) they, as employers viewed as essential. As one manager of a Type 2 ILM observed:

> *"there is always a bit of a conflict here between getting a really good person as an ILM[76] who can help build the voluntary sector organisation and using an ILM[77] as a mechanism for less able people to develop [...] we were partly working to build voluntary sector capacity and community enterprise. So we wanted people in who would be really beneficial to the organisation and not a drain it. At the same time we had to balance that with making sure that the whole programme was meant to be developing people who couldn't normally get into the mainstream labour market. I think in the early days that was definitely a tension" (ILM employer).*

A Type 2 employer operating a service sector organisation tended to agree with those sentiments, and thought that the 'quality' of ILM recruits was 'getting worse'. They observed:

> *"I must say, as the ILM's[78] progressed, the quality of the applicants we're getting is getting worse. And because of the constraints that are on the ILM programme it's going to continue to get worse. You know, because every round of ILMs, the goalposts have widened and we've got to have people who are in extreme long-term unemployment and they have to be eligible for New Deal payments and things like that, so we are actually scraping the bottom of the barrel and we are quite concerned really that [...] we are no longer going to be able to provide a quality service to our clients. The employees that we have, the ILM's that we have, have to be part of the employment team. They don't come to us as like, on a student basis. They have to be part of our team and, because of the quality that we're getting now; I'm concerned about the quality that we're giving to clients".*

SYCON ILM employers were paid £3,500 per year for 'project provision' to cover supervision, overheads and on-costs (SYCON, 2001, pp16-17) and also to recognise that participants might not become productive employees until they had been in employment for three to four months (SYCON manager). Nonetheless, this service sector employer found that many ILM applicants lacked basic literacy skills which were vital for their workplace: "a lot of the applications are illegible and, you know, we have to discard them right away.

---

[76] "An ILM" here refers to the ILM participant
[77] In the sense of an ILM project
[78] "The ILMs" here refers to the SYCON programme but later in the quote refers to the participant

The information [on them] is miniscule" (ILM employer). This employer thought that the 'restrictions' on eligibility were counter-productive and assumed that people were exempt from applying because they had prior qualifications:

> "There are people out there who are long-term unemployed that do have better qualifications than nothing. And, you know, why can't we help those people? ... and they're exempt from applying for an ILM programme and I just don't think it's fair, just to say that they've got qualifications and they are able to get employment on their own. They are not always able to do that. They might have other issues" (Service sector, Type 2 ILM employer).

In this case, the employer required ILM participants to be 'job-ready' from the start. They did not have the resources to train participants in the aesthetic and emotional skills necessary to act in a customer-facing role and were looking to recruit them (see the discussion of Williams and Connell's (2010) study of 'highend' stores' recruitment practices). In fact, prior qualifications would not exempt people from participating in SYCON, as is shown in Chapter 7. The issues described above might have been more acute in the service sector given the types of aesthetic and emotional skills required, although this point of view is challenged in Chapter 7. They might also be reflective of competition, or lack of competition, for ILM places within different sectors. For example, an employer in the construction sector reported no difficulties in getting suitable ILM participants of high quality, most of whom were able to find jobs when they left, either within their own enterprise or in private sector organisations.

Almost all employers interviewed dismissed any suggestion that their ILM jobs were anything other than real jobs. For instance, one Type 2 ILM employer argued that they provided:

> "A really high quality ILM programme. We employ people previously long-term unemployed and it is a proper job. You know, they get the same salary as normal computer technicians ... the only difference, I would say, is that they have to have training, whether it's CISCO, HNC, but it is, you know, it's a proper job" (ILM employer)

In other words, ILM employers were behaving like any other employers in that they had a range of needs and expectations from their workers. Like any labour

market there were peaks and troughs. One employer offering administration-based ILMs reported that:

> *"It has been really hard to recruit. I've been really struggling the last 12 months. People who are qualifying for New Deal just aren't coming through. They are missing out on opportunities".*

The fact that SYCON appeared to reflect the open labour market is perhaps an indication that it is successfully replicating the structures of employment. 'However, if sections of the 'market for intermediate labour' are unable to recruit from people who "have multiple disadvantages that are a barrier to employment *SYCON, 2001, p.4) then it is not achieving a core aim of ILMs to recruit from that group (see the discussion in Chapter 2). The programme which succeeded SYCON, the South Yorkshire Consortium Transitional Labour Market (SYCON TLM), recruited from people who were disadvantaged in the labour market but with the rider that they showed signs of being motivated to work (personal communication from a main funder). This might have been a potential consequence of making ILM jobs more like jobs in the mainstream labour market, rather than 'supported jobs'; there might be a pool of people, those most disadvantaged in the labour market, who are not suitable for ILM employment that is cast in this way.

The discussion above enables the tentative 'real job' CMO configuration to be further refined.

Table 20: Final refined, tentative, preliminary 'real job' CMO configuration

Context	Mechanisms	Outcome
Long-term unemployed person without a recent history of employment	Now has an ILM job • Shows promise • Is motivated and works hard • Likes the job and is good at it • Gets on well with the ILM employer	Employer sees that someone else has employed this person *in an enterprising organisation* so they must be OK.

The CMO configuration refinement exercise illustrates that, whilst a 'real job' might be important, other factors will contribute to the overall outcome. Successful outcomes might depend, to some extent at least, on external factors

178

such as the growth in labour market opportunities as shown in the case of the construction sector employer above. They might also depend on how successfully participants are able to operate within a labour market which calls for aesthetic and emotional skills and which requires participants to obey 'feeling rules' (Hochschild, 1979). These issues will be addressed in more detail in the next chapter.

Concluding discussion

This chapter has proposed that SYCON were creating new social structures of employment when the ILM programme was developed and implemented. SYCON, it is argued, aimed to develop a 'market for intermediate labour' which was designed to replicate the ways that structures of employment operate in the wider labour market. For example, one of the main theories which is articulated in wider ILM literature, and also in SYCON documents, can be summarised as, 'it is easier to get a job if you have a job'. Therefore, SYCON managers and others aimed to incorporate 'job-like' features into the development of the programme. These include that SYCON managers and others would always refer to ILM posts by their job titles; through the provision of a contract of employment and a wage; and by developing 'good quality' ILM opportunities. However, the theories which underpinned the need for the development of these 'job-like' attributes were not clearly articulated. It was not always clear how being inserted into such structures would effect change in the individual which would then move them from being in a condition of long-term unemployment to becoming 'employable'. In this light, the chapter has outlined a series of factors which militate against SYCON ILMs being 'job-like'. They include features such as the provision of guidance and job search activities, and a requirement to be, or to become, eligible for New Deal. These are not characteristics which an employer in the open labour market would necessarily want in a candidate and might be redolent of a 'scheme' to some ILM participants. Following the key tenets of critical realism, this chapter has revealed that these structures can be analysed as a series of CMO configurations. These CMO configurations have been used as an analytical tool in order to isolate mechanisms which might operate in favourable circumstances. They include those highlighted by SYCON managers, such as

providing a 'job-like' environment and paying a wage. However, the analysis showed that such mechanisms might be insufficient in themselves: they might not be triggered because the conditions in which they operate are not favourable. However, it is important to stress that such changes are contingent on the existence and functioning of appropriate structures that stretch far beyond the framing of ILM posts as 'real jobs'. They include factors such as funding regimes, the jobs available for the target group, and the policy contexts described in Chapter 3.

The critical realist approach used in this study has been successful in highlighting key programme theories. The realistic evaluation focus on 'propositions about how mechanisms are fired in contexts to produce outcomes' has enabled ILMs to be viewed through a different lens, one which is not so interested in 'outcomes' but in the mechanisms which generate them. As such it has contributed to knowledge of ILMs and other, similar, employment programmes. This study has also contributed to the overall development of critical realist research and analytical methods. It has, for instance, shown how the 'realistic' analytical tool developed by Kazi can be adapted to analyse data gathered on a large employment programme. However, there is another phase of research which continued the 'theory refinement' process: research undertaken with ILM participants. The experiences of ILM participants in navigating between the scheme-like and job-like characteristics of an ILM are explored in the next chapter which culminates in the findings of a postal survey which was designed to assess if mechanisms were being triggered for participants.

Chapter 7: The SYCON Programme: employees views

Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted a range of issues arising from an assessment of the development and implementation of the SYCON programme drawing on materials such as the SYCON *Business Prospectus* (SYCON, 2001), ILM publicity materials and other relevant documents, and on data from interviews with ILM managers, funders, and employers. It assessed factors which contributed to the creation of a 'market for intermediate labour' and explored tensions between two interconnected elements of the SYCON programme, the aspiration to provide 'real jobs' for ILM participants and the need to provide training and guidance in job seeking skills, the latter being more redolent of a scheme than a job. The chapter concluded that the motivation to develop 'real jobs' appears to have arisen from two sources: a general view that the third sector was somehow incapable of providing real jobs (Low, 20012), and a concomitant desire to create high quality work placements.

Consideration of the dual nature of SYCON ILMs (as jobs and 'schemes') led to the hypothesis that it was likely that their causal properties reside in both aspects of ILMs. Therefore research was directed towards exploring the relationship between employment and learning. ILM participants are directly involved in both and this chapter explores the ways that they negotiate between the two. The chapter draws on four phases of the fieldwork programme mapped out in Chapter 5: semi-structured interviews with five ILM participants and non-formal interviews with a further eight; observations at five ILM workplaces; observation during a week-long induction period which took place at the Rotherham managing agent's premises; and a postal survey undertaken with ILM participants across the sub-region which generated 107 useable responses. The participant interviews are assessed in the next section.

ILM participant interviews

A total of five semi-structured interviews[79] were carried out with SYCON ILM participants. Interviews were undertaken in private rooms in managing agents' offices. The interviews were designed to assess the workers' experience of the ILM and to start to assess if ILM programme theories were being reflected in ILM provision. The interviews were an attempt to gain a fuller understanding of ILM participants' opinions about their ILM project, and at the same time to probe for information that would help to define and refine programme theories. Of the five ILM participants interviewed, one worked in retail, one in administration, two in environmental work, and one in horticultural activities.

Retail worker

The retail worker was an ex-offender who had been referred to the ILM programme by NACRO[80] and was participating through the New Deal Voluntary Services Option (VSO). They had previously been an ILM participant in a charity shop but "hated it" because they thought that staff, "mainly the boss", were "always talking behind my back, slagging me off". The retail organisation was "not a good employer" according to the interviewee. At the time of this interview the ILM participant had returned to unemployment but was about to start a new ILM job. Before participating in the earlier ILM post they had worked in a large supermarket chain but they did not "get on" with the rest of the staff. Although the forthcoming Type 3 ILM post was going to be in a small, private craft shop, this person never had an ambition to work in retail, they just "fell into it, really". This person had a volatile 'learning territory' (Fuller & Unwin, 2004). During their previous ILM they had started a Level 2 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ)[81] in retail but withdrew, or stopped attending, when they left the project. The retail worker thought that their previous ILM felt "a bit like a job" rather than a placement because "when it's a placement they're always checking up on you". Doing the ILM improved their income; they noted that "it's

---

[79] See Appendix 3 for the topic guide
[80] An organisation which works with people in prison and on release in order to help prevent re-offending and aid resettlement. See http://www.nacro.org.uk/nacro-now/performance/nacro-in-summary,942,NAP.html
[81] See Chapter 3 for a comparison of the different 'Levels' and qualifications

alright for money". The retail worker's main aim now was to get a qualification and work experience.

Environmental worker 1

The first environmental worker had previous work experience in factories. However, that work had mostly been temporary work at peak times such as Christmas when employers were taking on extra staff. Their Type 3 ILM became available through New Deal Environmental Task Force (ETF). They had been in their ILM job for seven months and enjoyed the practical aspect of the job, although there was "a bit of paper work" which was not so appealing. The environmental worker was particularly enjoying their training, doing an "NVQ in fencing and stuff like that", adding that: "doing the work for the NVQ is OK. We're making a fence for the NVQ, planting trees and stuff like that". They also thought the NVQ assessor was "a nice chap" but did not get on well with the mainstream workers who worked for the organisation. They found that they got:

> "snidey comments. And the way they look at you, it's like they think we're in competition for their jobs, you know what I mean. They're stupid. We're not going to get their jobs. We need more qualifications".

Later that viewpoint was tempered: "it's not all [of them], there's like four, one of them I don't really like at all. He gets on my nerves". This worker also felt better off financially:

> "I think I am better off with the money and all 'cos when I were on the dole I couldn't do owt, I weren't really going out, hanging about with the mates and stuff 'cos I had no money and they'd all be at pub".

Environmental worker 2

The second environmental worker found that their Type 3 ILM job was "fine. I'm an outside person. It's brilliant. Everyone's great to get on with". They were referred by Jobcentre Plus. This person said that they had "got fed up of signing on, just needed the money. Needed a job. So this were, like, the easiest option". Despite professing to take 'the easiest option', this person was very motivated. They were having driving lessons, partly paid for by the Employee

Led Development (ELD) funding[82] that was available and wanted to pass their test so they could start their own business. They said that:

> *"When I get my licence, I can look for other options or... I really want my own business, that's what I want. So depending on what qualifications I get out of doing this I can look at my own business [...] landscaping, gardening, patios, fencing, things that I know how to because I, I first went on a scheme when I was 16, so I did two years in gardening, I've got two qualifications already in gardening".*

Therefore this person already had some relevant qualifications but "in normal gardening". They hoped they would get qualifications and experience in areas such as landscaping and fencing in order to broaden their skills. When asked why they particularly wanted to be self employed, they replied:

> *"If I work myself, I know for a fact I'm gonna go and work because without doing it I've no money. It's not like now. I can come to work here today and I can say I've had enough. All they can do is sack me. Working for myself if I go home it's my money I'm losing".*

They were motivated by a desire to improve their lifestyle and to fulfil an ambition. They said:

> *"I've always wanted my own business, it's just a matter of getting what [qualifications] I need and that's what I'm doing now. I'm 25 this month; I'm not getting any younger now. I've got two kids. One with one mother and one with another, I need to get myself so that I don't need to go on the dole. Enough's enough".*

This person was clearly motivated and wanted to achieve results:

> *"They pay for my [driving] lessons and my qualification. Without that it's not worth it. That's why I come here. I'm not going to leave here without that. It's not going to be worth it. That's what I'm here for. It's not only money it's what I can get as well. The more I know, the better I feel".*

Although this was a predominantly manual job, they did "get to meet all sorts of people. I mean we do public fences, we do schools ... we have to mind what we're doing, mind us Ps and Qs". In other words, the worker had to obey 'feeling rules' (Hochschild, 1979).

---

[82] Sometimes known as the 'Discretionary Fund' for New Deal participants (Chatrik & Convery, 2000)

Administration worker

The administration ILM worker had found out about their Type 2 ILM job "on the dole". Their induction consisted of: "health and safety, seeing what you could do, assessments, before you started". This worker wanted to gain work experience which they saw as vital in the mainstream labour market. They realised that a lack of work experience was a barrier for them and, echoing the views of ILM managers, they said that:

> "It's easier to get a proper job if you have experience. Some [employers] will take you on if you've got qualifications but they all want experience so you can't get a job until you've got experience".

This ILM worker was also studying for a Level 3 NVQ in Administration, noting that, "I can't afford to go to college so you might as well do a qualification while you're here". Lack of qualifications was recognised as a significant barrier by this worker: "I only had business studies GCSE". However, the participant was confident that they were now learning appropriate job search skills: "I've learned things I didn't know before. About what to put on a CV". The NVQ trainer carried out the training at the centre where they were employed, "so it's dead easy [to go to the learning environment] you don't have to travel". With regard to training, they felt empowered to suggest ideas for further development, "if we think we need any training or anything, we just ask the manager". This worker felt that their 'placement' as they referred to it was like a 'real job':

> "It's like a job. It's just basically that there's one day that there's training. Where I am, they don't treat you any different. You're tret [sic] like an employee and that's it. Your tret exactly same"

They found their manager helpful and easy to approach if they did not quite understand something about their work, saying that:

> "If there's anything that I don't know how to do I just ask my manager. She's really nice. She shows us or she does some training sessions on it".

This worker also understood the networking opportunities that their ILM job gave them as they meet a range of business people who use the centre where they work.

185

Horticultural worker

The horticultural worker was not very content with their ILM job. They indicated that they had previously been in higher education but dropped out of an engineering course after two years "through stress". On the whole, this person appeared to have a range of problems with maintaining employability skills. They stated that they "probably could get employed. They say I'm employable, which I am" but proposed to move to West Yorkshire because "if you move up there there's a lot more job opportunities up there anyway. Round here there's nothing". They had had a number of previous jobs but always temporary and short term:

> "I worked 'here' for six weeks, I worked 'here' for two weeks, and I worked 'here' for two weeks. But that were it. It were just like on work experience placements through the course I were taking at college, so basically a waste of time and effort".

When prompted, they thought that the ILM job was different to their previous experiences, but only in the sense that it was "more manual work. To be honest, I don't like manual work". Initially, this worker appeared to have some difficulty in identifying any positive aspects of the ILM. For instance, they thought that some routine tasks were "mind-numbing jobs", but observed that "next week we're doing fences which is great". Whilst this horticultural worker professed not to 'like manual work', they did appear to be enjoy working towards their NVQ in Horticulture:

> "We've got eight units I believe it is that we've got to do, and it were all a bit hit and miss at the beginning, but now we've sorted it out, we've been enrolled on it… We've got like path-laying, hedge-cutting, fence-building, wiring; it's just different ones, so we're just working our way through them… We've done fencing. You've just got to know what you're doing and do it by yourself".

The ILM participant also observed that:

> "We're doing some fencing at the moment, wooden fencing which… That's it we've got a task this week and we're going to carry it on next week, so I'm looking forward to going out next week. All week what we're doing is fencing. It's easy. It's nice. It's enjoyable work"

The interviewee appeared to have some problems with accepting advice and guidance offered by mainstream colleagues about how to carry out tasks.

186

When asked if they felt able to suggest different ways of doing tasks, they replied:

> "Some of them go, 'if you have an idea, tell me and we'll discuss which is best' but there's others that go, 'this is how you do it, this is how it's got to be done'. And I think 'no it isn't' and I've had a few arguments... I used to get arguing, but I just can't waste my breath on them".

Nonetheless, this person observed that they "love to get up and go to work. It gives you that aim. Alright, it's £140 a week but it's OK".

Section conclusions: ILM participant interviews

The ILM interviewees appeared to be able to negotiate between the 'job-like' and 'scheme-like' elements of the project without difficulty. They tended to view the ILM as a job with training. All interviewees valued the wage they received a great deal, noting that they were better off financially than when on benefits. All had a history of disengagement from the labour market: they had either never previously been in employment or had been employed in short term work. Some have had difficult relationships with work colleagues in the past, and some also reported having such difficulties in their ILM employment. In addition, the interviewees had volatile 'learning territories' (Fuller & Unwin, 2004). However, while the interviewees had poor academic attainment (some had lower level NVQs or GCSEs, but others had no qualifications), all appeared to believe that gaining a qualification would help them to get a sustainable job in the longer term. And all were working towards an NVQ.

Whilst managers and funders interviewed for this study tended to support employment-related training, they did not all support NVQs. Nonetheless, like the interviewees above, many participants were doing them. Historically, unemployed people in South Yorkshire had been able to gain NVQs but, in the words of one manager:

> "Lots of people do become demoralised because they have got lots of NVQ 1s and 2s and they have been told that these will get you a job and, actually, they don't" (SYCON manager).

There was no evidence that the ILM participants who were interviewed were 'demoralised', even though most had participated in training previously.

Another manager argued that "if you have been in [South Yorkshire] and you wanted to do any training and you haven't accessed training over the last 10 years, then you just haven't been trying". Nonetheless, New Deal regulations required all ILM participants to have developed a training plan within four weeks. A funding representative noted that they would rather that ILM participants took more sector-specialist qualifications but found that:

> "Actually we got a lot of NVQ training. That's partly I think because of New Deal and partly because the people who are actually running the projects [ILM employers] feel that that is what employers want"

Given that vocational training towards a qualification in general and NVQs in particular were apparently so problematic, a manager was asked why so many SYCON participants were working towards them. They responded: "Interesting question! To be honest it's not something we really questioned". However, most did argue that some training was necessary for the target group, and sometimes "there is only a limited number of qualifications you can get and there was a feeling that it was best to go for these qualifications" (SYCON manager). Issues relating to the provision of training were also evident during visits to ILM workplaces. These visits offered an opportunity to observe ILM participants in their workplaces, observe the interaction with project officers, and to carry out non-formal interviews with the worker.

ILM workplace observations

Project visits were undertaken with two different project officers to five different workplaces. The interactions between seven ILM participants were observed because two settings had two ILM participants each. SYCON project officers played a number of key roles in ILM participants' progress. At the time of this research, the role was changing from a project management role to that of a support worker and the project officers acted very much in that latter role. They also acted as a liaison between the ILM employer and SYCON's management and also to act in a technical development role, feeding back to the management team. They were also intermediaries between ILM participants and employers, and *vice versa* where necessary, aiming to ensure that good relationships were maintained and taking any remedial action that might be required. It was a project officer who tried to help the retail worker in their first

188

ILM job (see above) and who suggested a new place when it became clear that the worker and other staff in the original ILM workplace were incompatible. In addition, project officers acted as a link between SYCON and the employment services, including New Deal advisors, and also with careers guidance personnel and others such as debt guidance and substance misuse support workers. The two larger SYCON managing agent areas of Sheffield and Rotherham had well advanced systems for undertaking these 'signposting' activities (SYCON manager). In Sheffield there were established links between the managing agent and support services, while in Rotherham many services were available 'in house', delivered by different sections of the Phoenix[83] organisation. Such links were not as well developed in Doncaster and Barnsley at the time (SYCON manager). Another task which project officers carried out was in ensuring that personal development and individual training plans were created. They worked closely with ILM participants in the first few weeks, usually visiting the workplace in the first, third, fifth week, etc. until the fifteenth week and speaking by telephone in the intervening weeks up to week sixteen. The protocol was that from week sixteen the ILM participant should have become settled, more confident and independent. Therefore project officer contact was reduced to minimal contact at this stage unless something required their attention. A further important role that project officers assumed was to signpost workers to any relevant support services such as debt counselling, drug misuse, or similar. They also helped with finding support such as child care when needed and offered advice to participants about potential Employee-Led Development activities. Project officers were therefore key members of managing agency organisations and played a significant role in the SYCON programme.

The observations in ILM workplaces took place during SYCON project officer visits. The original intention was to use overt (Walsh, 1998, pp.221-222) unstructured, non-participation methods (Bryman, 2001, p.163). The aim was to influence the setting as little as possible. In the event, the author underestimated how much he would take a 'participant' role. ILM employers,

---

[83] Phoenix Enterprises was the SYCON managing agency in Rotherham

employees, and especially project officers involved the author in discussions more than was expected would be the case at design stage. Rather than non-participant observation, the observations became more like participant observation. That change in method was not particularly detrimental to the study, but did affect the setting as the focus of the observations was changed from being on the interaction between project officers and others in the field, to being on the participant and their involvement with their ILM. However, because of the nature of these project officer visits, it was not possible to act fully as either participant as observer or observer as participant and the author took up a position between the two roles (Walsh, 1998, pp.222-223). With reference to these changing roles, Walsh argues that they often occur during observational fieldwork and that:

> "changes in the observer's role in the field over the course of the fieldwork may be vital in producing new information, generating new data and creating new and fruitful problems and lines of inquiry" (Walsh, 1998, p.223).

New lines of inquiry were opened up because the researcher was effectively co-opted into a surrogate project officer role. This phase of the research did offer some useful insights into the professional/ILM participant relationship. Therefore, this observation phase did have value and added to the overall development of programme theories and therefore to the understanding of active labour market interventions.

Workplace 1: ILM participant 1

Workplace one was a community IT organisation, it was a Type 2 ILM with two ILM participants. They worked together in a workshop environment maintaining computer equipment for a variety of community clients and recycling computer parts and accessories. One participant was at week five of their ILM and had been referred to the ILM by their New Deal advisor. 'New Deal' required training plans to be completed by week four of the ILM at the latest, although they were often completed by week two (SYCON project officer). However, this participant had not yet drawn one up and the project officer was growing concerned that training would be delayed. The ILM worker had a provisional, draft training plan in place which indicated that either administration or IT

190

courses would be appropriate options for them. During the visit, the worker reminded the project officer that they had already gained an NVQ in administration, which the project officer had forgotten, and that they would have preferred to enhance that qualification by studying for a higher level NVQ. Even so, the project officer maintained that an IT course would be more appropriate and urged the worker to access a *Learndirect*[84] resource which was housed in the same building, and to start a European Computer Driving Licence[85] (ECDL) course. During a conversation with the author, the ILM participant had been somewhat disparaging about their ILM colleague, who was studying for a computer engineering course, saying that they "always have [their] head in a book". The participant did not appear to enjoy such studying. It was not clear to the author that the ECDL course with *Learndirect* was entirely appropriate because it would involve a large element of self-tuition, albeit with guidance from tutors.

Workplace 1: ILM participant 2

The other worker at workplace one was in week seven of their ILM job. This worker expressed a great deal of unhappiness with their colleague (see above) stating that they "don't do owt". This participant was working towards a Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer[86] (MSCE) qualification which they were enjoying a great deal. The course was not directly related to the computer recycling work that they were doing but was related to their career plan which was to work in computer systems installation. The worker liaised with customers and rebuilt or otherwise recycled the computers they donated or bought. This worker was able to suggest to their employer that they might be able to use *eBay* to sell refurbished computer equipment and accessories and was given permission to set up a "presence". They reported selling equipment on the auction site at a better price than they could obtain locally. It is clear that this worker could 'boundary-cross' (Griffiths & Guile, 2004) and was making connections across their 'community of practice'. They could also exercise a

---

[84] See http://www.learndirect.co.uk/ for information about their services
[85] See http://www.ecdl.com/ for information about this course
[86] See http://www.microsoft.com/learning/en/us/certification/mcse.aspx for information about the course but please note that the course has been updated since the observation took place and that this is a link to the updated course

good degree of discretion (Felstead et al., 2009). However, their ILM colleague was less able to either exercise discretion or boundary-cross. This chimes well with Fuller and Unwin's (2004) observation personal history and organisational setting are important factors.

Workplace 2

Before all visits took place, the project officer requested permission from all ILM participants and employers for the author to be present. The purpose of the observations was outlined and informed consent was sought. However, this worker had been identified as having problems with confidence, socialising and inter-personal interactions; therefore permission was repeatedly requested at different stages. Nonetheless, the ILM participant did not wish to be present during conversations between the project officer, the ILM employer and the author but gave permission for the conversations to take place within the group. This did raise questions of whether informed consent had been given but the author was guided by the project officer and the employer who both new the participant relatively well. Nevertheless, the participant appeared quite ill at ease during the visit and rarely gave eye contact with either visitor. The participant did not interact much and most of the detail in this report was given, with the participant's permission, by the employer before the meeting. ILM workplace two was a Type 2 ILM located in a community transport organisation. At the time of the visit they had one ILM worker. The ILM participant was doing an ECDL course and a number of other non-accredited courses. They enjoyed learning and the employer noted that they "mixed well on courses so there's a social element to the training". The participant was enjoying their work which they described as "better than being on the dole". They worked in a number of customer-facing roles including selling the RADAR scheme[87], and occasionally helping on a telephone helpline, as well as in more general administration roles such as logging the post and collating statistics from a web-based helpline. Their employer said that the participant played a substantial part in the delivery of services. The employer was therefore hoping to obtain funding in order to employ the worker for an extended period.

---

[87] See http://www.radar.org.uk/radarwebsite/tabid/41/default.aspx for details of the scheme

Workplace 3: ILM participant 1

Workplace three was a large school and nursery that offered specialist education for young people with motor disorders. They had students up to the age of 18. At the time of the visit they employed two ILM participants in this Type 2 ILM workplace. This participant was at week seven of their ILM. Together with their employer and project officer, they had identified their training needs and were considering courses that would help them work in a 'troubleshooting' role, identifying and rectifying problems with computer applications. Job search had already started and was being carried out at an external organisation. This participant had experience of developing databases and was helping the organisation with theirs. They had worked in the past but in warehouse work and the ILM was an opportunity to try something they preferred. They reported being very busy but preferred it like that rather "than just sitting around doing nothing".

Workplace 3: ILM participant 2

The other participant was at week three of their ILM. They had a higher education-level qualification, a university degree in fine arts, and some work experience in a gallery but could not get permanent work. This participant was a parent who was trying to return to full-time employment. At the time of the visit they were applying for relevant Tax Credits. They were reported as being very low on confidence. However, they agreed to having the author present and appeared confident in conversation and when answering questions. This ILM participant was very motivated and expressed a desire "to make the most of this opportunity". The participant did not want to do teacher training but stated that they would like to do some other, unspecified training so that they could work in schools as a visiting artist. The author is experienced in that role and passed on, via the project officer, details of courses they knew about. This participant could also exercise discretion (Felstead et al., 2009) and was able to suggest that they shadowed a worker who visited the workplace to deliver art lessons: a role that the ILM participant wanted eventually to undertake.

Workplace 4

Workplace four was a local branch of a national advice centre. The worker was in their sixteenth week of a Type 3 ILM. This was a rather truncated visit

because the participant was "very set in" (SYCON project officer), that is, they were doing very well in their ILM job. In addition, because the visit took place in during the sixteenth week, it took place a time when the project officer would withdraw unless there were particular issues. This participant had a very confident air. They had enrolled on a Tai Chi course which was paid for with Employee-led Development money that is available to most, but, as it turned out, not all ILM participants. They enjoyed advice work and wished to continue working in that broad field. One possibility they were considering was to take a university course in social work.

Workplace 5

Workplace five was a community development organisation. They had one ILM participant at the time of the visit. This participant was at week seven of their Type 2 ILM job and the project officer reported that they had already "come a long way forward". They were interested in sport and in youth and community work. They had become involved in a sporting anti-racist organisation and were working to set up a youth forum. This person had a personal history of debt-related problems and was concerned about money. They were receiving support from relevant agencies but it was a concern for the project officer that they had suggested that they would have to make savings on some essentials such as their gas bill. They were also worried that they would have to pay for prescriptions now that they were working.

Section conclusions: workplace observations

The participants were all at the earlier stages of their ILM when the visits took place (ILMs could last for up to twelve months). However, they had been in their ILM posts between four weeks to four months and it was possible to observe and speak to ILM participants at various stages of their projects. The changing observation method, from non-participant observer towards an observer as participant role, enabled a different type of observation activity to take place than originally planned. The original plan was to carry out an observation of the participant/employer/project officer interaction and then undertake non-formal interviews with participants in private. There were two main reasons why that was not done. Firstly, it was clear during the first observation visit that the project officer and other members of the observation

group were involving the author in their discussions. While this was not planned, it did enable some of the topics which would be discussed during non-structured interviews to be broached and was therefore considered to be useful. Secondly, the visits had to be carried out with a project officer present for safety reasons and in relation to guidelines for the protection of vulnerable people. Visits usually took the following format: the employer and project officer would meet to discuss the ILM participant's progress, needs, and action and training plans; the pair would then meet with the ILM participant; and finally the project officer and employer would de-brief at the end. It became clear at the first observation site that it would not always be possible to have a period of time at the end of the visits to undertake the interviews. Therefore a compromise solution was reached in which the author was able to carry out the interviews when the project officer and employer were meeting separately. In the event, the interviews usually took place during the de-brief period, with observations taking place during the initial employer/project officer meeting and during the meeting of all parties. This appeared to work well because it allowed the author to be appraised of any issues, to participate in the discussion with all parties, and then to address topics with the ILM participant in a brief, private non-structured interview carried out in the workplace.

Because of the process of gaining consent for the observations in particular, but also for the non-structured interviews, the issue of whether fully informed consent was adequately given was addressed. One issue related to the power differences or "persuasive influences" (Mason, 2002, p.80) that were at play, for example between the employer and project officer on the one hand, and the ILM participant on the other. The author recognised that there was also an "inequality of knowledge" (Skeggs, 2002, p.363), as the author would have had discussions about the ILM participant prior to their entering the field. Thus, the author always assumed that it was not the project officer's or the employer's place to give consent on behalf of the ILM participant and always sought to gain, or regain, consent during the interactions. It is recognised that "it may be impossible to receive fully informed consent" (Mason, 2002, p.83) but the author concluded that with the correct safeguards, for example by taking precautions not to identify participants by sex, age, or workplaces, then the observations

and interviews could go ahead. The author took the view reached by Skeggs (2002, p.363) that "most of us do empirical research to learn from others, not to exploit and use them. It is therefore important not to confuse positioning with morality or we become complicit in the reproduction of passive pathologies". None of these ILM participants refused to give consent, although one prospective ILM interviewee during the previous phase of the research did.

The question of whether training was appropriate was raised during the observations. There was a contractual relation with New Deal which stipulated that a training plan should be drawn up within four weeks and participants should "have started training very, very quickly after that four weeks" (SYCON project officer). In one location, training plans were drawn up with a professional who had oversight of training and employment, and of local training opportunities. Issues such as learning styles, the appropriateness of the course in relation to their ILM job, and the needs of the wider labour market were taken into account (SYCON project officer). The option for one participant to undertake an ECDL course through *Learndirect* was motivated on the premise that it would help the participant in the ILM workplace and would be more suitable than the administration course they wanted to work towards (SYCON project officer). This example shows that there are multiple influences on the selection of training courses, not all of which can be influenced by the participant. Influences include contractual arrangements, access to provision, and the perceived opinions of employers in the wider labour market

Another issue which arose was the question of whether ILM participants with qualifications from higher education were appropriate beneficiaries of the programme. Although not directly discussing the ILM participant above, a funding organisation representative said:

> *"Some of the stuff that [the funding organisation] is finding as well is that some of the people, the beneficiaries that are being targeted, are not necessarily the types of people that it was originally envisaged that the scheme would help" (Funding organisation representative).*

196

It can be recalled, for example, that Gregg (2008) remarked that "the overall consensus is that ILMs have a useful contribution to make to improving the employability of the most disadvantaged individuals" (Gregg, 2008, p.99). In the case of the ILM participant discussed above (workplace 3, participant 2) they were returning to the labour market after a number of years of child care. The only labour market experience they had was in work experience placements of a temporary nature. On the one hand, therefore, they were ideally suited to ILM employment, but on the other they had a fine arts degree from a respected university and had a good range of other qualifications. SYCON managers and other staff were clear that qualifications alone were not an indication of need but when it was suggested to the project officer that this participant might get a job without the support of an ILM, they said that, in their experience, the worker was typical of people who needed the extra support to get into employment and, without it, was likely to remain unemployed. A SYCON funding organisation representative argued that a shorter intervention would work with this participant, but in this case they did have past experience of those types of intervention and had not been able to find work.

Type 1 and 2 ILM participants in particular are often employed by their ILM employers in the longer term. In some cases that can be the appropriate and desired outcome, but not always. For example, one participant above was contributing well to their organisation and was increasing their capacity to engage clients. This ILM participant had a history of low confidence which had acted as a barrier to employment in the past but was now undertaking 'customer-facing' tasks. However, there were questions about whether the post was sustainable in the short to medium term. Thus, if an ILM employer is focused on increasing the capacity of their own organisation, the ILM employee might not be learning skills that are appropriate for another, albeit similar, environment. For example, someone learning about retail work in a small charity shop might not necessarily be learning the skills and attitudes that will enable them to work in a larger retail establishment. This highlights another issue, that of the transferability of skills. It is not simply a matter of if skills can be readily transferred from one environment to another; rather it is about whether the purpose, and therefore the practice, of an ILM or similar

intervention should be to prepare the ILM worker for employment in one ILM workplace or in a range of work places. That is to say, if the post is intermediary or transitional, whether boundary-crossing (Griffiths & Guile, 2004) is possible or if opportunities are restricted. Type 3 ILMs and those Type 2 ones which aimed at moving participants into employment are likely to have a different focus to those which aim to increase their capacities.

The thesis now turns to the second observation phase of the research. Unlike the phase outlined above, which was designed to be non-participant observation, this phase was designed to have a participatory element.

Induction week

Inductions for ILM participants in Rotherham were held at Phoenix Enterprises, the offices of the Rotherham-based SYCON managing agent. Participants in the three other areas attended inductions in their workplaces. SYCON managers and staff had different opinions about the value of the approach in Rotherham. For example, a project officer from outside the Rotherham area said that "if I'm going to work somewhere, I don't want to know where the fire exits are in another building!" There was an element of justification to that statement but ILM participants used the building for a range of activities and therefore attended regularly throughout their ILM projects. For example, activities such as training and job search were carried out 'in-house' in Rotherham. The organisation also housed a 'social inclusion unit' which helped clients address issues relating to debt and drug misuse. ILM participants would therefore often attend learning sessions in the building which, together with the staff working in it, formed part of participant's "community of practice" (Lave and Wenger, 1991). There were other advantages. For example, because training occurred regularly at the Rotherham premises, there was an opportunity to develop a well-defined learning curriculum that was delivered to all relevant beneficiaries. The managing agency could also oversee the quality of information and advice that workers received. From the perspective of learning theory, another advantage of having these sessions with a group of participants was that they could more easily facilitate the use of inclusive teaching and learning methods which are appropriate to adult learning, such as group work

198

and discussion (Daines et al., 1993). Those learning methods will be discussed further in a subsequent section of this chapter. The next section outlines the induction setting and the participants.

Induction setting and participants

Phoenix Enterprises' All Saints Building[88] was on Corporation Street in the centre of Rotherham's All Saints district. It was a large, multi occupancy building which housed a number of classrooms, meeting spaces, offices, computer facilities and a small snack bar. Many of the corridors were quite small and, although clean, the building was looking 'shabby' and in need of some refurbishment. The induction took place during the first full week of August 2003; a week of very high temperatures. As a result, windows were opened and it was often difficult to hear presenters and colleagues. Notwithstanding the open windows, the rooms tended to grow hot and oppressive as the day wore on.

There were a total of sixteen inductees on the first morning of the induction week. However, one person was not eligible for New Deal and therefore could not attend the course. In addition, three people left the group on the first morning to take up the offer of work trials in a local logistics warehouse. They would be employed if they successfully completed a short, fork-lift truck training course. When those four had left the induction there were twelve participants remaining, seven of whom were ILM participants and five were engaged in the StepUp programme. Rotherham and Sheffield had been selected as StepUp pilot areas and therefore the managing agencies in those areas could integrate the StepUp programme with the SYCON ILM to provide programmes which were almost indistinguishable to the participants but which were funded through different 'pots' of money (SYCON manager). If a participant was not employed by the end of their 26 weeks New Deal funding, they 'moved' seamlessly to the ILM. This was a bureaucratic 'move' and did not impact on participants who would not have noticed any change (see Chapter 2 for further details of the New Deal options and their relevance for ILMs and StepUp).

---

[88] Now demolished

Inductees had been directed to three New Deal options: ILM participants to either the Environmental Task Force (ETF) or Voluntary Service Options (VSO); and StepUp participants to Full Time Education and Training (FTET). Table 21 summarises the options and the sectors in which participants were engaged.

Table 21: Induction participants' sectors and New Deal options

Sector	Option	Number of ILM Participants	Number of StepUp Participants
Construction	Environmental Task Force (ETF)	2	
Retail	Voluntary Sector Option (VSO)	1	
Retail	Full Time Educational Training (FTET)		3
Warehouse	FTET		1
Care	VSO	1	
Handyman (sic)	VSO	1	
Horticulture	ETF	1	
Unspecified	FTET		1
Unspecified	VSO	1	
Total participants		**7**	**5**

Source: Phoenix Enterprises monitoring information

A total of eight male and four female inductees remained in the induction group. This was a more equitable ratio than in the SYCON programme as a whole which had 31 per cent female participants compared to 69 per cent male (See Table 14). The total number of attendees varied on each day of the induction period. Table 22 shows the attendance record of all participants:

Table 22: Attendance at induction

Sex	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Number of days attended
Male	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Male	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Male	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Female	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Female	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Male	✓	✓	✓	✓		4

Male	✓	✓	✓	✓		4
Male	✓		✓	✓	✓	4
Male	✓		✓	✓		3
Female	✓		✓		✓	3
Male	✓			✓	✓	3
Female	✓		✓			2
Total	12	7	11	10	8	

Source: Author's observation

Table 22 shows that Tuesday was the day with the fewest attendees with seven participants. Project officers contacted the absentees and four returned on the Wednesday. Two people did not attend on the Thursday, and three were absent on the Friday. Five people, two females and three males, attended on each day. Three people attended for four days, and three people for three days. One person attended for two days only. Later analysis of data in this chapter indicates that many ILM participants were well motivated to engage with the programme. While Table 22 tends to indicate that motivation was not as high for many, it can be noted that the induction week operated very much as the induction to a 'scheme' rather than to a job and was clearly not what some participants expected. These issues will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Attendance at induction was stated to be an important issue. Inductees were informed verbally and in writing that "high standards of attendance and timekeeping are expected" (Phoenix Training Services Programme). It was noticeable that some presenters did not lead by example and were often late for sessions. Daines, et al., (1993, p.5) note that adult learners "expect tutors to practise what they preach". In this respect, the induction week did not start well. The first meeting of an adult training programme can be very important for building participant's enthusiasm for the course; it is the session in which "vital first impressions are formed and motivation built or crushed" (Rogers, 2007, p.44). This session should have started at 9 a.m. (although subsequent sessions were timed to start at 9.30). All attendees, including the author, were present on time. We were waiting in a small open area which was set off a longer corridor. The area was full and a number of people were sat or stood on

the corridor floor. Most were young people but there were two older ones, possibly aged about 50. There was very little interaction between most people although two or three of the younger people knew each other and were chatting quite animatedly. A SYCON tutor took the author up to a room which already contained three people, one of whom appeared to be asleep. The other inductees came up to the room about five minutes later and sat around a large table constructed of six smaller ones pushed together. There was no one in the room to welcome attendees as they entered but a presenter 'popped in' to say that it would not be long before the session started. It finally got underway at 9.25 am.

Note on the observation process

The author was aware that the inductees were under no obligation to cooperate with him and considered that an overt presence would help in winning their trust over time (Walsh, 1998). To this end, the original research design anticipated that the author's role would be participant as observer in which:

> *"The observer and the people being studied are aware that theirs is a field relationship which minimizes the problems of pretence. It involves an emphasis on social interaction over observing in order to produce a relationship of rapport and trust"* (Walsh, 1998, p.222).

The author planned to participate as much as possible in all activities in order to assess how the induction training was delivered from the viewpoint of an inductee. However, the author was aware that it was not possible to achieve that in full because he had a different relationship to the induction than the inductees and a different motivation for being present. However the intention was to participate in as many activities as possible and at the same time observe the interactions taking place. In the event, there were a small number of activities which it was not possible for the author to engage in. These were mostly when individuals were working with support officers to complete training and personal development plans, or when personal issues affecting the participant were discussed in private. The role therefore tended to veer towards 'observer as participant' in which:

> *"The balance is in favour of observation over participation. This prevents the researcher from going native but restricts*

202

understanding because limited participation in social activities heightens the possibility of superficiality, so that important lines of inquiry may be missed or not pursued" (Walsh, 1998, p.222).

In fact, as with earlier observations, the author took a position between these roles and tended to fluctuate between them as the occasion allowed. However, the author took part in all group activities during the induction week and observed all teaching and learning sessions.

Issues relating to informed consent were also an important consideration in the design of this observation phase. Unlike the observations in workplaces where only a relatively small group were present, this group was much larger and it was more difficult to ascertain that everyone had given fully informed consent. In order to address that issue, the author was briefly introduced to the group by the SYCON tutor during the early stages of the session and the group were asked if anyone objected to his (the author's) presence. He introduced himself and the research project in more detail during an 'ice breaker' session in which all participants introduced themselves. He repeated that if anyone did not want the author present, they could either tell him or any member of staff, and he would leave the induction. In the event no one objected to the author's presence and the observation was able to go ahead.

Induction activities

The opportunity for the author to introduce himself and the study came during the first session when all participants spoke about their backgrounds. Of the sixteen people present (the ineligible person and the three warehouse trainees had not yet left) four had never worked beyond two weeks' work experience and six said they had no qualifications. Three people indicated what employment they wanted, one wanted to go into ground staff work, one to be a football coach and a third a wrestler. The potential football coach was very motivated. Their brother had done a similar ILM and was now working in sport, coaching younger people. This person wanted to follow them in their career and saw the ILM as an opportunity to achieve that ambition. It became clear, during the week, that others were also ambitious and were just as motivated to do well in their jobs or work experience. It is not entirely clear if that level of motivation was actually always present or if the induction week had instilled it.

203

Much of the first day was filled with relatively mundane tasks such as signing appropriate behaviour forms and checklists. Participants were required to sign for receipt of any form which was handed out so that SYCON had proof that they had been received. A SYCON manager observed that a form had been especially produced for this task[89]. The manager noted that, without it, participants would often deny having received the information and therefore that they did not know about the 'rules' or procedures they should comply with or had 'broken'. Phoenix Enterprise's Mission Statement was also passed round. Interestingly, apropos this study, it was "increasing employability and overcoming social exclusion". Start, break and finish times were outlined[90] but, because of the rising room temperatures, there was some flexibility later in the week when break and lunch times were shortened in order to finish before the 3pm to 3.15 pm scheduled time. Issues such as holidays and bus passes were discussed. Five 'ground rules' were outlined: participants must respect each other; confidentiality must be respected; there must be participation in discussions; participants must work in teams when appropriate; and participants must be punctual.

During spare time, when the group were chatting, some people said that they did not know why they had been sent to the induction. One inductee observed: "does anyone know why we're here? I'm not sure why we're here". Another informed the group, "Jobcentre Plus are supposed to find you a job and they send you to a place like this, I don't think this will get me a job". Many of the activities appeared to be designed as introductions to a training programme rather than as an induction into a 'real job'. The types of activities being undertaken were familiar to inductees who had been engaged with employment services for some time, many in the so-called 'revolving door' of New Deal. A result was that some inductees clearly believed they had been sent on a 'scheme' rather than starting work or work experience. There was a similar lack of understanding about why many of the learning activities were taking place.

---

[89] See Appendix 7
[90] Start: 9.30; Break: 10.15-10.30; Lunch 12.00-13.00; Break: 2.15-2.30; Finish 3.00/3.15

For example, while in a queue for the IT suite, one person asked, "What are we doing? Does any fucker know?" This situation could have been avoided if the aims and objectives of individual learning sessions had been described (Daines, et al., 1993). The whole week was contextualised for inductees but the aims of learning sessions were rarely explained.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to describe all the interactions that took place. Instead activities will be described when they illuminate a point that has been raised previously or if they point to a new direction. One such activity was the completion of a sheet designed to gather participants' expectations of certain professionals: fire fighters, Jobcentre advisors, police officers, nurses, doctors, hairdressers, fast food workers, and shop assistants[91]. Individual responses were read out and written on a flip chart by a volunteer: in fact, it was the author who was 'volunteered' for the task. One of the purposes of this activity was to enable people to be reflexive about the types of behaviour that 'professionals' should exhibit in their roles. Participants were then asked to reflect on their expectations of Phoenix Enterprises, their placement, and to consider what employers might expect of them. The responses are set out in Table 23. The 'Phoenix' column is not reproduced because it only had one entry, the one provided by the session facilitator: "preparation".

Table 23: Participants' and employers' expectations

Participants' expectations of their placement	Employers' expectations of participants
Qualification	Punctual
Friendly	Good timekeeper
Welcoming	Flexibility
To be given a fair chance	Versatility
Job	Smart
Fag breaks	Polite
Meet new people	Clean
Safety equipment	Appropriately dressed
Equal rights	Respect other staff
Opportunities	Abide by the rules
To be prepared for me when I arrive the first day	Learn new skills

---

[91] See Appendix 7

Participants' expectations of their placement	Employers' expectations of participants
Crap jobs	Enthusiastic
A test	Willing to learn
Motivation	Work under pressure
To take me for who I am	Team worker
	Prove yourself
	Willing to ask questions

The responses illustrate that participants were suspicious of their prospective employers: expecting to be tested and to be given 'crap jobs'. Some responses possibly indicate past negative experiences. The 'employers' expectations' column lists a range of attributes which could be summarised as 'reliability' and 'motivation': the two most important selection criteria according to a survey of employers (see Figure 7). They also reflect Nickson et al's (2005) finding that "managers' preference for recruitment and selection in service work has tended to be on the basis of personality and increasingly, as we have argued, aesthetics and self-presentation" (Nickson et al., 2005, p.199). Whereas Nickson et al. were assessing retail and hospitality sectors, it is interesting that the list of 'aesthetic' and 'emotional' skills in Table 23 is a product of a group of people who are planning to work in construction, horticulture and warehousing, as well as in retail. Similarly, aesthetic and emotional labour attributes were implied to be necessary traits by one of the interviewees, Environmental worker 2. This suggests that such attributes are perceived to be needed in a wider range of sectors, and also that customer-facing roles are prevalent in a wider range of occupations. It is notable that the 'employers' expectations' column lists only 'generic' and not 'vocational' or 'job-specific' skills (National Skills Task Force, 1998), even though 'qualification' is listed in the 'participants' expectations' column. In summary, the list is representative of:

> "the veritable galaxy of 'soft', 'generic', 'transferable' , 'social' and 'interactional' skills, frequently indistinguishable from personal characteristics, behaviours and attitudes, which in the past would rarely have been conceived of as skills" (Payne, 2000, p.354)

There were a number of group discussion activities such as those outlined above which enabled participants to reflect on topics such as their employment

206

and learning histories. Daines, et al. (1993) note that in respect of adult learning:

> "Where people are presented with new ideas and beliefs that are contrary to previous experience, it appears easier to modify their attitudes within the supportive context of a group than where they are individual members of a passive audience" (Daines et al., 1993, p.29).

Participants took part in such a group learning session on equality. It combined discussion with role play and was designed to challenge participants' attitudes. It involved assessing 20 photographs of various individuals about whom participants had been given only minimal biographical information. The group then collectively selected 12 people from the photographs to take with them to inhabit a new community in space. Further biographical information was added during the second stage of the session. After considering this further information, participants re-assessed their original decisions and discussed issues arising from their selection and their revised opinions. For instance, a woman who had originally been rejected from the new community but who was later shown to be a single parent was then included because "she would know how to bring up children". One point of the session was to encourage individuals to reflect on, articulate, and discuss within the group their own ideas, prejudices and opinions, and it appeared to succeeded in doing so. During the session many participants clearly related their learning to the wider social context, discussing their own experiences of disadvantage and discrimination. When more 'traditional' teaching methods were used, for example during a presentation of the NVQ system to participants which simply involved the presenter talking to the group, it was not at all clear that participants were making such connections.

As noted above, some training sessions were often not adequately introduced. For example, two training sessions in the computer suite were carried out with little explanation of their aims and objectives. The two sessions were, firstly, a computerised 'initial assessment 'activity; and, secondly, a session titled 'understanding computers and their uses'. It was a sign of poor session planning that participants were required to complete the computerised initial

207

assessment before doing the 'understanding computers' course. A more logical approach would be to ascertain if participants knew how to use the facilities before requiring them to complete a task on them. The handouts for the 'understanding computers' session were also of low quality. For example, they contained 'fill in the blanks' sentences which were quite poorly designed and almost impossible to complete without prompts; which is what the participants were required to do. The following are two examples:

Example A: Hardware is the name for any _____ of a _____ that you can _____. Although it is frequently used to _____ the _____ in the _____.[92]

Example B: The _____ _____, which is a set of _____ the _____ needs to run itself[93].

In addition, the teaching was not appropriate for some of the participants who had poor literacy skills. For example, the facilitator did not give all of them time to write down their answers. When the answers were shown to the group, they were presented on a PowerPoint presentation rather than being spoken. Therefore some people were doubly disadvantaged because they had neither the capacity to write down their answers, nor the opportunity to hear them. One person in particular had very poor literacy skills which the tutor made no allowances for. The author helped this person by reading out the answers. Other tutors had realised that this person had limited literacy skills and helped them with form-filling and other activities. However, the computer session facilitator did not appear to notice that anyone was having difficulties in understanding or participating in the proceedings.

During a conversation, the author asked a Phoenix Enterprises manager if participants' learning styles were assessed: it was affirmed they were. Subsequently, a learning style session was introduced on the final day. This

---

[92] Example B answers: part, computer, touch, mean, bits, box
[93] Example B answers: operating, system, instructions, computer

activity commenced with people given *Kinder Eggs*[94] and the tutor observing their different reactions: some read the instructions and then started to build the toy; others just tried to build it without reading the instructions; others did nothing with the toy and just ate the chocolate. Handouts about learning styles were distributed and learning styles discussed. However, given that the session was not originally scheduled, it was not clear if this was a regular session or if it had been prompted by the author's question.

Section conclusions: induction week

The induction week can be described as an induction into a community of learning rather than a community of work practice. For example, employers were not involved at all during the week; indeed, there was little discussion about participants' work placements at all. There were two main types of learning activities: learning about attitudes and behaviours; and learning about the Phoenix setting. Learning about attitudes and behaviours involved participating in group work sessions on equality and group discussions about the 'expectations' of employers and participants' expectations of them. In addition, tutors also discussed issues around developing work-like habits: getting up in the morning, arriving prepared for work, and so on; thus, aesthetic and emotional skills were 'taught' during these sessions. The second type of learning activity, learning about 'Phoenix', involved gaining an understanding of where facilities such as the computer suite, staff offices, and snack bar were located. It also involved understanding the plethora of forms which had to be completed and knowing where information such as individual learning plans were stored. It is understandable that participants would need to be able to navigate their way around the building in which they would be carrying out job search and training activities during work placements. However, the week was not a good introduction to the world of work.

It became apparent during the week that one problem with the participant observer role was that it was sometimes difficult to be a researcher when one is being a participant and *vice versa*. The author addressed this by focusing on

---

[94] Chocolate eggs containing a small toy which needs to be assembled to use

209

making field notes whenever the chance arose (see Appendix 4). Those notes were constructed as 'raw data', developed with the intention of "drawing excerpts from it for inclusion in your polished, written account" (Mason, 2002, p.99). Different sized notepads were used; the smaller one was carried in a pocket so that it was always available. This was not done as a covert exercise, but was undertaken in the open, resulting in a participant observing that "you're always scribbling!"

The next section analyses the ILM participants' survey. The survey was an attempt to assess if identified mechanisms had been triggered for participants.

ILM participants' survey

A self-completed postal survey was distributed to participants who were still on their ILMs at the time. The survey was an attempt to gain the opinions of as many ILM participants as possible about their ILMs, and at the same time test and refine developing programme theories. The design of the survey draws on an example survey in Pawson and Tilley (1997, pp.169-175). It presented statements about possible mechanisms which participants were asked to respond to by answering 'definitely agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree', 'definitely disagree' (see Chapter 5 for a discussion of the survey).

A total of 107 usable responses were received[95]. Table 24 shows that most responses (45%) came from the Doncaster ILM area; ILM participants in Barnsley returned 31 per cent, with 10 per cent and 14 per cent being returned from Rotherham and Sheffield respectively.

---

[95] See Appendix 8 for the statistical tables

Table 24: Location of survey respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Barnsley	33	30.8	30.8	30.8
	2 Doncaster	48	44.9	44.9	75.7
	3 Rotherham	11	10.3	10.3	86.0
	4 Sheffield	15	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

The different delivery methods for these postal, self-competed surveys are described in Chapter 5. To recap: in Sheffield the project officer opted to have the surveys left in a box at the offices of Sheffield Futures, an organisation which ILM beneficiaries attended for job search and career advice; in Barnsley, the manager contacted employers to pass the surveys on to participants; in Doncaster the project officer distributed surveys to employers who passed them to employees; and in Rotherham they were posted to ILM participants homes. The highest numbers of returns came from locations where distribution was through an employer which might indicate that ILM employees felt that they were required to complete them. Sheffield and Rotherham had the largest percentage of ILM participants (41 per cent in Sheffield and 28 per cent in Rotherham) (see Table 13) but the lowest numbers of responses. Doncaster, which had the lowest number of ILM participants, had the highest response rate. Because of these issues, crosstabulations are used sparingly in the assessment of the survey responses, and the results are treated as 'representing' SYCON as a whole rather than being representative of a particular area. The valid responses represent 4.6 per cent of the total number of all participants.

Table 25 shows the number and percentage of respondents in six time bands. Over eighty per cent of respondents had been on their ILM for three months or longer. Thirteen per cent had been an ILM participant for less than 2 months and 3 per cent of respondents did not answer the question.

211

Table 25: Aggregated time which participants had been on their ILMs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 less than 1 month	5	4.7	4.8	4.8
	2 1 - 2 months	9	8.4	8.7	13.5
	3 3 - 6 months	34	31.8	32.7	46.2
	4 7 - 9 months	25	23.4	24.0	70.2
	5 10 - 12 month	26	24.3	25.0	95.2
	6 more than 12 months	5	4.7	4.8	100.0
	Total	104	97.2	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	3	2.8		
Total		107	100.0		

The results of the survey have been grouped into themes which are set out in the next sections.

Worklessness

Two statements were designed to assess worklessness as a barrier to employment. The results are presented in Table 26.

Table 26: Responses to statements about worklessness as a barrier to gaining sustainable employment (expressed as a percentage of all valid responses[96])

Statement	% Def. agree	% Agree	% Neither agree nor disagree	% Disagree	% Def. disagree
Being without a job has stopped me from getting work in the past (N=104)	12.5	31.7	24.0	24.0	7.7
My chances of getting a permanent job are better now that I am on an ILM (N=106)	29.2	50.9	15.1	3.8	0.9

The statements in Table 26 address the idea that "it is easier to get a job if you have a job" (SYCON manager). More people agreed than disagreed with the statement that 'being without a job has stopped me from getting work in the past', but the results are more evenly spread across the responses than for

---

[96] Valid count in brackets

most other questions. The statements in Table 26 asked respondents to make causal connections. With all these types of questions (see also Bivand et al., 2006 and the discussion in Chapter 5) the responses need further interpretation. One way to do that would be to delve further with respondents in an interview, asking why they responded as they did; this was Pawson's method (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, pp.170-175). Another would be to ask a representative sample of people further questions in order to extrapolate from the sample to the population as a whole; this appears to be Bivand et al.'s (2006) method. It was not possible to use either method with this survey because they took place at a different time in the research process and had a different purpose. Rather than involving respondents in order to clarify programme theories (Pawson & Tilley, 1997), this survey was designed to test them. The survey was implemented at the end of the study period when the author had a more developed idea of programme theories. In subsequent studies they can be used earlier in order to 'cumulate' knowledge of theories (Pawson & Tilley, 1997).

Over half of respondents agreed with the second statement, "My chances of getting a permanent job are better now that I am on an ILM" and twenty nine per cent definitely agreed. Notwithstanding earlier cautions against drawing conclusions from this data, this finding does suggest that the majority of respondents feel they are becoming more employable through engaging with the ILM. When compared with the duration which participants had been on their ILM, the data indicated that most 'positive' responses came from people who had been on the ILM for between three and twelve months[97].

Table 27 contains responses to seven statements about ILMs as 'jobs'.

---

[97] See Appendix 9

Table 27: Responses to statements about ILMs as 'jobs' (expressed as a percentage of all valid responses)

Statement	% Def. agree	% Agree	% Neither agree nor disagree	% Disagree	% Def. disagree
My ILM is a job not a training scheme (N=105)	3.8	35.2	32.4	21.0	7.6
I had a choice of which ILM to go on (N=105)	4.8	41.0	15.2	21.00	18.1
Before starting my ILM, I got some good advice about which one would be best for me (N=107)	5.6	35.5	19.6	24.3	15.0
I was interested in the type of work I do on my ILM before I started it (N=105)	35.2	46.7	9.5	3.8	4.8
Having a 12 months contract is important to me (N=106)	18.9	49.1	22.6	5.7	3.8
My employer treats me just like the other workers (N=104)	37.5	50.0	7.7	2.9	1.9
It is important that my ILM helps the community (N=105)	13.8	43.8	34.8	6.7	1.9

The frequent description of SYCON ILMs as 'real jobs' has been assessed throughout this thesis. Responses to 'My ILM is a job not a training scheme' were mostly clustered around the central responses of 'agree',' neither agree nor disagree', and 'disagree'. The voluntary nature of ILMs is assessed in the following three statements. There is some evidence that the majority of respondents felt that they could choose their ILMs and possibly that there was more than one ILM to choose from (I had a choice of which ILM to go on). SYCON created more ILM vacancies than there would be prospective participants to take them (SYCON, 2001) and the data suggests that this strategy might have worked. The data also suggests that Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) could be improved: thirty nine per cent of respondents disagreed or definitely disagreed with 'Before I started my ILM, I got some good advice about which one would be best for me'. A Crosstabulation of this variable with 'managing agency' suggested that all areas performed equally in

this respect (Appendix 9). The maximum duration of ILMs vary (Finn & Simmonds, 2003) although all SYCON ILMs were for 12 month. Almost fifty per cent agreed that having a twelve month contract was important to them. This is a key tenet of ILMs, and the low number of people disagreeing suggests that it is a key mechanism for many. The workforces of all Types of ILMs might consist solely of ILM participants and therefore the eighty seven per cent 'agree' and 'definitely agree' to the statement 'My employer treats me like the other workers' should be treated with a great deal of caution. Nonetheless, it does appear that a sizeable proportion of participants are treated equitably. SYCON ILM participants were almost all placed within the social or voluntary sectors. Forty three per cent agreed that 'it is important that my ILM helps the community' and a further fourteen per cent 'definitely agreed'. This suggests that community involvement is important for many participants and perhaps casts some doubt on the benefits of private sector ILMs if they do not have a community character. Taken together, these results, although treated cautiously, suggest that the 'job like' features of SYCON ILMs are appreciated by participants.

Table 28 contains four responses to statements about the waged elements of ILMs.

Table 28: Responses to statements about the waged element of an ILM (expressed as a percentage of all valid responses)

Statement	% Def. agree	% Agree	% Neither agree nor disagree	% Disagree	Def. disagree
Earning a wage is better than getting benefits N=106)	65.1	33.0	1.9	0.0	0.0
Getting enough money is more important than whether it comes from benefits or wages (N=103)	22.3	34.0	15.5	25.2	2.9
The money I get is right for the job I do (N=104)	14.4	32.7	27.9	17.3	7.7
I have more money now that I am working on my ILM (N=107)	29.0	46.7	10.3	9.3	4.7

The statement, 'Earning a wage is better than getting benefits' received the highest number of positive responses with sixty five per cent definitely agreeing and thirty three per cent agreeing. This supports SYCON managers' belief that a wage is a key mechanism in attracting participants. The result also suggests that the perceived 'benefits culture' is not ingrained among SYCON participants, casting doubt on the 'underclass' theory of worklessness (see Chapter 3). The second statement 'Getting enough money is more important than whether it comes from benefits or wages' is not well phrased and, given the responses of the earlier statement appears not to have been well understood. It is a statement that should not have got through the piloting stage which was carried out with a small number of respondents. Most respondents 'agree' or 'definitely agree' that the money they get is right for the job they do, while over seventy five per cent of respondents have more money now that they are working.

These responses, when taken as a whole, do tend to support the view that waged labour market programmes such as ILMs are effective at increasing the income of many participants. In addition to those responding to the survey, all ILM participants interviewed for this study stated that they are better off financially on the programme. Given that participants will have been unemployed or otherwise disengaged from the labour market for many months this is perhaps not surprising. Many respondents might also have been relatively young: sixty five per cent of SYCON participants were from the 18-24 years age group (Table 14)[98]. Further research would be necessary in order to assess if increased income from ILM employment translated into a living wage if the job was sustained in the longer term. However, the wage seemed to work as a mechanism to attract prospective ILM participants, adding weight to the argument that 'work pays'.

Table 29 sets out responses to statements about ILMs as learning opportunities.

---

[98] Such demographic data was not collected for this survey, please see the concluding discussion

Table 29: Responses to statements about ILMs as learning opportunities (expressed as a percentage of all valid responses)

Statement	% Def. agree	% Agree	% Neither agree nor disagree	% Disagree	% Def. disagree
The skills I am learning on my ILM are needed by employers (N=106)	26.4	59.4	13.2	0.0	0.9
On my ILM, I am learning about working for other employers (N=95)	8.4	57.9	25.3	4.2	4.2
Training is an important part of an ILM (N=104)	32.7	54.8	10.6	1.9	0.0
It is important to start jobsearch during the first months of an ILM (N=106)	12.3	25.5	31.1	22.6	8.5

Training was seen as important by most ILM managers. However, there was a suggestion that the type of training was important. For example, a funding organisation representative observed that studying towards low level NVQs was not beneficial for participants; other forms of qualification were more appropriate. The interviews with participants and the observation at induction appeared to confirm that many participants were working towards an NVQ. Nonetheless, a majority of respondents did appear to value the learning they engaged in. Very few individuals responded negatively to statements on learning. The perception, that employers want qualifications as a signifier for 'skill', appeared to be well ingrained amongst respondents. There also appeared to be some element of preparation for boundary crossing with workers being prepared for other workplaces. Learning about other employers would have been especially important for participants on Type 2 and in Type 3 ILMs who would be 'moving on' to other employment. The responses to the statement on jobsearch were more evenly matched across the variables.

Table 30 shows responses to statements about the support they receive.

Table 30: Responses to statements about support (expressed as a percentage of all valid responses)

Statement	% Def. agree	% Agree	% Neither agree nor disagree	% Disagree	% Def. disagree
I get enough help and support from my Project Officer (N=106)	27.4	48.1	17.9	3.8	2.8
I get enough help and support from my employer (N=103)	30.1	54.4	12.6	1.9	1.0

Participants on ILMs tend to have complex support needs (SYCON employer) and effective support was thought to be a key mechanism for retaining participants in order for them to address the barriers they face. SYCON was developed so that project officers played a key role during the first 16 weeks of an ILM. In Type 1 and some Type 2 ILMs in particular, the employer can also play a strong supporting role. Survey respondents were mostly positive about the support they received from project officers and employers.

In summary, the responses to the survey indicate that some mechanisms were being triggered but, as noted, the results must be treated with some caution. For instance, there is an element of ambiguity in some of the statements and there are other issues with validity. Nonetheless, the survey results do tend to show that mechanisms such as wages and training or skills development were important factors for ILM participants.

Concluding discussion

This chapter has been a useful contribution to the development of SYCON programme theory. It has thrown more light on the operation of ILMs by focusing on participants as operating within structures of employment on the one hand, and a 'scheme' on the other. While other research was designed to develop programme theories, the survey element of the research was designed to test them. This runs somewhat contrary to Pawson and Tilley's (1997) recommendations, which are that the survey is used as a first step towards a more in-depth, teacher-learner interview. However, this study was, as far as the author is aware, the first time that a realistic evaluation approach had been

used in the assessment of ILM programmes and therefore the intention of the study was to identify implicit and explicit programme theories and to begin the process of testing them.

The survey did not ask for any identifying information or demographic data from respondents. One reason for this is that it was necessary to keep responses confidential. As well as the ethical considerations of maintaining confidentiality there were practical considerations. Confidentiality had been raised as an important factor by gatekeepers in the early stages of the research process and guarantees of confidentiality were made in order to gain access to the field. In addition, there were methodological reasons for not requesting demographic data. The survey was "a conceptual structure" (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, pp. 170-175) designed to test theories about mechanisms. Furthermore it was a 'first step' in doing so. More research is needed in order to test those theories in more depth and with different demographic groups. That work was beyond the scope of this project.

The previous chapter noted that it was necessary to adapt an analytical framework in order to adequately analyse interview and other data. The same framework was used in the assessment of most data collected for this chapter. However, the survey data was of a different type to other data and it was not possible to analyse it within the framework. Instead, survey data were analysed using SPSS and by grouping the findings into responses around specific themes. When presented in themed tables, this showed that there was an element of general agreement/disagreement in response to most statements in the survey. Nonetheless, the survey instrument could be improved; as is demonstrated by the many notes of caution which have been raised. However, the survey and other research undertaken with participants, have raised some interesting findings. For example, taken as a whole, the research does appear to support the view that 'work pays' for most of the target group engaged in the study. In addition, the research challenges the 'underclass' view of the target group, suggesting that most participants are motivated and eager to work. Although returns to learning do not tend to show positive rewards for the acquisition of lower grade NVQs (see, for example, McIntosh, 2004) this study

219

has suggested that most participants value the learning they undertake and expect that the qualifications will lead to better jobs. This is in contrast to SYCON managers, who appeared to be offering some qualifications, NVQs in particular, because they were required to do so by funders, rather than because they would be valuable to participants.

On the whole, participants appeared to be able to negotiate within the structures of work and learning, between a 'real job' and a 'scheme', with little difficulty. The research has suggested that SYCON workplaces are appropriate learning environments and that boundary crossing can take place. However, the research also tends to support the view that individual 'learning territories' (Felstead et al., 2009; Fuller & Unwin, 2004) are relevant factors for some, possibly inhibiting engagement with learning. In addition, there is some suggestion that participants understand the need for emotional and aesthetic labour skills and that these are required in a wide range of sectors.

The next chapter summarises the research findings and shows how this work has contribution to knowledge. The chapter includes reflections on the critical realist approach and indicates directions for further research.

Chapter 8: Concluding discussion

Introduction

This chapter is a reflective summary of the research process. It firstly summarises the thesis, explaining the process of responding to the research objectives. The chapter then assesses the contribution to knowledge, firstly with regard to theory and methods, then in respect of academic literature, and finally in terms of the implications for policy. The chapter closes with suggestions for further research.

The research: reflective summary

The central aim of this study was as follows:

> *"An exploration of the impact of specific training and education activities supported by the EU Structural Funds Objective 1 Programme for South Yorkshire on the ability of disadvantaged groups to access and engage with the labour market".*

Once the SYCON ILM programme had been selected as the exemplar case study for this project, the following "intellectual puzzle" (Mason 2002) was developed:

> *How and why do socially excluded people with a history of disadvantage and disengagement from the labour market move into employability and employment through ILM interventions?*

Define 'ILM'

This first step in address that 'puzzle' was to define what an ILM is. This process showed that different models of implementation had been developed which were based on two pioneering ILM programmes: the Glasgow Wise and the Works models. The former of these developed social enterprise organisations which employed ILM participants directly, the latter managed the process but ILM participants were employed by partner organisations in the 'third' sector. These models have evolved over time and, in order to reflect this, a Typology of ILMs was developed, it is summarised in Table 31

Table 31: Typology of ILMs

Type	Feature	Potential ILM priority
Type 1	• This type of ILM is based on the Wise Group model • ILM employment provided in wholly owned subsidiary organisations. • Earn a proportion of their income from selling goods or services Might contract with statutory organisations • Will address a market failure by providing a needed service which would otherwise not be available to residents	• The focus might be on training ILM participants to become skilled at providing organisation-specific goods or services • Another focus might be on delivering the service, possibly at the expense of moving the ILM participant into the wider labour market
Type 2	• This type of ILM is a hybrid between the Wise and Works models • ILM employment provided in Social enterprises, either newly formed or longer-standing, but which is a separate entity to the managing agency. • Possibly earn a proportion of their income from selling goods or services. Might contract with statutory organisations	• The focus might be on training ILM participants to become skilled at providing organisation-specific goods or services • Employers might be focused on building the capacity of their organisation rather than moving participants on
Type 3	• This type of ILM is based on the Works model • ILM employment provided in partner organisations • ILM employer partners usually based in the third sector but not necessarily so. Could be private or public sector	• The focus should be on tackling barriers affecting participation in the wider labour market. • Should aim to move people on.

ILMs had been delivered in each of the four major urban areas of Doncaster, Rotherham, Barnsley and Sheffield before SYCON was implemented. Rather than creating a unified model of SYCON ILM implementation, each area maintained its own approach. This resulted in all three Types of ILMs being delivered in the SYCON, South Yorkshire sub-region.

Literature review

The next step in responding to the intellectual puzzle was to explore relevant literature on social exclusion and related literature on learning and work experience. That review showed that discourses of social exclusion and lifelong learning are imbued with the message that work is the best way out of poverty and social exclusion but notes that this does not always seem to be the case, for example many households with at least one working adult remain in poverty (H. M. Government, 2011). Evidence from returns to learning indicates that it might be preferable for some, particularly younger, participants to focus on achieving academic qualifications such as English, Maths and ICT GCSEs rather than low level vocational qualifications, in order to improve their prospects of gaining sustainable employment. Employers often require aesthetic and emotional skills which are sometimes 'acquired' through socialisation processes rather than 'taught'. It is therefore also useful to take account of the learning context. ILM workplaces which effectively promote learning, 'expansive workplaces', are likely to provide conducive contexts for ILM participants.

The literature review also highlighted ways that unemployed and otherwise disengaged groups are often constructed in policy discourses as being immersed in 'cultures of worklessness', and through concepts such as the 'underclass' whose behaviour is determined by their reliance on the welfare system, rather than their status being a result of inequality.

Research design

The research design which was developed to address the 'intellectual puzzle' was couched in a critical realist approach which was operationalised through adopting realistic evaluation techniques. The research logic framework is reproduced in Table 32.

Table 32: Research logic framework

Phase	Aim of approach	Source	Research instrument
1	General programme	4. Published	4. Literature review

		academic and policy literature	5. Literature and Document review
	theories identified	5. SYCON literature and documents 6. EU and Objective 1 literature and documents	6. Literature and document review
2	Refinement of programme theories and development of author's understanding of programme	6. SYCON managers 7. Main funders 8. ILM employers 9. SYCON project officers 10. ILM participants	6. Semi-structured interviews 7. Semi-structured interviews 8. Semi-structured interviews; Informal discussions 9. Unstructured interviews 10. Semi-structured interviews and Informal discussions
3	Further refinement and development	4. ILM participants 5. SYCON project officers 6. ILM employers	4. Participant observation 5. Participant observation; Unstructured interviews 6. Participant observation; informal discussion
4	Further refinement and development	2. ILM participants	2. Questionnaire survey

The reason for electing to utilise a realist approach was to cast new light on the SYCON ILM which would be materially different to that which was gained through an independent evaluation which had been commissioned by the SYCON management board, and through less formal investigations which were being undertaken by a major funder. To this end, the research sought to explore the mechanisms which underlie ILM activity. The research aimed to focus less on empirical outcomes and more on the causal mechanisms that generate them. It aimed to uncover programme theories which were implicit or explicit in the implementation of SYCON ILMs.

A mixed methods design was adopted for the study but one which had a qualitative approach to identifying programme theories and a quantitative approach to testing them towards the end of the fieldwork process. At the time that the fieldwork was undertaken, realistic evaluation/critical realist methods were not well developed and the study therefore contributed to the further refinement of those methods. This is especially the case with regard to analytical frameworks: the study needed to adopt and adapt a framework in order to undertake a realist analysis of the data. In order to assess programme theories, data was organised into context - enabling mechanism - disabling mechanism columns. This was a process derived from Pawson and Tilley's (1997) realistic evaluation approach and adapted from Kazi's (2003a) analytical framework.

Empirical work

Empirical research took the form of literature and document reviews; semi-structured interviews with SYCON ILM managers, employers, and funding body representatives; semi-structured and unstructured interviews with SYCON ILM participants; participant observations at ILM workplaces and during a week-long induction setting; and a postal, self-completed survey of ILM participants. Research took place during the period 2002 to 2004 with most fieldwork activities occurring during 2003 to 2004.

'Gatekeepers' were an important factor in this research and were encountered during all phases of the fieldwork. Although full access to the field was achieved in Sheffield and Rotherham, it was not always possible to get equivalent access to ILM workplaces and participants in Doncaster and Barnsley. This was problematic given that ILMs were implemented differently in each of those areas but was unavoidable. However, the problem was addressed to some extent through undertaking telephone surveys of ILM employers which included representatives from those areas, and through the postal survey of ILM participants which gained responses from across the sub-region. When the sub-region is considered as a whole, a good range of key stakeholders were engaged in the study.

225

Given those problems of representation, the findings of this study need to be to be treated with some caution: they are presented here as 'suggested' findings. Nonetheless, this study has contributed to knowledge and that contribution is outlined in the next sections.

Contribution to knowledge

The study's contribution to knowledge in three areas is outlined below. Firstly the contribution to theory and methods is assessed. Secondly, the contribution to the academic field is outlined. Finally implications for policy are described.

Contribution to theory and methods

This study has contributed to a growing body of literature on realistic evaluation and critical realist methodologies and methods. Although the field has grown since this project commenced in 2002, understanding of critical realist methodology and methods is not widespread when compared to positivist and interpretivist approaches for example. Because critical realism draws on methods from both of those 'camps', it is often said to be 'methodologically pluralist'. However, this thesis rejects that claim, observing that critical realism is a methodology. It is method pluralist. Much of the relevant literature assessed for this study indicates that those methods must be related to ontological assumptions: methods are used to uncover mechanisms which are not necessarily observable by empirical means. However, the literature is less clear on how that can be achieved and the growing body of literature to which this thesis contributes aims to address that problem.

The conclusion here is that it is the approach, rather than the method which is important. For example, the ways that research instruments are constructed, the types of data they aim to gather, and the ways that data is analysed are more important than whether the instrument is a semi-structured or structured interview. As noted above, methods for analysing the type of data gathered on this study were not widespread when fieldwork activities were undertaken and this project has contributed to their development. The analytical tool adopted (see Table 11) can be adapted for the assessment of a wide range of data, including interview data and the results of document and literature reviews.

226

However, it is not appropriate for the assessment of the data gathered through the postal survey.

The postal survey was another area in which this project has contributed to the development of realist methods. Other than the example in Pawson and Tilley (1997), the author is aware of only one other example of its use: in Bivand et al., (2006) which was undertaken after the postal survey for this project had been designed and delivered. With reference to the analysis of survey data, this was achieved through grouping the responses into themes which reflect the mechanisms which they were intended to assess. Although there may be some weaknesses in the design of the survey, and unavoidable weaknesses in its delivery, this process has identified tentative findings which are addressed in later sections.

Contribution to academic literature

This survey has made contributions to academic literature in general fields of skills and learning. With regard to skills, there have been two areas of contribution. Firstly, the study has engaged with literature on the benefits and returns to vocational learning. However, the findings are mixed in this respect. SYCON managers and funding body representatives who were engaged in this study generally supported the view that lower Level NVQs would not be beneficial to ILM participants. Disengaged people were said to have been able to 'collect' numerous qualifications over the years but these had not led to jobs. Representatives of a funding body were concerned that NVQs were being offered in preference to other vocational qualifications which might be more suitable. These findings generally support the results of studies of the economic returns to learning such as McIntosh (2004) and Jenkins et al. (2007). However, it is clear that ILM participants engaged in the study valued their learning and thought that NVQs and the other qualifications which they were studying would enable them to move into employment. There appears to be a mismatch here which would benefit from further research.

This study has made a tentative contribution to knowledge of aesthetic and emotional labour developed by researchers such as Warhurst and Nickson (for

227

example Warhurst & Nickson 2009) and Bolton (2004). This study suggests that SYCON ILM participants are aware of the need to develop the emotional and aesthetic attitudes which are perceived to be required by employers. It also suggests that the need for aesthetic attributes goes beyond the service and hospitality sectors in which they have mostly been studied and into sectors such as construction. There were attempts made during the induction week to 'teach' these attributes but further research is needed into how successful 'teaching' can be or if the attributes are more likely to be gained through socialisation processes.

SYCON ILMs appeared to be operating well as learning environments and examples of successful boundary crossing (Griffiths and Guile, 2004) were identified. However, the extent to which participants would be able to apply their learning in new environments might have been dependent on the Type of ILM which they undertook. Nonetheless, 66 per cent of survey respondents and a number of the other participants engaged did indicate that they were learning about working for other employers on their ILMs. This indicates that some ILMs are operating successfully as 'connective' work experience models (Griffiths and Guile, 2004). A relatively small number of instances of people not engaging with learning tentatively supports Felstead et al's (2000) proposal that although structures of learning are important, they do not wholly determine the learning that takes place. Individual learning territories are also important factors (see also Fuller and Unwin, 2004).

Implications for policy

This study has contributed to welfare-to-work policy areas and to the understanding of ILMs and similar interventions. For example, the focus on the 'real job' mechanism throughout this thesis has shown that policy interventions can support participants in employment and at the same time offer training and support to address barriers to work. The week-long induction of ILM participants was undertaken in the manner of a training 'scheme' and this study has thrown light on how participant's progressed through the programme. Examples of positive and negative learning and teaching methods were identified and the findings tend to show that there is a need for such

programmes to be well structured and expertly delivered. With private sector and voluntary and community organisations increasingly involved in the delivery of employment programmes, there is likely to be a need for enhanced oversight of the activities which take place.

One of the main findings of this study is that for this target group (predominantly young people aged 18-24) work does pay. Almost all participants engaged in the study found that they were better off in work than on benefits. Additionally, almost all survey respondents observed that it is better to earn money through a wage than to receive it through benefits. This casts doubt on the notion of a widespread 'benefits culture' affecting and 'underclass' of 'chavs' and 'NEETs' who prefer to stay in 'benefits dependency' as a lifestyle choice. Beatty et al. (2010, pp.43-44) observe "that there is a powerful case ... for job creation schemes" to provide job opportunities for the workless populations which the researchers expect will not be addressed by private sector 'revival'. The findings of this study tend to support that finding.

Further research

It is noted above that this study is a 'first step' to developing an understanding of the mechanisms which can be triggered, given the correct contexts, on a large employment intervention. Further micro-level research would be beneficial in order to refine programme theories further. This study can be a springboard to such research.

There was a mismatch between SYCON managers and participants in their understanding of the value of NVQs and other qualifications. Further research into this area, particularly if it engaged employers, would help understand why this mismatch occurs. It would also be beneficial to carry out such research in localities with different levels of worklessness in order to local contexts are a factor.

Participants in the SYCON ILM induction week appeared to arrive with an understanding that aesthetic and emotional skills were required by employers. One other area which would benefit from further research is in the

229

understanding of such skills amongst the ILM target group and how the group develop their understanding.

Bibliography

Alvesson, M. & Sköldberg, K., 2000. *Reflexive Methodologies: new Vistas for Qualitative Research*. London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Anonymous, 2011. *PSE 2011*. [Online] Available at: http://www.poverty.ac.uk/content/PSE2011 [Accessed 13 November 2011].

Archer, M., Bhaskar, R., Collier, A., Lawson, T. & Norrie, A., eds., 1998. *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*. London and New York: Routledge.

Aspin, D.N., Chapman, J., Hatton, M. & Sawano, Y., eds., 2001. *International Handbook of Lifelong Learning*. Dordrecht, Boston, and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Astbury, B. & Leeuw, F.L., 2010. Unpacking Black Boxes: Mechanisms and Theory Building in Evaluation. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 31(3), pp.363-81.

Atkinson, J., Giles, L. & Meager, N., 1996. *Employers, Recruitment and the Unemployed*. Brighton : Institute for Employment Studies.

Atkinson, J. & Williams, M., 2003. *Employer Perspectives on Recruitment, Retention and Advancement of Low Pay, Low Status Employees*. Brighton: Cabinet Office and Institute for Employment Studies.

Barham, C. Walling, A., Clancy, G., Hicks, S. & Conn, S., 2009. Young people and the labour market. *Economic and Labour Market Review*, 3(4).

Beatty, C. & Fothergill, S., 1999. *Labour Market Detachment Among Older Men*. Sheffield: CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University.

Beatty, C. & Fothergill, S., 1999. *The Detached Mail Workforce*. Sheffield: CRESR and Sheffield Hallam University.

Beatty, C., Fothergill, S., Gore, T. & Green, A., 2002. *The Real Level of Unemployment 2002*. Sheffield: CRESR and Sheffield Hallam University.

Beatty, C., Fothergill, S. & Gore, T., 2007. *The Real Level of Unemployment 2007*. Sheffield: CRESR and Sheffield Hallam University.

Beatty, C., Fothergill, S., Gore, T. & Powell, R., 2010. *Tackling Worklessness in Britain's Weaker Local Economies*. Sheffield: National Worklessness Learning Forum and Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research Sheffield Hallam University.

Beatty, C., Fothergill, S. & Macmillan, R., 2000. A theory of employment, unemployment and sickness. *Regional Studies*, 34, pp.617-30.

Berg, 1998. *Qualitative Research Methods*. Boston, London, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo, Singapore: Allyn and Bacon.

Berkley, L., 2011. *Unemployment, Regeneration and Social Enterprise: a look at the evidence*. Glasgow: The Wise Group.

Berthoud, R. & Bryan, M., 2010. Income, Deprivation and Poverty: A Longitudinal Analysis. *Journal of Social Policy*, 40(1), pp.135-56.

Bhaskar, R., 1979. *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences*. Hassocks: Harvester Press.

Bhaskar, R., 1989. *Reclaiming Reality: a Critical Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy*. London and New York: Verso.

Bhaskar, R., 2000. *From East to West: Odyssey of a Soul*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Bhaskar, R., 2002. *Reflections on Meta-Reality: transcendence, emancipation and everyday life*. London, New Delhi, and Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Bhaskar, R., 2008. *A Realist Theory of Science*. 2nd ed. London and New York: Verso.

Bhaskar, R. & Callinicos, A., 2003. Marxism and critical realism: a debate. *Journal of Critical Realism*, 1(2), pp.89-114.

Bickerstaffe, T. & Devins, D., 2004. *Intermediate Labour Markets: Final Report*. Research report 63. Sheffield: New Deal for Communities: The National Evaluation Sheffield Hallam University.

Bierema, L.L., 2008. Adult Learning in the Workplace: Emotion Work or Emotion Learning? *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2008(120), pp.55-64.

Billet, S., 2004. Learning Through Work: Workplace Participatory Practices. In H. Rainbird, A. Fuller & A. Munro, eds. *Workplace Learning in Context*. London and New York: Routledge. pp.109-25.

Billett, S., 2010. The perils of confusing lifelong learning with lifelong education. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 29(4), pp.401-13.

Birckmayer, J. & Weiss, C., 2000. Theory-based Evaluations in Practice: What do we Learn? *Evaluation Review*, 24(4), pp.407-03.

Bivand, P., Brooke, B., Jenkins, S. & Simmonds, D., 2006. *Evaluation of StepUp Pilot: Final Report*. Norwich: Department for Work and Pensions.

Blanden, J., Buscha, F., Sturgis, P. & Urwin, P., 2010. *Measuring the Returns to Lifelong Learning*. London: Centre for the Economics of Education London School of Economics.

BMRB Social Research, 2001. *Further Investigation of a Disadvantaged Group on Pre-vocational Training.* Research Report No. 253. Norwich: Department for Education and Employment.

Boheim, R. & Taylor, M.P., 2002. The Search for Success: Do the Unemployed Find Stable Employment? *Labour Economics*, 9, pp.717-35.

Bolton, S.C., 2004. Conceptual confusions: emotion work as skilled work. In C. Warhurst, I. Grugulis & E. Keep, eds. *The Skills That Matter.* Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan. pp.19-37.

Brooks, G., 2001. Progress in Adult Literacy: Putting the Record Straight. *Adults Learning*, 12(10), pp.15-16.

Brooks, G. et al., 2001. *Progress in Adult Literacy: Do Learners Learn?* London: The Basic Skills Agency.

Bryman, A., 2001. *Social Research Methods.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burchardt, T., Le Grand, J. & Piachaud, D., 1999. Social Exclusion in Britain 1991-1995. *Social Policy and Administration*, 33(3), pp.227-44.

Burchardt, T., Le Grand, J. & Piachaud, D., 2002. Introduction. In J. Hills, J. Le Grand & D. Piachaud, eds. *Understanding Social Exclusion.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burns, P.M., 1997. Hard-skills, Soft-skills: Undervaluing Hospitality's 'Service with a Smile'. *Progress in Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 3, pp.239-84.

Byrne, D., 1999. *Social Exclusion.* Buckingham: Open University press.

Cabinet Office, 2010. *Office for Civil Society Structure Finalised.* [Online] Available at: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/office-civil-society-structure-finalised [Accessed 3 November 2011].

Cabinet Office, 2010a. *State of the Nation Report: Poverty, Worklessness and Welfare Dependency in the UK.* London: Cabinet Office.

Cambridge Policy Consultants, 2002. *Glasgow Works Strategic Review.* Final Report. Cambridge.

Cambridge Policy Consultants, 2007. *Comparison of the Value for Money from Labour Market Programmes.* Final Report. Cambridge: CPC.

Campbell, M., 2000. Labour Market Exclusion and Inclusion. In J. Percy-Smith, ed. *Policy Responses to Social Exclusion.* Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press. pp.22-42.

Campbell, M., 2001. *Skills in England 2001: The Research Report.* Nottingham: Department for Education and Skills and Learning and Skills Council.

Cassen, R. & Kingdon, G., 2007. *Tackling Low Educational Achievement*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation London School of Economics.

Chaplin, R., Flatley, J. & Smith, K., 2011. *Crime in England and Wales 2010/11: Findings from the British Crime Survey and police recorded crime (2nd Edition)*. Home Office Statistical Bulletin. Home Office.

Chapple, A., 1999. The use of telephone interviewing for qualitative research. *Nurse Researcher*, 6(3), pp.85-93.

Chatrik, B. & Convery, P., 2000. *New Deal Handbook*. 3rd ed. London: Unemployment Unit & Youthaid. Available at: http://www.convery.org.uk/website/pubs/nd2000/html/index.htm [accessed 7 October 20011]. Available online.

Child Poverty Unit, 2011. *The Child Poverty Act*. [Online] Available at: http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/childpoverty/a00 66302/the-child-poverty-act [Accessed 20 November 2011].

Clarke, L., 2007. *Memorandum by Professor Linda Clarke*. [Online] Select Committee on Economic Affairs Written Evidence Available at: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200607/ldselect/ldeconaf/138/138we 09.htm [Accessed 19th October 2011].

Clegg, S. & McNulty, K., 2002. The Creation of Learner Identities as Part of Social Inclusion: Gender, Ethnicity and Social Space. *(Author's Copy of Pre-Publication Manuscript)*.

Coffield, F., 1999. Introduction: lifelong learning as a new form of social control? In F. Coffield, ed. *'Why's the beer always stronger up North?' Studies of lifelong learning in Europe*. Bristol: The Policy Press. pp.1-12.

Colley, H. & Hodkinson, P., 2001. Problems with 'Bridging the Gap': the reversal of structure and agency in addressing social exclusion. *Critical Social Policy*, 21(3), pp.335-59.

Colley, H., Hodkinson, P. & Malcolm, J., 2002. *Non-formal learning: mapping the conceptual terrain. a consultation report*. [Online] infed Available at: http://www.infed.org/archives/e-texts/colley_informal_learning.htm [Accessed 20 February 2004].

Communities and Local Government, 2008. *The English Indices of Deprivation 2007*. London: Department of Communities and Local Government.

Connexions Direct, 2008. *Work Experience: What you need to know*. [Online] Available at: http://www.connexions-direct.com/index.cfm?pid=77&catalogueContentID=125 [Accessed 29 October 2008].

Crighton, M., 1998. *Good Practice and Effectiveness in Training for the Long-Term Unemployed*. Occasional paper 8. Aberdeen: The Robert Gordon University.

Curtis, T., 2008. Finding that grit makes a pearl: A critical re-reading of research into social enterprise. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research*, 14(5), pp.276-90.

Daines, J., Daines, C. & Graham, B., 1993. *Adult Learning Adult Teaching*. Nottingham: Department of Education, University of Nottingham.

Danermark, B., Ekström, M., Jakobson, L. & Karlsson, J.C., 2002. *Explaining Society: Critical Realism in the Social Sciences*. English Edition ed. London and New York: Routledge.

Davies, S., 2011. Outsourcing, public sector reform and the changed character of the UK state-voluntary sector relationship. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 24(7), pp.641-49.

Deacon, A., 2004. Justifying Conditionality: the Case of Anti-social Tenants. *Housing Studies*, 19(6), pp.911-26.

Dearden, L., McIntosh, S., Myck, M. & Vignoles, A., 2000. *The Returns to Academic and Vocational Qualifications in Britain*. London: Centre for the Economics of Education.

Defourny, J., 2001. From Third Sector to Social Enterprise. In C. Borzaga & J. Defourny, eds. *The Emergence of Social Enterprise*. London and New York: Routledge. pp.1-28.

Denzin, H. & Lincoln, Y., 1994. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Department for Communities and Local Government, 2007. *The Working Neighbourhoods Fund*. Wetherby: Department for Communities and Local Government and Department for Work and Pensions.

Department for Education and Employment, 1998. *Annex to the Select Committee on Education and Employment Second Special Report: Memorandum from the DfEE in response to the Second Report from the Education and Employment Committee on the New Deal*. [Online] DfEE Available at: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmeduemp/496s2/ees204.htm#a1 [Accessed 12 October 2011].

Department for Education and Employment, 1998. *The learning Age: a renaissance for a new Britain*. London: The Stationary Office Limited.

Department for Work and Pensions and Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, 2008. *Ready to Work, Skilled for Work: Unlocking Britain's Talent*. Norwich: The Stationery Office.

Department for Work and Pensions, 2002. *Employment Action Plan*. London: DWP.

Department for Work and Pensions, 2002a. HC815 *Report on the Government's Employment Strategy: Reply by the Government to the Third Report of the Work and Pensions Select Committee, Session 2001-02*. Norwich: The Stationery Office DWP. available from http://www.archive2.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm55/5599/5599.pdf.

Department for Work and Pensions, 2004. *Building on New Deal: Local Solutions Meeting Individual Needs*. Department for Work and Pensions.

Department for Work and Pensions, 2007. *In work, better off: next steps to full employment*. London: The Stationery Office.

Department for Work and Pensions, 2008. *No one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility*. London: Department for Work and Pensions.

Department for Work and Pensions, 2008a. Cm 7506 *Raising expectations and increasing support: reforming welfare for the future*. White Paper. London: Department for Work and Pensions.

Department for Work and Pensions, 2008b. *Working Together: UK National Action Plan on Social Inclusion*. London: DWP.

Department for Work and Pensions, 2009. *DWP's Commissioning Strategy and the Flexible New Deal*. [Online] Available at: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmworpen/59/590 7.htm [Accessed 23 September 2010].

Department for Work and Pensions, 2009a. *Realising Potential: developing personalised conditionality and support - A discussion paper on next steps in implementing the Gregg Review*. available at http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/gregg-review-discussion-paper-jan09.pdf. London: DWP.

Department for Work and Pensions, 2010. *Universal Credit: welfare that works*. Norwich: The Stationery Office.

Department of Health, 2010. *Measuring social value: How five social enterprises did it*. Leeds: Department of Health and Cabinet Office.

Devins, D. & Hogarth, T., 2005. Employing the Unemployed: Some Case Study Evidence on the Role and Practice of Employers. *Urban Studies*, 42(2), pp.245-56.

Dickens, R., 2011. Child Poverty in Britain: Past Lessons and Future Prospects. *National Institute Economic Review*, 218(October), pp.R7-R19.

Dickerson, A. & Vignoles, A., 2007. *The Distribution and Returns to Qualifications in the Sector Skills Councils*. Research Report 21. Wath-upon-Dearne: Sector Skills Development Agency Skills for Business.

Dodgson, R., 2004. Parents and higher education in the north-east of England: attitudes, concerns, influence and engagement. *Journal of Access Policy and Practice*, 2(1), pp.5-23.

Doeringer, M.F., 2010. Fostering Social Enterprise: a Historical and International Analysis. *Duke Journal of Comparative and International Law*, 20(2), pp.291-329.

Dwyer, P., 2004. Creeping Conditionality in the UK: From Welfare Rights to Conditional Entitlements? *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 29(2), pp.265-87.

ECOTEC, 2003. *UK Contribution to the Evaluation of the European Employment Strategy*. Birmingham: ECOTEC Research and Consulting Limited.

ECOTEC, 2005. *Final Evaluation of the SYCON Intermediate Labour Market Programme*. Leeds: ECOTEC Research and Consulting Limited.

Edmonds, T., Parry, K., Woodhouse, J. & Web, D., 2010. *Public services (Social Enterprise and Social Value) Bill*. Research Paper10/73. London: House of Commons.

Elder-Vass, D., 2007. Social Structure and Social Relations. *Journal for the Theory of Human Behaviour*, 37(4), pp.463-77.

Elwin, T., 2008. *Youth Unemployment in Hartlepool: Update March 2008*. Hartlepool.

Engeström, Y., 2001. Expansive learning at work: toward an activity-theoretical reconceptualisation. *Journal of Education and Work*, 14(1), pp.133-56.

Engeström, Y., 2004. The New Generation of Expertise: Seven Theses. In H. Rainbird, A. Fuller & A. Munro, eds. *Workplace Learning in Context*. London and New York: Routledge. pp.145-65.

European Commission, The, 1993. *Commission White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness, and Employment*. Brussels: The European Commission.

Fang, J., Fleck, M.P., Green, A., McVilly, K., Hao, Y., Tan, W., Fu, R. & Power, M., 2011. The response scale for the intellectual disability module of the WHOQOL: 5-point or 3-point? *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 55(6), pp.537-49.

Farrington, D.P., 1998. Evaluating 'Communities That Care'. *Evaluation*, 4(2), pp.204-10.

Feinstein, L., 2002. *Quantitative Estimates of the Social Benefits of Learning, 1: Crime*. London: Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning.

Feinstein, L., 2002a. *Quantitative Estimates of the Social Benefits of Learning, 2: Health (depression and Obesity)*. London: Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning.

Felstead, A., Fuller, A., Jewson, N. & Unwin, L., 2009. *Improving Working as Learning*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Fenoughty, R. & Holmes, R., 2008. *European Structural Funds in South Yorkshire 2000-2008: Objective 1 Programme - Transforming South Yorkshire*. Leeds: Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber.

Field, F., 2010. *The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults*. Report of the Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances. London: Cabinet Office.

Finegold, D. & Soskice, D., 1988. The failure of training in Britain: analysis and prescription. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 4(3), pp.21-53.

Finn, D. & Simmonds, D., 2003. *Intermediate Labour Markets in Britain and International Review of Transitional Employment Programmes*. DWP Research Report No. 173. Department for Work and Pensions.

Fletcher, D.R., Gore, T., Reeves, K. & Robinson, D., 2008. *Social Housing and Worklessness: Key Policy Messages*. London: Department for Work and Pensions.

Flint, J., 2009. Subversive subjects and conditional, earned and denied citizenship. In M. Barnes & D. Prior, eds. *Subversive Citizens: Power, Agency and Resistance in Public Services*. Bristol: Policy Press. pp.83-98.

FMR Research, 2006. *Literature Review of Employers' Attitudes Towards Employability Groups*. Glasgow: Equal Access to Employment in Glasgow and Glasgow Employer Coalition.

Freiler, T.J., 2008. Learning Through the Body. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, Fall(119), pp.37-47.

Friedman, M., 2005. *Trying Hard is Not Good Enough*. Victoria and Crewe: Trafford Publishing.

Fuller, A. & Unwin, L., 2004. Expansive learning environments: integrating organisational and personal development. In H. Rainbird, A. Fuller & A. Munro, eds. *Workplace learning in Context*. London and New York: Routledge. pp.126-44.

Gardiner, K., 1997. *Bridges form Benefit to Work: A Review*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Glogowska, M., Young, P. & Lockyer, L., 2011. Propriety, process and purpose: considerations of the use of the telephone interview method in an educational research study. *Higher Education*, 62(1), pp.17-26.

Gore, T., 2005. Extending Employability or Solving Employers' Recruitment Problems? Demand-led Approaches as an Instrument of Labour Market Policy. *Urban Studies*, 42(2), pp.341-53.

238

Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 1999. *South Yorkshire Objective 1 Programme 2000-2006: Single Programming Document*. Leeds: The South Yorkshire Forum.

Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber, 2000. *South Yorkshire Objective One Programme Complement: Final Draft*. Leeds: GOYH.

Grant, L., 2002. *Intermediate labour Markets and the Public Sector in Sheffield*. Sheffield: School of Social Science and Law, Sheffield Hallam University.

Green, A., 1998. Core skills, key skills and general culture: in search of the common foundation in vocational education. *Evaluation and Research in Education*, 12(1), pp.23-43.

Greene, J.C., 2006. Towards a Methodology of Mixed Methods Social Inquiry. *Research in the Schools*, 13(1), pp.93-98.

Greene, J.C., 2008. Is Mixed Methods Social Inquiry a Distinctive Methodology? *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 2(1), pp.7-22.

Greene, J., Benjamin, I. & Goodyear, L., Thousand Oaks and New Delhi. The Merits of Mixing Methods in Evaluation. *Evaluation*, 7(1), pp.25-44.

Green, A.E. & Hasluck, C., 2009. Action to Reduce Worklessness: What Works? *Local Economy*, 24(1), pp.28-37.

Gregg, P., 2008. *Realising Potential: A Vision for Personalised Conditionality and Support*. London: Department for Work and Pensions.

Griffiths, T., 2001. *Work Experience as an Education and Training Strategy: New Approaches for the 21st Century*. Final Report. European Commission.

Griffiths, T., 2003. Learning and work: issues for vocational and lifelong education research. *European Educational Research Journal*, 2(1), pp.1-5.

Griffiths, T. & Guile, D., 2000. Learning and Work Experience: European Perspectives on Policy, Theory and Practice. In *European Conference on Educational Research*. Edinburgh, 22 September 2000. ECER.

Griffiths, T. & Guile, D., 2003. A connective model of learning: the implications for work process knowledge. *European Educational Research Journal*, 2(1), pp.56-72.

Griffiths, T. & Guile, D., 2004. *Learning through Work Experience for the Knowledge Economy: Issues for Educational and Research Policy*. Luxembourg: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop).

Grugulis, I., Warhurst, C. & Keep, E., 2004. What's Happening to 'Skill'? In C. Warhurst, I. Grugulis & E. Keep, eds. *The Skills that Matter*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. pp.1-18.

Guile, D. & Griffiths, T., 2001. Learning through Work Experience. *Journal of Education and Work*, 14(1), pp.113-31.

H. M. Government, 2011. *A New Approach to Child Poverty: Tackling the Causes of Disadvantage and Transforming Families' Lives*. Norwich: The Stationery Office.

Hamilton, M., 2001. *Commentary on the NFER Research Report: Progress in Adult Literacy*. Leicester: NIACE.

Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P., 1995. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge.

Hansard, 2008. *Publications and Records: Welfare Reform*. [Online] Available at: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm081210/debtext/81210-0004.htm#08121022000764 [Accessed 12 December 2008].

Harmon, C. & Walker, I., 2001. *The Returns to Education: A Review of Evidence, Issues and Deficiencies in the Literature*. Research report 254. Norwich: Department for Education and Employment.

Hart, T. & Haughton, G., 2007. *Assessing the Economic and Social Impacts of Social Enterprise*. Feasibility Report. Hull: Centre for City and Regional Studies University of Hull.

Hartley, S.L. & MacLean, J.W.E., 2006. A review of the reliability and validity of Likert-type scales for people with intellectual disability. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 50(11), pp.313-827.

Haughton, G., Jones, M., Peck, J. & Tickell, A.W.A., 2000. Labour Market Policy as Flexible Welfare: Prototype Employment Zones and New Workfarism. *Regional Studies*, 34(7), pp.669-80.

Hayward, K. & Yar, M., 2006. The 'chav' phenomenon: Consumption, media and the construction of a new underclass. *Crime Media Culture*, 2(1), pp.9-28.

Ho, S., 1999. Evaluating Urban Regeneration Programmes in Britain: Exploring the Potential of A Realist Approach. *Evaluation*, 54, pp.222-438.

Hochschild, A.R., 1979. Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure. *American Journal of Sociology*, 85(3), pp.551-75.

Honey, P. & Mumford, A., 1992. *The Manual of Learning Styles*. 3rd ed. Maidenhead: Peter Honey.

House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, 2002. *The Government's Employment Strategy: Third Report for the session 2001-2002*. Report, together with Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices. London: Stationary Office Limited.

Hutchinson, A., 1989. Morocco: Owen Logan. *Portfolio Magazine*, Spring/Summer. pp.12-17.

Jamieson, S., 2004. Likert scales: how to (ab)use them. *Medical Education*, 38(12), pp.1217--8.

Jenkins, A., Greenwood, C. & Vignoles, A., 2007. *The Returns to Qualifications in England: Updating the Evidence Base on Level 2 and Level 3 Vocational Qualifications*. London: Centre for the Economics of Education London School of Economics.

Johnson, B.R. & Onwuegbuzie, A.J., 2004. Mixed Methods Research: a Research Paradigm Whose time Has Come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), pp.14-26.

Kaye, J., 2002. *Intermediate Labour Market Schemes in Partnership with the Public Sector: A Guide for Voluntary Sector Organisations*. Sheffield: Attercliffe and Darnall Community Enterprises.

Kazi, M.A.F., 2003. *Realist Evaluation in Practice*. London, Thousand Oaks, and New Delhi: Sage.

Kazi, M., 2003a. Realistic Evaluation for Practice. *British Journal of Social Work*, pp.803-18.

Keep, E., 1997. 'There's no such thing as society.' some problems with an individual approach to creating a Learning Society. *Journal of Education Policy*, 12(6), pp.457-71.

Keep, E., 2006. *Market Failure in Skills*. SSDA Catalyst: Issue 1. Wath-upon-Dearne: Sector Skills Development Agency.

Keep, E., 2009. *Initial Submission on Adult Learning in the Workplace - Explaining Current Patterns and their Outcomes*. [Online] Available at: http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/Workplace-Ewart-Keep.pdf [Accessed 28 August 2009].

Keep, E. & Mayhew, K., 1999. The assessment: knowledge, skills, and competitiveness. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 15(1), pp.1-15.

Keep, E., Mayhew, K. & Payne, J., 2006. From skills revolution to productivity miracle - not as easy as it sounds? *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 22(4), pp.539-59.

Kolb, D.A., 1984. *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Lafer, G., 2004. What is 'Skill'? Training for Discipline in the Low-Wage Labour Market. In C. Warhurst, I. Grugulis & E. Keep, eds. *The Skills That Matter*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan. pp.109-27.

Lave, J. & Wenger, E., 1991. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lawlor, E., Neitzert, E. & Nicholls, J., 2008. *Measuring Value: a Guide to Social Return on Investment (SROI)*. 2nd ed. London: The New Economics Foundation.

Layard, R., 2004. *Good Jobs and Bad Jobs*. CEP Occasional paper No 19. London: Centre for Economic Performance London School of Economics and Political Science.

Learning and Skills Council and European Union European Social Funds, 2007. *Learning and Skills Council East Midlands: Plan for ESF C0-financing - priorities 1 and 2 2007-2010*. [Online] Available at: readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/Lsc/EastMidlands/em-esfcofindraft-re-sept2007.doc [Accessed 29 September 2008].

Leitch Review of Skills, 2006. *Prosperity for all in the global economy - world class skills*. Final Report. Norwich: The Stationary Office.

Levitas, R., 1998. *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Levitas, R., 2003. *The Idea of Social Inclusion*. [Online] Available at: http://www.ccsd.ca/events/inclusion/papers/rlevitas.htm [Accessed 24 January 2005]. 2003 Social Inclusion Research Conference.

Levitas, R., 2005. *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour*. 2nd ed. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lewis, P., Taylor, M. & Ball, J., 2011. *Kenneth Clarke blames English riots on a 'broken penal system'*. [Online] The Guardian Available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/sep/05/kenneth-clarke-riots-penal-system [Accessed 10 September 2011].

Lifelong Learning Networks, 2011. *National Forum*. [Online] Available at: http://www.lifelonglearningnetworks.org.uk/news/latest-news/national-forum/ [Accessed 10 November 2011].

Lindsay, C., 2004. Employability Policies in the UK: Towards a 'Quality at Work' Agenda? In *Reflections on the European Employment Strategy: How Relevant to the UK?* London, 2004. New Policy Institute.

Lindsay, C., 2010. Re-connecting with 'what unemployment means': employability, the experience of unemployment and priorities for policy in an era of crisis. In I. Greener, C. Holden & M. Kilkey, eds. *Social Policy Review 22: Analysis and debate in Social Policy, 2010*. Bristol: The Policy Press. pp.121-40.

Lister, R., ed., 1996. *Charles Murray and the Underclass: the Developing Debate*. IEA Health and the Sunday Times ed. London.

Lister, R., 1998. From equality to social inclusion: New Labour and the welfare state. *Critical Social Policy*, 18(2), pp.215-25.

Logan, O., 1989. *Al Maghrib: Photographs from Morocco 1983-88*. Edinburgh and Glasgow: Polygon and Third Eye Centre.

London Evening Standard, 2011. *David Cameron praises courts for harsh sentences handed to riot thugs*. [Online] standard.co.uk Available at: http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/standard/article-23979080-david-cameron-carry-on-jailing-the-thugs.do [Accessed 18 August 2011].

Longhi, S. & Taylor, M., 2010. *Differences in Employment Histories Between Employed and Unemployed Job Seekers*. Colchester: Institute for Social and Economic Research and ESRC.

Low, D., 20012. Sheffield Intermediate Labour Market Programme: A Case Study. In A. Serrano Pascual, ed. *Enhancing Youth Employability Through Social and Civil Partnership*. Brussels: European Trades Union Institute. pp.191-203.

MacKay, R.R., 1998. Unemployment as Exclusion: Unemployment as Choice. In P. Lawless, R. Martin & S. Hardy, eds. *Unemployment and Social Exclusion: Landscapes of Labour Inequality*. London: Jessica Kingsley. pp.49-68.

Marshall, B. & Macfarlane, R., 2000. *The Intermediate Labour Market: A tool for tackling long-term unemployment*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Mason, J., 2002. *Qualitative Researching*. 2nd ed. London, Thousand Oaks, and New Delhi: Sage.

May, T., 1997. *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process*. Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press.

May, T., 2002. *Qualitative Research in Action*. London, Thousand Oaks and new Delhi: Sage Publications.

McEvoy, P. & Richards, D., 2006. A critical realist rationale for using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 11(1), pp.66-78.

McGregor, A., Ferguson, Z., Fitzpatrick, I., McConnachie, M. & Richmond, K., 1997. *Bridging the Jobs Gap: an Evaluation of the Wise Group and the Intermediate Labour Market*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

McIntosh, S., 2002. *Further Analysis of the Returns to Academic and Vocational Qualifications*. Research Report RR370. Norwich: Department for Education and Skills.

McIntosh, S., 2004. *The Impact of Vocational Qualifications on the Labour Market Outcomes of Low-Achieving School-Leavers*. CEP Discussion Paper No 621. London: Centre For Economic Performance London School of Economics.

McQuaid, R.W., Green, A. & Danson, M., 2005. Introducing Employability. *Urban Studies*, 42(2), pp.191-95.

McQuaid, R.W. & Lindsay, C., 2005. The Concept of Employability. *Urban Studies*, 42(2), pp.197-219.

Meager, N. & Metcalf, H., 1988. Employers' recruitment practices and the long-term unemployed. *Personnel Review*, 17(5), pp.12-17.

Mertens, D.M., 2010. Transformative Mixed methods Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, pp.469-74.

Milburn, Trinnaman, La Court, 2008. *Evaluation of the South Yorkshire Transitional Labour Market Programme: Final Report*. Leeds: Yorkshire Forward.

Miller, K.D. & Tsang, E.W.K., 2010. Testing Management Theories: Critical Realist Philosophy and Research Methods. *Strategic Management Journal*, 32(2), pp.139-58.

Mills, D., 2011. *Social Enterprise Network*. [Online] Available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/social-enterprise-network/2011/sep/15/chris-white-mp-public-assets?INTCMP=ILCNETTXT3487 [Accessed 16 September 2011].

Mingers, J., 2004. Real-izing information systems: critical realism as an underpinning philosophy for information systems. *Information and Organisation*, 14(2), pp.87-103.

Ministry of Justice, 2011. *Population and Capacity Briefing for 18 November 2011*. London: Ministry of Justice National Offender Management Service.

Murray, C., 2001. *Underclass + 10*. London: CIVITAS and The Sunday Times.

National Audit Office, 2002. *Individual Learning Accounts*. Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General. London: The Stationery Office.

National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 2005. *The Reform of Public Services: The Role of the Voluntary Sector*. London: NCVO NCVO.

National Skills Task Force, 1998. *Towards a National Skills Agenda*. First Report of the National Skills Task Force. Sudbury: Department for Education and Employment.

National Skills Task Force, 2000. *Skills for All: Proposals for a National Skills Agenda*. Final Report of the National Skills Task Force. Sudbury: Department for Education and Employment.

National Skills Task Force, 2000a. *Tackling the Adult Skills Gap: Upskilling Adults and the Role of Workplace Learning*. Sudbury: National Skills Task Force.

Nicholls, A., 2006. Introduction. In A. Nicholls, ed. *Social Entrepreneurship: New models of sustainable change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp.1-35.

Nicholls, J., 2007. *Why Measuring and Communicating Social Value Can Help Social Enterprise Become More Competitive*. A Social Enterprise Think Piece for the Office of the Third Sector. London: Cabinet Office of the Third Sector.

Nickson, D. & Korczynski, M., 2009. Editorial: Emotional labour and Masculinity. *Gender, Work and Organisation*, 16(3), pp.291-99.

Nickson, D., Warhurst, C. & Dutton, E., 2004. *Aesthetic Labour and The Policy-Making Agenda: Time For A Reappraisal Of Skills?* SKOPE Research Paper No.48. Glasgow: Scottish Centre for Employment Research University of Strathclyde.

Nickson, D., Warhurst, C. & Dutton, E., 2005. The importance of attitude and appearance in the service encounter in retail and hospitality. *Managing Service Quality*, 15(2), pp.195-208.

Nixon, D., 2009. 'I Can't Put a Smiley Face On': Working-Class Masculinity, Emotional Labour and Service work in the 'New Economy'. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 16(3), pp.306-22.

Norris, C., 1999. *Roy Bhaskar Interviewed*. [Online] Available at: http://www.raggedclaws.com/criticalrealism/archive/rbhaskar_rbi.html [Accessed 19 November 2009].

Novick, G., 2008. Is There a Bias Against Telephone Interviews in Qualitative Research. *Research in Nursing and Health*, 31(4), pp.391-98.

Objective 1 Programme Directorate, 2001. *Priority 3: Project Prospectus*. Wath Upon Dearne: Objective 1.

Objective 1 Programme Directorate, 2008. *South Yorkshire 2000-2006 Objective 1 Programme Investments*. Wath Upon Dearne: South Yorkshire Objective 1.

Objective 1 Programme Directorate, no date. *An Introduction to Objective 1 South Yorkshire*. Wath Upon Dearne: Objective 1 Programme Directorate.

Office for National Statistics, 2011. *Labour market statistics: December 2011*. Statistical Bulletin. London: ONS.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004. *Jobs and Enterprise in Deprived Areas: Social Exclusion Unit Report*. Wetherby: Social Exclusion Unit and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Owen, P. & Wintour, P., 2010. *New mothers and fathers should have parenting classes – Frank Field report*. [Online] Available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/dec/03/new-mothers-fathers-parenting-classes-frank-field [Accessed 6 November 2011].

Palmer, G., Carr, J. & Kenway, P., 2005. *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2005*. York: Joseph Rowntree foundation and New Policy Institute.

Palmer, G., MacInnes, T. & Kenway, P., 2007. *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2007*. York: Joseph Rowntree foundation and new Policy Institute.

Palmer, G., MacInnes, T. & Kenway, P., 2008. *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2008*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Parnham, J., 2001. Lifelong Learning: a Model for Increasing the Participation of Non-traditional Adult Learners. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 25(1), pp.57-65.

Pawson, R., 1989. *A Measure for Measures: a Manifesto for Empirical Sociology*. London and New York: Routledge.

Pawson, R. & Tilley, N., 1997. *Realistic Evaluation*. London, Thousand Oaks, and New Delhi: Sage.

Payne, J., 1999. *All things to all people: changing perceptions of 'skill' among Britain's policy makers since the 1950s and their implications*. SKOPE Research Paper No. 1. Coventry: SKOPE University of Warwick.

Payne, J., 2000. The unbearable lightness of skill: the changing meaning of skill in UK policy discourses and some implications for education and training. *Journal of Education Policy*, pp.353-69.

Payne, J., 2006. *What's wrong with emotional labour?* Research Paper 65. Coventry: SKOPE University of Warwick.

Payne, J., 2009. Emotional labour and Skill: A Reappraisal. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 16(3), pp.348-67.

Peck, J., 1990. The Youth Training Scheme: regional policy in reverse? *Policy and Politics*, 18(2), pp.135-43.

Peck, J., 1991. Letting the market decide (with public money): Training and Enterprise councils and the future of labour market programmes. *Critical Social Policy*, 31, pp.4-17.

Percy-Smith, J., 2000. Introduction: the Contours of Social Exclusion. In J. Percy-Smith, ed. *Policy Responses to Social Exclusion: Towards Inclusion?* Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Philips, M., 2001. What About the Overclass? In Murray, C. *Underclass + 10*. London: Civitas and The Sunday Times. pp.19-29.

Phills Jr., J.A., Deiglmeier, K. & Miller, D.T., 2008. Rediscovering Social Innovation. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, (Fall), pp.34-43.

Plewis, I. & Preston, J., 2001. *Evaluating The Benefits of Lifelong Learning: A Framework*. London: Institute of Education.

Policy Action Team on Jobs, 1999. *Jobs for All: Report of the Policy Action Team on jobs*. Nottingham: Department for Education and Employment.

Policy Research Institute, 2007. *Towards Skills for Jobs: 'What Works' in Tackling Worklessness?* Coventry: Learning and Skills Council.

Porter, S., 2002. Critical Realist Ethnography. In T. May, ed. *Qualitative Research in Action*. London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage. pp.53-72.

Rainbird, H., 2000. Skilling the unskilled: access to work-based learning and the lifelong learning agenda. *Journal of Education and work*, 13(2), pp.183-97.

REDF, 2000. *Social Return on Investment (SROI) Collection*. [Online] Available at: http://www.redf.org/learn-from-redf/publications/119 [Accessed 1 November 2011].

Rennie, S., 1999. *The Intermediate Labour Market*. [Online] Available at: http://www.brisinst.org.au/papers/rennie_simon_labour/print.html [Accessed 09 February 2003].

Research as Evidence, 2007. *What works in preventing and re-engaging young people NEET in London*. London: Greater London Authority.

Rodger, J.J., 2008. *Criminalising Social Policy: Anti-social behaviour and welfare in a de-civilised society*. Cullompton and Portland: Willan Publishing.

Rogers, J., 2007. *Adults Learning*. 5th ed. Maidenhead and New York: Open University Press and McGraw Hill.

Rojahn, J., Warren, V.J. & Ohringer, S., 1994. AS Comparison of Assessment Methods for Depression in Mental Retardation. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 24(3), pp.305-13.

Rolfe, G., 2006. Review: A critical realist rationale for using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 11(1), pp.79-80.

Rosenfeld, J., 2010. 'The meaning of poverty' and contemporary quantitative poverty research. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 61(Supplement s1), pp.103-10.

Rowlingson, K. & Berthoud, R., 1996. *Disability, Benefits and Employment*. London: Department of Social Security.

Sanderson, 2000. Evaluating Initiatives to Address Social Inclusion. In J. Percy-Smith, ed. *Policy Responses to Social Exclusion: Towards Inclusion?* Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press. pp.216-39.

Schmid, G., 2002. Towards a Theory of Transitional labour Markets. In Schmid, G. & Gazier, B. *The Dynamics of Full Employment: Social Integration through Transitional Labour Markets*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. pp.151-95.

Schmid, G., 2009. Transitional Labour Markets, from theory to policy application. Transitional Labour Markets and Flexicurity: Managing Social Risks over the Lifecourse. *CES Working Papers*.

Schuller, T. & Watson, D., 2009. *Learning Through Life: Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning*. Leicester: Inquiry into the Future for Lifelong Learning (IFLL) and NIACE.

Schwarz, C., Davidson, G., Seaton, A. & Tebbit, V., eds., 1988. *Cambridge English Dictionary*. Edinburgh, Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: W & R Chambers and Cambridge University Press.

Seale, C., ed., 2000. *Researching Society and Culture*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage publications.

Sealey, C., 2009. *Social Exclusion and Young People: A Critical Realist Strong Late Modern Analytic*. PhD. Birmingham: University of Birmingham.

Select Committee on Education and Employment, 1997. *Education and Employment: Second Report*. [Online] Available at:
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmeduemp/263/263ap201.htm [Accessed 4 March 2003].

Select Committee on Education and Employment, 1998. *Memorandum by the Trades Union Congress*. Second Report. London: House of Commons.

Select Committee on Education and Employment, 2001. *Education and Employment: Fourth Report*. [Online] Available at: http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200001/cmselect/cmeduemp/205/20502.htm [Accessed 4 March 2003].

Serrano Pascual, A., 2007. Reshaping Welfare States: Activation Regimes in Europe. In A. Serrano Pascual & L. Magnusson, eds. *Reshaping Welfare States: Activation Regimes in Europe*. Brussels: Peter Lang. pp.11-34.

Shury, J. et al., 2010. *National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009: Key Findings Report*. Wath Upon Dearne and London: UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

Sianesi, B., 2003. *Returns to Education: A Non-Technical Summary of CEE Work and Policy Discussion*. [Online] London: Institute for Fiscal Studies and Centre for the Economics of Education Available at:
http://www.ifs.org.uk/docs/cee_summ.pdf [Accessed 28 August 2009].

Silver, H., 1994. Social Exclusion and Social Solidarity: Three Paradigms. *International Labour Review*, 5(6), pp.531-78.

Silverman, D., 1998. Research and Social Theory. In C. Seale, ed. *Researching Society and Culture*. London, Thousand Oaks, and New Delhi: Sage. pp.97-110.

Silverman, D., 2000. *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*. London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage.

Silverman, D., 2001. *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*. London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Skeggs, B., 2002. Techniques for Telling the Reflexive Self. In T. May, ed. *Qualitative Research in Action*. London, Thousand Oaks, and New Delhi: Sage. pp.349-74.

Skills Funding Agency, 2011. *Confirmation of Funding*. [Online] Available at: http://qcf.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/qcf-funding/confirmationfunding [Accessed 26 November 2011].

Smith, D., 2000. Dealed out? Welfare to work and social exclusion. *Local Economy*, 15(4), pp.312-24.

Snowdon, G., 2011. *Lowest paid jobs in the UK 2011*. [Online] Available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2011/nov/25/lowest-paid-jobs-uk-2011 [Accessed 26 November 2011].

Social Enterprise South East, undated. *A Beginners Guide to Social Impact Measurement*. Reading: SE2Parnership.

Social Exclusion Task Force, 2008. *Context for Social Exclusion Work*. [Online] Available at: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/context.aspx [Accessed 15 December 2008].

Social Exclusion Unit, 1999. *Bridging the Gap: New Opportunities for 16-18 Year Olds Not in Education, Employment or Training*. London: The Stationary Office.

Social Exclusion Unit, 2001. *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: A National Strategy Action Plan*. London: Social Exclusion Unit and Cabinet Office.

Social Exclusion Unit, 2001a. *Preventing Social Exclusion*. London: Social Exclusion Unit.

South, J., Jackson, K.L. & Warwick-Booth, L., 2011. The Community Health Apprentices Project - the Outcomes of an Intermediate Labour Market Project in the Community Health Sector. *Community, Work & Family*, 14(1), pp.1-18.

Stewart, M.B., 2007. The Interrelated Dynamics of Unemployment and Low-wage Employment. *Journal of Applied Econometrics*, 22, pp.511-31.

Strelitz, J., 2003. Tackling Disadvantage: Education - Inequalities of Opportunities and Outcomes. In D. Darton & J. Strelitz, eds. *Tackling UK Poverty and Disadvantage in the Twenty-first Century*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. pp.57-75.

SYCON, 2001. *Business Prospectus.* Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster: Sheffield Centre for Full Employment, Phoenix Enterprises, Barnsley Development Association, and Doncaster Regeneration Partnership.

Syrett, S. & North, D., 2008. *Renewing Neighbourhoods: Work, enterprise and governance.* Bristol: The Policy press.

Tagg, J., 1988. *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories.* Macmillan.

The Social Exclusion Unit, 2001. *Preventing Social Exclusion.* London: The Cabinet Office.

The Wise Group, 2004. *Case Studies.* [Online] Available at: http://www.thewisegroup.co.uk/community/paisley_road_west.htm [Accessed 4 October 2004].

Thompson, J., 2000. *Social Exclusion.* NIACE Briefing Sheet. Leicester: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.

tlm.net, n.d. *Managing Social Risks through Transitional Labour Markets.* [Online] Available at: http://www.siswo.uva.nl/tlm [Accessed 11 September 2010].

Tomlinson, M., Walker, R. & Williams, G., 2008. Measuring Poverty in Britain as a Multi-dimensional Concept, 1991-2003. *Journal of Social Policy,* 37(4), pp.597-620.

Townsend, P., 1979. *Poverty in the United Kingdom: A Survey of Household Resources and Standards of Living.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Townsend, P., 2010. The Meaning of Poverty. *The British Journal of Sociology,* 61(Supplement 1), pp.85-102.

Toynbee, P. & Walker, D., 2008. *Unjust Rewards.* London: Granta.

Treasury, H., 2002. *The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery: A Cross Cutting Review.* Cross Cutting Review. London: HM Treasury HM Treasury.

TUC, 2010. *The Frank Field Review.* [Online] Available at: http://www.tuc.org.uk/social/tuc-18975-f0.cfm [Accessed 10 November 2011].

van Gelder, S., ed., 2011. *This Changes Everything.* San Francisco: Berret-Koehler.

Walker, I. & Zhu, Y., 2001. *The Returns to Education: Evidence from the Labour Force Surveys.* Research Report RR313. Nottingham: Department for Education and Skills.

Walsh, D., 1998. Doing Ethnography. In C. Seale, ed. *Researching Society and Culture.* London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage. pp.217-32.

Wardrop, K., 1996. *Glasgow Works: Helping the long-term unemployed get back to work*. Scotland Europa Centre Paper. Brussels and Glasgow: Scotland Europa Glasgow Development Agency.

Warhurst, C. & Nickson, D., 2007. Employee Experience of aesthetic labour in retail and hospitality. *Work, Employment and Society*, 21(1), pp.103-20.

Warhurst, C. & Nickson, D., 2009. 'Who's Got the Look?' Emotional, Aesthetic and Sexualised Labour in Interactive Services. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 16(1), pp.385-404.

Warhurst, C., Nickson, D., Witz, A. & Cullen, A.M., 2000. Aesthetic labour in interactive service work: some case study evidence from 'new' Glasgow. *The Service Industries Journal*, 20(3), pp.1-18.

Waring, P., 2011. Keeping up Appearances: Aesthetic Labour and Discrimination Law. *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 53(2), pp.193-207.

Watt, A., 1997. *Memorandum by the Wise Group*. [Online] Available at: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmeduemp/263/2 63ap211.htm [Accessed 3 September 2010].

Wells, P. et al., 2003. *South Yorkshire Objective 1 Mid Term Evaluation: Final Report*. Leeds: Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber.

Welsh Assembly Government, 2006. *Intermediate Labour Markets: summary of evidence*. Background Analysis. Cardiff: WAG Economic Research Unit.

Wengraf, T., 2001. *Qualitative Research Interviewing: Biographic, Narrative and Semi-Structures Method*. London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publications.

West Midlands Regional Observatory, 2009. *Employer's Experiences of Employing Those Who Have Been Workless: Literature Review*. Birmingham: West Midlands Regional Observatory.

Westwood, A., 2004. Skills that Matter and Shortages that Don't. In C. Warhurst, I. Grugulis & E. Keep, eds. *The Skills That Matter*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan. pp.38-38-54.

Wheelahan, L., 2007. Blending activity theory and critical realism to theorise the relationship between the individual and society and the implications for pedagogy. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 39(2), pp.183-96.

Wilkinson, R. & Pickett, K., 2010. *The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone*. London: Penguin.

Williams, C.L. & Connell, C., 2010. 'Looking Good and Sounding Right': Aesthetic Labour and Social Inequality in the Retail Industry. *Work and Occupations*, 37(3), pp.349-77.

Winnett, R., 2005. Meet the 'neets': A new underclass. *Sunday Times* , 27 March.

Wolf, A., 2011. *Review of Vocational Education.* The Wolf Report. Runcorn: Department for Education.

Wolf, A., Jenkins, A. & Vignoles, A., 2006. Certifying the workforce: economic imperative or failed social policy? *Journal of Educational Policy,* 21(5), pp.535-65.

Wood, C. & Leighton, D., 2010. *Measuring Social Value: the Gap between Policy and Practice.* London: Demos.

Yin, R.K., 1994. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods.* London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Word Count

Word count in main body of text = 74, 118 words

Main body plus appendices, bibliography, contents table, etc = 86.8450 words

Appendix 1: Managing Agents' Topic Guide

Learning to Work: ILMs

Address

Interview with ....

Job role..............................

Thursday 13th March.

3pm

Interviewed by Gordon Parker

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me today.

I expect the conversation to last about an hour. If we have not covered all the topics after 45 minutes, we can then assess any priorities for the last 15 minutes. Our talk is completely confidential and no individuals will be identified in any reports. All transcripts and notes will be kept secure and will not be passed on to any third party.

Do you mind if I tape the conversation? I would like to, so that I have a better record of the event and am able to represent your views correctly. I will be happy to send you a copy of the tape.

I have a number of topic areas I would like to cover. They are all aimed at eventually arriving at some responses to the main Research Question which is "Why do people with a history of disadvantage and disengagement from the labour market move into employability and employment through ILM interventions? This interview has three main aims for me:

1. To enable me to ensure that my understanding of your programme's aims is correct and, if not, to gain a better understanding.
2. To begin to assess current theories of why ILM programmes work against your experience here in Sheffield. I have questions at both the level of the programme and at the level of individuals as they pass through the programme.
3. To identify a way forward for this research project which takes account of what you would like from the research and also discussing issues such as access to key people and materials.

As we talk I will make a list of materials or information which I might be able to collect and perhaps we can discuss this at the end?

I will read each opening question but then, hopefully, proceed more conversationally.

1   So, in this first section I would just like to see if I understand the SYCON ILM model of implementation correctly. Can I list what I understand to be the characteristics of the model and see if that matches your experience on the ground?

Two formative models:

Wise Group Model

*Glasgow Works Model

- First priority = moving long-term unemployed people into employment

255

- Second priority = delivering new services or adding to existing services which benefit the community
- Long-term unemployed, e.g. one year plus
- Provide paid work on a temporary contract in the 'social enterprise' sector
- Project based employment opportunities
- Non-compulsory
- Competitive, e.g. access by interview
- Possibility of 12 months or more employment on project
- Provide training and support (job-search, ?basic skills) whilst on project and beyond
- Access a variety of funding sources.

1a   What current economic or other policy initiative do you consider to be the most conducive to supporting the model and helping it to be successful? By "successful" I mean having a positive outcome for most people.

1b   What, in terms of policy, then, are the biggest threats?

PROMPT

New Deal?

Length of unemployment?

Compulsion?

Funding?

2   OK Thanks for that. Can we now briefly turn to any specific problems or advantages of using that model here in Sheffield? Here I am beginning to assess the "ideal" model against local contexts brought about by different policy, programme and other issues in order to start to understand, for instance, issues such as why replications of programmes produce different outcomes.

PROMPT

Local

- projects,

- experience
- expertise

- sources of funding
- community need
- level of long-term unemployment**?**

Relationships with

- Employers,
- Employment services,
- Community groups**?**

StepUp   - e.g. criticism of minimum wage, all labour market sectors (cheap labour?)

3   **I would now like to turn to individuals who benefit from the programme and their passage through it. First of all by looking at how projects in Sheffield are conceived and developed, then moving to the interview and recruitment process, support whilst on the programme and then follow-up on leaving. I want to focus not so much on what happens but on why particular decisions are made; to try to make explicit the underlying theories or motivations for particular actions.**

PROMPT

Project conception and development – why, aims, examples?

Recruitment – how advertised, where, why there? ?examples of adverts

Interview – qualities of ideal candidate? Why would a candidate be refused? ?examples of interview scoring sheets or similar

Support whilst employed –

- Employability skills (job search, C.V. writing, interview skills, attitude): which, why these, how identified and by whom?
- Wider learning skills (basic literacy and numeracy, IT, job specific) examples, how identified, why these?
- Horizontal learning – dealing with research-identified problems – issues relating to employment and e.g. disability, ethnicity, gender, age, carer. Dealing with issues such as debt, drug or alcohol misuse, self-esteem.

Support when participant leaves project and/or temporary contract completed –

- If employed
- If unemployed

How monitored??

Quality of jobs achieved on leaving – how monitored?

4   Ok thanks. Can we now turn to taking the research forward please? From your point of view, I wonder if there is anything you think you particularly want to get out of the research? Feedback was mentioned at the meeting we had a few days ago, what do you think is the best way for me to present that feedback? From my point of view I wondered what kind of access to materials or key individuals you can offer and how best for us to communicate?

PROMPT

How to feedback? Presentation, findings, processes, emails, etc????

Materials – Raw data, publicity, questionnaires, interview forms, monitoring forms, etc?

Individuals –Project managers, support workers, participants???

- Methods: shadow support worker, observe at interviews, talk to employees/employers?

How to communicate – email, phone, meeting?

5   Is there anything that I have not covered which you think, perhaps, I should have? Or anything you want to add?

Appendix 2: ILM Employer Topic Guide

ILM Employers – telephone Call Script and Interview Schedule

Good morning / afternoon. I'm Gordon Parker from Sheffield Hallam University. I sent you an email recently to say that I would be in touch. I'm getting in touch now! Did you get the email?

It introduced my research project.

The research is looking at the impact of Object 1 funded training and learning activities aimed at people considered to be disadvantaged in the labour market. I am interested in ILM provision and particularly in how ILMs prepare people for sustainable employment and the wider labour market.

Do you mind if I ask you a few questions now?

OK – Go to Questions

NO – When would be a good time for me to call you back?

NO, NOT INTERESTED – OK. Thanks for your time

Questions.

I have a facility here to tape our conversation, do you mind if I switch it on? It will help me ensure that have your views better represented.

I should also say that our conversation is completely confidential. You will not be personally identified in any report. If I do refer to the conversation it will only be to, an "ILM employer".

1   I'm going to be a bit of a 'Devil's advocate' here. Two broad opposing opinions about ILMs have emerged; one is that ILMs should give the beneficiaries 'the best labour market experience possible' with lots of targeted support, in order to really encourage beneficiaries to take up paid employment. On the other hand, critics argue that ILMs offer too much of a 'comfort zone' and do not mirror actual working life in the wider labour market, leading to problems when they actually do obtain work outside of the ILM programme. OK. Can you respond to that, perhaps by saying how ILM employment in your organisation is similar to that which beneficiaries might encounter in employment when they leave you, and also where there might be differences?

SIMILARITIES

DIFFERENCES

2   Can you tell me if you take any specific steps to prepare people to go into other workplaces?

PROFILE OTHER EMPLOYERS

VISITS TO OTHER WORKPLACES

WORK IN DIFFERENT WAYS

3   Have you had any feedback from either ILM beneficiaries who have left you and / or mainstream employers who take on ILM beneficiaries about how they feel they have been prepared for work?

YES – can you give me a feel for what has been said?

ILM WORKERS

POST-ILM EMPLOYERS

4   Finally, I wondered if, In general, you find that people who leave into employment find work in a similar field to your organisation? Or do they move on into different kinds of work?

OK. Thanks very much for your time. Do you have anything to add, that you think might be useful or that I should perhaps have covered?

NO – OK. Well, again, thanks very much for your time.

<u>Appendix 3: Participant Topic Guide</u>

Learning to Work: ILM

Interview with ILM Worker

Name...

.... October 2003

Time:............................

Interviewed by Gordon Parker

Confidentiality

The interview is absolutely private. Your name is not put on any report; no one will be able to trace anything you say back to yourself.

Introduce myself.

Name

SHU / Objective 1 – Do you know about Objective 1?

Research into ILMs

What I would like to do.

Is have a chat about how you feel about your ILM. It should take about 15 – 20 minutes. If you feel that you don't want to answer of the questions that's fine but if you do answer them then your

261

contribution will be very much appreciated and may help us improve ILMs in the future.

I would like to [audio] tape this so that I can play it back and listen to it. Is that OK or would you prefer me not to tape it?

1. OK, as I said, I am interested in finding out about how you feel about your ILM. Can you tell me about it please, What kind of work do you do? Is it interesting? How you found out about it? That kind of thing.

ADVICE
WHO TO ASK? 'LOOKED AFTER'
SUPPORT

2. OK. Thinking now about looking for work before you started the ILM, and now that you are doing it, how do you think the ILM will help you get into permanent work? Maybe skills you are learning? Or people you are meeting? Support you are getting?

BARRIERS TO WORK

BRIDGES TO WORK

3. Thanks, can you tell me now about any training that you do, What kind of courses? Where you do them? How do you find the work, is it easy, difficult? What do you think?

LEARNING STYLES

OWNERSHIP – PREVIOUS INTEREST?

JOB RELATED?

4. Ok. Thanks again. One last question now but it is split into two bits: Firstly, what are the best things about your ILM? Is there anything that you particularly enjoy?

MONEY

SECURITY FOR A PERIOD OF TIME

BEING IN A JOB

SOCIAL

And what are the worst things? Is there anything [else] that you
don't like?

JOBSEARCH

TRAINING

"FREEDOM"

**Thanks very much for your time. Is there anything else that
you want to say about your ILM or your training?**

Appendix 4: Examples of Field Notes

① Phoenix   Mon 4th.

* lot of waiting - ~~small~~ large group
of young people - hanging
around - downstairs
first - taken upstairs
by Paul - lad asleep
in chair - baseball
caps - odd older
person 50s? - very
little interaction between
people - couple
of chatters chatting
- ~~x~~ people here for
9 am - may start around
9.30 - people in
small room downstairs
- warren of corridors

② tables downstairs

Office
Offices   Offices

Upstairs.

Door
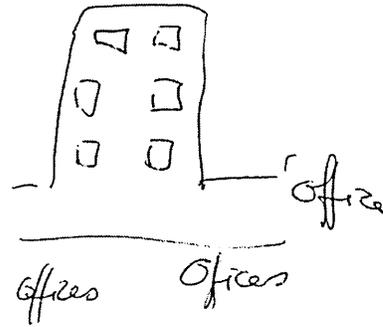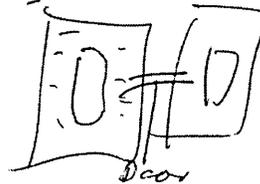
③ 11 m 3f

- sitting round again
- everyone has come into
room - no talking yet
- air of dependancy
rather than expectation
- no tutor in room
yet - popped in,
will be back in two
minutes - (too) (Doing)
Admin person up
down stairs - not
come in yet - in
at 9.25. -

④ 2513
 - Job search
Tutor.

- Mission statement -

- Passing papers
round.
-1st activity
folding paper / writing
names

- Not sure why we
are her -
"cos it's shit" "Jobcentre
~~plus~~ plus are supposed to
find you a job and they
send you to a place like
this, I don't think

to learn.

- ▮▮▮▮ request to use computer facilities was not responded to — Paul may not have heard it? It was at a time when ▮▮▮▮ was doing "1 to 1" — ▮▮▮▮ had been dealt with. Boots issue.

▮▮▮▮ had a problem re getting a lift to Dearne Valley College — he thought he had been promised a lift — ▮▮▮▮ contacted office/reception said no lift. ▮▮▮▮ said his contact had promised — didn't want to call, "not very good on the phone to people I don't know" (similar to farm) ▮▮▮▮ got ▮▮▮▮ number, rang him & sorted it out. ▮▮▮▮ worry was lessened.

▮▮▮▮ reading skills would have left him completely out of the loop. He copied words down but could not understand them. He soon picked up the technique.

▮▮▮▮ — I've had one day off this week, you know, How many more days can I have this week? Forms make sick days appear to be entitlements.

Misspelling / missing words on

What do you think about your ILM?

Please take a few minutes to do this survey. It will help us to know how YOU feel about being an ILM worker.

Answer the questions by ticking ✓ the box that best says how you feel. In the example below the person agrees with example 1 but disagrees with example 2

Statement	☺ ☺ Definitely agree	☺ Agree	☺ Neither agree nor disagree	☹ Disagree	☹ ☹ Definitely disagree
Example 1. I am looking forward to my dinner		✓			
Example 2. Mashed potatoes are better than chips				✓	

When you have finished, please put it into the pre-paid envelope and pop it in the post.

You are not asked for any personal details and cannot be personally identified. Completed questionnaires will not be shown to anyone outside my department at Sheffield Hallam University.

If you do want to talk to me about your ILM, please call 0114 225 3073, leave your number and I will call you back. Or just pop a note with your details in the pre-paid envelope.
Please read these statements and tick ✓ your answer.

Statement	☺ ☺ Definitely agree	☺ Agree	😐 Neither agree nor disagree	☹ Disagree	☹ ☹ Definitely disagree
My ILM is a job not a training scheme					
I had a choice of which ILM to go on					
Before starting my ILM, I got some good advice about which one would be best for me					
Being without a job has stopped me from getting work in the past					
I was interested in the type of work I do on my ILM before I started it					
My chances of getting a permanent job are better now that I am on an ILM					
On my ILM, I am learning about working for other employers					
Training is an important part of an ILM					
The skills I am learning on my ILM are needed by employers					
It is important to start jobsearch during the first months of an ILM					
It is important that my ILM helps the community					

Earning a wage is better than getting benefits					
Getting enough money is more important than whether it comes from benefits or wages					
The money I get is right for the job I do					
I have more money now that I am working on my ILM					
Having a 12 months contract is important to me					
I get enough help and support from my Project Officer					
I get enough help and support from my employer					
My employer treats me just like the other workers					

I have been on my ILM for (Please tick ✓)

Less than a month ☐

1-2 months ☐   3-6 months ☐   7-9 months ☐   10–12 months ☐

More than 12 months ☐

Thank you very much for completing this survey!

Please return it by (DATE)

Appendix 6: Transcription Excerpt

13/03/03

54 It...basically is but whilst you have been running through those I've jotted down some extra bits, for me... Erm Some of our ILMs would start at six months.

56 That would be the New deal 18 – 24 and Voluntary Service Option and Environmental Task Force Option. So there are some people that would start at the beginning at six months but... by nature they've usually, these days... We've got a deal with the Employment Service or Job centre Plus where, out of that group, we're picking the most disadvantaged, those that have been round a number of times, for the ILM product. So, if you totalled up all of their unemployment over the last five years they might have been unemployed three years, etc. Erm...

58 So. The other bit for me which I don't think comes out the bullet points. Now but SYCON's moved forward a bit, erm, these days and I think we're moving a lot stronger towards developing Community Enterprise or partners that can actually start the business off using ILMs but eventually might be self financing, funding, profit-making, etc. who would be able to continue offering the, sort of, ILM placement opportunities when Objective 1 money or CRT money, or whatever, disappears. So that we would have an infrastructure, er, below us or either side of us in the future that would have a number of placement opportunities for disadvantaged groups but still do still do some of the things that we are trying to do in the social enterprise sector.

60 Erm.

Gordon Parker

53 Is that basically it? Is there anything...?

55 Yep. Is that the New Deal?

57 OK

59 Right. So can you give me an example of how that would work in practice?

61 How it has worked, perhaps?

62 Well the best example I've got at the moment is we, for instance, have got a joint venture going

270

Appendix 7: Induction handouts

PHOENIX TRAINING PROGRAMME

Phoenix Enterprises Participation Induction Checklist			

Please sign in the space provided for each subject received

Item	Subject	Date	Received Signature
1.	Introduction to Phoenix Enterprises	4	
2.	♦ Tour of Building ♦ Domestic Arrangements	5	
3.	♦ Health & Safety ♦ Accident Reporting ♦ Risk Assessment	5	
4.	Personal Protective		
5.	Fire Procedure	4	
6.	♦ Participant Handbook ♦ 'Be Safe' Booklet Issued		
7.	Leave Entitlement	4	
8.	Sickness Reporting	4	
9.	Equal Opportunities Policy	4	
10.	Discipline & Grievance Procedures	4	
11.	♦ Appropriate Behaviour ♦ Drink / Drugs Policy)	4	
12.	Timesheets		
13.	Hours of Participation		
14.	Jobsearch Programme	6	
15.	Initial Assessment	6	
16.	♦ Training Plans ♦ Assessment	6	
17.	Tools & Equipment		

Employment Service

PROFESSIONAL

	Your expectations of these people
1. The Fire Service	
2. Job Centre Advisors	
3. The Police Service	
4. Nurses	
5. Doctors	
6. Hairdressers	
7. Fast Food Worker	
8. Shop Assistants	

Appendix 8: Statistical tables

See next page for statistical tables

Data for Table 26

Being without a job has stopped me from getting work in the past

Being without a job has stopped me from getting work in the past

N	Valid	104
	Missing	3

Being without a job has stopped me from getting work in the past

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	13	12.1	12.5	12.5
	2 Agree	33	30.8	31.7	44.2
	3 Agree nor disagree	25	23.4	24.0	68.3
	4 Disagree	25	23.4	24.0	92.3
	5 Definitely disagree	8	7.5	7.7	100.0
	Total	104	97.2	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	3	2.8		
Total		107	100.0		

My chances of getting a permanent job are better now that I am on an ILM

Statistics

My chances of getting a permanent job are better now that I am on an ILM

N	Valid	106
	Missing	1

My chances of getting a permanent job are better now that I am on an ILM

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	31	29.0	29.2	29.2
	2 Agree	54	50.5	50.9	80.2
	3 Agree nor disagree	16	15.0	15.1	95.3
	4 Disagree	4	3.7	3.8	99.1
	5 Definitely disagree	1	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	106	99.1	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	1	.9		
Total		107	100.0		

Data for Table 27

My ILM is a job not a training scheme

Statistics

My ILM is a job not a training scheme

N	Valid	105
	Missin g	2

My ILM is a job not a training scheme

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	4	3.7	3.8	3.8
	2 Agree	37	34.6	35.2	39.0
	3 Agree nor disagree	34	31.8	32.4	71.4
	4 Disagree	22	20.6	21.0	92.4
	5 Definitely disagree	8	7.5	7.6	100.0
	Total	105	98.1	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	2	1.9		
Total		107	100.0		

I had a choice of which job to go on

Statistics

I had a choice of which job to go on

N	Valid	105
	Missin g	2

I had a choice of which job to go on

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	5	4.7	4.8	4.8
	2 Agree	43	40.2	41.0	45.7
	3 Agree nor disagree	16	15.0	15.2	61.0
	4 Disagree	22	20.6	21.0	81.9
	5 Definitely disagree	19	17.8	18.1	100.0
	Total	105	98.1	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	2	1.9		
Total		107	100.0		

275

Before starting my ILM, I got some good advice about which one would be best for me

Statistics

Before starting my ILM, I got some good advice about which one would be best for me

N	Valid	107
	Missing	0

Before starting my ILM, I got some good advice about which one would be best for me

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	6	5.6	5.6	5.6
	2 Agree	38	35.5	35.5	41.1
	3 Agree nor disagree	21	19.6	19.6	60.7
	4 Disagree	26	24.3	24.3	85.0
	5 Definitely disagree	16	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

I was interested in the type of work I do on my ILM before I started it

Statistics

I was interested in the type of work I do on my ILM before I started it

N	Valid	105
	Missing	2

I was interested in the type of work I do on my ILM before I started it

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	37	34.6	35.2	35.2
	2 Agree	49	45.8	46.7	81.9
	3 Agree nor disagree	10	9.3	9.5	91.4
	4 Disagree	4	3.7	3.8	95.2
	5 Definitely disagree	5	4.7	4.8	100.0
	Total	105	98.1	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	2	1.9		
Total		107	100.0		

Having a twelve months contract is important to me

Statistics

Having a twelve months contract is important to me

N	Valid	106
	Missing	1

Having a twelve months contract is important to me

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	20	18.7	18.9	18.9
	2 Agree	52	48.6	49.1	67.9
	3 Agree nor disagree	24	22.4	22.6	90.6
	4 Disagree	6	5.6	5.7	96.2
	5 Definitely disagree	4	3.7	3.8	100.0
	Total	106	99.1	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	1	.9		
Total		107	100.0		

My employer treats me just like the other workers

Statistics

My employer treats me just like the other workers

N	Valid	104
	Missing	3

My employer treats me just like the other workers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	39	36.4	37.5	37.5
	2 Agree	52	48.6	50.0	87.5
	3 Agree nor disagree	8	7.5	7.7	95.2
	4 Disagree	3	2.8	2.9	98.1
	5 Definitely disagree	2	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	104	97.2	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	3	2.8		
Total		107	100.0		

It is important that my ILM helps the community

It is important that my ILM helps the community

N	Valid	105
	Missin g	2

It is important that my ILM helps the community

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	14	13.1	13.3	13.3
	2 Agree	46	43.0	43.8	57.1
	3 Agree nor disagree	36	33.6	34.3	91.4
	4 Disagree	7	6.5	6.7	98.1
	5 Definitely disagree	2	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	105	98.1	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	2	1.9		
Total		107	100.0		

Data for Table 28
Earning a wage is better than getting benefits

Statistics

Earning a wage is better than getting benefits

N	Valid	106
	Missin g	1

Earning a wage is better than getting benefits

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	69	64.5	65.1	65.1
	2 Agree	35	32.7	33.0	98.1
	3 Agree nor disagree	2	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	106	99.1	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	1	.9		
Total		107	100.0		

Getting enough money is more important than whether it comes from benefits or wages

Statistics

Getting enough money is more important than whether it comes from benefits or wages

N	Valid	103
	Missin g	4

Getting enough money is more important than whether it comes from benefits or wages

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	23	21.5	22.3	22.3
	2 Agree	35	32.7	34.0	56.3
	3 Agree nor disagree	16	15.0	15.5	71.8
	4 Disagree	26	24.3	25.2	97.1
	5 Definitely disagree	3	2.8	2.9	100.0
	Total	103	96.3	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	4	3.7		
Total		107	100.0		

279

The money I get is right for the job I do

The money I get is right for the job I do

N	Valid	104
	Missing	3

The money I get is right for the job I do

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	15	14.0	14.4	14.4
	2 Agree	34	31.8	32.7	47.1
	3 Agree nor disagree	29	27.1	27.9	75.0
	4 Disagree	18	16.8	17.3	92.3
	5 Definitely disagree	8	7.5	7.7	100.0
	Total	104	97.2	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	3	2.8		
Total		107	100.0		

I have more money now that I am working on my ILM

Statistics

I have more money now that I am working on my ILM

N	Valid	107
	Missing	0

I have more money now that I am working on my ILM

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	31	29.0	29.0	29.0
	2 Agree	50	46.7	46.7	75.7
	3 Agree nor disagree	11	10.3	10.3	86.0
	4 Disagree	10	9.3	9.3	95.3
	5 Definitely disagree	5	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

Data for Table 29

The skills I am learning on my ILM are needed by employers

Statistics

The skills I am learning on my ILM are needed by employers

N	Valid	106
	Missing	1

The skills I am learning on my ILM are needed by employers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	28	26.2	26.4	26.4
	2 Agree	63	58.9	59.4	85.8
	3 Agree nor disagree	14	13.1	13.2	99.1
	5 Definitely disagree	1	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	106	99.1	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	1	.9		
Total		107	100.0		

On my ILM, I am learning about working for other employers

Statistics

On my ILM, I am learning about working for other employers

N	Valid	95
	Missing	12

On my ILM, I am learning about working for other employers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	8	7.5	8.4	8.4
	2 Agree	55	51.4	57.9	66.3
	3 Agree nor disagree	24	22.4	25.3	91.6
	4 Disagree	4	3.7	4.2	95.8
	5 Definitely disagree	4	3.7	4.2	100.0
	Total	95	88.8	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	1	.9		
	9 Not asked	11	10.3		
	Total	12	11.2		
Total		107	100.0		

Training is an important part of an ILM

Training is an important part of an ILM

N	Valid	104
	Missin g	3

Training is an important part of an ILM

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	34	31.8	32.7	32.7
	2 Agree	57	53.3	54.8	87.5
	3 Agree nor disagree	11	10.3	10.6	98.1
	4 Disagree	2	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	104	97.2	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	3	2.8		
Total		107	100.0		

It is important to start jobsearch during the first months of an ILM

It is important to start jobsearch during the first months of an ILM

N	Valid	106
	Missin g	1

It is important to start jobsearch during the first months of an ILM

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	13	12.1	12.3	12.3
	2 Agree	27	25.2	25.5	37.7
	3 Agree nor disagree	33	30.8	31.1	68.9
	4 Disagree	24	22.4	22.6	91.5
	5 Definitely disagree	9	8.4	8.5	100.0
	Total	106	99.1	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	1	.9		
Total		107	100.0		

282

Data for Table 30

I get enough help and support from my Project Officer

Statistics

I get enough help and support from my Project Officer

N	Valid	106
	Missing	1

I get enough help and support from my Project Officer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	29	27.1	27.4	27.4
	2 Agree	51	47.7	48.1	75.5
	3 Agree nor disagree	19	17.8	17.9	93.4
	4 Disagree	4	3.7	3.8	97.2
	5 Definitely disagree	3	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	106	99.1	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	1	.9		
Total		107	100.0		

I get enough help and support from my employer

Statistics

I get enough help and support from my employer

N	Valid	103
	Missing	4

I get enough help and support from my employer

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	31	29.0	30.1	30.1
	2 Agree	56	52.3	54.4	84.5
	3 Agree nor disagree	13	12.1	12.6	97.1
	4 Disagree	2	1.9	1.9	99.0
	5 Definitely disagree	1	.9	1.0	100.0
	Total	103	96.3	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	4	3.7		
Total		107	100.0		

283

Managing Agency

Managing Agency

N	Valid	107
	Missing	0

Managing Agency

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Barnsley	33	30.8	30.8	30.8
	2 Doncaster	48	44.9	44.9	75.7
	3 Rotherham	11	10.3	10.3	86.0
	4 Sheffield	15	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

Time on ILM

Time on ILM

N	Valid	104
	Missing	3

Time on ILM

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 less than 1 month	5	4.7	4.8	4.8
	2 1 - 2 months	9	8.4	8.7	13.5
	3 3 - 6 months	34	31.8	32.7	46.2
	4 7 - 9 months	25	23.4	24.0	70.2
	5 10 - 12 month	26	24.3	25.0	95.2
	6 more than 12 months	5	4.7	4.8	100.0
	Total	104	97.2	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	3	2.8		
Total		107	100.0		

I need help and support for personal issues

Statistics

I need help and support for personal issues

N	Valid	11
	Missing	96

I need help and support for personal issues

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Definitely agree	1	.9	9.1	9.1
	2 Agree	2	1.9	18.2	27.3
	3 Agree nor disagree	2	1.9	18.2	45.5
	4 Disagree	2	1.9	18.2	63.6
	5 Definitely disagree	4	3.7	36.4	100.0
	Total	11	10.3	100.0	
Missing	8 missing	1	.9		
	9 Not asked	95	88.8		
	Total	96	89.7		
Total		107	100.0		

285

Appendix 9: Crosstabs

			Time on ILM						Total
			1 less than 1 month	2 1-2 months	3 3-6 months	4 7-9 months	5 10-12 month	6 more than 12 months	
My chances of getting a permanent job are better now that I am on an ILM	1 Definitely agree	Count	0	2	14	5	9	0	30
		% within My chances of getting a permanent job are better now that I am on an ILM	.0%	6.7%	46.7%	16.7%	30.0%	.0%	100.0%
	2 Agree	Count	4	5	14	13	13	4	53
		% within My chances of getting a permanent job are better now that I am on an ILM	7.5%	9.4%	26.4%	24.5%	24.5%	7.5%	100.0%
	3 Neither agree nor disagree	Count	1	1	5	3	4	1	15
		% within My chances of getting a permanent job are better now that I am on an ILM	6.7%	6.7%	33.3%	20.0%	26.7%	6.7%	100.0%
	4 Disagree	Count	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
		% within My chances of getting a permanent job are better now that I am on an ILM	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
	5 Definitely disagree	Count	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
		% within My chances of getting a permanent job are better now that I am on an ILM	.0%	100.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	5	9	33	25	26	5	103
		% within My chances of getting a permanent job are better now that I am on an ILM	4.9%	8.7%	32.0%	24.3%	25.2%	4.9%	100.0%

			Managing Agency				
			1 Barnsley	2 Doncaster	3 Rotherham	4 Sheffield	Total
Before starting my ILM, I got some good advice about which one would be best for me	1 Definitely agree	Count	4	0	0	2	6
		% of Total	3.7%	.0%	.0%	1.9%	5.6%
	2 Agree	Count	6	18	7	7	38
		% of Total	5.6%	16.8%	6.5%	6.5%	35.5%
	3 Neither agree nor disagree	Count	9	6	4	2	21
		% of Total	8.4%	5.6%	3.7%	1.9%	19.6%
	4 Disagree	Count	9	15	0	2	26
		% of Total	8.4%	14.0%	.0%	1.9%	24.3%
	5 Definitely disagree	Count	5	9	0	2	16
		% of Total	4.7%	8.4%	.0%	1.9%	15.0%
Total		Count	33	48	11	15	107
		% of Total	30.8%	44.9%	10.3%	14.0%	100.0%