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*Regenerating local economies: A comparative analysis of three UK coal areas.*

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**'Regenerating local economies: a  
comparative analysis of three UK coal  
areas.'**

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

**November 1996**

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## **'Regenerating Local Economies: a Comparative Analysis of Three Coal Areas.'**

### **Abstract.**

This study addresses the problems of the regeneration of local economies using three coal areas in a comparative evaluation. It is a study that attempts to link four areas of enquiry. Firstly, it locates economic policy development within the context of contemporary debates about theories of transition and explores how declining coalfields have readjusted to restructuring. Secondly, it establishes the salience, or otherwise, of concepts used to interpret capitalist development. Thirdly, it articulates the importance of regulating bodies and institutional forms and finally, asserts the primacy of issues relating to community empowerment, participation and democracy.

It finds that, despite the efforts of those charged with the responsibility of regeneration, there have been shortcomings in economic development policy directed at physical renewal, employment, training and community empowerment. In particular, policies directed at those affected by closures have been driven by short-term political expediency rather than the long term interest of localities or the economy as a whole. Each coalfield appears to have followed a similar route to decline, but it is discovered that the most significant difference can be found with respect to the institutional structures. South Wales in some respects has been best able to mobilise resources to secure renewal by way of inward investment. However, regardless of the success of regeneration initiatives in any of the sub-regions examined, the coal localities themselves have not been the main benefactors. This demonstrates the continued heightened uneven nature of the transitional, after-Fordist period of capitalist development.

It concludes that a de-regulated, market-led policy approach has contributed to social and economic inequalities and cannot provide economic growth or social stability. It argues that an effective way of maintaining some control over global forces is to build policies on the foundation of local and regional participation and the development of diverse socio-institutional structures that are inclusive rather than exclusive. However, for declining coalfields renewal in any form is unlikely without a shift in macro-economic policy at national and international levels which reasserts the need for more redistributive policies.

**David J. Parry - November, 1996.**



## Section A

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### **Chapter 1. Introduction.**

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This study is part of ongoing work carried out since 1984 by the Communications, Media and Communities Research Centre (CMCRC) at Sheffield Hallam University into the UK coal industry. The work began during the 1984-85 strike focusing on public disorder and then, with ESRC funding, moved on to comparing pits and communities in the aftermath of the strike. As a result of the closures a further ESRC funded study was carried out examining the effects of closures and the threat of closure on miners and their families. Given the widespread closures thereafter, it was logical to examine how those closures had been handled, what were the problems of readjustment and possibilities for sustaining coal communities without coal. Commissioned research in Germany and Spain, again funded by the ESRC, was carried out into closure processes and regeneration strategies. At the same time, as a redundant miner returning to education after 20 years, I was employed by CMCRC as a research assistant to carry out similar work in the UK coalfields.

My brief was to take a case study, mainly qualitative, approach to investigate closures and regeneration policies in three UK regions. The basic research design consisted of a comparative evaluation of three coal regions with different histories at different stages of decline. As the research progressed it was apparent from the literature, policy documents and policy implementation, that a study of local economic development strategies would have to take into account a wide range of economic, political, social and theoretical issues. In addition, it became apparent early in the research that firstly, traditional land and premises or market-led regeneration was not necessarily taking into account local needs, and secondly, research in this area was under-developed. For these reasons the research gave particular priority to examining the community empowerment and capacity building approach.

The study that emerged attempts to combine and examine the links between the empirical evidence from the case studies, including an emphasis on community centred regeneration and the context of fundamental questions about the nature of contemporary political economy from the global to the local scale.

To accommodate theoretical concerns, coal area case studies, comparative findings and conclusions, this study is arranged into three sections. *Section A* provides the context and highlights the problems of both theory and policy. Regeneration of local economies is set in the global context of current theoretical debates (chapter 2). The influence of these debates on policy is then examined and four component parts of regeneration strategies highlighted (chapter 3). Two more contextual features are introduced: some key players involved in regeneration and the nature of the UK coal industry, its decline and relationship to the communities once dependent on it (chapters 4 and 5). Having established a context, the study moves on to outline a series of questions that link the empirical enquiry with theoretical interpretations (chapter 6). The section is ended with an account of the research methods adopted (chapter 7).

In *Section B* each of the case studies is presented using the four components of regeneration, identified in chapter 3, as part of the analytical structure (chapters 8, 9 and 10). The next chapter draws together the elements from each of the areas and provides the basis for a comparative assessment (chapter 11).

The study is concluded in *Section C*, first by using the empirical comparative evidence to address the central questions and then, finally, reconsidering that evidence in the broader political context of the regeneration of local economies.

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**Chapter 2. Local Economies in the Global Context**

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Shifts in the global economy have precipitated major changes at the regional and local level. The coalfields of the UK, once literally the power houses of industrial development, have declined to a fraction of their former size. The context of that decline and how economic regeneration might take place is the substantive core of this study. In order to understand the processes involved, we need to identify tendencies in the national and world economy that have shaped how the decline of coal has been managed and informed economic development policy. A body of theory has produced a variety of interpretations and concepts. The intention here is to offer a brief explanation of some of the concepts prior to an assessment of their usefulness for analysing the decline and attempted regeneration of coalfield areas.

Analyses of late twentieth century capitalism employ concepts of economic and social restructuring such as 'post- industrial', globalisation, 'post-Fordist', 'neo-Fordist', 'post- modernist', the 'flexible regime of accumulation' or 'the post mass production economy.' (Aglietta, 1979, Piore and Sabel, 1984, Harvey, 1990, Peck and Tickell, 1994a, Amin, 1994, Amin and Thrift 1994.) There is no general agreement about the nature of the current phase of capitalist development nor whether it is in fact a new phase at all. Interpretations are varied, contradictory and contentious. There is agreement, however, that fundamental changes have been underway since at least the mid-nineteen seventies. Periods of transition are by their very nature characterised by uncertainty. Commentators' extensive use of concepts prefixed by 'post' indicate that 'we can define where we are coming from, but are uncertain towards where we are moving' (Crouch, 1995 p 63.) It is beyond the scope of this study to review the extensive literature or attempt a comprehensive account of this far reaching debate. However, it is necessary to at least address some of the arguments and offer some broad definitions of the key concepts used in order to understand how contemporary theory affects policy.

## Models of transition - terms and concepts

Amin refers to the 'three transition models' of 'the regulation approach, the flexible specialisation approach and the neo-Schumpeterian approach' (1994, p6). Since it would be impractical to discuss at length the contribution of these three schools of thought - or indeed whether they are indeed distinct schools, since there is considerable overlap of concepts - a concise explanation of the approaches and concepts is presented.

The regulationist school (Aglietta 1979, Lipietz, 1987, 1992, Jessop, 1995) has attempted to explain capitalism's tendency to progress in cycles of stability and crisis. Approaches and interpretations have differed between scholars and over time but they have collectively developed a body of knowledge that explains capitalist development in terms of regimes of accumulation. These regimes emerge at the level of production but are sustained by institutional forms and social norms, thus ensuring they have the capacity to regulate the economy (hence regulationist school.) The Fordist regime is the prime example of such a regime, combining Fordist/Taylorist mass production with Keynesian command management and welfarism. This regime is thought to have been most dominant in the post-war years up until the mid-nineteen seventies. Mass production and consumerism sustained economic growth (the regime of accumulation) whilst at the same time redistributive and welfare policies stabilised civil society (the mode of social regulation).

The flexible specialisation approach focuses specifically on the production process and does not attempt the more comprehensive explanation of the regulationist school. Indeed, post-Fordism and flexible specialisation are closely interrelated concepts, often used to support the same arguments. The origins of the concepts can be found in two industrial paradigms, or 'divides', identified as those of mass production and flexible specialisation (Piore and Sabel 1984). These paradigms are said to have been integral to the capitalist system but, depending on particular historical circumstances, one is more dominant than the other. During the rise of Fordism, mass production became overwhelmingly dominant. However, Piore and Sabel (1984) contend that, due to the crisis of falling rates of profit and overproduction in the mid seventies, flexible specialisation re-emerged as a contender for dominance.

Amin also refers to the neo-Schumpeterian approach. It differs essentially from the regulationist approach in that technology becomes the dominant variable in economic development (Freeman and Perez, 1988, cited in Amin, 1994, Jessop, 1994a). The basic argument is that technological change drives economic and social change, not the other way round. Although the concern with the central role of technological change and innovation does have far reaching consequences for regeneration policies one particular aspect of this approach, associated with the notion of 'workfare', may prove to be of more interest for this study. Jessop (1994a) argues that:

..domestic full employment is downplayed in favour of international competitiveness and redistributive welfare rights take second place to a productivist re-ordering of social policy (p263).

Coal communities have historically had a dependency on the state for employment and welfare provision. It is likely therefore that any substitution of 'workfare' for welfare may have significant consequences especially in areas of high unemployment induced by restructuring.

From these and other approaches to the interpretation of the transition of capitalism, we can select a number of concepts which appear to have influence over policies from the global to the local level. I propose to deal with the least contentious first, those of uneven development and post industrialism, before discussing the closely related terms post-Fordism and flexible specialisation. Finally I will consider the term globalisation.

Uneven development is a feature of economic and social development that pre-dates any of the theoretical concepts referred to in this section. It is usual for the term to refer to geographical unevenness but by definition development takes place over time.

Capitalism has always progressed with higher concentrations of activity in some areas compared to others and with some people benefiting more than others. Indeed, it is argued by Marxists that capitalism's very existence depends on such divisions, These are principally those of class based on the division of labour. An alternative view is that uneven development is a temporary phenomenon and that, although some areas are more wealthy than others, there is an in built tendency towards equalisation (Allen and Massey, 1988a, 1988b). For older industrial regions, the counter-tendencies of ageing infrastructure, obsolete production technologies and methods and the cost of labour

mean that they are likely to be abandoned as capitalism seeks more productive sites. Coal areas, being based on an extractive industry, are even more exposed to this process. Trends towards globalisation (Dicken, 1992, Stubbs and Underhill, 1994, Michie and Grieve Smith, 1995, Hirst and Thompson, 1996), including shifts or crises within regimes of accumulation, have produced new geographies of production along with spatially defined inequalities.

World companies have a world market for goods and for labour. Local and regional labour control regimes may influence the distribution of capital and therefore further exacerbate uneven development (Jonas, 1995). Policies in the UK, for example, have arguably sacrificed social equality for market efficiency thus reinforcing divisions. Both Fordist and post-Fordist developments have implications for where factories are built and what their relationship is to the locality or region. The flexible specialisation thesis could provide for the growth of industrial districts that revive or sustain a region. Equally, Japanese or other Far Eastern owned branch plants, along with a number of local supplier factories, may provide the motor for economic growth. The outcome for one particular area, however, is unlikely to be replicated in another (Peck, 1994.) Consequently the terms 'sunrise' and 'sunset' industries and their regional locations encapsulate the changing economic fortunes of places. It was accepted in the post war years that the aim of regional policy and economic development was to reduce inequalities and spread economic growth more evenly (Temple, 1994). The contemporary dominant view is that such matters will be settled by market forces. Massey suggests that the UK's role, within the international division of labour, is 'a combination of banking centre and low-cost-production.' (1988 p 273). Therefore coal regions can be seen as victims of uneven development who need to be the targets for compensatory regeneration policies.

Post industrialism or deindustrialisation describe a process whereby industrial production is marginalised. They are more straight forward and less contentious than other terms covered in this section because they are largely descriptive. These are concepts that virtually all approaches mentioned accept as valid. They refer to the trend in western developed countries for traditional industrial production to decline, whilst at the same time there is a growth in producer and consumer services (Coriat and Petit,

1991). Employment in industry declines, regardless of economic growth rates. The efficiencies of technologies have resulted in jobless growth (Martin, 1989). These changes may or may not have repercussions for uneven development, the international or even gender division of labour, but the defining characteristic is that fewer and fewer people are employed producing goods or, as in the case of coal, extracting raw materials, and more are employed in services. Rowthorn asserts that 'all economies follow' a 'general trajectory.' (1995, p 3). He argues that economies 'mature' when service jobs replace manufacturing jobs but also concedes that there are many differences between nations since each may have a different role within the world economy. Consequently despite the apparent inevitability of this model of development there is still a role for policy in steering local, regional and national economies.

Service jobs have become the most likely replacement for extractive jobs such as coal mining because manufacturing industry is unable to generate employment opportunities. This shift is evident from macro-statistics. As a share of total employment, industry accounted for 47.7% in 1960 but it was only 29.8% in 1988. Growth in industrial output over the same period went up from 2.7% per year to 3.7%. (OECD figures cited by Coriat & Petit, 1991.)

Post-Fordism is the most contentious of the terms used in the debate about the development of capitalism. There is no agreement about what it constitutes nor whether the features associated with it amount to a new regime of accumulation. Differences of opinion stem from a number of sources including: different analyses of Fordism, different judgements on the salience of Fordism and disagreement about whether the processes now underway represent a fundamental transition or merely an adaptation of previous forms of accumulation and regulation (Amin, 1994). Attempts to interpret the post-Fordist phase are extended to urban policy (Painter, 1995), local governance (Painter and Goodwin, 1995), local economic regeneration (Geddes, 1994), and the welfare state (Burrows and Loader, 1994). Nevertheless, it can be established that the Fordist regime was characterised by mass production, Taylorist division of labour, reliance on the economies of scale and mass consumption of standardised products. This was coupled with Keynesian management at a national and international level and the maintenance of the social wage through the welfare state. This version of

Fordism itself does not cover the range of Fordism shaped by individual state policies identified at an international level. Peck and Tickell (1995), for example, list eight variants. The UK variant *inter alia* is described as 'flawed' because of the 'inadequate integration of financial and productive capital' (p.362). 'Flex-Fordism' is used to describe West Germany because of the federal state and 'co-operation between financial and industrial capital' (ibid).

To add to the complexity, opinions differ about whether the regime described remains dominant and, if not, what are the features of the current situation that may or may not constitute a new regime. Other terms such as neo-Fordism and after-Fordism (Peck and Tickell, 1994) imply that the changes are adaptations rather than transformations. Peck and Tickell, amongst others argue that evidence for a fundamental transition is based on changes in productive processes in particular sectors rather than an overall change in the regime of accumulation and social regulation. Although the debate is complex, far reaching and unresolved, there are number of features of the contemporary situation that suggest a significant transition is in progress. Here it is not important whether the coal industry itself was representative of Fordist production, although the post-war mechanisation period was driven by Fordist/Taylorist ideas. The significance is that it was a large industry that supplied energy for a mass production and mass consumer society. In the 1990s it no longer has that role and its production methods are much the same but, because of a restricted market, particular qualities of coal are more significant.

A central feature of the post-Fordist vision, flexible specialisation is a concept, more than any other, that has come to influence the thinking of planners and policy makers. Whether this new regime of accumulation exists or not is less relevant to planners than the belief that flexible specialisation represents 'best practice' and therefore the best option for economic development. Flexible specialisation differs from Fordism in that it is consumer rather than producer driven. The ever changing demand for new, better products and the accelerating rate of obsolescence is satisfied by flexible, small batch production. Economy of scope is said to have replaced economy of scale and small companies, or agglomerations of small companies, emerge as key units in economic development. These new industries tend to be in the service sector, be knowledge

based and rely on the latest developments in information technology. This new regime is exemplified by the industrial districts and regions of Baden Wurttemberg, Emilia Romagna and Silicon valley. A British equivalent would be the M4 corridor from London to South Wales. By rediscovering industrial districts first identified by Marshall (1890) and analysing successful regional economies, academics have provided planners with a vision for development. Sabel (1994), adding to previous work (Piore and Sabel, 1984) maintains that 'flexibly specialised production systems seem better able to survive the current economic turbulence than the mass-production systems they are displacing' (p.104). Cooke (1990) and Cooke and Morgan (1993) pursue an interest in the relationship between the flexible specialisation thesis and regional development. Murray (1991) suggests that new production systems open up spaces for regional and local economic development. The general argument is that the chances for successful economic development in an increasingly globalised economy appear to be enhanced by flexible specialisation. This would appear to have limited value for the coal industry but could be important for the direction of replacement industries in coal areas.

The term globalisation covers a wealth of changes in economic, political and social spheres (c.f. Dicken, 1992, Stubbs and Underhill, 1994, Michie and Grieve Smith, 1995, Waters, 1995, Hirst and Thompson, 1996). It is important for this study because one of its chief concerns is how localities can assert any influence themselves against the pervasiveness of global forces. The broad agreement is that national economies have lost much of their power and influence over world economic trends (Dicken, 1992). It remains a matter of debate how far this process has gone and what then is the role and scope of national government (Hirst and Thompson, 1996). Commentators have identified many aspects of this process including: increased power of international finance and increased flows of knowledge technology and cultures, the growth of multi-national companies and political structures such as the UN, G7, GATT and the EU. Few deny that these and similar changes have accelerated in recent decades. Like Amin and Thrift (1994), Peck and Tickell (1995), the interest here is in the relationship between localities and the global economy - what they call 'the global local nexus' (ibid. p5).

The theoretical concepts I have dealt with, albeit relatively briefly, imply new geographies of production and spatial segmentation. This in turn has important consequences for institutional forms and levels of governance. The changes underway occur at the point of production, exchange and consumption, requiring responses at different spatial scales from institutions such as the World Bank, the European Union, national governments, local government economic development departments or small local enterprises.

There are two interrelated facets of this contemporary debate which interest this research. The first is the analysis of present trends and the second is the relationship between the global and the local. Global developments over the last decade have been interpreted as either presenting a new potential for regional and local economies or heralding the end of national and regional autonomy. Some see the potential for regional economic power in the examples of the 'third Italy,' (for example Cooke, 1990, Murray, 1991, Piore and Sabel, 1984 Sabel, 1994). Others point to the continuing dominance of the multi-national companies (Hudson, 1992, 1994). Whatever the position arrived at in this debate, there is a consensus that shifts in the form of capitalist accumulation have a direct effect on economic development. Albrechts (1989) addresses the problem of the 'socio-economic institutional' capacity of nations, regions and local economies to adapt to change and renew or maintain prosperity. This problem provides another area of enquiry for this study.

### ***Institutional relationships, the state and policy***

The nation state and agreements between nation states (for example Bretton Woods) provided the regulatory spine on which Fordism was built. Globalisation of production, the newly industrialising countries and the power of international finance has challenged the power of national governments, especially their capacity to control the flow of capital and the distribution of wealth. At the same time, some regions prosper and form 'clubs' with other areas in other nation states. One example of this is the 'Four Motors Club of Europe'. It is argued that the supra-national and the regional level are being strengthened at the expense of the national level. This is exemplified in the 'Europe of the regions' proposition (Harvie, 1994, Cooke, 1990) but is also some times referred to as the 'hollowing out of the state' (Peck, 1994, Peck & Tickell, 1994a,

Amin & Thrift, 1994, 1995, Amin & Tomaney, 1995). This process is considered to be the 'displacement' of the powers of and within the nation state 'upward, downward, and to some extent outward' (Jessop, cited in Peck and Tickell, 1994a, p.297). The ability of any nation to influence its economic fortunes is said to be weakened. It is not clear, however, whether regions, other than the most prosperous, are able to benefit from this perceived 'displacement.'

For regional economies the dialectical relationship between the global and the local scale becomes of paramount importance. If global forces are so pervasive, then what, if anything, is the role of the region, still less the locality? All economic, social activity and policies interact throughout the spatial scales. Global and local are interdependent. The lattice work of relationships may be complex but, if policy makers wish to effectively plan or anticipate economic developments, then those relationships have to be understood. Indeed, policy is required to make use of the web of interconnections between the local and the global in order to achieve economic prosperity.

This study is mainly focussed on the sub-regional and local level - areas made distinct by the common industrial history of coal mining. In subsequent chapters I will examine the regions, sub-regions and coalfield communities. For the moment I will examine the institutional 'tissue' which binds these spatial scales together and to the global political economy.

One view (Peck and Tickell, 1994a) which, like others, takes as its starting point the post-Fordist debate and regulationist theory, argues that the explanations proffered about the transition from Fordism are one dimensional. A regime of accumulation, as developed by regulation theory, requires both a dominant production system and supporting socio-institutional forms. Interpretations of the '*after-Fordist crisis*' (ibid. p 280) are at their most convincing when analysing economic or production factors such as flexible specialisation or globalisation of finances. They pay less attention to the institutional, political and social forms needed to regulate and stabilise any new regime. Moreover, the tendency, driven in the UK by neo-liberal deregulationist governments, is for less state or institutional intervention. The market is allowed to decide the outcome. Hence there is thought to be a 'hollowing out' of institutions at the national

level whilst at the same time supra-national bodies become more active (UN, G7, EU, GATT.) Whereas some may regard this as an opportunity for the development of regional institutions and therefore regional autonomy over economic development (Cooke, 1990, Sabel, 1994), Peck and Tickell are not convinced that any effective regulating mechanisms have been established and argue that global-local relations are 'asymmetrical and almost by definition unstable' (ibid. p.282). National and regional planning becomes another market where localities compete for resources and the opportunity to develop. They conclude that a new regime of accumulation cannot yet exist because there is no new social 'mode of regulation' in place. For this period of instability to be resolved there needs to be some 'filling in' or increase in institutional capacity. This is a call for nations and regions to reassert control over the global forces that are producing instability.

Another view from the literature which explores the relationship between organisations and local governance as well as its economic potential is Hirst (1994). He advocates 'associative democracy' as a means to reassert public regulation and reconstitute the relationship between the state, the individual and the market. Similarly, again addressing the problem of state management versus free market, Rogers and Streek (1994) argue for new 'solidarities' between organisations of production, distribution and forms of governance. These ideas will be reconsidered in the concluding chapter.

Amin and Thrift (1994, 1995) also emphasise the role of institutions. In particular they attempt to analyse how regimes and institutions relate in a globalised economy. Two further concepts are used: embeddedness and institutional thickness. Embeddedness refers to the extent to which companies, industrial networks and supportive institutions are rooted in a particular region or locality. It has been recognised that economic growth of industrial districts such as Emilia Romagna, is contingent upon not just economic but also social and cultural factors (Digiovanna, 1995). The relationship of Japanese factories to their localities in South Wales for instance has occupied a number of commentators (Munday, 1990, Morris et al, 1993, Morris & Wilkinson, 1993, Morris, 1995, Munday et al 1995). The benefits of foreign direct investment to the host nation or region cannot be taken for granted. Embeddedness becomes vital because it is

assumed it assists localities in their control over global forces and develops the capacity for indigenous economic growth.

The combination of economic, social and cultural factors is referred to as 'institutional thickness.' The layering or mix of institutions such as companies, banks, chambers of commerce, development agencies and local consumer and resident groups can be said to determine the possibility of economic success. Ideology and institutions can develop a distinct political culture which may assist or hinder consensus and cooperation. An example of two such distinct 'cultures' could be the UK and Germany, an issue I will return to in chapters 4 and 13. How 'thick', how 'thin' or what combinations of institutions any given region has developed however, does not seem to guarantee success. Peck (1994) asserts that 'regulatory systems are not portable structures' (p169) that bring success regardless of the localised social and cultural conditions. Rather, a region needs to be institutionally rich, flexible and adaptable. As this study will show, policy makers, having seen the success of certain regions (the 'Third Italy', Baden Wurttemberg, Silicon Valley), then attempt to replicate it elsewhere, with limited or no success. The North East of England is portrayed by Hudson (1994) as having a mix of institutions and cultural and social traditions that hinder the type of economic developments that characterise successful industrial agglomerations. Amin and Thrift (1994) offer this advice:

Policy makers would be better employed in encouraging a diversity of institutional forms...thus making for a more adaptive region (p.260).

In concluding, they present two interpretations of the process of globalisation. In the first, the inevitability of economic and social restructuring in the forms we have previously discussed is accepted. The implications for policy are that everything is done to accommodate the changes. Their concern is that this will result in 'structural disempowerment' (ibid. p.257). The second view is that it is possible to take part in the process and although there will be some losers and some winners, given the right mix of policies and institutions, it remains possible to control and influence global trends.

### *'Path-dependent' or contested*

Uneven-development is self evident at all spatial scales. Pockets of deprivation exist even in the world's most prosperous cities and the gap between the rich and poor regions of Europe continues to widen (Amin and Tomaney, 1995). In the developed world industrial production is being displaced by service industries. The possibility for regional and local economies to reposition themselves and harness economic developments is implicit in the flexible specialisation thesis. However, the most successful regions may have no interest in sharing their prosperity with older industrial regions such as former coalfields. Reproducing the economic success of particular regions with particular histories is problematic. The more comprehensive interpretation, that of Post-Fordism, encompasses a range of possibilities, including the potentially positive view of flexible specialisation. Globalising forces may at the same time be exacerbating the problems of uneven development and social inequity, whilst opening up spaces for more localised economic development.

Within each of the concepts I have introduced there is the possibility of a polarisation of views. A dichotomy exists between 'path-dependent' or a 'contested' economic future. All ask the question - how and in what way is it possible for regions to take advantage of the emerging forces of global change? Most would accept that uneven development and post-industrialism are descriptive terms which can be applied to certain economies to one degree or another. The more complex interpretations such as Post-Fordism, flexible specialisation and globalisation are more problematic. But, as Amin and Thrift (1994) suggest, either we accept that, for example, globalisation exists as an inevitable process 'with a logic of its own' (p.257) or we view it as a process that localities, regions and nations can take part in and to some extent shape. Consequently the perceived regressive features of this period of transition, such as technology-induced unemployment, polarised uneven development and social disintegration, can be potentially controlled. In terms of policy, these two views are likely to have a significant influence on strategies for economic development.

In this chapter I have provided a theoretical context for the discussion about regeneration of former coalfields. These concepts are important because firstly, they implicitly or explicitly inform policy ideas and planners views of what is happening in

the economy. Secondly, they give rise to theoretical arguments about how far and in what form 'local' economic intervention can have any effect. The latter is discussed in the conclusion, the former the concern of the next chapter.

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### **Chapter 3. Policy and components of regeneration**

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In the previous chapter I have reviewed a number of theoretical interpretations of the processes of economic and social restructuring. In this chapter I intend to show how those interpretations shape the development of regeneration policies and what become the components of regeneration policies.

The concepts of globalisation, uneven development, post-industrial societies, post-Fordism and flexible specialisation are common currency, not only amongst academic commentators but also amongst policy makers. Many economic development policy makers situate their prescriptions within such a conceptual framework. They argue that it is the task of developers to accommodate changes and anticipate future developments based on an interpretation of, for example, a post-industrial economy. Policy is often therefore dovetailed with a 'post-industrial', 'post-Fordist' view of the present and the future. This could equate with the allocation of resources to service sector employment whilst allowing older manufacturing industries to decline or disappear.

#### **National forms of governance and policy options**

In the search for successful models of economic growth at a national level, British policy makers may well look to Japan, West Germany, Nordic countries or the rapidly expanding economies of the Far East. The attraction for national and regional planners of inward investment from Japan, for example, is not simply that jobs and some wealth is created in a particular locality, but successful Japanese methods of production may influence indigenous firms. These methods of production are not easily described as Fordist or post-Fordist (Weiermair, 1991). Some would argue that the 'Japanese model' represents an entirely different model for economic development:

not flexible specialisation but a highly organised version of mass production which rested upon a precisely defined role for the Japanese state. (Sadler, 1992 p 253).

Peck and Tickell (1995) label it 'Hybrid Fordism' and describe it as 'modified Taylorism' combined, amongst other features, with 'societal segmentation and [an]

underdeveloped welfare state' (p 362). Other Far Eastern economies are described as 'primitive' Taylorist because they are based on high levels of exploitation and political authoritarianism.

The significance of Japanese and Far Eastern investment and production organisation has captured the attention of policy makers and commentators for some time. It has a combination of apparently Fordist style factories (mass production) with an apparently flexible specialised hinterland of Just-In-Time suppliers (Mair, 1992) regulated by highly structured corporate and state institutions. This undermines models based industrial agglomerations, flexible small and medium sized indigenous enterprises. Despite the recognised dangers in relying on branch plants in a local economy, every effort is made to attract overseas investment. Amin and Tomaney (1995) suggest that policy for 'less favoured regions' has shifted back to investment by large firms because small firm entrepreneurship has proved 'fragile' (p 201).

The German model of the social market and federal structures of governance attracts attention (Hutton, 1995). In this case the productive process itself is of less interest than the political and institutional structures that appear to facilitate long term growth. Similarly Nordic countries, for example Denmark, attract interest because the political, economic and social mix within the nation appears to sustain a high level of economic growth and social stability (Amin and Thomas, 1996). Continued interest in alternative models stems from disquiet about the UK model based on neo-liberal deregulation. This approach to economic and political governance appears to some (Amin and Thomas, 1996, Hutton, 1995, Peck and Tickell, 1994, Hirst, 1994) to accept the inevitability of global trends with only a minimal concern about 'promoting social goals' (Hirst and Thompson, 1996, p1).

As a supra-national level of economic governance the European Union has increasingly become more influential. The purported aim of the EU throughout its history has been to promote social and economic cohesion and address problems of regional disparities (Amin and Tomaney, 1995). Structural funds such as the European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) were set up to assist 'lagging' regions (limited industrialised agricultural regions) and older industrial regions. The

RECHAR (1) programme was initiated in 1990 and 'brought 300m ECU to Europe's coal areas' (EUR-ACOM, 1995). RECHAR (2), running from 1994 to 1997, is expected to add a further 400m ECU. It may be that structural funds to older industrial regions in the UK will be cut back after 1999 as a result of the expansion of the EU to former Eastern Bloc countries.

For the UK coalfields there are two issues of importance here. One arises out of the role of the UK government and how European structural funds are distributed and spent, the other to the overall effect of EU regional policy. Successive UK governments have reduced expenditure of regional aid and become more reliant on EU funds. So much so that 'at an unnoticed point in the second half of the 1980s it overtook the Government's own spending' (Fothergill, 1995, p1). UK Government antipathy to the objectives of European regional policy on the one hand and local authority power on the other has resulted in a constant 'struggle' to channel or access funds. One feature of this struggle was the issue of 'additionality', where local authorities were required to match EU funding with their own. Because local government spending was capped 'countless millions of EU aid was thereby lost to the regions' (ibid. p5). The UK Government's attitude was that money from Europe 'should be a reimbursement to the Treasury for Britain's financial contribution to the EU. If any of the money is then passed on to the regions, it should be spent in accordance with the government's own priorities' (ibid. p1). One of those priorities was to facilitate speedy closure of most of Britain's coal mines through lump sum redundancy payments and financing preparations for privatisation. The cost of additional pensions and social restructuring was estimated in to be £6.6 billion (IE+EC, 1995).

It is argued by Amin and Tomaney (1995) that 'the goal of social cohesion has been less urgent than the goal of raising efficiency and competitiveness' (p 28). Similarly, Brown and Crompton (1994) consider that EU encouragement of 'intensification of competitive pressures' (p5) produces widespread social exclusion. One consequence has been increased regional disparities. Structural funds account for only 0.24% of the EU's GDP, when it is believed 20-25% would be needed to reduce regional inequalities (ibid. p20). EU policies aimed at global competitiveness have contributed to the demise of the coal industry. Germany and Spain have to some extent resisted the pressure but the UK

government needed no prompting. Thus, while the EU claimed to be providing a cushion to enable industrial restructuring, it has arguably hastened closure without guaranteed adequate support for regeneration.

Planners have been preoccupied by the flexible specialisation analysis of contemporary economic development and the phenomenon of industrial districts. These concepts are then redeveloped within a regional policy framework on a European scale. The most successful growth areas such as the 'Third Italy' or Baden Wurtemberg are analysed and attempts are then made to transfer or adapt these successful practices to lagging, or older industrial regions. There is considerable debate about whether this is possible or desirable (Amin & Thrift, 1994, Peck & Tickell, 1994a, Hudson, 1992,1994) or how to conceptually categorise these economic agglomerations (Cooke and Morgan, 1993, Harvie 1994 Albrechts et al, 1989, Murray 1991). Nevertheless, for those who view economic developments in this period of transition as an *opportunity* for regions to assert some level of economic autonomy, achieve growth within the context of globalisation and against the trend of 'structural disempowerment,' the successful regions provide at least some of the answers. The organisation of the production process, with the potential for high value added production in small and medium sized firms, drives policy decision making.

Networks and interrelationships between firms and other institutions constituted at the local and regional level provides another area of interest. Amin and Thrift (1995) for example, explore the possibilities of 'associationism' whereas, Cooke & Morgan (1993) examine the phenomena at a more concrete level. I have already made reference to 'associationism' in the previous chapter. It is a concept that has been resurrected from the nineteenth century and attempts to restructure economic and political governance. Hirst, one of its most ardent supporters, suggests that its promotion of a 'decentralised economy based on the non-capitalistic principles of co-operation and mutuality', coupled with political federalism and 'voluntarism' (1994, p15) should be reconsidered in the contemporary context. Its relevance to economic governance, at a time when state command socialism and free market liberalism are discredited, is self-evident. Its interest to this study lies mainly in its exploration of links between local economies, the state and therefore the potential for regeneration.

## *Policy developments in the UK*

Although we differentiate between national and regional policies, in one sense, as far as the UK is concerned, the differences are mainly those of local detail. Regional policies are by and large the policies of central government. In the past the emphasis was on Keynesian re-distributive mechanisms involving the relocation of large companies to areas lagging behind in overall economic growth. In the last fifteen years or more that emphasis has shifted to supply side measures to stimulate entrepreneurship. Tiers of local and regional government may have been marginalised in the process but they have been substituted by other institutions or quasi-non governmental organisations (quangos) such as Urban Development Corporations, the Welsh Development Agency or English Partnerships. The reformulation of regional policy has also been accompanied by a new emphasis on urban development (Martin & Townroe 1992 pp 21-22). Urban centres have been encouraged to compete for resources rather than simply expect assistance. This has been characterised by some as the 'marketing of place' (Peck & Tickell, 1994b).

This process of the reconfiguring of institutions involved in economic development and the 'marketing of place', has accompanied the emergence of regions as economic actors in their own right. Some believe that this has occurred because the withdrawal of macro-economic initiatives at the national level leading to the adoption of 'ad hoc responses to the retreat of the national state' (Hirst & Zeitlin, 1989 p 9, Eisenschitz & Gough, 1993). Local government initiatives in the economic development field have also filled the vacuum left by the retreat of state management policies.

There are a plethora of critiques of urban policy which may not be immediately recognisable as relevant to the coalfields. Policy assumptions and directives are however, very similar throughout the regions, whether urban or rural. Peck and Tickell remark:

Workforce training, the erosion of social protection, the construction of science and business parks, the vigorous marketing of place and public-private partnerships seem now to have become almost universal features of so-called 'local' strategies (1994a. p 281).

The implication is that blanket policy prescriptions do not take into account, or develop, the full potential of particular localities with particular histories.

The domination of urban policy over regional or industrial policy has its effects on coalfield regeneration. The 1980s was characterised by the unchallenged belief in private sector led property development. The justification for this, apart from the obvious advantage to property developers and construction employment, was that the positive outcomes would 'trickle -down' to everyone eventually and even the most disadvantaged would somehow benefit (Barnekov et al 1989, Loftman & Nevin 1994). This policy was exported from the USA and was largely relevant to the major urban centres of the UK. It was a policy that permeated all approaches to economic development, even for the small towns. The shift in policy and resources to 'civic boosterism' (Barnekov et al 1989) and property development meant that regional policy was unable to address the problems of semi-rural coalfields. Large scale property development was never going to be central to the regeneration of coalfields, not least because the private sector had little interest in investing money in 'sunset' regions, particularly where the workforce had a confrontational history. Apart from London, where the London Docklands Development Corporation attracted huge additional investment from the private sector on top of the government's expenditure (see Townroe and Martin, 1992 p 21), most cities struggled to attract big investors. By the time of the major mine closures at the end of the 1980s, the property boom had turned to slump and it was no longer a realistic option to expect growth from large scale property development.

The new trend was for more targeted policies with especial emphasis on partnerships, City Challenge, then the Single Regeneration Budget, and the belief that small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) could be a key to renewal. Production in both the manufacturing and service sector was again seen as important. In particular the SMEs were seen as capable of providing sustained growth even in the declining industrial regions. The assumption was that everyone would benefit from this type of regeneration. The structures created to carry out new policies were to be private sector led but with more input from local authorities and the community through partnerships. As the government's policy instruments shifted from City Challenge to the Single

Regeneration Budget and various aspects of European money became more important, partnerships of partnerships were formed. The TECs and other government quangos became key players, as central government restricted the activities of local government through spending cuts. However, the resources cake was in fact shrinking (Cooke, 1993) and the regeneration landscape was altered, not because of the imperatives of effective policies, but to fight for position in the 'scrum down' for resources. It was argued that effective action was being undermined by lack of co-ordination, lack of accountability and too much emphasis placed on presentation rather than content in order to secure funding (Peck & Tickell, 1994b). Resources for economic development became reliant on:

- the so-called 'beauty contest' - rather than the more traditional allocation of resources to those people and places most in need (Robinson and Shaw, 1994 p 224).

Inward investment, a mainstay of regional policy, continued to preoccupy economic development planners. Whilst controversy about the nature of branch plant employment and the problems of regional rivalries caused some concern, the relocation of overseas companies remained tangible evidence of the economic progress of any given region.

Hudson (1994) categorises policy options as 'productionist solutions' and 'consumerist solutions'. These, in turn are subdivided into a localised entrepreneurial strategy (stimulating the indigenous growth of SMEs) and an inward investment policy aimed at large firms and branch plants. On the consumption side he identifies three trends: the growth of tourism based on the heritage industry, the development and transformation of former 'production spaces to middle class residential and consumption spaces' (ibid. p 206) and the unemployment or welfare state solution. The latter consists of maintaining a large pool of unemployed or under employed workforce, dependent on welfare and contained within spatially segregated areas. This view appears to have particular relevance to coalfield areas.

The history of regional development policy has involved a continuum of shifting priorities driven by perceptions of the national and global economy. In broad terms this has meant a core shift from Keynesian, demand side measures to entrepreneurship and supply side measures. Public and private capital has been moulded and remoulded as

ways have been sought to regenerate the regions. Wilks-Heeg suggests that there has been a 'circularity of policy' resulting from experimentation followed by 'managerialist re-organisation.' (1996, p 1263.) This has been accompanied by institutional changes, such as the emergence of growth coalitions', UDCs, TECs and the increased involvement of local authorities in economic development. All of this has been implemented as part of the restructuring of regional, national and global economies. However, the basic elements of economic development or regeneration remain much the same. It is to these components of regeneration that I will now turn.

### *Components of regeneration*

The aims and objectives of regeneration policies can be very different. There are however, particular aspects of strategies for economic development for older industrial regions (OIRs) or less favoured regions (LFRs), which are universal. They attempt to (1) physically transform the environment (both built and 'natural'); (2) they try to create employment and (3) to improve skills and education. In addition, and this is particularly true of more recent developments,(4) they try to develop the capacity of localities to play a role in the process of renewal. In order to analyse the regeneration policies of the various agencies, it is intended to examine each of these components in turn. Invariably the models overlap and most practitioners in the field would argue that regeneration is about packaging all aspects of economic and social life. There is a persuasive argument that the linkage of all aspects is essential for any one element to work (Nevin and Shiner, 1995).

An initial deconstruction is necessary here because the intention is to identify the essential components, not to engage in a debate about models of economic development. These components are then used largely as a heuristic device to help develop our understanding and provide structure and direction to this comparative evaluation.

### *Physical*

Physical regeneration has long been central to the planners' strategies to renew localities. Land, premises and infrastructure are the basic tools of economic development. It is in addition an acceptable policy direction because the outcomes are easily subjected to hard indicators of output. It can produce tangible proof of

improvements for all to see whether it be new buildings, new roads or reclaimed land. Consequently, projects for physical and environmental renewal are the least contentious components of regeneration. Disagreements occur when questions are raised about who benefits from regeneration and what the policy priorities should be. Traditional planning was dominated by the built environment and infrastructure. However, as cities that expanded during the industrial revolution began to decay and industry relocated, economic development became more and more focused on property development. In particular the apparent success of 'rust belt' and other cities in the USA in reversing decline in the 1980s attracted attention on this side of the Atlantic. The rapid rise in property prices during the same period increased the attractiveness of this 'post-industrial' option. City centre renewal and large scale developments based on the service sector, tourism, leisure and 'cultural industries' preoccupied planners. A formulaic approach was based on the US post-industrial model. Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) were introduced to carry out the tasks of renewal in a number of the major cities. As some critics point out:

The UDCs have generally pursued a post-industrial city model and have been hostile to local firms which do not conform to this strategy (Eisenschitz and Gough, 1993, p 71).

The contribution of the UDCs to physical regeneration has been significant but their record on the redistribution of benefits and their accountability to the locality they are supposed to serve has not been universally acclaimed (Parkinson & Evans, 1990).

The allocation of resources and finances to these projects was disproportionately larger than other projects. Housing, education and social welfare projects were by and large marginalised. The 'civic booster' projects relied on there being a 'trickle-down' of benefits to the majority in the region or locality. Commentators on the US situation were not convinced that this had happened to any significant degree (Barnekov et al, 1989), misgivings echoed in the UK by Loftman and Nevin (1994). Nevertheless, expectations that the redistribution of the benefits of regeneration would flow from property development remains a cornerstone of economic development. Its popularity as a policy was tempered by the collapse of the property market at the end of the 1980s.

For some older industrial regions with larger urban centres such as Merseyside, Glasgow and Birmingham, these schemes became dominant from the mid-eighties

onwards. In cities adjacent to coalfield areas such as Newcastle, Cardiff and Sheffield, this was also the case. For the coalfields themselves there was a more urgent need for more traditional planning. In particular infrastructural improvements were needed to link the often isolated settlements and towns to the major road networks. The reclamation of derelict land was another priority (Parkinson, 1995). Although major civic property developments were not entirely appropriate for coalfield areas, the expectation that flagship projects in the built environment could benefit localities permeated much of the thinking of planners.

### *Employment*

The need for new jobs to replace old jobs is a central aim of all regeneration initiatives. The employment level, or more usually unemployment rate, is the most used indicator of economic well being for the regions. Up until the 1970s, Keynesian redistributive policies were employed to try and maintain employment levels in regions suffering from economic decline. Companies were encouraged by financial incentives to build new capacity or relocate. By dispersing a number of government departments to older industrial areas, the state was directly responsible for the redistribution of jobs.

The aim of regional policy was taken to be: 'the attainment of a more efficient and/or equitable inter-regional distribution of economic activity' (Temple, 1994. p 225). Despite this generally accepted aim, the neo-liberal policies of successive Conservative governments produced a shift from a Keynesian approach to market de-regulation. European funding was used as substitute for that usually provided by the national government. The new approach continued to encourage inward investment but by the mid-nineteen eighties much of the investment now came from Japan and the Far East. In addition, local entrepreneurship and the growth of SMEs was given greater prominence. Government assistance was only forthcoming on a selective basis. Opinions differ about whether de-regulation really had meant the reduction of state activity or merely the reconfiguration of intervention through quangos and public/private partnerships (Moore, 1990). Regions were expected to market themselves. This philosophy has led to intense competition between the regions and sub-regions for inward investment and a share of government and European assistance. The success of policies in South Wales, for example, may be to the detriment of

Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire. The Korean investment announced for South Wales in 1996 reinforced concerns about the problems associated with regional rivalry (The Observer, 14th July, 1996). Job creation in one locality is taking place at the expense of another locality. Competition between and within regions, allied with the phenomenon of 'jobless growth', have often meant that 'local economic initiatives are a negative sum game with respect to job numbers' (Eisenschitz & Gough, 1993, p 52):

Indeed, increases in competitiveness nearly always mean fewer labour hours per unit of output, so the effect is usually to decrease the aggregate number of jobs. (ibid. p, 50.)

Paradoxically then, it is often the case that assistance to any locality, as part of a regeneration initiative, may produce further shrinkage of the labour market.

Difficulties arise in a situation where 'smokestack' industries are closing down and new industries through efficiency improvements based on technology are progressively employing fewer people. The nature of the jobs available and shifts in the 'pattern of employment' (Campbell, 1990) are additional changes that need to be accommodated. Planners' stated aims, in tune with the flexible specialisation model of economic development, may be to create highly paid, high value added jobs at the leading edge of their respective sectors. However, even though such ideas are accommodated in a policy shift in recent years, inward investment in the form of multi-national branch plants and low paid, low skill insecure jobs in the service sector appear to provide most of the replacement employment. Much of this employment appears to be female (Balls, 1993, Hudson et al, 1992, Campbell, 1990). The development of policies to secure employment as a component of regeneration remains central but there is every indication that the increased global competition as well as that between regions and localities, has intensified the unevenness of development. It is a key question therefore whether the coalfield areas examined in this study have been able to address this problem with any degree of success.

### *Training*

Skill enhancement, training and education have now become key supply side measures for successful economic development. The Detroit summit on jobs in 1994 placed training at the centre of policy initiatives required to redress the malaise of

unemployment. Training can be seen as beneficial by all across the political spectrum because it promises:

..to benefit simultaneously both profitability and the life chances of the disadvantaged, both capital and labour, both efficiency and welfare (Eisenschitz & Gough, 1993, p 37).

It is argued that the current phase of capitalist economic development demands increased flexibility of workforces and a high level of adaptable skill to meet the demands of the fast changing market. Otherwise divergent prescriptions agree on the need to improve the skills base of a region's or a country's workforce.

'Flexibility' and 'reskilling' are terms which are often linked in policy documents. The need for generic and adaptable skills is now greater because of the faster development and shorter life of products and services. Flexibility does not necessarily refer to workforce skills alone. It is more often a description of spatial and temporal flexibility and, according to Morgan and Sayer (1988), changes in industrial relations practices. Martin also refers to 'diversification and upgrading of skills' within the context of the 'development of new labour relations and flexible employment systems' (Martin, 1989, p 37). Others suggest that flexibility is sometimes wrongly equated with reskilling and warn against the optimistic expectations of 'high level' local economies. Cost cutting through de-skilling and the cheapening of labour is still far more prevalent than upskilling (Eisenschitz & Gough, 1993). New skills are essential for coalfield regeneration but it may be that flexibility of local labour markets is the effective aim of policy.

### *Community Empowerment*

Both community and empowerment, perhaps more than any other of the components of regeneration, are in need of careful description if not definition. The terms are used at a variety of levels. Community can include almost any section of society delineated by space, affiliation or activity. Empowerment can refer to the individual, to local people or even to regional economies.

Community, as far as this study is concerned, is a spatially defined entity. Common purpose or interest may occur in varying degrees but the key elements of convergence can be found in geographical residence and social class. The 'business community' or

the European community, for example, are not included in our perception of what a community is. There may be a flourishing debate about the relationship between 'shareholders' and 'stakeholders' (see Hutton, 1995, Financial Times, 1995, Bennet, Wicks & McCoshan, 1994, Froud et al , 1996) but it is beyond the scope of this study to reflect at length on the concept of community. Nevertheless, it would be useful to at least have some idea of what a coalfield community might be. The classic studies of mining localities (Dennis et al 1956, Bulmer 1976) have generated a community model based on close social relationships in single industry, isolated settlements. This somewhat over generalised view of these communities does not detract from the uniformity of their historical development and their emergence as a distinct socio-geographic form.

Empowerment cannot be usefully described or defined without identifying who or what is empowered. As Stewart and Taylor (1995) point out the 'processes', 'degree', 'focus' and 'ownership' of empowerment need to be understood. Again, for the purpose of this study, we are referring to communities and individuals in those communities and not to organisations who already have power, such as TECs or Development Corporations (Bennet, Wicks & McCoshan, 1994). A useful working definition could be the following:

At its most basic, empowerment might be seen as the degree to which or process by which disadvantaged communities define their own needs and determine the response that is made to them. (Barr, 1995, p.122,123.)

As Barr points out, however, a simplistic notion of community empowerment does not take into account the problems of defining community or conflicting interests. The reinforcing of territorialism in a 'populist' manner can lead to the disempowerment of other equally disadvantaged groups (Barr, 1995). To counter these tendencies Taylor (1995) suggests that three central issues need to be addressed:

how to release people's energies without exploiting them, how to respect 'difference' whilst organising around common interests and how to make local action relevant beyond the neighbourhood. (p 108-109.)

Definitions and interpretations of community empowerment are contingent on political views. If community was once an icon of the left it now is more than ever used by the right to explain and justify policies. Following widespread disquiet, even amongst government advisors, about the failure of private sector, property led, urban

development in the 1980s to improve the lot of the majority, the community is now a key concern across the political spectrum (Department of Employment, 1990). That it should now have such resonance in the political parties of the UK is a result of influence from the US. Bowman (1996) referring to 'empowerment zones', is concerned with diverse and possibly contradictory political interpretations. Thakes and Stauback adapt this concept and propose a national structure of 'community enterprise' zones and agencies (1993).

Much of the literature that comes from central government uses the term community but very often they are referring to a vaguely geographically defined amalgam of business people, local government and active agencies. The community is defined in effect as a partnership of economic interests easily confused with, say, a TEC board. The stakeholder concept widens this franchise. If local groups of residents are included then all well and good. The policy makers of the new right view the community as yet another vehicle for dismantling the local state and giving the market more room to operate.

The development of 'community business' provides both the neo-liberals and the radical left with further opportunities (Pearce, 1993, Community Development Foundation, 1995). Hayton (1995) provides one definition:

Community businesses are a form of economic self-help, where the local community attempts to create its own jobs by setting up self-sustaining trading ventures (p170).

Although originally the product of local action, government agencies have since co-opted some of these ideas. The emphasis on income generation appeals to central government for ideological and cost reasons. Those on the left are more ambivalent. They can see the potential for independence from state interference but, often because funding is at least initially state controlled, there are problems since they are

State-supported community economic initiatives with strings attached, strings which imply the reinforcement of low pay as a strategy for competing in the global economy (O'Neill, 1995, p107).

The tendency for 'enterprises of the oppressed' to 'exert downward pressure on the conditions of existing jobs' concerns other commentators but most accept that it is a valid alternative to no jobs at all (Eisenschitz & Gough, 1993, p 245). The dilemma for

some who promote community development has been how to avoid being used by central government to cut public spending and reduce its social responsibility for localities.

There has been a shift in the language of regeneration, with the almost obligatory inclusion of community objectives but little change in terms of concrete action and particular little redistribution of power (Robinson and Shaw, 1994). Craig and Mayo (1995) argue that the apportioning of power can be viewed from at least three theoretical or philosophical stand points. Firstly, power can be said to be a variable commodity and therefore individuals, organisations and communities can increase their power without necessarily depriving others. Secondly, 'power is conceptualised in zero-sum terms' (ibid. p 5.) and in this case the gains of the powerless must be at the expense of the powerful. The third approach is a Marxist perspective that combines political and economic power. If this view is taken, it is impossible for localities to achieve any meaningful command of their circumstances without addressing the issue of economic power on a global scale. It is within the context of this last point that the theoretical underpinning of community empowerment as a component of regeneration can be found.

The re-emergence of community focused policies as a means to economic and social regeneration has gone hand in hand with the increasingly popular notion that localised economic development is possible and necessary, if there is to be any future for communities in the throes of restructuring. Although particularly popular for Third World development (World Bank, 1995) it is increasingly part of the policy tools for developed countries faced with increased poverty and social polarisation (Craig and Mayo, 1995).

It is a policy that has its foundations in the ideas of commentators on regional development who have looked at regions in the European Union such as Baden Wurtemberg, Emilia Romagna and Catalonia, and have come to the conclusion that regional indigenous development can work even within the globalised economic forces of the late 20 th. century. It represents a coming together of economic opportunities and the bottom-up approach of community development discarded at the end of the 1970s.

If local economies are to thrive, then economic development must involve the local community as much as possible and harness the talents and endeavour of the local population. Nevin and Shiner argue that a 'new framework' is needed which puts community empowerment at the centre of the debate about regeneration (1995b).

Thus the rekindling of the community development ethos is complemented by the emergence of a theoretical underpinning for local economic activity. This involves the interpretation of post-industrial societies as being capable of economic growth, due to the development of flexible specialisation with an increased emphasis on the small and medium sized enterprise as the main vehicle for economic advancement. The idea is attractive across the political spectrum because it has the potential to cut costs and reduce state responsibility, whilst at the same time enhance the capacity of individuals and localities to take charge of their own affairs.

Wary though communities should be of powerful organisations or academics using their name in vain, the coalfield communities could benefit from this shift in the policy debate. The ability of relatively isolated and formerly self-reliant communities to adjust to economic restructuring could be enhanced. The closure of the dominating focus for life in such villages has far reaching consequences in which the former self-reliance and inward-looking culture is both potentially a source of weakness and strength.

The nature of coalfield communities and their position within the global economy suggests that the community empowerment component of regeneration is an important policy area. It encompasses physical, employment and training and can be viewed as a means to implementation as well as an aim in itself. Strategies for renewal such as 'regeneration through work' (Simmonds and Emmerich, 1996) may prove invaluable in this respect. They advocate the setting up of 'intermediate labour markets' in which waged jobs and training are combined. People are employed for a limited time in 'social economy' organisations involved in, for example, childcare or environmental improvement. The exploration of the potential of community based approaches and the views of participants in the coalfields is consequently a key element of this study.

Each of these components of regeneration are closely related and specific policy initiatives will contain a complex mix of them all. So far in this study I have provided

the policy and theoretical context for regeneration in local economies. In the next two chapters I will narrow the focus to the coalfields in particular and start by looking at some of the key organisations who have been charged with responsibility for assisting the renewal of coalfield areas.

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### **Chapter 4. Some key players in coalfield regeneration**

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The main agent in the implementation of regeneration policies in the coalfields is effectively central government. This remains the case, even though the professed aim of Conservative administrations over the last decade and a half is to withdraw from state intervention. As Moore suggests, there has been a re-orientation of intervention rather than a retreat from it (1990). De-regulation and the introduction of a 'market' philosophy into regional policy has meant that organisations such as the UDCs (Urban Development Corporations), the TECs (Training and Enterprise Councils) and other quasi-non-governmental organisations have been given the task of carrying out policy (Parkinson & Evans, 1990). The role of the EU has been increasingly significant, both as a source of funding and as a regulatory framework guiding economic policies.

The role of local government throughout this process has also changed. Economic and political restructuring, as an objective of central government, involved conflict with local government (Moore, 1990). Faced with a political and financial squeeze, local authorities increasingly created their own economic development units. Their activities were usually associated with land and premises and as local promotion agencies. After the radical experiments of the early nineteen eighties, most notably by the Greater London Council (Geddes, 1988. Geddes and Bennington, 1992), they adopted a 'modified market' model of intervention (Cochrane, 1990). This has alternatively been characterised as a shift from 'managerialism' to 'entrepreneurialism' (Stoker, 1990). Local authorities integrated some of their economic policies with social policies as a more holistic approach to regeneration took shape.

The situation that emerged in the 1980s was one in which a wide range of organisations and agencies attempted to carry out economic regeneration policies. Local Government, the TECs, Urban Development Corporations, Enterprise Agencies, English Partnerships and a plethora of other agencies and consultancies all competed for the limited resources available from government initiatives such as City Challenge, the Single Regeneration Budget or European funds.

British Coal Enterprise, an organisation set up by the government in 1984 in anticipation of extensive pit closures, became the 'front-line' agency for assisting the coalfields. In the case studies there are extensive references to both British Coal Enterprise and the TECs because they have been the main agencies at local and regional level that have been given the task of regenerating the coalfields. It is the intention to outline the history and role of these two organisations and to introduce some of the critical assessments of them from the relevant literature.

### **British Coal Enterprise.**

#### History and role

British Coal Enterprise was set up during the miners strike of 1984-5 and modelled in part on British Steel 'Industries' which itself was set up to help the restructuring of the steel industry (Hudson & Sadler, 1987). It had two main roles: to help create jobs through the support of small and medium-sized enterprises and to assist in the job search and training of redundant miners. There were three strands to its job creation role: to give impetus to businesses through a loan scheme: to support local enterprise agencies in particular with business advice, and to run managed workspaces and small business units (Hudson and Sadler, 1987, Rees & Thomas 1989, Edwards, 1991, Turner, 1993, Fothergill and Guy 1994). The loan scheme for example provided up to £5000 per job created or 25% of funding.

In the earlier years, the stimulation of entrepreneurship amongst ex-miners appeared to take central place. As Rees and Thomas (1989) point out, however, success amongst ex-miners themselves was very limited. Other people from mining communities, but with different work histories and educational backgrounds, made better use of the assistance on offer. In the mid-nineteen eighties many of those leaving the industry were above fifty years of age. Their chances of gaining employment were slim and there was little enthusiasm for setting up small businesses (Wass, 1989. Witt, 1990, Turner, 1993, Turner and Gregory, 1995). As closures progressed, the opportunities for transfers of the younger workforce were reduced and a higher proportion were leaving the industry with early retirement not an option. BCE consequently shifted more of

their resources to counselling, outplacement and training and the 'Job Shop' became a standard feature of their service.

The training scheme was known as JACCS (Job and Career Change Scheme). Redundant miners were either trained on BCE courses such as driving, welding and fabrication, security etc. or in some cases 'on the job.' Payment in 1992 was £50 per week plus £30 for a qualifying adult dependant earning less than £38 per week, for 13 weeks. This scheme was normally available only up to six months after the date of redundancy.

By the time of the major closures after October 1992, BCE had apparently developed as an effective 'front line' agency capable of responding to wholesale pit closures. Although, as we shall see from the case studies, there were some shifts in emphasis as BCE developed, the core activities remained the same from 1984 up 1995. The privatisation of British Coal in January 1995 followed the largely completed task of restructuring. BCE remained financially dependent on the government once the coal industry itself was in private hands and argued that there was still a role for such an agency. Although its activities over the years had attracted much criticism, its demise was feared by local authorities and the Coalfields Community Campaign. They argued that any agency trying to assist coalfield areas was worth having (Fothergill & Guy 1994). Eventually it was privatised with the outplacement, workspace and loan scheme functions in separate companies.

### An initial evaluation

It is unreasonable to expect to replace all jobs in the 'sunset' industries with jobs in the 'sunrise' industries. Given the problems referred to previously, of structural unemployment and global economic forces, the task for agencies such as BCE was formidable. Charged with much of the responsibility, BCE have developed the expertise with which to deal with redundant miners. Criticism has mainly focused on their claims to success. Research into their activities has consistently questioned that success rate (Hudson & Sadler, 1987, Witt, 1990, Trotman and Lewis 1990, Turner 1991, Turner, 1993, Fothergill and Guy, 1994, Turner and Gregory, 1995).

Table 4.1.

Estimated overall impact of BCE on job creation in the coalfields, end March 1994.

	Jobs Assisted	Jobs Created in Coalfields	
		Range	Central estimate
From business supported	38,101	3,500 - 14,000	9,000
From future development of business already supported	8,024	1,000 - 3,000	2,000
From workspace activities	13,622	1,100 - 1,700	1,400
Through JACCs etc.	46,282	1,100- 5,500	3,300
Total	106,029	7,000 - 24,000	16,000

Source: Fothergill & Guy (1994.)

Between 1984 and 1994 BCE claimed to have created 106,029 employment opportunities nationally (*see table 4.1*). Their figures, according to Fothergill and Guy, do not stand up to serious scrutiny. They have estimated that the true figure is nearer '16,000 jobs in the coalfields, of which 2,000 were still in the pipe-line rather than on the ground' (p.5). They attribute the shortfall to BCE's accounting terminology - jobs assisted and employment opportunities are not the same as jobs. Using the evaluation methods of assessing dead-weight and displacement ('the number of jobs that would have existed in the coalfields in the absence of BCE' [ibid.]) they conclude that they have done a reasonable job in the circumstances replacing 'one in fourteen' of the 230,000 jobs lost in the industry between 1984 and 1994.

The broad assessment was that BCE had become an effective agency dealing with large numbers of redundant mineworkers. It is accepted that they have made a positive contribution to job creation. Research carried out in 1993 reveals that, amongst other agencies involved in regeneration, BCE was by and large well respected. Of 54 organisations active in the coalfields of the UK, 37 (68.5%) considered BCE made a 'significant and useful' contribution. From the same number of agencies, 31 (57.4%) ranked them first for their outplacement and counselling activities (Hausner, 1993.) Nevertheless, research into pit villages have found a range of 'real' unemployment from 15 % in South Derbyshire/ North Leicestershire to 36% in Ayrshire (Beatty &

Fothergill, 1994). This initial outline of BCE's activities and some evaluation from the literature will be supplemented by evidence from the case studies (chapters 8, 9 and 10).

### *Training and Enterprise Councils*

#### History and Role

TECs and LECs (Local Enterprise Companies in Scotland) represent the biggest initiative on the part of central government to restructure training and enterprise through the introduction of private sector approach. Two White Papers in 1988 led to the setting up of 104 TECs and LECs in 1990 and 1991. The expressed purpose of these organisations was 'to plan and deliver training and to promote and support the development of small businesses and self employment within their area' (Department of Employment, 1988 cited in Bennett, Wicks & McCoshan, 1994). Thus training and economic development were the two main activities of this network of organisations (Boddy, 1992). Bennett, Wicks and McCoshan (1994) go on to explain that they are organised as limited companies with a majority of business leaders on the board. In 1993/94 they received £2.3m from public funds. Unemployment training accounts for 74% of that budget with enterprise activities accounting for most of the rest.

Within the coalfield areas covered by this study, the main TECs operating are Mid-Glamorgan, South Glamorgan, Gwent and West Wales TECs in South Wales; Greater Nottinghamshire and North Nottinghamshire TECs; Barnsley and Doncaster TEC and Rotherham TEC in South Yorkshire.

#### An initial evaluation

It is beyond the scope of this study to attempt to comprehensively evaluate or review all evaluation studies of Training and Enterprise Councils. However, some indication at this stage of the problems of TECs and the broad areas of critical appraisal informs the potential interpretations of the later case studies.

One of the aspects of the TEC initiative which appears at first contradictory is that a government committed to reducing government intervention should embark on such major project in the first place (Tonge, 1993). It is only if we view TECs as part of the

restructuring of governance within the context of a political as well as an economic agenda that this policy makes sense (Bennett, Wicks & McCoshan, 1994). The commitment to training and economic development being controlled by the private sector at regional and local level is backed up by the composition of the boards (*see table 4.2.*)

Table 4.2.

Origins of Board Members of TECs Operational 1990 - 91

<b>Origin</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Private Sector	339	69.6
Local Authorities	47	9.2
Trade Unions	26	5.3
Local education Authorities	16	3.3
Voluntary Organisations	14	2.9
Health Authorities	11	2.2
Other Sectors	34	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Hansard 1.11.90, 750w. cited by Tonge (1993.)

However, the main difficulty for the private sector and a market strategy is, according to most commentators, reconciling it with a national strategy to deal with unemployment. The privatisation of Britain's unemployment problem (Tonge, 1993) does not mean necessarily that it is dealt with any more effectively.

In fact what is happening is that the government is taking active steps to *create* a market-type system in an area where markets have never functioned effectively.(Peck, 1991, p 16.)

The fact that organisations created to help stimulate economic growth through partnership with local business should then spend 74% of their budget administering unemployment schemes is an implicit recognition of these difficulties.

The TECs role to co-ordinate training in localities is seriously hampered by the lack of power to carry out their policies and the ambivalence of local business. Government funding for the TECs has been viewed with envy by local authorities but is proving inadequate, considering the scale of the problem. There is growing evidence that it is

entirely a matter for the private sector company whether it carries out 'investment in people'.

Historical experience in Britain, and the experience of our major international competitors, suggests that a vocational training system based purely on voluntarism is unlikely to succeed (Peck & Emmerich, 1993, p 6).

The 'structural nature of under-investment' (Boddy 1992) is not confronted by the TECs or government departments. Private companies are left to pursue their largely short term policies - offering low pay and low skills whilst complaining of the unsuitability of many applicants for jobs. The primacy of small and medium sized enterprises in the economic development of regions is unfortunately not reflected in the TECs' success rate at influencing such firms (Curran, 1993).

Thus a number of commentators are concerned about the effectiveness of the TECs. Two of these concerns are the inability of the TECs to influence private companies and the weakness of 'vacancy led' provision. In both cases the TECS have little power to solve the problems. The short-term attitude of private companies to training provision is a legacy the TECs are unable to remove because they do not have the power to enforce policies (Curran, 1993, Boddy, 1992). Regardless of the policy statements that 'higher functions' and 'high value added production' is the key to success, quantity rather than quality remains the yardstick by which TECs measure their own performance. Boddy (1992, p 178.) explains that the 'emphasis on turnover and performance' leads to 'short-term, low cost training, for high turnover, low skill sections of the labour market' thereby discouraging 'training for mid and higher-level skills' (ibid.).

Suggestions from Bennet, Wicks and McCoshan (1994) concentrate mainly on the structure of the TECs and their relationship with central government. Their study is about empowerment and they recommend that central government gives up more of its power to such bodies. They do not, as others have (Boddy, 1992, Curran, 1993) question the ability of the business community to deal effectively with training issues.

British Coal Enterprise has had the main role of addressing the problems of former miners and areas former dependent on coal mining since 1985. The TECs have taken on an important role in regeneration since 1990 and were allocated the main funding for the

coal areas after 1992. This section of the study provides some background and elements of evaluation from the literature. The case studies will further contribute to a critical understanding of the role of BCE and the TECs in more detail and subsequently to an understanding of the role of labour market adjustment agencies in the context of global restructuring. At this point it is appropriate to put in place the final piece of the contextual jigsaw - an overview of the UK coal industry.

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### **Chapter 5. The UK coal industry**

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This section of the study consist of an outline of the decline of the British coal industry within the context of deindustrialisation and globalisation. It attempts to account for the particular policies towards coal carried out by the UK government which resulted in rapid decline. It also examines the distinctive characteristics of coalfield areas which may affect the potential for regeneration.

#### ***Coal in a global market***

The global market for energy has been expanding but coal's share of it fell from 60% in 1950 to 35% by 1970 (Chadwick et al, 1987). Seen from a European perspective, the coal industry is a fast disappearing legacy of the industrial revolution. However, globally it is an expanding and increasingly important industry, especially for the Far East where new coal fired power stations in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan have been built (Financial Times, July 8th, 1996). This rapid expansion is mainly for steam coal demanded and supplied outside Europe. Most coal consumption and production remained within national boundaries but by the mid-nineteen eighties a global market emerged. In 1973 only 20 m tonnes of steam coal and 87 m tonnes of coking coal were traded internationally. In 1986 this had risen to 133 m tonnes for steam coal and 140 m tonnes for coking coal (Sadler, 1992). While coking coal continued to show modest increase, the international market for steam coal almost doubled in the next decade, reaching 245 m tonnes in 1995.

The declining European coal industry enjoyed some respite following the oil crises of the 1970s when national governments placed higher emphasis on the strategic value of their own coal mines. But as demand stabilised, supply increased, as the major multi-national oil companies diversified into coal in both developed countries such as the USA, Australia and South Africa and also Newly Industrialising Countries (NICs) such as Columbia, Indonesia and Venezuela (Routledge and Wright, 1985).

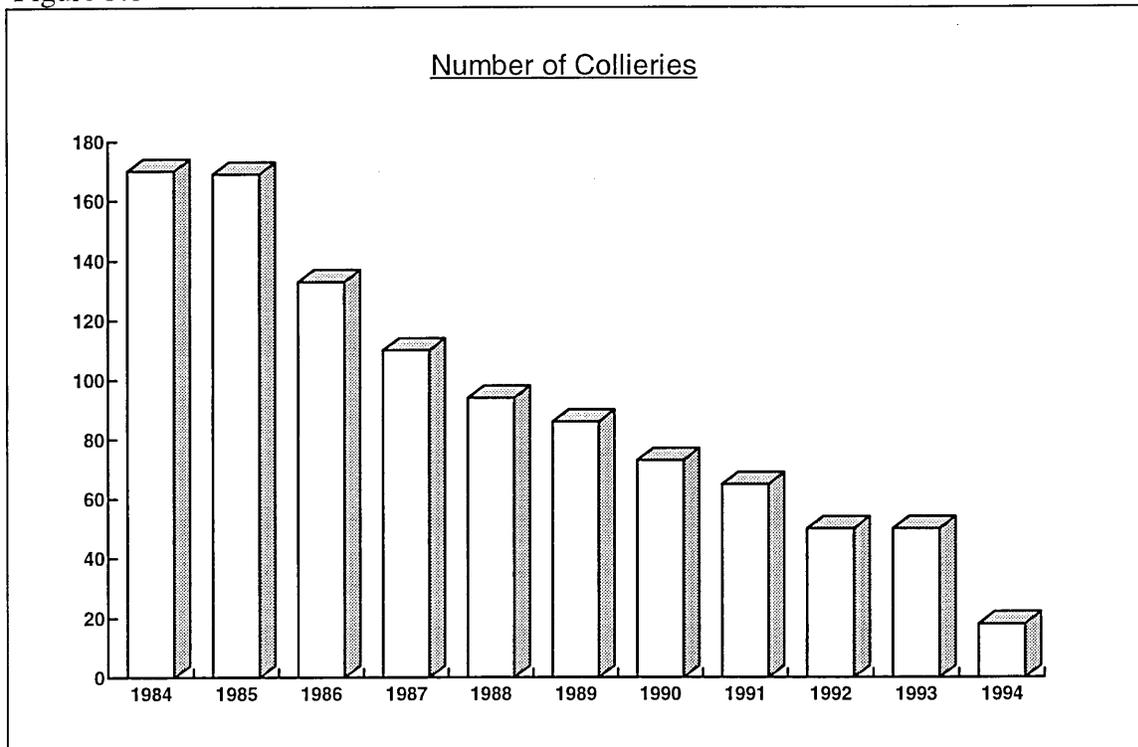
Optimistic projections of demand for coal within Europe were eventually invalidated by several factors: a global decline in economic growth; lack of investment in new coal-burn capacity in the developed countries; environmental restrictions and diversification of energy sources. Of the latter, use of gas for electricity generation was to be crucial. The multiplicity of sources and forms of energy supply in an increasingly international market meant governments were less likely to feel vulnerable to sudden shortages in one sector.

In Europe, as late as 1990, electricity generation was still 40% dependent on coal. The five main producers (UK, Germany, France, Belgium and Spain) were able to retain a 60% share of the EU market. The coal industries survived to varying degree on subsidies, enabling them to compete with imported coal. EU directives on reducing subsidies and increasing environmental controls called into question such protectionist policies. The net effect of all these factors has been that all coal producing countries in western Europe have been forced to progressively decrease productive capacity.

### **Restructuring in the UK 1981 - 95.**

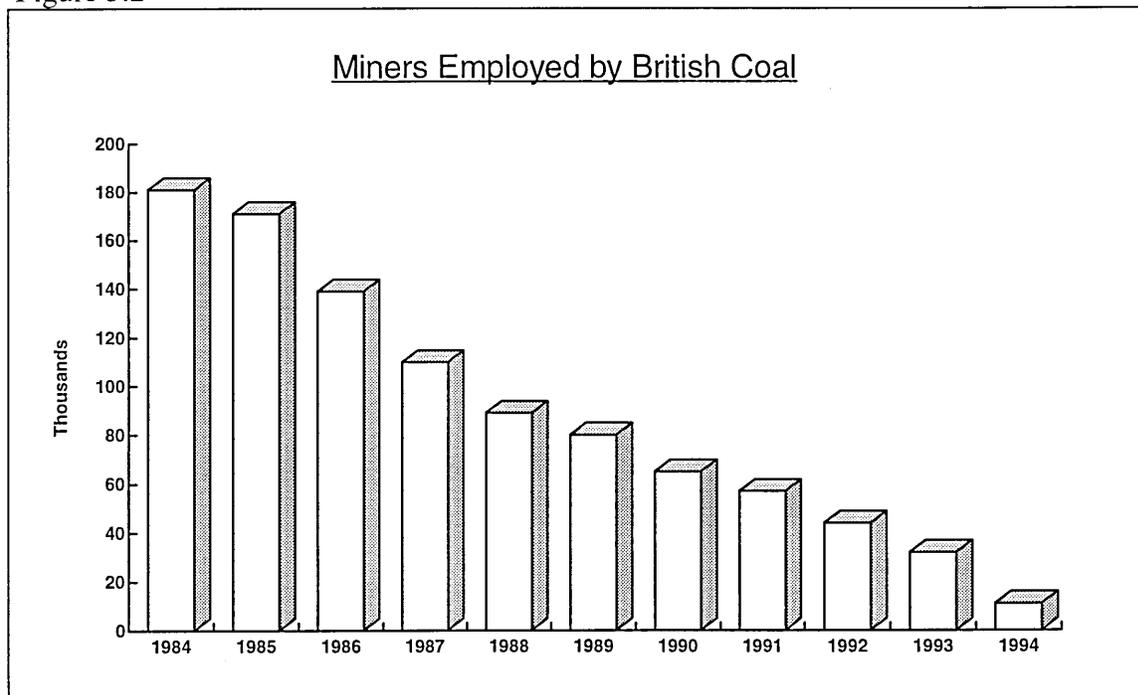
During the 1970s, the UK coal industry arrested its long term decline and under the 'Plan for Coal' received significant investment, most notably in the new coalfield near Selby in North Yorkshire. However, because relatively cheap coal imports were increasingly available and domestic consumption continued to decline, the increased capacity in Selby merely added to the pressure for closures and restructuring elsewhere. Opposition to closure plans was effectively broken with the defeat of the year long miners' strike of 1984-1985. With the right of 'management to manage' established, the industry was subjected to rapid and widespread closure. Between 1985 and 1992, one hundred and nineteen pits closed and employment in the industry fell from 171,000 to 44,000 (*see figures 5.1 and 5.2*). At the same time however, productivity in the industry rose from 2.7 tonnes per manshift to 6.3 tonnes (*see figure 5.3*). New capacity at Selby and the introduction of heavy duty mining equipment and new technology meant that the UK coal industry was the most advanced in the world. Productivity increases were achieved in the main by cutting higher cost capacity.

Figure 5.1



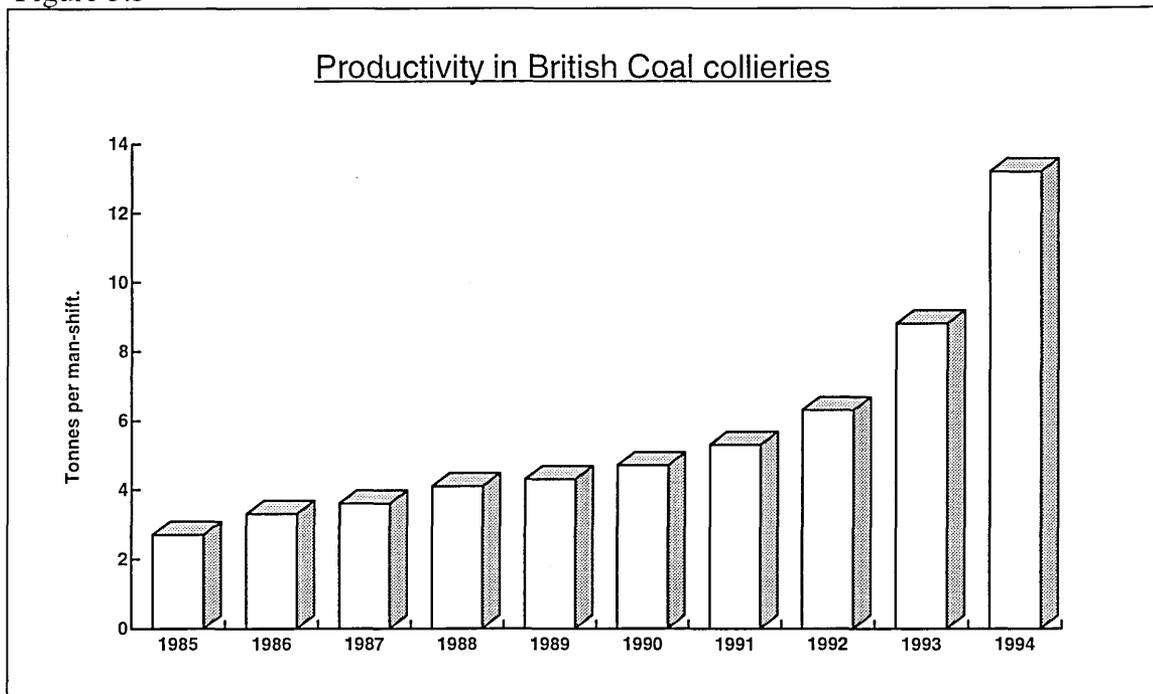
Source: British Coal (1995)

Figure 5.2



Source: Coalfield Communities Campaign. (1995)

Figure 5.3



Source: Coalfield Communities Campaign (1995).

However, the industry's problems lay in markets not productivity. The industry from the 1960s onwards was increasingly dependent on one market - power stations. The privatisation of the electricity industry, both generation and supply, in 1989 added to coal's difficulties. The new private companies were now in a position to freely use alternative sources of coal and other fuels. The exception to this was the nuclear industry which maintained its market share, although proving unattractive to the private sector and producing expensive electricity at 3 pence per kilowatt hour for Magnox reactors compared to 1.8 pence for coal fired stations (Coalfields Communities Campaign, 1995, Parker & Surrey, 1992). This was achieved through a subsidy based on an 11% levy on all fuel bills. The rapid increase in gas turbine power generation in the early 1990s sealed the coal industry's fate. A public outcry followed the announcement of a further 31 pit closures in October 1992. Despite concerted campaigning and favourable recommendations from two Parliamentary Select Committees the closures eventually went ahead. This reduced employment in the industry by over thirty thousand more.

When privatised the industry retained 32 deep mines, over 30 major opencast sites and remained significant. Deep mined production in 1994 stood at 31 million tonnes. Most deep mines are in the midland coalfields and Yorkshire. It is a capital intensive modern industry, producing deep mined coal at comparable prices to the international market

and considerably better than other EU producers. For instance the UK in 1994 produced 1.422 tonnes per man hour compared with Germany's 0.75 and Spain's 0.423 (Coalfield Communities Campaign, 1995). The future of the industry depends on still more cost reductions and the re-negotiation of contracts with the electricity supply industry in 1998.

### *The political context*

The restructuring of the coal industry took place because of the global forces exerted by the energy market. The events and the process of change involved in that restructuring cannot however, be fully explained by economic arguments alone. The political history of the industry, its position within the nation and its relationship with government had considerable influence on how restructuring occurred.

Coal mining was central to the development of British capitalism. In 1920 nearly one a quarter million were employed in the mines. This was accompanied by significant political influence, both by the owners through the ruling parties and through the development of the trades union and labour movement. Nationalisation of the coal mines in 1947 was the culmination of fifty years of political and industrial struggle (Powell, 1993.) and the miners' strikes have been land marks in the history of labour - 1926, 1972, 1974 and 1984-85. The political history of confrontation between the unions and, in particular, the Conservative government resulted in the bitter conflict of 1984-85. It was the political project of the government to break resistance to their restructuring and laissez-faire policies by confronting and defeating the symbol of British trade unionism, the National Union of Mineworkers (Waddington and Parry, 1995).

Endemic problems in the UK have been made worse by policies in which long term planning was replaced by short term political expediency. It can be argued that ideological confrontation has had undue influence over economic factors resulting in a more traumatic transition. There seems little doubt that a relatively sound industry would not have received such draconian treatment were it not for a political strategy based on historical antagonisms. It is of particular interest to this study how this traumatic transition, brought about by a political and industrial defeat rather than by

negotiation, has impacted on the coalfields, how it has shaped responses and what affect it has had on regeneration efforts.

### *The impact on the coalfields and the problems of regeneration*

Coal has been mined in Great Britain since the Roman times. The industry that concerns this study developed from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Consequently, unlike other mining or extractive industries exist world wide, it has been a relatively stable, long lasting industry that has evolved in economic, social, cultural and geographic terms. Although migrations of miners occurred throughout the development of the coal industry it was not an option simply to move on and abandon a locality as is the case with some mining activities internationally (see Neil et al 1992). Towns and villages became dominated by the coal industry or were built from scratch to accommodate miners and their families. These places were largely 'one industry' settlements. A significant number of these pit villages were semi-rural and had poor communications with the rest of the region. Transport and other infrastructural features were tailored to meet the needs of the industry which typically meant a 'mineral' rail link and a 'B' road. Historical development however, has meant that there is some diversity of the geography of mines and mining settlements, as the case studies will show.

This geographical characterisation of coalfield areas was part of the overall socio-economic typology of the coal communities. Miners, their families and the communities they have lived in, conjure up a particular image based partly on sentimental representations but also on sociological studies. The miner has represented the archetypal proletarian. For instance it has been suggested that the strategic position of the miners in the national economy over previous decades has help create this image. This 'cultural loading' (Field, 1989) of miners has meant:

Inherently, the mining workforce assumes symbolic significance from its subterranean location, its regional concentration and - often - isolation from other social groupings, its physicality, and its predominantly male nature (Field, 1989. p 347).

It is not within the scope of this study to discuss at length the historical development of this iconography but is important to assert that, myths apart, there are certain features of coal mining, miners and their communities that distinguish them from other sections of

the population. Some of these features are potentially crucial to our understanding of how the coalfield communities have responded to pit closures and may have a significant influence on the possibilities of regeneration.

Key studies into the sociology of the coal industry such as Dennis et al (1956), Bulmer (1976) and Warwick and Littlejohn (1992) have explored in depth the coalfield community. A chief area of concern has been how socio-economic processes contribute to the formulation of a particular community of coal. Warwick and Littlejohn re-state Bulmer's eight characteristics of the 'ideal type' mining community including; geographical isolation, domination of the mining industry, the influence of the hazardous nature of the work and the pride associated with it, minimal 'social or geographic mobility', gregarious patterns of communal sociability', accentuated gender divisions of labour and roles as well as continuity between generations, economic and political conflict and 'close knit interlocking collectivities based on a shared history.' (Bulmer, 1975 cited in Warwick & Littlejohn, 1992, p 30.) All of these features are identifiable within mining communities even in the early 1990s, although the complexities of the social and economic relations often defy simple analysis.

Of particular interest to this study is the contention made by Bulmer, Warwick and Littlejohn that the historical development of communities around an occupational focus, coal mining, has produced social and cultural relations which outlast and transcend the economic base they are born out of.

Communities may grow and they may disappear, though if a local culture has developed, it may provide the basis for a 'historical community' despite a restructured economy, maybe even for a generation or so. (Warwick and Littlejohn, 1992. p 15.)

Bulmer had previously suggested that:

The *gemeinschaftlich* ties of kinship, residence and friendship help to bond an ongoing local pattern of social interaction which may in time even become relatively autonomous in relation to the dominant economic activity. (Bulmer cited in Warwick and Littlejohn, 1992 p 29.)

Mining communities maintain certain social features, for a time at least, even when the mines are closed. However, the consequences of the removal of the main economic basis for the locality or the region must have some significant impact on those social relations just as they in turn impact on the possibilities for a new economic base.

Employment in coal has shaped these communities and it is likely that efforts to build a

new economic base and carry out social regeneration will have to accommodate this legacy.

These characteristics provide a socio-economic milieu in which the industry is restructured. The potential for problems in regeneration can be traced back to these distinctive characteristics. Mine closure will result in high concentrations of unemployment because of lack of economic diversity. If the skills required are industry specific and not easily transferable, then it is likely that the transition to new employment will be difficult. Because employment in the coal mines has transferred from generation to generation, educational achievement has not been generally encouraged. The hazards and long term health risks of the work of coal mining can contribute to a high proportion of economic inactivity through long term sickness. The traditionally low economic activity rate of women has meant excessive dependence on the male wage. Lack of money in the local economy can then lead to a more general deterioration of the community, resulting in closed shops and businesses and the physical decay of buildings. Crime and anti-social behaviour are often linked with high unemployment.

This potential for spiralling decline is made worse by the negative image of mining communities held by potential inward investors. The lack of transport infrastructure and the poor environment scarred by industrial waste is not attractive to businesses wishing to expand or relocate. It may be the case that the mining workforce itself is also perceived as being lacking in a number of ways. Not only do they not have the right skills for the new high-tech industries but they are often thought to have traditional, confrontational trade union attitudes that may obstruct a more flexible approach to production. It could be argued that a culture that had been built on hard physical labour does not seem appropriate for the needs of modern industry (Turner, 1995).

It would appear therefore that coalfields are doubly disadvantaged with respect to restructuring and the potential for regeneration. Firstly, the problems of unemployment are geographically highly concentrated and secondly, the former mining localities are not attractive to new economic development.

However, there is a third element which can, in part, account for the traumatic nature of this era of change. Restructuring has occurred through conflict. Confrontational

policies have received confrontational responses. Rapid decline followed the major conflict of 1984 - 85. In the list of most deprived regions in 1983 no coal mining area appeared. By 1988 five mining localities were in the top thirteen of the most deprived areas (Beynon et al 1991, cited in Turner, 1995). British Coal's role was to cut costs, close collieries and, in the later stages, provide a market clearing for privatisation. The Modified Colliery Review Procedure set up after the 1984-85 strike recommended that the closure of some collieries be reconsidered (Bates and Cadeby for example). BCC ignored the findings and closed them. Apart from this, at no stage was there consultation between the government, British Coal, the unions or local authorities about the closure of mines. Lump sum redundancy payments were used as tool to achieve rapid closure rather than a means to assist in readjustment (Waddington & Parry 1995). The main trade union, the National Union of Mineworkers, maintained opposition to closures and privatisation preferring to avoid the issues of job replacement or re-training. Its role as a social and political focus within former mining communities tended to wither once the mines had closed.

Traditional features of mining communities can be seen as both a weakness and a potential source of strength. They have developed and sustained the communities for up to three generations. However, as Hudson points out, the particular 'institutional thickness' that they have contributed towards may have proved an encumbrance to regeneration (1994). Lack of 'entrepreneurialism' and a 'dependency culture' suggest that the coalfields are not fertile grounds for the regeneration policies of the last decade. This study does not take these interpretations or perceptions as given and it will attempt to reassess them through examination of evidence from the case studies.

The restructuring of the UK coal industry has taken place in response to the pressures of a globalised energy market. The distinctive characteristics of the coalfields shaped by economic, cultural and political factors have determined how the decline of coal and coal communities has been managed and should in turn shape how they may be regenerated.

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### **Chapter 6. Central questions to address**

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So far in this section I have provided a context for understanding the regeneration of former UK coalfield areas. This context has consisted of an examination of particular theoretical debates and policy developments. Some key players in the regeneration of the coalfields have been discussed, as well as socio-economic and political aspects of the coal industry and its communities. Distilled from that context are a number of central questions to be addressed.

This study is about the political economy of regeneration in the older industrial regions of the UK. It focuses on the case of coal in three regions and seeks to explore the links between theory and policy at varying levels of abstraction and spatial scale. Thus it examines the practical policy outcomes at the local and regional level within the contextual framework of contemporary interpretations of economic structural trends. It starts from the premise that there has been a fundamental transformation of the global economy which, whilst presenting opportunities for some regions and localities, is a threat to others.

The central questions to be addressed in this research fall into four clusters: those relating to a general comparative evaluation of coal areas and which define the overall direction of the study; those arising out of the ‘post-Fordist’ or ‘flexible specialisation’ debate; those concerned with the inter-relationships between institutions and their role in controlling global forces; finally, issues about the control of local and regional development, sometimes referred to as ‘bottom up’ or ‘top down’ approaches.

#### **1. Comparative issues**

The research is a comparative appraisal of regeneration policies impacting on declining coalfield areas using three coalfields as case studies. Older industrial areas have been identified as particularly vulnerable to the structural changes of this period of transition. In particular the rapid decline of the UK coal industry has resulted in regional decline and acute problems for many localities. Consequently, the intention is to compare three

coalfield areas, all at different stages of decline and change, and to identify the problems and successes of regeneration policy. The four interrelated components of regeneration previously identified are used to assist the comparison - physical, employment, training and community empowerment. By examining these four components in three coal areas the study seeks to do the following:

- Compare policies designed to ameliorate the impact of colliery closures through direct assistance to ex-miners and mining communities and through regional regeneration policy
- Interpret such policies in the context of their implicit models of the regeneration process
- Assess whether there is any empirical evidence that policy prescriptions provide the basis for effective solutions to the problems of regeneration.

## 2. The usefulness of concepts as analytical tools and guides to policies

The theoretical context, as presented earlier, raises many questions about how trends in economic and social development are interpreted and how it feeds into policy implementation. It is considered whether a range of concepts which include 'post-Fordism', 'flexible specialisation', 'post-industrial', 'uneven re-development' and 'globalisation', assist or hinder our understanding of the process of economic and social change. To explore the links between theory and practice and between global and local, we take into account the theoretical preoccupations of contemporary regional policy. These preoccupations fall into two closely interrelated categories: those concerned with modes of production and those which examine the role of institutions.

We will ask if there is any potential for regeneration policies involving the development of small and medium sized firms (SMEs) and whether there are elements of 'post-Fordism' and 'flex-specialisation' in the coal areas which represent a way forward. The prescriptive outcome of some interpretations of current and future developments is that flexible-specialisation and the emergence of 'industrial districts' (Piore and Sabel, 1984, Cooke and Morgan, 1993) can benefit local and regional economies within Europe. This proposition will be evaluated.

The prospects and opportunities identified by this interpretation, in particular the examples of Emilia-Romagna and Baden-Wurtemberg, provide a substantial part of regional policy. An alternative view is that contemporary trends present a threat to older industrial regions. Consequently an assessment will be made of whether progress or economic hysteresis will be the likely outcome and if this involves the effective abandonment of coalfield communities. If what is happening is the widening of socio-economic inequality due to the uneven development of capitalism and the spatial division of labour, then we need to examine the suggestion that the power of multinationals and globalisation of capitalism is ultimately destructive for older industrial regions (Hall, 1988, Hudson, 1994). This interpretation argues that there is little chance of such declining regions repositioning themselves favourably in the world market and that the evidence so far is that they will be left behind in terms of economic development. If economic development is thought to be too problematic then the policy options will inevitably turn to the containment of the social consequences or what Hudson refers to as 'welfarist solutions' (1994.) The following issues will be addressed:

- An exploration of the co-development of the theoretical concerns with 'post-Fordism' and 'flexible specialisation', policy ideas and policy implementation in coal areas
- Assessment of the likelihood of declining coal areas repositioning themselves to take advantage of new developments
- Identification of aspects of the economic and social condition of coalfield communities that enhance or hinder economic development, promote social inclusion or exclusion.

### **3. Institutional issues**

A third area of enquiry is to examine the notion that there is a 'socio - institutional inadequacy to foster new development opportunities' (Albrechts, 1989) and that the form of 'institutional thickness' (Amin & Thrift, 1994) and culture dominant in coalfield areas precludes the possibility of these areas successfully repositioning themselves in the regional, national and international markets.

This approach involves assessing the situation in the coalfields from the point of view of the institutional structures that mediate between policy and practice, politics and

economics. This will include an examination of the possibilities for localities to 'hold down the global' by targeting policies at those aspects of regeneration over which we can have more control (Amin and Thrift, 1994). There is an emerging body of opinion that de-regulatory responses to global forces serve only to exacerbate economic and social problems at the national, regional and local level (see for example Amin and Thrift, 1994, 1995, Peck and Tickell, 1994, Peck 1994). There is no general agreement by the regulationist school that a new regime of accumulation has emerged and therefore the policy makers' acceptance of a new regime and a post-industrial vision has consequent dangers. They prefer to describe this period as one of transition, and in particular, point to the lack of a socio-political framework to stabilise the economic flux. In this period, whilst some nation states are deregulating, they suggest that more control in managing the global economy requires some 'filling in' rather than 'hollowing out' of the state (Peck and Tickell, 1994). This study will make use of these concepts by:

- Examining the implementation of policy through particular institutions and agencies
- Assessing which socio-institutional elements within the three coal regions obstruct or assist economic regeneration
- Identifying political and cultural barriers to economic regeneration and how these relate to the 'institutional tissue' of particular regions and localities (Hudson, 1994).

#### 4. Empowerment issues

Finally, if we are to consider whether policies are effective, it is important to establish what effective might mean and how the policies are received in specific localities. This is a crucial area of concern for this study. For example, it is argued that the property led 'civic boosterism' of the 1980s had no beneficial effect on the urban poor, but it did effectively transform urban landscapes (Barnekov et al, 1989, Loftman and Nevin, 1994, Nevin and Shiner, 1995a, 1995b). It is therefore important to assess developments from the point of view of the would-be beneficiaries of policy. The 'top-down/bottom-up' debate engages the issues of involvement, accountability, community empowerment and capacity building. If it is suggested that the economic processes of the last decade and more encourage 'structural disempowerment' (Amin and Thrift, 1994 p 257), then the possibilities of reversing that trend rests, at one level, with local people. For isolated settlements with no immediate prospect of an upturn in economic fortunes or a

significant improvement in the employment situation, it may be that policy developments in this area are crucial. To this end we need to understand if:

- Community empowerment represents more than a public relations exercise
- Community participation and empowerment can confront the problem of structural disempowerment
- Coal communities, as particular socio-economic or cultural defined entities, can reap some benefit from this approach
- This approach has serious limitations given the global context
- There are any combinations of ‘top-down / bottom-up policies’ that enhance the potential for coal communities to arrest decline.

Based on the evidence from three case studies, I will assess how coalfield communities have responded to restructuring and how they can be regenerated in the four key areas of physical or environmental improvement, employment replacement, training upgrading and community empowerment. In doing so I will analyse the process taking place, which theoretical positions best informs us about the nature of that process and in what ways resources can be mobilised to affect the outcome.

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**Chapter 7. Methods**

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In the previous chapter a range of questions are outlined which this study intends to answer. These questions link a comparative evaluation with theoretical concerns and an emphasis on 'bottom-up' approaches to regeneration. In this chapter the methodological framework adopted to achieve the objectives of the research are explained. The choice of methods is driven by the kind of questions asked rather than any a priori position. Bryman argues that the issue of quantity and quality need not be one between competing views and suggests that a view can be taken that:

quantitative and qualitative research are simple denotations of different ways of conducting social investigations and which may be conceived of as being appropriate to different kinds of research questions and even being capable of being integrated (1988, p 5).

Consequently the approach here is one of 'dovetailing the appropriate technique to particular research questions[s] (ibid.). It is not intended to enter into the epistemological debate about the use of quantitative and qualitative data because the choice of methods was pragmatic rather than principled on the grounds that:

Purity of method is less important than dedication to relevant and useful information (Patton, 1987, p 61).

Both methods have been used in what is intended to be a complementary way. However, because the emphasis of the research is on the opinions of those involved in policy and those who are supposed to benefit from regeneration policies, more use is made of the primary qualitative data. Qualitative data is therefore buttressed by quantitative data (and not the other way round) because:

The qualitative researcher is in a better position to view the linkages between events and activities and to explore people's interpretations of the factors which produce such connections. This stance affords the qualitative researcher a much greater opportunity to study processes in social life (Bryman, 1988 p 102).

A different and equally valid approach would have been to resolve some of the debates about evaluating regeneration policies in terms of statistical indicators. Studies using this approach are here used as secondary documentation (Guy and Fothergill, 1994, Beatty and Fothergill, 1994). Having read some of the literature I became aware of a

number of possible quantitative approaches including 'dead-weight' and 'additionality' (Gregory & Martin, 1988, Martin, 1989, Monk, 1991, Pearce & Martin, 1994), 'shift share analysis' (Buck, 1970, Fothergill and Gudgin, 1982) and 'cost-benefit analysis' (Lichfield et al, 1975). I was also aware of some of the problems associated with these techniques (Turok, 1989, Hughes, 1992, Foley, 1992). One concern has been the arbitrary nature of the methods and the fact that they were often 'divorced from the policy making and implementation process' (Foley, 1992, p 557). I concluded that neither myself nor my supervisor had the relevant expertise and more importantly that there was a shortage of specifically qualitative research in this area which this study could help redress. A broader, pluralist evaluation was adopted in order, as Hambleton and Thomas (1995) suggest, to attempt 'to take account of the different perception of success of different interest groups' (p 12).

This chapter establishes the rationale for a case study approach before going on to explain the collection of secondary then primary data and the use of triangulation as the key comparative technique.

### *A case study approach*

Case studies were considered to be the most appropriate because they are 'the most flexible of all research designs' (Hakim, 1987, p 61), making use of a variety of data collection techniques. It is common with such comparative studies of regions, nations and larger spatial units, to use a number of data sources because of the impracticalities of generating primary data on socio-economic issues on such a large scale (Hakim, 1987.) Hence, this requirement of flexibility and the use of a number of data sources was related to the scale and breadth of the area of study. The aim of the study was to evaluate a variety of policies which have been directed at ameliorating the effects of the closure of coal mines from 1985 to 1995. Those closures have affected many regions of the UK. It was therefore necessary to study some of those areas in some depth so that evidence of similarities and differences might emerge.

Case studies, although often associated with qualitative research in the epistemological divide, often combine many sources of data. Case studies are also associated with studying relatively small social units including single communities or even particular

individuals. In such cases, very detailed description is required. When the units under investigation reach the proportion of regions, detailed data is still important, but it needs to be relevant to the overall study. Not only is it important to bridge the gaps between macro and micro issues, but also to strike a balance between types of evidence. At the inter-regional scale the emphasis shifts from intensive detail (word for word textual analysis) to extensive relevance (what information is imparted and what opinions are being expressed.) Implicated in this is also a shift from methodological singularity to methodological plurality. Hence as Hakim points out:

The fieldwork for case studies may incorporate the analysis of administrative records and other documents, depth interviews, larger scale structured surveys (either personal interview or postal surveys), participant and non-participant observation and collecting virtually any type of evidence that is relevant and available (Hakim, 1989, p 63).

Having established that the research should take the form of case studies, some criteria needed to be established for deciding how many and which areas to focus on. There are around ten areas or sub-regions that have been affected by coal mine closures over the period in question, from Kent in the south east to Scotland in the north. Although it could be argued that a comparison of all of them was needed to make a comprehensive assessment, the practicalities of time and resources dictated otherwise. It is a fair supposition that three studies should provide most of the key variables that may be relevant to regeneration strategies. Also, as is explained in more detail when triangulation is discussed, the use of three case studies contributed to the overall symmetry of the design.

The choice of the three areas was based on prior historical and geographical knowledge relating mainly to the coal industry. They do not conform to any standard UK region since other criteria were more important. They were each, for instance, administrative areas for British Coal. South Wales had been in severe decline for longer and had therefore been the object of regeneration policies longer. It is considered to be an area of strong political and cultural traditions associated with mining and the trade union and labour movement. Nottinghamshire, being located in the East Midlands, has been economically better off than South Wales and many of its coal mines survived until the mass closures of the 1990s. Dramatic restructuring has therefore come later to Nottinghamshire. It is perceived to have less political and cultural identity than South

Wales. Central government support for the breakaway trade union, the UDM, when it refused to strike in 1984-85 may have influenced a range of policies. Coal mining in the region is still significant. South Yorkshire's decline as a coalfield has been more long term than Nottinghamshire but not so long as South Wales. A significant remnant of the industry survives in the Selby area to the north and provides continued mining employment for Yorkshire. Political and cultural ties are thought to be stronger than Nottinghamshire and its mining traditions more militant.

Although at the outset the case studies represented particular socio-economic entities within the UK coal industry, other possible variables based on criteria such as topography, infrastructure, proximity to Europe, could be revealed in the study as important. As well as being sub-regions of the standard UK regions, none of the three share the same form of regional or local government. Consequently, variations in the approaches of different forms of governance would prove of interest to the study. These and other potentially key variables serve to emphasise the importance of the comparative element to the study. A single case study may reveal more detail about a particular locality. It is only when areas are compared that we can begin to assess the significance local differences and similarities. Then it is possible make some generalisable claims about the nature, success or failure of policies.

Although this study concerns itself with the intersection of global, regional and local economic and social trajectories, its focus is mainly on specific sub-regional localities - the coalfields. Taking an 'holistic' view it places policies within a social and political context from the macro to the micro level (Patton, 1987, pp 17-18). At the theoretical level it extrapolates and assesses their applicability to each sub-region and coal communities as a whole.

### *Secondary data*

Secondary data is comprised of two strands. Firstly, documentation from a wide range of sources and secondly, a review of research specifically on pit closures and their aftermath. In the case of secondary documentation, the object was to collate as much relevant material as possible from each region and nationally. Most of the documents came from government agencies at national, regional and local level. These included

annual reports, labour market assessments, skills audits, promotional material and action plans of the relevant agencies as well as newspaper and other media reports.

The review of studies and surveys was limited to those specifically about the effects of closures from 1985 to 1995. It is not claimed that the studies referred to are the sum total of all studies on the subject in that period, but they represent a substantive and focused body of evidence. These included studies of the redundancy process, the post-redundancy process, economic and social impact of closure, evaluations of agencies involved and training and educational outcomes (*see appendix 1*).

There is some overlap of these two sources because research projects also provide the basis for documents from official sources such the Training and Enterprise Councils or local government. It is usually expected, nevertheless, that commissioned research represents comparatively dispassionate assessments whereas some other documents, published or otherwise, tend to reflect particular vested interests. Material from agencies and local government may tend to promote rather than analyse their worth. There may be some exceptions such as statistical information from the Census or NOMIS (National On-line Manpower Information Service). Yet, even with such sources there is inevitably a measure of selectivity, especially for some politically sensitive statistics such as unemployment levels. The rationale for combining these two sources of documentary data is to enhance the objectivity and validity of the evidence. As the research progressed, making use of various sources and types of data (including primary interview data) it was possible to identify areas of overlap and mutual confirmation of evidence. In this way inconsistencies could be identified and, if possible, accounted for.

There was no significant difference in the availability of documentation from each of the three areas, although it would have been possible to collate more from South Yorkshire because of personal contacts, knowledge and geographic proximity. The intention was to use documentation from equivalent sources in the three areas thereby facilitating, where possible, easier comparisons. Nevertheless, this was not always possible.

Difficulties occur with a multi-source method when making comparisons from different types of data set rather than case to case. Survey material from the studies is based on a

range of questionnaires and research interests. The same questions are not asked and the circumstances prevalent at the time of the survey may be different. For example studies of the effects of pit closures can vary, depending on how long after a pit closed the survey is carried out. Responses in interview about the effectiveness of BCE training may be influenced by different attitudes at different job shops and over time. However, because the research attempts to incorporate evidence from different areas, and by implication over time, commonalities and differences that can be identified can be judged to be all the more valid. The confirmation or rejection of data, filtered through these different levels, assists in establishing the generalisations that the research seeks.

This problem of compatibility of data is made more difficult because the chosen areas for the case studies did not match orthodox regions or sub-regions. Government statistics are collated for regions, local government and TECs for their own areas or commonly 'travel-to-work areas.' None of these necessarily matched the coal areas under study. As a result, some care is needed when making use of and analysing such data.

Although the approach to secondary data was to collect as much relevant material as possible, there was only a small element of qualitative data to be found. The material that was most useful, because it complemented my own qualitative data, was generally statistical. In addition, policy strategy documents were useful to compare the plans and of various agencies because some attempt can be made to assess their achievements in the light of the perceptions of other organisations and local people.

Secondary data from documents and studies provided essential background material and statistical evidence but the missing element, the voices of those involved at local level, had to come from primary sources.

### **Primary data**

The qualitative aspect of this research consisted of semi-structured interviews. Questionnaires were not considered worthwhile for a number of reasons. First of all, the research was not centrally concerned with the number of responses but the quality. Secondly, a low response rate from a mail-shot would be expected in any case because

the questions required considered and possibly lengthy answers. Thirdly, because the process of research involved investigation and refinement of lines of enquiry as it progressed, a fixed list of questions would have limited possible responses.

Open-ended or unstructured interviews were also felt to be inappropriate because factual information and opinions were being sought about a socio-economic process. A regard for relevant information guided the interviews but, because they were not in simple question and answer format, people were able to develop their ideas and opinions in a number of directions. This was felt to be important because it made it possible to get behind the official 'line' of agency spokespersons as well as encourage the least articulate of local respondents, who perhaps felt they did not know anything worth knowing, to contribute.

The fieldwork consisted of eighteen individual interviews and 2 group discussions in South Wales; 16 individual interviews and 1 group discussion in Nottinghamshire and 18 individual interviews and 3 group discussions in South Yorkshire (*see appendix 1*). All interviews were tape recorded. Fieldwork was carried out in Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire over a two year period by interviewing groups and individuals as and when it was mutually convenient, because of the geographic proximity. For South Wales the work had to be concentrated in three excursions, starting with local government and other agencies and moving on to local groups and individuals as local knowledge and contacts grew.

The interviews were started at the time of the coal closure programme after October 1992. Initially, local government officers and TEC personnel were interviewed. This was partly because of previous contacts with the Coalfield Communities Campaign (a local government pressure group) but also because it was assumed that local government officers would have a specific knowledge about coal closures as well as broad understanding of the problems of regional and local economic development. The TECs were earmarked for much of the funding available in the government's aid package, and had drawn up plans for areas affected by closure. They were therefore an obvious source of relevant information. In this way it was possible to quickly draw up a schedule for subsequent interviews and ensure that certain areas of interest were

covered. In view of the broad remit of the research, a wide range of interests and policies could be included on any aspect of regeneration or economic and social development. However, because the research is intended to explore the relationship between policies and localities undergoing accelerated change, the intention was to find out what the policies were and what spokespersons from various agencies said they were. More importantly, it was also to find out what local people believed to be the policies, whether they were aware of them, how they viewed them and what was their involvement with them.

In order to ensure that there was a number of clear comparative elements in each area, interviews with key informants from BCE, the TECs and Local authorities were standard. All respondents were chosen as a result of contacts with key personnel in local or regional agencies. People were interviewed if they were believed to have been playing some role in regeneration initiatives, either as a user or a participant.

The pattern of fieldwork was from key contacts to members of local groups involved in community development or enterprise. This may have been a leading figure or professional (e.g. a community worker) but, where possible, a wider constituency was consulted. On some occasions this involved 'user' groups. What these people said about local employment prospects, training and education and what it was like to have to cope with the negative effects of economic restructuring, contribute to an analysis of the effectiveness of policies. The evaluation of policies from their point of view is therefore articulated.

On some occasions unplanned interviews were carried out with local activists in, for example, a tenants association in the Cynon Valley (South Wales). Group discussions were arranged by key informants, such as community workers, as a means of efficient access to a larger number of local participants. There was no conscious effort to include focus groups in the research nor any particular intention of making use of the different type of data generated by group dynamics. Nevertheless, at each group session this dynamic did come into play and was taken into account when interpreting the transcribed text.

The analysis of the data in transcript form proceeded by identifying themes. The nature and detail of the textual analysis is governed by the research aims. As a consequence the themes are more or less predetermined by the broad interview schedule used (*see appendix 1*). As the research progressed it was possible to focus more on particular areas of interest such as physical, employment, training and empowerment as components of regeneration. For instance, the development of community enterprise and its potential role in coalfield regeneration was an issue that took on more significance as the research progressed. Analysis and further fieldwork in this respect was conducted at the same time and as Bryman and Burgess point out ‘data collection and analysis are simultaneous and continuous processes’ (1994, p 217). Straight forward content analysis, with coded themes, rather than a detailed concern with meanings, was thought to be more appropriate.

By using in-depth semi-structured interviews as the main source of primary data, a more comprehensive understanding of the situation in the coalfields is achieved. The perspective of the participants in the regeneration process cannot satisfactorily be gleaned from secondary data. For instance, informants from official bodies are more likely to relay ‘official’ versions of their activities. This can be very similar to that found in their publications. The views and expectations of individuals and groups in communities cannot be understood from publications and therefore, in this research, their interview material is given additional prominence.

### **Triangulation**

Above all this study employs a multi-layered approach to data collection, or triangulation, which enables the specific views of the localities to be compared and contextualised within the macro-micro scale. Case studies of three regions with similar socio-economic typologies (Hakim, 1987) are compared and the data itself is drawn from a number of different sources including semi-structured interviews, secondary documentation and a review of other studies. From the evidence an understanding of the processes, policy intentions and implementations is developed. The study is not intended as an appraisal of any specific policy but of the overall impact of policies and processes on the coalfields.

Although, as previously stated, the main concern of this research is coalfield localities, it is of equal concern that regional and local phenomena are placed in a broader context.

As Bryman points out, when referring to the macro and micro levels:

One approach to the bridging of the two levels of analysis is through a combination of quantitative and qualitative research. (Bryman, 1988 p.148.)

This combination is a principle element in the multi-layered triangulation approach.

The *first* layer of the triangulation method is the comparison of three case studies.

*Secondly*, there are a number sources of data and *thirdly*, there are different types of data: semi-structured interviews, secondary documentation, a review of other coalfield studies. These are the constituent parts of the triangulation approach and are an adaptation of that outlined by Denzin:

Triangulation, or the use of multiple methods, is a plan of action that will raise sociologists above the personalistic biases that stem from single methodologies. By combining methods and investigators in the same study, observers can partially overcome the deficiencies that flow from one investigator and /or method (Denzin, 1970, p 300).

If we view the regions as different examples of the same 'socio-economic area typologies' (Hakim, 1987, p 24), older industrial regions formerly based on coal, insights from three regions are more likely to generate an understanding of the peculiar problems that need to be addressed. Alongside this comparison there is also the comparison of different sources and types of data and thereby 'multiple methods and a variety of data sources can contribute to a methodological rigour.' (Patton, 1987 p 22.) In an attempt to link the spatial scales and address differing levels of theoretical abstraction it therefore, takes into account a host of complex issues and sees 'no reason to exclude quantitative methods...from the qualitative toolkit' (Dey, 1993, p 4). Making use of 'mixed data methods' and entering into the 'spirit of methodological ecumenicalism' (House, 1993, p 4) it takes the view that:

Most evaluations accept the view that quantitative and qualitative methods are complementary (ibid. p6).

The varied and complex aspects of economic and social change faced by older industrial regions is more than matched by the variety and complexity of the views of those trying to deal with it. The subject matter under scrutiny, the regeneration of the coalfields, encompasses such a range of sociological, economic and political considerations that no

one approach can deliver a comprehensive understanding. It is therefore unlikely that for instance, statistical analysis, on its own, will enable us to understand what is happening.

Qualitative data provides the main primary research evidence, but both the analysis of secondary documents and the review of coalfield studies are used to support the findings. These further components of the research contain data from both qualitative and quantitative sources. The views of the interview respondents are therefore cross-referenced with published material by particular agencies and the stated policies, verbal and written, of such agencies are set against the views and experiences of respondents from the localities. Commentators indicate that the issue of validity can be resolved by this method:

To summarise, methodological triangulation involves a complex process of playing each method off against the other so as to maximise the validity of field efforts (Denzin, 1970 p.310).

By and large, researchers have viewed the main message of the idea of triangulation as entailing a need to employ more than one method of investigation and hence more than one type of data. Within this context, quantitative and qualitative research may be perceived as different ways of examining the same research problem. By combining the two, the researcher's claims for the validity of his or her conclusions are enhanced if they can be shown to provide mutual confirmation (Bryman, 1988, p 131).

This form of cross-referencing is not the only value of linking different data types. As Bryman and Burgess point out it has its own value in that it 'reveals[s] processes and the perspective of those actually involved in situations' (1994, p 222).

It is an understanding of the problems arising from these processes that is sought, but it is also implicit that certain aspects can, and should be measured, if only in a limited fashion. Statistical data about unemployment levels, for example, is crucial to our comprehension of the changes taking place. The semi-structured interviews provide the study with the views, attitudes and expectations of the people trying to implement policy as well as those at whom policy is directed. At the same time the secondary documentary evidence, including statistical evidence, complements the findings. In some cases this may confirm interpretations, in others it may challenge assumptions. By including an analytical review of other coalfield studies, evidence is scrutinised and

some theoretical reflections can be made. (The figure in *appendix 1, page v*, illustrates how the triangulation method has been used.)

An example of linking qualitative and quantitative methods illustrates its value. In the study on Thurcroft (Cricher et al, 1995) both statistical analysis from a survey and in-depth interviews was worked on by myself, along with others. The combination of qualitative and quantitative research and how the use of both enhances our understanding is perhaps best illustrated by using the Thurcroft survey as an example. Statistical evidence from the survey revealed the number of respondents taking up different types of alternative employment but the in-depth interviews provided information on what kind of work this was, how it compared to work at the pit and what the day-to-day experience was. In the survey, although some claimed their jobs were full time and not on short term contracts, it became clear from in-depth interviews that agency work was more widespread than could have been assumed from the survey only.

### **Whose interests are prioritised and why?**

A declared interest of this study is to articulate the views of people active at local level in mining communities: those people who, despite being a key concern of policy makers, are often excluded from the potential benefits of economic development. Inevitably such an interest leaves the research exposed to the charge of bias. However, there are historical reasons why, and how, policies are implemented and in what circumstances local people may, or may not, participate or benefit.

It is a common concern of administrators, policy makers and academics that there is a clear link between economic restructuring in the older industrial regions and social exclusion. Understanding the disenfranchised and how the policy process has affected them is an aim of this research. Coming to some tentative conclusions about what their role might be in sustaining local communities and promoting economic growth is another. The methods I have adopted are designed to achieve such aims.

In the development of evaluation theory the concept of stakeholder was to become important (Hakim, 1987). This term refers to the various parties whose interests are at stake and is normally used where specific policies or programmes are being evaluated.

Whilst accepting the fact that others have a 'stake' in local economies, sections of the population who are most effected by restructuring are the main concern of this study.

House (1993) states:

Philosophically, evaluators ceased believing that their discipline was value-free. Politically, they saw that evaluation had political effects. (p 4.)

The critical political question remains; whose interest does the evaluation serve? (ibid. p 10.)

In considering the economic and social regeneration of declining mining communities this issue cannot be relegated to yet one more of any number of problems. The marshalling of resources and targeting of policies at such localities may prove beneficial to some and not to others. As Hudson (1994) points out:

But it does not seem reasonable to say that there can be no localised solution that impacts equally on all social classes and groups in the area. In this sense, the myths of socially undifferentiated proactive localities seeking to pursue their own interests are dangerously misleading ones. What is necessary to do is specify *whose* interests are to be prioritised in seeking to formulate and implement local solutions and create appropriate localised institutional structures to facilitate this process.(pp 212 - 213.)

A further more general observation needs to be made at this point so that the aims of the study and the methodological approach are made clear. For many social scientists, value freedom and objectivity are relative terms. They would argue (Harvey, 1990) that research into social phenomena needs to go beyond the microcosm of the social world the respondents inhabit. To discover and understand the meanings of social interaction, there has to be an attempt to locate their actions and views within a socio-economic historical process. The development of capitalism and the relationship between local and global, industrial and post-industrial broadly summarises that process with respect to this research. Social interaction cannot be really understood outside an historical context. The view of this research starts from the premise that 'knowledge is structured by existing sets of social relations' (Harvey, 1990, p 3) and that ideology plays a crucial role in what is perceived as knowledge. Consequently, policies, whatever they say or purport to do, need to be understood as having a political as well as an economic rationale. Otherwise we cannot make sense of the outcomes, whether successful or not.

Ideological constructs such as the dominant preference for market-led solutions shape history. People are led to believe in the natural laws of market economics and their

views and decisions are subjected to those apparent laws. By holding up such 'laws' to scrutiny the possibility arises of changing the perception of taken for granted social structures. The purpose of studying the endeavours of a range of official agencies, and those of local people, is ultimately to contribute to a body of knowledge of how progress can be made. Inevitably, that objective is only partially realised. Scientific objectivity may be a guide to research, but where people in deprivation constitute the subjective element there is a tendency to seek answers that will relieve that deprivation. For this research that tendency is made explicit.

To summarise: this study is a comparative evaluation that consists of a focused synthesis of a number of elements. It examines issues principally at the regional and local level; employs a multi-layered of triangulation method; makes use of secondary quantitative data but relies on qualitative data as its primary evidence and seeks to articulate the views of the disenfranchised. Employing the methods outlined in this chapter and principally that of multi-layered triangulation, I will now progress to the three case studies and a comparative evaluation.

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## **Section B**

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### **Introduction.**

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This section consists of the case studies of South Wales, Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire. South Wales is presented first because its decline came before the other two. Each case represents geographical and socio-economically defined examples of coalfields. A regional overview and outline of the particular features of the areas coal industry introduce each study. Policies and initiatives relating to the physical and built environment, job creation, training and community empowerment are then examined. This is followed by a comparison of the findings which are then discussed in the context of the theoretical and policy concerns of the study. Having presented the evidence and made a comparison of the three areas, the substantive questions raised by this study can be addressed.

### ***Regional overview***

South Wales is a sub region of Wales which, like Scotland and Northern Ireland but unlike the other regions in this study, is a principality. The geographic focus of this study is industrial South Wales. One of the birth places of the industrial revolution, its economic development was based on the availability of natural resources such as iron ore and other metal deposits, timber, water and coal.

South Wales has been an Older Industrial Region (OIR) for longer than most. Its decline was a cause of concern more than sixty years ago.

Its a sobering thought that this region has been in receipt of regional aid for nearly 60 years, and still the problems persist (Morgan, 1993, p177).

The experience of this region over such a long period may usefully inform contemporary policy. Regional policy in 1934 for South Wales took the form of the Special Area Act which was introduced to try and offset the 'interregional discrepancies in unemployment' (Temple, 1994 p 231). This continued as the Conservative and Labour policy consensus of the 1950s and 1960s found its expression in the 'Keynesian' model in which the problems of the older industrial regions were eased by grants and wages subsidies and by direct action on the part of central government. The diversification of an economy dominated by coal and steel began to take shape during this period.

Mackay (1992) points out that during this form of regional policy for the years 1963 to 76 there was an 'annual employment surplus' of over 4000 jobs but from 1977 to 1987 he records a 'deficit' of 8000 jobs (ibid.)

Industrial decline outpaced the efforts to regenerate the sub-regional economy and led to the setting up by a Labour government of the Welsh Development Agency (WDA). The recession of 1979 to 1983 resulted in severe unemployment and there was a consequential weakness in the recovery of 1983 to 1987 (Mackay, 1992). The problems of economic development were the most acute in the areas previously dominated by coal mining. Although South Wales is the region referred to in this study, consideration should be given to the sub-regional differences, in particular the difference between the valleys and the coastal strip served by the M4 or between Gwent in the accessible east

and Dyfed in more remote west. Parkinson refers to four subdivisions of the region: the 'heads of the valleys', 'the valleys', 'the mouths of the valleys' and 'the coastal plain with six ports' (Parkinson, 1995). It will emerge in the course of the text that sub-regional disparities are an important feature of the process of decline and regeneration.

Coal Mining areas of the Valleys have lagged behind other parts of the region and it was with this in mind that the Programme for the Valleys was initially set up. The Welsh Office claimed that the first programme (which operated from 1988 to 1993) would 'build a new economy, repair the damaged environment and strengthen the social fabric of Valleys life.' (Welsh Office, 1993, p 4.) This was followed by a second programme with similar aims which included job creation and improvements to training, education, transport, environment, health and housing (ibid.).

This programme and the work of the Welsh Office, WDA, local government and other economic development bodies in South Wales began to build a reputation for success in regeneration. By the end of the 1980s, when only a handful of pits remained, it was possible for these organisations, and even critics, to proclaim South Wales a success story in terms of economic regeneration. Relative, at least to the rest of the UK, South Wales was attracting a larger share of inward investment (Cooke, 1993, Welsh Economic Review, 1993). The Welsh Office, the WDA and local authorities took the credit for this development. Nevertheless, the problems persisted, particularly in the valleys with depopulation, high unemployment and low activity rates (WDA's 'Economic Overview', 1993).

Many people of the Valleys have been sceptical of the two Valleys Programmes initiated by Peter Walker, not least because the employment situation has deteriorated, despite inward investment into South Wales. Yet there has been a positive side to it, as was conceded in interview, by an individual normally sceptical of central government:

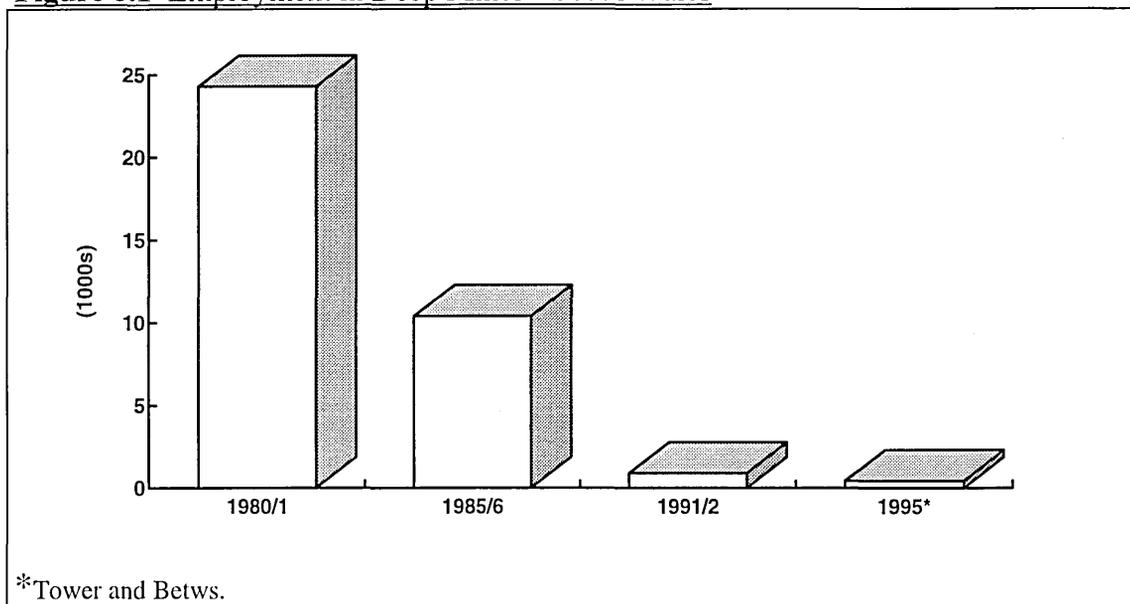
It was the first commitment from a Welsh Secretary of State, Labour or Tory, for a very long time, that the valleys actually had any future. At least it pointed in the right direction. (Development worker, Tonpentre.)

The sub-region, industrial South Wales, has slowly shifting its traditional economic base and has made gains on its counterparts in England but there still remains severe socio-economic problems.

## The coalfield

Coal mining and steel represented 76% of the insured working population of South Wales in 1930 (Morgan and Sayer, 1988). The deep mined coal industry reached its peak in South Wales as long ago as 1920 with 271,000 miners employed (Morgan and Price, 1992). Decline has been endemic in the coalfields of the area since its production peak in 1917. In 1985/6 there were 10,400 miners in the nationalised industry. Before privatisation at the end of 1994 there were none.

**Figure 8.1** Employment in Deep Mines - South Wales



Sources: National Coal Board (1985) and own research.

In the boom years the area exported coal but, as the NCB then British Coal concentrated on production for power generation to the detriment of other markets, mining the quality coal of South Wales was phased out. Only one major coal fired power station was built in the region and coking coal sales for the steel industry ended in the mid 1980s. The privatised industry was able to reverse this trend after 1995 but by that time the deep-mined sector consisted of two relatively small collieries. According to the NUM Area secretary in interview (1993), there were five billion tonnes of reserves but it is doubtful that very much of this will ever be extracted. Two former British Coal collieries remained, both producing anthracite: Tower and Betws. Celtic Energy, the main benefactor of privatisation, operated solely in the open cast sector. The easy accessibility of coal in the hillsides has meant that the region has supported a large number of small private mines with low cost, low volume production mainly of domestic house coal, employing some 600-700 men.

Closure had occurred over many decades and by the time of the accelerated closures of the late 1980s and early 1990s which were to severely affect other coalfields, there was only a handful of pits left to close in Wales. Even though employment in the industry is currently a fraction its former size, the legacy still dominates the economic, social and cultural horizons of the population.

### **The physical environment component**

The first component of regeneration involves physical transformation and includes the built and natural environment as well as infrastructure. One derivative of this is the urban model (Barnekov et al, 1988, Loftman and Nevin, 1994). Although this model has taken on particular characteristics in the 80s and 90s, its origins are in the traditional land and premises approach of the more traditional town hall planners. The South Wales valleys do not easily lend themselves to major urban, prestige developments and have inherited large scale dereliction of the limited areas of commercially useful real estate. As a consequence, the 'greening of the valleys', infrastructural and environmental improvements, have been central to the plans to regenerate the area. It was important to rid the region of its spoil heap image as well as provide development land so as to attract inward investment and managerial and technical staff prepared to live locally. Although this is a long way from the prestige developments of the big cities, it carries with it the core notion that the image of locality can contribute significantly to economic and social development.

Changing the physical environment of industrial regions is the most direct and tangible means of transformation. Infrastructural improvements and reclaiming of derelict land for commercial as well as leisure uses is an obvious course of action that can be easily quantified and the results are visible to the general population. There are a number of ways that this component is utilised and in South Wales we take three examples: the greening of the valleys, Cardiff Bay and infrastructural improvements.

The first is the 'greening of the valleys' programme carried so vigorously by the WDA. This programme is designed to remove the scars of two hundred years of coal mining and industrial pollution, to beautify the landscape and also provide land and premises

for further economic development. Publications stressed that reclamation should involve economic development:

Any reclamation which concentrates solely on the land and ignored the necessity of economic regeneration would only be doing half the job. (Landscape Wales. WDA 1992/93 Programme.)

The document goes on to assert that inward investors are 'looking for a good quality environment' and that the WDA has spent over £5 million on reclaiming 1,100 acres. It was intended then to spend a further £18 million reclaiming 500 acres in 1993-94 (ibid.).

John Redwood, the Secretary of State for Wales at the time, was reported as saying that one of the 'four motors' to power the Welsh economy was 'a decent supply of land and buildings' and that it was the 'single most important task of the Welsh Development Agency' to 'clear and reclaim more land.' (The Independent, 2.9.94). Apart from the physical renewal, the WDA also claim that this work has resulted in 25,00 new jobs and 5,900 new homes. The reclamation programme itself has employed up to 1500 people. In 1996 the WDA was reported as having '40 projects underway to restore 3000 acres of former industrial land.' (The Independent, 4.3.96). The transformation of the industrial dereliction is viewed as the WDA's most obvious success. A local government officer, amongst others, remarked:

You'd be hard pressed now, in the valleys, to recognise that they were ever mining areas (Cwmbran, 1993).

The second example of the physical or land and premises component of regeneration is the Cardiff Bay Development. Although this is not centred in the valley areas, it is claimed to be potentially beneficial to the whole region. Another local government officer from the valleys said:

From our skills audit we found that 49% travel out of the Valley everyday. So we support the Cardiff Bay Development and we want every opportunity for people who live around here to travel to Cardiff and work and get jobs there (Cynon Valley).

Cardiff Bay Development is a South Wales adaptation of the urban prestige model of regeneration. It is an approach used by all Development Corporations and is based on the assumption that private companies can be encouraged to develop run down cities and regions in partnership with local, regional or central government. Expansive physical construction can create jobs and wealth, generate positive local attitudes and

therefore provide the impetus for widespread economic and social renewal. The assumption is that the local population will benefit from this policy. It is a product of 1980s 'privatist' thinking and differs from earlier models of public works employment creation because it advocates using public money to stimulate private development and assumes that economic benefits will 'trickle down' to the most needy (Barnekov et al, 1988, Loftman and Nevin, 1994).

The Cardiff Bay Development Corporation, like other UDCs, has a predetermined life span and is due to wind up in 1999. Compared to some other UDCs, notably London Docklands, it has defined and achieved relatively modest aims. Nevertheless, firms such as NCM (credit insurer), National Westminster Bank, Nippon Electric Glass and Schott Glasswerke have relocated alongside the Welsh National Opera, a virtual reality cinema, the Welsh Industrial and Maritime Museum and Harry Ramsden's Fish and Chips. The glass works alone are expected to create 750 jobs. In addition the Corporation expects to build 6000 houses of which 25% will be 'social'.

Critics of UDCs in the 1980s pointed to the concentration on property development and the exclusion of local people (Loftman and Nevin, 1994). This more diverse approach reveals that UDCs have moved on, not least because the collapse of the property market after 1989 forced a re-think of development possibilities. It has been suggested also that Cardiff Bay Development Corporation has not perpetuated the 'politics of exclusion' but has been open to influence, particularly from the local business community (Imrie et al, 1995). There is no indication that there are any tangible 'trickle-down' benefits for local residents. Perhaps more pertinent to this study, it is not clear how such an initiative has benefited the coalfield areas of the valleys, despite claims to that effect. Positive and welcome as it is, the development of Cardiff Bay cannot yet be said to be a 'portent that the long heralded recovery was at last under way in Wales' as one commentator hoped (Adburgham, Financial Times, 7th September 1994). Like all major projects, it has attracted the criticism that it diverts resources from elsewhere:

There's going to be a lot of money channelled into Cardiff Bay to *make sure* it's a success [his emphasis] and no doubt that money will come from other sectors and local government in particular (Local government officer, Cwmbran).

A third example of physical renewal is infrastructural improvements. The geography of South Wales does not lend itself to easily constructed transport connections. The

uneven development of the area in the last 30 years can be attributed to this problem. The development of the M4 stimulated growth along its corridor and to some extent in the east of the region. Some refer to it as being 'locked in' to the economy of the South East (Local government officer, Cwmbran). The valleys were largely excluded from this infrastructural boost. After commenting on the poor state of the valleys' economy, one writer remarks:

The M4 has been a magnet, sucking industry in. Income levels, house prices, school facilities and transport links here are good. Most new arrivals including those in nearby South Glamorgan such as Bosch and British Airways at Cardiff airport, mentioned the motorway as a deciding factor when they chose South Wales (Moreton, Financial Times 4th June, 1993).

There have been some improvements to this situation and the southern ends of the valleys are now better linked to the main motorway. Despite lack of enthusiasm from British Rail in the early eighties the local authorities of Mid and South Glamorgan built 23 new stations between 1984 and 1992 (Parkinson, 1995) and passenger growth on services from the valleys into Newport and Cardiff has been one of the largest in Britain (Moreton, Financial Times 4th June, 1993). The opening of the second Severn bridge can only add to the potential for development along the M4 corridor and reinforce the pattern of development.

The 'greening of the valleys' is an important development towards the improvement of the environment and is a potential attraction for inward investors. Its worthwhile also in its own right and can only be of benefit to the local population. However, the impression of the region can be one of 'history marching backwards' (Baxter, 1992). The region has seen its industrial heyday and now it is returning to something like the natural state it was a few hundred years ago, with minimal economic use. Infrastructural improvements have manifestly assisted the coastal strip and the east of the region and road and rail links continue to improve in the valleys themselves. If anything however, these developments have tended to widen the gap between the former mining communities and their more prosperous counterparts along the M4 corridor. The former mining settlements are direct benefactors of the environmental improvements but such developments do not address the problems of trying to convert an area of 700,000 population with a common industrial heritage into dormitory towns and rural park land. Developments in major cities and along major motor way links have shown what can be done but they are very difficult to replicate in isolated mining areas. The disparities at

the sub-regional level continue to be of concern and Parkinson (1995) complains that the mobilising of resources for Cardiff Bay is not repeated in the valleys.

### *The jobs component.*

The second component, job creation, is universally adopted. This is arguably the overriding aim of all models and a basic indicator for regeneration. However, there is no longer an easy correlation between economic growth and employment. Jobless growth, especially in developed countries, is a central feature of late twentieth century development. Often the more 'modern' the productive unit, the fewer people are employed. Investment can create new jobs but very often destroys the old ones.

In the absence of the interventionist policies of a previous era, the jobs model of regeneration has been dominated by inward investment and attempts to stimulate indigenous entrepreneurship. Economic growth of the private sector is the aim of such policies and not employment as such. The new thinking of the early 1980s was that these policies ultimately compounded the problems and that what was needed was action to enhance industrial competitiveness and favour private sector growth by removing labour market strictures and unhelpful work practices (Martin, 1989). Thus regional industrial policy became regional restructuring policy with a free market bias. It was fully expected that employment would be a casualty of this process. Mass redundancies in less competitive industries such as coal mining were central to the plan.

In addition to the strident attempts to attract inward investment, which have been the hall mark of economic development in South Wales, interpretations of the nature of the period of capitalist transition were beginning to influence the policy community. The response was to espouse 'new wave' economic policies (Cooke, 1993). This involves identifying the potential of the local companies to concentrate on the leading edge of manufacturing and service provision and to attempt to develop indigenous enterprise. This type of approach usually involves a positive interpretation of such concepts as flexible specialisation and post-Fordist production, often implicitly accepting the dominance of a post industrial future for the older industrial areas such as South Wales. The geographical peripherality of the region takes on more significance now that its 'natural resources', e.g. coal and iron etc. are no longer required. The policy makers

locate their economic policies in what is perceived to be the new post-Fordist era. This notion is perhaps best illustrated by the ECOTEC report for the Standing Conference on Regional Development for South Wales, a committee which has been in existence for over twenty years and plays a key role in co-ordinating relationships with the EU. This report distils a number of themes from the ideas prevalent in economic development thinking and which I have outlined in preceding chapters. Models of successful economic growth in the EU are used to counter the dependence on trans-national branch plants. The examples of Baden Wurttemberg, Lombardy etc. are held up as possible formulae for success in South Wales.

The ECOTEC report, a substantial strategy document commissioned and digested by all the key players in South Wales and beyond promotes two main aims: to lift the growth in GDP above the EU average and to create 136,000 (net) jobs before the end of the century (ECOTEC, 1993). The report concedes that these objectives are 'demanding' but that, considering South Wales's success at adapting and diversifying its industrial base better than other areas in the UK, it is in a position to build on its 'assembly oriented operations' and develop new 'higher order' functions. These functions are to be found in various high tech industries. The report puts particular stress on trying to focus the 'regions manufacturing base on production which is related to the earlier phases of the product cycle, before the most price sensitive mature phase.' (ibid. p 44.)

Specifically the report suggests the setting up of two 'technopoles': one based on electronic engineering and one on materials and metals (ibid.). The solution for jobs in South Wales, it is argued, lies in higher order functions at the leading edge of technology as well as the expansion of the assembly oriented manufacturing.

Regional policy had been relatively successful in the past in encouraging the relocation of multi-national factories but, because of this dependence on branch plant 'Fordist' production, it was thought particularly important that new industries and services should be developed locally and be the product of a synthesis of research and development and lean production. Small and medium sized businesses have successfully sustained economic growth of other areas in Europe (see for example Emilia Romagna, Cooke & Morgan, 1992.) It is argued that South Wales could follow suit.

Although there has been much interest shown in indigenous strategies for economic development, South Wales' key area of success has been its ability to attract more inward investment. However, that success raises questions about the number of jobs being created, the type of work involved, the relationship of the parent company to branch plants and, particularly for this study, whether the coalfields themselves are benefiting.

The long term nature of the problems are referred to in interview:

A highly successful inward investment programme of five to ten years is never, ever going to overcome the problems of sixty years (Peter Slater, Chairman of the South Wales Standing Committee on Regional Development, Cwmbran).

This is not to say that there have not been many great changes in South Wales; in the last decade the comparative success at attracting inward investment and creating new employment opportunities have been envied by less fortunate regions. The policies of the government in the years of Keynesian re-distributive policies laid the foundations. This development has gone on despite the recessions of 1981-2 and 1989-1991, resulting in South Wales employing the highest percentage in manufacturing in any other region of Great Britain. Cooke (1993), before the latest influx of investment, questioned the WDA's claim that 'Wales receives as much as 20% of UK foreign investment', but believed that 'a more realistic proportion of 13% , for a part of the UK with only a 5% share of GDP, demonstrates a remarkable achievement' (p 9).

The key point is that the process has been uneven, with the M4 corridor benefiting and the coal mining areas having less success. This can be attributed to a shortage of suitable land and poor transport infrastructure (as referred to in the previous section.) Some companies have located in the valleys as *table 8.1* indicates but this amounts to only about one third of the inward investment by 1992. European trans-national companies have the most plants with 108 units employing some 14,500 people. However, Japan, with just 33 plants employs 12,200. Most of these larger plants are not in the Valleys.

**Table 8.1 - Inward Investment**

Country of ownership	1992 Plants	The Valleys Employment	1992 Plants	Wales Employment
USA	34	8,000	112	27,800
Japan	9	3,700	33	12,200
EU excluding UK	42	5,400	108	14,500
Of which ;				
Germany	16	2000	41	5,200
France	10	1,700	22	4,500
Other European	14	1000	43	5,200
Other Countries	14	2,200	48	6,400
Total	113	21,100	344	66,100

(Source: Welsh Office, Programme for The Valleys - A Statistical Profile, 1993.)

There has been a continuous flow of inward investment and further examples include the semi-conductor firm QPL with 768 jobs, Sumistumo Precision Products 100 jobs and Montecchio Maggiore 50 jobs. Typically these firms have relocated in Newport and other parts of Gwent in the east of the region. Alongside these examples there is South Wales' first South Korean plant at Merthyr Tydfil in the former coalfield. This firm, Halla, is expected to employ 300 people. However, it is perhaps more instructive to look at the relocation of an international engineering company, Fenner, on the site of the last pit in the Rhondda, Maerdy. The WDA have built the factory at a cost of £1 million. The Welsh Office has secured £5m of European regional grants and the local TEC has provided a further £1m for a training centre. Of the expected 500 employees, 145 will be transferred from a local plant that will close at Pontygwaith and two other plants in Peterborough and Hull will close with the loss of 400 jobs. The WDA can be congratulated on the success of its marketing but during the first five years of 'pump priming' for the Programme for the Valleys less than £700 million of the expected £1 billion private sector investment materialised.

The 'biggest investment coup in Europe' (Guardian July 11th, 1996) was yet another success of the Welsh Office and the WDA. If the 6000 jobs materialise, then, for the first time the number of jobs created appeared to be making a significant dent in the numbers of jobs lost in traditional industries. The South Korean group LG announced a £1.7 billion investment at Newport (July, 1996), in the east of the region and on the M4 corridor. Geographical and economic factors of a low wage economy, availability of industrial workforce with weakened trade unions and a site being secured within the EU,

all contributed to this decision. As an interviewee said about success in inward investment:

Labour costs, accessibility and the availability of sites and premises... it's as simple as that really (Local government officer, Cwmbran).

There has however, been the suggestion that the financial inducements on offer were excessive. Grants to the company are said to have amounted to £200 million or over £30,000 per job (The Observer, July 14th, 1996). Whether in the long term that will prove a good investment for the regional economy is yet to be discovered. Critics are not convinced that the regions of the UK should engage in expensive competition to attract overseas investment. They argue that the investment would have come any way and that marketing of regions is a waste of national resources (The Observer, July 14th 1996). Nevertheless, the Welsh Office and the WDA have demonstrated they have the ability to mobilise resources to make significant progress in economic development. Criticisms, often from other regions with less institutional weight, cannot detract from that success.

Impressive although inward investment figures are, the Welsh Office report was evaluated in the Financial Times (25th. Nov, 1993.) under the headline 'Doubts on South Wales Initiative.' These doubts arose because jobs in manufacturing had fallen by 6,400 between 1988 and 1992, which was 11% less compared with 7% in Wales as a whole. Having created 12,000 jobs in 73 new plants and 203 expanded plants, job losses have been higher, with 8,600 being lost due to closures and 9,800 a result of workforce reductions. Significantly the 'biggest losses have been in electrical and electronic engineering, with 4,300 jobs lost.' (ibid.) This illustrates how 'modern' industries with the potential for growth and productivity can create an over all jobs deficit.

Although economic health and employment may appear synonymous, the reality is that rather than create jobs, new industries squeeze out jobs in other industries, as well as their own (Martin, 89). As the ECOTEC report quoted earlier points out, it is jobs in 'sunrise' industries that are now being lost. Despite the implementation therefore of a relatively successful inward investment policy, the net result for the Valleys area and Wales as a whole since 1987 is outlined in *table A 2.1* and illustrates that the down turn is worse in the Valleys. The net results have been persistently high levels of

unemployment (*table A 2.2 in the appendix*). In addition there is growing evidence that, notwithstanding the shifts in government counting procedures for unemployment, the real unemployment figures for the valleys could be as high as 33.3%, if those no longer economically active are included (Beatty and Fothergill, 1994).

The relative success that South Wales has had in attracting inward investment cannot only be evaluated in terms of the replacement of lost jobs. Criticism of this policy and its outcome is more aptly directed at the kind of work that is now available. There are two strands to any critical appraisal. The first relates to the nature of the work, the second to the nature of the capital. Morgan and Sayer (1988) attempted to assess the new jobs coming into South Wales and concluded that task flexibility, tighter recruitment policies and marginalisation of the trade unions was prevalent.

The characterisation of South Wales as a 'smokestack', 'sunset', de-industrialising region has important implications for policy makers. Unemployment, tertiarisation and the shift to part-time and temporary work (especially for women) are established facts of the economic life of the region. *Tables A 2.3, A 2.4 and figure A 2.1* illustrate the continuing shift to female employment. Employment for the male population is a particular problem for the coalfields but is also a national concern (Balls, 1993).

Some would take a more pragmatic approach to work: in the words of a Mid-Glamorgan TEC training manager; 'A job is a job.' There are however, aspects of the debate about the nature of the new jobs that undermines the policy, even in its own terms. Trans-national companies are attracted to South Wales because the wages in South Wales are low. Labour costs in Wales are 90% of those in the rest of the UK and 50% of German manufacturing costs (Cooke, 1993). This inevitably produces imbalances on the demand side of local economies. The Low Pay Unit published a report in 1996 which claimed that 30% of men and 60% of women earned less than the Council of Europe decency threshold of £6.03p per hour ('Wales 1996 - Land of Low Pay'). The report goes on to highlight reasons for the interest of Far Eastern companies in South Wales including regional grants and a deregulated labour market. It has been argued that wages are lower than in the rest of Britain because 'less well paid sectors of the economy' are located in Wales (WDA spokesman, *Independent* on Sunday, 26.5.96). Others hope that with time the new firms will 'mature' and up-skilling and up-marketing will occur (Wales TUC spokesman, *ibid.*). Whether this is likely to happen

has been the subject of much study (Munday, 1990, Munday et al 1995, Panditharatna & Phelps, 1995, Morris, 1995).

Furthermore, the dependence on branch plants has been thought to be the Achilles heel in the South Wales economy for some time:

Although the new inward investors include some of the world's most technologically advanced companies, their operations in ISW appear to typically be assembly operations with relatively low skills and consequently income levels...Both in the immediate and longer term an over dependence on a 'branch plant economy can be seen as a weakness (ECOTEC, 1993, p 34).

The relationship of branch plants with the local economies may have resulted in a policy shift towards indigenous entrepreneurship but inward investment has continued to be the main motor of economic development. Consequently the issue of embeddedness, or the extent to which local suppliers and other aspects of production and services are integrated into the process, becomes an important factor in assessing the overall benefit for the region. Munday et al (1995) conclude that Japanese plants are not merely 'warehouses' but do contribute to significant employment growth and 'diversification of products and capital sources' (p1). Others also suggest that for some industries (e.g. auto-motive components) there is some evidence of 'functional upgrading' and 'embeddedness' (Panditharatna & Phelps, 1995. p 351). They encourage the WDA to continue its inward investment policy by attracting sectors of industry, such as auto-components that they believe are more likely to develop local embeddedness and upskilling of local workers. This theme will be developed further in the section on skills and training.

Commentators and planners are agreed that partnership and local initiative will provide the basis for sustainable growth, a key element for the valleys and former coal mining areas. Whether these ideas will be successfully implemented remains to be seen. There is little evidence in the valleys of any progress in that direction. Despite the efforts of government and other bodies involved in economic regeneration at all levels, between 40% and 50% of former miners remain long term unemployed (Guy, 1994, Critcher et al 1995, Witt 1989). At the last South Wales colliery to be surveyed, 43% were long term unemployed (Guy, 1994). Former miners generally find work in unsatisfactory, precarious jobs with lower pay. Those from Taff Merthyr took jobs with an average drop in weekly pay of £117. As yet the 'quality jobs' referred to by the policy makers

and the Welsh office have not trickled down to the restructured labour market. The closures of the collieries of South Wales and the rest of the UK were achieved by buying ex-miners out of the labour market with redundancy. This provided short term cushioning but did nothing to assist the long term development of mining communities.

British Coal Enterprise and jobs

The principal tool for job creation is their funding for local SMEs.(Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises). An interview with a BCE executive illustrates this aspect of their business:

Our investment fund rose from £5 million to £60 million in four years and we found there was tremendous demand in the market for the funds we were providing, usually in unsecured small amounts. We discovered that there was a gap in the enterprise financing market (BCE spokesperson, South Wales).

Evidence from Fothergill and Guy (1994) and Turner (1992) suggests that, whilst a welcome aid to organisations and companies trying to expand the local economy, their impact has been relatively small. This is illustrated in *table 8.2* where it can be seen that BCE failed to relocate 87% of miners made redundant in South Wales.

**Table 8.2.**

	<b>BC job loss</b>	<b>BCE jobs assisted</b>	<b>Jobs created in coalfields (central estimate of CCC.)</b>
<b>South Wales</b>	20,000	15,490	2,600
<b>National</b>	228,000	106,029	16,000

Source: Fothergill and Guy, 1994

They have been shown to have improved their record using their job shops and training schemes at least since 1992. Surveys carried out before 1992 showed a negative response from former BC employees (Witt 1990, Trotman 1989, Wass, 1988, 1996) The five pit survey carried out by CCC (Guy, 1994), and including Taff Merthyr, revealed that a majority of mineworkers make use of the job shop facilities and thought it was useful. Coalfield Community local authorities, faced with unprecedented financial constraints, became concerned that, along with the privatisation of the coal industry, BCE would be dismantled and the consequently the overall 'kitty' for economic regeneration reduced. This concern came about after years of open hostility to BCE's preferential relationship with central government. The break up of BCE and its

privatisation in 1996 ended the direct link between the industry and regeneration projects.

Apart from labour market measures concerned with training, which I shall deal with in the next section, BCE has attempted to encourage entrepreneurship in an area noted for its lack of it (Rees and Thomas, 1989, Morgan and Price, 1992). The bulk of closures in South Wales occurred as BCE services were developing and studies at the time (Wass, 1988 and Rees and Thomas, 1989) exposed some of the difficulties and failings of this key actor in the field of coalfield regeneration. Thomas (1988) and Rees & Thomas (1989) turned their attention to the central government policy on employment of encouraging an enterprise economy, creating wealth, self-employment and therefore more jobs. The research concludes that the main benefactors of BCE were not ex-miners but individuals who were fairly highly educated and who had some previous business experience.

Although BCE from the outset were obviously trying to stimulate enterprise they soon became wary promoting self-employment to former miners. As a BCE spokesperson told us when ex-miners approached them 'most of the ideas were half-baked.' It's not surprising therefore that BCE concentrated on assisting established businesses or ones (not necessarily started by miners) with a sounder footing.

The WDA attribute the low levels of self-employment to the regions dependence on the public sector (WDA, 1993). The planning strategies based on the growth of indigenous entrepreneurship, hopefully at the leading edge of manufacturing and services, have had no success amongst ex-miners. Entrepreneurship for the people of former mining communities has generally taken the form of precarious small businesses at the margins of the economy with subsistence livelihoods. Organisations such as BCE, charged with the responsibility of replacing the jobs lost in the declining coalfields, have been unable to arrest the decline and there are serious concerns about the precarious nature of the new jobs created.

The role of the WDA and the Welsh Office appear to have been significant in providing the institutional cohesion to act effectively on the national, European and world stage. Although there are many benefits from inward investment, there is some way to go

before the regional economy can reduce its dependency on branch plants. Accumulated evidence suggests that the deregulated labour market has attracted investors and that low pay, flexibility, and part-time working have become the norm. There are fewer new jobs and most are less well paid. Growth has generally occurred outside the coalfield areas and there are many pockets of high unemployment, low economic activity and resulting deprivation. High levels of unemployment in the former coalfield communities have been resistant to policies over many years.

### **Skills and training component**

In a region undergoing fundamental restructuring there is a need for new skills to match any new jobs. This is especially true when the policy objectives involve the development of higher order functions and much is made of the drive for quality, rather than quantity. It is self evident that at every level there is a need for re-skilling and the flexibilisation of skills to maintain the pace demanded by successful economic development.

Regeneration is particularly difficult in regions which have fallen into the trap of 'rigid specialisation' (Grabher, 1990)...In such a situation , new economic development strategies , whether they are based on attracting inward investment or on creating indigenous new technology based firms, must aim to upgrade training structures and provision (Davies, 1993 p 1).

Policy concerns with the future of regional economies have shifted to human or knowledge based capital partly because the physical resources that previously provided economic development are now much less relevant. The attraction of regions such as South Wales, it would appear from the evidence, is first and foremost cost. For an industry interested in quality and where the technological demands are ever increasing however, that is not enough to sustain growth over longer periods.

Success in attracting inward investment and significant high technology companies such as Bosch, and Hitachi has been offset by the fear that the current training provision and also the training culture of South Wales' economy is incapable of keeping up with the needs of advanced development. Current and potential problems have been identified. Firstly there is a mismatch between training provision and areas of economic growth. This is best exemplified by the fact that publicly funded training provision is dominated by administration and clerical jobs (about one third of the money made available),

whereas the region's most important manufacturing sector ,electronics and electrical, receive only 5% of the available funding (Davies, 1993, Employment Service, 1991). Secondly, there is widespread criticism of the low priority firms give to training. This is reflected in the number of firms who claim to carry out their training 'on the job' which is regarded as 'the cheapest and least effective form of training' (Davies, 1993. p 6). Both the Training and Enterprise Councils and the Employment Service regard as one of their central objectives the re-introduction of a positive attitude towards training by employers. The programme known as 'Investment in People' was an attempt to address that problem :

Too many employers still regard workforce training and development as a cost and not as an investment; too few individuals have access to or are sufficiently motivated to seek accreditation for the skills they have and can improve upon through learning (Owen, 1993).

This lack of enthusiasm for training by private sector companies and the predominance of 'on the job' training has resulted in significant skills gaps in South Wales. Skills Surveys and Skills Audits carried out by local authorities in conjunction with other bodies (Mid-Glamorgan 1993, Cynon Valley 1990, Employment Service 1991) indicate the main shortages to be amongst technical and higher skill jobs and yet firms continue to make do with the least effective form of training. *(See figures A 2.2 and A 2.3 in appendix 2.)*

Although many of the policy statements of agencies involved in the labour market and economic development have a strong strategic element, most also agree that strategic aims are not being met. Skills surveys have revealed a significant gap between policy and practice. Trying to cajole the private sector to take on the responsibility of training has not met with much success. Problems of co-ordination were regularly raised in interview about all aspects of regeneration but particularly in the area of training provision. An Employment Service manager illustrates:

The TEC have got a pot of money for what they are trying to do. We have got a pot of money for what we are trying to do. What happens is the TEC are trying to promote their programmes and we are trying to push our programmes and the poor chap in the middle must be thoroughly confused (South East Wales Employment Service).

## BCE and training

The TECs, and BCE received most of the money made available by the coal industry package attached to the closure programme of October 1992. By that time, for the South Wales coalfields it was largely too late. There have been a number of attempts to assess the impact of BCE's policies, notably those commissioned by the Coalfield Communities Campaign (Wass 1988, Rees 1988, Witt 1990, Guy and Fothergill 1994.) In addition other studies have been carried out independently (Trotman and Lewis 1989, Turner 1991, Rees and Thomas 1989).

Trotman and Lewis's study of former miners from Cynheidre and Betws Collieries is focused largely on the advice and training on offer at the time of their closure. It is the only study, other than BCE's own appraisals, carried out in the area and therefore I intend to look in some detail at its findings. The South Wales study coincided with the Witt (1990) study in Yorkshire and a shift by BCE away from re-training to re-employment. This change in emphasis by BCE had come about because they viewed the earlier JACCS (Job and Career Change Scheme) as too expensive and ineffective. In interview a BCE spokesman explained:

There wasn't the emphasis in the early days on finding new jobs for miners. Redundant miners were largely at the older end and nearly ready for retirement anyway. Initially we used some outside consultants who were rather costly and not very effective so we decided we'd have a go ourselves. We soon found it was a bit of a racket so we tightened up and were very selective about the people we brought in.

They felt that they were not getting value for money from the open-to-all training schemes catered for by external training providers. This was BCE's response to the criticism that it was no use 'training people for training's sake'. In the second version of the JACCS, a former miner could only be re-trained if someone was prepared to employ him afterwards. Ironically, this policy shift by BCE was at odds with the concerns of the strategic training policy makers. The shift by BCE inevitably led to the preponderance of 'on-the-job' training, a method viewed as unsatisfactory. A BCE representative described their functions as: 'effectively , helping you get another job with the skills you've got' (Trotman and Lewis, 1989, p 6).

It is accepted by all that the skills of former miners are no use outside the coal industry without some re-training or adaptation. It seems therefore contradictory to expect

former miners to find work 'with the skills they have got'. BCE's belief, based on a realistic assessment of the labour market, was that the best option for former miners was to get any job, which most likely would be low-skilled and low-paid. If they displaced another unskilled or semi-skilled job seeker, then that was evidence of their more effective outplacement service. Although this problematical phase in BCE's development improved in the 1990s, many thousands of former miners were processed between 1985 and 1992. For them, merely to have passed through BCE's books was enough to be considered 're-settled'.

Following the announcement of the pit closure programme of 1992 and the increased public interest in the fate of coal miners, BCE improved their service. That is the view at least of the former miners who made use of them. For instance, in the survey of five pits, including Taff Merthyr, carried out in 1994, 75% of the men who used BCE services found them useful or very useful and 60% found their other services helpful, even though only 1 out of 38 found a job through the BCE Job Shop and 3 received any training. Compare this with the survey carried out in Yorkshire (Witt, 1990) which indicates that only about 50% thought BCE to be useful or very useful.

BCE activities in the field of training and reskilling may have improved over the years but at Taff Merthyr, for example, 43% of the former workforce remain unemployed over 18 months after its closure and approximately 5% were involved in training or education at the time of the survey. These figures are generally consistent with other studies done in recent years in other coalfields (Cricher et al, 1995).

Increasingly there is a consensus of opinion that skills and training have been a victim of under-investment in past decades. The view now is that economic growth is not sustainable if the labour market is looked at only in terms of cost. As a component of regeneration, the development of skills is a necessary part of job creation. The Employment Service have estimated that 31% of the long duration vacancies at their Valleys job centres are not filled because of skill shortages. A further 47% were not filled for a mixture of reasons including low wages and unsocial hours. Vital though a skills revolution is to revitalise the economy of South Wales and maintain its record of attracting inward investment, the impact of policies, at any level, appears to be minimal in coalfield communities and amongst former miners.

### *An empowerment component*

The final component I intend to deal with is that of empowerment. This component is the least resourced and most difficult to evaluate. The idea is put forward that economic and social development can only take place, and can be of lasting value, if the population of a locality is involved in the processes of regeneration and have some measure of control over it (see chapter three). In South Wales there is a relatively well developed Community Business arm of the WDA which adds another dimension to regional renewal.

This component may take many forms and be concerned primarily with the individual or with small localities. It may take the form of small enterprise or education opportunities. Democracy and control are, however, central themes for all activities associated with it. Many of the people interviewed stressed the participatory imperative for regeneration. In the Cynon valley for example a development worker said: 'If you are going to get worthwhile regeneration and a positive attitude then you have to take the community with you.'

As outlined in chapter three, economic regeneration through local empowerment is an emergent policy feature. There are at least four distinctive aspects of community empowerment that concern this study; community development, community enterprise, personal educational development and community educational development.

There are tensions and divisions within the overall community empowerment approach to regeneration. The WDA is keen to develop the enterprise or community business aspect in their work. Other groups who have a more traditional approach to community development, recognise the importance of economic development but are less keen on their activities being 'market led.' An integral part of all aspects of empowerment is the issue of power itself. Orthodox practices by the formal agencies and vested political interests often obstruct, sometimes unwittingly, the self-development of communities. This manifests itself chiefly amongst those with some power.

I like to see the community as partners [with community development organisations] but there is difficulty I think with most authorities [local government] who don't credit people with the ability to think for themselves. So the terms of the partnerships tend to be a bit biased. (Cynon Valley Development Worker.)

Even civil servants are critical of local government's approach to community development:

You've got local authorities who have people responsible for economic development but there doesn't seem to be anyone responsible for the people-side of economic development (Employment Service spokesperson.)

Conversely active residents complain of apathy from communities:

People in our valley will vote in elections and as the saying goes they could put a donkey up and Labour would win. But then everything is blamed on the council. They never look to within because in the end it is the community itself that's got to start to build things up and stop the whole thing sliding away. (Chairperson, Resident's Group, Cynon Valley.)

Community Enterprise is particularly attractive to governmental bodies because of its potential to replace state service provision with the cheaper option of self-help. One of the leading proponents of this particular form of community empowerment is the Welsh Development Agency. The budget for their community enterprise unit is very low compared that spent on inward investment marketing, land reclamation etc. Nevertheless, as part of their strategy for renewal in South Wales they take the matter seriously and promote 'collective welfare instead of individual gain' (WDA, Community Enterprise Unit, 1993, p 2). They go on to define community business as:

a trading organisation which is set up, owned and controlled by the local community, and which aims to create ultimately self supporting jobs for local people and to be a focus for local development. (ibid.)

The key difference between this approach and that of the radical community development movement in the 1970s is the emphasis on *business*, albeit community controlled. The business they consider to be 'community enterprise at its best' (WDA, 1993) is the Amman Valley Community Business. Its activities include child care, catering services, cafe and food sales. It has attracted funding from a variety of sources (including Coopers and Lybrand) but significantly received £36,000 in Urban Aid, a fund which was later terminated by central government. Other projects supported by the WDA include: Betws Community Business (cafe, bar and management of community hall), Cynon Community Business (Community Transport, and refurbishing second hand 'white goods').

Other organisations have been set up to try and develop the type of environment where community business and community development can prosper. One such organisation

is Rhondda Community Business Initiatives. It is supported by the WDA, although the WDA admit to only a watching brief and say that their relationship is 'somewhat distant' (WDA, 1993). This organisation pre-dates the WDA's interest in community business and was perhaps only converted to the notion of business solutions to community problems because other avenues for funding were stopped by central government.

A lot of people think that certain things should be publicly funded and operated in that way - and rightly so. Some kinds of initiatives or projects are never going to be economically viable but they are still socially viable....but with the government we have got what are we going to do about it? Do we allow initiatives of that sort to die or do we start looking for maybe a new way of funding them? The best way we could think of to deal with this situation is through the medium of community business. We want to operate as far as possible to create wealth that could be re-invested in the community.  
(Development Worker, Tonpentre.)

The majority of the businesses are typical community activities which have taken on a business or enterprise aspect. Although none of them would exist without grant aid, their aim is ultimately to be self supporting and profitable for the local community. None are involved, as yet, in manufacturing. It would be easy to dismiss these activities as peripheral to the 'real' economy but no one can deny their value for isolated settlements struggling with the problems of unemployment, low living standards and poor service provision. The alternative to local response is demoralisation and powerlessness. There are severe limitations on this approach to economic regeneration. Apart from the fact that few resources are being channelled into community enterprise development (£200,000 worth of grants from the WDA), they almost inevitably operate on the fringe of the economy, providing local services. They do go some way towards fulfilling local needs but they are a long way from developing local manufacturing or any of the higher value added functions that policy makers hope will come from a blossoming of small and medium sized enterprises.

A further tension that is present at local, regional, national and international levels is that arising out of competition for funding. This type of funding has become central to all projects since the advent of City Challenge, the SRB or even the National Lottery (*see chapter 3*). At local level, the competition is no less fierce and communities and interest groups can become antagonistically embroiled. As one resident activist told us:

We got together and decided to put in a bid for this project because we knew about the 'community revival' bid put in by the local authority. We went in feet first and other areas might be a bit behind us but it's dog eat dog. I'd like every area in the valley to have one but of course it doesn't work like that. So, if someone is going to have it, it's going to be us. If we want the money we have to fight for it (Cynon Valley).

The WDA is not convinced by the activities of its own Community Enterprise Unit:

The way we operate in our unit is not the way the WDA operates at all - in any respect. It doesn't understand what I do and for the most part it doesn't even agree with what I do (CEU administrator).

The Tonpentre group are wary of WDA control, as are the people involved with VIAE and Dove Workshop. A community development worker from the Cynon Valley expressed concerns about the overbearing strictures of the WDA:

One of the problems with the WDA is they tend to set very heavy conditions when they put in funding and I wonder if they really have the right to do that.

Other government sponsored organisations are viewed with similar caution. Referring to training contracts, a community business organiser from Tonpentre had this to say :

When you are on these sort of government contracts with the TEC , they are cracking the whip and you have to fall in with what their wishes are if you want to keep the contract. I prefer the boot to be on the other foot - for us to be taking the initiatives and them to be supporting us.

The Valleys Initiative for Adult Education and its offspring, the Community University of the Valleys, consider that regeneration for the coal areas has to start with individual and collective empowerment through education. They put their emphasis on 'enabling' people to shape and control their future :

This enabling process is inextricably bound up with the idea of education, the acquisition of skills, and the most effective use of available resources (VIAE 1990).

The initiators of the educational programme claim to have taken some 'hard advice' on board and propose to help themselves by 'unlocking ' new resources, 'using the key of co-operation' (ibid.) To this end they attempted to bring together a 'wide spectrum of organisations which are committed to the communities in which they exist.'(ibid.)

Linked very closely with this initiative is the Dove Workshop at Banwen (a coal mining community in the West of the valleys.) At this location the ideas of educational empowerment and community business come together. The protagonists of the

Community University of the Valleys and Dove Workshop are, however, keen to point out some differences between themselves and activities championed by the WDA

Community Enterprise Unit:

At the moment we are not about enterprise in any way. Some of the other community groups have not got a critical approach. What they are doing is infilling in an inadequate and narrow labour market, rather than questioning what that labour market is and, changing that labour market and raising the aspirations. We ensure that the women who come on our courses are not just trained as machinists which is what some of the community groups are lending themselves to (V.I.A.E.).

VIAE have found difficulties promoting education in coalfield communities. Ingrained attitudes about education, as well as widespread apathy associated with the decline of communities, are viewed as a challenge. In a community conducted survey of Cwm and Oakdale in Gwent, a number of problems were highlighted in the search for effective out reach provision. Similarly, a study carried by Trotman and Morris stressed the importance of the community aspects of educational provision:

Obviously, the socio-economic conditions and changes which are endemic to post-coal communities are the result of structural forces, and thus increasing the level of participation in community adult education will not, on its own, result in an immediate end to social inequality, high unemployment, and deprivation in these localities. However, community education does have a crucial part to play in terms of combating the sense of hopelessness which is so apparent in these communities (1995, p 79).

This approach to education attempts to link individual empowerment with capacity building for the community as a whole.

It is too soon to make a clear evaluation until the community empowerment and community business have been fully accepted as part of mainstream economic development strategy. The Valleys are still primarily small isolated industrial settlements. Localised community based initiatives are often the only option. Some major overseas investors do relocate smaller units in the South Wales Valleys, but the jobs, however welcome, will not replace those lost. With concerted and effective economic development policies, there may well be improvements in the area brought about by inward investment and economic development. There is no guarantee that the benefits of wealth creation, improved life styles and better social infrastructure will directly benefit the majority of the socially excluded. The evidence from South Wales suggests that, if coalfield communities are to respond positively to the structural

changes, they require a commitment to empowerment which involves community development, enterprise and wider educational provision.

### Conclusion

The decline of South Wales as a coal mining area has been a long process. Although there is very little physical evidence of that coal mining past, the industry does still persist at a fraction of its former size and the legacy of coal remains interwoven into many aspects of life.

Physically and environmentally, there has been a significant transformation. The relatively straightforward task of reclaiming derelict land has eventually been carried out. Major developments in the built environment and infrastructural improvements have taken place in the south and east of the region and have only indirectly benefited the valleys communities.

South Wales has diversified its economy and been relatively successful in attracting inward investment but started from a low base and is in the process of catching up:

The economic regeneration which has occurred over the past decade has brought many benefits, notably a convergence of Welsh unemployment rates with those of the rest of the UK, although it is more the case that the more prosperous regions of the UK have fallen to the Welsh level rather than *vice versa* (Morris & Wilkinson, 1993).

However, unemployment overall, particularly in coal communities, remains high. New jobs have generally been lower paid than in other regions of the UK, with part-time jobs for women becoming more prevalent. The mass processing of redundant miners by BCE has had little, if any, strategic direction.

With the new concern for 'higher order functions' in manufacturing and services, has come the interest in investment in skills, training and education but attempts to lift the skill base of the population has been patchy at best. Where forward thinking employers have located, a more long term training strategy has been implemented. Most jobs require relatively low skills and this is reflected in the pay levels. Re-training for ex-miners has not proved successful. The TECs training programmes are by and large 'vacancy led' and although they, and many others, pay lip service to a more long term

approach, few former miners or young people from the former mining areas appear to be acquiring the higher order skills that modern business demands.

A burgeoning of neighbourhood activities including community enterprise, development and education has been important but has remained marginal. The development of social and cultural capital whilst being viewed by some as being crucial to long term renewal, has not yet attracted the resources to make a significant impact. One of the consequences of this is that many former mining localities have been effectively abandoned by mainstream regeneration policy.

Contemporary opinion suggests that, if regeneration is at all possible, it has to embrace all aspects in a co-ordinated and strategic fashion. There is no evidence that any one of the components I have dealt with, on its own, can deliver long term benefits.

Consequently a common argument is to try a combination of approaches involving the physical environment, employment and training which is tied into the development of community and local and regional institutional capacity. Any success has been in part due to the particular regional structure of certain key players such as the WDA. Morgan and Price (1992) have argued for a more co-ordinated approach to economic development, bringing together all relevant parties to 'sing from the same hymn sheet.' The Welsh Office and the WDA have played the kind of concerted regional role that is largely missing in the rest of the UK. Some would like to see the constituency widened much further than the Welsh Office or WDA and include widespread representation from coalfield communities.

The process of uneven -development and social exclusion is exacerbated by the peculiarity of the local geography characterised by isolated valley estates. The restructuring of the South Wales economy and the virtual end of coal mining has led to patterns of socio-economic inequality. As production and employment changes so do the spatial divisions of labour and consumption. The sub-region of South Wales may have experienced some benefits of regeneration but particular localities are comparatively untouched and demonstrate heightened uneven development within regions.

## Section B

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### **Chapter 9. Nottinghamshire - Case Study 2**

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#### Regional Overview.

Nottinghamshire is a large rural county with the concentration of the population in the west and is part of the standard planning region of the East Midlands, a region which up until the recession of 1989 was one of the few regional success stories of the British economy. This is an area which includes the cities of Derby, Leicester and Northampton as well as Nottingham itself. La Court makes these comments on the region:

The diverse nature of the economic base, robust manufacturing sector and the large number of small to medium size firms operating in the area meant that the East Midlands economy was one of the most buoyant among UK regions during the 1980s despite its poor performance in attracting overseas foreign direct investment (1992 , p 49).

La Court is of the opinion that ‘change over a longer period reveals that the process of de-industrialisation, while not absent, has been less marked in the East Midlands than elsewhere.’(ibid. p 50.)

Whilst this general view of the East Midlands economy holds true, there are some countervailing aspects. Firstly, the East Midlands is not a distinct regional economy: Northampton in the south is very much influenced by the ‘ripple out’ effect from the South East. Secondly, the broad M1 corridor that runs through the west of Nottinghamshire itself is very different in terms of economic activity from the east and north of the county, where the coal industry survived intact until very recently. Robust though the regional economy might be, it has not escaped the problems of economic decline typical of the British economy as a whole. It can be seen from *figure A 3.1 & A3.2 (in appendix3)* that traditional sectors have been shedding jobs for at least 15 years.

At the regional level, the overall picture that emerges is of an economy that has stood up well to the economic problems common in the British economy and that, in particular, the region has a strong manufacturing base consisting of small and medium sized endogenous enterprises. The Regional Policy Commission report that ‘27% of employment is in manufacturing, compared with 19 % for the UK as a whole’ (1996, p 238). The regional culture of entrepreneurialism is said to be stronger than other areas

and in general the transport infrastructure is good. If this picture is accurate, then the region conforms well to the archetypal buoyant economy prescribed by many economic planners and could be well suited to take advantage of the spaces being opened up as a consequence of flexible specialisation and the new 'industrial districts' (Cooke, 1990). There is a growing population and inward migration amounting to 0.5% over the last 15 years (Regional Policy Commission, 1996).

This relatively favourable view of the region masks problems at the sub-regional level.

If the view is restricted to Nottinghamshire, then the prospects are not as good.

Nottingham County Council (Economic Development Strategy, 1993/4, p 2) makes reference to the county falling from '9th to 23rd in the ranking of the 46 English counties' in terms of GDP *per capita*. When the coalfield areas are brought into focus, the scenario is worse still; as La Court (1992, p 49) points out, there are 'particular concentrations of economic problems in declining coalfield areas'. Dabinett et al (1992) suggest there is a dual economy with declining and buoyant sectors characterised by an urban-rural shift from the west to the east of the county. The overall view of the East Midlands as a successful region only serves to highlight the uneven nature of the processes of de-industrialisation and the spatial distribution of prosperity (*see table 9.1.*)

**Table 9.1. - Employment Change 1981- 89.**

	1981-84	1984-87	1987-89	1981-89 % Change
Newark and Sherwood	-0.4	-2.7	+2.1	-1.1
Mansfield	-4.7	+3.3	-3.3	-4.8
Notts	-3.1	-0.2	+3.7	+0.3
East Midlands	-0.6	+3.5	+4.4	+7.3
Great Britain	+2.2	+2.0	+4.5	+4.3

Source : Department of Employment (1993).

The region has many of the problems of economic and social restructuring, if less severe than some other regions of Great Britain. The Department of Environment's first competition results for the Single Regeneration Budget puts the East Midlands only fifth in the ranks of the needy (*see table A 3.2 in appendix 3*). These figures indicate that the East Midlands as a region continued (at least up until 1989) to be better placed than

Great Britain as a whole. Yet within the region, the coalfield areas were losing jobs. *Figures A 3.1 and A 3.2 (in appendix 3)* illustrate the changes occurring prior to the major pit closures after 1992. Mansfield is an area where pit closures had already occurred in some measure, whereas Newark and Sherwood closures were implemented later. Consequently, the relatively favourable position will not be sustained, despite Newark itself continuing to grow economically. The most obvious feature of the changes in employment is the expansion of service sector jobs at the expense of traditional sectors, even in an area where the service sector is not thought to be as developed as elsewhere in the UK.

The North Nottinghamshire TEC's list of problems of its designated area are familiar to those of its counterparts in other coalfields. These include over dependency on coal and other traditional industries, under-developed service sector, high and persistent levels of unemployment, inadequate investment, poor environment and an increase in crime and other social problems (North Nottinghamshire. TEC Action Plan for the North Nottinghamshire Coalfield, 1993. p 4).

The East Midlands can be characterised as relatively good economic performer in UK terms but not in attracting inward investment. However, the strength of indigenous SMEs has 'contributed to its adaptability and resilience' (Regional Policy Commission, 1996). There are sharp contrasts between the coal areas of Nottinghamshire and the region as a whole. Regional identity is weak and the main concerted effort directed at regeneration has come from the County Council.

### **The Nottinghamshire coalfield**

Compared to the decline of the coal industry nationally, Nottinghamshire has fared better than other areas. Nottinghamshire peaked in terms of mining jobs in 1961 with 56,000 miners employed. Although this fell due to mechanization and rationalization to 13,000 in June 1992, the long term prospects for the coalfield had always been thought to be relatively good. In Nottinghamshire the market was mostly domestic. This became increasingly so as the county, like areas of Yorkshire, became an integrated power generation economy with bulk producing pits and large coal fired power stations along the Trent. The dependence of the area's high production pits on the declining power station market sealed their fate. It is unlikely that there will be any expansion of

employment in the area’s coal industry. The most likely scenario is for more contraction as the new coal companies adjust to the restricted markets, despite RJB Mining’s plans to sink a new mine. The development and decline of the coalfield has been similar to the traditional coal areas of Yorkshire. The industry has declined in an easterly direction as the older pits have ceased production and the newer, larger and more isolated pits of the east, have increased production. The miners of the area, despite political association with the Thatcher government, were not to be spared the closures that other areas had suffered over previous years. Closures were accelerated after 1992 with the run up to privatisation (*see figure 9.1*). In 1971, 52% of the areas output was sold to the electricity supply industry and this rose to 80% by 1991.

**Figure 9.1.**



Source: Nottinghamshire County Council (1995).

When the industry was privatised at the end of 1994, seven pits remained employing less than 3000 mineworkers. Three of these were lease and license mines previously closed by British Coal. Bilsthorpe has been run down ready for closure since it was taken over and Annesley/Bentinck, initially operated by the defunct Coal Investments then sold on to Midland Mining, has an uncertain future with limited reserves. In the region, but to the south in Leicestershire, the new Asfordby mine has had serious geological problems and is also in a precarious position. Apart from Calverton and Clipstone, two lease and license mines, all the collieries are dependent on the power

generation market. Prospects are for further contraction. Although coal mining in the area is likely to continue, without additional investment in pits and the ageing coal fired power stations on the river Trent, it is by no means certain.

**Physical environment component.**

In Nottinghamshire, there is no one single project of the built environment that has been initiated to arrest decline and stimulate economic growth. Plans for civic/regional boosterism designed to lift the profile of the area have remained modest. The urban models of Birmingham, Merseyside or Cardiff are less applicable. This situation could well reflect the perceived relative prosperity of the area or indeed the absence of an Urban Development Corporation or similar growth coalition. No obvious areas of deprivation had emerged as in the Rhondda or the Dearne Valley for example. Only in Mansfield can we find similar levels of the concentration of problems associated with economic restructuring. When Mansfield received Assisted Area Status with the announcement of the pit closures of October 1992 and later the establishment of three Enterprise Zones, it was an admission by central government that the region had problem areas that demanded urgent attention. Economic growth, urban projects and infrastructural improvements have been part of the continuous development of the region. Crisis measures have not by and large been needed. Perhaps, more poignantly, towns such as Mansfield are unlikely to embark upon major prestigious developments even if they were so inclined. They do not attract the same type of private investor and cannot apply the same leverage as large cities.

A local partnership - Mansfield 2010 - was a response to local economic decay but it never aspired to the grand schemes of the development corporation. It was viewed by the local authorities, at least, as a significant player in the field of regeneration. One economic development officer had this to say:

Mansfield 2010 began to fill the vacuum left by the less than hundred percent activity of the district Chamber of Commerce. As a result of that people started talking to each other in the private sector.(Mansfield District Council.)

Whilst superficially similar to the Development Corporations or organisations such as the Dearne Valley Partnership in South Yorkshire, it in fact is less influential. It does have a commitment to the physical regeneration of the area and this is tied in very much

with image building. In a study carried out for Newark and Sherwood District Council, Mansfield 2010 is dismissed as:

- an elaborate talking shop. As such it may give Mansfield a higher profile than other areas and a head-start in the scramble for funds, but it does not have resources to do anything significant in its own right (Dabinett et al, 1992 p 19).

This view is supported by interviews:

Mansfield 2010 ? I'm not sure it does answer any of the problems about for instance co-ordination. You get the sense that the co-option of community groups are there to give it a sense of worth if you like - they haven't really thought through where they fit in and what their role is. If you have a large amount of money to play with then you start to attract peoples' interest. Mansfield 2010 doesn't have that (Spokesperson, Mansfield Council for Voluntary Services).

Another clear and achievable objective for planners in declining coalfield areas is the reclamation of derelict land. Despoiled landscapes are seen as major disincentives to inward investment. The physical image of an area is thought to be as important as any other factor in the marketing of place. That large tracts of Nottinghamshire are pleasantly rural only brings colliery waste problems into sharper focus. To address this problem, the County Council has produced a 'rolling program of land reclamation measures' (Nottinghamshire County Council, 1993). In comparison to the Welsh Development Agency's projects in South Wales the plans are low key, partly because problems are not as acute in Nottinghamshire. Usable industrial land is a major problem in South Wales but Nottinghamshire has none of the extremes of the valley areas and 'it does not feel or look like a typical run-down mining area' (Dabinett et al 1992, p 30). This availability of land and the relatively recent problem of land associated with colliery closures meant that colliery sites had not been used by and large for industrial development. There is evidence in the policy proposals of the County Council that the reclamation of the pit sites as industrial land and recreational land will now be a much higher priority.

Two areas of regeneration that conform to a physical model in the region are transport and land reclamation. Both these aspects of regeneration are typical of coalfields. The development of the coal industry has led to isolated settlements with poor road transport links and with rail links only to coal market outlets. The coalfield is dispersed and large tracts of rural land separate the towns and villages. Running through the west of the county is the M1 and most of the development in the last thirty years has been within a

few miles of this road. To the east of the county is a major trunk road, the A1. One of the main infrastructural schemes is to link the two main north-south trunk roads with a link through Mansfield and Newark (Nottinghamshire County Council, Planning and Economic Development, Annual report 1992/93).

In Nottinghamshire County Council's 'New Deal' for the area 'transport and infrastructure improvements' and 'improving the environment' are two of the six priority objectives listed. Under the heading of transport and infrastructural improvements there are nine major projects, all of which are road improvements or traffic related. This is the traditional approach of the town and country planner and arguably these projects would be planned whether the coalfield was in decline or not.

The transport project that has had the highest profile has been the 'Robin Hood Line'. It is one of the few local passenger rail developments in the country and has been promoted by the County Council against the tide of rail cutbacks leading up to privatisation. This scheme is regarded as a 'flagship' by the County Council and one that will have a catalytic effect on the local economy (Nottinghamshire County Council, 1993). The project has clear physical objectives; to rebuild a railway line closed in the 1960s and therefore provide a transport link through the heart of the county. Whether this will encourage other regeneration projects is not so obvious but like all infrastructural improvement schemes, it has the benefit of being direct and visible. The development of a rail link cannot fail to help the local economy, even if it is not so easy to measure the outcomes. Faced with the overwhelming problems of de-industrialisation and coalfield decline, local authorities look to their traditional planning role and transport, infrastructural improvements and new buildings are more easily tackled than the economic and social renewal that lies at the core of the problems. As an economic development officer explained in interview:

The scene that is flagged up in people's minds is that - with something that can be built quickly in a short space of time - a minister can come up, open something, have a plaque on the wall, shake hands with a few people and bugger off back to London in his Rolls. But the needs of communities take a bit longer. (Nottinghamshire County Council.)

To sum up: Nottinghamshire has embarked on a widespread programme of physical and environmental renewal involving infrastructural improvements, the construction of factory space and business parks. No one major project can be highlighted. The

partnership of Mansfield 2010, although being the nearest equivalent organisation to a UDC, is not in a position to orchestrate large scale physical development. The county council co-ordinates regeneration across a wide spectrum of activities but also has eschewed the concentration of resources on a small number of high profile projects.

The physical renewal of the Nottinghamshire coalfield through the provision of industrial land and premises is a central part of the schemes for those involved in economic development. This is linked directly to the job creation. It involves essential measures to provide a basis on which an region can develop economically but it does not in itself produce the economic renewal that is sought. Employment is viewed as the key indicator of economic health and it is to this facet of regeneration I will now turn.

### **Jobs component**

Significant employment in Nottinghamshire has traditionally been in textiles, engineering and pharmaceuticals, as well as coal mining and power generation. Employment levels fell during the 1980s in each of these, but coal mining and textiles fared the worst. Nottinghamshire is under-represented in services and, according to their economic planners is 'over dependent on production and manufacturing' (Nottinghamshire County Council Annual Report 1992/3, p 7.) The concern is that, if projections for growth nationally are in services then Nottinghamshire may slip further behind.

It has been decline in coal that has received most attention and been largely responsible for Nottinghamshire slipping from 9th to 23rd in counties ranked by GDP (ibid.). In their submission to the Select Committee on Employment in November 1992, the local authorities highlighted coal dependency, stating that 33.6% of all male employees in the Mansfield Travel To Work Area, and 45% in Newark and Sherwood TWWA, worked in the industry. The fears of that time were realised with closure of more pits than originally planned. Expected stability has been replaced by rapid decline and uncertainty. This contrasts with South Wales where decline was endemic, protracted and predictable. It is in this context that we should try and assess the measures taken to try and ameliorate the effects of that decline in terms of employment.

Policy responses to decline in employment have followed much the same pattern as elsewhere: encouraging inward investment and local companies by providing incentives, factory space, infrastructural and other improvements. However, in Nottinghamshire, inward investment, so often seen as the panacea for declining economies, appears to have a less prominent place in the economic strategy. Statements made on the subject are dispersed in general policy documents that tend to stick to the planning policies that are more direct and tangible: those that a local authority can implement without dependence on the arrival of a major international investor. An officer with Nottinghamshire County Council said in interview that ‘inward investment is all very well but it’s not the answer.’ Without industrial land and premises there can be no attraction to the outside investor in any case. The region’s inward investment record has improved considerably due to the location of the new Toyota plant near Derby. In Mansfield a new Japanese plant Toray Textiles has relocated. Another major investor to come into the Mansfield area is an automotive furnishings manufacturer, Johnson Controls. Marginal in job terms, but encouraging for potential growth in ‘higher order’ industry was the relocation of Renacare, a manufacturer of technical medical equipment and the establishment of a European Research centre for NSK. In Nottingham itself, 2,000 jobs are being created at the new Inland Revenue office. This helps a little to redress the service job balance but is more of a reversion to former policies of locating government departments in the regions rather than an example of inward investment.

There is a tacit understanding on behalf of local government agencies that a net increase in jobs is unlikely and that growth may indeed not produce many jobs at all. As a result they concentrate on providing a basis on which economic expansion can occur. This was made clear in interview by an economic development officer.

The first priority was to use European money to develop industrial land. The strategy was really one of two broad strategies - to go for modern, clean, growth industries and develop a business park, which was something quite novel for Mansfield at the time. We persuaded BCE to build on the prime plot of the business park- we said we don't want sheds, we want business park style accommodation.(Mansfield District Council, 1993.)

However, the relevance of this approach was not universally accepted by community spokespersons:

O.K. So they shutting our pits and making us redundant so we’ve got to look at economic regeneration. We don’t want business parks popping up on the top of the pits, where the headstocks used to be. We don’t want people just saying

‘that’s what you are getting’ and we have to accept it. (Mansfield CVS and former faceworker at Bevercotes Colliery.)

Job creation is considered almost synonymous with business or enterprise development. If we take Mansfield as an example, their current economic development strategy, including their bid for the Single Regeneration Budget, is dominated by the creation of not jobs directly, but a ‘world class business support service which can respond flexibly to local business needs.’ (Mansfield District Council, 1994. p 23.)

The oft repeated reference to ‘world class business’ implies that the type of business development needed is competitive, either purely on costs, but hopefully on quality. It may well be that such documents are designed more to impress central government than provide realistic solutions. Implicit in the local authority strategy is an interpretation that economic development is primarily ‘post-industrial’ in nature. The focus is on prestige and office development rather than industrial production. This recurrent theme throughout economic planning in the last decade is all the more surprising in an area with a strong base for manufacturing and a potential for the development of SMEs.

Statistical information about employment, unemployment and the shifting nature of the labour market suggest that past and present policies have had little overall impact. This especially the case in the coalfield localities. Unemployment figures for the Newark and Sherwood area for example are set out in *table 9.2*.

**Table 9.2.** Registered unemployment rates - August 1992.

	Male %	Female %	Total %
Boughton	16.9	6.2	13.0
Blidworth	16.0	7.0	12.7
Ollerton North	14.2	5.2	11.0
Rufford	12.3	7.9	10.5
Ollerton South	13.5	4.3	10.1
Clipstone	13.6	3.8	10.0
Bilsthorpe	10.4	5.0	8.3
Rainworth	10.2	5.1	8.2
Edwinstowe	10.7	4.1	8.1
Newark TTWA	12.2	6.4	9.9
Mansfield TTWA	19.8	6.4	13.8
Nottinghamshire	16.7	6.1	11.9
UK	16.2	6.2	11.6

Source: Department of Employment (1993).

Male unemployment rates for the Mansfield Travel-to-Work Area are higher than the national average whereas those for Newark are lower. This reflects the steady growth of Newark itself and confirms the analysis by Dabinett et al that there is a dual economy operating within the council district. There is considerable evidence that despite some attempts at redistribution uneven development is taking place. *Figure A3.3 (in appendix 3)* illustrates that jobs in manufacturing were at a similar level in 1989 to those in hotels, catering and retail. Employment in services continues to expand although not at the rate of some other areas of the country. In *figure A 3.4 (in appendix 3)* we can see that in fact services is the only area of expansion and that the increase almost matches the decrease in jobs in energy and water (mining.)

If we concentrate on the Mansfield District itself (*figure A 3.5 in appendix 3*) certain trends with respect to male / female and full-time / part-time employment emerge. Between 1984 and 1989 male employment in manufacturing (S.I.C. 2, 3, 4.) fell by 6% but rose by 9% in part-time manufacturing. However, this rise in part-time work only represents 18 jobs, reflecting the low incidence of male part-time work in this sector (although not the low incidence of casual or precarious employment). In the service sector (S.I.C. 6,7,8,9.) male full-time jobs have again fallen ; this time by just over 5%. There has been a significant rise in part-time employment for men in the service sector. This 25.4% increase represents an actual higher figure than the 6% lost in full-time manufacturing. (An increase of 579 part-time service jobs compared to a drop of 456 full time manufacturing jobs.)

Female full-time manufacturing jobs have suffered the most in the district, with a drop of 29.4% full time jobs and 13.3% in part time jobs. Mansfield, unlike the rural coalfield, has had a high percentage of women working in the long established textile industry. The collapse of coal mining in the area has been accompanied by a similar collapse in the textiles. A 9.5% rise in service jobs for women is the only improvement throughout the range with respect to full-time employment. There is a further 5.9% increase in part-time service jobs for women. These figures, whilst being untypical because of the relatively high levels of women's employment in the recent past, otherwise conform to the general pattern of other coalfields and older industrial regions. The employment opportunities for unskilled or semi-skilled men are very poor. Most of

the jobs around are part-time. Women have a better chance of being employed in the expanding service sector both full-time or part-time. Ex-miners, regardless of the efforts of the labour market adjustment agencies, are unlikely to thrive in this employment environment.

For the rural coalfield areas, the position is slightly different. The opportunities for part-time work for women are very restricted. Travelling long distances to do a couple of hours work is not an option. Yet, perhaps more significantly, the benefits system prevents families from generating additional income. It does not make economic sense in a family unit with an unemployed miner for the spouse to take a part-time low paid job. One of the consequences of this is that income distribution is increasingly less equitable because there is a tendency for families to be either 'job rich' or 'job poor' (Gregg, 1994).

As already indicated, the overall employment figures do not reflect the localized devastating effects of pit closures. The continued rise in unemployment despite the 'aid package' to the coalfield areas suggests that old jobs are disappearing at a faster rate than any new jobs. Unemployment in the assisted area of Mansfield increased from 13.8% in 1989 to over 16% in 1994. The findings of Beatty and Fothergill are interesting for each of the case studies because they successfully account for the phenomenon that massive job losses in the coalfields are not matched by similar rises in the registered unemployed. An adopted strategy for some ex-miners appears to be to withdraw from the labour market (at least officially). The construction of very different measures for unemployment (or non-employment - Balls and Gregg, 1993) reveals that in Nottinghamshire, for example, the real unemployment in the coalfields is 18.7% compared to 11% registered at the Department of Employment. This last point could well be relevant to Mansfield in particular, where female employment in manufacturing has collapsed and been partly replaced by male part-time employment.

In Nottinghamshire, as in South Wales, economic activity rates amongst males in mining communities are low. Hidden unemployment reinforces this perception. What needs to be considered in this context is the method the government and British Coal took to restructure the industry. By opting for lump sum redundancy payments, effective opposition to closures was diluted but it also had the effect of buying out older

miners from the labour market altogether. There was also the danger that giving people a substantial one off payment without an equal commitment to providing opportunities for job replacement or retraining may result in at least temporary dislocation from the jobs market. As one respondent commented:

If you are a miner you have had £30,000 you are likely to have a year on the dole, a holiday. About 6 to 8 months later, drawing your dole, you are going to think about work, by then you are deemed unemployable. (Training consultant.)

In such circumstances the needs of miners, in the run up to and immediately after a pit closure, are crucial.

### British Coal Enterprise and jobs

Agencies involved in trying to remedy this situation clearly have an enormous task, none more so than British Coal Enterprise. This section on jobs as a component of regeneration is completed by a more detailed analysis of the ways in which redundant miners confront their problems and the effectiveness of the 'front line' organisation charged with assisting them.

It may be expected that the problems for former miners in Nottinghamshire have proved less than other coalfield areas, if we take into account the relative economic positions of the regions under study. However, like the other areas, the concentrations of economic and social problems are not always seen in the broader regional picture. Silverhill Colliery near Mansfield was surveyed by the Coalfield Communities Campaign. The results are broadly typical of all similar surveys carried out in other coalfield areas. Almost forty nine percent of the respondents were unemployed more than a year after the pit closed. Training and education accounted for 4.7% , 1.6% were self employees and the remaining 45.% were employed (*see figure A 3. 6 in appendix 3*).

The report found that employment outside mining made up only a third of the sample and this was mainly in 'factory or warehouse work, with the service sector emerging as the second largest source of new employment (Silverhill Report, 1994. p 10. *See figure A 3.7 in appendix 3*). Part-time work was only significant in service jobs. The most significant change occurred with respect to earnings - '89% of those working outside mining taking home' an average of £94 per week less (*ibid.*)

Silverhill was one of the first ten collieries to be closed in the closure program starting in October 1992. For the first two years after its closure, there was some scope for re-employment with outside contractors in the coal industry. Despite the re-opening of some pits under lease and license and the survival of other Nottinghamshire pits in the private sector, the prospects for continued employment in the mining industry are not good. BCE's impact on the employment prospects of former Silverhill miners appears to be less than their national figures would indicate. However, respondents to the survey were in the main content with the service they provided and 73% found the service either useful or very useful. This represents an improvement for BCE on earlier surveys carried out in 1989 (Witt) and 1990 (Trotman and Lewis).

Throughout the eighties, the government promoted the notion of an enterprise society. The people of the coalfields were thought to be particularly unreceptive to this concept because of dependence on a 'job for life' with a large national corporation. Despite the best efforts of BCE, few ex-miners have become entrepreneurs and many that opted for self-employment have done so at the margins of the economy with little or no improvement in living standards. At Silverhill only 1.6% were self-employed at the time of the survey conducted by Guy (1994). Even BCE began to recognise the limitations of encouraging ex-miners to invest money in their own business.

In Fothergill and Guy's evaluation of the BCE Midlands Area, they estimate that out of 47,100 jobs lost by British Coal only 2,600 were created by BCE. They themselves claim to have assisted 20, 189 (*see table 9.3*).

**Table 9.3. BCE - Job Creation Record**

	BC Job Loss	BCE Jobs Assisted	Jobs Created - central Estimate
Midlands	47,100	20,189	2,600
Total	228,000	106,029	16,000

Source - Coalfield Communities Campaign (1994).

Whether this is viewed as an achievement or a failure is the subject of their conclusion. They are of the opinion that the efforts of BCE 'compare favorably with other job creation agencies and reflect well on the efficiency and commitment of BCE staff.' (Fothergill & Guy 1994, pp 39-40). Interview material used in their report contain

comments from the Midlands and all are critical of BCE's record. The comments of economic development officers are perhaps more pragmatic:

Some local authorities do knock BCE quite a lot, but they are like us - they have to play within the rules. They are after all a subsidiary of British Coal.  
(Mansfield District Council.)

In our dealings with BCE we try to get them away from the 'training -equals -job equals-output mentality'. (Nottinghamshire County Council.)

The attitudes of British Coal and British Coal Enterprise evolved over the time of the closures from 1985 to 1995. As one BCE respondent who used to work for British Coal employee relations explained:

British Coal Employee Relations saw BCE and jobshops as peripheral, as a methodology by which an effective closure could be handled sensitively and wound up. BCE was seen in the early days as a puppet of British Coal, part of the bosses' armoury for effecting a closure and they were not trusted.

As much as BCE tried to maintain independence from British Coal and improve its service to former miners, mistrust persisted. The evidence in this study suggests that the service improved but the overall strategy did not. That strategy was to close pits quickly with the least amount of political fuss and provide an avenue by which former miners could be conditioned for a more precarious existence in the labour market. BCE respondents from Nottinghamshire support this analysis:

People had a perception that they should get a job outside the industry on the same money as they did at the pit and that if we couldn't do that we were a waste of space. There's an issue of education there that you've got to get through to people. There are no local jobs on that rate of pay. Getting another job involves travelling and involves probably taking a cut in wages.

Although the figure of 2,600 jobs created is unsatisfactory in a number of ways (i.e. it is for the Midlands and not Nottinghamshire and it is only an estimate) it means that over 44,000 midlands miners were not found jobs by BCE. At Silverhill nearly half were still unemployed over a year after the pit closed. Other studies of mining communities have shown that the figure only marginally improves over the next two years and that a large minority of miners join the long term unemployed. The work that is available to ex-miners is largely poorly paid and with little or no security.

Restructuring of the Nottinghamshire coalfield has resulted in job losses throughout traditional industries. Inward investment and local growth policies backed up by

coalfield aid packages, assisted area status and enterprise zones have had some success but made little significant impact on overall employment prospects. The burden of job losses has fallen mainly on the coalfield communities with pockets of high unemployment. A labour market shift to services has been marked with an attendant rise in part-time and precarious employment. Semi skilled and unskilled male employment is a particularly intractable problem.

BCE and other agencies have had some success in processing mass redundancies and have played a significant role in trying to stimulate local economic growth. Entrepreneurship has only had marginal impact in mining communities. Unemployment figures indicate that if they have been less successful in placing miners in other jobs, it has only been at the expense of others in the coalfield communities.

### *Skills and training component*

Older industrial regions, particularly where skills are not easily transferred or adapted like the coal industry, are poorly placed to cope with the need for the continual upskilling of modern production. The value of human capital in more knowledge based flexible, contemporary production has been reasserted. Skills and training, often taken for granted when large industrial companies invested in appropriate skills for their workforces, is a key element to economic renewal. Conversely many of the service jobs created in the last twenty years have very little skill content. In this section I examine the work of agencies who have tried to provide training services to the people of the declining coalfield of Nottinghamshire.

North Nottinghamshire TEC's 'Action Plan' for the coalfield resembles a comprehensive economic development strategy and is only in part concerned with skills and training. This reflects the changing role of the TECs as they try to take on activities usually associated with local government. Comments made by TEC personnel emphasise the economic development role rather than the training role and the friction that is caused:

Lots of argy-bargy is one thing to mention - right. We are a newcomer on the patch and people are saying - 'what the hell have you got to do with economic development, that's not your job - you're a training organisation.' So there's potential conflict with various organisations. (North Notts TEC, 1993.)

They plan using community outreach workers to provide a four tier structure; pre-recruitment training and confidence/motivation building, skills conversion courses, retraining in vocational skills and access to education and pre-vocational foundation training and support. This provision is further supplemented by providing resources for access to work for women with children and people with disabilities and also encouragement for people to go into further and higher education.

The TEC refer in their plan to 'barriers to employment.' These barriers are categorised as being both supply side and demand side in nature. On the supply side ex-miners have no, or few, transferable skills. Problems on the demand side stem from employers' reliance on informal contacts within the jobs market rather than use of job centres and the continuing reluctance by the majority of firms to give sufficient emphasis to training and education support. Few would argue with the widely understood belief that most firms are conservative in their attitudes to training but private companies are not given the incentive, either carrot or stick, to invest in their workforce (Curran, 1993).

The 'Action Plan' put together by the North Nottinghamshire TEC is a cogent and comprehensive document which blends all models of regeneration together. The TEC are keen to point out that they are main players in economic regeneration. Referring to the 'action plan' a TEC executive said

As for the strategic objectives - these are in this order for very definite and important reasons - first - 'to create and preserve jobs through the regeneration, modernisation and diversification of the local economic base.' So we are focused first of all on business, existing business and potential inward investors because we recognise that that is the source of wealth and employment creation (North Notts TEC, 1993).

A training consultant who had been involved with training for many years, however, had this to say :

We have five training providers in the Mansfield area - all of whom are providing painting and decorating courses because they are cheap courses to run. Not one of these painters and decorators is going to get a job. If you work it out - that's about 800 painters and decorators per year in North Nottinghamshire. Why can't the TECs find ways of spending that money wisely on things that are needed because long term its not cheap for the nation? They might as well take big sacks full of cash and dump it at sea - it would be as much use (Training Consultant, Mansfield).

Another common criticism discovered in interviews was the problem of short term funding:

TEC funding is very short term - bang, bang, bang for twelve months and then its good-bye. It's not their fault - I'm sure they want something more progressive and ongoing (Nottinghamshire County Council).

The County Council has maintained direct training provision, despite the development of the Training and Enterprise Councils, through the Youth Training Agency, Nottinghamshire Training Opportunities and the Women's Training Schemes.

North Nottinghamshire TEC, displayed a grasp of the problems of all aspects of regeneration not just training. They appeared dynamic and relatively well regarded by other agencies. However, policy and funding restraints limited their potential. In declining coalfield areas it is unlikely that the TECs or any other training provider will attempt to address the problem of quality training. Regardless of the strategic needs of the economy, the most likely policies that are seen to be effective are those that remove former miners from the unemployed register as soon as possible.

#### British Coal Enterprise and training

It is the clearly stated opinion of BCE, the first line training provider for ex-miners, that re-employment, in whatever capacity, and not training, is the prime aim. When asked whether there had been a shift from training because it was felt it was training-for-training's sake a BCE executive answered:

I took a very hard line on that one. I actually said I wouldn't support any training unless there was a job available. Just because somebody said they fancied doing something ... I said 'well you are not on!'. You could delay men getting back into the job market. The idea was to get back into the job market ahead of the others. We had to advise people about taking an extended holiday and decorating the house (British Coal Enterprise).

Another commented: 'with training for training's sake some people just move from being a redundant mineworker to being a redundant lorry driver.'

The emphasis for BCE changed as the pit closure programme reached its climax. It became clear that there would no longer be large numbers of miners to leave the industry so job shops, training and counseling would be less important. Faced with the

possibility that they would no longer exist following privatisation, BCE pushed the loan scheme and economic development side of their business.

The TEC are not initially involved with redundant mineworkers, that is the role of BCE. The Job And Career Change Scheme (JACCS) is intended to provide ex-miners with an opportunity to retrain. The level of funding and the time constraints on this type of training provision inevitably mean that it is not designed to fulfill the strategic needs of the local economy but to satisfy turnover and output targets. When former mineworkers from Silverhill Colliery themselves were asked whether they found the advice from BCE useful the majority said that they thought it was. When asked whether the Employment Service Job Centre was useful, most said it was not (*see table 9.4*).

**Table 9.4. Quality of advice given before respondent left Silverhill.**

	Very useful	Useful	Not very useful	Useless
BCE Job shops ( 113)	28%	45%	16%	11%
Other BCE services (98)	25%	40%	25%	11%
Trade Union (69)	9%	19%	38%	35%
Jobcentre (95)	5%	27%	47%	20%
Other (15)	40%	7%	20%	33%

NB figures in brackets indicate number of respondents using each service.  
 Source: Coalfield Communities Campaign, Redundant Miners Survey (1994).

Training and skills enhancement form key aims for all parties involved on regeneration from Mansfield 2010 to local community initiatives. It does not follow, however, that any one of these agencies has the resources to carry out any effective training policy. In particular, local firms are very wary about spending money training their current or potential workforce when they may be poached by other companies. For the ex-miner or unemployed person, there is no economic incentive to embark on long term education. As a consequence, the quality of training is always restricted by short term considerations.

Efforts to regenerate local economies are unlikely to be successful without skills and training being tightly woven into the employment model. If the aim of economic regeneration is to create jobs, then the development of skills is central to that aim. However, as in South Wales, the evidence for such policies exist more on paper than in fact. Long term unemployment would appear to be now the accepted future for a

significant minority of former mineworkers. For the majority of those in work, low pay and low skill levels predominate. The potential benefits of the post industrial age, at least with respect to training, are not distributed amongst declining former coal mining communities.

**Empowerment as a component.**

The purpose of this section of the Nottinghamshire case study is to examine the approach of agencies and local government to community empowerment, describe a number of examples from the county's coalfields and assess the contribution they make to regeneration.

In Nottinghamshire the coalfield consists of 115,395 people in the rural coalfield area, and 594,395 in the coal areas of the county as a whole (Nottinghamshire County Council, 1992.) Mining communities are significant settlements and cannot somehow move en masse in search of employment. The view that the future of these communities can only be enhanced if the people in them are encouraged to develop their own and their community's potential is outlined in chapter 3.

Most of the main players include a community and individual empowerment aspect to their plans. The perception of the Nottinghamshire coalfield as a deprived area is only recent and therefore there has been little opportunity to develop some of the policy ideas. Whereas the WDA has a large Community Business portfolio, for instance, there have been no such developments in the Nottinghamshire coalfield.

The new ingredient now added to this community development model is economic development. Community business or enterprise is seen as an essential part of the policy. This is linked, at the theoretical level at least, with the idea that localised economic development is sustainable. Nottinghamshire County Council, the largest organisation concerned with economic regeneration was still at the stage of investigating community business in 1994 (Economic Development Strategy, 1993/1994 p 10.) Similarly the Rural Development Commission were only thinking about this type of activity as we found in interview:

One of the issues I'm looking at is more co-operative development. People would like to use their skills but they don't want to go it alone. It's a big step to start your own business. We are looking at setting up small co-operative type workshops where people can get the support and expertise. (Coalfield Development Worker, 1993.)

The TEC include 'investment in the Community' in their action plan for the coalfield and list one of their priorities as 'secure effective co-ordination and collaboration between existing statutory agencies and voluntary groups engaged in community development.' (North Nottinghamshire TEC, 1993, p 15)

The particular cultural history of pit villages has meant that, in the main, there has been no need for community development to be stimulated from the outside. This is the new role for organisations such as the Rural Development Commission:

They are focusing now on coalfield areas because Rural Community Councils haven't traditionally looked at coalfield villages because coalfield villages have always been self-supporting. One you've got a pit you don't need outside organisations - everything is taken care of. (Coalfield Development Worker.)

The workspace and infrastructure plans involve the development of former colliery sites as factory , workshop units and road access improvements. Employment and training is the aim of their plans to develop community resource centres. Four part-time centres were planned at Blidworth, Bilsthorpe, Langold and Newstead. The intention was to employ a part-time worker -

We've managed to get European Social Fund money, RDC money, TEC money and we have set up four resource centres. They are equipped with faxes, telephones, computers and the job centre will send through all the latest vacancies. The colleges run courses and there are career service sessions. It's basically so that the people in the village don't have to travel into town. (Coalfield Development Worker.)

The social and community project they plan had four broad objectives involving: 'partnership', 'a community based approach to problems', 'improve existing pattern of village facilities' and target 'disadvantaged groups' (Rural Coalfield Partnership, p 30).

The Rural Coalfield Partnership is made up of the following organisations : Five district Councils, the County Council, British Coal Enterprise, the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation, Department of Employment, English Estates, North Nottinghamshire TEC , the Association of Parish Councils , the Rural Community Council and the Rural Development Commission. Despite this array of apparent support there is not an

equivalent financial commitment. They can only manage to support a worker for one and a half days per week in the key community resource centres.

Another project that is firmly located in a community is the Warsop Regeneration Project. This project is supported by the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit and the Rural Development Commission. Its aim is the environmental, economic and social renewal of the area. Its significance is that it is entirely locally based and focused on the details of life in the locality. Without any significant funding itself, it attempts to forge interests in the locality and pressurise other agencies such as the TECs and the local authorities to take action. It has a strong sense that it is rekindling local democracy (Civic Trust Regeneration Unit 1991, p 11).

In addition to the four centres proposed by the Rural Development Commission, the Warsop group also plan a community resource centre. The centre would be used as a job centre, for careers and advice, training, business advice, child care facilities etc.:

It could also act as the seed bed for community enterprises responding to the needs identifies such as child care facilities, and create local employment through the development of a teleworking business.(ibid. Page 32.)

A local activist stated:

The first project that was identified as being essential to Warsop was a drop-in centre. The idea is that - particularly when you live at a distance from local facilities such as the Employment Exchange and things like that - you can have a one stop place where you can perhaps sign on, look at any job vacancies, have someone chat to you about problems. (Warsop Parish Regeneration Agency, 1993.)

There is a universal demand amongst coalfield communities for this type of facility. In South Wales the most successful of the WDA initiatives have been of this type. They cannot replace jobs lost or dramatically reverse the effects of macro -economic policy but they are nevertheless, invaluable in providing communities with vehicles for survival and progress. Typically such projects embrace all aspects of regeneration and are focused on a physical presence within a community.

The Dukeries Complex in Ollerton is a good example of a community college and as such a model for community empowerment. A report commissioned by Newark and Sherwood District Council recommends it should be expanded to meet the needs of the locality as pits close (Dabinett et al, 1992, p 35). Education and training provision

integrated into a community facility would appear to address a number of problems in declining coalfield communities. A senior teacher had this to say:

Community education is all about breaking down barriers and saying that you don't just learn from school between the ages of five and eighteen. You learn before that and can come back to it at any time. You can learn from other people too, you don't have to learn from teachers. There are other people who have got skills to share (Dukeries Complex).

Another initiative which seeks to combine housing needs, skills and empowerment is the Guaranteed Accommodation Project, sponsored by Mansfield District Council, but run by a local training consultant GBR. The scheme consists of a partnership between the local authority a training consultant, housing association and the TEC. The project is designed to provide accommodation for the homeless and unemployed. Those identified as in need are then provided with training through the TEC and carry out repairs and housing improvements with a local building contractor on the houses they then move into.

We started off in 1990 looking at the two growth areas in the country at that time - unemployment and homelessness (Training Consultant, Mansfield 1993).

Empowerment as a regenerative mechanism is less concerned with specific programmes but how they are carried out. If a policy is implemented by an agency such as the TEC or the County Council, but is done so without consultation or participation, then the people of a community may well be peripheral to the both the process and the outcome. This not only increases the risk of the failure of any project but also brings into question what the purpose of economic regeneration is and who is it for. Location and control are key elements to this component of regeneration. Other than resource centres there are no universal mechanism for sustaining these communities. Yet there is a general understanding that some focus is needed as a community worker explained:

There is a sort of vitality in these communities that causes them to resist dying. The traditional leadership provided by the union or the parish council survive for some time once the pit itself has gone. Once the focal point withers away, there is a need to reinforce it in other ways.

For many of the agencies involved in regeneration, the involvement and participation of communities remains a low priority. Respondents involved in community work were sceptical of the commitment from major bodies:

At a conference on the needs of the long term unemployed it was proposed that we have a centre for each village, but with the kind of resources being made

available we get four part-time workers for the whole of the county (Community Worker. Bassetlaw, 1993).

A co-ordinator from the voluntary sector explained :

The problem is that all the money around pit closures is going to economic development agencies. It's harder to develop a well funded response to social and community issues. It's also hard to start to get people to see that you can help people in communities gain confidence, develop communication skills, develop a sense of value and enable them to identify their own needs and start to make demands on the statutory agencies about what they want in their own communities that will aid economic regeneration. It's all about empowerment (Mansfield CVS, 1993).

There has been a general shift in policy statements to include social issues and community empowerment on the regeneration agenda. In terms of finances and resources this shift has been minimal. There are a number of examples in Nottinghamshire where local initiatives are making a contribution to the social well being of localities. There is little evidence that this has any direct economic benefit in terms of jobs or wealth creation. Nevertheless, in the context of the culture and geography of mining communities, a community empowerment approach is an indispensable element of regenerative strategies.

### **Conclusion.**

Nottinghamshire, as part of the East Midlands, has been used to relative prosperity. Dependence on coal and manufacturing, along with a low levels of inward investment, has resulted in general decline. However, this decline is sharply differentiated across the area with the coalfield localities worst off. There is very little regional identity but the County Council has maintained a strong coordinating role.

The coalfield declined at a slower rate than the others in the UK, with the rural coalfield to the east surviving longest. The pace of closures after 1992 resulted in severe dislocation of local communities and economies. The future of the remaining industry lies in the balance but contraction rather than expansion is more likely.

Physical renewal of the built and natural environment has been county-wide and incremental. There has been no attempt to focus on major flagship initiatives. Without

a UDC, the County Council and partnerships such as Mansfield 2010 have promoted and carried out renewal programmes.

Despite aid packages, enterprise zones and assisted area status, there has been little significant impact on employment, particularly in the coalfield settlements. In line with national trends, new jobs are likely to be low paid, part-time and less skilled than mining. Industrial employment is being replaced by service employment with semi or unskilled males the least employable. The strength and adaptability of the indigenous SMEs (Regional Policy Commission, 1996) has not had much effect in coal areas. British Coal Enterprise has successfully processed many redundant miners and plays a worthwhile role in promoting and sustaining local businesses. However, it has not succeeded in finding employment for the majority of ex-miners or stimulating an enterprise culture in coalfield localities.

Training has a high profile amongst all agencies involved in regeneration. The much sought after up-skilling required for modern industry is not taking place amongst ex-miners. Quality training has been the exception rather than the rule.

Community empowerment has found its way onto the regeneration agenda and a number of initiatives are underway. Whilst this approach is valuable to former mining communities, it is under-resourced.

Although the four components of regeneration are being widely used in the Nottinghamshire coalfield, there is a tendency for all parties to overlap and integrate these models in their plans. Indeed the preference for a partnership approach encourages further integration of the physical, employment, training and empowerment policies.

When people in former pit villages are asked to rank the problems they face, they are likely to place employment (or lack of it) at the top of the list. In reality, creating jobs is the most difficult and problematic of the components available. The physical environment can be improved, industrial land provided and workspaces built. Training provision can be improved and made available to more people. Communities can be encouraged to participate in the process of renewal. Practitioners, those that tackle the

problems of regeneration daily, such as the TEC, are under no illusions that success is around the corner :

There are no quick fixes to regeneration of an area like this. Its been an area that's been dependent for a very long time on a particular group of industries - they are in long term structural decline. There is not an easy overlap between decline and regeneration - there is a gap, a yawning chasm - and it's going to take many years. It's going to be very painful for a lot of people - but there does seem to be a will out there to want to do something (North Notts TEC, 1993).

This case study highlights many of the problems of regenerating coalfield localities. As the TEC respondent suggests, long term structural decline is difficult to reverse and perhaps it is too soon to assess post-closure initiatives in Nottinghamshire. However, it is apparent that, given the piece-meal efforts and the lack of required resources, there is unlikely to be a significant change in the fortunes of these localities. It is for this reason that this study considers that economic and social measures to secure community sustainability, are a prerequisite for *any* regeneration.

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## Section B

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### **Chapter 10. South Yorkshire - Case Study 3**

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#### *Regional Overview*

South Yorkshire, a sub-region and former County Council, is located within the county of Yorkshire and the region Yorkshire and Humberside. Unlike South Wales, which has a clear identity based in part on nationality, or even Nottinghamshire which has still a county council structure - this area is dominated by Metropolitan Authorities. Although the coalfield was still essentially rural, especially to the east, the area consists of coalfield towns as well as villages. Whereas in Nottinghamshire only Mansfield fulfils this role, in Yorkshire, as well as the major cities of Sheffield and Leeds (which have a past closely linked with coal), there are other large towns such as Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, Pontefract, Castleford and Wakefield. In South Yorkshire there is no co-ordinating body, with the exception of the area covered by the Dearne Valley Partnership.

Yorkshire and Humberside, regarded as the region for standard planning purposes, is described as follows:

The extent of deindustrialisation can be gauged by the fact that in 1989, there were 66,000 fewer jobs in primary industries (including coal mining) and over 74,000 fewer jobs in manufacturing industries than there were in 1981. (Leigh & Sitwell, 1992, p 68.)

If we take a closer look at the coalfields the problems are greater :

Rotherham, Mexborough, Barnsley and Doncaster hold the distinction of being the Travel-to-Work Areas (TTWAs) with the worst unemployment rates. (ibid. p 69.)

*Figure A 4.1 (in appendix 4)* illustrates the changes in employment by industrial sector in Yorkshire and Humberside compared to nationally, from 1990 to 1993. Employment has fallen comparably in all with the exception of the primary sector , where the regional figures are 15% worse.

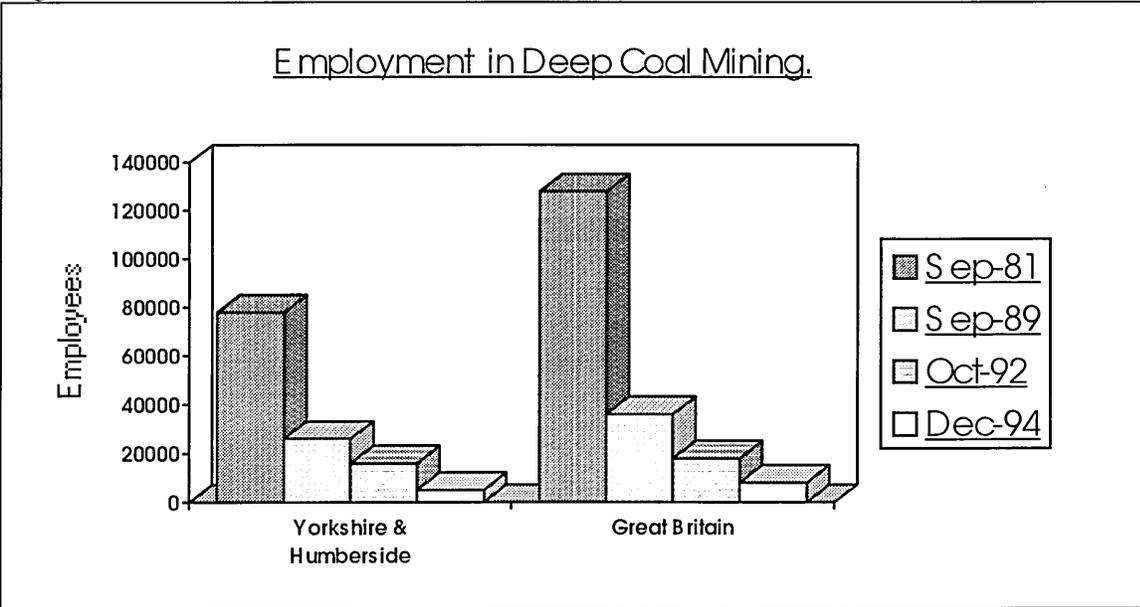
Yorkshire and Humberside is divided, like Nottinghamshire, into industrial and expansive rural areas. Much of the remaining coal industry is located in the rural part of the region. It is only in parts of West Yorkshire, traditionally a financial and business centre, that new growth has been significant. Other parts of the region, particularly

South Yorkshire, have not been able to readjust as successfully. It is pointed out by the Regional Policy Commission (1996) that whilst South Yorkshire is pressing for ‘Objective One’ status (the most deprived in the EU), the economy of Leeds is too strong to qualify for ‘Objective Two’. In the same report the region overall is described as not being ‘dependent’ on inward investment (ibid. p.236.) One further indicator of the sub-regional disparities is GDP. In 1993 North Yorkshire was 1% below the EU average, West Yorkshire 7% and South Yorkshire 20% (ibid.).

**The coalfield**

The major decline and restructuring of the Yorkshire coalfield started in the early 1980s and precipitated the year long strike from March 1984 to March 1985. With resistance seriously weakened, the closure programme started in earnest and continued until privatisation on the eve of 1995. From 1981 to 1995 over 70,000 jobs were lost in the Yorkshire area. South Yorkshire, a former British Coal area, was more severely affected by coal rationalisation than the remaining Selby coalfield. Unlike in Nottingham, there was no expectation that any colliery was safe and the decline was largely predictable although the closures that followed the 1992 announcements went further than many expected. (See Figure 10.1.)

Figure 10.1.



Sources: British Coal Corporation and Coalfields Communities Campaign. (1995).

When privatised at the end of 1994, the deep-mined coal industry in Yorkshire was made up of twelve collieries and one coal preparation point (Gascoigne Wood.) Ten of those units are operated by RJB mining. Hatfield is run by an independent management buy-out. Markham Main was operated by Coal Investments until the company collapsed at the beginning of 1996. Although some of these pits produce coal which can be sold in the industrial and domestic market, their future depends mainly on contracts to the power generators which expire in 1998. In 1995 there were fewer than 5000 employed in all deep mines in Yorkshire, of which approximately 40% were outside contractors. It is unlikely that there will be any increase in employment. On the contrary, it more likely that, as the new owners restructure their pits to meet the needs of the restricted coal market, further closures seem likely. Whatever the future brings, it is certain that large scale employment in coal mining is now a thing of the past. Regeneration of former mining areas will have to depend on other types of economic activity.

**A physical environment component.**

In chapter three the development of policies around the physical and built environment are outlined. Much of this activity was centred in the large cities where it was easier to persuade private capital to invest. For the coalfields these developments had two effects. Firstly, some of the urban centres close to the coalfields were direct participants in this approach (Cardiff, Newcastle, Sheffield, Leeds etc.) Secondly, the trickle-down assumptions were adopted across the board. Urban developments, whether it be Cardiff Bay or Meadowhall (Sheffield) were thought to benefit the region and therefore all the people of the region. For the declining pit villages the need for improvements in the physical environment were less grand. In addition to housing, basic infrastructural improvements (roads and railways), useable industrial land and land reclamation were the main targets of the regeneration agencies.

The dereliction brought about by coal mining and associated industry in the Dearne Valley, for example, was arguably the worst in Europe and is surpassed only by the problems of the former eastern block countries. For South Wales the 'greening' of the valleys is seen as one of the WDA's main achievements. In South Yorkshire it is a problem which is not apparently so easily solved.

Colliery sites which closed as long ago as 1985 were still unfit for other uses ten years on. Much of the blame for this can be laid at BCC's door because they have used such sites for reclaiming coal and opencasting. As a consequence, it is often many years before a site can be effectively used for any other purpose. In addition, apart from some direct benefit to contractors involved in the work and the minimal employment opportunities from this, much of this work falls to the local authorities to carry out. Derelict land grant is available and is welcomed by local authorities, as one respondent told us, because there are very few strings attached unlike other sources of funding :

Derelict land grant is a very valuable source of assistance to local authorities, it is first of all a hundred percent grant. (Barnsley MBC, 1993.)

There are some areas of derelict land, such as the sites of former coke and chemical plants, where the reclamation of the land is in itself very difficult and potentially very expensive to carry out properly. If you then take into account that new businesses are not well disposed towards former colliery and coke work sites, it is not surprising that the transformation from colliery site to country park, or new factory units, is a slow process. In the 'First Two Year' progress report, the Dearne Valley Partnership refers to its major land reclamation projects as being 'ongoing.' Like Nottinghamshire and South Wales, the objectives are to 'remove the worst eyes sores' thereby restoring 'the natural beauty of the area' and 'attracting new investment in jobs.' (DVP, 1994 p 12.)

The target for land reclamation over the five year City Challenge period was 786.8 hectares. After two years they had achieved 272.41 hectares (35% of target in 40% of the time.) Assuming that completion of work will accelerate in the next two years, the programme appears to be on schedule. (*For this and other details of targets and achievements see figure A 4.2 in appendix 4.*) Difficult though it sometimes is to reclaim derelict land, its future use is perhaps more problematic.

One of the key elements to the Dearne Valley Partnership's plans for the revival of the area is the 'Earth Centre'. This is intended to be a 'major educational/visitor/ business centre' (DVP, 1994 p 7). It is planned to have employment and educational outputs as well being an environmental project. It will not only environmentally improve the site it is on (the former Cadeby Colliery) but it will also be expected to have a direct influence on other local projects designed to improve the surroundings. The project received a

major boost by attracting £50 million from the Millennium Fund in October 1995.

Although the total cost is expected to be £125 million, it seems likely that the centre will be one of the main successes of the Dearne area and could attract up to two million visitors a year.

Despite the lack of major 'flagship' property developments in the South Yorkshire coalfield, scaled down versions were initiated such as the 'Dome' leisure complex in Doncaster, the 'Metrodome' in Barnsley, and the World Student Games facilities and Meadowhall in Sheffield. As part of the Dearne Valley Partnership programme, a new university was supposed to be built in the locality. Like the 'Earth Centre', it was to combine significant physical construction with improved educational facilities but was shelved when the government capped student numbers, thus rendering the project unviable. The Dearne Valley Partnership continued with a scaled down version involving Sheffield University and three local F.E. colleges and intends to open in September 1996 with 500 students (The Times Higher, August 16th, 1996).

Road improvements are a key concern of physical renewal in an area of small towns and villages whose transport links were evolved during the development of the coalfield from the 1870s onwards. The construction of the 'Dearne Town Links Road' is, for example, a £30m project designed to uprate the infrastructure. At the same time as better road links have been introduced rail links, both passenger and coal freight lines have been closed.

Closed colliery sites are quickly levelled but reclamation of the land is much slower. Nevertheless, progress has been made and there is no long term encumbrance to the 'greening' of the former industrial landscapes, except where open cast coal production continues. Major property development has not been a feature of the physical renewal of the coalfield, although adjacent cities and metropolitan boroughs have adopted this approach. Infrastructural improvements have been piecemeal. The only major transport initiative, Supertram, was introduced in one of the main urban centres, Sheffield. North-South road and rail links are good but cross-regional and inter-coal community connections remain poor.

## Jobs component

The employment situation in South Yorkshire is described by the Rotherham TEC as follows:

The rate of industrial job loss has been one of the highest in the United Kingdom and the European Community. Nearly 100,000 jobs have disappeared since 1981, and the area has been seriously affected by the continued restructuring of the coal and steel industries (Rotherham TEC, 1994, p 10).

Approaches to employment creation, in the absence of direct government intervention, usually fall into two categories: inward investment or indigenous growth. South Yorkshire has had some success in attracting inward investment; for example, Koyo relocated on the site of a former colliery near Barnsley and Kostel in the Dearne Valley. There has not been the scale of success that South Wales has achieved. The shortage of green field sites is thought to be partly responsible for this. Business growth in general is held back by what is perceived to be the lack of an enterprise culture in the area. This is a common theme for all coalfields. Dependency on large employers such as British Coal or British Steel is said to stifle entrepreneurial initiative. As a consequence, agencies charged with regeneration have put a great deal of emphasis on business promotion, advice and training, in an attempt to stimulate indigenous growth of SMEs. However, according to Rotherham TEC, the process is difficult and slow and there has only been an increase in new business formations between 1981 and 1991 of 23% compared with a national rate of 29% (Rotherham TEC 1994, p 11).

Notwithstanding the inadequate response in terms of the numbers of alternative jobs, most prescriptions for economic development in the coalfields are based on the premise that a post-industrial, service sector led future is all that is on offer, and the best way out of decline. This is also linked with the contemporary preference for high technology, high value added, high quality manufacturing, located in production clusters or new industrial districts. Similar to South Wales, policy documents are often laden with this approach (see the plans of both Rotherham and Barnsley and Doncaster TECs in the response to coal closures, 1993). Perhaps the only example where jobs have been reclaimed in traditional industries followed the privatisation of the coal industry itself. Three collieries, closed by British Coal were re-opened as private concerns, albeit employing less than half the men.

In this section on employment, I will draw on the evidence of a number of studies as well as interview material to examine what has happened with respect to employment. This involves a comparison of the numbers remaining unemployed and economically inactive as well as looking at the nature of the replacement jobs.

There are a range of findings with respect to unemployment rates for former miners. The variations occur because of the length of time that elapsed after closure when a survey was carried out. For example, Witt (1990) who surveyed three pits in the Barnsley area, found 77.8% unemployed one year after closures. Dicks et al (1993) surveyed four pits in the Doncaster area and found 57.5% unemployed eighteen months after closure. Others (Gregory, 1993, Guy, 1994, Critcher et al, 1995) found between a third and a half were unemployed up to two years after closure. *Table 10.1* below illustrates the range of unemployment rates.

**Table 10.1 Unemployment - Yorkshire pit surveys.**

Survey	Colliery	How long after closure (approx)	Unemployment rate
Witt (1990)	South Kirkby/Riddings & Woolley	1 year	77.8%
Dicks et al (1993)	4 Doncaster pits	18 months	57.8%
Gregory (1993)	Markham Main (Doncaster)	6 months	40%
	Brodsworth	3 years	33%
Guy (1994)	Grimethorpe	1 year	44%
Critcher et al (1995)	Thurcroft	2 years	48%

The Halstead & Wright survey carried out on miners after the major pit closures of the early 1990s used former day release students as its sample. It surveyed miners from Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire who were still in the industry and those who have left as long ago as 1960- 63. In *table A 4.1 (in appendix 4)* place of residence is linked with success in gaining employment. Rotherham scores the worst and Mansfield, in Nottinghamshire, the best.

The study divides the unemployed into two categories (leaving aside the economically inactive) the ‘unambiguously unemployed’ and the ‘constructively unemployed’. The former refers to those who may have had jobs but are potential long term unemployed - 14%. The latter refers to those who are pursuing courses of one type or another - 11.2%. The significance of these figures may be that after a longer period the employment situation of former miners settles down and readjustment, although slow, results in only

14 % unemployment (similar to the Employment Service figure of overall unemployment in South Yorkshire for instance.) However, if we recognise that former day release students will potentially be better placed in the labour market, such figures suggest that, although the unemployment position improves over time, there is still a significant long term problem.

Since the mid 1980s researchers have found that the restructuring of the coal industry has resulted in a decrease in the economic activity of males. The 'economically inactive' are those who have withdrawn from the labour market due to age, sickness or infirmity. The study by Beatty and Fothergill indicates that this could be as high as 19% in pit villages in Yorkshire. Guy(1994) puts the figure for a five pit national survey at 30% of the unemployed and Gregory (1993) found 23% and 18.8% were long term sick.

Critcher et al (1995) found that of the 48% of the former miners who were unemployed at the time of the survey, 72% of the currently unemployed had never had a job since the pit closed (*See table A.4 2 & figure A 4 3 in appendix*). Employment was then broken down into full-time, permanent - (34%) and temporary, part-time - 19% (*See Table A.4.3 in appendix*). Of the 56 respondents employed in the whole sample 5 were self-employed; two were from Thurgroft and three from the Rotherham area. This represents 8.9% of the total employed at the time of the interviews. In keeping with the findings of Beatty and Fothergill (1994), 22% classed themselves as permanently sick. The findings of these studies do go some way into answering the queries of at least one local government officer:

I cannot reconcile the known job losses in the pits with the current levels of unemployment in Barnsley. Any objective approach would suggest that the unemployment levels should be a great deal higher (Barnsley MBC, 1993).

The nature of employment following pit closures was a concern for all these studies and for regeneration policy in general. First of all it is important to note the number of miners who became re-employed in mining as outside contractors. The early survey of Witt found 40% returned to mining at a time when it was more possible to do so. As collieries have closed since (there are no pits in the Barnsley area), this possibility has diminished. Consequently the employment figures of this 1990 study are better than we can expect later. Despite this, the findings were not encouraging and the type of work taken up by former miners does not give rise to optimistic visions of better jobs. On the

contrary, 31% of the higher earners at the pits surveyed were found to be earning less, mostly in factories, warehousing, driving, security and the service sector. The kind of work replacing the older industrial jobs is not in the main well paid, high value added etc. but low paid, precarious and often part-time. This is a typical story from an ex-miner:

I've a daughter at Mexborough - her husband works at Sheffield. He's got to have a car to get there and for five days and Saturday morning his take home pay is £120 per week. If these are the kind of jobs that are coming - and I know they are - and people have got to work for that, then it's slave labour (Thurnscoe Family Centre Users Group, 1993).

He is backed up by official reports that find that:

low paid jobs have, and will continue to replace full time employment in South Yorkshire at a rapid rate, and that by the end of 1993 one third of all workers were employed in part-time posts (Rotherham TEC, 1994 p11).

Studies into the employment status and general well being of miners following pit closures generate overwhelming evidence that the regeneration process is at best patchy and that further decline appears inevitable. Speaking about the decline of their community, one amongst a group of residents said the process started when the NCB (National Coal Board) stopped recruiting young people:

Two years before the strike there were no opportunity for young 'uns to come into the industry apart from the select few. That's when the downhill started. Since then they have come in with government youth schemes. Now there's lads and girls in the village - in fact with sewing factories there's more opportunities for lasses than lads - who are twenty five and twenty six year old who've never had a job and they're married with kids (Thurnscoe Family Centre Users Group, 1993).

Dicks et al (1994) found only 15 % are now re-employed in mining with 27.5% getting new employment in low skill jobs. Guy found similar results at Grimethorpe where:

Only 2% of the men who left Grimethorpe have found better-paid work outside the mining industry. A massive 85% of former miners are worse off (Guy 1994, p 5).

From Gregory (1993) we learn that employers were keen to emulate 'Japanese methods' which would involve 'multi-skilling and generally higher skill levels; a willingness to take decisions and initiatives at all levels of the workforce; personal accountability; single status for employees; remuneration related to productivity; the use of sub-contract labour' (p 23). This list is generated to illustrate that former miners do not match up to

the expectations of employers but it is also revealing in the way employers policies' adhere to prevailing notions of flexibilisation. The real problem for the former miner is how to get the higher skills required for the job in the first place. Speculation about the adversarial nature of former miners could be construed as largely irrelevant if the jobs are not available anyway.

Amongst the general findings of the study by Critcher et al (1995) were that new jobs fell into three main categories: (50%) had jobs in services, 14.3% jobs in the extractive sector (including agriculture & fishing, energy & water and mining and 36% in manufacturing. Working in excess of a basic 40 hour week was very common, nearly half earned less than £150 per week and 70% earned less than they did at the colliery. Of the aspects of their new job that were clearly worse, half of the ex-miners said job security and three quarters said trade union strength (*see table A 4.4 and figure A 4.4 in appendix*).

The findings of each of these studies indicate that the employment prospects for former miners in the South Yorkshire region has worsened since the closures of the mid nineteen eighties, partly because the option of re-employment in mining has been largely removed. This assertion may be disputed by agencies involved in managing the restructuring. Equally, successes and improvements do not readily present themselves and this can be demonstrated if we look at the work of British Coal Enterprise.

#### British Coal Enterprise as a Job Creation Agency

Fothergill and Guy (1994 ) use a 'deadweight' analysis to estimate the number of jobs that British Coal Enterprise have created. ('Deadweight' is taken to be the number of jobs that would have been created without intervention.) BCE are very careful to refer to jobs assisted in their figures. In Yorkshire the estimate for jobs created is 3,100 out of a job loss for the coal industry of 47,300. This represents just 6.5% compared with the claimed 'jobs assisted' of 21,875 or 46.2%. Even though it is conceded that BCE have performed reasonably well in the circumstances at providing jobs - the outcomes are not very encouraging, considering that BCE is the 'front line' provider for ex-miners almost to the exclusion of other agencies in the first few crucial months of redundancy.

Previous reports put BCE in a worse light, challenged its success rate and question their use of the term 're-settled' when there is 'no information about subsequent employment experience.' (Witt, 1990, p 47.) Witt's study had shown that 20% were unemployed for at least eighteen months after their pit closed and that 9 months was the average length of unemployment for the whole sample. In this survey 40% were re-employed as outside contractors in mining and this can not fairly be attributed to BCE's effectiveness. This type of inconsistency is repeated throughout the country (Trotman and Lewis 1990) and similar figures emerge after the closure of Thurcroft colliery in March 1992. (See table A 4 4 and figure A 4 4 in appendix 4.) Job Shops, first introduced in Yorkshire in 1987, were not an immediate success as one respondent confirmed:

At first they were run by commercial concerns and we weren't entirely happy with the service that we got. It didn't seem particularly professional. It didn't seem that it was any better than what the average guy could go and get down at the employment service. We weren't adding any value (BCE executive).

Although there has been some improvement in the perceptions of former miners since the closure of pits prior to October 1992 (Fothergill and Guy 1994, Guy 1994, Rotherham MBC, 1991) and that there is some justification in Fothergill and Guy's assertion that BCE have performed reasonably well given the extreme difficulties, the short term nature of their approach apparent from the Thurcroft survey. The evidence from the survey is that a substantial number of ex-miners continue to need assistance to find work and take up training. The policy of BCE to exclude miners who, having worked with sub-contractors, come to them several months after closure or have already received some assistance, is not consistent with a concern for the real needs of ex-miners.

Other studies of BCE activities have concentrated on two aspects: their effectiveness as job creation agencies using 'displacement' and 'deadweight' assessments and the possible emergence of an 'enterprise culture' (Turner, 1992, Rees and Thomas, 1989, Turner and Gregory, 1995). Turner takes 'displacement' to mean the process whereby the creation of jobs in one locality may mean loss of jobs on another. 'Deadweight' (as already indicated) refers to those jobs which would have been created without the intervention of agencies such as local authorities or BCE. Turner has looked at BCE's activities at Carcroft and South Kirkby and come to the conclusion that BCE, whilst

making a positive contribution, cannot claim the success rate that it does. He develops his study using two further concepts; ‘accommodated’ jobs and ‘attributable’ jobs. The former of these is the number of jobs which have been created, regardless of deadweight and displacement and the latter consists of jobs ‘which would not have existed in the absence of governmental or quasi-governmental regeneration activities.’ (Turner 1992, p 6.) By this definition Turner estimated that 97 of the 238 jobs (41%) were created by regeneration policy. However, as with all these studies, and this one does point out BCE’s positive contribution, the numbers involved pale into insignificance compared to the jobs lost.

When considering the relative success in this area it is important to recognise that the manufacturing base of the coalfield areas was deliberately restricted for several decades so that coal mining was not short of labour. Fothergill and Beatty reveal that in Yorkshire for example there is ‘real’ unemployment in the pit villages of 27.8% compared to the registered figure of 15.1%. This is tempered slightly in the coalfield as a whole with 22.8% ‘real’ unemployed and 12.9% registered. (See table 10.2)

Table 10.2 Alternative measures of unemployment

	<b>DE registered Unemployment</b>	<b>Census Unemployment</b>	<b>Real unemployment</b>
Yorkshire Coalfield	12.9	14.2	22.8
Yorkshire pit villages	15.1	16.7	27.8

Source Beatty and Fothergill, 1994 (taken from NOMIS, Census of Population.)

There has been some inward investment into the South Yorkshire coalfield but the area has not had the success of other coalfields such as South Wales or the North East. A series of reports and studies, along with official statistics, suggest that employment prospects for former miners have been poor. Approximately 50% of miners remain unemployed for a significant period after closure and around 20% become economically inactive. New jobs have been by and large been less well paid. Only a small percentage have attempted self-employment and this only as a last resort. British Coal Enterprise, whilst improving their outplacement service, have only made a modest contribution to enhancing the job prospects of former miners or local job creation.

Policies aimed at the employment of former miners have met with only limited success and those aimed at improving the employment prospects for the general population, particularly the young, have met with even less success. Structural unemployment concentrated in isolated mining villages is defying the efforts of all agencies to try and improve the situation. Employment for the majority is now a precarious affair, often involving low pay and part-time work.

### *A training and skills component*

In chapter 4 I discussed the role of the Training and Enterprise Councils. In this case study I will deal with its activities in South Yorkshire as well as other agencies involved in training and skills development. The call 'to develop a high quality and value added national and local economy' is re-iterated. (Rotherham TEC 1994, p 38.) For mining areas some are wary of this scenario and argue that the target should be 'midi-tech' rather than 'high tech', as one planner pointed out in interview:

At Dodworth we marketed the site for Koyo Ball Bearing. Those are the kind of jobs we'd like to have more of - sometimes referred to as 'midi-tech' rather than 'high-tech'. What we want are reasonably well paid jobs, with reasonable opportunities for people to utilise and enhance their skills but not jobs that are so skilled from the outset that they cannot be filled by the existing Barnsley workforce (Barnsley MBC).

It is the intention in this section to examine the implementation of such policies with respect to the coalfields of South Yorkshire. This will require looking at specific TEC policies designed to deal with coal closures but also the training programme of British Coal Enterprise. Consideration will be given as to whether the manifestation of these policies is largely one of flexibilising the workforce rather than upgrading skills.

Criticisms of the Training and Enterprise Councils referred to in chapter three and the other case studies are repeated by South Yorkshire respondents.

I think you've got to say that the TEC system as a method of administering local training and education has got a major defect - it's not democratically controlled. The major function so far has been the administration of government schemes like YT and Employment training and so on. I am not sure, personally, that I would accept that a great deal of what goes on under those headings genuinely warrants the title of training (Barnsley MBC).

The limited effectiveness with respect to private sector training provision is a more general criticism and is even found when you talk to the TECs themselves.

So really we have to link what we are doing on the training side with potential investors and also with existing employers and say to employers 'look get off your butts and get some training done!' They say - 'only if you pay me, only if there is a grant.' Now in the past these grants have been available on the backs of the unemployed people (Rotherham TEC spokesman).

Having pointed out the failings of some employers the same TEC spokesman goes on: We took a decision as a TEC that our primary customer was the employer. If we could make it a good environment for employers and help employers survive then that in itself would create jobs (Rotherham TEC).

The TECs have not been in operation that long (1989) and although it would be easy to point out their obvious shortcomings, a great deal is expected of them in an area of development that does not respond to short term measures and is resistant to dramatic improvements. One example of this in Rotherham was that for an 45% NVQ target, they only achieved 2.6% in 1993.

#### British Coal Enterprise as a training provider.

The 'front line' agency for dealing with redundant miners has been British Coal Enterprise. The TECs have played a secondary role picking up where BCE have left off. Evidence has shown that whatever the successes of BCE, there are usually approximately 50% of former miners who get no long term benefit from BCE assistance (Witt 1990, Guy, 1994, Critcher et al, 1995).

The main thrust of BCE's policy is to direct former miners into employment, and it would appear there is little regard for the long term training needs of individual ex-miners or the economic requirements of sustainable development. The policy documents of the TECs, local and central government may put great emphasis on a high skilled, adaptable workforce, but BCE have more immediate outputs to meet.

Differences in findings from studies since 1985 in Yorkshire can, in part, be due to the process of restructuring of the coal industry, rather than any policy change by BCE. The JACCS scheme was introduced in the mid nineteen eighties and, even though money for training has been made available for a wider range of training avenues since October 1992, the scheme has largely remained the same. After BCE made efforts to refine their

work, eventually ex-miners came to value BCE's services more. They did not necessarily find the training on offer any more helpful for their long term job prospects. The take up of training, re-employment levels and the attitudes of former miners does change with time, and to some degree from area to area (Guy, 1994). As I have already mentioned, the rapid contraction of the industry from 1992 onwards has meant, for instance, that many fewer former BCC employees found jobs with mining contractors. The additional funding and political pressures after October 1992 meant BCE could fund a wider range of training.

Some of the points made about training in the Witt study (1990) are comparable to those made by subsequent studies (Guy, 1994; Wright and Halstead 1994; Critcher, Parry and Waddington, 1995). For example, Witt found that the take up for retraining was low with only 39 (less than 14%) making use of the JACCS scheme. In later closures, such as Thurcroft Colliery in April 1992, the take up was considerably higher (*See table A 4 7 in appendix 4*). The earlier study was critical of BCE for turning down men seeking funding on JACCS. This criticism remains valid for the study carried out in 1994 at Thurcroft. However, the key issue is not the numbers availing themselves of BCE training or how well BCE is now thought of compared to five years ago; it is that despite improvements in the service provided, the point made by Witt (1990) cannot be refuted:

The success of BCE's strategy seems to depend largely upon ex-miners obtaining jobs which require no skill enhancement, or in many cases, little skill at all (Witt, 1990, p 43).

Other studies (Gregory 1993; Guy, 1994; Wright and Halstead, 1994) include some consideration of BCE as a training provider but in order to illustrate and evaluate BCE in South Yorkshire I intend to make further use of the study carried out in 1994 and published in 1995 by Critcher, Parry and Waddington some two and a half years after the pit ceased production.

According to the BCE figures : 76% of the 421 registered clients found work or were retrained on a JACCS course or on the job. There were 101 'clients' (24%) who no longer required assistance (*see table A 4 8 in appendix 4*). The figure for those 'no longer requiring assistance' is the most misleading. The usual policy of BCE is to count the resettled figure as successful cases. Consequently the 76% resettled is slightly lower than their claimed national success rate in their report of 1991-92 which was an '

impressive 86% success rate in placing former employees.’(British Coal Enterprise, A Review of Activities, 1992.) We must presume that ‘no longer requiring assistance’ means simply that BCE do not know what has happened to these people. Similarly they will have no information on the remaining workforce who did not register with them. Many of these will have transferred to other pits before being made redundant.

BCE’s training programmes, like its employment services suggest that there was little consideration of the longer term needs of ex-miners once they were ‘off the books.’ Some of the comments from the survey questionnaires highlight this problem and include being *refused* training because an individual had not applied in the first six months or had simply not been told until it was too late. One serious deterrent to going on a J.A.C.C.S. course was being disqualified by taking up temporary jobs in contract mining:

The Job Enterprise from British Coal never really gave us any advice or anything. They said that me husband could take this course on long distance lorry driving. Then he went back into contracting for British Coal and because he'd had this contracting job, they told him then that he couldn't do this driving because he's already took this contracting up (Thurcroft wife, husband employed as security guard.p 59).

It is apparent from these comments that, for the ex-miners of Thurcroft, the approach was to deal with the mass redundancies in the first instance as effectively as resources would allow. Then, once an ex-miner had received some assistance or had a short term job, they were no longer the responsibility of BCE.

However, the survey does reveal some aspects of a direct and positive contribution made by BCE. There are 15 ex-miners who have been on JACCS courses and were currently in employment. For six of these it can reasonably be claimed that the training was directly beneficial. This represents a 40% 'success rate'. There is therefore a reasonably successful correlation between the training and employment. This is illustrated by *table A 4.7 in appendix 4*.

Driving courses are the most popular and the most successful. Even for those who did not get a job involving driving, it is a useful skill to have and invaluable as travelling longer distances to work is more common. It is the easiest and most minimal re-skilling avenue for ex-miners. Many used JACCS simply to get a car licence. Although a

sensible option for ex-miners, it is hardly the kind of reskilling that will revitalise local industry. After the political storms of October 1992 and the subsequent White Paper, both BCE and the TECs were given money to fund ex-miners who sought advancement in a variety of ways, but mainly further and higher education. Prior to this, only managerial and supervisory grades were encouraged to use JACCS money in this way because it was assumed they would be more likely to successfully complete their course. The general findings of the study were as follows:

Just over a third (26 men) had applied for training under this scheme. Two had been refused funding.

Of those who had taken up courses two thirds had taken a driving qualification and one in six welding or fabrication. 15 of the 23 taking such courses (65%) had subsequently found a job (Critchler, Parry, Waddington, 1995, p 57). (*See table A 4 10 & figure A 4.5 in appendix 4.*)

The findings from the Thurcroft survey, with respect to training and BCE, reinforces the view that the kind of restructuring that is taking place does not comply with the hopes and expectations of economic planners. A workforce with highly specialised skills i.e. deep -coal mining, has largely been de-skilled rather than reskilled. Even though there is a fair success rate for those making use of BCE training, there is no evidence that skills levels are being improved to meet the needs of the modern economy. On the contrary, the evidence seems to point mainly to the negative aspects of flexibilisation of the workforce - casual work, part-time work, low skill and low pay.

The intervention of the other agencies involved appears to improve that situation a little. Again, if we turn to the Thurcroft study, there are some more general findings on training that may be enlightening. Most men undertook some form of training but only one fifth used agencies other than BCE. Where former miners had used other training services, there was a generally high satisfaction level. From the survey and the interview material, it emerged that individuals did not develop ideas about training until several months after redundancy by which time the opportunity was lost. The costs of further training, in terms of low incomes and fees, make it unattractive to most former miners.

Training is not rejected out of hand by ex-miners, but many needs are not being met by the services on offer; following redundancy it may take many months before an

individual is committed to one avenue of development (withdrawing guidance and assistance after six months is not appropriate.); if quality training is what is required, then longer term funding commitment is inescapable.

You can't improve the quality of anything if you are working from hand to mouth, if you are doing it on a year-on-year basis. if you are working to improve peoples' current performance it is not on to say 'well we'll ask you to do this for a year but we don't know what we'll ask you to do next year' (Barnsley and Doncaster TEC, 1992).

One of the complaints often made of the TEC is that their approach is 'vacancy led' (Curran, 1993). The demand for high skilled jobs presupposes the establishment of that type of industry. It could be concluded that what is wanted in South Yorkshire is a pool of labour capable of a number of low skill functions such as driving lorries or cleaning offices. Without an effective linkage between local companies, inward investors, educational establishments and training providers, the high value added functions the planners insist we require for sustained growth, will not materialise.

In the Rotherham area, for instance, the category of 'hard to fill vacancies is increasing. This is particularly true of low paid and low skilled jobs and is a trend that is emerging throughout South Yorkshire (Rotherham TEC, 1994). The TEC highlight difficulties in filling a number of managerial and professional functions, but also sewing machinists and nurses. This could indicate that women are not seeking work for domestic reasons or that the pay and conditions on offer for these kinds of jobs is not attractive enough. The TEC concludes the latter: 'However the issue for potential applicants is usually the pay and conditions package which is below their expectations.' (Rotherham TEC, 1994. p. 26).

Allied closely to training is further and higher education provision. Taking some inspiration from the Valleys Initiative for Adult Education, the Coalfield Education Project is trying to promote and implement adult education amongst mining communities. Like many such initiatives, they have struggled for resources and most of their efforts up until 1996 involved development rather than delivering courses. As some of the studies referred to earlier indicate, further and higher education provides the most reliable way for miners to make a successful readjustment following redundancy. The commitment of this project to outreach work recognises the fact that cultural barriers to the option of general education need to be broken down. Although this

initiative is in its early stages, its potential for contributing to regeneration is clear, as the Coalfield Communities Campaign suggest in their publication - 'Regenerating the Coalfields, Good Practice in Local Economic Development' (Guy, 1995).

As indicated in chapter 4, the TECs have struggled to fulfil the training needs of putative high tech economy. BCE, having improved their training provision, were also unable to add value to training and tended to help ex-miners re-adjust to unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. Reluctance on the part of ex-miners and other industrial workers to accept this situation has led to an increase in 'hard-to-fill' vacancies in a range of unskilled jobs. Further and higher education appears to be the best route to a successful career change but for cultural and financial reasons few ex-miners take this option.

### *Empowerment as a component.*

The fourth and final component of regeneration is empowerment. As I have indicated in chapter 3 and in the previous case studies, empowerment can refer to individuals or to communities. In the former, it usually involves confidence building and some aspects of education or the learning of skills. It overlaps with the later because implicit in the concept is the development of power. This power may be, as far as the individual is concerned, to be used to enhance your prospects in the labour market or for the community to have a say in how economic development is carried out. If empowerment is taken seriously, then political and economic power should be vested in people who have relatively little of it. This does not easily fit in with the concerns of either central or local government. A respondent from a voluntary group was critical of the overbearing nature of local government:

There's never been a good history of co-operation between voluntary groups and the local authority in Doncaster or between anybody and the local authority, Labour party, trade union grouping, because I think they like to have all the credit. They are as paternalistic as if they were a Tory Party in terms of peoples' lives here - people aren't involved (Tricon /Highway, 1993).

A professional worker with voluntary groups is equally critical and suggests that empowerment

requires two things - large sums of money and the powers that be deciding that they can actually 'let go' and let people do things. That can be quite frightening for them. Otherwise it still leaves the local people powerless (Doncaster CVS).

Planners and policy makers are introducing community empowerment into the national debate and Nevin and Shiner (1995) talk of pilot projects, but there are some examples of this type of activity that have emerged on an ad-hoc basis because they seem to be an apt response to the problems of declining coal communities. In the rest of this section I will describe a number of community projects which attempt to address the problems of regeneration.

Most of the projects I will refer to are in the Dearne Valley, an area where rapid decline in the deep mined coal industry started immediately after the 1984/85 strike. There are now no mines left in the area. The development of the region as a post-coal economy started earlier than some other areas of South Yorkshire and has therefore been taken a step further. Much of the community activity response to the closures pre-dated the City Challenge bid resulting in the Dearne Valley Partnership.

The injection of modest amounts of cash has served to further stimulate activity of this kind. The Dearne Enterprise Centre was initiated by Barnsley MBC and serves as a model for centre-based community intervention by local government. It was opened in 1986 at the height of the post strike pit closures. The idea of a community centre based around issues such as unemployment were not new in urban areas, even if pit villages had not come across them. Its function has been that of the traditional community centre but with a political and economic agenda. Education and training, welfare rights, writers workshop, an urban farm and campaigning with the community on key issues, make up its activities. Although originally aimed at former miners one respondent told us:

The biggest response was from women and that still is so. The perceived target group were redundant miners but that didn't happen and never has happened.  
(Dearne Enterprise Centre.)

Outputs in empowerment do not succumb to numeric analysis. The following extracts from one of the reports typifies what the centre is trying to achieve:

It was a friend that fetched me here. I've been coming about three years now. Courses - what courses haven't I done? Computing, farming, return to study, assertiveness - and I've practised that. I'm on the urban farm, the disabled club, I'm a street rep with the tenants group. Before I came here I'd never done anything, not since I left school.  
(Woman in her early forties with several children and no previous experience of adult education. - Dearne Enterprise Centre, 1992.)

It would be easy to dismiss this case as either untypical or hardly worth mentioning in the context of economic regeneration. If we compare it with the situation of a pit village without such centre, such as Thurcroft, we can begin to understand the value of its activities. In the Thurcroft survey section on community there is evidence of widespread disillusionment and atomisation of the village. The opportunities for social activities are fewer since the local pit closed and there appears to be no focus for joint activity to try and arrest decline. The report on this particular pit village remarks;

a picture emerges of an increasingly atomised community ...it is fair to say that the closure of the pit and the subsequent lack of focus (at least for the men) has compounded the general trend towards individualised, non-social daily lives. If people do not work locally, do not shop locally, do not participate in local groups and have less money to socialise, it is likely that there is increasingly less social cohesion (Cricher, Parry & Waddington, 1995, p143).

This malaise reflected in the survey data can also be found in other former mining villages but it is noticeable in the case of Thurcroft that there is no focus within the community for a response to the problems, as there is in the Dearne for example. In the Dearne, there is a centre which, although it is not used by the majority, is a vehicle for regeneration and change that was not present before. Other local authorities with the same resources have been reticent to establish such centres. A voluntary sector worker reflects on his own local authority:

The Dearne Enterprise Centre is part of economic development but Doncaster doesn't see it that way but more in terms of starting up small businesses and providing starter workshops without recognising that there is a stage well before that of what you might loosely describe as adult education, assertiveness training. (Doncaster CVS.)

Apart from the urban farm, the centre does not directly participate in job creation initiatives. This is done by the managed workspace units nearby. Whereas in South Wales the WDA actively encourages the integration of community development and economic development through community enterprise, there is a much clearer separation of the two aspects of regeneration in the Dearne valley. Managed workspace initiatives are a common feature of local economic development and are not often associated with empowerment or social regeneration. The workspace that is allied to the Dearne Enterprise Centre consists of 22 units with 12 workshops and 10 office units. At the time of the interview there were 14 companies operating from it employing 84 people.

When the Dearne Enterprise Centre was being established, the church was also responding to the trauma of pit closures and decline in the aftermath of the strike. The Anglican Deanery of Wath was instrumental in creating a network of community groups that have survived and developed. These small groups all come under the umbrella organisation of Dearne Valley Venture, a company limited by guarantee under the Industrial Common Ownership Movement. Activities include community arts, heritage projects, an advice centre, print and resource centre, women victims of domestic violence, community transport and the Sight and Sound Music Workshop.

Once you've become unemployed it's very easy to become unemployable. What do we do with all these people? You have to give them a purpose and structure in their lives. That's what we try to do and I think we are quite successful in that. (Dearne Valley Venture.)

Within the Doncaster Council part of the Dearne Valley another Christian based group has developed as a community business, Tri-con Highway. After working as separate charity organisations for a number of years, they came together as a Foundation, organised as a Community Business 'with the broad aims of relief of distress for the unemployed and care of the disadvantaged in a work oriented context.' (Tricon Highway Foundation 1993, p3). The Highway branch of the organisation has done 'out work' involving approximately 17 people, for a large multi-national (Monsanto.) They produce geo-textile products including 'Astro-turf.' As a respondent pointed out:

We realised that there were a lot of people who would be very pleased to earn £15 per week. Although it seemed such a small amount of money it made a lot of difference in their economy; those who couldn't go out to work or who would lose their benefits if they earned anymore. They could earn it in three hours - which by local standards of wages is very good pay (Highway, 1993).

Driven initially by enthusiasm and commitment on the part of two individuals, the Foundation has built strong roots. It was dismissed as crank charity work at first by the local authority but, with little better to offer themselves, they have had to concede that it is successful within its own objectives - 'We are doing it all in a tin-pot little way but we are having small successes' (Highway).

In keeping with the reappraisal of economic development that accompanied City Challenge, the community has been given a voice in the Dearne Valley Partnership. A community forum was set up to establish some channels of accountability. Much of the activity of the Community Forum and the community aspect of the City Challenge project has been to support existing voluntary groups such as those already mentioned.

In that respect, the Community liaison officer and the Forum representatives were oriented towards the development of established community groups rather than trying to initiate new ideas and new forms. For example the Tricon - Highway Foundation receives support but there is no co-ordinated effort to introduce community business elsewhere. The Community liaison officer explains:

So its a matter of making suggestions, making inroads in where it's appropriate. It needs to evolve out of what is currently around....Perhaps to parachute in and say right we'll have community business where people aren't quite ready for it wont work.

Those professionally involved with the Forum see the problem of continuity as crucial, given the relatively short life of City Challenge funding. As a result they are drawn to invest in physical structures that will outlast the five years and provide a long term legacy:

The aim would be in a physical sense to leave behind some sustainable buildings which the community feel they have and that they are involved with.

Residents in the area confirm this approach:

My wife, daughter and myself are involved in Hickleton Youth Project, situated in the old pit baths. There's a youth club and a boxing club that's been there for long, long time. There's been money come forward, quite a lot of money and it's all been refurbished. (Thurnscoe man.)

This appreciation of the benefits of City Challenge is tempered by other concerns:

There's been money granted for groups doing voluntary work - but there's no jobs coming out of it as such. I haven't seen where there's been a permanent job created. (Thurnscoe woman.)

One Community Forum member, whilst maintaining a firm commitment to developing people's influence over their own lives through the forum and other channels, despaired of the problems:

I happen to think City Challenge, as done by government, was almost guaranteed to produce failure. I went to a meeting in London and was horrified to find the diversity of interpretations of community involvement. In some places it meant that a community group would be told by the local authority that there was a bid and asked what they thought about it and that was it. (Respondent in Conisborough.)

The same respondent pinpointed a crucial problem for City Challenge and other forms of regional aid:

I think that the pressure to show results of spending is such that it's easier to implement a big expensive scheme than to have confidence in a lot of little schemes despite realising that the only place where things are happening is in little things.

The relatively small amount of funding earmarked for community development in the Dearne Valley has produced results. It does not mean that the lessons being learnt by community responsive organisations like the Dearne Valley Partnership, however limited that may be, are being taken up by other bodies. According to a Dearne valley respondent:

There's lots of things come across my desk with all the right words and all the right jargon - where does the community fit in to this lot? I can't see where the community has been consulted or involved and really they don't get very far. I really don't think that unless they are vested in the community that they are going to fulfil what they are here to do.

This plea for community involvement in regeneration projects is a common theme amongst practitioners at this level and also common written or verbal currency at government level (both local and national.). What is universally lacking is the financial commitment to really carry this type of development through.

The holistic approach is what the rhetoric of the single regeneration is all about... but the delivery doesn't fit into that.' (Allison West, Community Development Foundation, quoted in *The Guardian*, 10.5.95.)

Community development provides more scope for optimism but few indications, in the short term, that there will be any dramatic improvement in the lot of these discarded settlements.

Projects that contribute economically and socially to the empowerment of coal communities in South Yorkshire have grown steadily from the mid-eighties onwards as pits have closed and individuals and groups have come together to fill the void. The most comprehensive of these has been backed by City Challenge funding in the Dearne Valley but others have emerged with much less assistance from public or private sector funding. Economic regeneration in the form of community enterprise had not taken a hold but by 1996, with further RECHAR funding available, some projects were being started. For example, Development Trusts were set up in the Dinnington and Kiveton areas of Rotherham. Community empowerment and economic renewal have become part of the planning vision for the declining coalfields but as of yet resources that may allow a full potential to develop are not forthcoming.

## Conclusion.

Attempts to regenerate former coal mining areas such as South Yorkshire have incorporated four main components which I have referred to as physical, employment, training and empowerment. The most tangible of these is physical renewal - buildings, roads and landscapes. Decline in the potential for a property led development and the relative lack of interest in coalfield areas has meant that this model of regeneration, although essential and worthwhile, is limited. The rural coalfields of South Yorkshire cannot attract the kind of investment that for instance an area in a major city can. Employment is an intractable problem that cannot easily be addressed locally because of the influence of global forces. Policies have been largely aimed at helping former miners readjust to the changing situation. However, given the general decline of these local economies, this has meant a downward readjustment in terms of earnings and expectations. Training can be improved but, because of the lack of employment opportunities, success is limited. Empowerment of communities is an increasingly fashionable yet underdeveloped process that involves political risks, has no clear outputs and, arguably, does not address directly the problem of wealth creation. Nevertheless, it fulfils some important immediate and long term needs and is potentially a valuable course of action.

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## Section B.

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### **Chapter 11. The three coal areas compared.**

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This section comprises of a comparison of the three coal field areas and, using the central questions proposed in chapter 6, begins the process of interpreting the body of evidence in the case studies. To do this I will firstly: explore the extent to which there are any significant differences in the economic history and geographical locations of the three areas; secondly, highlight any evidence that suggests one region is more effective in regeneration and therefore if that approach is generalisable; thirdly, assess the capacity of local and regional institutions to implement, modify and enhance centrally directed and funded regeneration policy.

#### **History and geography**

Historical development and geographical features are variables important for any interregional comparison. Despite coal being a common heritage, the regions are different in a number of ways. South Wales and South Yorkshire, although dependent on the coal industry, developed historically as a centres for iron and steel. Nottinghamshire had no such history and its coal industry developed within a more diverse industrial base in light engineering and textiles.

The 'spatial Keynesian' policies of the 1950s and 60s, involving incentives for private companies to relocate and direct employment in public services, were directed more at South Wales than Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire. The longevity of the region's economic problems meant that government intervention during this period led to a significant diversification of the duo-economic base (coal and steel) well before the dramatic decline of the coal industry in other areas. South Wales has had considerable international investment compared to other regions where, as part of the central coalfields, inward investment was actively discouraged in the post war years in order to maintain a captive labour force for the National Coal Board.

South Wales' coal industry began to decline around the time of the first world war. Its coals were largely for steam generation and export. The virtual end of the export trade and the subsequent wholesale shift to other forms of motive power meant that the area

has been in steady decline for decades. Only one coal fired power station was built in the region at Abertawe. In contrast, Nottinghamshire developed as a major coal producer after 1945, and its bulk producing collieries, along with the large coal fired power stations in the Trent valley, typified the modern industry. The Yorkshire coalfield similarly expanded in the post-war period, with further investment in the Selby coalfield securing its ascendancy from the 1980s onwards. The market trend was similar to Nottinghamshire, although more industrial quality coal was produced and sold. In an extractive industry, inevitably, there are local shifts in activity. The decline of South Wales was paralleled in parts of Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire, with the closure of collieries in the west of the counties in the late fifties and sixties.

Thus the coal industry, in South Wales has been declining for much longer and had become marginal. At the time of privatisation, apart from a number of small private mines and an open cast sector, only Tower and Betws collieries remain of the former nationalised industry. Both are owned by independent buy-outs. In Nottinghamshire, four former British Coal collieries are now owned by RJB Mining. They also operate two pits under licence. The open cast sector is less developed here. In South Yorkshire there is a further expansion of open cast, one colliery owned by RJB Mining, one operated by the same under licence and one by a local management buy-out team. Coal Investments' only colliery in South Yorkshire closed when the company collapsed in 1996. The bulk of production from seven collieries in the Selby area is now outside of South Yorkshire. Despite the even more dramatic decline in Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire in the last decade, a viable industry still remains and could, in more favourable economic circumstances, provide regional economic growth. The case studies show that the opportunities for re-employment back in mining in the central coalfields is much higher than in South Wales. This is one reason why unemployment is higher in South Wales than South Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire.

These important differences must be set against many commonalities. As older industrial regions, they are characterised by labour market and socio-economic relations that have been forged from the industrial revolution onwards. Waged labour in large private or public sector companies dominates (Hudson, 1994). This is often accompanied by a marked gender division of labour. This was less the case in

Nottinghamshire's textile industry which employed mainly women. Previously, employment in large units such as mines or steel works and single industry settlements produced a greater degree of social cohesion, high trade union density and labourist political uniformity. Dependency on paid employment and state provision can be said to disadvantage these areas in contemporary economic development.

Geographically, it is again South Wales that is the exception. The once coal-dependent valleys are mountainous and the transport infrastructure has been traditionally poor. Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire have less geographical problems but transport connections between parts of the coalfields remain poor. Towns and villages in South Wales are either on the coastal plain or in strips along the valley. In Nottinghamshire, much of the county is still rural in character, with only one main city and a few towns such as Mansfield and Worksop. South Yorkshire is dominated by the industrial conurbation of Sheffield and Rotherham and the coalfield is characterised by relatively large urban centres such as Barnsley and Doncaster. Geographical location within the UK, and the relative position to the EU, have become more important in the last decade, and parts of South Wales have benefited from relative proximity to the Southeast (an extension of the M4 corridor). They all have major motorways but that does not guarantee regeneration. South Yorkshire is marginally worse off in terms of links with Europe.

It will be argued by those responsible for economic development in these regions that each has advantages with respect to infrastructure and their relative positions as regards the European union. Based on spatial considerations alone, there are some differences. For instance South Wales does have less industrial land available but has the advantage of being at the western end of the M4 growth corridor. Nottinghamshire is potentially well positioned because of its proximity to more economically buoyant counterparts in the East Midlands (Derby, Leicester and Northampton.) South Yorkshire, on balance, is perhaps the least well positioned of the three.

However, the problems for the coalfield areas, within these regions, are much the same. This is especially true of the mining areas where geographic isolation has retarded growth and problems are spatially compounded. In all three areas coal communities have tended to be isolated and lacking in modern transport infrastructure with poor

intra-regional links. Despite the differences in history and geography of the regions as a whole, the coalfield communities themselves, having shared a common industrial legacy, display overwhelming similarities. These similarities tend to confirm a pattern of uneven development.

### **Components of regeneration within the three regions.**

#### *Physical*

Physical or environmental renewal is effectively aimed at land reclamation, infrastructural improvements and, where appropriate, 'civic booster' projects.

In the case of the latter, perhaps the biggest difference detectable in approaches to physical regeneration is that between Nottinghamshire and the other two.

Nottinghamshire has no high profile 'civic booster' project whereas South Wales has Cardiff Bay (and for a limited period the Garden Festival at Ebbw Vale) South Yorkshire has Meadowhall, the World Student Games sports facilities and Supertram. Nottinghamshire has not put as much emphasis on this approach as other regions and this may be partly a result of the two tiered structure of local government. For the Metropolitan Boroughs of South Yorkshire, and in particular for the city of Sheffield, this option became central, whereas, in Nottinghamshire a more diverse policy seems to have been adopted. This aspect will be developed when the institutions involved in regeneration are considered.

The down turn in the property market in the 1990s has meant that major building projects are now less favoured as the means to regeneration. Despite this, 'civic boosterism' schemes remain influential in coalfields even though the largest projects are not located there. The Cardiff Bay development, for example, is a major project for regeneration in South Wales but is located well away from the valleys. Meadowhall is located between Sheffield and Rotherham but is not a project designed for coalfield renewal. Coalfield areas are not characterised by cityscapes for which 'civic boosterism' is appropriate. However, elements of the same philosophy can be found in the three coalfields with projects designed to improve the appearance of locality, both for the benefit of residents but also to attract potential investors.

More directly relevant to coalfield areas are infrastructural improvements and land reclamation. Differences in regeneration based on the land reclamation are related to the staggered historical decline of the coal industry, coupled with the peculiar geography of South Wales with its steep sided valleys. In South Wales the work of the WDA to reclaim colliery and other industrial sites is one of its notable successes. In Nottinghamshire, with much more potential industrial land available, this has not been a priority, although work is ongoing. In South Yorkshire, and particularly in the Dearne Valley, the reclamation of the biggest area of derelict land outside of Eastern Europe is a major and ongoing project. Throughout the area reclamation has been outpaced by the despoilation of open cast coal production.

In terms of transport infrastructure, South Wales has the biggest problem.

Infrastructural improvements in South Wales have been linked to the M4 corridor and the most prominent of these is the new Severn crossing. The 'Heads of the Valleys' road is slowly being improved. Light railway connections within the valleys have been re-introduced. Economic development in Nottinghamshire has clustered near to the M1 in the West and the A1 in the east. Nottinghamshire County Council have developed the rail network and re-opened what is now called the Robin Hood Line which has improved connections through the centre of the county. Similarly South Yorkshire is divided in to motorway corridors. There have been no improvements to rail links and the only innovative project for public transport is in a major urban centre. All coalfield areas have had difficulties with adequate connections to the main motorway spines and between the constituent settlements.

There are some appreciable differences in the way these areas have tackled the problems of physical and environmental renewal, based partly on geography and partly on policy implementation. 'Civic booster' schemes have only been implemented in urban centres close to the coalfields in South Wales and South Yorkshire. Nottinghamshire has taken a more traditional approach and, without the services of a Urban Development Corporation, resources have been spread more thinly. Reclamation of land is near completion in South Wales because most of the coal mines were closed earlier. Expansion of open cast coal production has added to this problem in all regions but less so in Nottinghamshire. South Wales has the most difficult local geography and this is reflected in the worst intra-regional links. Relative isolation is a shared feature of each

of the former mining communities. They are settlements emerging from a particular industrial heritage and consequently with similar requirements for regeneration. The ‘greening’ of the former industrial landscape will go ahead, but it is unlikely these communities will be the target of major investment in infrastructure or the built environment.

*Jobs*

A comparison of the three regions’ employment record is made more complex when we consider sub-regions and localities. An orthodox assessment of the economic performance of the regions in recent years reveals that South Wales, due to inward investment, has been a success, but it started from a lower base. Nottinghamshire, as part of the East Midlands, was an economically buoyant area but, having suffered from two recessions of the early and then late 1980s, has been slow to recover its former prominence. Yorkshire and Humberside has proportionally less manufacturing inward investment than any other region in the UK (Leigh and Stillwell, 1992). South Yorkshire, although claiming some success with inward investment, continues to struggle with the multiple problems of the older industrial region. Figures for new jobs created in 1995/96 at a regional level can be seen in *table 11.1*.

Table 11.1 - Jobs created in 1995/1996 as a result of inward investment.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Jobs created</b>	<b>% of UK total</b>
Wales	4,429	9.7%
Yorks & Humberside	2,004	4.4%
East Midlands	1,437	3.1%
UK Total	45, 676	100

Source: WDA/ DTI in The Guardian 11th July 1996.

New industry has been brought to the regions (notably South Wales) and also into the former mining areas, but this has not replaced the jobs lost. Moreover, the case studies show that, although jobs are being created, they are, in general, lower paid, often short-term or part-time. Employment is the key model of regeneration but it is not necessarily a measure of success. Inward investment can be successful in a region but not improve overall employment figures as the South Wales case illustrates. In all three cases, the

evidence suggests that coal mining areas are not necessarily representative of regional trends and that there are sharp sub-regional contrasts.

If we look specifically at the outcomes of employment for former coal miners, the three regions display some differences but overall, as with the economic fortunes of the mining communities, the similarities are more prominent. In the wake of the pit closure programme of 1992 -1993, a survey was carried out by the Coalfield Communities campaign and includes a pit from each of the regions. Taff Merthyr in South Wales was found to have 43% long term unemployed, Silverhill 49% unemployed and Grimethorpe, in South Yorkshire, 44%. The higher percentage of unemployment for the Nottinghamshire pit, Silverhill is counterbalanced by the higher figures for ‘sick’ from the other two pits especially Taff Merthyr. From the South Wales colliery there are marginally more former miners employed but, not surprisingly, fewer back in mining. The significant difference, with respect to those claiming sickness between Silverhill and the other two may reflect a different sample profile. Older men are more likely to withdraw from the workforce.

Table 11.2 Redundant Miners Surveys

Pit	Unemployed	Working	Training & education	Back in Mining	Sick
Taff Merthyr	45%	48%	7.1%	13%	55%
Silverhill	49%	47%	4.7%	25%	16.6%
Grimethorpe	44%	46%	8.7%	24%	32%

Source: Coalfield Communities Campaign, 1994.

If we compare this with the figures of Beatty and Fothergill for what they term ‘real’ unemployment in pit villages (*see table 11.3*) we must conclude that policies, even when specifically targeted at former miners, have had only very limited success and that the processes of restructuring have neither been changed, or harnessed to the benefit of coal mining areas. Moreover, the figures highlight the deeply uneven nature of unemployment trends within regions. South Wales is arguably the most successful of the three at regeneration yet scores worst on localised unemployment levels.

Table 11.3 Unemployment - three regions compared

	Wales	East Midlands	Yorks & Humberside
Regional unemployment figures	6.6%	5.1%	6.7%
	South Wales	Nottinghamshire	Yorkshire
'Real' male unemployment- pit villages	33.3%	21.2%	27.8%

Sources: Beatty & Fothergill (1994) and Townroe & Martin (1992).

Much of the 'real' unemployment identified by Beatty and Fothergill is accounted for by men leaving the jobs market. The counter balance to this is the claim by Beatty and Fothergill that the targeted policies have in fact been relatively successful and that between 65 and 70,000 more male jobs have been created in the coalfields as a result of policies. This adds up to about one quarter of the jobs lost in the coal industry. It appears that even a policy success such as this remains marginal when compared to the general forces of restructuring. As Critcher et al (1995) discovered, much of the replacement work is in fact part-time including agency work with no guaranteed hours.

Some would argue that 'a job is a job' whilst planners believe 'higher value added jobs' are the only type that will bring about sustained growth. The survey of three pits indicated that earnings have fallen significantly in the new jobs. In South Wales employed former miners have taken a £117 average drop in wages. In Nottinghamshire at Silverhill 89% are taking home on average £94 less and in South Yorkshire 85% are worse off. This does not represent a shift to higher value added jobs. On the contrary, the evidence points overwhelmingly to the preponderance of low paid, insecure and often part-time employment. Agencies such as BCE are managing the decline of the coalfields in such a way as to readjust former miners to the realities of a low wage economy.

Lack of 'entrepreneurship' is thought to directly impinge on prospects for economic development through the encouragement of small and medium sized businesses (SMEs.) and appears as a common factor in the case studies. If South Wales can be said to have been successful at attracting inward investment and developing a branch plant economy, it has fared no better than the other areas at creating small local businesses. This failure is blamed by many on the dependency culture fostered by employment in large (usually

nationalised) companies and the welfare state. The lack of 'entrepreneurship', the willingness or the capacity to become self-employed, by former mineworkers is a recurrent complaint of agency officials (in interview) and the a common finding of studies (Wass, 1988, Rees & Thomas 1989, Witt 1990, Turner 1992, Gregory 1993, Critcher et al 1995, Turner and Gregory, 1995). Some have argued that the economies of the coalfields are the least likely places to carry out a successful policy based on fostering SMEs through self-employment (Turner 1992). Others have put more emphasis on the cultural barriers as a result of a history of dependency, and the socio-political institutional layers that perpetuate a particular social attitude (Hudson, 1994.) Evidence from the case studies would suggest that job creation, through self-employment, is an option many former miners consider, and some take up, but do so usually because there is little alternative. Consequently the outcome for small business operators on the margins of profitability is longer hours and a reduced standard of living.

Each of the regions have had their success at job creation based on a policy of restructuring and diversification with a particular emphasis on marketing the regions to potential inward investors. South Wales has been much more successful than the others. It has been pursuing a coherent policy to this end for longer and has been able to build on earlier success. The main successes of Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire (e.g. some Far Eastern inward investment), although encouraging, reflect a shorter development time and a politico-institutional weakness which prevents regional planning.

In a comparison of the three areas with respect to employment policies, South Wales is by far the most successful at attracting inward investment. Over the years however, this has not prevented net job losses. In Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire, which have been much less successful at attracting inward investment, unemployment is not significantly worse. If the coal areas themselves only are compared, indeed South Wales appears paradoxically to have fared worst. There is little evidence that the enterprise culture has been adopted by the people of former coalfield settlements and high levels of economic inactivity persist long term.

## *Training*

Significant differences in training implementation in the three areas are not apparent. There are, however, some differences in detail of the approach of TECs and training in general in mining areas but this is often the result of varying relations with other participating organisations. The interviews and published documents reveal that the nature of the TEC's partnerships at local level often lead to variations in implementation (Peck, 1994), although the message and the direction are the same.

The other main agency dealing directly with the coal industry, BCE, had even less flexibility in its approach. If miners in South Wales were treated any differently from those in Nottinghamshire or Yorkshire, it is mainly because most of them had left the industry before 1992. BCE improved its provision by a process of trial and error throughout the eighties and this led to the central coalfields eventually getting a better service than South Wales. BCE, being a coal industry agency performed better over time and not necessarily between regions. Figures from the Coalfields Community Campaign national survey (Guy, 1994) reveal slight variations but a consistently low take-up of training and education (*see table 11.2*).

South Wales, because of its developing manufacturing base and inward investment over a period of years, is able to provide more training opportunities. Some companies do have above average training schemes and at least a training culture is being rekindled (Rees and Thomas 1994, Panditharatna and Phelps, 1995). These trends do not necessarily extend to mining communities and, as with economic development in general, the indication is that spatially uneven re-development also manifests itself in training provision. If a training policy is vacancy and private sector led, local economic fortunes will dictate what type and levels of skill can be delivered by training providers. Skills enhancement and education, at whatever level, are investments in the local labour market but they do not produce quick results. The evidence from the case studies is that much is said and written on the subject but that little progress has been made in mining areas or amongst former miners.

In the area of training, we find that the similarities between the three regions outweigh the differences. As a natural consequence of de-industrialisation and a fall in

manufacturing activity, training has also declined. Employer led role of vocational training through apprenticeships has been eroded. Skills shortages are viewed as a major brake on development and a disincentive to inward investment. The domination of the newly industrialising countries (NICs) in mass manufacturing and the development of information technologies has led planners to believe that skills and knowledge are the key to economic prosperity for the developed economies. Policies from all agencies with a role in economic development, re-iterate the centrality of training and education. In the three regions under study, this position is proclaimed universally.

Criticisms of the TECs suggested in chapter 4 seem well founded. The dominance of government schemes and the tendency for training to be vacancy-led are evident in each of the areas. They are compelled, because of strict auditing of outcomes, to try and match training with specific jobs. The jobs market is dominated by low skilled vacancies. Consequently, strategic policies to raise the skills levels to 'higher order' functions are in effect not implemented. What is implemented is a policy of returning people to work (ex-miners included) in whatever employment is available. It is suggested by some that no real training is taking place in the mass schemes and that it is directed more at keeping young unemployed people occupied. Others argue that the easiest training option is taken and as a result the job market is oversupplied with particular low grade, easy to learn trades such as painters and decorators.

National training policies through the TECs, and for the coalfields through BCE, have dominated. The TECs have been occupied by management of unemployment imperatives such as training for work. BCE has been concerned more with the processing of ex-miners and training has been generally of limited scope and value. Although some TECs are more effective than others and may have better working relationships with other local organisations, there do not appear to be any notable successes or differences of approach in the three regions. Potential for better and effective training and skills enhancement appears to be linked to progressive companies located in the area rather than the programs of any particular agency. Generic skills via further and higher education are the best option but few ex-miners take this route.

## *Empowerment*

Empowerment and community involvement have become integrated into mainstream regeneration at most levels of governance in response to the threat of social polarisation arising out of restructuring. It has taken the form of community development, community enterprise and group or individual development through education. Coalfield areas, unlike urban centres, have not in the past been the target of community development initiatives. The expectation was that a pit village with a working mine also had an effective social welfare and support network and could manage well enough without external initiatives. Although this was a reasonable assumption when employment levels were relatively high, the closure of the pits has forced a re-consideration.

The differences between the three regions with respect to this component of regeneration are related to the longevity of the perceived problems. Community development initiatives have developed further in South Wales than in Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire. South Wales, whose valley areas had been declining for decades, had well developed self-help structures typified by the health centres, miners welfare, libraries and also the chapel. During the 1980s, as funding for community development has been reduced, local groups have adapted traditional approaches to the 'market' or more specifically, they have become aware of the need for self-financing. Community enterprise has developed further in South Wales partly because it has been promoted by the Welsh Development Agency. In Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire there has been much less promotion and initiatives are either just being started or considered. The impetus for further community regeneration initiatives in the case of the two English areas came as more European funding (RECHAR 2) became available from 1996 onwards.

Community Enterprise is strongest in South Wales but this may only reflect an opportunistic attitude to funding rather than an entrepreneurial upsurge. Nottinghamshire was beginning to introduce a number of community oriented projects into their renewal strategies. In South Yorkshire the attitudes of local authorities to community development was varied. For example, there was much more activity in the Dearne valley than Doncaster. This may not only reflect local authority policies but

also the fact that the Dearne valley was in receipt of City Challenge funding and that the Dearne area had been in decline for longer.

The issue of the commercialisation of community initiatives remains contentious and there are those in each region wary of this approach and who would not see community enterprise as necessarily a positive step. Many consider that the key issue, when considering the empowerment component of regeneration, is not the initiative itself, (whether its business oriented or for training and education) but the level of control that local people have over it. People in the Valleys Initiative for Adult Education (VIAE) are critical of WDA sponsored schemes because the business aspects are thought to be advanced at the expense of empowerment. In the Dearne Valley there was concern that the imposition by outside agencies of such a formula cannot work. Community enterprise cannot be seen as a more developed form of community development *per se*, what can be said is that local control and particularly financial control are more likely to be sustained, if part or all of the funds are generated locally. Although growth coalitions such as the Dearne Valley Partnership in South Yorkshire have a community forum and Mansfield 2010 has community representation, there are widely differing interpretations of what community involvement might mean. It is a further matter of contention whether those with power, even at local government level, are willing to transfer it to local groups.

In this apparent 'post-industrial' phase of coalfield development, more attention is now given to community development, linked to small scale economic projects. This policy approach has taken root some time after pit closures when the problems of long term unemployment, decline and associated social malaise have emerged. The evidence from the case studies suggest that, given the resources and commitment of national and local government as well as other key agencies, empowerment and community capacity building can be viable, at least in the short term.

## *The role of institutions*

A further aspect to be considered in this comparative overview of the three coalfield areas is that of the institutions involved. Policies throughout the UK for the coalfields are similar and consistent. It can be misleading to refer to most local economic initiatives as such, because they are largely a response to, or strongly influenced by, national and global directives. The programmes, the language and the theoretical underpinning are the same for each area. Policy prescriptions are derived from interpretations of the 'best practice' in regions that have sustained high economic growth. Differences occur for geographical and historical reasons but the implementation of policies differs the most at the level of institutional implementation. Where TECs are the agency in question there is little difference except, crucially, where they have to deal with other local institutions or fit in with a particular local authority programme. This is the intersection between a standardised policy, a nationally constituted agency (the TECs) and the localised 'socially embedded' institutions (Peck 1994). 'Growth Coalitions' (Barnekov et al, 1989, Loftman and Nevin, 1994.) such as the Dearne Valley Partnership or the Urban Development Corporations of Sheffield and Cardiff form another layer of institutional structures that also have major roles in policy implementation. Policies strategies are filtered through such organisations but they are in the main dominated by local private business interests.

South Wales' regional identity is built on nationality. The Welsh Office and the WDA reflects the national dimension of Welsh affairs. Nottinghamshire has little economic, political or cultural identity and is governed by a County Council and a number of District Councils. South Yorkshire, as part of Yorkshire, has more of a regional identity but is represented and governed by Metropolitan Boroughs. The City Challenge initiative of the late 1980s reinforced the competition between such bodies (although the Dearne Valley Partnership was an example of three metropolitan councils coming together). The Single Regeneration Budget maintains the competition from town to town or region to region, whilst bolstering co-operation within towns and regions. The one area where this kind of 'beauty contest' (Robinson and Shaw, 1994) is less important is Wales, where the Welsh Office and the WDA have combined to market and develop their region in a more coherent and strategic way. Whilst some of the claims of these organisations are viewed with scepticism, or misgivings expressed about the

nature of the inward investment into South Wales, the ‘institutional thickness of the region’ (Amin and Thrift, 1994) has brought better results than in other areas. It does not follow that institutional thickness or any particular formula or combination of agencies will necessarily generate economic growth. As Hudson points out, some forms of regional regulatory ‘tissue’ operate counter to the development of new economic strategies. In particular, he cites an older industrial region and former coalfield area, the North East, as being institutionally resistant to contemporary economic developments (Hudson 1994). South Wales has developed institutions that have been better suited to regional economic development but, like Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire, they have been unable to reverse the decline of the areas once so dependent on coal.

De-regulation and neo-liberal economic policies have contributed to what is referred to as the ‘hollowing out of the state’ (Peck & Tickell, 1994a). Specifically the power and financial resources of local government have been cut back and replaced by agencies, such as the TEC, under central government control. However, the one region, in this study, where this ‘hollowing out’ has been resisted, albeit in a less democratic form, is South Wales. The WDA, for example, has proved an effective, though un-elected, institution in the field of economic development. The case studies show the efficacy of regeneration measures is partly contingent upon the organisations that carry them out. It could be argued therefore, that, having ‘hollowed out’ the state it now needs some ‘filling in.’ (Peck & Tickell, 1994a, p 311.) Regardless of the strength or weaknesses of policies or the institutions implementing them, the fate of former mining communities and the pattern of decline remains.

### *Concluding comparative observations*

South Wales, the region most advanced in post coal restructuring, should provide us with some pointers as to the future for the other two regions. If that is the case then, what Morris refers to as ‘Mc Jobbing’ a region (South Wales), may in time also describe Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire. However, because of the differing histories and geography, rather than any policy differences, it is unlikely that they will follow the same path entirely. It is ironic that the diversification of the Welsh economy, and the basis of its current economic development, comes from robust state intervention, starting as long ago as the 1930s. Although direct state intervention is eschewed in the

80s and 90s, the role of the Welsh Office and the WDA are central to the economic progress made in the region. The relative success of economic regeneration in South Wales, and in pockets of the other two regions, serves to bring into sharp relief the lack of success in the coalfield communities themselves.

Of the variables impinging on regeneration in the three regions, institutions exhibit the most differences. Effective initiatives are contingent on local or regional actors. In broad terms nevertheless, the similarities of older industrial regions are more pervasive than the differences. At the sub-regional level of the coalfield communities themselves, almost identical pockets of deprivation can be found. Using the four components of regeneration, the evidence from each of the areas under examination is that they suffer the same fate, are confronted by the same problems and risk being abandoned as lost causes in the continual and heightened spatial and socio-economic polarisation that characterises contemporary society.

The physical renewal of the areas is, and can be, achieved given sufficient resources. New jobs, whether the result of inward investment or developing small firms, are a small proportion of those lost and are often low-paid and precarious in nature. Successes, particularly in South Wales, are located outside the coalfield. Training, although increasingly prioritised, is still dominated by low grade schemes for the unemployed and is likely to be more effective where larger companies have successfully located. Empowerment remains a model with potential for mining settlements but, despite its emergence as a key component of regeneration, is under-resourced and is constrained by political considerations both at the local and national level. If solutions are sought that are inclusive of the people of former mining communities, then empowerment and community involvement should command the resources and the institutional support to make it effective. The current trend is more towards 'socio-spatial segregation' and 'social containment' (Hudson, 1994, p 208-209).

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## Section C

Regeneration policies in three UK coalfields have been outlined and comparatively evaluated in the previous section. In this final section I intend to reflect on the findings; first of all as potential answers to the main questions set out in chapter six and then within the context of contemporary political developments.

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### **Chapter 12 Conclusion - the central questions addressed.**

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In this study there were four areas of enquiry relating to specific policy measures and to the theoretical context of policy development (chapter 6). The first related to the general comparative evaluation defining the overall direction of the study including the theoretical premises on which policy is based; the second to characterisation of this transitional period of capitalist development and in particular production regimes; the third to regulating bodies or institutional forms; the fourth to issues of empowerment, participation and democracy. In this first concluding chapter I refer back to these four clusters of questions.

#### ***Cluster one: Comparison and evaluation of regeneration policies***

There are three aspects to this area of enquiry. Firstly, policies designed to ameliorate the impact of colliery closures through direct assistance to ex-miners and mining communities and through regional regeneration are compared. Secondly, these policies are interpreted in the context of their implicit models of the regeneration process. Thirdly, an assessment is made whether evidence from the case studies that policy prescriptions provide the basis for effective solutions to the problems of regeneration.

Policies directed at the coal areas can be said to have two objectives: one, ameliorative policies designed to reduce the impact of closures and two, regenerative policies designed to promote economic growth for the future. The first category may include the direct assistance to mineworkers and their families in the form of redundancy payments, advice and training, whereas, the second would include broader economic development projects. Although each of these are inter-linked, there is an implicit assumption that reducing the impact is a first step and regeneration is later and more long term. This separation of the tasks is also implied in the manner in which BCE took on the task of processing thousands of redundant miners, whilst trying to promote business growth

through its loan scheme. Similarly, the TECs' plans were directed at the more medium term needs of former miners through their training provision, as well as their own attempts to stimulate economic growth. In the specific circumstances of the drastic restructuring of the UK coal industry, both short and medium term policies were implemented reacting to perceived crises. There is no evidence that there were any long term plans implemented designed to manage decline or bring about regeneration.

If the four components of regeneration used throughout this study are superimposed on the findings, then some overall assessment can be made. Physical renovation need not be problematic and can be carried out successfully given the resources. However, there is no evidence that major civic booster projects will directly or indirectly benefit coalfield communities. Inward investment and the local growth of SMEs are important but cannot replace the jobs lost. Most training is directed to the management of unemployment and not to the long term needs of people from mining communities. Training for high-value added, high skill jobs is limited. Training for generic skills and higher education is more effective but tends to benefit only a few individuals and not the community in general. Community capacity building initiatives, whether in the form of orthodox community development or enterprise remain marginal to the regeneration effort.

For each policy implemented, there are assumptions made based on theoretical interpretations of contemporary economic development. The implicit models of regeneration are made explicit. Commentators and policy makers, whilst often avoiding specific prescriptions, are in broad agreement that the trend, for developed western economies at least, is away from the traditional industrial base and mass production that has characterised much of this century, towards a more service based, information, flexible and globally inter-dependent economy. Consequently, the policies promoted are intended to assist regional economies in their efforts to adapt to and, where possible, lead in this fast changing situation. Emphasising the need to stimulate the growth of SMEs is therefore not simply an ideological preference of the neo-liberal governments but is also an attempt to reproduce the successful formulae of regions such as Baden Wurttemberg or Emilia Romagna.

Figure 12.1.

The theory and practice of regeneration policies in the coalfield areas

Policy component	Measures	Assessment	Agencies / Institutions	Theoretical Underpinnings
Physical	Civic boosterism Infrastructural improvements Land reclamation Housing Community centres etc.	Tangible physical outcomes Trickle-down Large projects appropriate for cities but tends to divert resources from direct provision	Urban Development Corporations Growth Coalitions Local Authorities English Estates WDA	Post-industrial Vision Consumer Service led growth
Employment	Inward investment Indigenous growth	Uneven-development Pockets of success Little growth in local entrepreneurship	BCE Employment Service TECs UDCs Firms Local Authorities Enterprise Agencies	Globalisation International division of labour Fordism and post-Fordism Flexible Specialisation
Training	JACCs Work experience FE HE On-job training	Low-grade schemes for unemployed dominate Best practice in areas where firms expand FE / HE the best route to higher grade employment	BCE TECs and training providers Educational Institutions Firms	Post-industrial Flexible Specialisation Technology driven growth
Community Empowerment	Community Enterprise Community development	Few jobs created Limited but essential component of regeneration Under resourced and under-valued.	Local Authorities WDA TECs	Flexible Specialisation and the re-emergence of the regions Post-industrial employment Post-Fordist welfare provision

The literature of the policy makers displays this clear link between the theoretical interpretation of economic trends and the policies that they attempt to put into practice. There is some re-interpretation to fit regional and local circumstances, but documents such as the ECOTEC Report (1993) for South Wales, as well as the more promotional brochures of economic development departments or TECs, are very similar in their strategies. That similarity is based on a common acceptance of a post-industrial solution.

It is easy to find low incomes, part-time work and social exclusion, but less easy to discover economic development leading to high value added jobs and growth. This, at the macro-level is to be expected. The policy of 'market shock' (Amin and Thrift 1995, p 44) and deregulation inevitably leads to a concentration of resources, including physical infrastructure, skills and power, in areas where the highest and quickest return on investment is possible. Regional disparities increase rather than decrease (Amin and Thrift 1994). Effective solutions to regeneration in the coalfields have proved elusive. Where economic development has been fostered and sustained in South Wales and pockets of Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire, the overall tendency is still towards decline. In the case of many coalfield localities, that decline is at its steepest. If the global production process is viewed in hierarchical terms, then the coalfields are on a very much lower tier. Where there are relocated or indigenous growth companies, then cheaper labour and flexibility take precedence (Hudson, 1988). Infrastructural improvements, availability of factory and office space, planning attractions such as Enterprise Zone status, have only been partially successful and have not reversed the general downward trend in employment or job quality. Flexibility - task, temporal and contractual - is evident in employment trends. Although these aspects of flexibility are associated with the 'specialisation' paradigm they do not define it (Curry, 1993). Industrial networking, (Cooke & Morgan, 1993) high-tech, high value added, high quality, high skills are much less evident.

### **Cluster two - Regeneration - theories and concepts of economic change.**

The second area of enquiry concerns the concepts generated by theory and employed by policy makers. An assessment is made of their usefulness as analytical tools and guides to policy. This is followed by a further assessment of the likelihood of declining coal

areas repositioning themselves to take advantage of new developments and whether there are any aspects of the economic and social condition of coalfield communities that enhance or hinder economic development, promote social inclusion or exclusion.

Interpretations of contemporary economic and social restructuring remain contentious. Elements of those analytical interpretations have been adopted by policy makers. Whilst some faithfully describe the processes underway, others are yet unsubstantiated and may result in policies that exacerbate the problems of transition.

Such interpretative concepts that are useful include post industrialism and, for this particular study, uneven development. A shift has occurred from an industrial based economy to one where the tertiary sector becomes more important (Allen & Massey, 1988a, b). This has happened in the coalfields but some of the consequences include lower incomes and precarious employment. Coalfield communities are examples of the uneven development of capitalism that have been forced in to decline by world forces (Sadler, 1992). One manifestation of this is the relocation of capital to low wage de-regulated areas (Jonas, 1995). Economic re-development is starkly uneven throughout the regions and the nation (Hudson, 1986, 1988, 1994). Uneven development is evident at the sub-regional level when growth areas such as the M4 corridor in South Wales and the deprivation of the valleys is compared.

Globalisation is a term so all-encompassing that clarity is only achieved when some of its specific features are highlighted. A globalised world coal market has been directly responsible for the decline of the coalfields. Regeneration of those areas may well depend on the shifting fortunes of global capital. Foreign direct investment is one assured way of securing some level of economic growth. However, as the discussion in the next section on institutions and the final chapter indicate one of the key issues for localities, planners and governments alike is how to control or make use of the forces unleashed by globalisation.

The theoretical concern with post-Fordism and flexible specialisation permeates much of contemporary policy, even if there is little agreement about what the concepts might mean. As I indicated in chapter two, it is problematic to separate these two concepts

because flexible specialisation is often taken to be a feature of post-Fordism. To adopt a regulationist view, post-Fordism is an overarching socio-economic regime that includes both a production or accumulation element as well as 'mode of social regulation.' On the production side there is little evidence that flexible specialisation has penetrated coalfield areas and assisted economic growth. Planners have highlighted the flexible specialisation paradigm as a potential avenue for economic development because not only does it provide an analysis, but also suggests a strategic approach whereby regional and local growth may be encouraged and sustained. This holds true for planners across the political spectrum. At the same time as globalisation appears to be reducing the ability of regions and localities to act independently, here, it is argued, lies the potential for regeneration, indigenous growth and the successful repositioning of declining economies.

The emphasis on SMEs and networking is an attempt to stimulate growth patterns similar to the more successful regional economies. Whilst most economic development planners do subscribe to a preference for flexible specialisation firms at the high end of the skill, knowledge and value-added chain, they also usually rely on branch plant inward investment. In terms of the production process, this may or may not be interpreted as post-Fordist, but assembly plants they remain. Batch production, just-in-time methods, team work, temporal and task flexibility may be features present but such plants still rely on basic Taylorist/Fordist assembly methods (Munday et al, 1995, Panditharatne & Phelps, 1995).

The establishment of a new regime of social regulation is not confirmed by this study. The evidence would appear to confirm the views of Peck and Tickell (1994, 1995) that Keynesian welfarism has not yet been replaced, even though the sustained attempt to reduce universal welfare has disproportionately disadvantaged coalfield localities. Workfarism is said to be replacing welfarism as part of this new mode of social regulation (Jessop, 1994a, 1994b, Rutherford, 1996, Peck, 1996) and the efforts of agencies such as the Employment Service, TECs and British Coal Enterprise suggests that the processing of redundant and unemployed people is directed towards readjusting their expectations to lower pay and often insecure employment.

The question raised for this study is not so much whether a new regime of accumulation or social regulation has secured dominance, but what does such an interpretation hold in store for declining coalfields? The findings tend to confirm the notion that 'sunset' regions are unlikely to prove fertile ground for growth (Hall, 1988). Communities with closed collieries have no obvious advantages for economic development. On the contrary, they are perceived to have a wide range of disadvantages including poor infrastructure, environmental dereliction and sub-standard housing. There are labour market problems such as inappropriate skills or low educational attainment. In addition, it is often argued there are cultural barriers to economic development which include confrontational industrial relations traditions, low female waged activity, parochialism and lack of entrepreneurial motivation bolstered by a dependency culture (Rees & Thomas, 1989, Turner, 1992, 1993).

For the inward investor or local company, the advantage is that there is a larger pool of labour to draw from. This can help reduce labour costs and assist with flexibility. Major employers can employ stringent selection in recruitment processes with a resulting improvement in the quality of their workforce. Relocation assistance and the full co-operation of local government and other agencies can be assured in Enterprise Zones, Assisted Areas and City Challenge locations. Nevertheless, even though some parts of the regions under study have been able to adjust, there is little evidence that former coal communities themselves have been, or are likely to be, the beneficiaries of any significant economic growth.

Coalfields settlements, being isolated, can more easily be abandoned than deprived or declining areas of major cities and towns. There may be a sense of 'history marching backwards' (Baxter, 1992) but these now long established settlements are home to many thousands of people and cannot so easily be abandoned as a mining town in the outback of Australia or other remote parts of the globe (Neil et al, 1992). Although prosperity, relatively speaking, has never been a reality for mining communities the social malaise prevalent in recent years is new. Yet the widening wealth gap is less obvious because pockets of deprivation in semi-rural settings can be managed and do not present the potential threat of similar disparities in cities and large towns. Unsurprisingly, social

exclusion and the policy option of social containment become, by default or design, the norm (Hudson, 1994, Brown & Crompton, 1994, Kennet, 1994).

Theoretical constructs about the nature of the late twentieth century may help us understand the times through which we live, but there is a persuasive argument that effective regeneration policies need to be rooted in local needs. It may well be that under a new economic regime of flexible accumulation of capital, local economies can prosper and that, given certain circumstances, the trends in macro-world economics may not mean the neglect and marginalisation of areas dependent on sunset industries. Some of the arguments put forward by Cooke (1990), Murray (1991) and Morgan & Price (1992) do indicate that there are opportunities in the latest phase of capitalist development for local and regional economies to retrieve some control and create and distribute wealth more equitably. The future of mining communities may well depend on the ability to seize these opportunities but there are much more mundane policies that need to be implemented so that these communities can survive at all.

There are dangers in allowing policy to be driven by interpretations of economic development which appear to accept the inevitability of the processes associated with globalisation and other attendant concepts such as post-Fordism or flexible specialisation. An interpretation of the current phase of economic development as post-Fordist is of limited use in trying to understand what has happened to coal communities. The flexible specialisation thesis presents us with a potential avenue for development but coal field areas are not likely, in the present circumstances, to take advantage of that potential. Globalisation of the coal market has been directly responsible for the problems of the UK coal industry. A globalised market place for investment has partially benefited some sub-regional growth areas. The dominant policy makers' view is that market-led solutions take precedence over a more overtly redistributive approach. The evidence from the case studies is that the processes well described by theory are socially divisive and, rather than representing a new departure in economic development, are a re-working of one of the most established features of capitalism - uneven development.

### *Cluster three - Local institutions and global forces.*

Implementation of policy through particular institutions and agencies is examined. This is followed by an assessment of which socio-institutional elements within the three coal regions obstruct or assist economic regeneration and identification of the political and cultural barriers to economic regeneration.

Policy implementation is carried out by a variety of institutions and agencies. In this study, BCE and the TECs have been scrutinised more than others, but Local Authorities, English Estates and the Rural Development Commission have also roles to play. In South Wales, the role of the Welsh Development Agency is also significant. Agencies and tiers of regional government are directed by central government and as a result policy prescriptions remain uniform throughout the UK. This has happened, despite the apparent preference for non-intervention. Central government has exerted more control by 'rolling back' the local state and squeezing it financially, promoting quangos and initiating a series of funding measures such as City Challenge, the Single Regeneration Budget and lottery money hand outs. To compete in this process, all agencies and tiers of governance have to try and meet centrally laid out criteria. Consequently, as Peck (1994) points out, it is striking how 'unlocal' many policies are. For BCE, which operated mainly outside this bidding process, the government had more direct control and there was very little regional policy variation.

Having established that policies were grounded in similar theoretical concepts and that central government had increased its control over the last decade and a half, particular local and regional structures do appear to affect the way in which policies are carried out and what effect they ultimately have. The case of the WDA in Wales is a key case in point. Whilst being wary of giving the WDA panacea status in terms of regional governance, its role in co-ordinating and sustaining economic development appears to be positive overall and absent from English regions with no such institutional tier. Inadequate though the institutional configuration of the UK regions may be to meet the challenge of regeneration, the WDA's qualified success should at least stimulate a rethink about how our regions are governed and how they can implement regeneration policies (Morgan, 1995).

In view of the successes of the WDA, it may be tempting to conclude that similar institutional bodies would be of assistance in Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire. Indeed, central government has shifted towards this by setting up the Integrated Regional Offices. This may be interpreted as a step towards regional devolvement of power, as well as a concerted attempt to co-ordinate regeneration strategy at the regional rather than the Local Authority level. However, if past experience means anything, then the IROs are more likely to further usurp local authority power and enhance central control. This is less likely to happen in Wales because of the other important governmental, political and cultural differences. These include national identity and a separate government department, the Welsh Office. In regions where the economic, social and cultural identity or boundaries are less clear, a satellite government office will not in itself establish clear common aims and aspirations.

There is some evidence in the case studies that larger units of governance or coalitions of local government can be more effective in regeneration policies. In Nottinghamshire, for example, the County Council appeared to be better placed to deliver co-ordinated regeneration policy than district authorities. Similarly, the most vibrant of initiatives, funded by City Challenge, was the Dearne Valley Partnership. Regeneration and urban policy since the nineteen sixties has been criticised for its multiplicity of initiatives and lack of co-ordination. Throughout the coalfield areas, the plethora of agencies and governmental bodies involve in regeneration has been often uncoordinated and sometimes duplicated (Peck & Tickell, 1994b). Open or covert rivalry between local authorities and between agencies has hindered the efficient and effective implementation of policies. The Dearne Valley Partnership is an example of co-operation, as are other partnership projects. However, the bidding process for funding incorporated into central government policies, such as City Challenge or the SRB, encourages the marketing of place and does not represent necessarily a fair distribution of resources based on need.

The institutional configurations of regions are influential in the success and failures of regeneration efforts but ultimately it is the political policy of central government in the UK that has determined the outcome. In other countries this is not necessarily the case. What this strongly suggests is that it is not simply a question of the size or effectiveness

of institutions but how much autonomy they have from, and thus the capacity to influence, national governments.

The dominance of public ownership and public welfare provision in the coalfields is said to have engendered a particular culture and prevalent world view (Hudson, 1994). A job for life and universal welfare state benefits are no longer available but many people in these areas have not been able to readjust. Their expectation is that the state in its local and national forms should provide a living or the opportunity to earn one. This position is in part contradicted by the view that coalfield communities, whilst there were pits to work down, were capable of looking after themselves. The reality was perhaps more complex. Certainly the paternalist nature of the NCB, kinship networks and the reliability of a job at the pit if there was nothing better, sustained many thousands of people in these communities over fifty years. The domination of the industry, local government and politics by traditional, and often very conservative, Labour Parties, schooled on Morrisonian top-down paternalism, did nothing to encourage self-help or indeed self-determination. A collectivist history had its advantages for these communities but it also had its disadvantages in that few were able to assert any real power locally. This heritage persists and independent activity outside of local Labour control is discouraged. This has implications for community empowerment and the ability of local people to determine economic development, over and above the broader issues about the capacity of localities to influence wider economic forces.

Resistance politics, as practised by the NUM, has not been capable of suggesting solutions for local people, once the battle for the industry itself was lost. Traditional trade unionism had very little to offer coal communities without coal, despite the rhetoric of the 1984-85 miners' strike which elevated the role of the community. The NUM, as one aspect of the 'institutional tissue' (Hudson, 1994) of coalfield areas, has not assisted regeneration. It has been conspicuously absent from the Coalfield Communities Campaign, one of the few organisations that has campaigned for both the retention of the industry and for resources for economic renewal. The strong political and collectivist tradition could be reshaped to address the needs of future economic survival and social needs. The evidence from this study, however, suggests that the collectivist strength has been sapped and that there is increasingly less social cohesion.

Restructuring as an element of globalising forces can and should be managed. This can best be done where institutional linkages and levels of governance encourage co-operation. The decline of the UK coal industry compares unfavourably with that of Germany in this respect. Effective regeneration policies are influenced by institutional structures. The Welsh case study highlights this point. It follows therefore that coalfield areas, as examples of disempowered and declining economic regions and localities, are not capable on their own of repositioning themselves favourably in the national and world economies - they require state intervention. The resources to assist regeneration and economic development can be found and through differing levels of governance be made to be effective, despite the countervailing tendencies of globalisation. However, the market itself cannot redistribute to a level that can promote social cohesion. On the contrary, inequality and instability are the more likely outcome.

#### **Cluster four - Empowerment and regeneration**

In this final area of enquiry, several issues about the role and efficacy of community empowerment are addressed. These include whether community empowerment represents more than a public relations exercise or whether it can confront the problem of structural disempowerment and coal communities, as particular socio-economic or cultural defined entities, can reap some benefit. If this approach has serious limitations given the global context, then are there any combinations of 'top-down / bottom-up policies' that enhance the potential for coal communities to arrest decline?

This fourth main area of interest in this study draws together much from the other three but re-examines both theory and practice in the light of the 'top-down/bottom-up' debate. Hence questions about accountability, democracy and equity come to the fore. A shift in apparent emphasis in recent years has been tangible enough (Craig & Mayo, 1995, Simmonds and Emmerich, 1996). However, between 1992 and the end of 1995, initiatives with a central community empowerment element have remained peripheral to the main thrust of regeneration. A modest burgeoning of projects in the three regions has made a localised positive contribution to the well being of communities in the throes of change (McArthur, 1993, Hastings & McArthur, 1995). It cannot be said that this

represents a significant success when it is clear that the resources are not made available.

The evidence from this synthesis of three case studies suggests that community empowerment can go some way to reverse the trend of 'structural disempowerment' (Amin & Thrift, 1995). It is recognised that 'community-based initiatives can reap limited but real gains' (Lawless, 1996) particularly for isolated coalfield communities, providing foci for the disadvantaged, educational and training opportunities and physical renewal of neighbourhoods. It may only directly provide a handful of jobs but through training and childcare facilities people's employment potential is increased. It has proved important that such projects are locally centred and run so that they can maximise their attraction to local people. As Critcher et al point out (1995), the former miners and their families who live in pit villages are less likely to make use of advice, welfare, training and educational provision because it is often not available locally.

The danger is that the empowerment approach can be used as substitute for other regional policies. Self-help for communities assists governments trying to reduce the public spending borrowing requirement and divert responsibility criticism from central government. Entrepreneurialism or a business mentality appears to be a key criterion for many community projects, including those promoted by the WDA. Whilst self-sustaining community development and locally controlled business projects are to be encouraged, it could be counter-productive if the policy is driven by a desire to abdicate responsibility on the part of the state. The emergence of 'communitarianism' (Etzioni, 1996), which calls for individuals to assert control within localities, can be viewed by as a possible excuse for government, both central and local, to devolve responsibility without devolving power. The issue of power is discussed by Robinson and Shaw (1994) and Craig and Mayo (1995). They, among others, are not convinced that it is the intention of the establishment, whether local or central government, to give up any of its power. There are no significant resources directed towards community centred projects, indicating that both central and local government are reluctant to allow local people to take the control over their futures. If we make use of Arnstein's eight-rung ladder of citizen participation, much of the actual policy directed at community empowerment falls into the category of tokenism which includes 'placation', 'consultation' and

'informing.' (Arnstein cited in Atkinson & Cope, 1995. p4). For example, the Dearne Valley Partnership may have a Community Forum but it is mainly a mechanism to consult with certain local representatives, inform them and, when necessary, placate them. Other forms of participation, such as community businesses, promote more direct control but in the case of the WDA sponsored projects there are strict criteria laid down for funding. This financial control undermines, to some degree, the notion that community enterprise promotes local autonomy.

The holistic approach has prevailed in recent years, substituting for the property led development of the 1980s or the inward investment at all costs view. It may be that this policy shift is not just a recognition of the failures of previous priorities but that the options are now even more restricted. Certainly for the coalfields 'flagship' projects and 'civic boosterism' are inappropriate. Economic revival based on inward investment surges now seem a delusion and more and more the policy focus is turning to doing what can be done with limited resources. It is in this policy frame of mind that empowerment takes precedence over grand schemes. For the beleaguered coalfield communities there is no hope of returning employment levels to those of a thriving coal industry. Scaled down expectations and projects are much more likely to work, especially if they are located in and controlled by the community they are trying to help. This is not an argument for the abandonment of these communities to their own devices, but it is a recognition of the fact that coal communities can be helped in very concrete ways which does not necessarily require Japanese investment or grand civic schemes. The type of activities and the level of funding from the agencies charged with regenerating these areas does not indicate that central government takes the task seriously. As Chanan suggests (1996) the issue is not just that this approach has 'economic value', but 'whether policy, both domestic and global, can be made more accountable to the ethos of community activity.' (p 103).

If large scale job creation is beyond those that plan and implement policy in the medium term, then more funding and attention could be given to those aspects of regeneration over which we can have direct control. The problems of training and individual and community empowerment can be tackled immediately. There is no need to rely on inward investment or try to sell the regions' workforce as low wage or pliable, for the

benefit of international investors. The physical renewal of community buildings and their use as educational and training facilities controlled by the local people give mining communities the chance to sustain themselves in a limited but valuable way. Although these communities may welcome the opportunity to help themselves, this should not mean the abdication of responsibility of national government.

It is argued convincingly by Simmonds and Emmerich (1996) that significant job creation is possible in the 'social economy.' Their 'regeneration through work' strategy addresses the type of problems evident in coalfields communities and combines all four components of regeneration identified in this study. It argues that the 'employment demand deficit' (ibid.p 4) is not inevitable and that, by creating intermediate labour markets employing people in socially useful jobs not covered by private or public enterprise, successful regeneration is possible. A proposal involving the setting up a 'Community Enterprise Corporation', regional and local agencies as well as 'Community Enterprise Zones' could provide an appropriate institutional structure to complement 'regeneration through work' (Thakes & Stauback, 1993.) This study argues such approaches are the most immediately relevant and effective for declining coal communities.

Regional successes in physical renewal, inward investment, indigenous firm growth and renewed emphasis on training, though important and welcome, have not reversed decline in coalfield areas. Furthermore, there are doubts whether they do more than simply add to the increasingly uneven nature of capitalist development. Theoretical interpretations of this transitional phase usefully describe the situation in declining coalfields but are of limited use in prescribing policies for renewal. The role of institutions as two-way transmitters between different spatial scales and between needs and policy, emerges as a key factor. However, in order to bring about successful regeneration in the coalfields more emphasis is needed on building community capacity. This can ensure that communities can participate and enhance the relevance of policies by influencing government.

Because policy options are based on interpretations about structural trends, there is the possibility that such interpretations are at one and the same time prescriptive as well as

descriptive and analytical. For example, if it is accepted that a post-industrial, possibly post-Fordist, future is inevitable, then it may be concluded that policies designed to adjust more quickly in that direction would be the best option. It would be argued that there is no use swimming against the tide. However, the interpretations referred to in this study, and dealt with at great length in a vast literature, can only agree that we are in a period of transition. There is then a significant element of choice left to national governments, at least, as to which direction is taken. Comprehending the problems of regeneration requires an understanding of the wider context of world political economy. Policy decisions are always political decisions; before this study can be concluded, that final element needs to be considered.

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### **Chapter 13. Conclusion - The political context of local economic regeneration.**

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Policies designed to ameliorate the effects of decline in coalfield areas and stimulate replacement economic activity are implemented within a political context. Models of economic regeneration may, to a greater or lesser degree, inform those policies as would the specific conditions of the localities they are aimed at. However, overarching political considerations have the most direct influence on what policies are followed and how they are implemented. I have not sought to explain policy choices in political terms *per se* and the main focus has been at the sub-regional level. However, if we accept that there is a 'rational policy making cycle' (Hambleton and Thomas, 1996, p10) which leads from appraisal, through implementation to re-appraisal, we would also have to take into account the role of politics and ideology in its national and international context. In this chapter I will give a brief exposition of the fused nature of politics and economics, of 'power and wealth creation' (Underhill, 1994, p 17); sketch the political history of regional regeneration; assemble some of the political strands that run through the study; and give an account of the interactions between local, regional, national and international forms of governance, and interpret the UK approach to economic development as part of international political-economic models.

#### **Political economy and local economic development in the UK.**

In the management of the decline of coalfields and the proposals for renewed economic activity, the UK government made particular choices based on ideological as well as more pragmatic reasoning. Economic development does not exist in a political vacuum nor is there a 'natural' progression that necessarily leads to decline in one sector or region and growth in another. Political and economic power 'cannot be separated in any meaningful sense' (Underhill, 1994, p 18). That is not to say that political decisions alone can provide control over regeneration or economic growth, only that through policy choices, local, regional and national economies can be steered or managed by the exercise of governmental/political power. Policy is about political choice and even the decision not to intervene or adopt a *laissez-faire* approach demonstrates the exercise of power for particular ends.

Within national boundaries the spatially uneven problems of the political-economic system (the dominant capitalist variety) have been addressed by regional policy. In the UK an approach was developed in the depression years of the twenties and thirties and found later expression in a form of Keynesian welfare redistributive policies of the post war years up until the end of the 1970s. The areas under study were to a varying degree the targets of such policies. However, the policy shift after 1979 and the corresponding ideological realignment is the period of most concern to this study

The successive Conservative Party governments after 1979 have adapted a laissez-faire economic policy. I do not intend to rehearse all aspects of such policies here but there are some useful generalisations that help us to understand what has happened to certain industries and certain regions as a result of such an approach. In particular specific aspects of policies towards the coal industry have been distinctive as part of UK policy, compared to policies elsewhere in the EU.

An argument could be made that all policy areas are likely to have some significant impact on economic and industrial policy. Some particular aspects are more relevant than others. Approaches to regeneration outlined in section 'A', although containing elements relating to political standpoints, are not in themselves politically defined. A policy that includes inward investment or the stimulation of indigenous growth through SMEs can have its origins to the right or left of the political spectrum. A commitment to better training or indeed to empower communities may equally come from any of the major political parties in the UK. Nevertheless, despite a reconvergence towards more consensual politics in the 1990s, the outcome of restructuring and the fate of many industries and the communities that depended on them has been the result of particular policies and the manner of their implementation. It was not pre-determined or inevitable that the coalfields should be undergo the traumatic processes of the last decade. Restructuring may appear to be a fundamental imperative of contemporary society but that does not mean that attempts to politically control the process are either unnecessary or futile.

The expression of neo-liberal policies have impacted on the coalfield in at least six ways. The first and dominant element is the specific politically motivated approach of Conservative administrations towards the coal industry. Second, there is the industrial policy that supports de-regulation and opening up of production and services to unfettered market forces. Part of this involves the diminution of the power of labour through unemployment and specific policies to restrict trade union influence but also drives the policy towards privatisation. Third, regeneration has been dominated by the belief that the private sector, encouraged by selective use of public money, is the only vehicle capable of ensuring growth. Fourth, the emphasis on restricting government spending, coupled with a belief that the market can operate successfully in all spheres of society, has led to erosion of state welfare provision. Fifth, funding arrangements have been largely based on the 'marketing of place' rather than a thorough going assessment of need. Sixth, despite an avowed preference for less government interference in the running of society, state power has been reasserted through the weakening of the power of local and government and local accountability and the establishment of a network of central government controlled bodies, notably the TECs and quangos. These aspects, *inter alia*, have had profound effects on how economic regeneration has been handled in the UK.

Along with the ending of the redistributive policies of the post war years, direct assistance to older or declining industries was perceived to be counter-productive. If they could not survive without subsidy then closure, whilst problematic in the short term, was the best option. This was particularly true of the older heavy industries, where exposure to globalised markets emphasised their apparent obsolescence. As a large monolithic nationalised industry, British Coal represented a prime worst case, at least if a particular interpretation was made of its alleged uncompetitiveness.

Despite the strategic arguments for a diverse domestic energy supply, the status of the UK coal industry as advanced and potentially competitive and the dependence of whole areas on the one industry, most mines were closed. The key policy tool of the government was redundancy payments. This short-term measure had the advantage of speeding up closures by buying off opposition but provided no long term future for the communities left without employment opportunities. This approach can only be partly

understood in terms of the neo-liberal economic agenda of the UK government. After all, the economic arguments for closing the mines were not entirely convincing. The £900 million (approx.) paid to the Exchequer by the private owner RJB Mining compares poorly with the £6.6 billion paid out in additional pensions and social and restructuring grants to the industry (IE+EC, 1995). Public money used to prepare the industry for sale and the expense of defeating the unions in 1984-85 has yet to be fully accounted. The political transformation brought about by the defeat of the mining unions was a prize that transcends easy economic analysis. Unlike shipbuilding or steel, the rundown of the coal industry became embroiled in the wider political agenda of the Conservative Party to break the trade union movement through its strongest union. Closing the pits was a political act of vengeance as much as an economic decision.

### *Growth policy*

On the face of it, Conservative governments have shown great reluctance to become directly involved in industrial policy. Non-interventionist policy was designed to allow private companies get on with their basic purpose; produce goods, sell them and employ people to do it. At the same time public enterprises were sold to the private sector to provide more opportunities for this virtuous circle to operate. Regeneration of production, whether it be manufacturing or services, also had to rely on the private sector, either in the form of inward investment or the growth of small and medium sized indigenous firms.

Encouragement of inward investment is a policy that spans the political spectrum and was part of post war redistributive regional policy. It was only later that concerns about branch plant dependency emerged. These problems included the possibly transitory status of the factory, its provision of assembly only jobs and immediate benefits accruing to the trans-national company rather than indigenous companies or the region as a whole. Nevertheless, the success of areas such as South Wales is viewed as a vindication of central government policy to de-regulate the labour market and make the UK attractive to trans-national companies, particularly from Japan and the Far East. Although the influx of Far Eastern companies in the UK is higher than in the rest of Europe, locational reasons are often cited for the choice of site. It is generally accepted however, that low pay and a de-regulated labour market are the crucial attractions.

In addition to employment creation, the benefits of this policy are several fold. New technologies and working practices are introduced into localities where previously economic stagnation was partly attributed to restrictive and obsolete labour practices. Not only are Japanese and Far Eastern firms welcomed for their employment opportunities but also because they can influence local companies to adapt their own production techniques and labour relations. Conservative administrations claim responsibility for these successes because they have rid the country of the 'British disease' which was perceived to have been restrictive labour practices organised by trade unions.

Policy intentions to stimulate small and medium sized enterprises directed by the watchword 'enterprise' have had less visible results. Particularly in coalfields, the evidence is that an enterprise culture has been difficult to cultivate with the exception of the 'informal' economy. Despite many misgivings (Turner, 1992, 1993), British Coal Enterprise had filled an important role in providing smaller loans for existing or new companies but there has been no systematic analysis of the outcomes. Small companies and self-employment tend to exist on the precarious margins of local economies and VAT registrations compared to small firm failure rates bear this out (Parry and Gladstone, 1993). Nevertheless, this aspect of economic regeneration is supported by all political parties because, despite the difficulties, it at least opens up the possibility for local economic growth in the absence of any other alternative.

### *Trickle down*

A second feature of policy adopted by government was the belief that economic renewal could be left to the private sector. This included industrial development as well as the transformation of the built environment. Referred to as 'privatism' by Barnekov et al (1989) and subsequent commentators (Loftman and Nevin, 1994), the main focus was on urban developments which dominated regenerative plans in the 1980s. It was based on the assumption that property development in large urban centres would eventually have universal benefits - the so-called 'trickle-down' theory. Critics have shown that few, if any, economic or social improvements were apparent amongst the most needy of urban areas. Although I have pointed out that this policy did not have any major

expression in the coal regions, particularly following the depression of the property market after 1990, the concept of 'civic boosterism' (Barnekov et al, 1989) and flagship projects primed by public money still held sway. Viewed as regional policy, the civic booster/trickle down policy had certain limitations. Not least of these was its tendency to exacerbate uneven development. Private sector investment in the London Docklands far outstripped other projects in regional cities and at the sub-regional level there are few examples of comparable developments in the coalfields themselves.

### *Welfare provision*

Resources were found to stimulate urban renewal in the expectation that there would be some general benefit but at the same time central government policy was to find ways of cutting back on universal welfare provision. This included education and health, as well as income provision in all its forms. So in the coalfields, whilst jobs were harder to find and low pay commonplace, government policy was also eroding the welfare state, segmenting and differentiating provision. For the urban poor and the newly impoverished people of the mining communities, a 'drawbridge' society was beginning to emerge. They were subject to a policy of containment (Hudson, 1994). Apart from sporadic eruptions of discontent, this section of society could be managed politically and, in the case of many coalfield settlements, urban pockets and outlying estates, could be excluded from the mainstream. Scholars of social policy could point to dangers and injustice in the containment policy (Brown and Crompton, 1994, Craig and Mayo, 1995), to the arrival of the 'workfare' state (Jessop, 1994, Peck, 1996), but politically the shift from chronic to acute social malaise associated with economic decline remained within manageable boundaries. There are a plethora of policies and initiatives directed at these problems but as of yet there is little evidence that current approaches go beyond alleviating some of the effects rather than the causes.

### *Funding*

Again, in place of a broad redistributive regional policy the central government has introduced a series of funding schemes that encourage the marketing of place. City Challenge and the Single Regeneration Budget have been described by some as 'beauty contests' (Robinson and Shaw, 1994). This criticism is based on the requirement that each area, region or sub region is required to package its bid for money in such a way as

to impress government without any clear link with local need. Similarly, funding from European sources depends on tactical acumen for packaging. Ostensibly, Conservative governments have given full support to the dispersal of economic power and in theory the opportunity is there for any region, locality or individual to create wealth through entrepreneurial endeavour. The government, however, remains the sole arbiter of who will receive the funding and as such retains central political control.

### *State power - local power*

Unlike many of its European partners the UK has few tiers of regional or sub regional government and hardly any that have effective power. Indeed, central government policies have been to reduce the power of local government and only in the principalities of Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland has any real power been left at regional level. Funding and revenue restrictions on local authorities has been coupled with the growth of quasi non-governmental organisations (quangos). Important amongst these for regeneration have been the TECs, English Partnerships and the Urban Development Corporations. The growth of regionalism (Murray, 1991, Harvie, 1994) and the debate about the potential for regional and local economic policy remains a muted affair in the UK because of the stifling nature of central government control. As we have seen from the case studies, the only area where some effective regional tier of governance is in place is the only coal region of the three making significant progress.

Despite the restrictions and because of a lack of a co-ordinated regional policy localised economic development planning has burgeoned.

With the economic slowdown a new strategy emerged: rather than rely on redistribution, the region would take control over its own economy. (Eisenschitz and Gough, 1993. p 6.)

Local authorities, both large and small have adopted the 'bootstraps' approach (ibid.) and increasingly look to Europe for help in their plans. At the heart of the political-economic process here is the issue of subsidiarity. The devolution of governance and therefore power is treated warily by all the main parties in the UK. Even where support for the idea is apparently unequivocal, as in the case of the Labour Party, there is no specific commitment to policies that might transform sub-national government, except where there are clear national boundaries as in the case of Wales and Scotland. The case studies demonstrate that the effectiveness of regeneration can be profoundly

influenced by institutional structures. Unlike certain aspects of economic processes, of which globalisation is contentiously the prime example, institutional reform designed to promote responsive levels of governance is an achievable policy goal. Within the UK, the dominance of central government has stifled a comprehensive re-think on the relationship between levels of governance, democratic control and economic development. No mainstream political party has been prepared to consider a fundamental reorganisation even though different models of governance on other EU countries have proved more successful at achieving economic growth.

### *Alternatives*

In trying to provide a political context for policies related to regeneration, inevitably the record of Conservative administrations provide the main reference point. The Labour Party, for example, has not been in a position to implement any national policy and therefore it is impossible to make an assessment. Although it may be contended that Labour may well have had a significantly different approach, speculation on political outcomes are of limited value. Welfare provision aside, the main tenets of Conservative party policy appear equally at home in the Labour Party of the 1990s. Indeed the 'market' has been embraced with so much enthusiasm (Howells, 1996) as a mechanism for growth that it is only at closer inspection that any differences become apparent.

Eisenschitz and Gough (1993) using the orthodox political categories of centre, right and left, compare attitudes to local economic policy. The centre is thought to embrace localised development because as an inclusive approach it strengthens the consensus. Local enterprise and individual enterprise leads to a more co-operative relationship between capital and labour. The right does not seek any such collaboration but tries to give employers a free hand. At the local level decentralisation and the reduced role of the state combine to produce a 'popular capitalism' (ibid. p16). Individual enterprise and self-help rather than state dependency is encouraged. This aspect of local economic and social policy is evident in the case studies. The emergence of community enterprise as a form of self-funding welfare provision is an obvious example (Pearce, 1993). The left is perceived to promote an extension of state management and public ownership but is also drawn to local economic development because it offers the chance of democratic control at the local level.

Political differences with respect to regeneration policies have reconverged in recent years at the local level. The alternative economic strategy of the Labour Party as embodied in the local economic strategy of the GLC and Sheffield in the early 1980s, has been replaced by a more centrist position which encourages enterprise even down to the micro-level of community development. Local economic initiatives tend to be practically oriented towards particular limited ends, including small scale job creation or training opportunities.

The strategy for regional economic development proposed by the Labour Party in the 1990s appears more aligned to the centre than the left. It seeks to address some of the problems of regional development by establishing a more co-ordinated and simplified structure with 'Regional Development Agencies' replacing the multiplicity of agencies operating under the Conservative administration. It also suggests that funding should be more clearly linked to a needs assessment (Regional Policy Commission, 1996).

Although there are many other policy suggestions which differ from current policy, state management and direct intervention involving the more traditional tools of public works and public enterprise is avoided. Hobsbawm asserts that:

..trends in economic development increase the likelihood that wealth will be generated by a smaller proportion of total populations, the redistributive function of the public sector is likely to become more important than ever (1996, p 267).

If we accept this, then the policy change based on an aversion to direct public management could be ill-judged.

Radical political developments or alternatives to current policy have been slow to form. New approaches in the 1990s are being distilled as a result of two political developments. One is the perceived failure of state command management, both the UK variety of previous Labour governments, and more significantly, the collapse of the regimes of the eastern bloc. The second is the fear of social polarisation resulting from laissez-faire policies of the Reagan-Thatcher era which has prompted the re-working of models of political economy.

The exploration of a 'third way' between these polarities, is the concern of a number of scholars already referred to in this study. For example, Amin and Thrift (1995) take up

this theme in their article on ‘socio-economics and powers of association.’ Amin returns to it along with Thomas with a case study of Denmark (1996). Hirst (1994) forcefully advocates ‘associative democracy’ as a route to an inclusive rather than exclusive political economy and in this he is supported by Rogers and Streek (1994). Many of the ideas aggregated in this exploration of ‘new forms of economic and social governance’ (Hirst, 1994) have some resonance in the subject of this study. However, without entering into the debate in depth, it is useful to highlight some of the particular manifestations of this thinking within contemporary politics and policies. In the UK the Labour Party has been drawn towards these ideas.

For the UK Labour Party the concept of stakeholding has emerged in an attempt to combine policy with vision. In a study which concerns itself with regeneration of coalfield communities and which specifically attempts to evaluate the role of local communities themselves in economic development, the concept of stakeholding is alluring. One source of the concept is Hutton (1995), who, in contemplating the malaise of UK capitalism, its short-termism and the inadequate structures of governance that are incapable of preventing decline, alights on the concept as a form of responsible participatory economic order. Developed then by the Labour leadership it evolves into a twin concept involving the economy and the welfare system (Imrie and Wilks-Heeg, 1996). The concept is promoted as a political economic mechanism through which opportunities and benefits are more widely distributed and a majority feels they have a stake. In this way it tackles the problem of social exclusion, one of the results of economic restructuring evident in coal regions amongst many others.

It is not the intention to analyse this concept in any depth - it is after all still poorly formed in specific policy terms - nor to seize upon it as an answer to some of the problems addressed in this study. Nevertheless, there are elements associated with this concept that present at least the opportunity for a more inclusive and therefore effective approach to regeneration. The problems, as Imrie and Wilks -Heeg (ibid.) point out, are the lack of clear linkages between the macro and the micro level and the, as yet, ill-formed vehicles of governance that such a concept implies. This study has found that the particular structures, linkages and institutional relationships of the regions can have a significant effect on the way older industrial regions successfully reposition

themselves. It argues that the participation of local communities, their inclusion in the processes of regeneration, should be a key objective. Empowerment requires some redistribution of power which implies building representative structures. Stakeholding does not yet address that problem:

For the stakeholder local economy to take root a turnaround in existing socio-institutional relations of local governance is required (ibid., p5).

In the proposed partnership of local business, local government and local communities, there is a likely source of conflict between stakeholders and shareholders, the latter being more attuned to profit motives rather than social accounting. Froud et al (1996) make this point strongly by analysing the privatisation of public utilities. Profits for the shareholders have been the driving force, resulting in very little tangible benefit for the consumer and unemployment for the workforce. Whilst it is premature to make a full assessment of stakeholding within the context of economic development the concept itself has emerged from other models of politico-economic governance.

### ***International models of political-economic governance - alternative approaches to the regulation of capitalism***

If we have to speculate about the possible outcomes of alternative policies of any putative UK government, comparisons with other approaches internationally are less fanciful. In particular, the approaches of other governments to the run down of their coal industries have been different and that difference has its origins in the political economic models of governance adopted by respective countries.

The prime example from the point of view of coal is Germany, exponent of the social market. This model is based on a combination of a political commitment from both labour and capital to maintain social peace and the economic and political structures that foster what is perceived to be responsible capitalism. If we look briefly at how decline has been managed in the coal industry, there a number of relevant comparisons to be made.

Germany has protected its coal industry from global forces with subsidies - the coal penny. The industry has been restructured and closures implemented in a negotiated programme adhered to by all interested parties. This has involved early retirement

schemes and long term re-training. The traumatic process so evident in the UK has largely been avoided. Nevertheless, unemployment amongst younger people and economic inactivity amongst older men have increased in former coal areas, along with attendant social problems. Perhaps more significantly, political pressure within Germany and from the EU to reduce and end subsidies suggests the coal industry will soon disappear (Schubert et al, 1995). In effect, the pressures of the global coal market will have proved irresistible but the response of government has been to control the process rather than give it free rein. Efforts to regenerate former coal dominated areas have met with more success, although it can be argued that the relative strength of the German economy has enhanced the capacity to do this (Cricher, Schubert and Waddington, 1995).

A further aspect of the German model (and that of other EU countries) that is relevant to this study is the relationship between sub-national levels of governance and economic development. The *Lander*, or regional tier of government in the federal state exercises political and economic power far beyond anything comparable in the UK, providing an important link between state and local institutions. Again, whilst this is not the place to examine in detail the complex institutional mix of the German model, it is apparent that the configuration of institutions and levels of governance provide a responsive vehicle for economic development which the UK could learn from.

Similarly, other macro forms of political economy such as the Japanese model or the paternalist capitalist model of other Far Eastern economies have interested western governments and commentators in search of a correlation between regulatory system and successful economic development. In this search for a third way, which rejects both the strong state managed economies and the more laissez-faire UK approach, less obvious examples have been examined. For example Amin and Thomas (1996) make case for the 'negotiated economy' of Denmark and suggest that the particular relationship between state, civic institutions and the economy is one worth emulating. Impressed though we may be by the Danish system, they do add a cautionary note that only through 'an active politics of contestation' (ibid. p 279) would the combination of democracy and economic success continue.

In considering all these models, it is tempting to try and replicate them in the UK. However, established structures, history and cultures of different nations tends to militate against easy replication. Recurrent problems within, for example the German economy, have intensified the debate about whether it is a model worth emulating and if national models of regulation are inter-changeable (Soskice, 1996, *The Economist*, 1996, *The Independent*, 1996, a, b, Wallace, 1996). Dynamic growth areas such as the 'Third Italy' have not been replicated in former coalfields. Therefore the argument introduced in chapter 2, that such models or regulatory systems are not 'portable', is supported by the findings of this study. It is more tenuous to assert that other national models may have worked better in Britain because the UK government has eschewed alternatives to its *laissez faire* approach.

The weight of evidence from this study suggests that the UK model which guided the management of decline and regeneration of the coalfields is flawed, not least because economic renewal still seems very far away and social problems persist. If there are other, better ways of restructuring older industries and regions which take into account issues of social equity and democratic participation then they inevitably provide the possibility of preferable alternatives.

#### *The nation state and globalisation*

The scope of national models of regulation and economic development and the future role of the national state is increasingly the subject of much debate, given the pervasive forces of globalisation (Amin and Thrift, 1994, Hirst and Thompson, 1996, Dahrendorf, 1996, Hobsbawm, 1996). Neo-liberal policies of successive UK governments have at the same time embraced the international markets and been keen to subject domestic producers to the rigours of the globalised markets, whilst at the same time harbouring deep seated fears about political integration. Comparing the UK record and that of other countries in adapting to new economic, political and social circumstances inevitably requires a political interpretation. It has been strongly argued, not least by the UK government itself, that its policies will eventually reap their rewards. The inward investment record of the UK is often used to support this argument. However, if we interpret the process of change in the UK and the policies designed to bring about regeneration in the coalfields within the context of international political economy, there

is one generalisation that can be made. Alternative models of economic and political management have secured change with relatively less social dislocation. As Glyn and Miliband conclude:

The turn towards inequality in the 1980s did not produce generally improved economic performance. What is more, countries with less inequality have tended to grow faster, and with generally no more instability (1994, p 216).

It follows then that the forces of globalisation are subject to constraint and control by national governments and therefore policy choices are not confined deterministically by economic forces, I would concur with Hirst and Thompson (1996) and with Dahrendorf who argues for a 'workable balance between prosperity, democracy and social cohesion.' (1996, p 229.)

The EU provides one arena where national models for economic growth or regulation are contested, whilst at the same time international regulatory measures are formulated and implemented. As I indicated in chapter 3 the EU, unlike the UK, has tried to implement social intervention as well a free market. The role of the EU as a supra-national regulatory body is therefore, not surprisingly, ambiguous. Whilst advocating measures promoting social cohesion, the effect of the single market has been to encourage greater disparities at regional and sub-regional level. Successful regional economies, of the type policy makers try to imitate, have achieved more success whilst the less favoured regions, including former coalfields, have stagnated (Amin and Tomaney, 1995). The success of South Wales in attracting foreign investment has not closed the gap. Policy intentions, such as those encapsulated in the ECOTEC report (1993) have only partially been realised. Meanwhile, the club of the richer regions (Harvie, 1994) continue to prosper.

'Europe of the Regions' remains an attractive idea because it appears to give regions the power and scope to hopefully engage as equal partners in a single market, but three factors militate against it. Firstly, as this study shows, redistributive policies in the form of structural funds have not managed to narrow the gap between richer and poorer regions (Amin and Tomaney, 1995, Brown and Crompton, 1994). Secondly, because 'national consumption is no longer part of the 'growth equation' (Amin and Tomaney, 1995, p38) spending on welfare is cut 'in the name of relieving the burden on business' (ibid. p39) thereby hindering prosperity in less favoured regions. Thirdly, nations such

as the UK have avoided implementing the policies of the ‘social chapter’ which are designed to promote social cohesion. It is even suggested that the UK provides a convenient scapegoat so that no country is required to embrace radical social policies, thereby allowing capital, in the form of multi-national companies, a free hand (Amin and Tomaney, 1995). The UK’s neo-liberal stance undermines the socially cohesive aspects of policy in part because it has many powerful supporters in all EU countries.

It is argued that the UK model is socially divisive and ultimately ineffective (Hutton, 1995). The fate and prospects of three former UK coalfields supports that critique. At an international level, Amin and Tomaney (1995) argue for a more interventionist role for the EU to achieve better distribution of economic prosperity whilst at the same time building regional institutional capacity. Promoting a decentralised industrial policy and European wide macro-economic policy implicitly enhances the role of the EU as a tier of governance. It seems unlikely, however, that there will be any resolution of the debate about national models of economic governance. The tension between ‘market-led solutions and active intervention in favour of economic expansion and the achievement of social justice and solidarity’ (ibid. p 307) persists. Assistance from European funds has been invaluable to the coal areas of the UK but the pre eminence of EU policies that are market-led suggest that they may well slip further behind in terms of relative prosperity.

### **Regeneration for declining coalfields - linking local policy with national and international regulation**

These, then, are the political issues that regeneration of the coalfields have to consider. Political and economic power are inseparable and each are manifested in policy. The shift to the neo-liberal policies in the UK since 1979 has had profound effects on regional development and regeneration. Policies towards the coal industry have been influenced by political animosities. This emphasises the contested nature of economic governance and indicates that economic development is contingent on political decisions and not path dependent. Inward investment strategy has been relatively successful for some areas but the stimulation of entrepreneurship through SMEs has not brought increased growth rates in former coalfields. ‘Trickle-down’ expectations of initiatives in the built environment remained unfulfilled. Cut backs in welfare and the rolling back of the state have contributed to social exclusion and *de facto* led to a policy

of social containment rather than social development. Centralised power has been maintained because of the reduced power of sub-national levels of governance and control of funding processes.

Whilst there has been a general convergence of political opinion and a noticeable shift towards potential consensus, largely brought about by changes within the Labour Party, distinct policies are being formulated which take into account the relationship between levels of governance, local, regional and national institutions, socially responsible capitalism and local participation. International models of economic and political regulation, although not necessarily easily replicated, inform our understanding of how successful economic development can be integrated into and assisted by political forms. The role of the EU, although currently ambiguous, is crucial in managing the economy at the international scale. The influence of globalisation should not be underestimated but the possibilities for controlling it and promoting social objectives remains the legitimate aim of policy at each spatial scale, from the international to the local. The 'redefinition of the traditional rules of governance' (Goetz, 1993. Pp218) has opened a broader debate about the relationship between local participation, social equity and economic growth which can influence the future of policies for the former coalfields of the UK.

This study does not reject the theoretical interpretations that inform policy, nor does it contend that all policies aimed at regenerating the coalfields have failed. It does however, consider that, of the models of governance employed by national governments, that of neo-liberalism as exemplified by the UK government's policies for the coal industry and coal communities, represents a symptom of economic and social crisis and not a putative solution. It suggests that the market itself cannot provide economic growth or social stability and that an effective way of having some control over global forces is to build policies on the foundation of local and regional participation and the development of diverse socio-institutional structures that is inclusive rather than socially exclusive. To that end, whilst embracing many positive elements of regeneration policy, a crucial element at the micro-level needs to be the integration of local people into the process of economic renewal. However, renewal in any form for declining coalfields is unlikely without a shift in macro-economic policy at national and international levels

which rejects a narrow market-led approach and reasserts the need for more redistributive policies.

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**Appendix 1 - Methodology -****Semi -structured interviews****South Wales**

<b>Organisation/Agency</b>	<b>Number of interviews</b>
<b>Local Authorities- Economic Development or Planning</b>	
Cynon Valley District Council	1
Gwent County Council	1
<b>Training and Enterprise Councils</b>	
Mid-Glamorgan TEC	2
<b>Other formal agencies</b>	
British Coal Enterprise	1
Welsh Development Agency	2
Employment Service	2
<b>Others</b>	
Community Development Foundation	1
Community University of the Valleys	4 (group discussion)
Rhondda Community Business Initiatives	1
Amman Valley Enterprise	1
Cynon Valley Community Projects	1
Dove Workshop Students	8 (group discussion)
Penrikyhber Workmen's Hall	2
Cynon Valley Tenants	1
NUM	2

**Nottinghamshire**

<b>Organisation/agency</b>	<b>Number of interviews</b>
<b>Local Authorities Economic Development or Planning</b>	
Mansfield	1
Newark & Sherwood	1
Ashfield	1
Notts County Council	1
<b>Training and Enterprise Councils</b>	
North Notts TEC	1
<b>Other agencies</b>	
British Coal Enterprise	2
Mansfield Council for Voluntary Services	2
Rural Development Council	1
<b>Other</b>	
Community Workers	1 + Group Discussion
GBR ( Training Consultants)	3
Dukeries Complex- Community College	1
Warsop Regeneration Agency	1

## South Yorkshire

<b>Organisation / agency</b>	<b>Number of interviews</b>
<b>Local Authorities/ Economic Development or Planning</b>	
Barnsley	1
Rotherham	1
Doncaster	1
Wakefield	1
<b>Training and Enterprise Councils</b>	
Barnsley and Doncaster	1
Rotherham	1
<b>Other</b>	
British Coal Enterprise	1
Dearne Valley Partnership - Community Liaison Officer	1
Doncaster CVS	1
Ivanhoe Trust	1
Doncaster Training	1
Dearne Valley Enterprise Centre	2
Dearne Valley Enterprise Centre Users Group	5 - group discussion
Thurnscoe Managed Workspace	1
Thurnscoe Family Centre	1
Thurnscoe Family Centre Users Group	10 - group discussion
Thurnscoe Tenants Co-operative	6 - group discussion
Tricon/Highway	2
Edlington Community Profile	1

## Documentation

<b>Document type</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Relevant content</b>
Coal Action Plans	Local Authorities and TECs	Proposals for regeneration in each area.
Labour Market Assessments	Local Authorities and TECs, Employment Service	Analytical research of each area - employment/skills/demography
Skills Audits	Local Authorities and TECs	Local skills audit
Statistical profiles	Local Authorities, Welsh Office. NOMIS and Census material.	Macro and micro statistics on employment, unemployment, demography, ward profiles.
Brochures	All agencies involved	Statement of aims and achievements.
Annual Reports	All agencies	Accounts of previous activities as well as aims and future plans etc.
Newspaper and other media reports	Press and television	General information, views and opinions

## Studies and Surveys

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Specific Area of enquiry</b>
Wass, V.J.(1989)	Redundancy and Re-employment: Effects and Prospects following closure	Markham Colliery, South Wales. The focus is on the process of redundancy.
Thomas, M. (1989)	Colliery Closure, Entrepreneurship and Industrial Change	South Wales - see below.
Rees and Thomas (1989)	From Coal Miners to entrepreneurs? A Case Study in the Sociology of Re-industrialisation	South Wales - an examination of the labour markets adjustment agencies policy of bringing self-employment to the coalfields.
Witt, S.(1990)	When the pit closures - The employment experiences of redundant miners	Woolley, South Kirkby and Riddings collieries , South Yorkshire. A study of redundancy and re-employment with specific attention given to one market adjustment agency - BCE.
Trotman and Lewis (1990)	Training and education: the experiences and needs of Redundant miner at Cynheidre and Betws Collieries in South Wales	Two pits in South Wales - concentrates on the failings of BCE to provide assistance in the fields of training and education
Wakefield MDC Economic Development Dept.(1991)	Survey of miners at Denby Grange Colliery	A survey of miners at a pit in West Yorkshire after the announced closure but before the majority left.
Gregory, M (1993)	Responding to the Decline of the Coal Industry - Longitudinal Study	Two pits in South Yorkshire - Markham and Brodsworth. Aimed at assessing the effectiveness of labour market adjustment policies.
Guy, N ( 1994)	Dole not Coal	A summary of a five pit survey (one in each area) following the major closure programme of 1992. Based on the model of Witt.
Fothergill, S and Guy, N. (1994)	An Evaluation of British Coal Enterprise	Evaluative review of BCE's activities.
Fothergill and Beatty (1994)	Registered and Hidden Unemployment in Areas of Chronic Industrial Decline: The Case of the UK Coalfields.	Census based study of unemployment in the coalfields nationally.
VIAE ( Valleys initiative for Adult Education.) (1994)	Survey into the training and educational needs of ex-miners and their families from the two communities of Cwm and Oakdale in Gwent.	Survey carried out by local people supervised by VIAE and concentrating on educational provision
Dicks, Critcher and Waddington. (Forthcoming)	Coal was Their Life	Study of the effects of pit closures (real and threatened) on the social and psychological well being of mining families.

Derbyshire County Council (1995)	Derbyshire's Last three pits - A survey of redundant mineworkers	Mapping / tracking study based on similar model to Witt.
Halstead and Wright (1995)	Confronting Industrial Demise	Survey of ex-day release students with assessment of market adjustment services and orientation to further and higher education provision.
Critcher, Parry and Waddington (1995)	Redundancy and After	One pit study involving survey and in-depth interviews. Outcomes for pit village residents and town residents highlighted. Women interviewed.

### Interview schedule for key informants

*This schedule is designed mainly for 'professionals' in local government or other agencies.*

1. Minimal personal profile - their job description and what they do with regards to activities within coalfields.
2. Area, locality profile - how would they describe the area they work in socio-economic terms.
3. Brief historical background on the coal industry in their area.
4. Pit closures - the up to date position.
5. How have the closures affected the area - what kind of problems or perhaps even benefits?
6. Responses - Plans and policies: how are these problems being tackled by i) the organisation the respondent works for ii) other organisations.
7. Relationships between agencies - ask about TECs, BCE, local government.
8. Dealings with central government - perceptions about policies.
9. Flagship initiatives - are there any examples of successful projects or 'best practice.'
10. Community initiatives- what is the role of the local people, the state of community development projects or community economic development projects?
11. Problems with policies or their implementation - what can be done to improve matters?

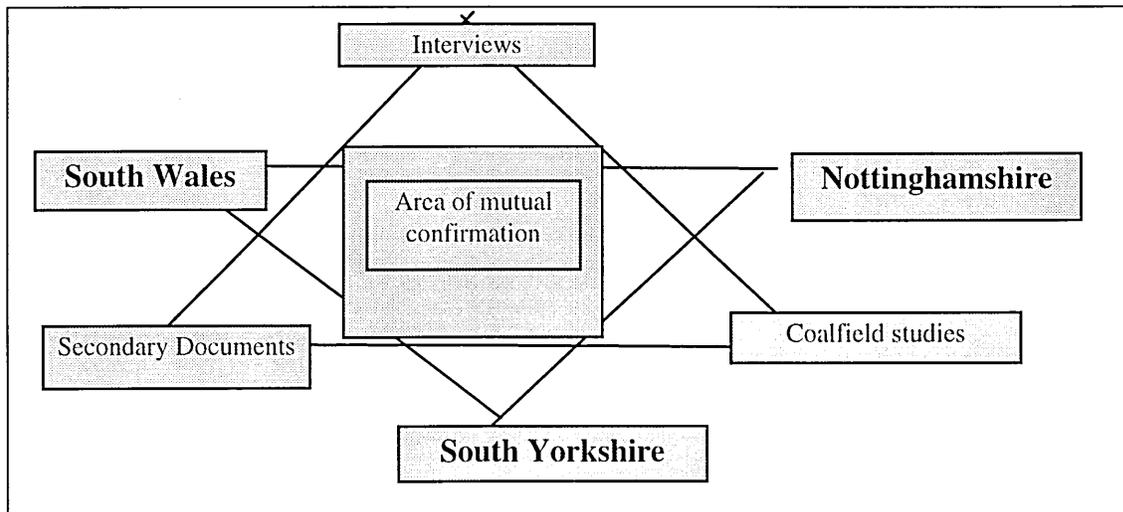
*Conclude the interview by asking for documentation and other contacts, particularly those of local initiatives.*

## Interview schedule for local people and groups

*This schedule assumes some involvement by the individual in a local project or activity relevant to the research.*

1. Brief personal profiles- introduce themselves
2. What kind of area do they live in / is their group located in? - describe it.
3. Relationship with the coal industry - former miners, miners wives?
4. What has happened to the coal industry locally?
5. Now that most of the pits are closed what has that meant for your village/ community/ family?
6. What is the purpose of the local group you are active in, what are its activities, where does it get its finance?
7. Does it work in partnership with other organisations? If so who and how?
8. Have you or your group had any dealings with local government, British Coal Enterprise, the TEC, Employment Service etc.?
9. What policies are being implemented locally to regenerate the communities?
10. How is your efforts helped or hindered by such policies or the actions of government at local or national level or any other agency?
11. How do you see the future? What could be done to help?

### Multi-layered triangulation



**South Wales**

**Table A.1**

Standard Industrial Classification	Programme for the Valleys Area (% Change)		Wales (% Change )	
	1987-1989	1989-91	1987-89	1989-91
	Agriculture ,Forestry Fishing	-7.0	-0.3	-7.8
Energy and Water Supply	-43.3	-39.2	-22.2	-13.8
Extraction/manufac', mineral/metals	15.1	-5.3	6.7	-11.8
Metal goods /vehicle industries	6.1	-19.9	10.7	-11.7
Other manufacture	3.5	-8.7	5.4	-5.1
Construction	-7.0	0.2	8.3	-2.4
Distribution, hotels/catering; repairs	15.7	4.9	17.0	1.3
Transport /communication	16.0	-16.3	17.1	-13.4
Banking,finance,insurance	17.0	29.0	16.0	3.4
Other Services	-3.6	6.2	1.5	2.3
Total	0.3	-3.6	6.7	-2.3
Divs 2-4 (Manufacturing.)	6.3	-13.3	7.9	-9.4

(Source: Census of Employment, 1993)

**Table A 2.2**

Unemployment Rates	Valleys Area	UK
March 1988	14.8%	9.2%
March 1990	9.9%	5.8%
March 1993	13.8%	10.7%

(Source:Employment Department - workforce based and using Department denominators, 1994)

**Table A 2 3.**

	Economic activity (males) %		GB
	Mid-Glamorgan	Wales	
1981	86	87.5	90.4
1991	78.2	81.2	86.6
Change	-7.8	-6.3	-3.8

Source: Mid-Glamorgan County Council, 1993

**Table A 2.4.**

	Economic activity ( females) %		GB
	Mid-Glamorgan	Wales	
1981	55.4	55.4	60.9
1991	59.9	62.5	67.6
Change	+4.5	+7.1	+ 6.7

Source: Mid-Glamorgan County Council, 1993

Figure A 2.1

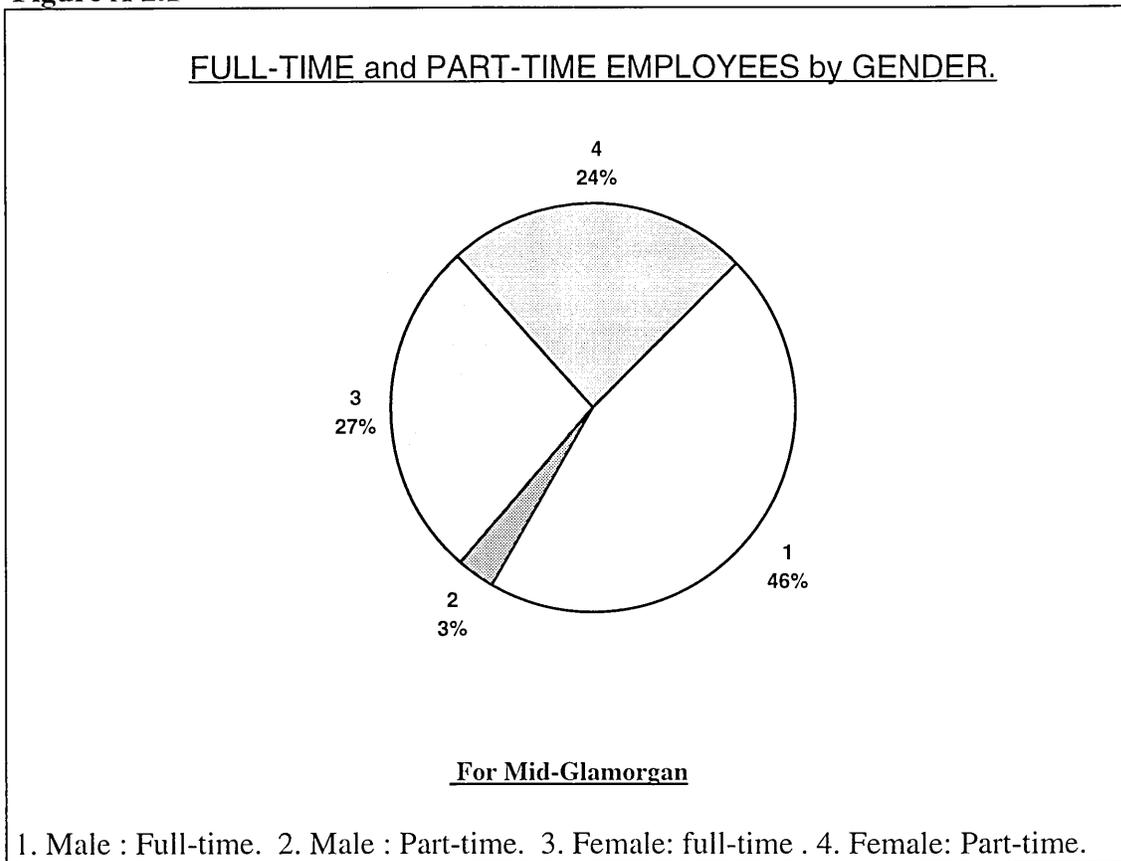
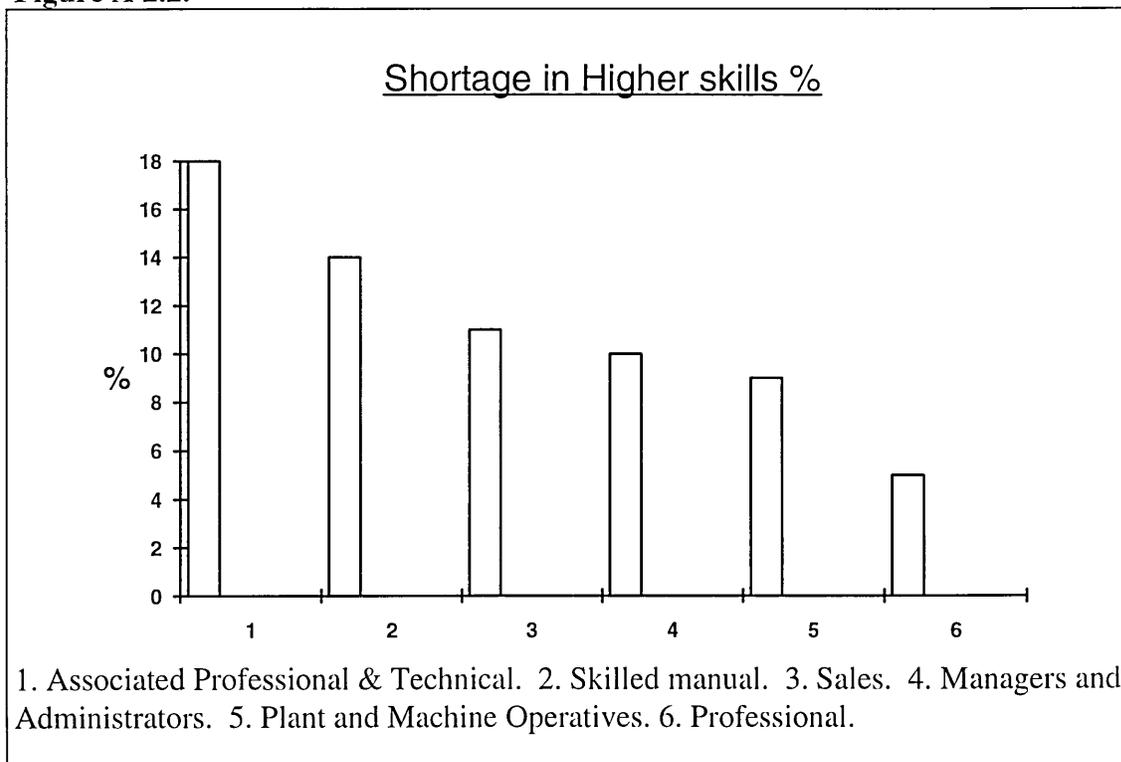
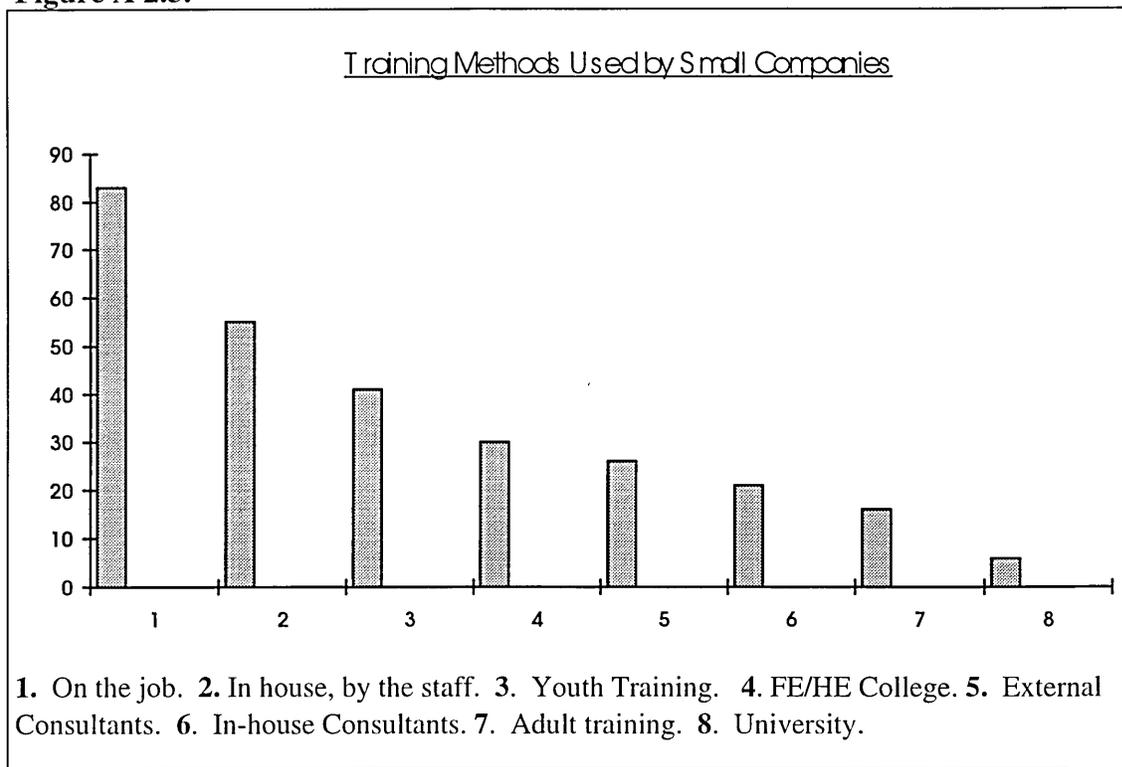


Figure A 2.2.



**Figure A 2.3.**



Source : Mid-Glamorgan Training and Enterprise Council. 1993.

**Table A 3.1. - Employment Change 1981- 89.**

	1981-84	1984-87	1987-89	1981-89 % Change
Newark and Sherwood	-0.4	-2.7	+2.1	-1.1
Mansfield	-4.7	+3.3	-3.3	-4.8
Notts	-3.1	-0.2	+3.7	+0.3
East Midlands	-0.6	+3.5	+4.4	+7.3
Great Britain	+2.2	+2.0	+4.5	+4.3

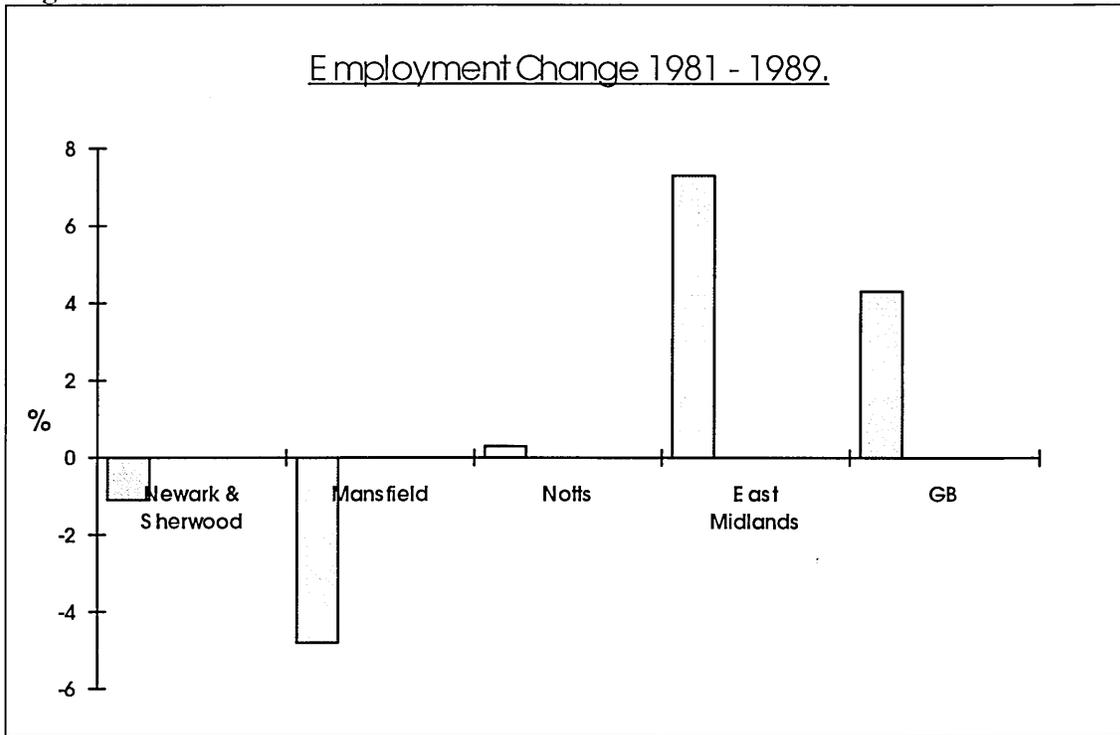
Source : Department of Employment, 1992

**Table A 3.2. Funds allocation for Single Regeneration Budget**

Region	1995 -96 Funds	Total Funds
London	£36.584m	£316.710m
North West	£18.267m	£143.293m
North East	£18.286m	£80.667m
Merseyside	£10.382m	£78.004m
East Midlands	£7.378m	£55.876m
South West	£4.050m	£34.090m
South East	£5.2663m	£31.798m
Eastern	£2.749m	£20.721m

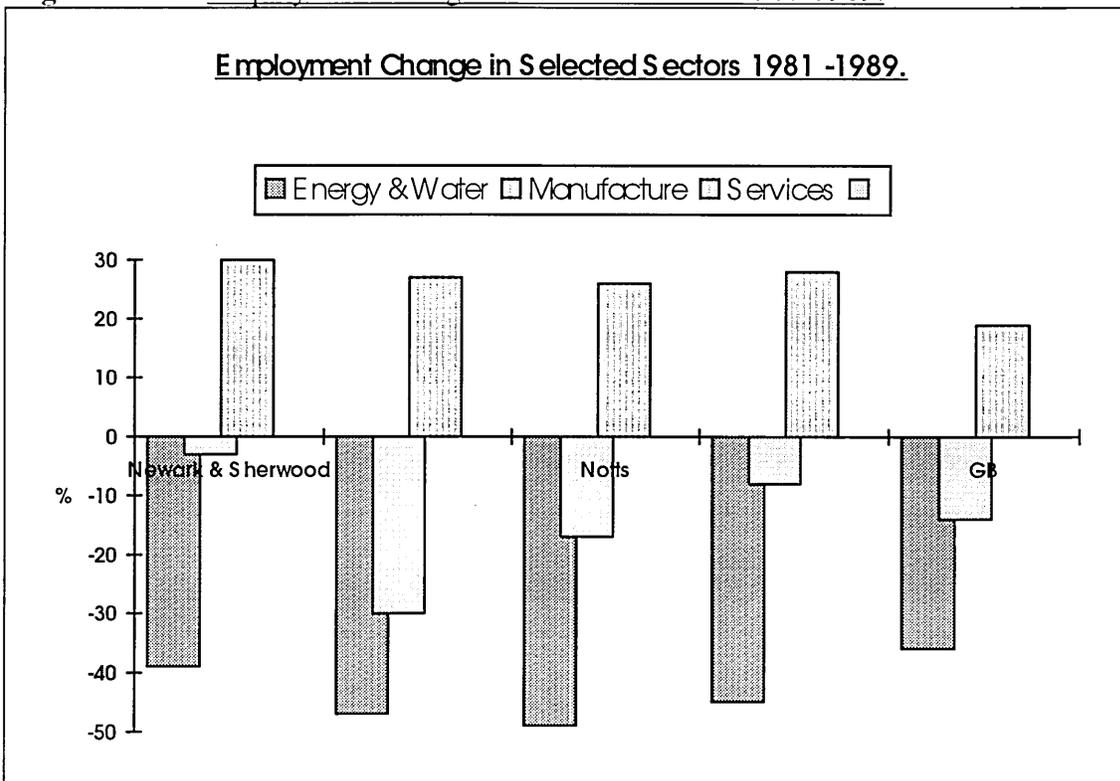
Source : Financial Times, 1996

Figure A 3.1.



Source: Department of Employment, 1992

Figure A 3.2.- Employment Change in Selected Sectors. 1981-1989.



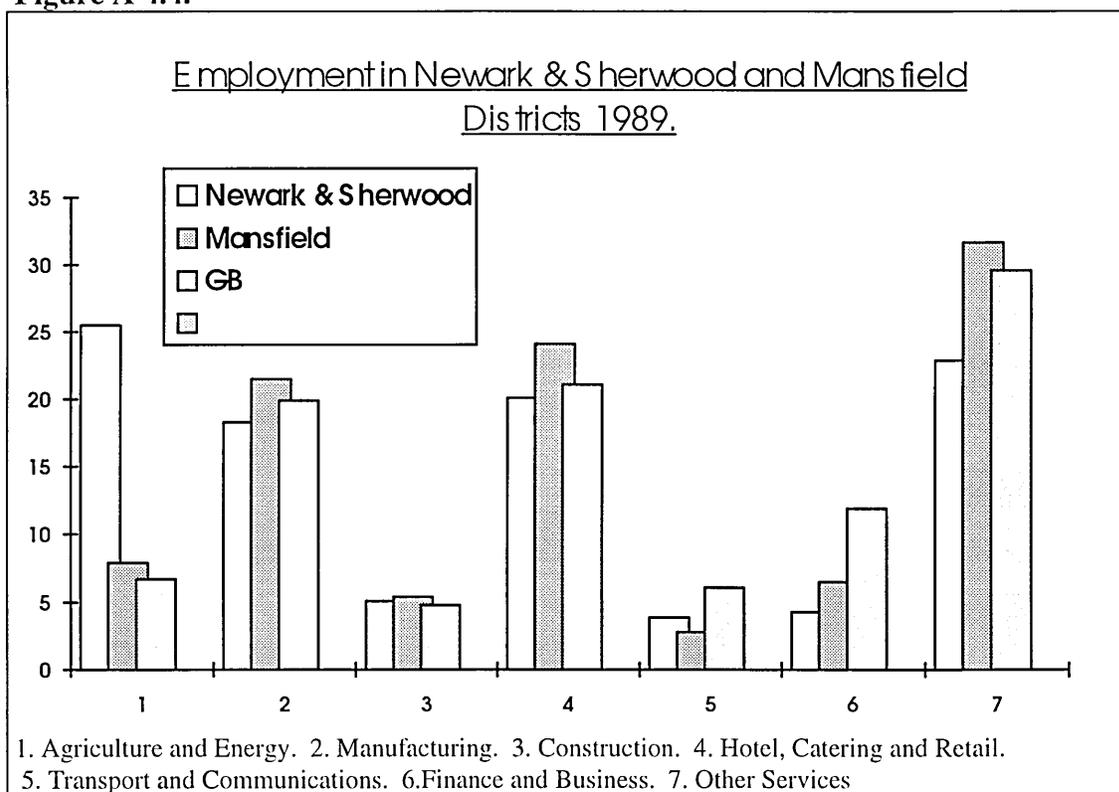
Source: Department of Employment, 1992

**Table A 3.3. - Registered unemployment rates - August 1992.**

	Male %	Female %	Total %
Boughton	16.9	6.2	13.0
Blidworth	16.0	7.0	12.7
Ollerton North	14.2	5.2	11.0
Rufford	12.3	7.9	10.5
Ollerton South	13.5	4.3	10.1
Clipstone	13.6	3.8	10.0
Bilsthorpe	10.4	5.0	8.3
Rainworth	10.2	5.1	8.2
Edwinstowe	10.7	4.1	8.1
Newark TTWA	12.2	6.4	9.9
Mansfield TTWA	19.8	6.4	13.8
Nottinghamshire	16.7	6.1	11.9
UK	16.2	6.2	11.6

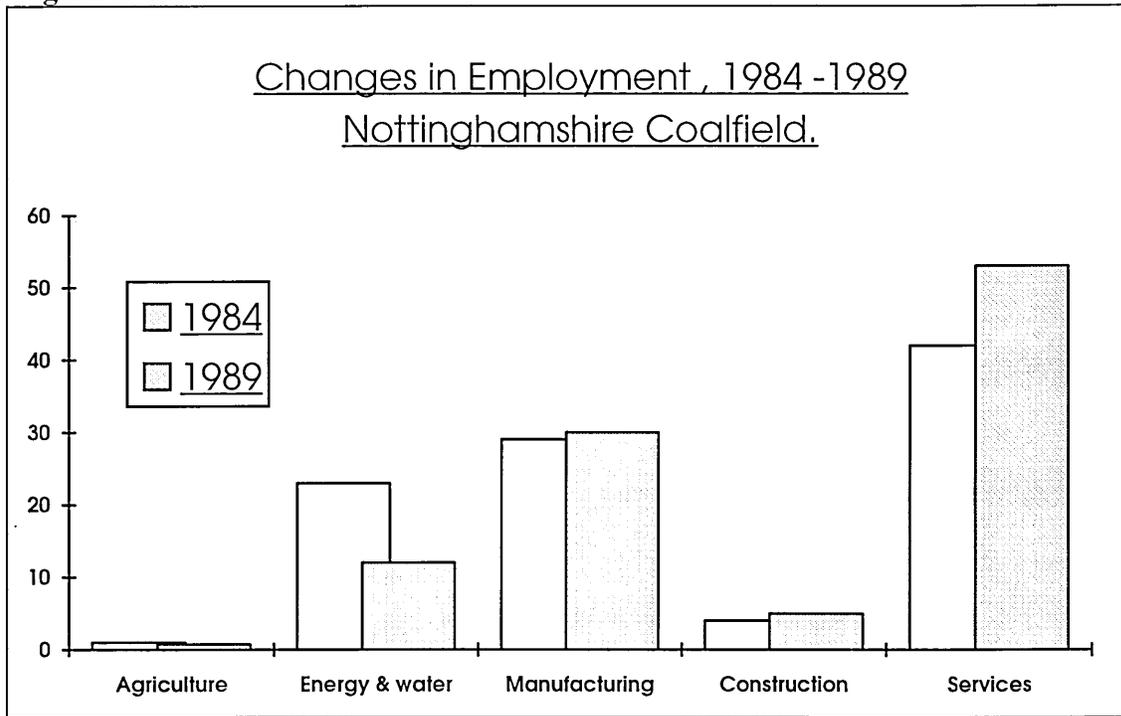
Source Department of Employment 1993

**Figure A 4.4.**



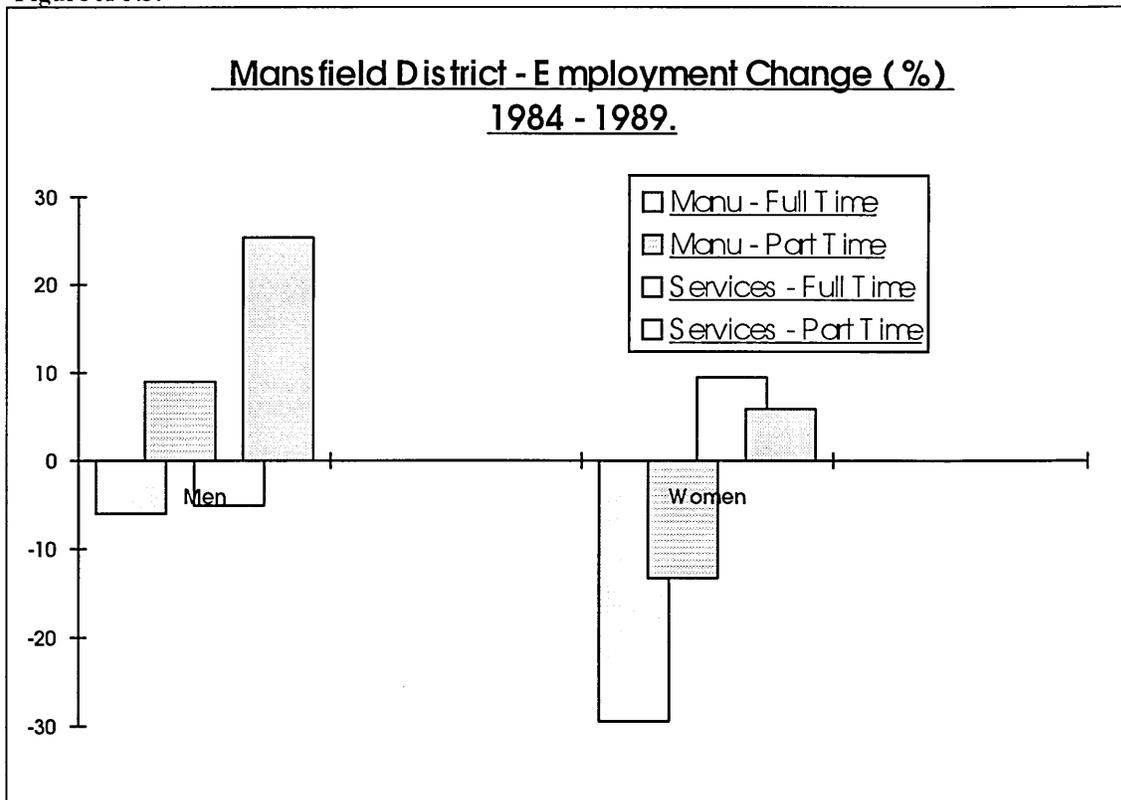
Source - Department of Employment, 1993.

Figure A 3.4.



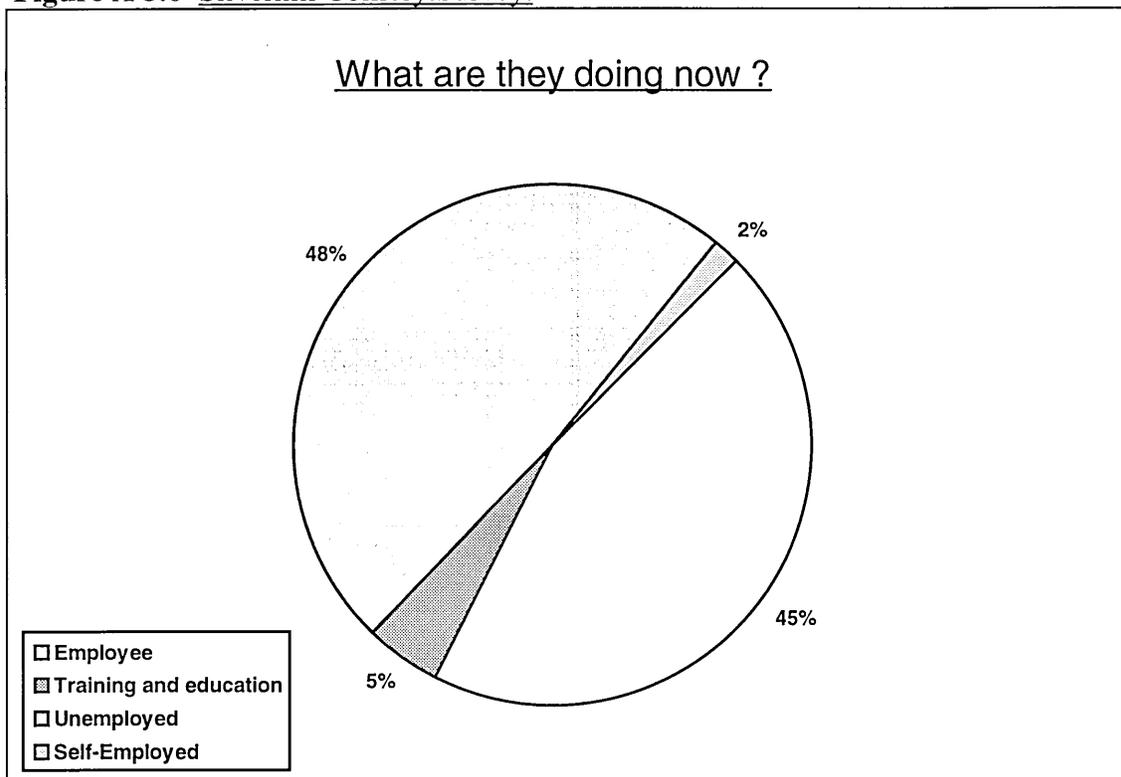
Source: Department of Employment, 1992.

Figure A 3.5.



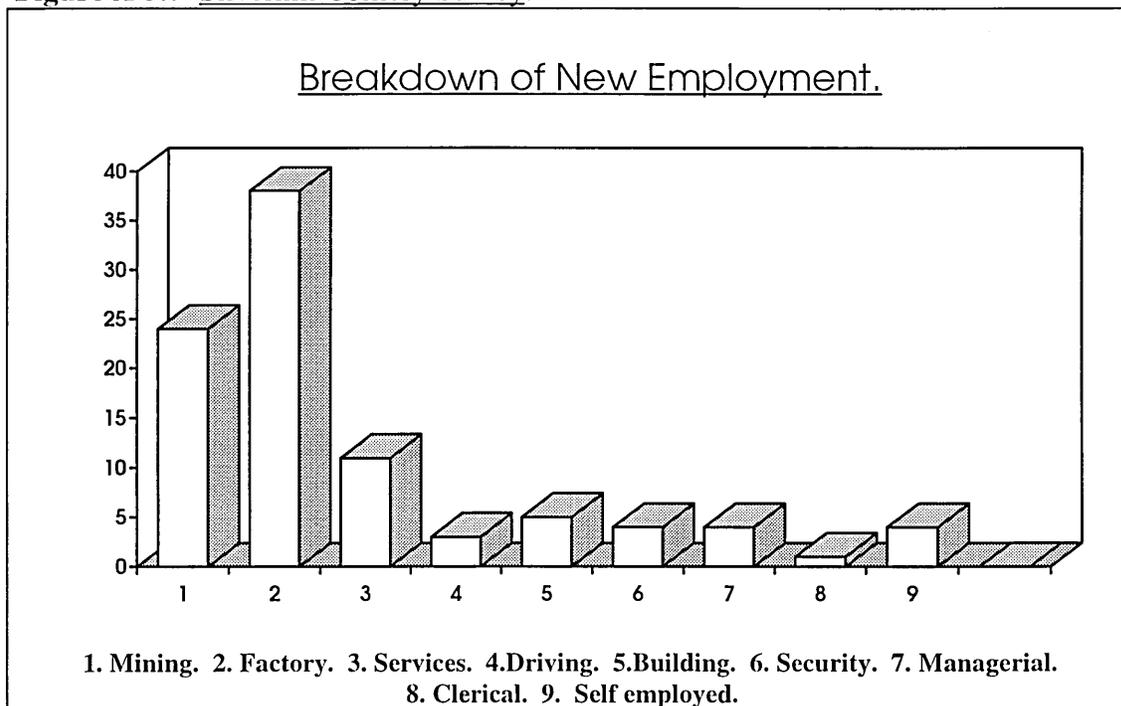
Source: Department of Employment, 1992.

**Figure A 3.6** Silverhill Colliery.Survey.



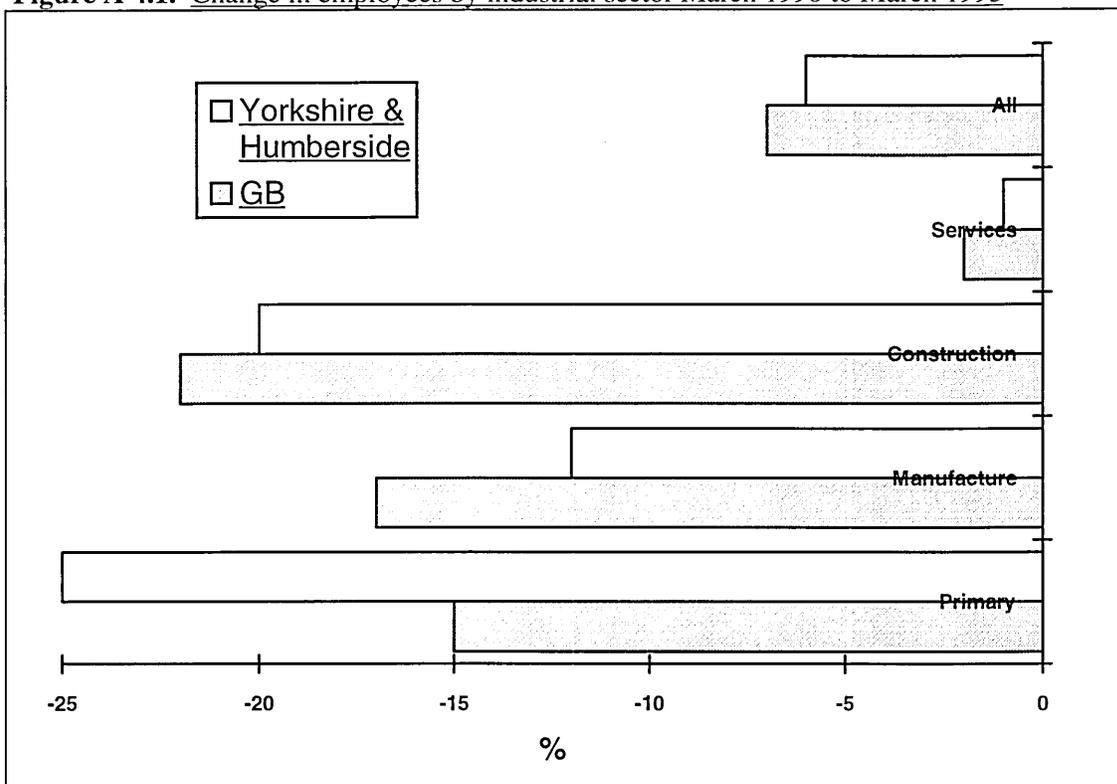
Source : Coalfield Communities Campaign, 1994.

**Figure A 3.7** Silverhill Colliery Survey.



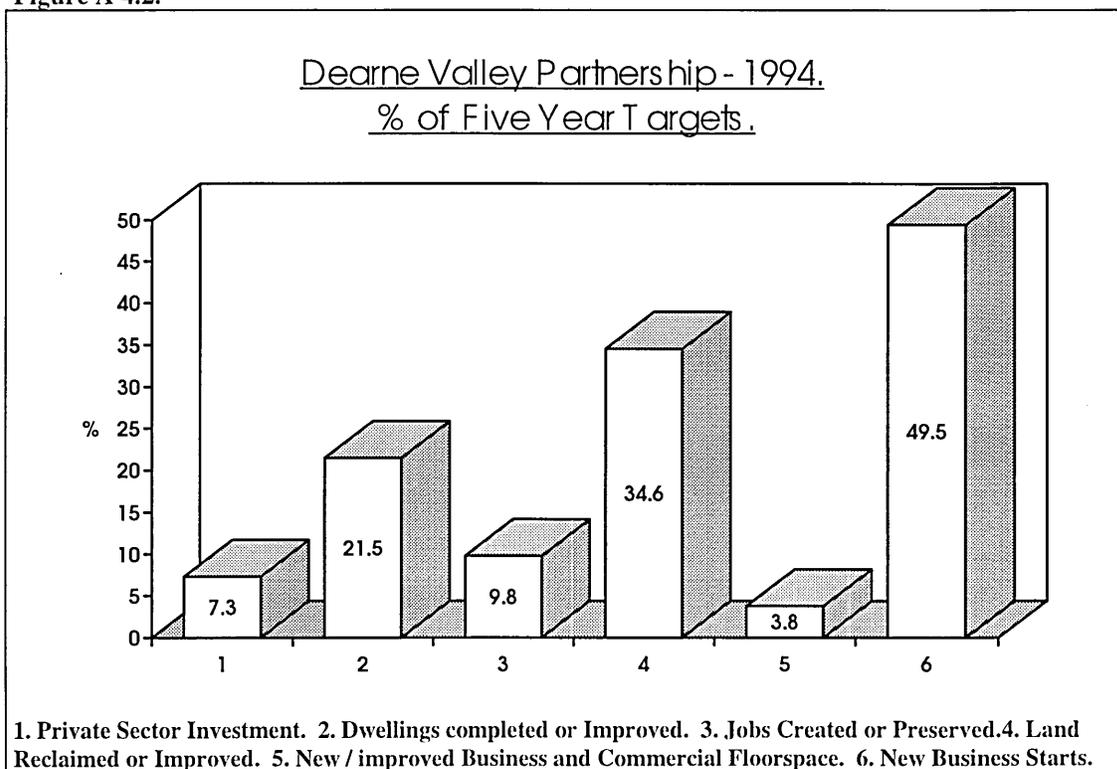
Source: Coalfield Communities Campaign, 1994.

Figure A 4.1. Change in employees by industrial sector March 1990 to March 1993



Source: Department of Employment in Rotherham TEC Labour Market Assessment, 1994.

Figure A 4.2.



Source: Dearne Valley Partnership, 1994

**Table A 4 1.** Place of residence and success in entering new jobs

<b>Yorkshire</b>	
Barnsley	56.7%
Doncaster	41.7%
Rotherham	30.4%
Sheffield	59.1%
<b>Derbyshire</b>	
Chesterfield	51.7%
<b>Nottinghamshire</b>	
Mansfield	71.4%
Worksop	66.7%

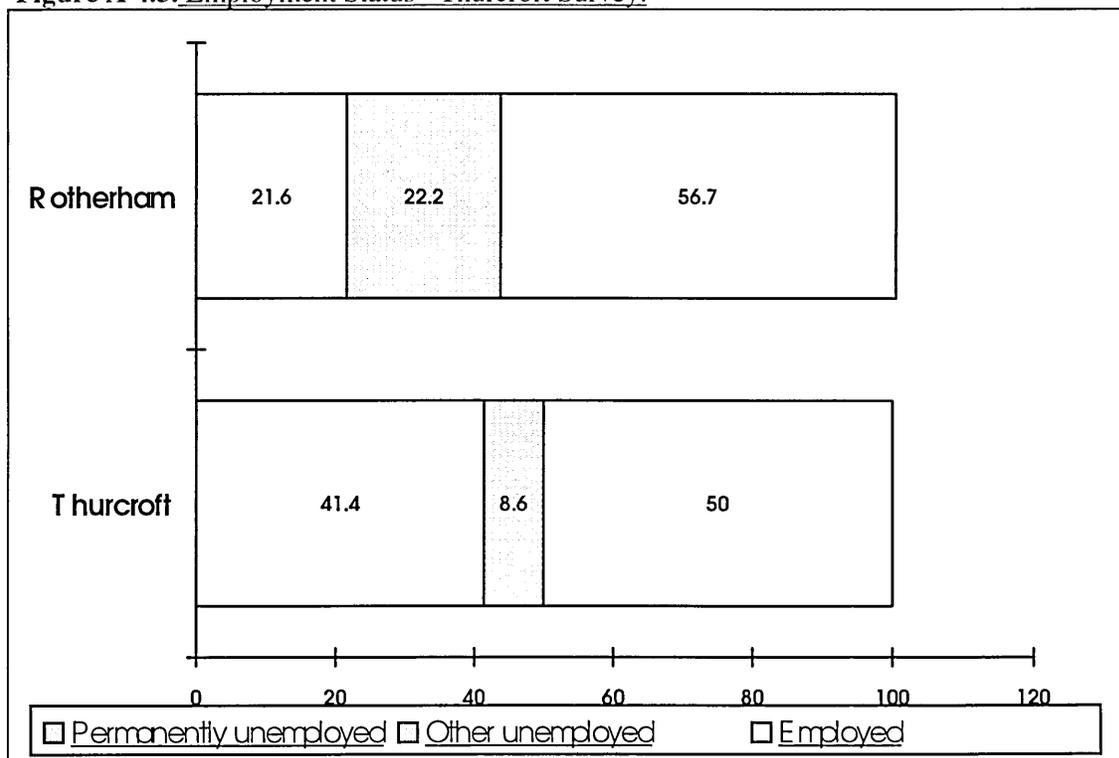
Source: Wright and Halstead, 1995.

**Table 4. 2.** Employment status - at time of survey, Thurcroft.

	Thurcroft		Rotherham		All	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Employed	35	50	21	56.7	56	52.3
Unemployed	35	50	16	43.2	51	47.7
Totals	70	100	37	100	107	100
Permanently Unemployed	29	41.4	8	21.6	37	37.6

Source: Critcher et al (1995)

**Figure A 4.3.** Employment Status - Thurcroft Survey.



Source: Critcher et al, 1995.

**Table A 4.3. Temporary and part-time jobs**

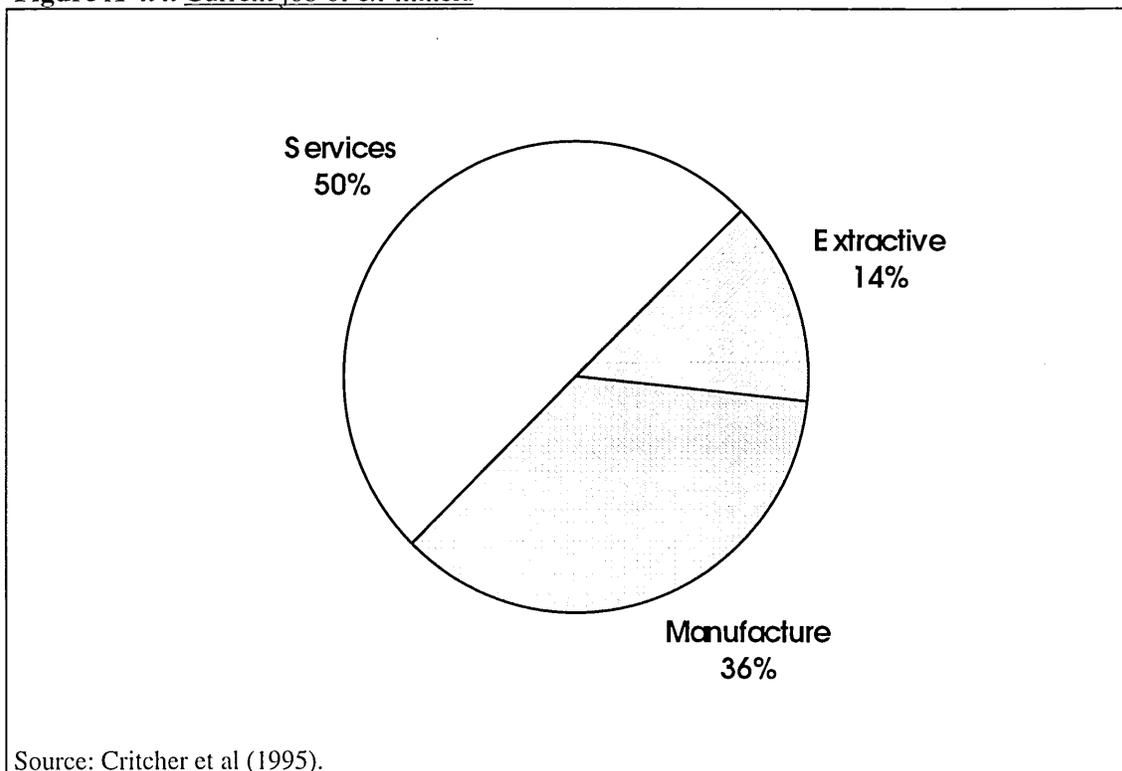
	Thurcroft	Rotherham	All	
	n	n	n	%
Permanent	27	15	42	75
Temporary	8	6	14	25
Totals	35	21	56	100
Full Time	32	18	50	89.3
Part Time	3	3	6	10.7
Totals	35	21	56	100

Source: Critcher et al, 1995.

**Table A 4.4. New jobs by Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) - Thurcroft Survey**

	Thurcroft		Rotherham		All	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Agriculture and Fishing	2	5.7	-	-	2	3.6
Energy and Water	1	2.8	-	-	1	1.8
Mining	3	8.6	2	9.5	5	8.9
Total Extractive	6	17.2	2	9.5	8	14.3
Manufacture-Metals	7	20	4	19.1	11	19.6
Other Manufacture	1	2.8	2	9.5	3	5.3
Construction	5	14.3	1	4.8	6	10.7
Total Manufacturing	13	37.1	7	33.3	20	35.7
Distribution & Catering	4	11.4	4	19	8	14.3
Transport	4	11.4	3	14.3	7	12.5
Bank and Finances	-	-	2	9.5	2	3.6
Other Services	8	22.8	3	14.3	11	19.6
Total Services	16	45.7	12	57.2	28	50.0
Total All	35	100	21	100	56	50.0

Source: Critcher et al, 1995.

**Figure A 4.4. Current job of ex-miners**

Source: Critcher et al (1995).

**Table A 4.5. . Total take up of training**

	Thurcroft	Rotherham	All	
	n	n	n	%
At least one course	21	21	42	58.3
No course	14	16	30	41.7
Totals	35	37	72	100

Source: Critcher et al (1995)

**Table A 4.6. BCE figures - Thurcroft closure :**

Registration (clients.)	421
Number no longer requiring assistance	101
Employment	137
Self employment	22
Retraining	159
Retraining (on the job)	2
Sub total resettled	320

Source: British Coal Enterprise, 1994.

**Table A 4.7. Direct benefit from training.**

<u>Course</u>	<u>Job</u>
Car Driving licence	Public Transport driver
PCV Driving Licence	Self-employed taxi -driver.
HGV licence	Self-employed lorry driver.
Joinery	UPVC fabricator
HGV licence	HGV driver.
Control Engineering	Maintenance Engineer

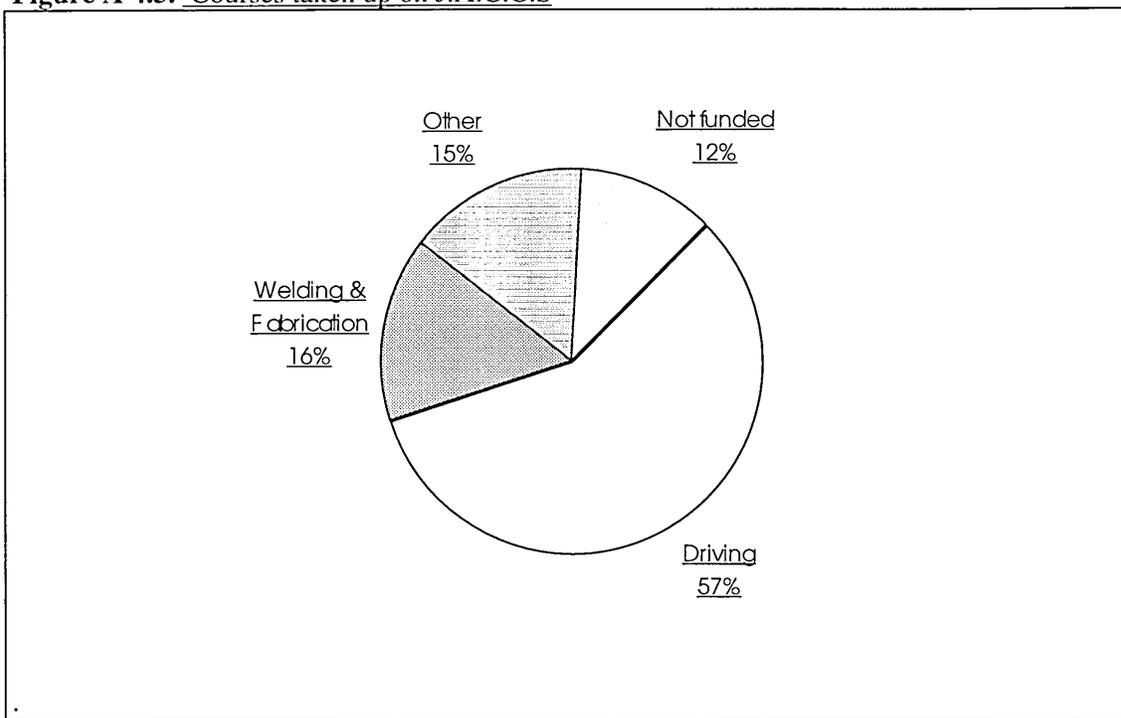
Source: Critcher et al, 1995.

**Table A 4.8. J.A.C.C.S. Scheme: courses taken**

	Thurcroft	Rotherham	All	
	n	n	n	%
Driving (car, PSV, HGV.)	9	6	15	57.7
Welding/fabrication	2	2	4	15.4
Joinery	1	-	1	3.9
Security	-	1	1	3.9
Fork Lift truck	-	1	1	3.9
Other	-	1	1	3.9
Not funded	1	2	3	11.5
Total applying	13	13	26	100

Source: Critcher et al, 1995.

**Figure A 4.5. Courses taken up on J.A.C.C.S**



Source: Critcher et al, 1995.

The purpose of this section of the methodological appendix is to reflect on the process of the research.

### **The basic approach**

The assumption at the start was that this study would be primarily qualitative but with a substantial quantitative element based on secondary data. The original research design however, was transformed by the research process itself. Once some of the literature had been reviewed and secondary evidence assembled, theoretical concerns became more important because policy documents appeared directed by a number of key concepts. However, although theoretical and other presuppositions were influential, in essence, the research is based on an inductive model of analysis because, once fieldwork was begun, it was patterns emerging from the data that gave it direction.

Having made choices about which data collection methods were to be used, the initial problems were those of scale and scope. It may have appeared that three coalfields were a relatively well defined subject area, but once the nature of economic development is considered, the scale of the issues were revealed. Given the resources of the researcher, decisions had to be made about limiting data collection. Whilst accepting that more interviews with any number of relevant informants would have assisted the validation of the data, it is fair to maintain that the study generated data that gave insights into the views and expectations of a range of key people at the level of detail relevant to the research aims.

### **Comparative case study**

At the start of the research I was presented with an outline of a research design that involved a comparative approach to the evaluation of regeneration in three coalfield areas. There were particular reasons why South Wales, Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire were chosen, but an equally strong case could have been made to choose or include other areas. Inevitably, in a study of this kind, depth is often sacrificed to breadth and the difficulties and dangers lie in trying to bridge the macro and micro

levels both empirically and theoretically. This could have lead to either bland generalisations that add little to our understanding or exaggerating the significance of some minority local views and opinions. Nevertheless, the challenge was to maintain a clearly signposted reflexivity on the research allowing adequate conclusions to be drawn and generalisations made from the specific.

Although a comparative study is essentially designed to assist the capacity to generalise, a recurrent problem was to try and collate equivalent data. Different area and regional organisations proliferate. Where the same organisation operates in two of the areas they may locally have different priorities. For instance, the Rural Development Commission was active in South Yorkshire but did not have a community development role as was the case in Nottinghamshire. Community enterprise was well developed in South Wales but only being considered elsewhere. The local organisations included in this study are the ones that were active on issues relevant to coalfield communities renewal. If they had a role, or were attempting to have a role, in sustaining and regenerating pit villages, they were included in the research. At the outset I decided to seek out examples of community enterprise and as a consequence the evidence at local level is partially skewed towards an understanding of the potential of this particular approach.

At the local level information may be even more diverse. I made an effort to interview key informants in each area, but local activities and different organisations and groups are represented in the research. In terms of the larger agencies involved in regeneration, it is unlikely that interviewing twenty people from a TEC will reveal much more than one or two. With local activities the possibilities for variations are much more extensive and practical decisions about time and resources limit the research as much as any consideration about its design or thoroughness. Community development differs with respect to any number of local phenomena and may be difficult to compare or replicate elsewhere. 'Best practice' for one Welsh community may inappropriate in a Nottinghamshire community. I took the view that care was needed to extrapolate or generalise, not about the specifics of a project but more on the potential of a particular approach.

### Secondary data

I found the main problem with using secondary data was maintaining consistency across the three areas. Equivalent information is not always readily available except in large data sets such as NOMIS or the census. Data, whether qualitative or quantitative, when presented by local or regional agencies, tends to fulfil particular research or political requirements. More problematic for my research was trying to draw conclusions from studies that took place at different times in the decline of the local coal industry or at different intervals after the closure of particular collieries. Different questions were asked in many of the surveys and it was therefore only possible to make comparisons about some of the more universal statistics or views. Again, this problem leaves the researcher confirming much of what is already established, such as employment levels and labour market trends.

### Primary data

Once again, given the relatively broad research objectives, consistency and equivalence was important when deciding who and how many were to be interviewed. More work was carried out in South Yorkshire but, as can be seen from the table in this appendix, the numbers and type of interviews are broadly comparable. However, this only partially overcomes the problems of validity and reliability.

Having placed such restrictions on the direction of the research by the use of a schedule or broad areas of interest, it could be argued that the respondents were manipulated into following the researchers' agenda. This is referred to as 'molest[ing] in advance the phenomenon to be studied' (Matza 1969 cited in Bryman, 1993, p 58). The assertion that 'naturalism claims fidelity to the empirical world' (ibid.), however, takes no account of the fact that researchers cannot examine any social phenomenon devoid of preconceptions. It may well be argued that selectivity in the use of quotes for example has revealed bias on the researchers' part. Perhaps more difficult to refute is the 'circularity objection' referred to by Pawson (1989). This research, although not an investigation of 'meanings' rather than 'causal variables' (Ashworth 1987), accepts that:

people are for the most part properly viewed as acting for reasons which are meaningful to their own definition of the situation within which they are placed. (Ashworth 1987 p 2.)

My intention, therefore was to articulate the perceptions of those involved and place macro policies within the context of local subjects.

In mining villages it was all too easy to find people saying that what they needed most was jobs. Questions about activities other than those with clear employment outcomes, were either thought to be irrelevant or misunderstood. I introduced direction to an interview or group discussion and the danger may then be, not only that what is included is selective, but that other issues may have been missed. Although this problem could be addressed by intensifying the qualitative work around a particular locality and teasing out much more information on a whole range of topics or concerns, it was not possible, given the range of this comparative study to carry out such detailed work. As it was, some areas, notably South Yorkshire, received more attention than others on particular topics.

I have already referred to the problems of generalising from the views of individuals but there are also potential pitfalls in group discussions that were carried out mainly because it was the most convenient way of engaging a number of people. I had to consider whether there would be different answers had the interviews taken place separately or in a different location. Individuals can be constrained by expected behaviour in groups and present only their public face (Burgess 1982). There is no way of being sure on this but, in support of the technique and its reliability, I suggest that a discussion in a community centre is as near to a natural setting as possible and that the interaction of the respondents generated more information than would perhaps have been possible in another setting or individually. The uninterrupted flow of the discussion revealed disagreements and was less controlled by the interviewer. A counter-argument could be that not all respondents had equal amounts to say. Other sources of data were incorporated into the study so that reliability was not dependent on any one research instrument.

### *Triangulation*

One of the difficulties with using a triangulation approach is deciding whether the various data sources are being employed for cross-checking purposes or simple to

present another view thereby contributing to the richness of the data. I concluded that both uses were valid.

My initial intention was to try to use it as a scientific tool (see the figure in the appendix). For example, I looked at the nature of work replacing mining jobs and found that the predominance of low wages and job insecurity is talked of by local respondents, referred to in reports and studies, and supported by statistical evidence. Thus the reliability of the perception of local people is re-inforced.

Where the generalisability of comments made by local people is not sustainable they can be included and reflected upon but not advanced as conclusive evidence of a universal nature. The findings from an approach that encompasses a number of data types from an number of sources across a three regions can be thought to be comprehensive. However, given the wealth of information there was very little opportunity to do justice to some of the interview material. Whilst the triangulation method generates rich data, there is a tendency for the findings to obscure some of the interesting detail.

### *In conclusion*

I consider the combination of qualitative and quantitative data sources in a multi-layered regional comparison to be the most appropriate design for such a broad research topic and the limitations or any shortcomings were due to the practicalities of time and resources. Leaving that universal excuse aside, the triangulation research method demonstrates that a comprehensive approach can generate a considerable amount of empirical evidence from which our understanding of the processes of economic and social restructuring is advanced. My contention is that, although there were many difficulties in sustaining the rigour required by such research, I believe the objectives were well served by the methods and can reasonably be said to exhibit 'construct validity' (Krausz and Miller 1974, p.23).

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