# How can the lessons of social learning within grassroots housing contribute to a planner's knowledge toolkit?

***An exploration of the knowledge of contemporary grassroots planners***

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# 1. Introduction

The last few decades have seen planning practice in the UK face a number of difficulties, both enduring and significant. Politicians bemoan the discipline's shortcomings, seen an easy targets onto which to attach blame, and increasingly pursue a model of the corporate state that both marginalises the social planner and places competing demands on them. Social agendas – so important for many planners – increasingly oppose hegemonic market forces, but are employed and directed by organisations governed by the very same forces. Yet in societies saturated with conflict between such opposing forces as environment and economics, values surrounding community identity and self-determination, and plurality and inequality, there remains a reductive tendency towards planning practice. Reports focusing on quantitative analyses of diverse human life and based in the reduction of progress to economic indicators remain central planning activities, and calls for more collaborative approaches are not materialising in institutional structures. There is significant debate about what planning should be doing for itself when confronted with such difficulties, or indeed how planners might tackle contemporary challenges that question the role of our discipline.

Yet in the face of this, as well as with consideration of challenges posed by the growing urban-rural dichotomy, there is widespread apathy towards state apparatus and partisan politics, manifesting itself as a growing focus on the ideas of local- and people-based action to re-humanise urban life (Harvey, 2001). Increasingly there is a need for collective consensus, for embracing community values and 'the human dimension', and to take holistic approaches to understanding and intervening; to recognise the lessons of history and society in its totality, and unearth the understandings and experiences of both individuals and communities.

A shift back to human and collaborative ideas has actualised the potential for planning to be as effective and socially-rooted as we hope it can be (Fischler, 2012). Our role might be under threat and our objectives difficult to control, but opportunities to rejuvenate a planner's purpose and to reconnect to our social roots are greater than ever. But to do so we must make sense of and move forward from this theoretical *impasse*, and in practice grasp what the demands of contemporary planners are. As a professional discipline, increasingly orientated towards the navigation of procedures and bureaucracy:

> *"The Dilemma of the professional today lies in the fact that both ends of the gap he is expected to bridge with his profession are changing so rapidly: the body of knowledge that he must use and the expectations of the society that he must serve… This places on the professional a requirement for adaptability that is unprecedented"* Schön (1983 *p15).*

The UK planning experience reflects the persistence of this dilemma, and the demands placed on planners that stretch their abilities and overestimate expectations of what can be achieved. Notwithstanding a recognition of the value of collaborative planning, planning policy is still rooted in technical rationalities. Despite the Conservative government's emphasis on 'Localism' and grassroots action, planners are not being afforded the resources and skills necessary to make this a reality, and the expectations of an entrepreneurial state in deep austerity do not align with the behaviours that the government wishes to see in planning. These conflicting demands pull planners in several directions, and their existing toolkits are struggling to fill these diverse requirements.

With unanswered appeals for a wider foundation of skills and expertise to tackle wicked problems, a planner's identity and toolkit is in need of refinement. For Glazer (in Schön, 1983), planning is a minor profession: we engage with unstable institutions, our ends are fluid and ambiguous, and our basis of knowledge is not standardised (or indeed, attempts to do so are reductive of both the profession and society). But far from getting disheartened, planners must embrace the diversity of our skill-set and tailor our approaches to the new societal expectations we encounter on a day-to-day basis. We must find a way to account for the shifting institutions we engage with; to incorporate fluid *ends* and thus contribute to a set of *means* conducive to this. Despite this incompatibility, there is an endurance of technical-rationalities at the detriment of planning understanding and thus a miscalibration of how to approach problems and intervene in society.

This thesis will argue that a planner's toolkit can be more richly populated when cultivated within a communicative paradigm such as Social Learning (SL). It can challenge narrow rigor of knowledge that exclude locally specific and subjugated knowledge and provide a toolkit more compatible with the wicked problems of planning and the objectives socially-rooted planners wish to achieve. Additionally such a paradigm can directly reduce gaps between theory and practice by stressing the intimacy between knowledge and action and help to overcome narrow technical-rationalities that impose unhelpful restrictions on planning problems and interventions. When conceptualising planning knowledge into six categories outlined by Salet (2014), we can identify a meaningful contribution to a range of behaviours and skills that demonstrates the benefits that knowledge and actions emerging from social learning can make to planning practitioners.

In achieving this planners must embrace immersion, pragmatism and community experiences. This study will focus on a topic that is truly community based, small scale but wide reaching in social impact. Self-help housing is a movement that has been growing since the post-war period, yet is murky in its conceptualisation and under-represented in political discourse. This study will investigate the experiences of grassroots organisations and housing actors in the Teesside region of

North-East England with the Empty Homes and Communities Grant (EHCG). A funding programme introduced by the British coalition government in 2010 as part of the wider localism agenda to rejuvenate derelict properties, improve life chances for struggling communities and empower communities. As local expertise and community self-governance are significant aspects of the current UK localism agenda there is a strong case to suggest that social-learning within these groups is a strong fit to achieve these aims.

The study here will explore how social learning has contributed to the knowledge and practices of planning for grassroots self-help housing groups, through a qualitative content analysis of literature and semi-structured interviews, conducted with 8 players in housing and third sector provision. Theoretical arguments will be made for moving onto social learning before an empirical exploration of how this development occurs. A qualitative medium is ideally suited to the communicative and non-technical nature of community based action and the contributions of social learning which are rooted in local experience and the mutual development of values and actions. Interview based methods have been successful in exploring social learning and this study will take this approach in a new direction and shall use knowledge and action as a lens through which to explore the contribution that social learning can make to planning practice, and how the toolkits of grassroots planners have been shaped by such processes.

With consideration to the problems traditional rigors of professional knowledge place on the development of planning toolkits, this thesis posits that knowledge and actions that are rooted in principles and processes of social learning will prove a fruitful line of inquiry in exploring how toolkits are cultivated that are well calibrated to the needs of communities, inspiring the titular research question. The central problem statement of this thesis is as follows:

Planning knowledge has traditionally been based upon rationalities that problematize planning for social objectives and exclude the plurality of experience and locally-specific nature of social dilemmas. By exploring the theoretical and empirical impact of processes and tenets of social learning, can we identify a contribution towards planning knowledge and behaviours that produces toolkits more sensitive to local needs, more suitable for daily practice and able to generate mutual consensus and action?

In order to explore this problem several sub-questions have been defined and incorporated into the structure outline below.

Chapter two shall begin with a content analysis of literature surrounding positivist conceptions of professional knowledge and technical rationality, asking what conceptual problems have been produced, what relationships with power exist and what implications for planning knowledge and roles have emerged. The second half of this will ask how planning has developed solutions to these problems through the collaborative turn and reformulated how planning should be conducted.

Chapter three will introduce social learning and ask what theoretical expectations we can trace in how social learning can contribute to a planner's toolkit in terms of rigor and relationships between theory and practice whilst referencing solutions to the previously mentioned issues and exploring the implications for planning professionals. Some limitations and aspects of the theory are then explored to introduce concepts important for this research.

Chapter four will outline the UK planning context to link theoretical developments to outcomes in practice, asking what issues with knowledge planners have faced in recent times. The self-help housing movements will then be introduced with aspects highlighted to demonstrate the features of social-learning within the movements.

Chapter five will outline the conceptual framework for knowledge and social learning in order to undertake empirical research in chapter six, which will ask how the processes of social learning have contributed towards planning knowledge specifically, and the theoretical challenges raised in previous chapters. Key questions in exploring this empirical contribution will be: which processes produce the largest contribution? Finally, 'which bodies of knowledge receive the greatest contribution? In exploring the theoretical contribution, key questions will be: What are the implications of a closer relationship between theory and practice? What are the benefits of approaching planning problems through an SL approach? Finally, how compatible is this approach with governmental planning demands?

Chapter seven will finally explore the outcomes of our findings with respects to this study's problem statement and conclude with discussions of SL's value and further research.

## 2. What kinds of knowledge has planning valued and why?

This chapter shall first introduce the concepts of positivism and technical-rationality and their implications for defining professional knowledge. The implications for power and how it is exercised through knowledge is then explored, drawing attention to the self-reinforcing nature of institutions

built upon positivist knowledge and technical rationalities. The implications for planning practice are then addressed with particular attention paid towards technocracy, before planning theory and its developments of these problems are explored and new conceptions of knowledge, planning practice and the shift to communicative paradigms are revealed.

### 2.1.1 Positivism and Technical rationality

> *"Post-empiricist philosophy has demonstrated that the history and philosophy of science are inextricably linked" (Dryzek, 1996 p217).*

In order to explore the nature and objectives of scientific epistemologies we must explore the history of the societies that produced them. Positivism and technical rationality have been dominant approaches in science since their introduction in the enlightenment (Alexander, 1984). For Alexander, rationalism represents an approach of scientific analysis that views problem solving as a systematic consideration of a range of means in light of the ends they hope to achieve. For professional practice this has developed into technical rationality: an "application of research-based knowledge to the solutions of problems of instrumental choice" (Schön, 2001). However such an approach has had negative effects on planning, with Willis (in Albrechts 1991 p125) arguing:

> *"Planning was more and more legitimised as a method of decision-making on the basis of procedural ideas. It became concerned with how to plan rather than with the outcome of planning."*

The values, bias and irrationalities that can influence this and the approach to planning this engenders causes widespread problems.

Positivism can be seen as an elaboration of rationalism, basing assessment in an empirical and gradually accumulated body of knowledge, to which each discovery incrementally improves with the assumption of attaining a field of knowledge free from error and representing full refinement of theory. For planning this means that intervention (and grounds presupposing it) should be built upon academically produced causal laws of society, and those that the scientific method has rendered objectively and neutrally verifiable (Dryzek, 1996). But planning theory is polemical, populated by competing theories, and faces questions of verification and objectivity in light of the situations and frames planning operates with. Thus without agreement on the methods and objectivity of these laws, how can such a practice be compatible with planning?

Immediately inconsistencies between these rationalities and planning activities emerge. Glazer (in Schön, 2001) labels planning a minor profession unable to fully satisfy positivist rigor for professional knowledge as: our practice is beyond technical in being unable to fully rely on replicable and consensual understanding; our causal laws are unrefined and methods demanding more than technical interventions; planning works towards ends that are ambiguous and shifting; it constructs a situation into a solvable problem and thus determines means and a range of ends with unclear agreement about their objectivity (child poverty for example could be conceptualised differently between an economist, a planner, a social worker or a teacher); finally we should not separate research from practice. As practice is bringing about change in reality, and a clear goal of planning (Friedmann, 1987), research must be rooted in the unstable institutions of society or face developing unsuitable theories. Thus planning does not meet the criteria of technical rationality and positivist rigors for professional knowledge and the demands of rigor for planning knowledge can sacrifice relevance. Planning therefore has reason to take these tensions as a starting point and develop repertoires of professional knowledge that address them.

### 2.1.2 Conceptual problems

Harmonious with Dryzek, Friedmann (1987) connects historical contexts and their theoretical groundings. The tenets of a theory and the objectives it holds have emerged intrinsically from the ideological context that the theory itself emerged from. To objectify elements of society and nature with theoretical constructs is a theoretical and ideological act itself. It is exercising reduction in which the means of reduction are subject to bias and error (Vollrath & Fantel, 1977). Thus the act of creating theories frames an understanding of history (or the present) which excludes or highlights certain facets. For Innes (1998 p54) information (such as that favoured by technical rationality): *"frames, or in other words limits the available choices… it points the way to and defines the nature of reality*" In technical rationality, focus on generalizable findings and objectively knowable elements do this at the expense of the non-generalizable, the subjectivity of experience and the less tangible. Framing reality and problems through technical rationality therefore is incomplete framing, influenced by the demands on knowledge and the correspondence of information with models rationality. Focusing solely then, on knowledge generated from this framework can overlook factors important to planners. For Habermas (1984) claims to the totality of objective knowledge are illusionary claims from hegemonic philosophies that require such objectivity to remain hegemonic, further calling for a diversity in knowledge generation, methods and rigor of validation.

The damages such illusions have done are widespread, slowing social sciences' for decades. A monopoly over what science *should be,* occupied by the alluring logics and demonstrable results of positivism have limited reflection upon the reason of scientific inquiry. Scientific-reason and

positivism, as a method of practice became a philosophy of science (Schön, 1983) implying, for planning that practice could become limited simply to prediction and control over objectified variables (Habermas, 1984). These implications, connected to the tensions above have generated theoretical breakdowns between our laws of understanding and their incompatibility with the reality they seek to understand. Social science became increasingly aware of its struggle to accurately construct normative theories and objective elements without balancing the equations with caveats such as complexity and uncertainty. Despite this however, Alexander (1984) notes a ritual adherence to such paradigms is likely to be long lasting.

A significant cause for this endurance is the compatibility of technical rationality with the demands of governance, increasingly rooted in economic logic (Albrechts, 1991). As numerical prediction, quantitative indicators surrounding economic performance and investment remain significant, there is little demand to structure planning practice around more fuzzy rationale and non-generalizable results when bureaucratic structures favour knowledge from technical rationality. Equally, such rationale is more congruent with simple targeted interventions with which governments seek measurable results. Institutions that have become structured around particular modes of governance come to internalise such philosophies, even when significant support doesn't exist within them (Schön, 2001). This further limits the opportunities for planners to diversify knowledge production methods and reinforces the dominance of technical rationality and instrumental action.

Thus, focusing on any one frame of understanding through a single rationality paints an incomplete picture which limits understanding. Despite theoretical recognition there is an endurance in institutions of planning practice. In explaining how this hegemony of technical rationality has endured we must turn our attention to the relationship between power and knowledge, a relationship that Foucault can help illuminate.

### 2.1.3 Power

Particular knowledge for Foucault (1980) becomes hegemonic due to their compatibility with the demands of the state, which in contemporary western societies are influenced by neoliberal capitalism and a shift to entrepreneurial governance (Harvey, 2001. Albrechts, 1991). He posits that knowledge and the institutions that produce it bear a relationship of 'conditioned-conditioner' with these demands. Certain epistemes, defined as *"one unconscious structure underlying the production of knowledge"* (O'Farrell, 2007) for Foucault (1980) and closely related Kuhn's paradigm concept as discussed by Alexander (1984) become favoured languages by certain institutions for learning and intervening in society. The philosophies of these institutions, through internalising epistemes, come to reflect certain interests and values that correspond with these world views, such as the

entrepreneurial state. An administration of knowledge emerges from this relationship, valuing certain knowledges over others and combines with a politics of knowledge, to subjugate certain knowledge through ideological prisms and limits planning debate to arguments over means and a range of interventions, instead of true reflection over the nature of inquiry, consolidating the bounded reflection positivist rationalities engender. Through deciding what is of value by adopting certain epistemes, powerful institutions can exploit their position to limit debate and justify certain approaches. This occurs indirectly through embedded understandings within institutions, the mind-sets of actors within policy process' and established procedures and routines (Innes, 1998. Hall,1993).

The outcomes of this interplay are apparent across history: In the UK specifically, despite rhetorical shifts towards communicative planning, indicators, research and policy are still rooted in technical rationalities, evident in Raco's (2012) new contractualism. Institutions and behaviours constructed around scientific models of cost-benefit and quantitative modelling elevate these approaches and resistance will be met when they are challenged (Innes, 1998). Knowledge then is power, and as such those who hold it have particular power over diverse planning processes. Knowledge that justifies and instrumentalises action based on foundations internalised by policy makers and influenced by ideological grounds is viewed legitimately. Foucault takes this further, arguing that these foundations become the codes that frame and define laws (of 'nature' and of man) representing a law of normalisation. A law based on the premise of normative descriptions of society in its totality that the sanctity and arbitration of science render neutral and beyond question (Foucault, 1980). Planning and policy become powerful enforcers of these laws. Basing this means of normalisation, and thus the knowledge that makes up a planners toolkit on only a technical rationality can misrepresent society and knowledge and deepen planning struggles.

Returning to Alexander (1984), the ritual response to paradigm breakdown, in which adherence will endure despite theoretical breakdowns, can be explained by this hegemony and the subjugation of knowledge incompatible with the entrepreneurial state. Power then has a significant impact on how knowledge is collected and valued and thus seeking a diversity in methods of knowledge production is a step towards overcoming this hegemony. The nature of planning however has been shaped by this rationality and reduced the usage of a diverse set of methods in practice.

It is evident then that positivism and technical rationality, despite their popularity causes dilemmas for planners. Constructing the discipline's knowledge toolkit calls for an employment of mixed epistemological grounding, highlighted by the tensions within professional knowledge and the warnings Arendt, Habermas and Friedmann raise about the limiting logics theory can impose over

social understanding and intervention. Planning in this light becomes directed by certain world views which can be reinforced by powerful institutions and validated based on narrow epistemologies which subjugate other epistemological methods. When unchallenged, these epistemes can come to define what is validated and legitimised as knowledge. For planning, this problematizes knowledge which is locally specific, not well calibrated to the demands of governance and raises the debate around rigor vs relevance, a theme revisited throughout this thesis.

## 2.2 The roles and knowledge of planners

Planning science's orientation in relation to positivist rationality, amicability with governance and relationships with power are revealed in technocratic governance. Tensions emerge in its scientific underpinnings and the nature of management it entails. The next sections will investigate these tensions and their links to technical and instrumental rationality.

### 2.2.1 Technocracy

Planning interventions based on positivist laws of society and technical rationalities run the risk of understating the complexity of society and intervening based on partial understandings. Tenets of positivist epistemology such as generalizable laws and wider theory struggle to account for human experience and small-scale events. Returning to Schön's (1983) definition; problems instrumentally chosen through technical rationality is also a source of concern in planning, as these can be manipulated or poorly conceptualised with such tenets. Planners however knew that they are more than instrumental and that the world cannot be reduced to technical and quantifiable factors, yet their practical toolkits have been influenced by such presuppositions. Knowledge and expertise from communicative and qualitative roots struggled to gain a footing and planning's *lingua franca* became overly technical.

The modern framing of urban problems as management problems highlights this technical approach and the narrowing of reflection to a range of instrumental interventions (Albrechts, 1991). A discussion of how to maximise management efficiency and achieve specific ends without a reflection on the nature or values underlying those ends ensued. This discussion is technocratic with questions around cost efficiency central in the entrepreneurial state, and the values and motivations underpinning strategy and objectives avoid significant reflection, as long as they correlate with the language of technical rationality & demands of planning policy. Planning is then limited by this objectivism, removing scope for nomocratic understanding and the low resolution data surrounding less measurable values and experiences in favour of reductive, but incomplete technocratic understandings.

Articulating problems in this manner, in reducing vagueness with technical principles, produces a systematic distortion of the true complexity of issues and deepens the objectivist illusion of surety of definition. Planning has suffered from a hegemonic focus on such methods in favour of a richer basis upon which to validate knowledge (a basis which incorporates experiential and non-generalizable knowledge) and thus a basis to overcome such distortion and the hegemony of knowledge powerful interests can maintain. Debates structured around technique within narrow laws of normalisation have led to a distancing of social interests in discussion, and rendered debate limited to a select group whom are viewed to have suitable expertise, further marginalising the valuable insight citizen actors can contribute and consolidating the hegemony of technical rationality. Such a narrow basis and the subjugation of subjective experience is incongruent with the fragmented and plural view of society post-modern theory espouses. A further motivation to widen our knowledge basis to incorporate more relevant epistemes is found in the problem of technocracy. This motivation is furthered when the specific roles and challenges that planner's encounter under such rationalities are explored.

### 2.2.2 The challenges and roles of planning

Such theoretical foundations produce bespoke challenges and roles for planners, defining the remit of the profession more than the profession can define itself. Unable to neatly address trends and problems with positivist abstract codes, normative laws and instrumental interventions, the framing of societal problems became based on abstract and instrumental ideas (Healey, 2009). This has contributed to gaps between theory and practice and whilst planning knowledge recognised these problems, holding the philosophies of science in technical rationality and positivism static and beyond question throughout this development deepened these gaps. Problems were not adequately reflected upon, interventions were not rooted in unbiased and well conceptualised justifications and errors propagated (Vollrath & Fantel, 1977), exemplified in the UK context by growing inequalities, environmental degradation, increasingly exclusionary urban life and struggling planning structures (Raco, 2012).

Planners became instrumental: A medium through which to impact atomised societal features (Friedmann, 1987. Schön, 1983). Again, the encouragement of powerful institutions influenced adherence to these static principles and a programmable language of society (Foucault, 1980). A planner's toolkit became populated based on a programmable language for society, often dominated by economic terms, maximising efficiency and reducing costs; A language that returns to the spotlight in times of austerity (Albrechts, 1991). Planning became procedural and market orientated – restraining, redistributing or targeting the gaps (Friedmann 1987). With increasing

bureaucracy, planners became deal makers and centred on meeting contracts and performance indicators (Healey, 1996).

Basing planning apparatus upon such narrow, technical foundations causes great dilemmas for practicing planners and limits what they can hope to achieve. Over-use of any one means of normalisation risks exacerbating misconceptions of social truth and systematically undermines knowledge. Increasingly however problems that states faced were not captured by these rationales. The true plurality of society became apparent in contemporary challenges and recognition of these epistemological failures spread throughout academia. A new set of paradigms and rationalities were called for as planning entered a period of reformation.

### 2.2.3 Momentum for a new paradigm

As with the elements above, theoretical and professional challenges prompted inquiry into new ways of thinking and doing. The folly of accumulating knowledge solely within a positivist episteme, free from reflection on the nature of this science and dismissiveness of alternative epistemes became apparent (Habermas, 1984). Not questioning or diversifying a normalisation subject to bias and improperly objectifying subjects became recognised as the source of the crisis of legitimacy that plagued (and to an extent, continues to do so) social sciences (Friedmann, 1987). The separation between knowledge and a humanitarian grounding was implicated in the poor trajectory that social science followed (Habermas, 1984). Alternative epistemologies were called for.

In politics the ideological and value-laden nature of planning conflict was impossible to capture with technical and instrumental rationale. The claim that policy and political arenas could be conducive to a rigorous episteme of science when so concerned with the contingent and the ideological was seen to be fallacious (Schön, 1983). The abandonment of positivism was a steady process, with Dryzek (1996) noting that truly positivist research was increasingly rare, but technical rationality endured politically and practically. As Schön (2001) notes, such tenets are ingrained into our institutional behaviour even without vocal proponents, further supporting Alexander's (1984) ritual response.

In practice too momentum for change was apparent. As Fischler (2012) notes, planning in its traditional approaches failed to account for the intersubjective, the complex differences between institutional theory and practitioners' theory, the externalities of the most well refined interventions and was systematically observing the same problems for the same reasons. The plurality of values and conflicts for example were difficult to explain without abandoning assumptions of technical rationality, generalizable laws and rational actors. Values, bias and emotions are intrinsic to social dilemmas and planners struggled to grasp the dimensions in which they occurred (Schön, 1983). A

question of rigor vs relevance emerged, with real world problems messy, fluid and subjective and by defining scientific rigour in terms of technical rationality:

> *"We exclude as non-rigorous much of what competent practitioners actually do, including the skilful performance of problem-setting and judgment on which technical problem-solving depends. Indeed, we exclude the most important components of competent practice."(*Schön, 2001 p8*)*

Thus a choice emerges between narrow, technical high ground, sticking to technical rationality or manipulating a situation until technical rigor fits it. Alternatively there is a murky immersion in experience, trial and error and non-rigorous but important, practical theory (Schön, 2001). Glazer's disparaging view of planning as a minor profession for working on the boundary of this tension, tackling divergent phenomena of complexity and uniqueness is a dismissiveness protective of technical rationality unwilling to pollinate professional knowledge with alternative epistemologies (Schön, 2001). Thus unsuitably basing professional knowledge solely in positivist principles is incorrect for planners.

Social sciences were not founded upon and should not be built through the enhancement of technical rationality and reductive objectivism. With the discipline's discourse increasingly abandoning this view, reflection upon the nature and values of the social-sciences discourse could open up diverse possibilities and introduce cultural and collaborative threads to social sciences (Foucault, 1980).

Technocracy then, as a method to conduct planning activity is connected to the demands governance and administrations of knowledge have imposed. Whilst well calibrated to entrepreneurial governance, this hegemony has foreclosed much debate about the underlying principles of technocratic behaviour and has marginalised non-expert knowledge and techniques lacking in traditional rigor. Accuracy in understanding has been undermined by narrowness of approach and the gaps between theoretical understanding, practical toolkits and the needs of society have grown. Despite recognition of this lack of understanding, uptake of rationalities beyond positivism and technical-rationality has been slow. Planning however, like all the social sciences reflected upon its discourse and sought answers in the cultural turn.

For planning, populating a toolkit through only positivist knowledge provides knowledge miss-calibrated to the demands of society and indeed knowledge which can undermine the input of non-experts. Technical rationality is not inherently problematic, but foreclosing debate about the values

and presumptions underlying its employment is poor scientific practice and ill-equips planners. Attention for the rest of this chapter will now turn to the collaborative shift in planning, drawing attention to the ideas that emerge with relevance to how knowledge is appraised, gathered and applied with specific reference to how such developments point towards the employment of new epistemes of knowledge production. Ultimately to populate a planners toolkit with more relevant and community focused knowledge.

## 2.3 The new wave of planning

The issues that such issues and roles presented for planners did not go unnoticed. In the following section, theoretical ideas around planning practice, what knowledge should be incorporated into planning processes and the fundamental paradigm shift towards collaborative planning are reviewed, pointing towards the employment of a new epistemology of knowledge.

### 2.3.1 New conceptions of planning and its challenges

If planning is to reconnect to its roots, to become guardians of local democracy, to plan for society before capital, to achieve hope and consensus then the way society is captured and affected needed redesigning (Albrechts, 1991. Forester, 1999. Fischler, 2012). To reduce the distance between political and academic interest in the activities within society and our exploration of the activities ourselves we need new ways to articulate them (Harvey, 2001). This goes beyond choosing a single appropriate paradigm or rendering objective elements of societies in positivist-empirical ways (Schön, 1983). It goes beyond choosing the best sales pitch and the most elegant design and justifying specific interventions. It requires dealing with the logics and visions that constitute the theories of practice we employ (Friedmann, 1994). As Arendt (Vollrath & Fantel 1977) succinctly declares, we must remove ourselves from the world of abstraction and generalities. Practice is about the concrete and it must be rooted in the context and its struggles. Critique and experience is local in character for Foucault (1980), validity of experience needs not the approval of the established regimes of knowledge; it is life, not theory that matters. Truth is situated, historically and spatially and is thus incongruent with positivist conceptions of absolute normative knowledge which diminish the local and subjective. Local immersion and understanding of experience are important steps towards discovering well-grounded knowledge.

The collaborative turn builds upon these ideas and brings the logics and values underpinning epistemologies under scrutiny with the aid of communities, allowing the theoretical gaps caused by technical rationalities to be directly discussed by societies who experience this gap.

### 2.3.2 New thoughts on Knowledge

These conclusions reflect the epistemological development of ideas of truth, knowledge and the subjectivity of experience within societies. The discipline's acceptance of multiple facets, layers and notions of truth and knowledge and that historical planning theories struggle to grasp this multiplicity (Salet, 2014). Key proponents for such paradigm shifts are Kuhn, Freud, Habermas and Marx (although his narrow view of class struggle must be developed to capture the true plurality of social problems). Freud's psychoanalytic presumption of each patient being a universe of one, only understandable in its totality and incomparable to other universes is another important step in the development of communicative theories. Extracting objective variables from a case and assuming comparability to others does an injustice to the uniqueness of social experience. The influence of the subjective is further developed by Arendt (In Vollrath & Fantel, 1977). By drawing attention to the dialectical relationship between knowledge and thinking, truth and meaning she draws attention to the self-reinforcing nature of positivistic epistemologies. When assuming a single truth and collecting knowledge based on this premise, the plurality of views and subjectivity of social actors is excluded from understanding. Planning activity requires a Freudian view to correctly understand plural social problems and thus cannot be achieved with traditional positivist-rational assumptions. Multiple ways of thinking must be included to capture the range of meanings and knowledge social actors hold and to arrive at a consensual understanding of societal truths. An awareness of a range of paradigms, in Kuhn's definition, is therefore an important precondition to these processes and paradigms sensitive to subjectivity and human interaction are vital for a planner to cultivate a useful toolkit. For Friedmann (1987), these paradigms provide opportunities to reconnect planning activity to its human and moral principles.

What therefore does this mean for planning theory? We need to embrace the communicative nature of the world in order to extract understandings of the inter-subjective nature of society. Holding theory over an object will exclude certain facets, particularly when technical rationality and its rigorous demands are applied. The clarity of our understanding is influenced by the resolution of our conceptual equipment and this has a systematic effect on planning theory and practice. Theory must incorporate the plurality of society, values and meanings alongside technical understandings to provide richer conceptions. Relaxing the traditional demands of technical rationality, supplementing theoretical toolkits with communicative ideas and local knowledge are important developments for the discipline.

### 2.3.4 The collaborative turn

The culmination of the thoughts and debates along these lines is known as the collaborative shift in planning, part of the wider cultural turn in the social sciences. Rooted in ideas of communication,

the linguistic turn within humanities, and inspired in no small part by the critical theory and communicative rationality of Habermas, much academic and practical exploration of its value has been conducted since the 80s and 90s. Like never before in schools of geography, socio-cultural situatedness were viewed for their non-generalisable value and in a return to the pragmatists the importance of practical wisdom and ad-hoc judgement was again recognised (Healey, 1996). The trappings of our previous epistemological designs were conceded and communicative theory was a way forward. Planning, for Forester (2012) is by nature a communicative endeavour and inextricable from the social contexts of plans. Despite the range of issues and counter-intuitive logics (such as less rigorous validation) the collaborative turn was a productive step to embrace and incorporate post-modern fragmentation where positivism could not, and generate holistic and consensual ideas of social problems, measures and interventions where technical rationality failed (Healey, 2009). As such, it provides an interesting field within which to seek alternative paradigms that can move forward from the tensions in positivist professional knowledge.

Planners, as Albrechts (1991) notes, have always identified as more than an instrumental organ of governance and to become more formative of the course of society requires a deliberative model sensitive to the multiple ideological and labyrinthine trajectories of society (Salet, 2014). To do this, one route for planners is to view planning as the transfer the capacities of action and judgement to the citizen through communicative endeavours to achieve mutually agreed and socio-spatially relevant consensus. Individuals, for Foucault (1980) are the vehicles of power which have been transporting the wrong forms of power in tacitly internalising hegemonic positivistic principles. By reconceptualising rigor and rationality around agreement and experience, the limiting effects of technical epistemes can be mediated and knowledge can improved with communities (Rein & Schön, 1996). Science and the empirical is not disposed of, however its nature is subject to mutual learning, its value located in holistic discourse and the importance of daily experience, morality and culture are promoted against technical-rationale (Willson, 2001). Reason is now corroborated through intersubjective mutual understanding and the validation of this is revealed by agreement over constitution and expected effectiveness. A richer theoretical discussion can ensue.

The real value of the collaborative turn is the potential to emancipate the role of planners from the narrow logics that power and positivist rigor have placed upon knowledge and action. Planning can become absolutely socially rooted in its service by improving its toolkit with communicative lessons and using consensus to challenge presupposed values and powerful interests (Albrechts, 1991). Planning becomes about discovering options and facilitating meaningful debate (Friedman 1987), strategy can become a mixture of traditional scientific/technical knowledge mediated and refined by

the impact of experiences and values. Whilst a planner may still be a deal maker, a regulator and a market restrictor, invoking collaborative action and communicative rationalities opens up the range of interventions, enriches the laws of society we work with and promotes shared values and understandings in those deals. We can regulate more intimately with communities and formulate new ideas and new roles with each issue. In short, make our repertoires open to improvement from knowledge that has previously been overlooked and subjugated (Dryzek, 1996).

#### 2.3.4.1 Habermas' contribution

The collaborative turn owes much to the critical theory and communicative rationality of Habermas, and his contribution is worth attention to reveal his impact on conceptions of knowledge, the importance of reflection and the emancipatory potential of communicatively rooted epistemology.

If the spheres of practical and public life are to be protected from the [ir]rationalities of instrumentalism and technocracy, then *reason* must be made unbiased, arrived at through inter-subjective inquiry and practical debate incorporating local knowledge. As Foucault (1980) observes, the greatest advancements of thought and take-offs of knowledge occur through changes in the rules governing statements and new epistemes. Only through challenging the discursive regimes of truth and the political administration of scientific knowledge can true advancement occur. By adopting communicative rationality, paradigm shifts and challenges can be meaningfully mounted and reason can be opened up to debate, as it cannot within hegemonic epistemes. These changes are, for Habermas, changes to the theories of measurement that enable a reflection upon the conditions of objectivity and the normative frameworks that govern validity. Technical rationality frameworks are irreconcilable with the structure and influence that communication has on planning and distillation of these frameworks to instrumental action smooth over this fundamental incompatibility.

The implications here for knowledge is that we can supplement and repurpose knowledge based on technical control and limited mutual understanding (limited to a range of procedures and options instead of a range of understandings) through generating real understanding. In achieving this, Habermas (1980) revisits Immanuel Kant's work on reflection and reconstruction. Reflection in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is a reflection on the conditions that validate a certain set of knowledge (how can we judge knowledge to be correct). Reconstruction, however, is a revisiting of the historical and situational subject and thus is directed at exploring knowledge that has been invalidated. The former challenges ideas underpinning validity, the latter explores what has been lost by these conceptions of validity. Both strands have potential for challenging knowledge

hegemonies and require communicative endeavours. As such their utility for eliciting knowledge important for a planner's toolkit is substantial.

Planning theory then has developed a culturally rooted view of what knowledge should be used in planning and has recognised the benefits of collaboration and epistemologies sensitive to value, experience and irrational action. Certain knowledge has been subjugated by the institutionalisation of a single technical rationality at the expense of a more diverse basis upon which knowledge can be formulated. Habermas' and Foucault's works draws attention to this and point to processes that engender this subjugation and methods by which it can be overcome. By taking the view of planning as the transfer of capacities, knowledge and action we can begin to structure planning in a way more open to otherwise non-rigorous knowledge, and the social learning model as discussed in Friedmann's (1987) seminal text provides an path towards this.

## 3. Planning as social learning

Planning as a social learning activity has strong roots in the collaborative turn. To attempt to construct planning and its skillset as anything other than communicative, for Forester (2012) is foolish, suggesting instead that we discuss ways to democratize and seize the value of interdependence. He calls for a critical planning theory that is sensitive to power, organisationally creative and practice orientated.

For Friedmann (1987), social learning (henceforth SL) emerged as a critique of earlier discourses of planning activity, challenging rational models of technical reason. He however draws attention to the lack of coherent theory surrounding social learning. This is partly due to the wide contexts and disciplinary backgrounds that have seen usage of the theory, partly the importance of relevance vs rigor in SL theory (weaknesses that present their own opportunities), but in the absence of a wider theoretical model for operationalisation and the diverse sourcing of tenets from ranging disciplines, theories within SL can be more positively regarded as complementary rather than competitive (Friedmann, 1987). Nonetheless, the linking of knowledge to action and a social, non-expert basis for this knowledge has legitimacy in overcoming the pitfalls of technical rationality (Morgan, 2009).

This chapter shall explore facets and implications of SL theory for planners. The planning traditions and contributions of major SL theorists are first outlined, drawing attention to the implications for rigor and combining theory and action. Then a reflection on the issues raised in the previous chapters is presented, each section mirroring those raised previously to highlight the contributions SL can make to planning. Finally, empirical research is explored to highlight key facets of the theory

that will allow us to construct a conceptual framework to operationalise SL and capture new measures of rigor.

## 3.1 On Pragmatism

Inspired by the works of Dewey, Pierce and James, it is of interest that despite their work predating the First World War, these authors well grasped the messy nature of knowledge, the fragmentation of experience and subjective understanding. The pragmatists, before modernity, had pre-figured the foundations of post-positivist and post-modern thought (Healey, 2009). Their focus on the 'here and now' and 'what works' reconnects a humanist perspective and communicative interpretations of affairs, placing 'working theories' and learning from action central to planning activity. The implications of this for planning theory are broad when contrasted to technical rationalism and positivist theory: With the source of all valid knowledge, for pragmatists, being the practice of bringing about change in reality, theory must constantly bear a relationship of mutual adjustment to the experiences of practice. It is this relationship that SL, in its action orientation is based upon and enables knowledge to emerge for the betterment of planning toolkits.

With this idea, the positivist conceptions of Glazer's (in Schön, 2001) professional knowledge are again challenged. Research becomes inseparable from practice and the elevation of theory over action dissipates. We cannot hope to neatly control variables in practice and produce thoroughly well-grounded research; research is rooted in understanding the changes that a professional planner makes by moving through the world and exploring consequences (Forester 2012). Thus the instrumental selection of problems within technical rationality becomes inappropriate; research-based knowledge becomes rooted in working with these problems and social agreement in practice as opposed to pre-defining them with a programmable language. For a planner to connect research, practice and action, he must open the connections between theory and practice, the consequences of action and the subjective experience of citizens. These pragmatist tenets, and challenges to technical and positivist rigor have become central to the ideas of social learning theory as a method of practice, and a direct development of the planning challenges such epistemologies produce.

We return to the debates around rigor: in an absence of widely accepted normative laws, and the incompatibility of planning knowledge with positivist conceptions of professional knowledge, how can validation be achieved? To seek validation in consensus introduces subjectivity of truth and meaning and to seek validation through action requires relinquishing narrow technical criteria. The local specificity of truth and practicing then challenges the constraints of technical reason. We can turn to Dewey for discussion.

Dewey argues two threads for these dilemmas. Firstly that validation is proven through the disposal of a problem. For Dewey (Friedmann, 1987) knowledge must be refreshed at each iteration and redundant knowledge abandoned and therefore validation is problem specific. If successful at its objective, which for wicked problems is hard to measure, validation is achieved (Friedmann, 1987). Secondly, validation can be intersubjectively arrived at through agreement on the reliability of an action (Friedmann, 1987). This however raises the spectre of power, with institutions able to enforce their criteria for identifying and corroborating a problem and its response. This view embraces the idea of plural meanings and understandings so neutral objectivity and arbitration becomes a challenging expectation. Again plans based on truthful consensus can mitigate these challenges, and we can achieve a degree of validation but positivist philosophies and their deep institutional roots can cause issues in pragmatic planning ideas, making consensual understanding necessary to approach mutually agreed upon knowledge and action. Forester's (2012) development of a critical pragmatism is of value for overcoming these pitfalls, suggesting attention to both the consequences of a particular problem framing and the relations of power and institutions that arbitrate what knowledge is seen as valid. Critical pragmatism can democratize social interdependence, be practice centric enough to evaluate goals and processes at once and overcome differences in aid of consensus (Forester, 2012). Thus SL can benefit from both Dewey's and Forester's contributions. New rigors of validation open up knowledge of value from SL situations and Foresters reorientation can scrutinise the relationships between power and knowledge.

The pragmatist work of Dewey came to populate much of the field of planning as a social learning activity, stressing the close relationship between knowledge and action and local expertise. Social learning is a practice suggested by Friedmann (1987) in response to many planning dilemmas and this thesis shall explore its contribution specifically to knowledge. The following sections of this chapter will explore this contribution by addressing the challenges raised in the previous chapters.

## 3.2 Moving forward from positivism and technical rationality

This chapter shall introduce the contributions of SL to the problems of positivism, technical rationality and the tensions of professional planning knowledge based on such principles.

As chapter 2.1.1 showed, technical rationality frames research-based knowledge and instrumentally chosen problems. For Schön (1983), SL models overcome this misconception with the action-orientated nature of social learning. Forster (2008, p302) highlights that "*our concern with knowledge sometimes truncates our vision to seek understanding and justification…even as action goes begging."* Thus the pursuit of knowledge, at the expense of action can lead to a repertoire of instrumental actions limited by narrow vision, but to overcome this truncation in research-based

knowledge, and the implications technical rationalities have when constructing problems, SL places action and knowledge as two sides of the same coin and one reflects-in-action (Schön, 1983). Reflective practice in SL communities begins with action, therefore research is more intimately tied to practice and a problem becomes understood through experiences. SL then ties understandings of research and problems to incorporate shifting and ambiguous ends and deepen a range of interventions.

Technical rationality doesn't only raise tension in planning's approach to knowledge and problems, it doesn't explain how planning practice is experienced by professionals, who recognise the limitations of solely acting upon scientific knowledge and instrumental approaches to problems (Innes, 1998). Planners have little time to apply a wealth of research-based knowledge and only in a university is there space to think about knowledge before action (Forester, 2015). Positivist conceptions of professional knowledge in planning patently break down and social learning's focus on generating (shared) knowledge from action embraces the qualities of planning that create these tensions and importantly, links research with practice to create space to depart from the demands of rigor that limit relevance.

Against positivism further, generating knowledge through social learning can address challenges of positivist professional knowledge. Intervening based upon causal laws in Dryzek's (1996) account of positivism is problematic, As Hall (1993) notes, it is difficult for a choice between paradigms to be made on scientific ground alone. If a choice between competing planning paradigms is influenced by institutions and resources, positivist conceptions of neutrality in causal laws dissipate. Planning practice therefore cannot rely on solely positivist ideas of causal laws and must develop a wider understanding of causality sensitive to the multiple relevant knowledges that community's hold. Again, social learning theorists overcome this impasse by reconnecting knowledge and action:

> *"When someone reflects-in-action he becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique but constructs a new theory of the unique case"* Schön (1983, p68).

Thus social learning invoking the tenets of Schön's reflective practice generates a relevant understanding of causality, free from the rigorous constraints positivism imposes. When bringing reflective practice into play, SL takes advantage of this freedom by generating relevant and mutual understandings of causality. We are, for SL theorists and echoing Arendt, always theorising and always using partial lenses and frameworks and thus different views of causality, frames and rigors can have huge value.

For a planners toolkit these points have several implications: social learning can provide a response to the tensions planning encounters in professional knowledge by developing responses to the challenges planners face in this conception. A case is made to incorporate knowledge that would not meet the rigorous demands of positivism, that are a more textured view of the world then in technical rationality, and to view the tensions as opportunities for new practices. SL builds upon this providing a method in which planning knowledge can be more intimately linked to social needs and planning problems. Ultimately providing a toolkit of knowledge beyond that of inappropriate views of technical and positivist professional knowledge.

## 3.3 Conceptual solutions

As discussed, certain epistemes correspond with institutional arrangements and governance demands and support hegemonic usage despite the particular framing of reality these epistemes create and the paradigmatic breakdowns observed in academia. SL however can overcome these problems whilst corresponding with governance rhetoric and planning processes.

Alexander (1984) views social learning models as a means to improve traditional rational paradigms through communicative debate. Planning is inherently communicative and acts in an interdependent and unpredictable society. The SL view of the world as a totality in which cherry picking knowledge has no place embraces this to create legitimate understandings of multiple social realities and knowledges (Bolan, 1980). Immersion in local experience and seeking relevant information is at odds with positivist rigor, but can supplement our understanding of issues. The goal is still to convert knowledge into protocol; however SL debates the values and intentions that underpin protocols (Bolan, 1980). So SL reframes planning processes differently to technical rationalities and is more sensitive to the communicative dimensions and multiple frames within planning issues. When bringing planning knowledge under scrutiny in SL, and eliciting subjugated knowledge, SL for Hall (1993) can act as a complementary part of planning process' and refine technical understanding. Positivist conceptions of rigor still need to be relaxed for the knowledge emerging from these processes to be validated, but by adopting a model of SL a planner's toolkit can benefit from a methodology that is sensitive to planning realities.

Thus the narrowing down that occurs when theory is applied is limited (and with theories-in-use, becomes more action orientated, breaking down the dichotomy of research and practice), philosophies of science are brought under public scrutiny and social learning can offer a mode of practice to improve governance and is resonant with current UK political discourse.

## 3.4 Mitigating power

Discussion on power has revealed that administrations and politics of knowledge influence how certain epistemes and information is viewed. Certain frames become embedded in institutions and for Foucault (1980), laws of normalisation reflect institutional behaviours and demands, institutionalising the subjugation of certain knowledge. Social learning is a power sensitive methodology, and whilst influence still arises, features of SL process' can mitigate powerful interests and emancipate certain knowledge.

> *"Policymaking processes can be structured by a particular set of ideas, just as it can be structured by a set of institutions. The two often reinforce each other since the routines of policymaking are usually designed to reflect a particular set of ideas about what can and should be done" (Hall, 1993 p290)*

Hall's observation identifies the relationship that social learning can disrupt in order to overcome the administration of knowledge. SL directly seeks out policies and knowledge from plural peripheries, scrutinising knowledge from the centre. As such a new decentralised view of knowledge is created in SL. For Albrechts (1991) planning that does not address conditions that create existing problems cannot be effective planning. The problems to which he refers are the socio-economic arrangements of the entrepreneurial state, but his conditioner-conditioned relationship between the state and its institutions of planning make his observation applicable to knowledge here. If planning has become miss-calibrated and influenced by embedded conceptions of legitimate knowledge within institutions, then challenging the sources of ideas and generating new ones through SL can mitigate the administration of knowledge and disrupt this mutual reinforcement. Indeed the problems of the entrepreneurial state (such as efficiency and declining resources) are problems that SL can tackle, through creating the effective, empowered communities the UK government wish to see. Planning through SL then can reduce this mutual reinforcement and inspire a shift in episteme to produce institutional demands, governance strategies and planning toolkits centred around social knowledge. Planning for Albrechts (1991) then must become more political, building social capital to instigate structural change and SL provides a framework for this.

SL can also weaken hegemonic conceptions of laws of normalisation:

> *"Most research on practice simply does not use a lens to see what types of knowledges are in play, much less document their functions… the next step will be to develop a normative and descriptive model of the roles of information in communicative practice"(Innes, 1998 p60)*

SL, as a planning model that reconnects research and practice elicits local knowledge and creates shared ideas and understandings. If knowledge development reflects certain values and activities then by producing knowledge in SL frameworks, new non-technical laws of normalisation can emerge, with problems and institutions brought under social scrutiny (Bolan, 1980). Importantly, subjugated knowledge can re-emerge and are validated in different rigors. Again, Albrechts (1991) critique of economically rooted and interventionist planning toolkits has purchase here. Unable to challenge the structural conditions (i.e. monopoly capital) overseeing knowledge and laws of normalisation, he calls for a redesigning of the planning toolkit towards social needs and SL answers this call.

Remaining in Albrecht's (1991) critique of economic rationale, there is resonance here with Gramsci's organic intellectual as a class-rooted enabler of counter-hegemonic ideas (Bardsley, 2015). Although SL, in its plurality necessitates a post-Marxist expansion of class sensitive to plurality, the positioning of the organic-intellectual as an advocate of subjugated knowledge resonates with the objectives of SL. As such, moving beyond controlled epistemes with SL, and by acting as an organic intellectual (representing not one class but a range of dominated interests), a planner can cultivate new toolkits rooted in new means of normalisation and directly correlating with social needs. The implications for planning professionals in adopting SL are covered below, but as a method of populating a planner's toolkit, SL gains momentum as a counter-hegemonic strategy to generate relevant knowledge with new conceptions of rigor and is compatible with planning frameworks and UK rhetoric.

## 3.5 Opportunities and roles for planners

2.2.1 and 2.2.2 outline the issues that technical and positivist rationality have created for planning. Technocracy limited the debates of planning around a set of interventions, invoking knowledge disconnected from plural social needs. Planning roles became limited and theoretical gaps between practice and theory grew. In politics and practice, the demands of rigor vs relevance created a dilemma: either choosing between rigorous knowledge that is theoretically congruent but of poor fit for the murkiness of reality or abandoning technical and positivist rationalities in favour of immersion. SL theory offers solutions to these problems.

Fundamental in overcoming these issues is linking practice to theory more intimately by beginning with the experiences of a community of learners. Planning process' can then become less dominated by technical languages and instead, meaningful reflection can occur and the practical and theoretical questions that emerge become more tangibly linked to society (Forester, 2004). In this arrangement, professional knowledge is built upon and corrected with the insight of social actors through its

application (Diduck et al, 2012). Collaborative theories, such as SL do not dismiss expert knowledge, but improve it through social consensus (Innes, 1998). As a result epistemology can be questioned, a wider range of means and ends can be discussed and gaps between theoretical and practical knowledge can be reduced. For the planner, a greater responsibility then deal-making emerges. Planners must facilitate the SL process, local knowledge and consensus. Deals are important but the framework within which such agreements are formulated can be enriched by a planning toolkit improved by social knowledge.

Departing then from a toolkit designed to program society can be achieved with SL. Planning information is no longer a tool just for policy makers, but informs and is informed by action and discussion through SL. With collaborative roots, this knowledge becomes less quantitatively and objectively defined and more sensitive to the subjective inputs of the institutions involved. Social reality is viewed less mechanically and more organically and thus local knowledge that emerges is more appropriate for the complexity of society (Innes & Booher 1999, Webler et al, 1995). Planning becomes less technical, less focused on interventionist behaviour and closer to how practice unfolds then in positivist and technical conceptions. A communicative *lingua franca* then can facilitate the shared knowledge SL can produce, and engagement, alignment and imagining alternatives become important planning skills in order to develop a stronger toolkit (Wenger, 2000). Local experience is a central contribution of SL towards planning practice and by helping to reconstruct and reflect upon lost knowledge in Habermasian terms, SL planners can challenge powerful epistemologies.

Structuring planning as SL provides great opportunities to inspire take-offs of knowledge and paradigmatic shifts. The constraints imposed by certain rationalities and narrow past learning can be overcome by new conceptions of the social reality, rigor and subjugated knowledge (Nonaka et al, 2006. Muro & Jeffrey 2008). For Habermas (1984), social change is a process of learning, and the opening up of professional planning knowledge to wider ideas and disciplines can provide a toolkit and planning process more orientated towards this change (Fischler, 2012. Rodela, 2013). The knock on effects to wider communities have been observed in Bull et al's (2008) study, and Webler et al (1995) credit a growing social maturity to SL processes, which have demonstrated the activation of civic actors in planning processes (Bardsley, 2015). With the opportunities SL can provide to planners addressed, attention will not be turned to aspects of the theory that are important in formulating a conceptual framework for this empirical research, beginning with limitations that must be considered in this study.

## 3.6 Limitations

Many problems in SL come from the difficulty in measuring the changes in knowledge, actions and values that emerge. The lack of agreed operationalisation and definitions combined with the reduction of knowledge to a transmission of information render such measurement difficult (Muro & Jeffrey, 2008). Changes in attitudes and beliefs, also, do not necessarily translate into changing behaviours and this is exacerbated if learning dissipates at the end of a process. Maintaining an intimacy between knowledge and subsequent action is then important to realise change and further research must work towards an operational basis. Communicative theories more generally also struggle with perceptions of checklist planning and satisficing behaviour, creating a view that engagement will not affect overall plans (Innes & Booher, 2004). Again, action can overcome this perception and momentum must be maintained. Finally, with regards to the participants, it is unclear whose knowledge should be most valued in conflicts. Holden's (2008) step of setting the community as the unit of analysis can provide purchase here to elicit the relationships between various perspectives and the consequences such positions have for action. The gatekeepers of information can leverage their position to become dominant, and this must be mitigated in order to facilitate open communication (Bull et al, 2008). These limitations must be considered throughout this research and their effects will be discussed.

## 3.7 Strands of SL planning

Holden (2008) breaks SL down into three different strands when considering dynamics for research. Each holds different objectives, structures and different criteria for success.

Primarily within institutions and businesses, Organisational Learning (OL) is concerned with efficiency and creating successful businesses. Rooted in systems theory and inspired by the findings of the Hawthorne experiment that small groups are strong social settings; objectives include garnering shared visions and understandings by cutting across normal hierarchies (Friedmann 1987). Importantly, external learning perspectives are a vital input for this model. Such a model is increasingly popular in sustainability programmes in the commercial sector, with Molnar & Mulvihill (2003) noting its impact on paradigm shifts in this field, adding weight to the usage of SL ideas to foster such shifts in other sectors. Limitations to learning in this model however stem from its management and efficiency orientation and the lack of challenge to hierarchies of power (Friedmann 1987). The role of the SL planner, therefore, is limited by the objectives outlined by the organisation. Nonetheless eliciting experiences and worker expertise are important features, and as is the case with this research, OL within social enterprises can sidestep the limitations that power dynamics introduce in commercial OL.

Second along the continuum is communicative action (CA). In the CA model of SL, knowledge is rooted in community collaboration and consensus. In recognition of this, various methods of engagement and eliciting experiences are explored and significant shifts in beliefs and values are possible within this. In CA, experts and actors enter into mutual learning relationships where knowledge connected to technical rationality and positivist principles can be supplemented. However, this relationship can be a challenge to traditional governance relations and professional standings. As such the environment within which communication and agreement is reached must be carefully structured to facilitate genuine consensus. This is one key role for the planner, in addition to aiding the two-way flow of knowledge and learning between the expert and the civic actor.

Finally on the spectrum is the pragmatic strand. True to pragmatism, values and actions are reviewed in iterative open discourse and validated in agreement and efficiency. Holden (2008) calls these SL groups communities of inquirers and are the most focused of the three in seeking out new knowledge. This community, to be most effective should be self-governing and produce knowledge free from bias. Establishing this freedom (and articulating the benefits and relevant interventions that emerge) can cultivate further awareness beyond the community of inquirers into wider society. Of course, such a model is in tension with the governance orientation towards contractualism and pre-defined ends of technical rationality, but Dewey had faith that the validity of such a process can become self-evident through success. For the planner therefore, revealing the wisdom every individual holds is an important skill. In aid of this, arbitrating meaningful consensus and mediating the role power plays in controlling this are capabilities the SL planner requires.

In each model learning occurs through particular cycles. Firstly there is single-loop learning, which occurs mainly around skills, practices and actions. It is for Morgan (2009) a question of 'are we doing things right?' Learning here is often within the boundaries of logic and epistemology currently in operation and does little to challenge values and preconceptions, thus displaying qualities of satisficing (Hall, 1993). This is not to say that learning in this order cannot produce better policy outcomes, mutually arrived at understanding or greater efficiency, just that the objectivity of these elements can escape significant scrutiny (Holden et al 2014).

Double-loop learning is deeper than this, questioning the models, means and ends in operation (Diduck et al, 2012). It is a question of 'are we doing things right?' for Morgan (2009). Double-loop is important for SL as it brings learning to bear in a more meaningful way and is conducive to the plural understandings and realities that communicative planning addresses.

Moreover, scholars have identified a triple-loop learning process, in which paradigm shifts and knowledge take-offs can occur as Foucault identifies as important in overcoming hegemonic knowledge (Hall, 1993). It is viewed as a more fundamental learning process that concerns changes in norms and protocols, as well as a challenge to the power structures that select certain knowledges as valid (Diduck et al, 2012). It is in this loop that significant learning can occur for policy and institutions, but also meet the most resistance. As sensitivity towards various world-views is involved in this level, it is here that Kant's reconstruction and reflection can uncover subjugated knowledge and reflect on epistemological principles.

Thus SL is a combination of learning along these three loops. All have value but in order to instigate double/triple-loop learning and thus new ways of doing and theorising, a planner's role in mediating the dominance of conventional knowledge and powerful interests in discussion becomes crucial. All can add significant value to a planner's toolkit but knowledge arising from double and triple-loop learning would be expected to have more significant implications.

For Friedmann (1987), planning practice from a social learning perspective is concerned with changing two kinds of theories: a theory-of-practice and a theory-of-history of which both are in a mutually affective relationship. The former relates to codes and procedures of a practice, rooted in, for example bureaucracy, politics, commercial tenets or revolutionary ideas. It is in this category that expectations and behaviours are set and adapted throughout planning processes. The second is where ideologies and understanding of situations are rooted and can be most resistant to change. Positivist conceptions of rigor however limit interaction between the two, with theories-of-practice in planning struggling to meet the conditions of rigor that would produce a change in the theory-of-history. This split between theories can be the target for SL. Action and reflection can more easily affect a theory-of-practice, but it is through feedback into the theory-of-history that SL can cause the most significant shift through a deep reflection. By linking knowledge and action in social learning by structuring questions around consequences and affects, the relationship between Friedmann's (1987) two theories can be enriched and mutually reinforcing patterns of knowledge in institutions can be disrupted. For Argyris (1994), SL is concerned with correcting errors caused by systematic misunderstandings: pollinating between the two theories of practice and history challenges these errors and overcomes limitations of positivist epistemology. Reflection therefore is a central aspect of generating meaningful shifts in theory, and through an informed citizen such reflection can be rich and rooted in shared, social consensus.

These strands of SL contribute to this study in a number of ways. Firstly, we can identify which of Holden's learning groups the subjects of this research occupy and therefore, apply the criteria and

limitations for appraisal. Second, we can now identify the processes that SL goes through allowing an exploration of how these features contribute to the development of shared knowledge and planning toolkits and bring about new, mutually agreed actions and thus overcome traditional positivist knowledge. We can also identify how SL affects the interplay between theories-of-history and theories-of-practice, again exploring the benefit of challenging the separations within positivist professional knowledge. These elements will be revisited in the conceptual framework, but it is important to now explore the context and cases in which this research is being conducted.

# 4. The planning demands of the UK

Having drawn attention to the literature and theoretical principles of interest in this study, attention will now be turned to our research context. Firstly, a brief summary of key developments within the UK will be reviewed, paying attention to the knowledge and expertise demands that planners have employed and the relationships to certain rationalities. An introduction of the self-help housing movements will follow; exploring their objectives and principles, and applying an appropriate social learning framework.

## 4.1 The development of the UK planning system

The planning system of the UK has taken many turns throughout the political swings of the last 50 years. In the early post-war period buoyed by large scale rebuilding, a bespoke land-use based pragmatic system developed to accommodate the rapid shifts in industry and society. However, it was not until the late 60s that the view of a holistic planning intertwined with socio-economic objectives emerged (Evans, 1995).

The planning regime's most notable shift occurred under the Thatcher government. Rooted in the tenets of market freedom, rule of law and centralisation; planning became project led and poorly integrated. The spatial dimension came to the fore, monetary assessment became a key tool, and abolishment of local development plans –'a burden to businesses'- marginalised local sensitivity (Allmendinger & Twdwr-Jones, 2000). During this period the planning framework and raison d'être first came under intense pressure. Implementation issues put planners at the forefront of political blame, to the extent that Evans (1995) suggests that planning stopped being a welfare profession and became a skills based service of procedure and bureaucracy under this pressure. A key shift with long lasting implications for planning and its knowledge toolkit.

The last decade of the millennium saw modest systemic changes, but overall orientation to market logic and centralisation remained. Overarching plans re-emerged, deepening centralisation and local

leadership was promoted but was primarily rhetorical (echoed in Cameron's localism) (Nadin, 2007). Green politics' emergence changed agendas, with the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) established in 1990 empowering LA's. Linked to this the government's voluntary commitments to the Rio+20 agreement had a modest influence on policy (Nadin 2007). John Major succeeded Thatcher and despite little ideological distance he instigated a significant change in planning with the Town and Country planning act, aiming to promote more local choice but alongside the contents of the Local Choice agenda, which environment minister Chris Patten wrote into law, control was further centralised, again under-representing the local dimension of planning (Allmendinger & Twdwr-Jones 2000). Tensions at this time grew between market freedom and environmental protection. EU planning laws became more influential and the Conservative green-belt heartland staged huge protests in 1997 and 1998. These tension's influence in planning were great: as Nadin & Stead (2008. pp41) notes: *"Planning systems are an expression of some fundamental societal values."* Value conflicts, growing in society became apparent in these contradictory planning agendas.

During this time, the Blairite third way and pluralistic politics emerged, rhetorically acknowledging the multiple rationalities and values in society. Increased community focus and a view of an enabling and enforcing state concerned with social justice and wealth entered into political discourse. Public engagement in planning was greater than ever before in recent history but despite this, policy integration and implementation issues were sustained and community sensitivity overlooked. Slow planning systems' evolution exacerbated these challenges, with focus on PPP and investment reflecting this technocratic endurance.

In addressing this, John Prescott on becoming the Minister for Environment, Transport and Regions in 1997 introduced the new regional framework, with Scotland and Wales devolving planning responsibilities alongside 9 regions plus London (Allmendinger & Tewdwr-Jones 2000). Local authorities were urged to link up with this governance level quickly, but results were slow and agreement with the European Spatial Development perspective further fragmented planning authority. This concurred with New Labour rhetoric of discretion and community power but in a wider sense, this trajectory was at odds with the EU's desire for strong central bodies and the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) were seen to lack accountability, value, effective day-to-day powers and appropriate implementation (Nadin & Stead 2008. Nadin 2007). Nonetheless, this planning configuration introduced learning and community collaboration to planning.

In the 2001 Fundamental Change green paper participation, integration and collaboration became important through existing Unitary development plans, however LA uptake was as low as 13% by

2002 with complexity and stringent requirements on district wide integration cited as reasons for failure (Nadin 2007). Here we see the issues that collaborative rationalities place on planning, in producing widely inclusive plans and the challenge that meaningful collaboration presents. Toolkits were still incongruent with this agenda and despite a 2003 paper by the Deputy PM calling for *"all parts of the community have their voices heard through consensus building and participatory engagement"* (Innes & Booher, 2004 p428) planners still struggled to create such situations and expand their toolkits with such outputs.

By 2004 another fundamental change was called for, again for the sake of efficacy through responsiveness and reduced regulation. Nadin (2007) sees this shift as a recognition of the failures and fragmentation of planning systems, incongruent with objectives of integration and collaboration. Again holism was central to this cultural change and a discourse grew labelling planners as inadequately skilled and too technical to be effective for greater social objectives. This further reinforced the discourse of New Labour and the Conservative governments before it, suggesting that state bureaucracy is a fundamental part of the problem. Top down and bottom up assessment of these problems were in disagreement; the top down regarding a lack of clarity, communication and skills dispersion to blame with the bottom up countering this argument as being too insensitive to the reality of society and its planning structures, stating implementation should be seen as a continuation of the policy process and therefore better accounted for in plans (Clifford 2013).

The struggles of this period are well framed by the challenge of the local development fund reform. By this point, the frequency of policy change was causing significant issues and distrust across governance hierarchies, a factor today still overlooked (Clifford 2013). The system itself, like the RDA's initially, was seen as slower and confusing with 63% of authorities viewing changes as unhelpful, creating more red tape, check box planning and demanding the most arduous interpretations of regulations. Accountability and transparency were not increased by these reforms and implementation was overwhelmingly criticised (Clifford 2013). The government consultancy firm employed to investigate these issues once again highlighted this, but ultimately sided with the government in blaming a deficiency of skills in planners. This contention may not be entirely incorrect; as Taylor and Kelly note (2006) this period saw the key shift from 'grant' to 'contract' that demanded a new set of skills, a reduction of discretion and a shift from planning for issues towards planning for contractual obligations (with immeasurable implications for self-help housing groups of interest here. European funding, which by this point was flowing freely was much more responsive to the needs such groups identify, allowing discretionary freedom and facilitating collaborative identification of problems. The implications of Brexit for these groups could well be terminal). So

with these new and arguably inappropriate rigours placed around planners and the deepening of market orientation under New Labour, the gaps between planning problems and governance demands grew and continues to under the current government. Despite increased public spending in 2007 and a deepening of social enterprises and collaborative discourse, the economic downturn and legacy of the *"chaotic conveyor belts of initiatives and plans*" foreclosed any effective developments for the remainder of New Labour's government (Clifford, 2013 p380).

The response to the 2008 financial crisis of the coalition government was a significant influence on planning policy and restructuring dovetailed (in rhetoric at least) with Cameronist ideals of Big Society. The 2010 spending review set the tone for the government, reflecting the view that the paternalistic state has failed (in housing especially, with sink estates viewed as government creations), the coalition reversed the centralisation which had steadily consolidated over the past 50 years (Sturzaker & Shaw, 2015). LA's were bestowed greater responsibility in the review, with innovation through greater budgetary freedom and greater self-regulation promoted, local power and funding (e.g. through mayoral elections), freeing up frontline staff and removing barriers to community led provision (Lowndes & Pratchett, 2012). In this sense there is overlap with New Labour policy and indeed recognition of where planning had been going wrong in the past but again implementation was poorly accounted for.

The spending review set out agreeable aims, however austerity measures have contrasted this rhetoric. Local government allowance saw a 27% cut in the first budget, combined with a 51% cut to the community's budget. Indeed across the public sector the coalition aimed to save £81bn over 4 years – including a 2 year pay freeze in the public sector, 490,000 jobs cut and £7bn cut from the welfare budget- (Lowndes & Pratchett, 2012). Although both agendas seek economic efficiency, the scale and speed of the cuts have created a self-preservation atmosphere in public service providers and cut the capacities of LA's, perhaps best encapsulated by Mr Cameron's shock at the scale of rollback in Oxford (Mason, 2015). Planning questions did not revolve around 'how can we solve these problems' but instead 'what problems can we solve with 25% of our previous budget'.

As noted, the Localism act of 2011 nominally decentralised power to local authorities, however the term localism has been stretched by the government to encompass wider objectives such as facilitating private-provision choice & reducing bureaucracy (Select Committee: Localism, 2011). The Liberal Democrat coalition partners themselves campaigned for localism but have had little influence or support for the reforms, demonstrating the stretching of localism and a modest desire to truly promote communicative planning. Further mitigation arises from disputes within the Conservative party over the form localism should take. Implementation issues were again expressed, with

accountability, responsiveness, information & power now expected to come 'from below' (through referendums and consultation) in favour of the previous infrastructure of LA's. No framework or capacities were built to allow planners to create this. Some authors note the potential this creates for short-term self-interest to influence planning (with examples such as Manchester and Bristol constituents rejecting traffic proposals), demonstrating the democratic gaps that emerge in restructuring (Lowndes & Pratchett, 2012). Others point to difficulties with integration and the realities of supporting numerous devolved bodies (Clifford, 2013).

Despite the positive rhetoric, several trends raise tension in the localism agenda: firstly, market rationale has further encroached into state management, with hybrid organisations & private provision growing in the housing sector in particular; social objectives are becoming less represented in this and technical rationalities are still central languages of planning (Mullins, Czishke, van Bortel, 2012). An impact of private provision in the current contractual governance arrangements is that private bodies, under this rationality are viewed more favourably in Whitehall. More robust, accountable, better equipped and offering clearer paths to wealth creation, grassroots organisations simply cannot compete. Secondly, new criteria for funding render it difficult for small groups to receive support, leaving them with the choice of applying for a contract without undertaking the stringent registration and viability assessment process (such an approach proved beneficial in some cases of the Empty Homes Grants central to this research) or to enter into partnership with Housing Associations (which proved useful for smaller groups such as Cultures CIC). Thirdly such housing associations are criticised for lacking accountability to local communities. Only the largest receive public funding (with social housing only getting 13% of its budget from subsidies) further hindering the activities of smaller associations and social objectives. Thus the tensions in Cameron's localism surround an increasing centralisation of financial control (75% of LA budget set by Whitehall) and an absence of capacity building and collaboration central to localism rhetoric are large (Lowndes & Pratchett, 2012. Sturzaker & Shaw, 2015).

More specifically regarding housing there have been some positive shifts. The Right to Bid programme provides communities with the first opportunity (and time to gather resources) to bid for community assets, this however isn't manifesting in practice as LA's are keen to retain asset ownership in light of reduced finance. Additionally, skill provision to facilitate this asset management has yet to materialise. In a wider sense, the shift in rhetoric has generated interest in community housing. CLT's are receiving modest funding as of June 2014, 20 CLT's were being piloted on top of the 140 in action. 20 of which have reached completion. 9 CLT umbrella organisations were in operation at this time covering just under 50% of the country (Lang & Mullins 2015). Aside from this

the empty homes programme has been an effective programme with over £50million given to 110+ community organisations, providing environmental improvements and increased financial revenue for groups who control such assets (Minora, Mullins & Jones 2013). Emerging from these trends is facilitated communication between developers, communities and third sector organisations who are less oppositional to outside investment with concurrence in objectives. Aiding this interaction is the development of neighbourhood development plans, supported by the former right to build funding pots. However criticism for these are widespread, with significant wealth gaps reflected in their spatial distribution, themes of NIMBYism and protective policies, the need to align such plans with objectives of localism and the ability of LA's and local elites to influence and reject plans creating community-level clientism (Sturzaker & Shaw 2015).

So what can we conclude from this? There is an incompatibility with planning skills and the evolving demands of governance and society. If planning systems reflect social values, the rapid changes of society and political swings are compelling explanations for the inefficient calibration of planning activity and education. Whilst governments for decades have espoused rhetoric revolving around community and collaboration, simultaneous desire for contractual accountability, more efficient management and the embracement of market rule undermines this. Localism has been a prominent discursive element which has repeatedly been diluted and reversed, with the scale debate peripheral to the actual problems which evade reflection. At times, the decisions around planning infrastructure have been influenced by the EU and politically valuable constituencies, but there is an imbalance in the translation of policy into practice. Similarly, tensions in the housing sector reflect tensions at a higher political level (local/financial accountability; large/small scale) and evidence of political disconnect is notable.

Some benefits can be derived however: genuine discussion has emerged around community led housing, funding has been released and the EHCG programme has been a resounding success (though again government reflection on this is absent). Ultimately, and especially with regards to housing, localism vs centralisation is not the important debate: instead it is how to get meaningful co-operation and shared values and understandings within communities to develop dialogue and support between higher government and street level planning, between planners themselves and civic society.

## 4.2 The self-help housing movement

The self-help housing movement, with respect to the current government's objectives is a promising planning activity for SL. Friedmann (1987) notes the particular resonance self-help movements have with social learning and Borkman (1999) identifies the strong role played by reflective and

communal learning in the development of self-help and third sector work, but what facets of these organisations can we identify that make this resonance significant? Borkman (1999) sees a need for professionals with technical and social skills in strengthening such groups and the knowledge that emerges often "*pertains to a different sphere than that of technical and specialised professional knowledge"* (Borkman, 1999 p19). So planners can enrich their toolkit with knowledge from these wider spheres.

The practice involves bringing empty and dilapidated housing back into use with the aid of local people, often borrowed on a short-term lease or bought for a marginal cost (Teasdale, Mullins & Jones, 2011). In this case, the houses have been used as training opportunities for young and excluded people to earn qualifications in building, decorating and joinery. The homes are simply a starting point, with skills, community building, regeneration and environmental improvement being key outputs. Our CLT case deviates from this and is working with the self-help groups to improve the area of North Ormsby which is one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the UK. With the Big Society agenda, increasing funds from providers such as the UK HCA, around 784,000 empty homes country-wide and a housing market which is rapidly becoming unaffordable, the climate is ripe for such activities to become more central to official policy. With a social-housing coverage of around 2.3 million, a waiting list of 1.8 million households and over 280,000 homeless in the UK, there is a desperate need for a new approach (Teasdale, Mullins & Jones, 2011).

Most simply from definitions of self-help, Samuel Smiles 1859 definition separates help from within which 'invigorates' compared to help from without which 'enfeebles' (Mullins, 2010). This immediately invokes connections to community expertise and actions. It is worth noting that in expanding this definition, authors such as Archer (2009) draw attention to the need for outside support to facilitate this help from within and this resonates with the importance of outside learning for OL. When exploring the roles and functions of self-help housing movements, many expand their service delivery to training programmes for communities, provide apprenticeships and life skills and mutually support wider learning (Teasdale, Jones & Mullins, 2011). The local character of these objectives and goals of inclusion and cohesion are heightened by the small scale of these organisations, placing local values and community ideas centre stage in self-help housing providing great potential for SL methodologies.

Generally, the Conservative UK agenda of minimalist government opens up spaces for self-governance, and the anti-planning rhetoric further promotes social engagement in such activities (if we overcome the irony of supporting a self-planning activity marginalising the profession) (Lloyd et al 2013). Additionally, the creation of neighbourhood development plans, renewed focus on land

trusts and community accountability further make SL a valuable activity. So the opportunities in this minimalist government for networks of self-help housing organisations to grow together, learn from each other (and their communities) and collaborate in this sector of planning are growing. Nationwide, the self-help movement has consolidated into large groups (http://self-help-housing.org) which have become sources of advice and material support, spreading the lessons that have already been taught to allow new bodies to start on solid footing within umbrella networks (Mullins 2010).

Returning to the strands of social learning that exist, placing these organisations in one or the other is not an easy task. As the generation of new knowledge and theory is not a primary aim for these organisations, they do not fit well into the pragmatic strand of SL. Diggins (in Molnar & Mulvihill, 2003 p169) states that to be a SL orientated organisation:

> *"…demands commitment, determination and discipline. Commitment to ideals of inclusiveness and interconnectedness on the one hand and autonomy and freedom on the other; determination not to distort or trivialize the deeper meaning that undergirds life and the discipline of seeing the wholeness of things, of constantly questioning assumptions that underpin our actions, of clarifying our vision, of creating learning organizations where individuals are members not servants of teams of leaders."*

Such groups display many qualities of the Organisational and Communicative Action strands of social learning. Molnar & Mulvihill (2003) outline aspects of OL groups:

- Commitment to being a learning organisation
- Strong community and connection within the group
- Openness, inclusiveness and empowerment
- Experiments and risks
- A climate open to questioning assumptions
- Meaningful dialogues
- Envisioning different futures collectively
- Creating resilience and flexibility
- Co-operative basis

The self-help movements in this study satisfy much of the criteria for an OL model of SL. Under question are the level of risk taking and the openness of the discussion of assumptions. Aspects will

be discussed in our empirical analysis. As social enterprises, the organisations display elements of CA models, such as blurred relationships between expert and lay knowledge, various means of engagement and significant learning between organisations and their community contexts. OL is still the model of best fit, but this research highlights a need to expand OL models to account for third-sector organisations, as the relationships of power that are a limitation in commercial settings are also less applicable here. Additionally, the mutual learning between the groups of this study is crucial to their development and whilst the OL model accounts for this importance, the network is vital for these groups' survival.

# 5. Conceptualising planning knowledge and social learning

## 5.1 Conceptual framework

As outlined in previous chapters, this thesis seeks to explore the contributions that SL can make to a planner's knowledge toolkit in light of the inadequacy of positivist conceptions of professional knowledge. Firstly, in order to explore the contribution of social learning towards a planner's toolkit, we must identify what this toolkit is made of. Six dimensions of spatial planning knowledge, proposed by Salet in '*The authenticity of spatial planning knowledge'* (2014) (henceforth referred to as planning knowledge bodies [PKBs]) will be used to investigate which categories of spatial planning knowledge SL processes contribute towards. Taking these dimensions as a starting point useful in separating what knowledge planners must employ, our definitions and indicators come from wider literature and SL studies. With the increasingly wide demands placed on planners in objectives and expected skills these dimensions have become increasingly pollinated from other disciplines and institutional backgrounds, further widening the knowledge that planners must employ and use on a case by case basis.

In the second section, a conceptual framework to investigate social learning will be proposed, influenced by a range of theoretical sources and empirical research of SL. Firstly, indicators of SL processes will be defined in order to correctly attribute PKB development to SL processes. Secondly, Dewey's conception of validity will be operationalised to appropriately verify this knowledge. Finally, the concept of learning loops and interactions between theories-of-practice and history will be operationalised to trace how the knowledge contributing towards a planning toolkit has been created.

This framework will allow us to explore which PKBs benefit most from an SL process and the key loops in these processes. This will provide an answer to the question of how social learning can

contribute to a planner's toolkit by isolating elements. Secondly, by investigating how knowledge and action are linked in SL theory, the new conceptions of validity and the influences of powerful institutions in SL processes, we can appraise SL more widely in its implications for a planner's behaviour.

### 5.1.1 Cognitive Knowledge

Of first interest is cognitive knowledge which we can view as the methods of understanding a situation and the use of tools, measurements and concepts (such as technically or communicatively rooted concepts) that develop and channel this understanding. This category of knowledge will relate to the epistemological and philosophical underpinnings of approaches and tools. It will reveal what information is made knowable, where this information is found and reflect the types of information and knowledge considered important. More than this, this body of knowledge will also capture the limits of this understanding (such as where gaps exist in knowledge) and the ideas that groups have for bringing about change. For example, we might observe evidence of technical rationalities or communicative rationalities here and objectives or tools that reflect these rationalities. From this, we can identify several dimensions and indicators:

- Approaches to complexity and uncertainty
    - Evidence of holistic/atomised approach; mechanical or organic social view
    - Awareness of the relationships between contexts and objects in practice
    - Recognition of sources of uncertainty
    - Mitigation of uncertainty
- Methods of data collection and analysis
    - Variables identified as valuable
    - Methodologies of analysis
    - Rationalities used when selecting units of analysis
- Outcome of data collection
    - Which objectives are identified as important and how is this justified
    - Identifying potential for developing cognitive understandings

Complexity and uncertainty are significant conceptual elements for scholarly planning inquiry. The appraisal of cognitive knowledge in practice calls for investigation of these elements. Sources of uncertainty and complexity can be investigated for example by separating all-encompassing and atomised approaches to problems and their features, harking back to Einstein's famous 'Keep it as simple as possible, but no simpler' misquote. As such discovering approaches to problems can reveal the importance of this cognitive element to organisations within this study.

Methods of data collection and analysis will reflect the values, objectives and orientations of organisations and point to the epistemological grounds upon which these qualities are based. In keeping with social learning theory conceptions of learning as a process and the ideas of joint inquiry and harmonisation of values, exploring such features and how they are judged to be significant are important steps in identifying the rationalities that underpin them. The methodologies employed will also reflect the objectives and values of these groups.

These steps are continued in the outcomes of data collection. When an objective is identified the justifications and values informing them will be revealed, drawing attention to the cognitive understanding of a situation. Capturing these final two elements is necessary when our social framework is introduced, as meaningful social learning cycles would be expected to develop the objectives, understandings and focus of cognitive knowledge.

### 5.1.2 Reflective Knowledge

In line with the pragmatist underpinnings of the communicative turn (Healey, 2009), reflective knowledge has been defined in the words of John Dewey as an: "*Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends*"(Dewey 1933) There are however limitations with this term as explored by Smith (1999): firstly Dewey confines himself to an individualised sense of learning, at odds with the mutual learning of SL. Second, the emotional dimensions of reflection which initiate it, frame it and direct reflection towards desired outcomes are understated. Reflection –and knowledge of its processes- have been deepened in light of these criticisms, directly as a development of Dewey by Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) and indirectly through Donald Schön's (1983) discussions on reflective practice. Both incorporate experiences and emotions as central to a communicative conception of reflective knowledge. From these re-conceptions, three dimensions can be identified:

- Steps to return to experience
    - Identifying information and variables of salience
- Steps to connect with feelings of the experience
    - Assessing and using actions, processes and behaviours which generate feelings of helpfulness/obstruction
    - Appraising the value of experiences and information
- Steps to evaluate experience
    - Assessing coherence between outcomes and objectives
        - Relating assessment to intent and existing knowledge

    - Reformulating policy, behaviour and conceptions

The first two dimensions capture 'the grounds that support [knowledge]'. Firstly by allowing review of the information and variables of importance and secondly by focusing on the feelings involved in developing new knowledge. This assessment of the emotional reflection allows us to explore the conclusions that emerge from it, capturing both elements of Dewey's definition. Additionally we can explore the reflective process that could produce new ideas of theory and practice.

This developed conception will therefore allow greater purchase on the collective nature and emotional factors influencing the reflective knowledge that these community based groups cultivate and that Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) and Schön (1983) view as central to reflection.

### 5.1.3 Experimental Knowledge

In defining experimental knowledge we can again return to the pragmatist roots of planning as social learning. Dewey (1922) views the development and employment of experimental knowledge as an exercise in valuation and judgement. It is difficult here to neatly separate experimental knowledge from reflective and cognitive knowledge, however there are key differences. Cognitive knowledge pertains to the inputs of knowledge and episteme into inquiry, whereas experimental knowledge is concerned with making judgements based on experimentation with these inputs. Questions of value and episteme are possible outcomes of experimental knowledge but the process itself is concerned with facts and the exploration of empirical relationships within experimental design. With regards to reflection, this empirical and factual basis is again the seat of distinction. Our definition of reflective knowledge pertains to the emotional and experiential elements of reflection, whereas experimental knowledge focuses reflection upon measurable facts, data, tools and practices. Dewey (1922) sees the elements of experimental knowledge in three dimensions:

- Series of judgements about facts and variables
    - Knowing how to validate, verify and investigate variables
    - Understanding relationships between variables under investigation and context
- Formulating an action in light of these judgements
    - Monitoring and measuring variables
    - Choosing appropriate tools and methods
    - Managing bias and error
- A final judgement about the value's brought into existence by this action
    - Assessing range of options and conclusions to draw
    - Appraising the conclusions and contributions the experiment has produced

Thus this frameworks captures the experimental knowledge surrounding investigation and validation, procedures that measure and manage experimentation and the outcomes that can emerge. This focus on empirical information and judgements provides a framework able to separate experimental knowledge from other PKBs.

### 5.1.4 Entrepreneurial Knowledge

The fourth PKB is entrepreneurial knowledge. Defining this term is a challenging exercise due to the contested nature of the term entrepreneurialism and the varying cultural and organisational contexts in which it applies. In their exploration of competing definitions, Ahmed & Seymour (2008) suggest that indicators of entrepreneurial *activity* should reference value creation (socio-cultural and economic) and development of opportunities, capacities and resourcefulness. Activities also aren't limited to traditional vehicles of entrepreneurialism, namely firms and companies. They make the distinction between traditional entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs, identifying the value creation for others to be greater for social-entrepreneurs. Due to the third sector or social-enterprise status of many of the organisations in this research, operationalising the knowledge requirements behind social-entrepreneurship is of most utility here in lieu of specific definitions. Abu-Saifan (2012) concludes with a set of characteristics of social-entrepreneurs, compiled from seven definitions of social entrepreneurship –and indeed wider entrepreneurship-. We can extract three dimensions of knowledge from these:

- Financial skills
    - Knowing how to balance profit and social objectives
    - Recognising ways to minimize the need for external funding
    - Creativity and resourcefulness in identifying and applying for funding
- Innovation skills
    - Identifying aspects of projects or contexts with innovative potential
    - Recognising how to create the best value from innovation
    - Being creative and flexible
- Management knowledges
    - Maintaining accountability for business activities (within communities and organisational networks)
    - Establishing checklists and strategies of business management
    - Evaluating the strength and weaknesses of behaviours and policies
    - Demonstrating leadership qualities

Financial skills in the contractual governance climate of UK planning are vital and deserve inclusion, with the ability to balance profit/social objectives and creativity in finding funding being key knowledges. This is taken further in exploring indicators relating to establishing financial independence. Innovation is a consistent quality of entrepreneurialism which in social-enterprise manifests in two strands: the ability to promote elements of innovative potential and then get the most mileage out of this innovation. In this context these are important qualities to investigate when considering the impact and resourcefulness of a social-enterprise. Finally management knowledges reflect the business necessities of social-enterprises and are important aspects of the administration and day-to-day practice of business management. These have been taken further by identifying the need to maintain accountability within communities and organisations and be able to identify the relative strengths and weaknesses of business operations.

### 5.1.5 Political Knowledge

Political Knowledge is the fifth PKB under investigation. In operationalising this, dimensions have been drawn from Hoffman's (2012) diverse work splitting political knowledge into dimensions of civics and issues. Hoffman discusses political knowledge here in the public sphere of US politics but this does not disqualify this definition for several reasons. Habermas' critical theory in its problematisation of knowledge develops a knowledge production system based on fostering mutual understanding between all affected parties, thus Hoffman's dimensions being located in the public sphere resonates well with the tenets of SL and the third-sector nature of this study's groups. Hoffman (2012) see's political knowledge as knowledge in these dimensions and the depth of her research utilising these categories adds weight to their accuracy:

- Civic – knowledge on political institutions & processes
    - Navigating institutional structures leading to support or resistance (public , private or social)
    - Knowledge of where and how to apply for support or funding
    - Knowledge of wide range of trends or behaviours that can influence and build institutional capabilities
- Issues – knowledge of characteristics of actors & nature of issues
    - Exploring and developing mutual positions and objectives of various actors
    - Mobilising actors and balance stakeholder demands
    - Facilitating communication & consensus.
    - Recognising political dimensions of issues, stances and options.

This dual categorisation therefore captures both the institutional relationships and the more person centric issues 'skills', both of which are vital planning knowledge to engage actors and wider institutions.

### 5.1.6 Emotional Knowledge

Exploring emotional knowledge within planning and through an SL framework has significant justification. Firstly, enlightenment conceptions of rationality externalise emotions, presenting them as problematic hindrances to true rational action (Baum, 2015). This is an outdated conception but the endurance of technical-rationality has helped sustain this view, despite evidence suggesting that emotions are also contributors towards rational action (Ferreia, 2013). Secondly, social sciences with the cultural turn began to recognise the importance of emotions, revealed by work in emotional geographies and has accepted the view that emotional influence is great for planners and their subjects (Ferreia, 2013). Finally, emotions are now conceived in planning to be intrinsic to action and as such, in the action centric method of SL, their influence is worth consideration (Ferreia, 2013. Baum, 2015). Many planning scholars have begun to incorporate emotions into their analysis, as revealed by Lindblom's focus on interactions and Forester's development of professional stories and deliberation and Innes' collaboration, which help to incorporate this element. Exploring the impact of emotions then, is a way to move beyond technical-rationality and can be fruitful in revealing the consequences of powerful institutions exerting an overly technical framework. When viewing definitions of emotions, the benefit SL can bring in communicating and developing shared understandings emerge. If emotions *"influence the way we screen, categorize and interpret information"* (Baum, 2015 p505) then an SL process, and subsequent knowledge generation could fall under the effects of emotional influence, an awareness of this within the process can produce more meaningful awareness of the outcomes and influences for planning policies. Baum's (2015) definition of emotions can allow us to identify key indicators:

- Relationships
    - Action based on community or companionship
    - Actions based on distrust or dislike
- Security
    - Actions based on fear, anxiety or danger (for example, towards livelihoods, relationships or existence)
- Identity
    - Actions based on a self-image or perceived role e.g. protecting identity, autonomy, emotional investment in area or challenging alternative identities.

This framework then, captures the actions that emotional responses produce and is sensitive to the collaborative ideas of SL. It moves beyond technically narrow conceptions of planning processes and problems. Thus emotional knowledge is sensitivity towards these aspects and therefore an important part of planning practice.

## 5.2 Social learning framework

A number of steps are important to create an accurate conceptual framework for SL and lessons are drawn from theoretical and empirical research of SL, including research by Bos et al (2013), Bowman & Ambrosini (2002), Bull et al (2008), Colvin et al (2014) and Ospina et al (2008). Firstly, as Schön's connections between knowledge and action are crucial, we must look for the policies and consequences emerging from knowledge, and the feedback from this. This focus also addresses a limitation of social learning in that appraising changes in behaviour is important to identify that learning has occurred and has been applied. In line with Holden's (2008) suggestion, the unit of analysis for this research must be the community of groups, as such learning within and between the organisations is important here. Thus knowledge produced from group interactions is our focus. These steps capture the relational nature of social learning, the intimacy between knowledge and action that SL demands and allows an exploration of how the relationships within the group are affected by the positions and relative expertise of various stakeholders.

As SL incorporates new conceptions of valid knowledge (and a focus on relevance over rigor) data for this research has been appraised with, and is only included, when satisfying Dewey's criteria of agreement over problem displacement and intersubjective agreement over validity. Taking these steps ensures that the criteria for valid knowledge are appropriate for the socially specific and value and experiential dimensions central to the interplay between knowledge and action in SL and wider collaborative planning. We also capture Schön's and Dewey's close relationship between theory and practice with these criteria. By exploring problem displacement we can verify the success of actions, and by exploring agreement over validity, we can appraise the accuracy of knowledge.

Finally, we must ensure that the learning we observe meets wider criteria for SL situations. Muro & Jeffrey (2008) compile a number of indicators investigated in SL research from which a number can be of use. Attention to these strengthens our framework by further ensuring the relational nature of SL processes is captured and that the shared development of values, actions and knowledge can be observed:

- Identification of common purpose, values, knowledge and subjective impressions
- Discovering areas of agreement, disagreement, problems and opportunities

- Learning about community capacity
- Learning about system features and structural change
- Learning to collaborate, trust and develop relationships

These steps then allow us to attribute the contribution towards a planner's toolkit to SL processes; the relational nature of learning is placed centrally and the interplay between knowledge and action is directly sought. Secondly, by only observing examples that satisfy Dewey's criteria we relax requirements of rigor to become more sensitive to local knowledge, experiences and again, mutual development of actions and knowledge. So with a wider framework outlined to ensure SL is occurring, and that important knowledge contributions are captured, we now turn to a measurement of the process' themselves by creating a framework for the loops of social learning in order to get a deeper understanding as to how these contributions develop.

### 5.2.1 Learning loops

Social learning, as discussed occurs along three loops and thus identifying the process' here is necessary to identify contributions to a knowledge toolkit from SL.

To identify single-loop learning we must look for changes in skills, practices and actions WITHIN the context and framework of governing values (Diduck et al 2012). These indicators maintain the relationship between knowledge and action and reflect ideas about theories in use as discussed by Friedmann (1987) but will not be expected to affect a theory-of-history due to the limited boundaries of this learning. True to the collaborative roots, these changes will need to emerge from shared understandings.

Double-loop learning can be identified by a shift in understanding of problems, ends and associated means, inspired by a new conception of governing rules and variables. As such, it is important for learning surrounding mutual perceptions to be evaluated as well as indicators related to structural change and new ideas around community capacity. The value of certain practices will be questioned as well as the objectives that are being targeted. A more significant relationship will be evident between the theory-of-practice and theory-of-history, with the latter being informed by reflections upon the former.

Finally, triple-loop learning will involve two indicators: sensitivity to alternative world views and questioning the relationships between practices and powerful interests. Many of Muro & Jeffrey's (2008) indicators will be involved in this loop and it is here that significantly different ways of doing will emerge. Differentiating this from double-loop, here we will see the development (and inclusion) of new ideologies, values and experiences underpinning such practice. Whilst there are similarities,

triple-loop is more directed at the development of new values, as opposed to new ideas of rules and objectives in double-loop. It is in this loop that Forester's (2012) critical pragmatism ideas of exploring institutional relationships between knowledge and power will be brought into learning, as well as Kant's reflection and reconstruction. The former challenging the rules that validate a certain set of knowledge or behaviours and the latter incorporating the knowledge of actors that will traditionally be excluded and invalidated on positivist conceptions of professional knowledge. It is here that Dewey's reformulation of validity has the biggest impact and thus triple-loop learning can produce the largest shifts in understanding, the richest relationship between theories-of-practice and history so long as the lessons can be converted into practice and values.

## 5.3 The self-help case study

This fieldwork was conducted during a week-long visit to various self-help housing groups in the Teesside area of North-East England. Quintessentially post-industrial, the city's recovery from the flight of the steel industry and hundreds of thousands of jobs has been limited. It is within this context that many of the organisations emerged. This research was conducted as a joint case-study with members of the Housing and Communities Research group of Birmingham University, investigating the impact of the Empty Homes and Communities Grant (EHCG) which released just under £100 million for locally accountable bodies to renovate empty properties. Seven organisations delivering this programme were the subjects of this research. Data was collected through the recording of observations on regeneration sites, during interactions with community's clients and the organisations themselves. In depth, unstructured Interviews were conducted with representatives from the 8 players in the region and one focus group was organized with members, trainees and clients of one organisation. This qualitative focus is appropriate for the importance of experiences within the case study and the communicative theory informing this investigation.

Community Campus 87 (CC87) is a social enterprise based in Stockton-Upon-Tees. They have provided housing, training and support for young vulnerable people since 1987. Their longevity and wide reach have made them a key third sector player in the wider region and each organisation in this research has received invaluable support from CC87. Through the empty homes grant they were able to continue delivering affordable housing and qualification training, enabling clients to build upon solid foundations and develop their own capacities. The focus group was conducted with this organisation and an observation day was undertaken with leading members.

The Hartlepool NDC trust emerged from the government New Deals for Communities programme focussing on community regeneration, property management and skills training. The current leadership entered when the Morison Hall project – a derelict Methodist church converted into 5

luxury flats on the Hartlepool headland- had financial difficulties during renovation with the EHCG. The current leadership of this group was interviewed along with various partners at the opening of Morison Hall. Two organisational bodies are Hartlepool Revival –a holding company for the assets including Morrison Hall, a car park and a hotel-, and Opening Doors, their construction and maintenance service, which provides skills and training opportunities for young people.

East Cleveland Youth Housing Trust (ECYHT) follow a similar model to CC87 of providing homes to vulnerable young people as a basis for delivering a range of life skills. Working in rural areas the issues faced are somewhat different. EHCG had a modest impact but proved a valuable learning experience. Three group leaders were interviewed alongside a long-term trustee with established connections to other community groups under investigation.

Five Lamps is a large, long-established not-for-profit organization set up in the 1980s during the steel industry decline. Initially focused on youth unemployment they have developed alongside the city's challenges, growing into an employability and financial inclusion enterprise. Recognising the potential of the EHCG to enhance their service and buoyed by past success, the group received a large allocation of £1.3 million from ECHG allowing 50 properties to be acquired over the region.

Cultures CIC are the smallest group among the organisations and the least contingent on self-help housing, however their service provision is a valuable niche. Their primary aim is introducing migrant communities to British work ethics through training and education. Not EHCG recipients themselves, cultures CIC partnered with the housing association Thirteen for a handful of derelict properties to provide training opportunities and affordable rent accommodation for their clients. Their managing director was interviewed.

North Ormesby Development Trust (CLT) (NONDET) is a community-led land trust in the North-Ormesby neighbourhood of central Middlesbrough. Benefitting from the Big Local Lottery funded scheme for 150 localities across the UK, the CLT bought local interests together to tackle rogue and absentee private landlords, security and dilapidated housing. Implementing a landlord licensing scheme, owning various community assets (such as a playgroup, community shop and recently, the town market) has led to advanced discussions regarding the purchase of 6 empty homes below market value. The CLT has reinvigorated an area which politically and commercially many actors had abandoned. Interviews were conducted with their housing project adviser (mediating between the Big Local and the CLT, funded by Thirteen) and a long term worker.

A member of the procurement agency, Ferngarth Ltd was also interviewed. A small team of long-term contract tenderers, their mediating role between social and commercial organisations and

funding bodies is important. Their responsibility to translate the objectives of client groups (of which social enterprises are well represented) requires them to translate these elements into languages amicable for funding providers.

Finally interviews were conducted with two members of the recently closed regeneration department of Thirteen, the largest Housing association in the North East of England, created in the merging of several smaller HA's in the region. Both interviewees have long term connections and experience with the above third sector organisations and provided insight into the role of HA's in this governance climate and the opportunities for networking their nature as a HA allows.

Individually, these groups fulfil various roles in the area but the most important factor for success is their intimate relationships. Each and every group is aware and has at some point formally or otherwise engaged and supported each-other. CC87 for example readily shared their experience with Cultures CIC, Hartlepool Revival, ECYHT and NONDET. Thirteen, as the single largest housing provider in the area has leased out many homes to these groups, and when assets require work, they have contacted groups in need of training opportunities. This factor adds to the relevance of an OL approach to the learning within these groups: outside support has been vital and the learning within these organisations has been kick started by learning received from their peers. Appropriately therefore, this thesis shall focus on both this external learning and internal learning. External learning more obviously manifests in official support or advice on business practice. Internal learning on the other hand regards a mutual exchange between group representatives and their clients. Due to the network's resonance with features of SL, this research takes an etic view of these experiences with SL processes and explores this through interview findings.

Interviews were analysed using a content analysis coding method. This was done in four stages to ensure codes were refined and suitably reflected the intentions and contexts in question. Stage one annotated and extracted aspects from raw data. Stage two categorised these into themes, modifying where necessary and cross referencing to minimise overlap. In the third step, these themes were collected under over-arching categories again cross checked to minimise overlap.

Finally relevant categories were assigned to the PKBs under operation. This framework provided a useful structure through which to approach interview data, enabling notable contributions from SL to be identified within our operational dimensions. To ensure rigor, the raw data each theme pertained too was reviewed throughout this process. This confirmed the context and intent of each statement which proved important in locating forms of knowledge whose categorisation was

ambiguous. Appendix A demonstrates the comprehensive categorisation of each code, with comments attached to a number of elements in aid of methodological clarity.

Due to the tacit nature of many incidences of knowledge and expertise sharing and the diverse inputs into some forms of knowledge, a certain degree of flexibility in this framework has been necessary. Robustness has been maintained however by concerted efforts to correctly contextualise statements.

# 6. Analysis and Discussion

## 6.1 Cognitive

This fieldwork indicates that the impact of SL upon cognitive knowledge can be great due to a fundamental shift in understanding that can emerge. Overall, SL has produced meaningful shifts for cognitive knowledge in opening up practice to the ideas and benefits of non-expert knowledge and communication with clients. This fundamental development has had knock-on impacts onto wider business strategy. As such, OL tenets of learning from a range of participants are well reflected here, as well as the opening up of capacities towards being inclusive learning organisations with the sharing of responsibility and trust. As such, our dimensions of data collection methods and the outcomes of this data collection emerge as prominent knowledges improved through SL.

Firstly, methods of data collection and analysis have been developed in a way that reflects the complicated needs of these organisation's constituents and demonstrates many communicative principles. CC87 stand out, but in each organisation there is a deliberate attempt to explore the needs and experiences of their clients and methods sensitive to this have emerged, such as interviews, anonymous suggestion boxes, regular open meetings and in the case of ECYHT, a housing priority list that is developed in interviews about backgrounds and desires in order to find appropriate accommodation (an important factor to ensure that tenancies are stable). Cultures CIC in particular conducts larger group interactions with diverse ethnic and employment backgrounds to develop an understanding of what role the organisation should fill and to break barriers and tensions between groups. Aspects of OL and Muro & Jeffrey's (2008) indicators are reflected in these steps: deliberately developing collaboration and shared visions, incorporating outside perspectives and community capacities. Knowledge relating to outcomes of data collection emerges in an interesting way, as new objectives, practices and wider business values have been produced with potential for knock-on effects. Indeed the shifts in data collection knowledge towards communicative tenets have been a great contributor to this wider change.

For example, the former category surrounding data collection and analysis techniques reflects single-loop developments of practices that draw learning from group interactions and the experiences of policies:

> *"We have annual surveys and always try to encourage feedback. We have a suggestion box and have created an atmosphere of openness really, in the office, and we get tenants in regularly to have a moan at us." CC87*

> *"Every month we have a review of our service package with the board and some tenants." CC87*

Whilst ostensibly modest steps, this development of data collection methods open to SL has created an open atmosphere and facilitated shared learning and effective business practices. These small steps have allowed double and triple-loop learning to more readily occur by enabling a range of perspectives and experiences to inform business practice. This opening has had a significant impact on another dimension of cognitive knowledge in the outcome of data collection. Shared discussion and environments that are receptive to various needs and concerns have furthered the ability of CC87 in particular to operate as a person centric, holistic and socially rooted group:

> *"We've always been a very people centric organisation and really tried to be a service for young homeless or other economically and socially disadvantaged people. But what kept coming back to us [as a need] and has really allowed us to thrive, I suppose, is a more holistic view of the person and their livelihoods… realising that a wider service package is needed in a lot of cases." CC87*

This quote indicates that the dimension of data outcomes has received meaningful contributions from SL in the form of triple-loop learning. Incorporating the views and needs of their clients pushed the group towards a wider support package and displays a large policy outcome as a result of this shared learning and data collection/appraisal methods, improved by tenets of SL. By learning along this loop, the greatest inspiration for the shift was discovering the exclusion many young people face and that there was a real absence in employability skills that public sector bodies were not addressing. The outcome here then is that SL corresponding to OL tenets produced a fundamentally different understanding of social needs and responsibilities for CC87 and that a more holistic enterprise was called for inspiring their wider service delivery today.

Perhaps the most interesting example of SL's contribution towards cognitive knowledge is represented by the PHD of the director of Hartlepool Revival. His experience as mayor of the city and his work in the third sector has led him to identify a lack of appropriate indicators for social impact,

for example in projects such as the EHCG which produced not only homes, but hundreds of hours of training opportunities for builders and decorators, provided chances for young excluded people to earn qualifications and in some cases, live in houses they themselves had renovated. The wider impact on communities, environmental quality and personal stability for these people is difficult to measure, so with SL leading to new indicators as an outcome of data collection for him, a deficiency in the methods of data collection (and formats suitable for stakeholders favouring numerical indicators) has been his focus. Thus by contributing to cognitive knowledge in these two dimensions (by identifying new objectives and pointing towards deficiencies in the resolution of data collection to capture social impact), SL has inspired an investigation of how to measure 'social impact' opening the door for further new cognitive knowledge to emerge.

## 6.2 Reflective

SL has a peculiar contribution to reflective knowledge. Immediately, it can bring new practices and methods of reflection into play, it can make reflection more targeted towards social objectives and it can greatly expand the information, experiences and values that are reflected upon. Less immediately however, the outcomes of this reflection can be improved by SL.

CC87 for example have brought new practices of returning to experiences and evaluating experiences into play which creates potential for SL to contribute. Their usage of steering groups, regular tenant meetings and suggestion boxes are some of the ways in which this has been achieved and a wider set of inputs are contributed towards reflective knowledge, which can allow for a greater set of outputs. Information from tenants is directly incorporated when they return to the experiences with these meetings. Their focus on experiences ensures that they are connecting with the needs of their tenants and these needs can be corroborated with the policy objectives the organisations currently hold. Their discussion of how they reflect upon their service demonstrates this:

> *"It can be challenging to keep our social roots as a company as it has grown, which is one of the reason we've maintained a steering group of old tenants who review with the current tenants: Right, how was your last repair, was it done on time, what do we need to do better, and that's vital really." CC87*

To maintain their social roots they have adopted practices that would better allow them to reflect on their progress and are clear in their desire to improve reflective practices through SL. Additionally, their use of Maslow's hierarchy of needs when discussing their service with tenants

further ensures that their reflection is considering the right information and provides an experientially rooted framework through which their assessment can be refined.

The contribution of SL here has occurred in single-loops: new practices of steering groups and meetings have emerged so that their current objectives can be achieved and this has ensured that their reflective knowledge surrounding evaluation is appropriately sensitive to allow an assessment of the success of their policies. Ultimately, SL here has improved the foundations of reflective practices by widening the information that is reflected upon and policies that emerge can be more closely related to the tenants needs and in their words, their social roots. Additionally, this opens the way for deeper SL loops to emerge, as by widening the inputs into reflection, the knowledge and action outputs can be more holistically informed and double/triple loop learning becomes a greater possibility.

ECYHT have also greatly benefitted from SL's contribution to reflective knowledge and by structuring their tenant engagement around individual meetings and case-by-case appraisals, all three elements of reflection have been improved. For example by taking a case-by-case basis for housing needs, they return to the experiences of tenants through personal interviews that find information salient to the individual. From this, they reconnect specifically to their problems and can produce actions tailored to their needs (for example, drug addicts finding stability in shared housing, placing an individual who grew up in a city in a house with a busier environment, or placing a high risk individual at the top of the waiting list). This finally enables evaluation of objectives and outcomes to be specific to the client's needs and they credit this approach to reducing homelessness and creating more stable tenancies:

> *"We allocate on a needs led basis really, take everything into consideration. For example a young person who has never lived alone, or lots of ASBOs [anti-social behaviour orders],we'd want them where they could get support not isolated in a small village, put them on [the] high street with better access to services more support… You could be on the waiting list for a longer time but there might be people more suitable for the properties. We always do interviews and a lot of pre-tenancy work which is going down well. Builds for us a better picture of how they'd manage the property." ECYHT*

> *"We've recognised the importance of flexibility to help our tenants… lowering the rent to cover the shortfall in housing benefits and preventing homelessness." ECYHT*

Here we see how reflective knowledge has been improved by an SL based approach of learning about the client's needs and generating a shared understanding of what actions should be taken,

such as reducing rents. By returning to the experience with interviews, pertinent information is gathered by 'taking everything into consideration' and building a picture of the individual. By connecting with the feelings involved (such as the need to be flexible to allow financial security, by identifying the concerns of the client), certain actions can be formulated that reflect the experiences and needs of the individual. Finally, by reflecting positively on this behaviour there is an indication that this approach has proven beneficial.

Taking such an approach is patently in line with SL. Mutual agreement over the most suitable property is reached, specific knowledges are incorporated with regards to the particular needs of clients and tailored approaches emerge and the reflective knowledge emerging is directly from interactions. The positive view of such an approach suggests that validity through problem displacement and agreement has been reached. Indeed such an approach is specific to the case-by-case ideas of pragmatic planning and ensures the knowledge and actions are relevant. There is therefore, triple-loop learning emerging here. The world views of clients are directly fed into reflections upon how to attain stable housing for them, new experiences and values are addressed in each case and practices that have found to be exclusionary are questioned (and the action of reducing rents emerge to address this).

So by engaging in triple-loop learning with clients, reflective knowledge has been improved by a pragmatic approach and ultimately dimensions of reflective knowledge are benefitted by this case-by-case approach. Not only is the reflective process itself contributed to through SL, but actions that have emerged from this reflection are ultimately better receptive to client needs due to the triple-loop learning that occurred. Thus reflective knowledge and practice again becomes more targeted and more appropriate for social needs when SL contributes towards it.

Our final example of SL's contribution to reflective knowledge blurs the boundary between reflection and action and demonstrates that through SL practice, reflective knowledge can be improved for clients too. CC87 have discovered that releasing funds to youngsters within the organisation has produced meaningful benefits for their business management and their youngster's life-skills. By giving them responsibility, the openness and collaboration within the organisation has been improved and their wider objectives of helping individuals with a range of skills are reached by introducing them to larger sums of money, allowing them to learn some points of business and financial management. This process directly converts non-expert knowledge into actions by allowing them to spend as they see fit. Reflective knowledge has been improved here therefore by using SL actions to improve the youngsters' abilities to reflect: their experiences are turned into actions, they

learn how to appraise spending from a business perspective and they can rethink how to spend money to achieve certain objectives; reflective knowledge that can help them in wider life.

> *"We give about £4000 a year to the youngsters and the steering group and say, look, spend this as you see fit and we've found that really makes money go further. We obviously still sign off on things but they are more resourceful with it as they're not used to dealing with huge amounts [of money]." CC87*

So the value of this resourcefulness and the value of this experience have been evaluated as an effective policy for a number of objectives. SL has contributed to the business by demonstrating that non-expert knowledge can be harnessed to produce better business management, create new practices and demonstrates the value that trusting clients and sharing values (such as what the youngsters identify as important to buy, and what is involved in business finances). This also bypasses the fears of checklist planning as input is directly incorporated into practice. This has introduced a host of new criteria to reflective knowledge and gives ideas of how business objectives can be achieved. By the youngster's reflecting-in-action, this environment has introduced them to reflective practices in a business environment. These actions then incorporate alternative approaches, challenges conceptions of how business should be conducted and employs knowledge that may otherwise be excluded, or indeed need developing (as these youngsters themselves are learning about business practice) and demonstrates many of the qualities of triple-loop learning.

So SL's contribution to reflective knowledge in this example has expanded the practices and experiences that are reflected upon. Novel ways of operating can be incorporated into reflections upon how to best achieve objectives, reflective knowledge can be shared and developed and it brings new values and experiences into play when considering how CC87 should address challenges. SL most importantly has allowed this by generating trust and collaboration, by demonstrating that sharing knowledge is beneficial for all parties, that community capacities are sometimes better then organisational capacities and that new areas of agreement and problems can be demonstrated by the items that the youngsters or managers view as important.

## 6.3 Experimental

Experimental knowledge appears to play a modest role in the grassroots activities of this study. There is little indication of direct experimentation yet tacitly such behaviour is well represented.

Ferngarth LTD suggest that behaving in an experimental manner is vital for the third sector and indeed covers gaps that governments do not address. For example, a direct discussion about how important investigation and unearthing problems and relationships are for the third sector, suggests

that our first experimental indicator plays a strong role in their activities. This is also reinforced by ECYHT gathering and interpreting information through interviews, conducting follow up meetings for their tenants and developing new policies such as creating shared housing to fulfil specific needs. CC87 too, when exploring needs found a wider service package was necessary to bring vulnerable youngsters the stability and capacities they need, demonstrating the gathering of information through interviews (and validated based on agreement between the group), the appraisal of conclusions (service gaps exist and we can help) and a new set of variables to monitor (for example, from Maslow's hierarchy of needs). So, whilst explicit experimentation is lacking, their work can be seen as a continuing, exploratory experiment that bears features of Schön's (1983) reflection-in-action.

> *"I can think of, in 10 years of working between the voluntary sector and government in this area [North East England], I can't think of one example of the government conducting any research or asking the third sector or whoever what the problems are and how best to fix them… the community organisations however MUST act in this way in order to find the issue and find how to solve it.'' Ferngarth LTD*

The contribution of SL to this is multi-faceted. Single-loop occurs and generates practices of periodic tenancy monitoring for ECYHT, or the assessment of how effectively training hours have been provided by the empty homes programme for CC87 (which led to the conclusion that we must branch out to find more training hours and generate a wider community impact). Triple-loop learning has also contributed to this experimental knowledge: a deeper awareness of the relationships between social features led CC87 to widen their service and this would not be possible without the inclusion of Kantian reconstruction with participants sharing their experiences. There is also recognition from ECYHT that they have many vulnerable tenants who will be more stable with regular engagement (and thus, their experimental practice around monitoring was modified) and that without awareness of these alternative views about what these tenants require this may not have been incorporated into experimental design. Equally for both Hartlepool Revival and ECYHT, their conclusions from communities and their own clients seeking training hours that more projects within the community improve relationships, community receptiveness (with housing problematic individuals potentially causing tension in small villages) and provided a source of pride for their trainees (and thus, final judgements about value have been informed by a shared understanding of what the communities and their trainees need). Thus SL has brought competing views together to allow conclusions within the groups and communities to reflect upon new values. It has challenged

community views that problematic youngsters will only be a negative for the area and by discovering the value of work in the wider community, more community work has been the focus.

It is not therefore, only through need that an experimental mind set has been produced upon the tenets of social learning (returning to Ferngarth's quote, by asking communities about problems and how to fix them), but a recognition that neighbourhood values and the values of trainees such as those working for CC87 and Hartlepool Revival, when incorporated into experimental design can improve the actions constituting business practice. SL therefore can produce experimental knowledge that leads to better business management by focusing the experiment on values and experiences more sensitive to the needs of communities and these group's clients.

Direct experimental practices do emerge and Cultures CIC using a pilot study early in the process demonstrates this. When deciding how to approach integration, they realised that bringing together various cultures was as a variable to help achieve this. Their pilot not only emerged as an action in light of this, the scenario allowed them to explore the outcomes in a controlled environment. As a result of the pilot's success, the model was incorporated into regular practice and their successful experiment opened a range of options when funding was explored, as the demonstrable results (when combined with external support from Thirteen for housing management, and CC87 for training and maintenance) highlighted that they could reliably lease and improve dilapidated properties for private funders.

> *"The pilot for example, we had recruited volunteers from the community and for quite a lot of them English wasn't their first language, so we also put in someone who's English was relatively good who could communicate…when you mix with other people you learn a lot…. in a very strange way, it was used to address mental health because for quite a number who are refugees they really are not doing anything… it gave them a flavour of what they could go on and do at the college. We've used this pilot to look at what you would like to do." Cultures CIC*
>
> *"…with the type of support from CC87 and Thirteen and the fact we've done this kind of pilot we stand a better chance of borrowing [from banks and funders]." Cultures CIC*

So here, experimental dimensions are revealed by approaches to investigating an issue (language and cultural differences and bringing together different backgrounds in a work environment, thus exploring relationships between variables) choosing an appropriate method to promote and assess development (in this shared environment, where mixing produces learning) and a judgement about the conclusions and options it has produced (improving mental health, providing tasters of

education options and proving an example for funders that this model can produce results). The knowledge emerging from this experimental process has been improved by SL in a number of interesting ways. By creating a SL situation, the pilot study investigated and monitored the outcomes that such processes could produce. Thus experimental knowledge here has been contributed to by producing outcomes based on how SL can instigate changes in values and break barriers between different groups. In this sense then single-loop development surrounding experimental practices has occurred in that future practices can benefit from the experience of this pilot study. With new possibilities towards funding sources, outcomes of the experiment have been improved which demonstrate that conducting SL in this way can produce results. As such, experimental knowledge has been benefitted from by this SL situation. With positive results from this experiment, a weight of evidence is added towards this model of learning providing motivation to continue.

## 6.4 Entrepreneurial

Examples so far have indicated that SL can make a positive contribution towards knowledge toolkits, however limitations of what can be achieved are revealed in entrepreneurial knowledges. As CC87 has grown, the nature of their business has developed and new demands have been placed upon them. There is evidence that financial skills and management knowledge are found lacking in these organisations and that developing them through SL is a difficult task. For example, their discussion of the importance of Key Performance Indicators and balance sheets reflect this business orientated knowledge and their unhappiness that such skills would be difficult to share to actors within the group suggests that more formal sources of this knowledge is required. Additionally, the statement that an entrepreneurial arm of the company is still needed suggests that in terms of the knowledge and behaviours needed for this, distinct roles and specialities will be required. NONDET too, have reached the limits of what they can achieve through SL and find that their ownership of the town market will probably require a bespoke manager and although the CLT has engaged in SL processes to discover how the market should look, achieving this is beyond their skillset in-house.

> *"We would love to see more tenants on the board, but as we have grown the nature of our business has changed, I mean, we're now a company with a turnover of £1.5 Million and our board is now concerned about KPI and balance sheets and what-have-you… as a result there are a significant amount of quite advanced skills that would need to be shared." CC87*

> *"Really we need an entrepreneurial arm to the company for us to find funding and to act business like in the current climate." CC87*

> *"We need someone to run the market as that's a bit beyond us." NONDET*

So NONDET and CC87 indicate here that their financial and management knowledge can only go so far and that there is a need to bring in outside sources to get this knowledge. Indeed there is an indication that traditional technical knowledge surrounding financial behaviours are still present in this grassroots planning and are still exclusionary and that gatekeepers of this information have particular power. Considering SL here, there is an indication that developing these knowledges through SL would be a difficult task. This points to the importance of outside learning for OL, and challenges Kantian ideas of reconstruction and reflection, in the sense that knowledge here would have to come from a traditionally legitimate source. Far from challenging the validation rules of certain knowledge, entrepreneurial knowledge appears to be reinforced as distinct from the knowledges local actors can bring to the table. Without the right actors engaging therefore, SL's contribution towards a planner's toolkit is limited and entrepreneurial skills may have to be cultivated in more traditional ways, pointing towards the need for the government to ensure that knowledgeable actors are involved in Localism programmes to see the community development that the government wants. With the right actors and willing engagement however, we can identify a contribution towards entrepreneurial knowledge.

Significant entrepreneurial knowledges have been exemplified by the introduction of the new head of ECYHT, a retail manager with over 10 years of experience. After taking over this organisation there are many reports of how useful his financial and management knowledge has been for the organisation itself and for the network of groups in this study. For ECYHT, his innovation with finance allowed them to take on the Crown Pub project, converting the property into five flats and thus making use of funding that would otherwise not be adequate in meeting contractual obligations. The reports of CC87 too, demonstrate the impact that entrepreneurial expertise has had when shared between groups, as well as the direct skills sharing that Thirteen provided NONDET in terms of management knowledge.

> *"We really are lacking IT skills, administration and business management which is why when [ACTOR A] came in it was such a breath of fresh air." CC87*

> *"The Northern Rock [building society fund] money was really not enough for the objectives attached to the funding at the time, until we considered The Crown and now we've overachieved on our targets…" ECYHT*

> *"We needed to work with Thirteen to get the management expertise and their input was vital to our project, it's coming to an end now and that's been a big help… they have taught us a lot." NONDET*

Thus the sharing of expertise in admin and business management for CC87, and the benefit of Thirteen's management skills for NONDET demonstrates that in SL processes, entrepreneurial skills can be shared for the benefit of grassroots groups. In both cases this has been primarily single-loop sharing of skills and practices, but the increased collaboration and sharing of knowledge that can build capacities has been beneficial. Again, the sharing of knowledge from outside of organisations emerges as a significant contributor to SL processes of knowledge creation, in this case double-loop learning surrounding new understandings of rules and variables informed by a business perspective. Thus when it comes to SL, we can identify a need for willing and skilled participants for a contribution towards entrepreneurial knowledge to occur. Developing such knowledge from traditional sources is still necessary to supplement SL and it is this factor that places planning in an important role for SL processes. Certain skills planner's or indeed any actors possess should be freely shared with communities in order for them to become more formative of their area and continue meaningful SL processes after the planners and knowledgeable stakeholders have left.

The limits that SL can be reached even when the right actors are involved are indicated in Thirteen's dilemmas. Thirteen discuss the economic argument that needs to be made for social objectives and thus financial knowledge about balancing books is important. Also innovative knowledge emerges here; discussion on how to make the argument that leasing out poor quality properties to the empty homes group can be beneficial economically reiterates the importance of financial knowledge for organisations and the importance of innovative knowledge to find opportunities. This reflects the experiences of ECYHT, whom would not have been able to meet the contractual requirements for the money they received from the Northern Rock society without their identification of the Crown Project, a unique case within these networks. Innovative knowledge again emerges as important.

> *"It's all well and good acing socially but as a large HA we need to make the economic argument and really that's a philosophical debate within all HA's for that balance." Thirteen*

> *"We have to make the economic argument that for large HA's, a handful of liability properties aren't a great loss and we can improve their income and act in a conscious social manner." Thirteen*

So the contribution that SL can make to these financial and management knowledge bodies in particular appears limited, but innovative knowledges are perhaps better contributed to through SL. With an economic bottom line, the development of shared values and actions and reflecting upon a range of experiences and non-expert knowledges will still come into tension with the financial demands around whether or not to act. The limits of what SL can achieve, and to whom the

outcomes appeal, are indicated here. Indeed the implication that social and economic objectives are mutually exclusive reflects the social and structural conditions that can limit the contribution of SL to knowledge: with financial responsibility at the forefront, SL's communicative contribution can do little to uproot the technical rationality of financial decision making, and with contractual arrangements limiting what funding can be spent on, SL may be a futile endeavour. Whilst government mantras currently revolve around 'doing more with less', contractual arrangement still dictate these terms and as is repeatedly reported in this study, these arrangements are often distant from the actual social needs to be addressed. The only way for SL to be able to contribute to actions and knowledge surrounding financial skills then, is to arrive at the win-win situations that Thirteen hint towards and demonstrate that by developing shared actions and values all parties can see benefits. This aim of SL however appears challenging to reach, and for contractualism to be improved by SL significantly, learning between communities, government and funding providers is needed prior to contract creation in order to allow meaningful triple and double loop-learning to be turned into action. With this, SL can strengthen the innovative argument with the inputs of new actors and experiences to find alternative actions and the willingness of decision makers to look beyond their traditional financial knowledge comes into play.

Power therefore is remaining stubborn here. An administration of knowledge placing financially responsible action in a primary position limits the contribution that SL can make to actions made on the grounds of entrepreneurial knowledge. By 'making the economic argument' thirteen are demonstrating Hall's warning about particular sets of ideas becoming internalised in institutions. Whilst SL can answer Albrecht's call to challenge these knowledges with a new basis for planning knowledge, convincing institutions of the benefit of these toolkits when such institutions are structured around economic bottom lines remains difficult. Thus there is still work to be done to spread new laws of normalisation and remove economic centrality from its hegemonic position.

## 6.5 Political

Political knowledge emerges as a strong benefactor from SL processes, and the enduring and remarkable networks of support that have developed between these groups are a testament to this contribution. SL has truly impacted not only the longevity and richness of these relationships, but deepened the shared objectives and values for the various stakeholders in the area and led to case after case of mutual support and joint effort.

With regards to civic knowledge there are numerous examples of improvements through SL: lots of informal advice been shared surrounding funding and institutional support, be it specifically developing procurement tenders for ECYHT and Cultures CIC with the aid of CC87 or reaching out to

actors within institutions who have been helpful in the past for other organisations (Hartlepool revival's governmental background for example, or Thirteen collaborating with other housing providers and mediating between government and grassroots). More formally too, we see joint bids for funding pots, Thirteen acting as a resource 'conduit' for less secure grassroots groups, who also directly equipped NONDET members with management expertise and they have allowed their asset base to be used by smaller enterprises (for example, providing 'safe houses' for a small organisation addressing domestic abuse). It is thus sharing objectives and tapping into relative capacities that emerge as prime civic examples of SL's contribution, even in a direction which we might not expect:

> *"The easy bit of empty homes is the improvement, sustainable tenancies and support is where the other group's expertise comes in… groups who are footloose, connected and can also generate pride in the tenancies… without CC87 tenant management we would struggle more here…. We can mutually support each other capacities and grow together" Thirteen*

For a large HA to report the benefits of single-loop learning here (through incorporating new skills and practices with the aid of SL improved civic knowledge) indicates the strong results such processes can achieve in developing political knowledge and behaviours. The expertise contribution of CC87, which as we know have demonstrated cognitive knowledges refined by SL, exemplifies mutual understanding of values, skills and new behavioural rules and thus a richer set of civic knowledges have emerged from this double-loop process. A planner's toolkit is contributed to by SL here with a greater repertoire of political knowledge (particularly surrounding mutual support) which can in turn open up possibilities and relationships. We see evidence of this political knowledge improvement more formally through the skills sharing of CC87:

> *"CC87 chipped in on doing the land trust and doing a feasibility and appraisal skills, how it should be organised who in the council to talk to… learning skills and developing the policies of housing management…e.g. from Thirteen and other housing people" NONDET*

In this case we see that single and double-loop learning has emerged from the interactions between CC87 and NONDET. Single-loop in the development of skills and approaches and double-loop in sharing understandings of means and ends related to navigating institutional support and sharing behaviours and negotiations. Whilst the inclusion of management skills is perhaps more rooted in entrepreneurial knowledge, the source of it emerging from SL improved civic knowledge justifies its notice here. Thus SL's contribution to civic knowledge is strongly rooted in the OL tenet of seeking external support and skills and in this case has enabled triple-loop learning to emerge for the CLT, as much of their further activity is rooted in communicative consensus: Their *issues* knowledge has

been furthered by SL contributing to civic knowledge. By developing their understanding of the structural dynamics (through feasibility skills), and learning about community capacity (by discovering from CC87 the day-to-day needs and actions that can be achieved, heightened by their success in collaboratively developing programmes sensitive to the needs of the area) SL contributed towards the development of NONDET's civic knowledge and practices conducive to issues knowledge.

The SL contribution to issues knowledge is particularly true for knowledge around mobilising actors, achieving consensus and discovering mutual values and objectives. This was done for NONDET through community meetings which included over 100 people, local business' and HA's, leading to problem 'hit lists' in which 5 challenges and solutions were outlined surrounding crime and CCTV, rogue landlords and subsequent regulation and management issues, with landlord monitoring schemes emerging. In this case a direct SL process invoking community action achieved three dimensions of issues knowledge and improved the capabilities and repertoires of the CLT:

> *"We've really been responding to the problems raised in community meetings like introducing the landlord licencing which required huge collaboration" NONDET*

So double-loop learning has directly occurred in these CLT meetings, generating understandings of the problems and means in the area and a new understanding of the variables in play that are important for residents (such as security concerns and absentee landlords). Triple-loop learning too has emerged: by tapping into local knowledges and questioning the problems that have emerged from landlords acting in a legal, but unethical manner, these experiences prompted new practices and objectives sensitive to the needs of local residents. So issues knowledge of achieving consensus, actor mobilisation and arriving at mutually agreed understandings and objectives have been specifically improved by SL here, highlighting the relationship between local, overlooked knowledge and appropriate policies. In a wider sense, the activation of citizens and capacity building has been heightened by the CLT populating its board with members skilled in housing management, former governmental officials and representatives from a number of social enterprises. This opens the pathway for SL in the future to be informed by a diverse background of skills and experiences, and is buoyed by this example of success. Ultimately the possibility of further development of political knowledge exists due to the momentum these successful outcomes can generate. A more holistic input to future learning can be achieved and triple-loop learning sensitive to a wide range of experiences and backgrounds can result in stronger contributions towards political knowledge.

## 6.6 Emotional

Emotional knowledge as suggested by the developments noted in our framework plays an important role in planning and grassroots activities. Most basically, the fact that each organisation is rooted and invested in the area of Middlesbrough, relationship knowledges are very important as each organisation, despite working with great challenges and small budgets, are motivated by a desire to see improvements in their local area. CC87 for example started to help young people during the city's decline who were being excluded from the housing markets and falling into service gaps, unable to get themselves into employment or education; a similar story to Five Lamps. Cultures CIC also work based on community action and their large meetings and attempts to foster cultural integration by creating work teams of different cultural backgrounds reflect this, as well as an attempt to share identities knowledge between the local community in an effort to not only help new migrants integrate but also raise awareness within these communities of cultural practices. NONDET, as a CLT reflect each of our emotional indicators: their purpose is to take steps to improve a struggling community, to increase security as noted by their development of security programmes and to become more determinate over the identity of the area themselves, by controlling rogue and absentee landlords and managing community assets such as the playgroup and the market, they ultimately seek to improve the cohesion and character in the area. Even thirteen, when discussing their philosophical debate around social vs economic objectives, invoke actions that emerge from identity and relationship knowledge: by deciding to fulfil social objectives and thus reflect their business identity with these activities and by working alongside grassroots groups where they see opportunities to benefit local communities and forge closer bonds to these stakeholders. Emotional knowledge then, and its manifestation in action is a central motivation for the groups in this study. Patently therefore, SL has purchase to make a strong contribution to the planning practice in the area through emotional knowledge.

SL most obviously has purchase in enabling emotional knowledge to develop respective to the various needs in the area, and this most readily can contribute towards relationship dimensions.

> *"…It's about bringing all the parties to the table, creating better service, accountability and we need to keep flexible to achieve this. At the end of the day our tenants want to have a community for their own sake and we've grown into our role to facilitate that" CC87*

Directly here CC87 discuss their role in creating communities for their tenets. By listing the actions that they see as vital in their business operation and following up with their recognition of tenets needs, this quote demonstrates the development of actions relating to relationship knowledge. Double-loop development then of means (in their activities such as getting everyone to the table)

and the identification of a governing variable (in the centrality of community to their work) appears to have occurred and thus reflects the contribution of SL to this dimension. The outcomes of the focus group reveals this with reports of weekly informal get-togethers, trips to football matches, Christmas dinners and even trips to Australia and India to build schools, highlighting the communally orientated outcomes of relationship knowledge that has become important based on learning about their client's needs. Not only has this double-loop created new understandings of means and ends, it has created shared visions, a paradigm shift towards community building and these hallmarks of OL reflect a double-loop development of new ends for the group identity: a new set of identity knowledges that produced objectives and outcomes tied to the desires of their clients.

Once again NONDET have benefitted greatly from aspects of SL: not only by developing shared visions and community relationships knowledge (and activities that help rebuild the community such as the playgroup, community shop, micro-loans and the recently acquired town market), but also shared visions surrounding security in CCTV and landlord monitoring schemes. Not only this, there is evidence that new relationships have been created through SL and by creating an interest and stake in the area:

> *"…Additionally we bring more accountability to the local community… keep it in house and local not some rogue landlords like [Rogue Landlord]. This is where our work with [Local Business] is good, they are based around the corner and getting them to have a stake and pride in the area is really quite important" NONDET*

This quote reflects SL in a number of ways: firstly, new ends of accountability and keeping things 'in house' have emerged from their engagements and the actions emerging from this (such as greater local asset ownership and transparency between the CLT and the community) reflect relational dimensions of emotional knowledge. Secondly, by developing new relationships with the aid of SL tenets (by sharing experiences, community visions and 'pride in the area' with local business'), the interests of this stakeholder have become more aligned and invested in the area and thus, relationship action has been developed and the community's identity knowledge has been shared.

Returning to the emotional inspirations that these knowledges have for grassroots planning activities, SL has had a great contribution in being able to develop identities, values and actions that are rooted in community objectives. Developing these factors is of course central to SL and thus its relationship with emotional knowledge is vital: if one is engaging in grassroots activities such as these for reasons of community benefit, learning directly from communities is of course vital. Cultures CIC well demonstrate the contribution this can make:

> *"I looked back and looked at why I had failed… I've been down that road before that people go through now and I was born here and I spoke English but I experienced what they are now and what we want to with it and they saw where I was coming from… I came up with a programme called raising awareness of British work ethics… and I was able to do exactly what I wanted to… supporting people who wanted to start businesses or into employment" Cultures CIC*

Here we see that identity knowledge (of business objectives and through her own past challenges) and relationship knowledge in aid of this have emerged through engagement in the community. These knowledges have then been developed alongside the desires and responsibilities of the head of cultures CIC to inspire her business. SL therefore has enabled her to refine her objectives and combine her personal experiences and those of the communities (in this case, primarily migrant communities) and allowed her to forge her business and find her gap in the market. Emotional knowledge has ultimately been deepened through her efforts to bring together community groups and share experiences and values and as a result, the dimensions of emotional knowledge have played a big role in the formation of this organisation. The learning that she has undertaken indicates many of the features of triple-loop learning: various world views have been brought into play and local, perhaps overlooked knowledge concerning the issues that these communities face have been addressed to produce an organisation with a unique role the area. Not only has SL been formational of the knowledge underpinning this, it has also allowed the practices of the business to flourish: her visible pride of how readily diverse backgrounds can break down cultural barriers when they work together or share their various concerns demonstrates the success of SL. Thus this formational triple-loop development of business objectives has inspired business practices that directly encourage sharing identities and developing relationships and thus incorporate SL tenets to create further learning between the actors and clients of her organisation.

## 6.7 Conceptual Discussion

With the contributions of social learning outlined in relation to our conceptual framework, this sub-section will turn attention to the relationships between empirical findings and the theoretical questions raised throughout this study.

Returning to the pragmatist tenet that theory and practice must consistently co-evolve and mutually affect each other, and thus the positivist conception of an achievable totality of objective knowledge is not realistic, there is evidence that the planning repertoire of Five Lamps reflects this statement:

> *"Skills wise, we are still learning and for example we've been quite inexperienced or naïve with some tenants and we have been working at a new scale with subcontractors that we aren't well engaging with. In that sense it will be a continuous process and we can't say we have a full repertoire because we still don't know what that would actually look like." Five Lamps*

A contribution of SL towards a planner's toolkit, in a wider sense, is that this process is more congruent with what pragmatic theorists suggest the constantly changing relationship between theory and practice should be. This echoes Schön's (1983) reflection-in-action and SL's compatibility with how Five Lamps are viewing their knowledge toolkits. There are further evidences that a closer relationship between knowledge and action is important in the examples of reflective and emotional knowledge. Without readiness to incorporate different strategies of business management and access diverse knowledges and experiences, it is likely that groups such as CC87 would not have been as effective enterprises as they have been. This readiness has ensured that their working theories, wider values and approaches are better orientated for the nature of their work and open to the needs and values of the community groups they are supporting. It is this readiness that has helped them provide support to many of the organisations in this study over a number of years, and the political, entrepreneurial and cognitive knowledges that they have shared have been particularly useful for Cultures CIC, NONDET and ECYHT. The reflective knowledges that they make use of incorporates these three bodies informed by SL, further streamlining the relationship between knowledge and action, practice and theory. This solidifies the case for developing knowledge through SL processes and placing reflective knowledge as the most significant input and outcome of SL for collaborative planning. An additional benefit of this closer relationship and the incorporation of client and community knowledge is that the actions that emerge are tailored to social needs and thus the decentralised sources of knowledge that SL incorporates are more appropriate for planning problems then sources that favour and produce traditionally rigorous professional knowledge and theory. In short, the relationship between Friedmann's (1987) theory-of-practice and theory-of-history is brought closer together and feedback can more readily occur.

In addition to the input of practice into theory, the other direction has proven useful. When appraising their effectiveness, CC87 present Maslow's hierarchy of needs to their clients, demonstrating an effort to assess their theories-of-practice with the input of wider theoretical models. This awareness of the value of academic theory indicates that these groups are using social reflective practice to incorporate theories and use them to help gather better practical knowledge. This is also reflected in their thankfulness for the research we were conducting. By highlighting the

importance of research and the exposure it gives them, they acknowledge the contributions research can make to their cause. Thus, the perception that this external exposure can provide support suggests an awareness of the limits in generating wider momentum for their causes that they encounter and the value of research work for their practice. This goes back to the lack of governmental appraisal of the EHCG scheme and beyond, and the view that academic input could help to inspire re-thinks in institutional behaviour.

As a result of a wider basis for knowledge and framing of problems through collaborative discussion, technical pitfalls of having to construct problems in a way conducive to technical understanding is minimized as revealed by the holistic, consensual and community centric approaches of these groups. Instead of a problem identification based on intervention techniques, problems can become more accurately discovered and reflective of the experiences, values and local specificity in play. By taking this approach of relevance over rigor, problems and policies can more be more accurately and appropriately discovered by planners and thus SL is a method of planning practice that is aligned to the nature of wicked problems planners face. The implications of SL then are wider than just a contribution to PKBs. The process allows a more accurate resolution of planning problems to emerge and can realign planning activity towards an understanding of society that captures the messy nature of social problems. By reconceptualising rigor we can incorporate knowledge and practices that would otherwise be excluded. Planners then can become deal makers and negotiators on solid footing and through SL, can generate shared understandings, values and interventions to create effective deals.

Whilst evidence points to the benefits of a decentralised view of knowledge sources -social objectives and plural values can be better represented and mutual agreements arrived at- there are structural limitations that SL can struggle to combat, despite Localism agendas corresponding to this decentralised view. Technical-rationality is still the *lingua franca* for planning within government institutions and contractual obligations may leave little room, or necessity to engage in SL. Whilst there is still a benefit to this, being unable to supplant this rationality fully with SL is a limitation of conducting planning in this way. Situations could occur where significant learning has taken place but can be discarded and ignored on the basis of more technical justifications for action. Thus supplanting the administrations and politics of knowledge is an achievement in which SL can only have limited success, as revealed by the economic arguments of Thirteen and the closed nature of entrepreneurial knowledge. Whilst developing new administrations and politics within these social-enterprises has been achieved, the stubbornness of such within political institutions and HA's cannot be supplanted without a receptive arena. This points to a need to develop SL as a framework and

articulate the meaningful benefits of generating knowledge in this way in order to create bodies of evidence large enough to generate momentum for a shift in the right institutions. Unfortunately, the methods of governance such as contractualism, austerity politics and the demands governments have in quick and measurable results, suggest that such a development is hindered by resistance to this paradigm shift.

So whilst this research has demonstrated some meaningful contribution SL can make to a planner's toolkit it does also reflect the limitations of such a model. Friedmann's (1987) observation that the cumulative knowledge of SL processes can be lost at the end of such processes is reflected in the experience of Five Lamps and highlights another limitation:

> *"Unfortunately, much of the creativity and capacity build during EHCG has evaporated and everyone is sitting in neutral waiting for new funds to come through, which they won't…. everyone's lost the momentum and forgot what could be achieved" Five Lamps.*

So despite the learning these community groups have done during the EHCG project, and the financial security owning such assets has presented them, the end of the project has halted many actions that have emerged as possibilities during the learning process. Whilst the organisations involved in learning have not dissipated themselves, the increased capacities and the strategies employed have not been continued. Despite multiple reports that the organisations are more secure, empty homes can become a platform of self-sustenance and are assets against which future funds can be borrowed, it seems that these capacities are overlooked in favour of governmental funds, which in light of recent UK events are simply not likely to be provided.

The absence of governmental follow-up again demonstrates the limited distance that the learning of these groups can travel. The experience of the CLT however is one positive in this light. With successful collaborative action to overcome some of the area's issues, and the gathering of momentum in their management of community assets such as the market and playgroup, there is a good mix of expertise, motivation and meaningful relationships in this group that can allow the learning to continue and hopefully address many more issues in this neighbourhood, one of the most deprived in the UK.

# 7. Reflections and Conclusions

## 7.1 The Contributions of SL

The empirical research provides an answer to our problem statement in that developing a planning toolkit through SL process' is a method well suited to the daily practice of planners, conducive to the types of information that these community organisations need to function and has allowed them to better meet their objectives. It also is a method that captures the complicated and multi-layered reality of social problems and incorporates experiences, values and action based research.

SL's contribution towards cognitive knowledge has created fundamental shifts in business practice. Social agreement is directly sought, business practices in data collection and appraisal have been strengthened and calibrated with SL and despite minimal indication of complexity or uncertainty, a holistic approach reflects awareness of social complexity. Indeed by approaching their cognitive knowledge development in such ways the organisations are demonstrating many of Muro and Jeffrey's (2008) indicators of SL and Molnar & Mulvihill's (2003) OL tenets. Triple-loop learning is the most prominent process in this body by incorporating ranging world views, challenging normal ideas of business practice and creating alternative practice paradigms. Despite the seemingly modest changes here, SL's contribution has recalibrated knowledge and action in this body more than any other PKB and has important lessons for planning toolkits.

SL improves reflective knowledge in dimensions of methods, focusses and outcomes. In general, SL targets reflective knowledge upon the right qualities and contributes meaningfully to the development of shared understandings and actions, as shown by ECYHT. Social demands are better targeted, demonstrating a close relationship between theories-of-practice and theories-of-history with the input of communities. A planning toolkit is patently improved by such an orientation. Single-loop learning contributes, but again triple-loop is the most meaningful process by which reflective knowledge is improved. SL can produce then a huge benefit for reflective knowledge that, whilst not as fundamental as cognitive knowledge, has long-lasting implications for practice.

Experimental knowledge has had relationship with SL which is difficult to untangle, but in a wider sense single-loop development of experimental practices and business polices has emerged from SL's contribution. SL has led to new subjects of experimentation by creating actions of monitoring variables as shown in ECYHT interviews and monitoring and has itself been a part of an experiment in Cultures CIC's pilot project. By experimenting on SL here, triple-loop development has occurred for Cultures CIC resulting from bringing together world views in the experiment, discovering new practices that can be important and finally investigating the experiences and knowledge of culturally

diverse groups, ultimately arriving at a model whose results can be demonstrated to funding providers.

Entrepreneurial knowledge demonstrates some of the issues with SL when contributing to knowledge. Certain skills for these groups are lacking and the limits of how far SL can go with non-expert knowledge are revealed. Reality of business management and contractual objectives mean that certain specialty skills need to come from traditional sources and financial knowledge in particular adheres to economic rationale, which as Thirteen suggest is in tension with social aims. Government and planners therefore have a role to play in bringing this knowledge to communities in order to see the self-governance localism wishes and to move beyond gatekeepers withholding information. This is mitigated when skilled actors are involved as the head of ECYHT demonstrates, which again reveals the need for outside learning to occur and for SL to include a wide range of standpoints and expertise if it is to make a contribution to a planning toolkit, for planners and communities alike.

Political knowledge earns a great contribution from SL and the potential for future contributions to emerge from past learning is a large step towards greater learning communities and well refined toolkits. Civic knowledge in particular receives direct contribution which we have seen knock-on to issues knowledge as NONDET's experience reveals. New ideas and understandings of issues and thus a wider input of knowledge informing potential actions can emerge, creating wider and more meaningful developments. By taking advantage of local knowledges specifically, civic and issues knowledge develops along double-loops with new rules of the game and variables brought into play and as this grows, the space for wider loops and more mutual sharing is increased. A clear role for planners therefore is evident here.

Emotional knowledge finally is patently important and truly central to grassroots planning. Relationship knowledge emerges most importantly and there is an unsurprising contribution that SL, in its shared development of actions and values can deepen this dimension. Security too appears important and will continue to be in the conflict laden nature of contemporary planning struggles. A socially orientated planner can benefit from SL's contribution towards this and plans, in a wider sense, when considering security and identity dimensions have the potential to become more inclusive and rooted in consensual action. Importantly, these knowledges can work against technical rationalities when introduced into planning information and as such there is great potential to supplant hegemonic policy processes when recognition of the centrality of emotional knowledge is better recognised, which SL can benefit. Despite the uphill struggle these organisations face, the evaporation of much formal support and their modest wages, the emotional connection that these

organisations have to the area and its communities are crucial in their continued work. SL has built these knowledges by taking advantage of the honesty, trust and shared visions that such activities are built upon. Whilst then historically overlooked, emotional knowledge is the single most important PKB in this research, and SL's contribution for this is vital in terms of the motivation it can create and the reasons that such organisations will continue to work despite the difficulties they face. A planner's toolkit demands inclusion of this body and SL provides a good process through which to develop it. With this, double and triple-loop learning are the most important features and brings about the connections, understandings, trust and shared struggle that this grassroots planning involves.

## 7.2 Conclusions

Returning to our problem statement, exploring planning knowledge through SL has allowed us to identify the contribution that the methodology can offer. Actions and knowledge are intrinsically linked to social needs; conflicts can be mediated to create win-win situations and a shared development of values has led to shared actions between the groups of this study and the communities they are serving. SL has instigated fundamental shifts for cognitive knowledge, and this contribution has produced great changes, but at the heart of SL's contribution towards a planners toolkit is its developments for emotional knowledge and reflective knowledge. By contributing to the former, SL has deepened the emotional basis for action for these groups despite the challenges faced and it is here that SL can most significantly help planners re-orientate their activities, motivations and knowledge towards the needs of communities, such as the excluded people of wider Middlesbrough. Reflective knowledge too takes advantage of SL to develop understandings and agreement that again invoke the central tenets of social learning and contribute to more a more harmonious relationship between theory and action by taking lessons from the pragmatists and Donald Schön. By blurring this boundary, the intimacy that emerges produces learning and actions inseparable from the values and experiences of engaged actors, and has great benefit for recalibrating planning activities.

Our conceptual framework for SL provides a good measure of the input it can make to planning toolkits, despite the difficulty in creating wider normative frameworks and theoretical checklists for SL. Equally, Salet's (2014) PKBs provide good purchase on the knowledge and actions employed and in particular reveal the primacy of collaborative planning principles, emotional knowledge and the importance of civics dimensions of political knowledge. Thus as an epistemology to discover pertinent knowledge for planning, SL offers a diversification of knowledge that overcomes the limitations of technical and positivist knowledge by siding with relevance over rigor and reducing

boundaries between theory and practice with the result of actions better calibrated to social needs. To contend that planning should solely be structured around social learning however would be counter to the arguments of this study, and a wider basis could still provide benefit, for example, Social Mobilization planning could provide another useful lens through which to approach planning problems, particularly in the face of dominance from administrations and politics of knowledge which this study has found as a limitation of SL.

Unfortunately, the limitation of SL that learning can be lost at the end of a project comes through prominently. Directly mentioned by Five Lamps and indirectly indicated by the absence of governmental follow up, it is a shame how such capacity improvement and innovation has gone to stagnated. Further demands placed by the government on housing and social-enterprises demonstrate how out of touch governmental institutions and policies are with the needs of the grassroots. Spreading social learning across institutions then is a vital next step, however it is one that is perhaps contingent on wider paradigm shifts in governance beyond the rhetoric of localism.

There are strong reasons then to further research the contributions SL can make to planning. Whilst developing a wider normative framework may be a challenge due to the pragmatic and case-by-case underpinnings, there is cause to solidify rules around certain features. Muro and Jeffrey's (2008) indicators provide a good prescriptive list of what features such processes should entail. Learning how to develop these features within learning groups is a good step towards helping social learning situations become emergent behaviours with self-perpetuating momentum. Additionally, whilst this study has focused on knowledge generation, the learning-loops are important in any process and the elements of note identified here can provide a point of departure in exploring how to ensure that these loops can occur. Limitations however must be addressed. Whilst rhetorically, SL is a good fit for governmental agendas, there appears to be little appetite or resources for facilitating greater social autonomy beyond rhetoric. Whilst there is little governmental reflection on the EHCG and the learning that has made it possible, to solidify a body of research surrounding the contribution the SL framework can make to the Localism agenda of the UK government can only be a productive step, if not for government, then for planners, social enterprises and community action groups.

Planning identities, whilst garnering some resolution still have to operate as mediators and deal makers, but the foundations upon which these deals can be made can be improved through SL. We as planners may, by Glazer's definition, be a minor profession but the particular problems we face through this should be seen as a source of inspiration to recalibrate our activities and our expertise in the face of these challenges. We evidently as planners have to draw upon wide pools of knowledge and SL can help bring diverse sources for this into use and spread capacities to multiple

actors. To accept the challenge of wicked problems and difficult solutions and spread the awareness of miss-calibrated activities, the real power that collaboration has and the value of local experts within communities must be promoted. Through SL, a momentum of evidence and consensus can be built if research is done to discover how to make learning groups stick and become self-perpetuating entities. To plan for society and to create self-governance, planners and society simply must learn alongside each other.

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# Appendix A

**Cognitive**

| ***Codes*** | **Themes** | ***Aspects*** | ***Notes*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Identifying outputs and objectives | • Expressing outputs<br>• Formulating policy | • Difficulty in measuring impact (Hartlepool Revival)<br>• New director helped refine objectives and business practice (ECYHT)<br>• Unwritten rule to help the vulnerable (CC87)<br>• PHD to quantify social value (Hartlepool revival) | |
| Methods of data collection and analysis | • Qualitative methods<br>• Open discussions<br>• Formal checklists | • Annual Survey, Suggestion box, monthly review (CC87)<br>• Tenant Committees (Thirteen)<br>• 100 strong community meeting (NONDET)<br>• Input of clients regarding how money should be spent (ECYHT)<br>• Priority checklist (ECYHT)<br>• Group discussions (Cultures CIC) | Range of methods of data collection, not experimental due to the focus on this initial collection as opposed to monitoring |
| Approaches to complexity/uncertainty | • Holistic approach<br>• Individual orientation<br>• Checklist addressing common issues | • Holistic view, person centric (CC87)<br>• Needs led individual basis (ECYHT)<br>• Procedural checklist to minimize disruptions (ECYHT) | Minimal recognition, tacit awareness that unexpected outcomes will occur |

**Reflective**

| ***Codes*** | **Themes** | ***Aspects*** | ***Notes*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Returning to experience | • Business practices to incorporate diverse information<br>• Reaching the right variables | • Engaging with the individual (ECYHT)<br>• Learning needs of flexibility (ECYHT)<br>• Pre-tenancy work and interview reviews (ECYHT) | Methods of returning to experience, separated from cognitive due to the focus on collecting information specifically to improve practice through reflection |
| Connecting with | • Techniques to | • Criteria for waiting list | |

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| feelings of experience | connect and evaluate | (ECYHT)<br>• Review of needs and deficiencies (ECYHT)<br>• Monitoring (ECYHT)<br>• Maslow's hierarchy of needs, tenant discussions (CC87) | |
| Evaluating experiences | • Steps to incorporate ranging views and contextual developments<br>• Novel approaches to invoke local-knowledge<br>• Reformulating policy and objectives | • Maintaining social roots via steering group and tenant review (CC87)<br>• Finding how people fall through the gaps (ECYHT)<br>• Benefit of letting youngsters handle funds (CC87)<br>• Client meetings to get new objectives (CC87)<br>• Flexibility in overarching business objectives(CC87)<br>• Adaptive to tenants needs (CC87)<br>• Need new funding patterns to survive as we see grants drying up (Hartlepool) | Reflective focus again separates from cognitive and reflective: this is about evaluating experiences, not creating new cognitive knowledge's based on failures or assessing new conclusions through experimentation |

**Experimental**

| ***Codes*** | **Themes** | ***Aspects*** | ***Notes*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Importance of experimentation | • Positive outcomes of third-sector experiments<br>• Lack of govt experimental behaviour | • Absence of governmental experimentation (Ferngarth)<br>• Vital activity for third-sector (Ferngarth)<br>• Good results from community projects (ECYHT) | |
| Identifying, validating and testing variables | • Interviews and discussions<br>• Person centric research | • Discovery of tenant needs through interviews (ECYHT)<br>• Aspects of exclusion (CC87)<br>• Steering group to discover problems and posit solutions (CC87)<br>• Group discussion to discover problems (NONDET) | Focus on finding variables and formulating responses in a controlled manner |
| Testing variables | • Trials | • Pilot appraising the success of cultural mixing in work. (Cultures CIC)<br>• Trial of neighbourhood watch and CCTV (NONDET)<br>• Trying out new practices to be resourceful with funds (CC87) | |

**Entrepreneurial**

| ***Codes*** | **Themes** | ***Aspects*** | ***Notes*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Financial skills | • Finding funding externally<br>• Becoming internally sustainable | • Finding and demonstrating a working model (Cultures CIC)<br>• Renegotiating loans (Hartlepool Revival)<br>• Moving beyond grants (Cultures CIC)<br>• Recover costs through rent<br>• Value of business background (ECYHT, CC87)<br>• Casting wide net, introducing new practices to become eligible (ECYHT)<br>• Balancing profits with costs (ECYHT)<br>• Staff cutbacks (CC87)<br>• Clever accounting (Hartlepool)<br>• Disinvesting poor stock (Thirteen)<br>• Cost recovery through rent (Cultures CIC)<br>• Sensible resource usage (CC87)<br>• Conducting own procurement (Five Lamps)<br>• Fulfilling contractual requirements (Five Lamps)<br>• Carpark and hotel revenue (Hartlepool)<br>• Community shop, Playgroup and market (NONDET)<br>• Plan to become self-sustainable in 5 years (ECYHT)<br>• Increase value of asset base (ECYHT)<br>• business mind-set (CC87)<br>• Economic bottom lines (ECYHT) | Mixture of internal and external. A number of statistics excluded due to their irrelevance specifically to knowledges or learning: simply stating facts |
| Management skills | • New demands<br>• Changing boardrooms<br>• Need to act in a business manner<br>• Outside skillsets | • Difficulty keeping social objectives (CC87)<br>• Wider service packages (CC87)<br>• Commercial arm, entrepreneurial wing (Hartlepool Revival, CC87<br>• Chancing language of boardroom (CC87)<br>• More general needs tenants (ECYHT)<br>• Commercial management background (ECYHT) | |

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| | | • Msc Entrepreneurship (Cultures CIC)<br>• Lack of management expertise (NONDET)<br>• Lack of IT, Admin and management + help ECYHT gave (CC87)<br>• Management expertise of Thirteen (NONDET) | |
| Innovative ideas | • Value of assets<br>• Finding and building unique selling point<br>• Challenges of maintaining practice in difficult times<br>• Motivation for investment<br>• Creating flexibility and robustness | • Leasing on peppercorn rent (Thirteen)<br>• Value groups in network can bring to each other (Thirteen)<br>• Properties becoming income stream for small groups (Cultures CIC)<br>• Value of tenants living in properties they work on (Hartlepool Revival)<br>• Housing as a baseline for skills training (CC87)<br>• Housing homeless fits with charitable objectives (Five Lamps)<br>• Inertia after project finished (Five Lamps)<br>• EHCG allowed thirteen to protect adjacent stock value (Thirteen)<br>• Clever usage of money (ECYHT)<br>• Becoming more involved in the street level (NONDET)<br>• Crown Pub (ECYHT)<br>• Offering new mediums for communication (ECYHT) | Whilst political knowledges are evident here, the context in which there statements were made relate more immediately to the innovative intent they indicate. Overlap here therefore but with context and intent considered, Innovative knowledge is the most appropriate category |
| Remaining competitive | | • Rents cheaper than private sector (ECYHT)<br>• Act like social landlord (ECYHT)<br>• Diversifying skills training and workforce (Hartlepool, ECYHT) | Additional codes emerging |
| Tensions | | • Economic argument vs social objectives (Thirteen)<br>• Balance Charitable objectives with income stream (CC87) | Do not fit neatly into framework. however their inclusion is necessary |

**Political**

| ***Codes*** | **Themes** | ***Aspects*** | ***Notes*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Behaviours/trends for institutional capacities | • Capacities and skills building<br>• Skills of importance<br>• Value of support | • Mutual growth and support (Thirteen)<br>• Tenant management help (Thirteen)<br>• CC87 offer houses, we offer trainees (Hartlepool Revival)<br>• Self-help national network (NONDET)<br>• Learning how to get collective knowledge to the table key (Hartlepool)<br>• CC87 Surveying properties, Thirteen management skills, making argument that sharing will help us all<br>• Argue for the added value (Hartlepool Revival)<br>• Negotiation skills vital, govt experience helped (Hartlepool)<br>• Benefit of mentors (Cultures CIC) | |
| Building issues awareness | • Community projects<br>• Individual 'messengers'<br>• Involving ranging stakeholders<br>• Generating community support<br>• Political dimensions and ways to capitalise on them | • How to contribute to community, training hours (ECYHT)<br>• Getting local business involved (NONDET)<br>• Champions in community, council and Thirteen (NONDET)<br>• Involving media (NONDET)<br>• Tenants want community for their own sake, our job to support this (CC87)<br>• Community steering group who appeal to parliament (CC87)<br>• Raising profile in community (ECYHT)<br>• Sharing experiences of CLT nationwide (NONDET)<br>• Openness with local communities (Five Lamps)<br>• Flagship projects to capture attention (ECYHT)<br>• Open community meetings (NONDET) | In some cases, eg local business involvement and champions, civic knowledges are noted. However as the statements refer to mobilisation and generating shared visions their categorisation in issues knowledge is more appropriate |
| Finding/offering | • Techniques to | • Long term experience | Financial |

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|---|---|---|---|
| support | help<br>• Who is able to offer support<br>• Challenges faced<br>• Appealing to political/financial objectives of stakeholders<br>• Benefits of teaming up – skills and business<br>• Mobilising actors<br>• Developing consensus and shared action | (Hartlepool)<br>• Conduit for resources (Thirteen)<br>• New approach to council (we worry about funding, you tell us where and what to do) (Five Lamps)<br>• £400,000 from our asset base gone into new companies (Five Lamps)<br>• Support for start-ups (Five Lamps)<br>• Identifying supportive and motivating council staff (ECYHT)<br>• Joint group bids for funds (CC87)<br>• Thirteen's weight vital to get on board –allows Whitehall to be more receptive- (Hartlepool)<br>• CC87 support everyone (Cultures CIC)<br>• Work with early help team, council and homeless charity (ECYHT)<br>• Referrals from job centres and charities (CC87)<br>• Charitable funding (ECYHT)<br>• Applying for EU funding easier (NONDET)<br>• Speaking political language (Hartlepool Revival) | knowledges referenced but the networking dimension to these aspects suggests a better fit in political knowledges. For example thirteen adding security to bid demonstrates a financial knowledge for finding funds but without the relationship knowledges this would not be possible. |
| Changing nature of institutions | • Governmental changes problematizes support<br>• Lack of funds means less third-sector<br>• Changing role of boardrooms | • Retreat of third sector (ECYHT)<br>• Govt support rollback (ECYHT)<br>• HCA requirements out of touch (Thirteen)<br>• Staff turnover at council too quick (Hartlepool)<br>• Trustees no longer heavily involved (ECYHT)<br>• Desire for active boardroom and engaged trustees (NONDET)<br>• Certain councils more helpful than others (Five Lamps)<br>• CC87 conducting feasibility study (NONDET) | |
| Benefits/problems of being grassroots | • Community closeness | • Benefit of being grassroots is closeness with community, | |

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| | • Too small to get significant funding<br>• Reliance on key individuals<br>• Dispersed and informal network | being nimble BUT too small to leverage support (Thirteen)<br>• Tapping into local needs and identities (NONDET)<br>• Need to constantly refresh council links (Five Lamps)<br>• Few members means skills difficult to replace when someone leaves (Five Lamps)<br>• Hard to get decision makers around the table (CC87)<br>• Too many groups, too little co-op so individuals get pulled in different directions (CC87)<br>• Lack of formal ties means individuals can be lost after working with us (CC87)<br>• Bring accountability back to communities (NONDET) | |

**Emotional**

| ***Codes*** | **Themes** | ***Aspects*** | ***Notes*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Relationships | • Motivations<br>• Sources of value | • Value of activity (Cultures CIC)<br>• Need for social action (Thirteen)<br>• Responsibility to help<br>• Helping communities close to oneself (Cultures CIC)<br>• Motivation to work (Cultures CIC)<br>• Working to achieve community desires (CC87)<br>• Giving back to the community (Five Lamps)<br>• Bringing community stakeholders into play (ECYHT)<br>• Providing employment for motivated youngsters (Hartlepool Reveal)<br>• Inspiring people to take ownership of an area (Hartlepool Revival)<br>• Networks keep us going (CC87) | Centricity of action emerging.<br><br>Some elements of political knowledge but again the intent and context of statements suggest an emotional root |
| Security | • Identification of issues | • Importance of trust and accountability (NONDET, CC87)<br>• Decline of homeless charities means someone needs to work here (ECYHT) | Difficult to observe, participants occasionally closed off and understandably not wanting to |

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| | | | be too critical of opposing forces whilst being recorded |
| Identity | • Area connection | • Investment in area (all)<br>• Sadness at area decline (NONDET)<br>• Rejuvenating area (NONDET)<br>• Thirteen and council joining up to help problem areas (Thirteen) | |

**Miscellaneous categories**

| ***Codes*** | **Themes** | ***Aspects*** | ***Notes*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Relationship between theory and practice | • Nature of feedback<br>• Views on knowledge repertoires<br>• Value of theory | • Learnt a lot, still got appetite (Five Lamps)<br>• Don't know what our full repertoire would look like (Five Lamps)<br>• Need for researchers to raise awareness and add weight to ideas (CC87 | |
| Dissipation of learning | | • Evaporation of learning and momentum (Five Lamps) | |
| Governmental disconnect | • Unhelpful policies<br>• Lack of review | • Imposing 5% rental reduction (Thirteen)<br>• Non-review of EHCG (CC87) | |