THE PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE REGENERATION: VARYING INTERPRETATIONS AND VALUATIONS AMONG PRACTITIONERS IN THE LEE VALLEY

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ABSTRACT

This research has developed out of an interest in exploring the relationship between the promotion of sustainability within regeneration as a high-level policy commitment, and the actual process of definition of sustainability policy goals at the local level. The research has been informed by the idea that the notion of sustainable development is characterised by a key ideological dimension, given by the fact that people hold different ideas about the role of the environment and the direction of societal development. In addition, the notion that sustainability refers to a complex and dynamic condition related to the viability of the relationship between societies and the environment over a long time is central to the conceptualisation of the research topic. These ideas have led to the examination of two main questions. First, how different interpretations of sustainable development inform the process of the formulation of sustainable development policy goals within regeneration. Second, how the actors' valuation of regeneration objectives contribute to shaping the relationship between societies and the environment.

The research shows how ambiguities and lack of clarity in the definition of the basic policy goal have left scope for different players in the implementation process to identify their own interpretations of its meaning. This has taken place under the influence of the culture of their organisation, their own agency's policy priorities and of the activities and interests defined by the processes in which they are engaged. Findings suggest that given the wide range of policy themes coming together under regeneration policy, the various policy discourses, championed by different groups of actors, concur in the definition of the regeneration agenda. With respect to the promotion of sustainability, the co-existence of different policy discourses results in the creation of discrete and contextual actors' accounts where the environmental dimension of regeneration initiatives is defined and circumscribed. In particular, the analysis of the actors' valuation of regeneration objectives, and of the environmental transformations that such objectives entail, offers an interesting insight into the power of discourses to reinforce certain arguments, at the expense of others. In addition, it demonstrates how the social processes, in which the actors are involved, shape their valuation of regeneration objectives and overall their understanding of sustainable development policy goals.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CONTENTS 3

List of figures

List of tables

List of acronyms

CED	Community Economic Development
CRQ	Central Research Question
DOE	Department of the Environment
DETR	Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
ED	Enumeration District
EKC	Environmental Kuznet's Curve
ELLV	East London Lee Valley
ERP	Enfield Regeneration partnership
FPP	Finsbury Park Partnership
GLA	Greater London Authority
HU	Hermeneutic Unit
IQ	Interview Question
LDA	London Development Agency
LLVP	London Lee Valley Partnership
LPAC	London Planning Advisory Committee
LSC	Learning and Skill Council
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
LVSTC	London Voluntary Sector Training Consortium
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
NLL	North London Leadership
RDA	Regional Development Agency
SBS	Small Business Service
SLED	Sustainable Local Economic Development
SPD	Single Programming Document
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
TQ	Theory Question
ULVP	Upper Lee Valley Partnership
UNCED	United Nation Conference on Environment and Development
UNCHS	United Nation Centre for Human Settlements
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development

Chapter one

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) brought the concept of sustainable development to the international agenda through its report "Our Common Future" (Brundtland Commission). The report focused upon the growing threat of poverty, environmental degradation, disease and pollution and advised on the need to change patterns of development. In particular, in one of the most quoted paragraphs, the Brundtland Commission said: *"Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable - to ensure that it meets the need of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs"* (WCED, 1987: 8). Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio in 1992, the term 'sustainable development' has gradually acquired an international resonance as the keyword of a political discourse that brings together key contemporary concerns and the interrelated nature of their relationship. The discourse on sustainable development combines issues concerning the link between economic development and resource conservation, between the well being of future generations and the development targets of the present generation, between the resource consumption of industrialised countries and those of less developed ones, together with the demand for more participatory and democratic models of decision making. Essentially, it challenges present patterns of development on the ground that traditional development approaches, based on economic growth, have shown great limits in addressing problems of poverty and deprivation while increasingly generating a critical impact on natural ecosystems. The overall idea of finding a way in which the human-environment interaction can be sustainable in the long term has raised a wide range of issues ranging from the reasons behind protecting the environment, to the definition of the obligations that this generation hold towards future generations, to the principle of equity that the use of natural resources implies for present generations.

Since the late 1980s, research on sustainable development has investigated the scope of its core ideas and debated their implementation. The vast literature on the subject tends to distinguish between environmental, social and economic sustainability, in an attempt to

define leading principles or to formulate key questions. This has included questions about the potential for sustaining the environmental contribution to human welfare; about the capacity to sustain today's level of wealth creation; and about the ability to sustain social cohesion and important social institutions (Ekins and Newby, 1998). In addition, ethical questions included reflection on whether the present generation sufficiently values other people and other life forms, both now and in the future. Following a similar tripartite division between environmental, social and economic sustainability, the challenges posed by the notion of sustainable development are often summarised in the form of three imperatives: the ecological, the economic and the social. In particular, the ecological imperative has been defined as the target of remaining within the planetary biophysical carrying capacity. The economic imperative has been described as ensuring adequate material standard of living, and the social imperative is in terms of providing social structures that allow people to sustain human welfare, as well as in the form of the values that people want to live by (Robinson and Tinker, 1995). Other studies analyse the idea of sustainability from the perspective of the application of 'green' and 'brown' agendas, processes of social and intellectual change and operating principles of political economy (Dobson, 1995). Finally, some research questions the degree of sustainability that policies and programmes are likely to achieve by investigating whether environmental considerations should be taken into account in decision-making but traded off against others goals (weak sustainability) or should be considered as limits on the achievement of other goals (strong sustainability) (Bartelmus, 1994; Gibbs et al, 1998, Pearce et al, 2000).

With respect to policy actions, sustainable development is characterised by a specific focus on local action as set in Agenda 21(UNCED, 1992b). In particular, the role of local governments in implementing sustainable development is articulated with respect to their responsibility in building and maintaining key local infrastructures, their role in planning and development control and in the development of local environmental policies, as well as in developing a form of government closer to the people in order to promote education and mobilisation around sustainable development (UNCED, 1992b; Keiting, 1993). Given the widespread recognition of the importance of the local dimension to sustainable development policy actions, the analysis of sustainability has also developed around an urban perspective (Girardet, 1992; Pugh, 1996; OECD, 1997, UNCHS, 1996; 2001). Cities are places of production and consumption, where resources are transformed to goods and services, returning to the environment as wastes and emissions. Urban institutions of

government, in many part of the word, are the primary deliverers of services and programmes and thus are identified as key players in moving towards more sustainable forms of development. Considerations about the sustainability of urban settlements have taken into account internal and external dimensions: from the ecological impacts of the cities demand for resources (Wackernagel and Rees, 1996) to the flow of resources within the city (Alberti et al, 1992).). Cities are not self-sufficient systems. Indeed cities rely on a complex organization of importing and exporting activities. Within cities, the consumption of energy, especially in the dominant form of non-renewable resources, and the consequent emissions of pollutants, depends on urban structures and developments that require travel and transport. Finally, the social dimension of sustainability, as the need for sustaining social cohesion and important social institutions (Ekins and Newby, 1998), has a central urban relevance because of the size of urban populations, the role of urban institutions and pressing issues of poverty and social deprivation.

The urban focus of the notion of sustainable development has increasingly influenced specific policies and programmes such as urban regeneration. The term 'sustainable regeneration' was given formal recognition in England and Wales in the fourth round of the Single Regeneration Budget Challenge Fund (SRB) and more recently, with the establishment of Regional Development Agencies (DETR, 1998e), the promotion of sustainable development has acquired a more clear status as a regeneration policy objective. A significant policy document on sustainable regeneration was "Sustainable Regeneration Good Practice Guidance" (DETR, 1998a) which focused on the role of regeneration partnerships, such as SRB partnerships, as a major vehicle for bringing together different interests and pursuing an integrated approach to working. The growth of policy reference to sustainable regeneration has contributed to the demand for theoretical frameworks of sustainable regeneration in order to identify how leading principles of sustainable development could be translated into regeneration initiatives. It has also coincided with the need to reformulate some of the ideas behind regeneration initiatives. For example, during the last decades, the failure of regeneration initiatives to address local imbalances has created the demand for theoretical contributions about the ideas and the principles guiding regeneration (Haughton, 1998). In the specific context of sustainable development and urban regeneration, current theoretical works have focused on issues of policy integration and holistic approaches to problems of economic decline, social exclusion and environmental degradation. This is evident in studies aimed at developing

frameworks such as Sustainable Local Economic Development (SLED) (Ekins and Newby, 1999), which emphasise the need, as well as the advantages, to adopt an integrated approach to current economic, social and environmental issues. Frameworks, such as SLED, provide key guiding principles, derived from the literature on sustainable development, in order to emphasise the potential for win-win solutions that create jobs, promote social inclusion and improve the environment.

Overall, the notion of sustainable development has generated a wide-ranging debate both at the theoretical and operational levels. Theoretical contributions as well as policy formulations have tried to address some of the challenges that the notion of sustainable development poses. A main critique has been based on the idea that the term 'sustainable development' itself can be contested on the ground that it represents an empty agreement of two un-reconcilable agendas (Richardson, 1997). However, recent contributions have highlighted how the notion of sustainability has to be considered as a generator of problems, rather than a solution to them, posing new types of questions instead of offering a unifying paradigm (Becker et al, 1999). In this respect, sustainable development refers to a field of investigation that is essentially social since it raises questions about the way in which societies define their processes of transformation while considering the requirement of development of future generations (Becker et al, 1999).

1.2 Aims of the research

The objective of this research is to gain a better understanding of the process of formulation of sustainable development policy goals within regeneration. In particular, the fracture that seems to exist between the high-level policy commitments to the promotion of sustainability within regeneration and the poor understanding of the meaning of such policy goals among the actors, as became evident in the initial pilot study, has been the starting point of the research. As in other urban policy areas, such as transport and land use planning, in the specific context of urban regeneration, the development of the sustainability agenda has become a distinct policy objective. During 1990's the notion of sustainable development has emerged onto the regeneration agenda and urban regeneration policies have gradually incorporated terms such as 'sustainability', 'sustainable growth' and 'sustainable regeneration'. However, in spite of the policy commitment to the promotion of sustainability within regeneration, the research pilot study showed poor

understanding of these terms and overall of the issues raised by the notion of sustainable development (appendix A). Therefore, the research has developed from the interest of exploring the relation between the consensus about the policy objective of promoting sustainability within regeneration, that exists at a higher political level, and the actual process of definition of the policy goals of sustainable regeneration at the local level, as made by the actors that design and deliver regeneration initiatives.

According to Fainstein and Campbell (1996) the formulation and implementation of urban policies is influenced by the context in terms of priorities for the policy agenda, ideological positions on alternative approaches and social facts of a given territory. The context is therefore interpreted as a broad setting, made up of key leading issues driving the demand for policy development, of theories and debates informing the ideas behind the policies, and of factual aspects of the socio-economic reality. Thus, the development of policies for sustainable regeneration at the local level has to be considered in relation to a wider context made of pressing urban issues such as economic decline and social exclusion, and of ideological positions about contemporary urban changes.

In the formulation of policies, leading issues represent the priorities on the policy agenda. In the case of urban policies, current priorities result from the historical situation in which cities and regions have found themselves as a consequence of world economic restructuring. The decline of traditional industrial areas and resulting high rates of unemployment have made economic development a priority of urban policies. The area of study of the research, that is the Upper Lee Valley region of North London, has experienced a dramatic decline of its manufacturing industries generating high rates of unemployment. In this context, all regeneration policies and programmes that have targeted the Lee Valley region have focused on economic development and job creation, defining specific priorities on the policy agenda. The well-established importance of these priorities has to be considered among the elements influencing the development and implementation of sustainable development policy goals at the local level.

In addition to priorities, the development of policies is shaped by ideologies (Fainstein and Campbell, 1996). Current ideologies about regeneration, such as the focus on multi-agency working or the great importance given to community participation, are therefore likely to represent driving forces that have an impact on the actors understanding and interpretation of sustainability policy goals. Likewise, current theoretical frameworks on sustainable regeneration play an important role in shaping the relevance of sustainable development

within regeneration. For example, frameworks such as Sustainable Local Economic Development (SLED) (Ekins and Newby, 1999) or the E3 model (ALG, 1998) emphasise the benefit of pursuing sustainable development within regeneration with a strong reference to the importance of pursuing a holistic approach to urban issues.

Finally, it should be considered that in the process of definition of the policy goals of sustainable development at the local level, a key element is represented by the nature of the agencies that are involved in designing and implementing regeneration initiatives in terms of their role, interests and activities. The actual identity, power and resources of those delivering regeneration programmes is likely to have an effect on the interpretation and prioritisation of sustainable development goals (Söderbaum, 2000).

Among the different factors that contribute to shaping the formulation of sustainable development as a goal of regeneration policy, this study focuses on the content of sustainable development and regeneration policies and on the actual definition of regeneration goals as made by the agencies that, in the area of study, design and deliver regeneration initiatives. In this way, the research aims to achieve understanding of the factors that foster and limit, the application of sustainable development within the practice of urban regeneration. The high-level policy commitment to the promotion of sustainable development within regeneration is a key element in defining the context in which sustainable development goals are defined and implemented. In fact, it includes the definition of sustainable development as a requirement of urban regeneration policy and programmes and, at the same time, incorporates a range of themes and contents that define the context in which regeneration projects are developed. With regards to the actors, the results of the pilot study indicated a poor understanding of the meaning of sustainable development as a goal of regeneration policy and highlighted the need for exploring what is the actual interpretation that the actors give to sustainable development.

In addition, the research explores Norton's hypothesis about the role of human values as important drivers in the management of the relationship between society and environment (Norton, 1996a; 1999a). Starting from Norton's theoretical considerations about the importance of considering values as a crucial variable in the policy process, the research focuses on exploring and describing the actors' valuation of long-term regeneration objectives and of the environmental transformations such objectives entail. In particular, valuation refers to the way in which the local actors construct priorities, attach significance to certain regeneration objectives and attribute negative or positive values to the

environmental transformations that take place alongside the regeneration process. In the process of negotiation of regeneration goals and strategies the valuation of regeneration objectives, and of the environmental changes connected to them, represents a central variable that can provide informational feedback on the preferences expressed by the actors and of the factors shaping them.

The policy framework, as a main structuring element of the regeneration process, and the agency of the actors, as those interpreting and implementing regeneration policies, are the main objects of investigation. In this respect, this study explores the following research questions:

I.   In the context of the definition of sustainable regeneration as a policy objective, how are the issues arising from the notion of sustainable development incorporated into policy interventions? How is sustainability being interpreted in regeneration policies and local strategic documents? Which themes are emphasised and which are underplayed?

II. Given the recent introduction of sustainable development within regeneration, to what extent are the actors familiar with the notion of sustainable development and what are the meanings that they give to the terms 'sustainable development', 'sustainability', and 'sustainable regeneration'?

III. What is the actors' valuation of the long-term objectives that they think regeneration initiatives should deliver and of the environmental transformation such objectives entail? What are the preferences they currently express? And what are their aspirations in the long-term?

The purpose of the research has determined the choice of a qualitative research design. In particular, the understanding of the research participants' perspective is considered an essential part of the reality that is the object of study. In fact, investigating the meanings includes how the participants make sense of something and how this influences their behaviour (Maxwell, 1996). Finally qualitative research is particularly useful to investigate the context in which the research participants act and the way in which it influences their actions.

1.3 Area of study

The research focuses on the regeneration process taking place in the Lee Valley region of North London (fig. 1.1), an area with significant socio-economic problems and one with a number of regeneration policy initiatives. As with many conurbations, London has experienced the decline of its key industrial areas in the last decades with consequent economic and physical degeneration. Since the beginning of 1990s, the six London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Newham, Haringey, Waltham Forest and Enfield have been identified by the Government Office for London in proposals for economic regeneration as one sub-region: the East London and Lee Valley (ELLV) (GOL, 1994).
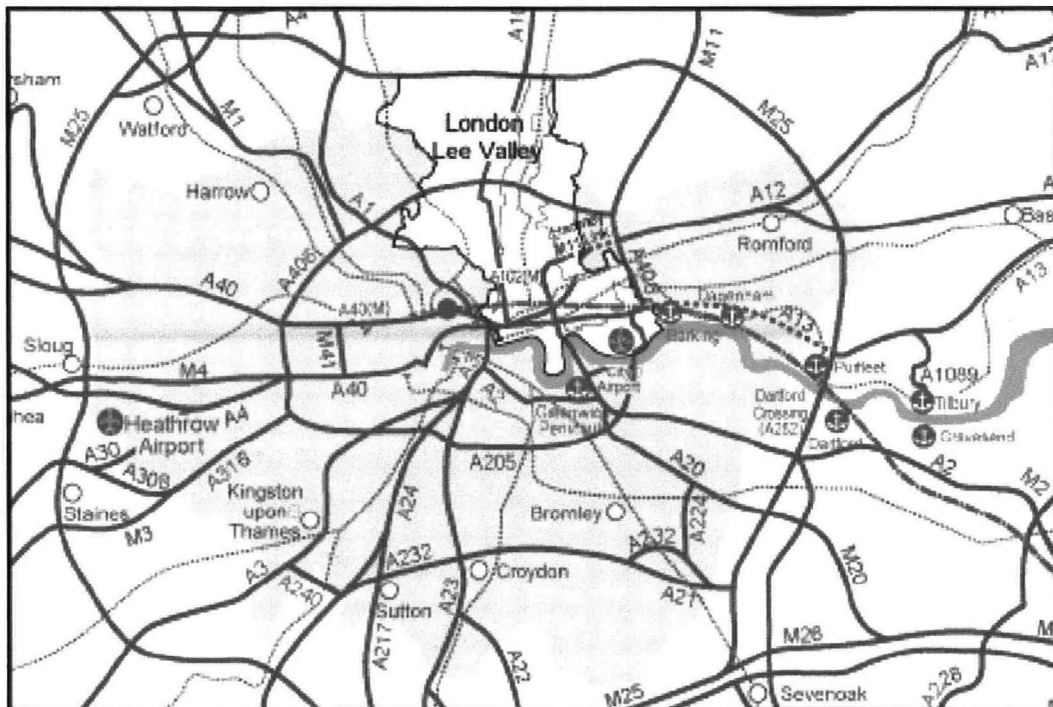
Fig 1.1 London Lee Valley and Objective 2 Area, source LLVP (1997)

In 1994, the European Commission designated the Lee Valley area as eligible for support under Objective 2 of the European Structural Funds in recognition of the effects of industrial decline resulting in high unemployment and degeneration (GOL, 1994). In addition to the Objective 2 funding, other regeneration initiatives have targeted the Lee Valley region including the Urban Programme, the Single Regeneration Budget, Training and Enterprise Councils, Assisted Area Status, City Challenge, Government Task Forces and more recently the New Deal for Communities and New Commitment to Regeneration.

However, at its southern end the Lee Valley overlaps with the East Thames corridor which results in areas including the boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Newham becoming increasingly incorporated in strategies and initiatives aiming at the regeneration of the Thames Gateway region rather than the Upper Lee corridor exclusively. This trend has been strengthened by the new organisation of London's sub-regions and their relative strategies that for the northern part of the city will include the three boroughs of the Upper Lee Valley (Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest) and the borough of Barnet.

In the Economic Development Strategy *"Success Through Diversity"* produced by London Development Agency (LDA, 2001), the Upper Lee Valley is identified as the sub-regional scale of the Lee Valley corridor in which regeneration priorities should be planned and addressed. The above factors allow the identification of the three boroughs of Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest, which occupy the upper part of the Lee Valley, as a valid subset of the whole area. Within these areas, key actors have been identified according to different categories of organisations (e.g. local government, business organisations, community and environmental groups, partnerships and professional bodies) and of various regeneration initiatives (e.g. Single Regeneration Budget, New Commitment to Regeneration, New Deal for Communities, European Structural Funds) and strategic roles.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into four parts. Part one (chapters 2 to 3) defines the research context and the existing theoretical debates that underlie the analysis conducted in this study. Part two (chapter 4) presents the methodological framework, the research design and the fieldwork methodology. Part three (chapter 5) describes the policy context that informs current practice of sustainable development and urban regeneration. Finally, part four (chapters 6 and 7) describes and explains the findings of the fieldwork data. Chapter 8 is dedicated to a final discussion of the issues raised by the research.

Chapter 1 introduces the research through an overview of the context in which the study is located. It also includes a description of the purposes of the study, including the questions that this research aims to investigate, and a presentation of the area in which the study has been conducted. It also explains the structure of the thesis with a short summary of the contents of each chapter.

Chapter 2 outlines the notion of sustainable development and the debate around its core meanings. The chapter emphasises the alternative positions developed around the key themes that constitute the notion of sustainable development. In this respect, the chapter highlights the ideological character of sustainable development. In addition, the chapter introduces new theoretical contributions to the study of the relationship between society and environment stressing how these are redefining the notion of sustainable development and the challenges that it poses. Overall the aim of the chapter is that of providing an overview of the debate generated by the notion of sustainable development while, at the same time, introducing the conceptual themes that guide the research.

Chapter 3 focuses on the operationalisation of the concept of sustainable development with respect to the practice of urban regeneration. Urban regeneration is one of the policy fields that recently have seen the introduction of the notion of sustainable development as a new strategic theme. In consequence, there have been recent contributions to the definition of operational frameworks on sustainable regeneration. The chapter discusses the role of these frameworks in shaping the policy agenda of sustainable development into regeneration. In addition, it reviews the policy goals and approaches of contemporary urban policy. The development of urban policy is examined to identify how the policies, and the ideas behind them, have changed and how these changes impact on the formulation and implementation of policy for sustainable regeneration.

Chapter 4 describes the research design and methodology. It includes an explanation of the reasons for undertaking this study and the objectives it aims to achieve and the potential use of the results. This chapter puts together the purposes of the research with the conceptual framework that informs the study and the methods through which data were collected and analysed. The chapter explains the research questions that inform the fieldwork, the study area and the research participants. In addition, the chapter describes the methods of data collection and analysis; in particular, it explains the development of the fieldwork interviews, from the research question to the interview questions, and the process of data analysis.

Chapter 5 describe the current policy framework with regards to urban regeneration and sustainable development. The evolution of the sustainable development agenda is outlined, especially with regards to the role that policy documents attribute to the notion of sustainable development at different scales. In particular, the chapter describes how the notion of 'sustainability' has evolved in national, regional and local regeneration policies.

Finally, strategic policy documents and recent institutional arrangements are taken into consideration with respect to London and the Lee Valley region.

Chapter 6 presents a first part of the analysis of the fieldwork data; it explores the variety of meanings that the terms 'sustainable development', 'sustainability' and 'sustainable regeneration have among the research participants. It contains a description of the key discourses that are formulated by the actors and their connection to main policy discourses, highlighting existing power relationship between them. The chapter stresses the importance that the role, activities and interests of the informant seem to have in shaping ideas about sustainable development and in defining a sort of 'language/meaning convention'.

Chapter 7 concludes the fieldwork data analysis by describing how long-term regeneration objectives are articulated by the actors and the role of the environmental dimension in such formulation. The chapter emphasises the capacity of well-established discourses of environmental improvements to circumscribe environmental issues in specific respects. It also highlights the relationship between actors' objectives and the character of the processes in which they are engaged. In particular, in valuing environmental transformations, the different social processes that coexist as part of the regeneration process have a central role in the actors' valuation. Overall, the chapter shows that there is a plurality of ways in which environmental transformations are valued and competing claims on the use of local resources are determined.

Finally, chapter 8 summarises the research bringing together the questions that the research aimed to explore with the results that have been obtained. The chapter includes a main discussion of the research results that highlights how the policy framework, the actors' interpretations of sustainable development, and the values that are pursued, define an interlinked context. The overall conclusions are drawn with regard to the empirical findings as those derived by fieldwork data and document analysis. In addition, the theoretical assumptions on which the research has been based and the research variables identified are evaluated, and the limits of the research and areas for further work are outlined.

Chapter two

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE THEORETICAL DEBATE

> *"Sustainable development is a "metafix" that will unite everybody from the profit-minded industrialist and the risk-minimizing subsistence farmer to the equity-seeking social worker, the pollution-concerned or the wildlife-loving First Worlder..."* (Lele', 1991:607)

2.1 Introduction

Sustainable development tends to be regarded as an ideological turning point in the debate between economic growth and environmental protection developed during the last decades by environmental movements and green political theory (Daly, 1991; Martell, 1994; Dobson, 1995). Since the 1980s, multidisciplinary studies have contributed to broaden the literature on sustainable development, raising questions about what is to be sustained and which changes are required to achieve sustainable patterns of development. The debate on sustainable development has produced a number of different theorisations arguing whether sustainable development means a new development path or a greener interpretation of the old one (Daly and Cobb, 1990; Pearce et al, 1989). Provided that ecological integrity is to be sustained, it has been questioned whether its maintenance is a prerequisite for human welfare or a consequence of its inner importance. This is rooted in different ideological positions in the form of principles, obligations and values about the nature of the relationship between the natural world and humankind. Those views are generally described as belonging to an anthropocentric or eco-centric environmental ethic (Eckersley, 1992; Norton, 1996a; Richardson, 1997). In general terms, an anthropocentric environmental ethic would consider the 'instrumental value' of the natural world in terms of the services it can provide to humankind, generally described as use, option and existence value. In contrast an eco-centric position would argue that all the constituent parts of global ecosystems have the right to exist and flourish because of their 'intrinsic value' (Pearce and Turner, 1990; Norton, 1996a).

Similarly, when considering the degree of change required to make development sustainable, it is fundamental to distinguish between environmentalism and ecologism (Dobson, 1995). While environmentalism believes that modern industrial society can be reformed and made more sustainable, ecologism argues that achieving sustainability requires social, political and economic changes.

> The principal difference between the two is that ecologism argues that care for the environment...presupposes radical changes in our relation to it, and thus in our mode of social and political life. Environmentalism, on the other hand, would argue for a 'managerial' approach to environmental problems, secure in the belief that they can be solved without fundamental changes in present values or patterns of production and consumption (Dobson, 1995: 13)

Considering these differences, it is rightly argued that ideological positions such as the anthropocentric and the eco-centric views of the world as well as approaches such as environmentalism and ecologism cannot be harmonised and would always produce alternative interpretations on how to reconcile environment and development. This poses problems to the integration that the notion of sustainable development is assumed to have produced or is capable of achieving. Therefore, as Richardson (1997) points out, the value of the term sustainable development can be contested on the basis that it represents an empty agreement of two irreconcilable agendas.

> The problem with the Brundtland Commission was that it tried to unite the ununitable - the anthropocentric and the biocentric approaches to the natural world - by means of an agreed form of words. It was an act of political consensus, which sought to bring together not only governments (both Left and Right), but also the business community, the scientific establishment. non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and even environmentalists. In this it has achieved considerable success. It is almost universally subscribed to. It gives hopes to developed states, in particular their scientific and business communities, that economic expansion can be achieved without adversely affecting the environment. It gives hope to less developed countries and underdeveloped regions that their development needs will be met. It has given environmentalists credibility. (Richardson, 1997:47-48)

However, given the differences in ideologies and approaches, such as those represented by anthropocentric and eco-centric views of the world and by environmentalism and ecologism, it is important to acknowledge that many agendas for sustainable development exist and that each of them reflects alternative positions on the role of the environment and the direction of human development. Consequently, sustainable development has to be considered not only as a physical condition but also as a social and political construct (Baker et al, 1997) reflecting different viewpoints about the direction of societal development. This explains why the debate on sustainable development poses theoretical as well as operational challenges to a vast range of disciplines ranging from the natural to the social sciences and why, although the term can be contested as an empty or contradictory definition, it has generated an interesting multidisciplinary debate.

This chapter reviews the main positions around the core ideas of sustainable development showing the complex and multidimensional character of the notion of sustainability. Although it is possible to agree on broad definitions of sustainable development, the debate

on the meanings that can be given to the key themes that make up the notion of sustainable development demonstrates that different positions inevitably develop. Generally, alternative approaches such as those represented by mainstream economics and deep ecology have polarised the debate on sustainable development around whether protecting the environment should be done because of its utilitarian or intrinsic value. However, beyond the dichotomy that opposes the use of instrumental or intrinsic values in managing natural resources, other important contributions are moving the research and the debate on sustainable development forward by arguing for a more dynamic conceptualisation of the notion of sustainable development; for the employment of a pluralistic approach to the description and understanding of how people value the environment, as well as more general arguments for a paradigm of co-existence that is able to accommodate more than a singular viewpoint in the attempt to address complex conditions such as the relation between environment and development.

2.2 The *meanings* of sustainable development

Among the dominant definitions of the term 'sustainable development' those of the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987)[1] and the *Caring for the Earth* (UNCN et al, 1991) report[2] are widely spread and adopted. The Brundtland Report definition contains the core ideas of "meeting the needs", of the present poor population, and "not compromising" the environment's capacity for future generations. The *Caring for the Earth* definition counterbalances the goal of improving the "quality of life" with the constraint of living "within the carrying capacity" of vital ecosystems. While the challenge of making development sustainable can be more or less clearly expressed by these two definitions, much of the debate is about the interpretation and consequent operationalisation of its core ideas.

Meeting the needs of the present population has different meanings and requirements in the rich or poor countries; does it mean that different needs should be defined within different development paths or that only universally valid basic needs should be identified and satisfied? Or it is about raising the standards of living of poor countries to those of industrialised society? While it is questionable that it would be theoretically possible to

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[1] development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs
[2] improving the quality of life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems

identify and to meet only universally valid needs or environmentally feasible to raise the standards of living of poor countries to those of richer areas, it could be argued that to meet the needs of people in poor countries requires the consideration of underlying economic, social and political causes of poverty and deprivation as well as the distribution of power and ownership of resources. The commitment of not compromising the environment's ability for future generations clearly requires the assessment of the impact of current human activities on the environment in order to protect its ability to provide for future generations. As a consequence, meeting our obligation towards future generations implies further considerations about the definition of the 'environment' in terms of natural capital that generates welfare or in terms of existing physical stock. Does this require the application of concepts of distributive justice to environmental goods and to apply them to future generations? Does this commitment imply that the same distributive justice is applied towards the people of the present generation? Does living within the carrying capacity resolve the above obligation towards future generations? Does it mean balancing economic growth with environmental protection or posing limitations to the quantity and the quality of human activities?

The challenges posed by the notion of sustainable development are often summarised in the form of three imperatives: the ecological, the economic and the social imperatives. One example is the definition provided by Robinson and Tinker (1995) that identified the biosphere, the economic system and the society as three equally important systems that are interconnected, overlapping and self-organising. Thus sustainable development is the reconciliation of the different imperatives posed by these three systems. In particular, the ecological imperative is to remain within the planetary biophysical carrying capacity; the economic imperative is to ensure adequate material standard of living; and the social imperative is to provide social structures that allow people to sustain human welfare, also in the form of the values that people want to live by (Robinson and Tinker, 1995). Following on from this position and because of the interconnected nature of their relationship, it is the requirement for addressing all of them in order to reduce un-sustainability. This view is often graphically represented using a three-spheres diagram that visualises three equally important systems with the relative areas of overlapping and interconnection (fig. 2.1).

Part of the message that is conveyed through this model is the attempt to overcome the overwhelming role of economic development towards a more balanced approach where

equally important aspects, such as social and environmental aspects, are taken into account in decision-making. In this respect, the three-spheres approach aims at challenging current patterns of development that are mainly oriented around issues of economic growth with an attempt to reconcile different objectives. It also represents a way of overcoming a sector-oriented approach to policy and projects towards integrated solutions. However, according to more eco-centric view, this representation of sustainable development portrays a conventional view about the relationship between the three systems of society, economy and environment.
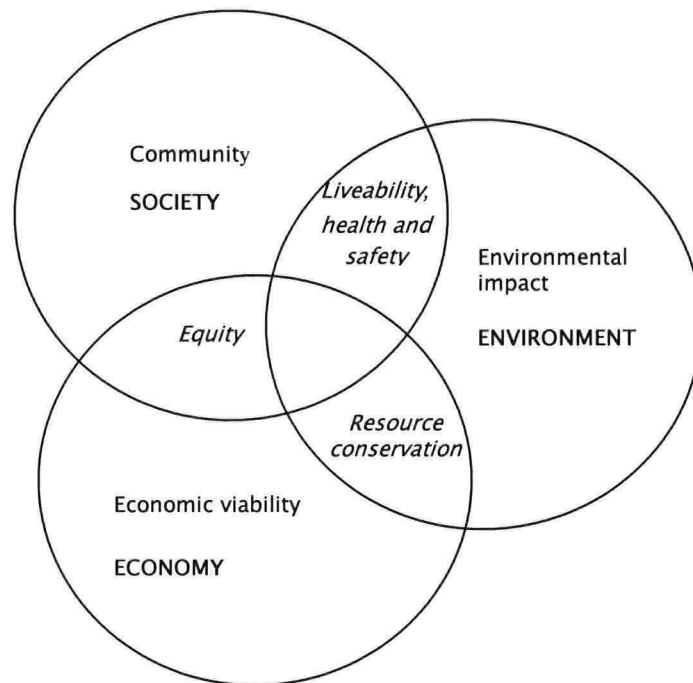
Fig. 2.1 Dominant view of sustainable development, source Eichler (1999:198)

Eichler challenges this view from an eco-feminist perspective proposing a diagram where the three systems express a different relationship on the basis of a number of considerations. First, she argues that it is inappropriate to conceptualise aspects of the human and the natural system as equal. Since humans depend on natural resources, human activities need to be framed within the larger system of the biosphere. With respect to the economic system, the main issue is whether this can be considered separate from all other human activities constituting a co-equal system or should be considered as an important sub-system of the human system. With regards to the social system, she proposes a distinction between aspects such as governance and decision-making and aspects such as culture, religion and spiritual meaning system. Following this distinction, the social system will include structures and institutions such as family, community, law, education and

24

associational structures. In this way, the conceptualisation of sustainable development through the three spheres approach has been redefined leaving two, rather then three, main systems: the human and the biosphere. They are interconnected and self-organising but absolutely not co-equal; in fact, the two systems do not even overlap since the human system is completely included in the natural system. The human system, then, includes four sub-systems: the economic system, the decision-making or governance system, the cultural system and the social system (fig 2.2).

In this way, Eichler redefines the imperatives that the notion of sustainable development poses on the basis that since all systems are within the natural system they all have to incorporate the ecological imperative of remaining within the planetary biosphere carrying capacity. In particular, the economic imperative becomes to ensure adequate standards of living considering the constraints of the ecological imperative. The social imperative would be to create and maintain social structures that meet diverse social needs; this means addressing the needs of all people currently living on earth and because of the ecological constraints, redistributing material goods rather then increasing their production. The cultural imperative would be to provide a cultural base that recognises the human interdependence with the natural environment and other humans; one that transcends material accumulation as a form of fulfilment and generates respect for future and past generations, and is committed to non-violence. Finally, the decision-making imperative would be to provide structures that are effective and legitimate for those affected, and that implements the policies needed to fulfil the other imperatives.
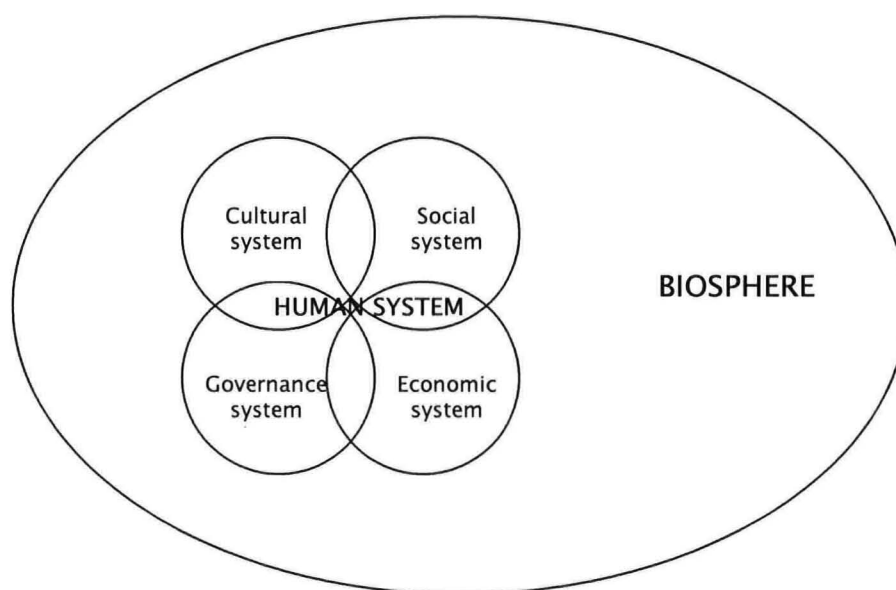
Fig. 2.2 Alternative view of sustainable development, source Eichler (1999:200)

Overall, this interpretation challenges several conventional approaches to the definition of the relationship between humans and the natural environment providing a specific view of sustainable development where humans needs or imperatives are met subject to ecological constraints.

The issue of identifying and interpreting the key requirements that sustainable development entails has generally led to the search for a universal interpretation of the term 'sustainable development' or the identification of measurable criteria as necessary prerequisites to make sustainable development operational in policy terms. However, the search for a unitary definition and interpretation of the term 'sustainable development', of its key concepts and policy principles represents a questionable task since interpretation and operationalisation of the core ideas of sustainable development are grounded in ideological positions as Eichler's (1999) arguments demonstrate.

Jacobs (1999) says that it is crucial to recognise that sustainable development is a 'contestable concept', which means that like other terms such as democracy, freedom or social justice, sustainable development has two levels of meanings. The first is a unitary and easily understood definition including general core ideas. The second level of meaning is where the contest occurs on how the concept and its core ideas should be interpreted in practice. While the first level of meaning of contestable concepts is generally understood and widely subscribed, the second level is characterised by alternative ideological positions. If sustainable development is a contestable concept, the search for a unitary definition and interpretation is not possible since people hold different political values and interests and therefore different positions on what it is required to make development sustainable.

> Such agreement is only possible at the first level-and now exists, coalesced around the Brundtland and *Caring for the Earth* definitions. At the second, there is contestation. This shouldn't be perceived as remediable lack of precision over what sustainable development 'means': rather such contestation *constitutes* the political struggles over the direction of social and political development. (Jacobs, 1999:26)

Within the term 'sustainable development', a number of existing discourses on environment and development have been brought together under a single concept; its core ideas or key principles are generally identified around the main interlinked themes of environment, growth, futurity, equity and participation. A review of the main alternative

positions around the core ideas of sustainable development gives an idea of the contestation and how the relationship between environmental protection and the direction of social and economic development is constructed.

2.2.1 Environment vs. growth

The concept of sustainable development has not provided an answer to the crucial debate on whether or not the finite nature of the earth poses limit to economic growth. The economic growth debate, central to the development of green political theory and environmental movements (Daly, 1991; Meadows et al, 1992), is based on the limits to growth theory, which contains three main principles. First, technological solutions cannot help to realise infinite growth in a finite system; second, the exponential nature of growth can bring about sudden catastrophic changes; and third, the complex nature of the global system is far beyond our current understanding as the interconnected problems linked to growth show.

The fundamental conditions that form the biophysical limits to growth are also defined in terms of finitude, entropy and complex ecological interdependence; alongside are the ethico-social limits to growth. Growth, diminishing the ecological capital, should be limited by the moral obligation towards future generations; growth, degrading natural habitats, is limited by the extinction of other species; increasing growth does not mean increasing human welfare; and economic growth driving forces have a negative effect on moral values by fostering self-interest and the pursuit of infinite wants (Daly, 1991). The belief that there are biophysical and ethico-social limits to growth has produced a number of theorisations on alternative green economics, principally based on distinguishing growth from development, and quantitative increase from qualitative improvement.

> By "growth" I mean quantitative increase in the scale of the physical dimension of the economy; i.e., the rate of flow of matter and energy through the economy (from the environment as raw material and back to the environment as waste), and the stock of human bodies and artefacts. By "development" I mean the qualitative improvement in the structure, design and composition of the physical stocks and flows, that result from greater knowledge, both of technique *and of purpose*...An economy can therefore develop without growing, just as the planet Earth has developed (evolved) without growing. (Daly, 1991: 36)

With regard to the notion of sustainability, the difference between growth and development is reproduced by distinguishing sustainable economic growth from sustainable development. From an economic perspective, sustainable economic growth is defined as increases in GNP per capita that are not affected by negative biophysical (pollution,

27

resource problems) or social (social disruption) impacts; in contrast sustainable development is defined as per capita utility or well-being increasing over time (Pearce et al, 1989). According to Pearce and Barbier (2000), the debate on the incompatibility between environmental quality and economic growth is based on an incorrect idea that economic growth would mean an increase of material and energy throughput of the economy. Considering that environmental degradation is caused by factors such as price distortion or lack of resource rights and that economists define economic growth as an increase in the level of GNP over time, the focus of the debate should be moved from the link between material/energy throughput and pollution to the one between income growth and material/energy throughput. In addition, the option of reducing economic growth in order to decrease environmental degradation is contested by Pearce and Barbier on the basis that less economic growth would mean incurring social costs that should be traded off against those of environmental degradation. Pearce and Barbier says that *"unless protecting the environment has super-moral status- it is morally much more important to conserve the environment than, say, to create employment - the issue becomes one of comparing costs and benefits"* (Pearce and Barbier, 2000: 30). This position is reinforced by modern theory of economic growth which identifies factors like endogenous technical change, including research and development and education, as those determining growth; therefore, critics of limiting growth are supported by views such as *"to lower economic growth means, among other things, the lowering of technical change and a reduction in education"* (Pearce and Barbier, 2000: 31). Therefore, going back to the initial assumption that economic growth is an increase of GNP, the issue has to be its composition rather then its level, monitoring the way in which economic growth is secured rather then its level, that should be *"at lower and lower ratios of materials and energy input to economic output"* (Pearce and Barbier, 2000: 32).

Recently, the literature on the Environmental Kuznet's Curve (EKC) has brought new arguments in the debate on environment versus economic growth (Panayotou, 1995). The EKC (fig. 2.3) represents the hypothesis that there is a relationship between a number of pollution indicators and level of income per capita. According to the EKC, economic growth may cause environmental degradation but beyond a threshold further growth is beneficial for the environment. Therefore, according to this argument, it could be assumed that economic development generates a better environment although an initial degradation of the environmental asset. A number of reasons have been suggested to explain why

environmental degradation should rise but then decline with increasing income. One is that of changes in people's preferences; while poor countries may regard material well-being as more important than environmental amenities, getting rich changes the demand and consequently, the political structure reacts by developing and implementing environmental policies and measures. However, the EKC has only been validated for a few air and water pollutants, generally considered easy and cheap to abate, while there is no evidence that the EKC hypothesis can be valid for resource depletion.
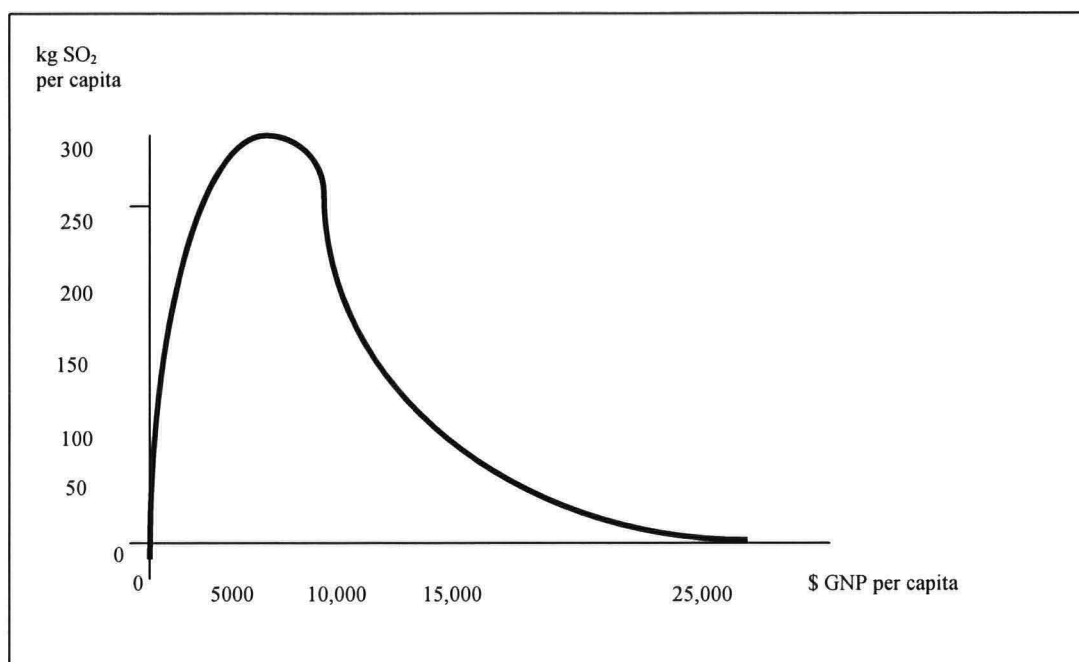
FIG 2.3 EKC for Surphur Dioxide (Panayotou, 1995) source Pearce and Barbier, 2000: 25

Overall, although the conflict between environmental protection and economic growth has not been settled by the notion of sustainable development, a new element has been brought into the debate: the moral commitment that development choices should entail in the form of obligations towards future generations. With sustainable development, the central theme of environment and growth has been enriched by an intergenerational temporal dimension and by a new collective responsibility.

2.2.2 Environment and futurity

The concern that future generations may experience a lower quality of life because of the environmental impact of current patterns of consumption and production explains intergenerational justice as our moral obligation towards future generations. The concern for compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs has been

addressed through economic and ecological perspectives generating different approaches to the main question of which actions today would provide justice to future generations. The issue of intergenerational justice contains three sub-problems of a) how far in the future our moral obligations extend, b) how to identify the needs and the wants of future people and c) how to determine which actions today have moral implications for the future (Dobson, 1999).

The concept of sustainability has its roots in the environmental notion of managing natural resources in a way that does not damage future supplies; consequently, sustainability and sustainable development can be interpreted as maintaining the ecological conditions necessary to support human life through the future. According to an economic perspective, the goal of sustainability would require maintaining the 'capital' over time by *"leaving the next generation with a stock of capital assets that provide them with the capability to generate at least as much development as is achieved by this generation"* (Turner and Pearce, 1993: 180). In the approach to sustainability as a non-declining level of capital, the total capital - that is the total resources capable to contribute to human welfare - is divided into natural capital (such as minerals, biological yield potential, pollution absorption capacity) and human made capital (such as artefacts and human capital). According to this interpretation, the environment is defined as a capital asset providing economically valuable functions and services such as renewable and non-renewable natural resources, waste assimilation capacity, provision of amenities and life support system.

Consequently, the economic importance of the environment can be established by placing monetary values on environmental assets and services by a process of market valuation. This kind of valuation is considered important since it can facilitate *"that environmental impacts are taken into account in decision making on the same basis as the conventional costs and benefits of economic activities"* (Pearce and Barbier, 2000:7). Consequently, the impact of economic activities on environmental assets can be evaluated by revealing the nature of unsustainable path of development as the reduction of the asset bases. In addition, an economic valuation of environmental services and assets would oppose environmental degradation placing environment protection in competition with other economic activities. Finally, the establishment of an economic value of the environmental assets could lead to the creation of a price for using the assets that translated into a revenue can finance conservation.
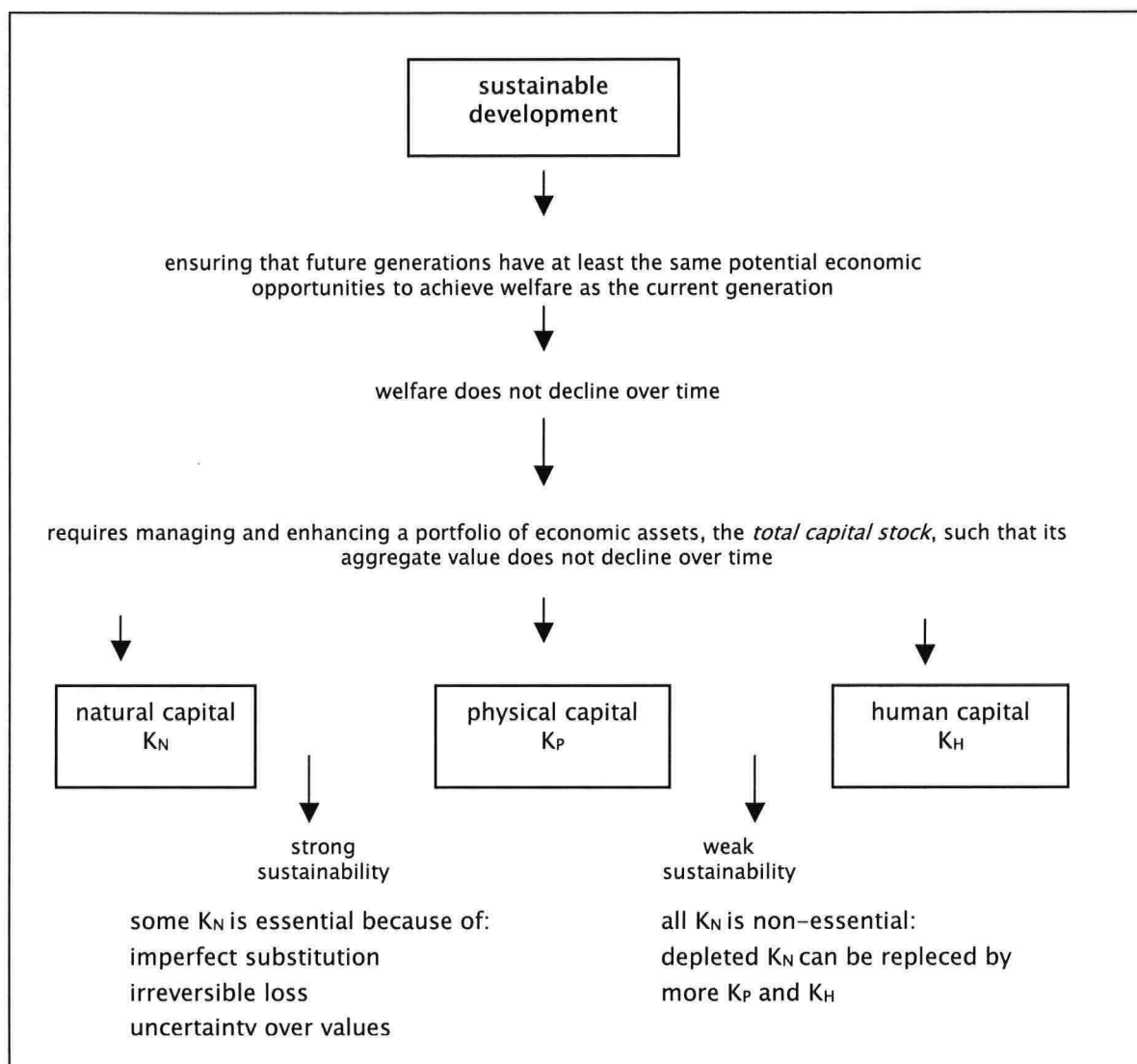
Fig. 2.4 Strong and weak sustainability (adapted from Pearce and Barbier. 2000: 21)

In the literature, two different approaches to the concept of sustainability as non-declining capital are identified as 'weak' and 'strong' sustainability (fig. 2.4). Weak sustainability assumes that human and natural capital are substitutable and, therefore, that it is not important in which form the capital stock is passed on to future generations; to provide a non-declining stock of aggregated capital would satisfy our moral obligation. In contrast, a strong position on sustainable development is based on the idea that there is a 'critical capital stock' which exercises vital ecological functions and that it cannot be substituted. Therefore, strong sustainability argues that world's resources and functions must be passed to future generations, since the natural capital, or environmental asset, contributes to human welfare providing essential resources and services. This includes the consideration that sustainability requires non-declining natural capital.

However, critics of the position of sustainability as non-declining natural capital are grounded in the consideration that an economic approach to the environment as natural capital or assets does not satisfy environmental considerations and that measuring the level of natural capital presents a critical bias. First, there is an ideological consideration. Weak and strong sustainability are generally considered as distinct positions because strong sustainability has a clear commitment toward sustaining the natural capital. However, since the commitment to non-declining natural capital is determined on the grounds that the natural capital contributes to human welfare, strong and weak sustainability are based on the same ideological position.

> Proponents of weak and strong sustainability both advocate the maintenance of a non-declining capacity to generate (human) welfare; on this point of principle there is no difference between them. But whereas proponents of weak sustainability are supposed to believe that natural and human made-capital is, as matter of fact, indefinitely substitutable, proponents of strong sustainability believe that they are not. (Holland, 1999; 51)

Therefore, the goal of maintaining the environment's capacity to generate present and future human welfare while securing the level of natural capital does not mean that all natural capital is protected but only as far as it is critical to human welfare. Moreover, the commitment to non-declining natural capital raises questions of how to measure the level of natural capital that is being maintained or that it is necessary to maintain. The key problem has to do with the fundamental assumption that natural capital exercises an economic function in contributing to human welfare and, therefore, its contribution is assessed in terms of value.

Holland (1999) identifies the main problems of measurement. First, the value of the natural capital considered as its value to humankind can be culturally relative, changing in relation to social and cultural variables; thus the determination of the amount of natural capital to be sustained reflects present but mutable values and has an effect on what we pass to future generations. Consequently, the value of the natural capital may change, by being transformed for production or consumption, but not necessarily the natural items; because in the economic view the natural capital does not represent the physical stock but its present and potential value. Keeping the value of the natural capital constant does not ensure that the natural items themselves will be held constant. Third, natural capital is measured with regard to its utilisation, making it dependent upon current knowledge and technology. Consequently, changes in the level of natural capital will depend on change in the assumption about its use. Finally, it is questionable what level of natural capital should

32

be considered in relation to its capacity to generate welfare in the future given current levels of welfare.

Opposite to the economic view of natural capital, 'ecological' approaches to the issue of intergenerational justice are represented by the 'physical stock' for Holland (1999) and the 'listing stuff (LS)' for Norton (1999a). The physical stock approach tends to focus on the natural items themselves rather then their economic value; it implies the possibility to make an inventory of natural items considering that the difficulties of aggregating different units of measurement can be addressed by the use of indicators such as biodiversity. In this way the goal of non-declining natural capital understood as physical stock *"is more likely to do better justice to environmental concerns"*(Holland, 1999: 65). Similarly, the listing stuff (LS) approach considers all physical aspects of the natural world that should be passed to the future generations. It rejects an economic perspective in that the loss of specific natural aspects is considered non-compensable, harming of the well-being of future generations regardless of their economic wealth. This approach is based on the idea that sustainability means maintaining options and opportunities through the future. According to this interpretation and the assumption of comparing well-being across generations, rather then of economic wealth, sustainability would require that options - as available natural resources - and opportunities - as the conditions to use them - are open to future generations. The identification of the 'stuff' that should be protected is a locally determined process, which brings together key community values and the associated options, or key resources that must be protected.

2.2.3 Environment and equity

A main element that is linked to the challenge of meeting the needs of the present generation and to the commitment towards the development of future generations is equity. In the debate on sustainable development, equity has different interpretations. In the Southern debate on sustainable development, equity is a central issue particularly with regard to resource distribution (Sachs et al, 1997); in the North there is much emphasis on equity as the principle of redistribution in favour of deprived urban communities, including ethnic groups, women, youth, special needs groups and other minorities (Baker et al, 1997). In addition, considering intra-country equity means challenging consumption and production patterns as well as international economic relations. In fact, if equity and justice has to be related to the consumption of the world's resources, a redistribution from North

to South would require decreasing the material production and consumption in the North to increase it in the South, within global and ecosystem limits. Sustainable development requires an investigation of the manner in which the economy/environment relationship meets the requirements contained in its core ideas and at which scale. Is it the relation between a national economy and its resources that has to become sustainable? Or the global interactions between human activities and the environment? Considering that many economies in the North draw natural resources from outside their administrative and ecological borders, a global perspective is necessary to address the 'external unsustainability' of the economies of developed countries. In fact, while different standards of living and habits have different ecological impacts, especially comparing developed and developing countries, exceeding the local carrying capacity does not produce any negative feedback on the economy or lifestyle of that locality.

The 'internal' end 'external' dimension of sustainability can be taken into account considering the ecological impact of an area in terms of resources drawn from outside its boundaries as well as internal flows of resources. Ecologically the limit of an area is determined by its carrying capacity as productive capacity of the resources and absorption of waste. Linked to the concept of carrying capacity, the notions of 'environmental space' and 'ecological footprint' are largely used to measure the relationship between different uses of the natural environment and the scale of their impact. The concept of 'environmental space' defines the area of the natural environment that can be used without harming essential natural characteristics; it is a function of the carrying capacity of ecosystems, the regenerative ability of natural resources and the availability of raw materials. Similarly, the concept of 'ecological footprint' (Rees, 1992) analyses the flow of resources and the demand of natural stock; it measures the impact of an area on the global environment as import of carrying capacity (e.g. resources coming from other regions) and export of ecological degradation (e.g. emission of wastes).

According to Sachs et al. (1997), the environment/equity relationship contains a demand for justice that it is not necessarily a demand for development. In fact, he considers that the pursuit of economic growth to abolish poverty and generate justice has failed, leading to social polarisation and long-term unequal distribution of the world resources.

> In a finite biosphere the search for justice involves restriction of traditional development among the rich rather than greater economic growth for the poor. In other words, after the end of the age of development, the prime commandment for the North is to take less rather than giving more (Sachs et al, 1997:14)

To promote environmental quality and equity it seems important to reconsider the notion of development as a universal value, as currently led by specific actors, such as the international agencies, and linked to specific kind of changes, such as technology transfer (Sachs, 1993). The claim for equality demands that equal rights of utilisation of global environmental goods have to be considered as a guiding principle aiming at regulating one's own behaviour; in particular, the moral obligation of ecological integrity raised for the future generations has to be accompanied by the same claim for the present generation.

The notion of equity is generally related to North/South issues and to the poverty experience by developing countries. However, equity is also considered in relation to the opportunities that are available to marginalised groups. In this respect, equity is linked to the other key theme of sustainable development of bottom up involvement as people's empowerment and participation in the process of policy development and implementation.

2.2.4 Top-down planning and bottom-up participation

The notion of sustainable development contains the idea that people should be able to participate to the decisions that alter or improve their own lives through a process of bottom-up or grassroots involvement and empowerment. People's rights to participate are an essential feature of sustainable development with regards to both the elaboration of plans, such as Local Agenda 21, and the challenge of unsustainable practices. At the same time, sustainable development demands the commitment of governments and international organisations to subscribe and implement key reforms. This is consistent with a belief that commitment and action for sustainable development are needed at a number of different scales. However, there are alternative positions on the role that bottom-up initiatives and top-down strategies can play with regards to the complexity of challenges that the notion of sustainable development poses.

The literature on sustainable development makes clear references to the importance of bottom up involvement (Kirkby et al, 1995; Baker et al, 1997; Jacobs, 1997). Participation, as involvement of citizens and grassroots groups, is considered important for the implementation of policies for sustainable development in terms of widespread public support. Participation is also important in terms of co-operation of actors at the local level as a broad-based consensus on projects and initiatives. In particular, participation is central to Local Agenda 21. The process of subscribing and designing a local Agenda 21 requires

a broad-based consensus. In particular, Agenda 21 (chapters 23 to 32) states the importance of involving different interests and minority groups from local authorities, trade unions, business and non-governmental organisations to women and indigenous people. In this respect, the commitment to enable participation in the decision-making process is also linked to the notion of equity in particular with regard to marginalised groups. Producing consensus and involving minorities as two key aspects of participation are currently seen as an integral part of the promotion of sustainable development. Finally, participation is increasingly considered important in relation to policy formulation when it is based on the communities' understanding of their natural environment and their interaction with it.

However, the definition of environmental problems in terms of negative externalities generated by market mechanisms determines a strategic role for governments and therefore identifies a main role for top down interventions. In order to correct market failure, governments can use a range of instruments such as regulations, levies and subsidies, setting standards of environmental quality and introducing economic and fiscal instruments to influence patterns of consumption and production. However, different views on the role of the market affect the way in which top-down strategies can be formulated. A key question is whether sustainable development requires a high degree of state intervention or a decentralised market-led approach. Some argue that sustainable development demands a high degree of state intervention in particular with respect to industrial policy (Meadowcroft, 1995) and to environmental management (Redclift, 1993); keeping economic activities within the limits of environmental carrying capacity requires economic planning based on controlling the market and setting environmental targets. In contrast, others believe that the market is the place where environmental decisions can be decentralised on the basis of introducing economic instruments (Pearce, 1995). However, the argument on the degree of centralisation that is appropriate to promote the changes that sustainable development demands has to be considered within current trends of deregulation and privatisation and the effective capacity of governments to deliver certain strategies.

For different reasons, a decentralised approach is also part of the ideology of radical political ecologists according to which, decentralised communities are an essential political and institutional form in the realisation of a sustainable society (Dobson, 1995). The main reason is that bringing production and consumption together is essential to solve problems

related to resource use; therefore, political decentralisation is determined by ecological constraints and generates environmental benefits. The commitment to decentralisation and local politics is generally linked to some form of participatory democracy; if more decisions are taken at the local level, more participation and accountability can be pursued and delivered. However, apart from extreme forms of decentralisation, such as bioregionalism, that would not consider any institutional contact between communities, the idea of a decentralised society still implies that the relationship between the local and national levels has to be solved, in particular with regard to the political and economic spheres. One answer is that environmental problems occur at different levels and have to be dealt at the appropriate level and political institutions should correspond to these levels, integrate and co-ordinate them. Ecologies are regional, national, international and local and decentralisation can be intended as the effort of matching ecological diversity with institutional diversity (Goldsmith, 1988). For example, global environmental problems are best dealt through government's negotiation or supranational bodies while national governments have the power to control market forces and to set up the framework for a sustainable society (Eckersley, 1992). Again, the debate between centralised planning strategies and decentralised approach lies in the relationship among various institutional levels with respect to what different ideological positions think should be delivered.

> Overall, promoting successful sustainable development policies depends upon maintaining a satisfactory balance between the imperatives of top-down strategic planning and bottom up participation in the policy-making process. However, whilst current sustainable development models reject a simple top down structure, they leave us unclear as to how the imperatives of top down management and bottom up participation can be reconciled into new policy paradigms (Baker et al, 1997; 26).

The formulation and implementation of sustainable development policies requires top-down input, in particular through the role of governments and international agencies. At the same time, it recognises that the various stakeholders in society have their own role to play. The reconciliation between these two imperatives depends on several factors such as the democratic structure of national and local institutions, the degree of participation and the outcome that the process is likely to produce. In particular, as Lele' (1991) points out, while participation is necessary for achieving equity and social justice, it does not necessarily promote or reinforce environmental sustainability as an outcome.

With the notion of sustainable development the above themes of environment, growth, futurity, equity and participation have become interlinked: issues of growth and

environment are constructed into a future generation concern that poses key questions of equity across present and future generations. The issue of equity is also connected to the other main theme of participation in decision-making and the role of top-down strategies versus bottom up involvement. However, each of these themes is open to a range of interpretations according to alternative positions and viewpoints highlighting the 'contestable' nature of the notion of sustainable development. However, recent researches have proposed a process-oriented understanding of sustainability that recognises the dynamic nature of environmental and societal changes and the critical character of unpredictability and uncertainty of such changes.

2.3 New directions

In the last decades, a more process-oriented approach has been employed in the description and understanding of environmental problems. For example, Norton (1996a) points out how in the field of conservation policies, the focus has gradually moved from the concern to protect particular kind of species and ecosystems toward the formulation of more comprehensive concepts such as that of "biodiversity", defined as *" the sum total of distinct species, genetic variation within species, and the variety of habitats and ecological communities"* (Norton, 1996a: 5). These kinds of transformations can be considered as expressions of a gradual move from object-oriented approaches to the definition of environmental issues, and in the example of biodiversity to the development of conservation policies, towards more process-oriented models. Following such process-oriented approach, environmental problems have increasingly been described and understood as problems of adaptation within complex, multiscalar, dynamic systems. In particular, the work of Holling (1996) on resource modelling and the thesis of adaptive management have advocated the need for developing a science of complexity to the study of ecosystems where incomplete predictability is a fundamental property (Holling, 1978; Walters and Holling, 1990).

New understanding and knowledge about the structural functioning of complex natural systems poses new questions about management and exploitation of natural resources and consequently on the challenge that the notion of sustainable development poses. In this respect, Norton points out that, given such new conceptualisations of environmental problems: *"neither means or goals of sustainability can be set concretely in the beginning, and the quest for sustainable human communities must involve many individual processes*

of experimentation, revision of scientific understanding, and of reformulation of community goals" (Norton, 1996a: 6).

The contribution of Holling's work on dynamic management of natural resources and the arguments of adaptive management are both grounded in an increased acknowledgement of the incomplete understanding and of unpredictability in natural systems. Sustainability is therefore characterised as a complex condition that cannot be predefined and needs to be conceptualised in relational terms. In this respect, there are a number of pathways towards sustainability defined around the relation between environment and societies and the viability of their relationship over a long time (Becker et al. 1999). Focusing on such relationships has posed the need for renewed understanding of the dynamics and complexity of socio-ecological transformations: *"In sharp contrast to thinking in terms of preservation, sustainability opens up a perspective that is inherently dynamic ... sustainability is concerned with stabilized and preserved patterns within socio-ecological transformations in which the natural environment is a central dimension"* (Becker et al, 1999:6). In fact, the notion of sustainable development essentially raises questions about the way in which societies could shape their processes of transformation whilst considering the requirement of development for future generations. Considering the dynamic and complex character of social-ecological interactions, sustainability is characterised by uncertainty and by the recognition of multiple paths of development. Since it is not possible to define a threshold between sustainability and un-sustainability, the question remains within a domain characterised by change and transformation rather than preservation (Becker et al, 1999). Holling's studies (Holling 19978, 1996) have produced a new vision over ecosystem structural organisation that denies a static version of nature in which sustainability could refer to a specific status. This also implies that there is not a single pathway to sustainability but that multiple trajectories can be searched and pursued. Such multiplicity of trajectories towards sustainable paths of development derives from different political, cultural and ecological starting points of societal transformation. Thus, the management of the relation between human activities and resource management becomes increasingly important. In this respect, the thesis of adaptive management stresses the importance of learning by doing as one possible answer to incomplete predictability and in the definition of a process of knowledge building that is necessary collective (Walters and Holling, 1990; Gunderson, 1999; Lee, 1999).

The work on dynamic resource modelling (Holling, 1996) has been elaborated using concepts derived from hierarchy theory (Allen and Starr, 1982). Hierarchy theory characterises natural systems as nested dynamics that can be defined into discrete portions of temporal and spatial possibilities. Central assumptions of hierarchy theory are that a) all description and measurements are be formulated from within a complex, dynamic system and b) spatial relationships are characterised by subsystems within larger systems that, changing slower, provide the environment against which smaller subsystems have to adapt. Thus, choices made by level one can be defined as response and adaptation to patterns and processes taking place at level-two larger system, the environment. At the individual level, organisms encounter the environment as complex structure of options and constraints; however, at the same time, the aggregate choices by individuals at level one determine features of the larger system.

Human activities express choices that can be considered as a form of response or adaptation to the structure of the environment they inhabit, but the cumulative impact of human activities gradually alter the environment in terms of ratio of options and constraints faced by future generations. According to Norton (1996b), a hierarchical approach to environmental problems poses a central question with regard to the way in which human choices and values fit in such a complex framework. With regard to human activities, it can be observed that while their choices are constrained by the environment at the larger level, the cumulative impact of their choices affect the future structure of the environment. In particular, he argues that human values and value driven choices play a determinant role in such a hierarchical vision of environmental problems for two main reasons. First, the choices on the models that are used to represent and understand the interactions between humans and nature are inevitably based on value considerations; thus human valuation is an integral part of process of representation of reality in terms of identification and modelling of problems. Second, human's values and value driven choices play a critical role in the determination of changes in ecosystem states; the impact of human activities is affecting the resilience of ecosystems.

If the core idea of sustainability can be expressed as the obligation to maintain options and opportunities for the future, then values emerge as important element *"within a dialectic between culture and nature, with each generation facing a mix of opportunities and constraints and with the cumulative choices of each generation affecting the landscape in ways that will affect the mixture of opportunities and constraints that will be faced by*

coming generations" (Norton 1996a:8). However, in such a representation of environmental problems, by articulating the cumulative impacts of human activities as well as the impact on options open to future generations, values and choices have to be considered one of the crucial variables of policy processes.

Norton observes that values are generally assumed as exogenous, independent variables in modelling environmental management, defined outside the policy process; on the contrary, valuations represent important drivers in defining the relationship between resource and development since individual preferences result in the cumulative impact that threaten resilience. As long as values are considered exogenous, the process of resource management cannot offer options, such as an informational feedback, if the preferences that are expressed by a community promote negative cross-scale impacts. In particular, while environmental management is based on a predefined assumption about what people should prefer, such as the obligation to protect the resilience of ecosystems to ensure the well being of future generations, the reality is that current preferences drive unsustainable development paths. Thus, individual preferences and social values must be considered and modelled as endogenous variables to the process of environmental management.

2.4 The need for a pluralistic approach

Following Norton's argument about the central role of values as key endogenous variables in choices about environment and development, the search for sustainable patterns of development becomes inevitably grounded on the fundamental question about the way in which humans value nature. This aspect is traditionally debated in oppositional terms; for example, representatives of mainstream economics and deep ecology argue on conservation policy for future generations on the base of opposite reasons, the utilitarian value for the first and the intrinsic value for the latter (sections 2.1 and 2.2). However, while there are several contributions to sustainable development that are based on either of these views, other works highlight the need to recognise and to adopt a pluralistic position about valuing nature as underlying complex dimension to sort out decisions on environment and development.

Mainstream economics, which has developed great interest in environmental issues, has proposed considering environmental problems as market commodities and defining environmental protection employing a utilitarian approach. Among the main critics

towards the work of mainstream economists are the considerations that environmental goods cannot be considered as market goods and that there is more than one way, i.e. consumer way, in which people value the environment (Jacobs, 1994; Söderbaum, 2000). On the contrary, it has become widely debated that there are a multiplicity of ways in which people value the environment as well as there are a number of approaches to set environmental protection goals, considering principles such as equity and futurity.

The theoretical framework developed by neo-classical economics about the description and solution of environmental problems has been largely criticised by those looking for a multiplicity of ways of dealing with environment and development issues on the base that one single model would not be satisfactory of such complex set of problems. In particular, it is becoming evident that valuation is a complex process that can be approached in a number of different ways. Sagoff (1988) observes that people act as consumers but also as citizens when their choices and valuation are driven by moral reasons about what they believe is right. In his opinion, environmental questions should be dealt with acting as citizens not as consumers; they should be left to a domain of public policy, debate and enquiry about moral decisions for the society. Overcoming the strict distinction between consumers and citizens, Jacobs observes (1994) that people are likely to be interested in the protection of the environment for a number of different reasons that can derive from moral or cultural attitudes as well as consumer preferences. Similarly, Norton (1996) stresses how the relationship between human activities and the natural environment generate the expression of a range of different attitudes; people value the environment in utilitarian as well as aesthetic or spiritual terms. Therefore, given such multidimensional aspects of valuation towards the environment, the issue is not to argue for the right way to value, and, therefore, to protect the environment or to rate our development paths, but to acknowledge the existence of what Söderbaum (2000) emphasises as "paradigm co-existence". This implies accepting a plurality of perspectives rather than searching for a model that can be eventually replaced by successive improved models. The idea is that there is not one truth but a number of perspectives to look at a set of very complex issues regulating the relationship between human development and the natural environment. The search for sustainability has to be conducted on the base of trans-disciplinary approaches that recognise complexity and the plurality of viewpoints in order to achieve a better understanding.

2.4.1 Nature's creativity

Following the argument that environmental issues cannot be reduced to a question of deciding which entities/objects to save but rather to evaluating processes of change (Norton, 1996a), the focus on valuing the environment can be moved towards valuing certain processes. In particular, beyond the dichotomy between assigning an intrinsic or instrumental value to the environment, it would be possible to search for a deeper aspect, which is about the 'becoming' rather than the 'being'. On this base, Norton argues that if there has to be a common denominator about valuing the environment this could be what he calls "nature's creativity" as the ability of *"natural processes to maintain, support and repair damage to its parts"* (Norton 1996a: 11). According to his analysis, the plurality of ways in which humans value the environment can be connected to this deeper source of creativity that is valued by people in different ways as a result of their interaction with the environment as well as its dynamic representation.

> If we reject this sharp dichotomy between instrumental and intrinsic values, a pluralistic and integrative position emerges as a possibility: there are many ways in which humans value nature. These ways range along a continuum from entirely self-directed and consumptive uses, and includes also human spiritual values and aesthetic values, and other forms of non-instrumental valuation... Some humans are hunters, some are birdwatchers, some are shamans, and others are developers and capitalists. The common denominator of all these types of values derived from nature – when expressed in a dynamic, process model – is nature valued as a multiscalar system of creative processes. (Norton, 1996a: 10-11)

In the search for the common denominator of all types of values, Norton aims to overcome the predominance of one type of value, for example instrumental value, over all the others; this would be reductive of the multiplicity of ways in which humans value and relate to the natural environment. In particular, the attempt to define a deeper aspect in nature's creativity does not define how people should value the environment; on the contrary it aims at expressing an underlying value and, at the same time, the multiplicity of opportunities that such creativity offers to people. Norton's analysis of "nature's creativity" is one of the answers to the search for adopting a pluralistic view of values. In this sense, this position tries to be open to the multiplicity of ways in which different people, not least as a result of different cultures, value the environment.

2.4.2 Institutional economics: Söderbaum's ideological orientation

Against the single disciplinary approach expressed by the thesis of mainstream economics, ecological and institutional economics offer a trans-disciplinary approach to look at the complexity of the issue that the relation between environment and development poses.

Ecological economics takes a pluralistic trans-disciplinary approach .... with a comprehensive perspective that view a problem from a holistic, long-term and contextual point of view; a concern for sustainability and equity; a tolerance of uncertainty; ... a concern for dynamics, process, non-equilibrium, heterogeneity and discontinuity..." (Hagan 1991:4)

Ecological economics is open to contributions that derive from ecology and economics as well as social science disciplines such as sociology, political science and educational science; in this sense, it is open to a pluralistic perspective in order to identify new approaches to the complex and interconnected relationships between ecological and economic systems. Within this trans-disciplinary orientation, institutional economics tends to consider and analyse institutional arrangements in society both in term of formal and informal rules, organisations and power relationships. With the respect to the issue of valuation, the contribution of Söderbaum is articulated around the concept of 'ideological orientation' as the complex patterns of images and ideas that underline people's experience of valuation. Söderbaum (2000) has suggested that individuals should be considered as Political Economic Persons (PEP) as opposed to the neo-classical Economic Man in the attempt to bring together a number of relevant aspects of the relation between individuals and environmental issues (fig. 2.5).

POLITICAL ECONOMIC PERSON

Roles
Interests/Motives
Relationships
Activities

INTEGRATING CONCEPTS

ideological orientation, identity,
network, life-style, power position

CONTEXT
socio-cultural, institutional, physical, man-made, ecological
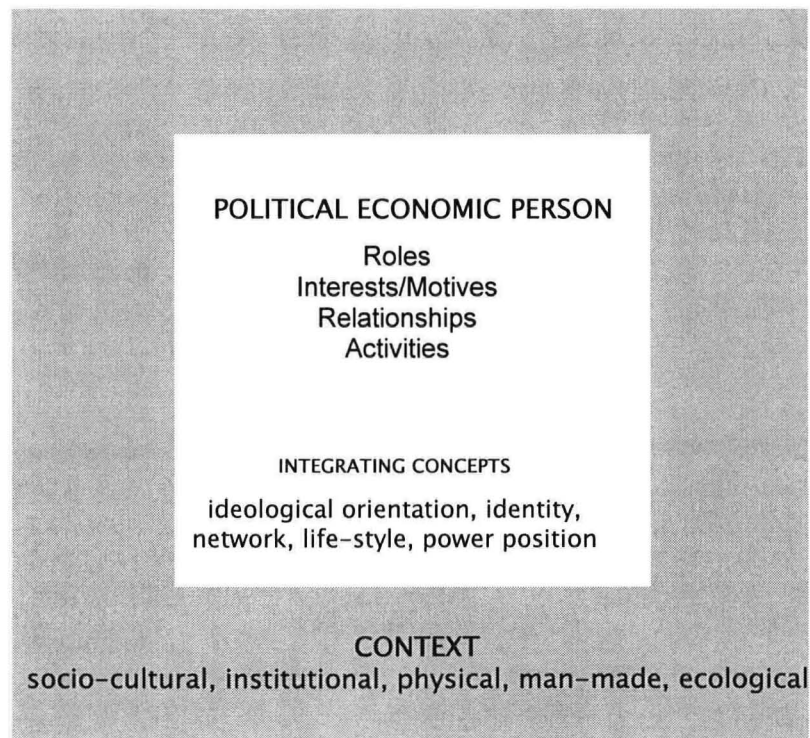
Fig. 2.5 Political Economic Person, adapted from Söderbaum (2000:34)

45

These aspects include roles, relationships, activities and interests; in particular, connected to specific roles are specific relationships, activities and interests. In addition, he considers key integrating concepts; for examples all the roles of an individual can be kept together under the 'identity' of the individual; the relationships can be referred to as 'network'; the patterns of activities can determine his/her lifestyle; and the interests or motives can be part of an 'ideological orientation'.

Then, it should be considered that individuals are positioned in relation to their context; according to Söderbaum, knowledge, power and other resources are essential features to the understanding of the position of an individual in a context. The context is the socio-cultural context, the institutional context, the physical and the ecological context; the relationship between individuals and the context is described in terms of 'adaptation process'. According to this conceptual framework, for each individual there are a set of relevant roles, relationships, interests and motives in relation to environment and development issues. For example, there are market-oriented roles such as the role of consumer but there also roles like being a parent or a professional. Each role entails a number of activities and interests that are kept together by the ideological orientation of individuals. These are elements that, according to Söderbaum, contribute to articulate and reassess people's ideas about themselves and society; for example, activities and interests can contribute to exclude environmental concerns from an individual's agenda. In addition, another essential element in understanding issues related the environment is represented by the relationships among individuals (fig. 2.6). A relationship is generally part of a larger network where individuals are linked; with respect to relationships, aspects such power and resources are key elements in understanding interactions. Dialogue and interaction are aspects of relationships that influence the development of ideas; similarly the degree of conflict or trust can be facilitated or inhibited by the ideological orientation of the individuals. As in the case of individuals, relationships have to be located within a broader context: socio-cultural contexts as well as institutional arrangements are key elements structuring relationships.

Norton's idea about nature's creativity and Söderbaum's ideological orientation are two examples of employing a pluralistic approach to the issue of valuation. The way in which people value nature is multiple and complex; it is multiple because individuals perceive the environment and environmental issues in relation to the different roles and activities in which they are involved. It is complex because it cannot be reduced to one-way value; for

example, it is not possible to value the environment only for instrumental or aesthetic reasons. This is particularly important with regard to the way in which environmental valuation is brought within decision-making and choices are made among conflicting valuations. In this respect, Söderbaum's idea of the PEP, the individual as complex entity, and the characteristics of the relationships among individuals are effective tools of analysis and consideration of the process by which ideas about environment and development are developed and continuously reassessed.


CONTEXT
socio-cultural, institutional, physical, man-made, ecological

Actor A	RELATIONSHIP	Actor B
roles	part of network	roles
activities	social aspect	activities
ideological	interaction/dialogue	ideological
orientation	cooperation, conflict,	orientation
	trust, mistrust	
	history	
resources	habits, stability	resources
power	incomplete	power
	information	

Fig. 2.6 Aspects of a relationship between two actors, source Söderbaum (2000:43)

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has developed the arguments that sustainable development is characterised by a key ideological dimension, given by the fact that people hold different ideas about the role of the environment and the direction of societal development, and that it refers to a complex and dynamic condition that regards the viability of the relationship between societies and environment over a long time.

As a consequence to its ideological dimension, the notion of sustainable development is debated according to different perspectives (section 2.2) and generates a variety of interpretations ranging from anthropocentric to eco-centric views of the world. This has been defined by Jacobs (1999) as the 'contestable' nature of sustainable development. This implies that the search for a unitary definition can be considered as a misleading objective while it is possible to consider the different interpretations of sustainable development as a necessary contribution to the political process of shaping the direction of societal development.

As a consequence of the theorisation of sustainability as a dynamic condition that refers to the relation between societies and environment in the long term, it is not possible to define a single pathway to sustainability but a multiplicity of trajectories can be searched and pursued. Such multiplicity of trajectories derives from different political, cultural and ecological starting points of societal transformation. In this context, approaches such as ecological and institutional economics have argued for a more comprehensive analysis of the elements affecting the perception and valuation of environmental and developmental issues (section 2.4).

According to Becker et al. (1999) at the analytical level, the notion of sustainable development has strengthened the idea that development cannot be achieved without considering environmental constraints and in this sense, has weakened the equivalence between economic growth and development creating the space for alternative forms of development. At a normative level, the notion of sustainable development has introduced the need for considering intergenerational equity as a form of commitment towards future generations. In addition, aspects such as intergenerational equity and democratic participation have been considered central to the access and management of natural resources. Finally, at a strategic or political level, sustainable development has posed the need to renegotiate the object of development, the political content of policies with respect to the compatibility of economic and environmental goals and the institutional arrangements and actors that should deliver them.

Following Becker et al (1999) distinction between the analytical, normative and political/strategic claims of the notion of sustainable development, it could be argued that both analytical and commitment claims can be expressed in a number of ways reflecting different interpretations of sustainable development (sections 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3 and 2.2.4). As a consequence, it becomes essential to consider whether such a variety of

interpretations do indeed coexist at the strategic/political level and how they contribute in shaping the process of defining societal goals as well as of the means and strategies to achieve them.

Given that the objective of this study is exploring the formulation of sustainable development policy goals within the practice of urban regeneration, its scope lies within the strategic/political claims that sustainable development poses. This is the level at which regeneration goals and strategies should be reformulated in the light of sustainability considerations. It is also at this level that the variety of interpretations of sustainable development is going to feed into a regeneration process made of social and economic transformations, where new objectives such as the obligation towards future generations and the compatibility of economic and social targets with environmental change have to be taken into consideration.

In addition, considering that regeneration represents a process of socio-economic transformation, it should be assumed that such processes can take different directions in the search for sustainable paths, as a result of the different starting points in which localities find themselves. The search for sustainable paths of societal transformation concerns the viability of the relationship between societies and environment over a long time. This means that the socio-economic transformations that take place as part of the regeneration process have to be considered in relation to the environmental changes that they pose. In this respect, the works of Norton and Söderbaum represent an important contribution to the key issue of human understanding, perception and valuation of environment and development changes.

Overall the arguments about the 'contestable' nature of sustainable development and the dynamic and complex nature of the interaction between societies and environment overlap in emphasising the process of defining the goals of future societal development as the key challenge of sustainable development.

Chapter three

THE PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN REGENERATION

"It is overly simplifying to suggest either that there is a fundamental conflict, say between economic and environmental goals, that the sustainable development concept is trying to avoid, or that the concept manages to effect a synergy between all dimensions. Rather there are different viewpoints which find different pathways through these potential conflicts and synergies, many of which can only be concretely assessed as conflicts or not in specific, practical settings." (Rydin, 1999:470)

3. 1 Introduction

During the 1990s the pursuit of sustainable development has gradually acquired the status of a regeneration policy objective. In particular, the evolution of urban policies and the continued progress of the sustainability agenda have contributed to shape the policy context for sustainable regeneration (Gibbs, 1999). One influential mechanism for bringing the concern for sustainable development principles within regeneration has been the EU's Structural Funds. The Structural Fund Regulations, adopted in July 1993, address the issue as follows: *"Development plans for Objective 1,2 and 5b must include an appraisal of the environmental situation of the region concerned and an evaluation of the environmental impact of the strategy and the operations planned, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and in agreement with the provisions of Community law in force"*. In 1997, with the fourth round of the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), the promotion of sustainable regeneration was introduced as a regeneration objective; after that, more recently, with the establishment of the Regional Development Agencies (DETR, 1997a; 1998e) the promotion of sustainable development has acquired a more clear status as a regeneration policy objective (reviewed later in chapter 5).

The requirement that has occurred during the last years of integrating sustainable development in a range of policy fields has created a demand for more theoretical work on themes and principles of sustainable development that would be applicable to urban regeneration. Urban regeneration policies have been mainly reinterpreted in the light of sustainability principles as the challenge of strategies that should be comprehensive of social, economic and environmental considerations. This approach has generally been

defined as the search for 'win-win' solutions; sustainable development as an overarching principle capable of delivering on social, economic and environmental aspects.

This chapter outlines how the notion of sustainable development has been introduced into the practice of urban regeneration by examining the challenges that the operationalisation of sustainable development poses, the main policy goals and ideas that characterise contemporary urban policy and the development of theoretical frameworks for sustainable regeneration. The development of models such as the E^3 diagram or the Sustainable Local Economic Development (SLED) scheme represents a main attempt to bring issues raised by the notion of sustainable development into the regeneration agenda. In particular, such models have a key role in shaping sustainable development as a policy direction of regeneration because they contribute in constructing the relevance of sustainable development to regeneration initiatives and act as 'blueprint' for practitioners. At the same time, the characteristic of contemporary urban policy defines the context, as policy goals and approaches, in which the formulation of sustainable development as regeneration policy goal takes place.

3.2 The operationalisation of sustainable development

The operationalisation of the concept of sustainable development brings the debate from the formulation of theoretical positions to the definition of sustainable development policies and programmes. A useful outline of the links between different interpretations of sustainable development and the formulation of policy options is provided by the Ladder of Sustainable Development (Baker et al, 1997), which describes how different views of the world lead to differences in the identification of the issues related to the role of the environment and the direction of societal development (table 3.1). Different ideological positions, divided into the treadmill approach, weak and strong sustainable development and the ideal model, entail different approaches to sustainable development as a policy direction with regard to the role of the economy and the nature of growth; the geographical focus; the protection of nature; the characteristics of policies and sectoral integration; the role of technology; the development of institutions; the use of policy instruments; aspect of redistribution; and the transformation of civil society (Baker et al, 1997). For example, in the 'treadmill' approach, production and growth are maximised with little concern for their environmental impact based on the assumption that technological innovation and human

51

	Approaches to sustainable development			
	Ideal Model	Strong sustainable development	Weak sustainable development	Treadmill
Role of economy and nature of growth	Right livelihood meeting needs not wants; changes in patterns and levels of production and consumption	Environmentally regulated market; changes in patterns of consumption and production	Market-reliant environmental policy; changes in patterns of consumption	Exponential growth
Geographical focus	Bioregionalism; extensive local self-sufficiency	Heightened local economic self-sufficiency, promoted in the context of global markets	Initial moves to local economic self-sufficiency; minor initiatives to alleviate the power of global markets	Global markets and global economy
Nature	Promoting and protecting biodiversity	Environmental management and protection	Replacing finite resources with capital; exploitation of renewable resources	Resource exploitation
Policy and sectorial integration	Holistic inter-sectorial integration	Environmental policy integration across sectors	Sector driven approach	No change
Technology	Labour-intensive appropriate technology	Clean technology; product life cycle management; mixed labour and capital-intensive technology	End of pipe technical solutions; mixed labour and capital intensive technology	Capital-intensive production technologies; progressive automation
Institutions	Decentralisation of political, legal, social and economic institutions	Some restructuring of institutions	Minimal amendments to institutions	No Change
Policy instruments and tools	Full range of policy tools; sophisticated use of indicators extending to social dimensions	Advanced use of sustainability indicators; wide range of policy tools	Token use of environmental indicators; limited range of market led policy tools	Conventional accounting
Redistribution	Inter- and intra-generational equity	Strengthen redistribution policy	Equity as marginal issue	Equity not an issue
Civil Society	Bottom-up community structures and control; new approach to valuing work	Open-ended dialogue and envisioning	Top-down initiatives; limited state-environmental movements dialogue	Vary limited dialogue between the state and environmental movements

Table 3.1 The Ladder of Sustainable Development, source Baker et al, 1997

ability can solve environmental or technical problems. Differently, in the 'weak sustainable development' approach there is an attempt to integrate conventional growth with environmental concerns; the objective of policies would remain the promotion of growth while environmental costs would be taken into account, for example, through accounting methods. In contrast, in the 'strong sustainable development' approach environmental protection represents the condition for a different kind of economic development; in this context, political and economic policies should work to maintain the productive capacity of environmental assets and to protect and improve them. Finally, in the 'ideal model' approach there is a renegotiation of the objective of development based on radical changes in patterns and levels of production and consumption. These four approaches would also imply different choices about the role of institutions, technologies and civil society (table 3.1).

The Ladder of Sustainable Development clearly outlines how different ideological positions lead to differences in the description of key interconnected aspects defining the direction of social and economic development. In the context of urban regeneration, the definition of sustainable development policies inevitably implies preferences about key aspects such as the nature of economic regeneration, the role of natural resources, the functions of agencies and institutions and the long-term objectives that regeneration aims to achieve. These preferences can be considered the expression of different viewpoints reflecting underlying ideological positions. However, in the definition of sustainable development policies the importance of ideological positions has to be re-considered in relation to a wider range of elements shaping the process of policy making and implementation and to the specificity of the policy context, such as regeneration policy, in which sustainability policies have to be included.

3.2.1 Policy-making and implementation

A widely held view of the way in which policy is made describes policy-making as a problem-solving process, which is rational, balanced, objective and analytical. According to this view, often referred to as the linear model (Sutton, 1999), decisions are made in a series of sequential phases that start with the identification of a problem and end with the definition of a set of actions to solve it. However, theoretical contributions from different disciplines, such as political science, sociology, anthropology, international relations and managements, have generated alternative understandings of the policy process. Concepts

and tools including policy narratives, discourse analysis, regime theory and change management have highlighted different aspects of the policy process and replaced the view of policy making and implementation as a linear course of actions with that of a more complex process.

Discourse analysis and the related notion that the policy process is characterised by a central communicative dimension (Rydin, 1999; 2003) are well-established themes within the social science perspective on policy analysis. Discourses can be generally defined as the set of ideas, concepts and categories that are used to attribute meanings to certain phenomena (Sutton, 1999). Beyond this definition, different approaches to discourse analysis are associated with the study of the role and function of discourses ranging from those commenting on the power of dominant discourses to marginalized alternative positions to those focusing on the ability of discourses in facilitating the development of alternative visions. For example, according to Shore and Wright (1997) in the initial stages of policy development, such as setting the policy agenda, a key aspect is represented by who has the actual power to define the policy agenda; thus, discourses delimit a setting for policy formulation that marginalized alternative options. According to this view, the ability of discourse to marginalize alternative options is linked to a concept of power as exercised by the actors. In contrast, for Laclau and Mouffe (1985) even in a situation of political hegemony characterized by a particular dominant discourse, there is space for oppositional voices to construct alternative discourses by using certain elements to whom is possible to give new meanings. In this sense, the analysis of discourses is used to demonstrate that the character of dominant discourse has a historical contingency and alternative discourse can be developed.

Reviewing the main aspects of policy making and implementation, Sutton (1999) defines six cross cutting themes (table 3.2): the dichotomy between policy-making and policy implementation, the management of change, the role of interests groups, the ownership of the policy process, the preference to simplify and the narrowing of policy alternatives. These themes can be useful to reflect upon some of the features that are likely to characterise the formulation and implementation of sustainability policies. With respect to the relationship between policy-making and implementation, it is necessary to acknowledge the crucial importance of the local actors in the formulation of sustainability policy goals at the local level. Given that policies often change as they move through their process of implementation because of the political character of this task (Lindblom, 1980,

Grindle and Thomas, 1990), attention has to be focused on the local actors. The actors' interpretation of the high-level policy commitment to sustainable development is a crucial phase that can determine much of the policy direction. Overall this includes expressing preferences, weighting different options and eventually choosing and implementing them in the specificity of the local context.

	Cross cutting themes
Policy-making & implementation	Splitting policy-making and implementation is based on the assumption that the decision-making activities are political while implementation is an administrative activity (Grindle and Thomas, 1990). On the contrary, policies often change as they move to the local level where they are implemented (Lindblom, 1980). Those who implement the policies are crucial actors whose actions determine the success or failure of policy initiatives (Juma and Clarke, 1985).
Management of change	The complexity of the implementation process requires management in the form of consensus building, participation to key stakeholders, conflict resolution, compromise, contingency planning, resource mobilisation and adaptation. It is important to recognise change agents who will be instrumental in managing change (Ambrose, 1989) as well as the barriers to change as the reaction to individuals and groups to proposed changes
Role of interest groups	Different interests groups that have power and authority over decision-making influence the policy process; influences affect the process from agenda setting, to the identification of alternatives, weighting options, choosing the most favourable and implement it.
Ownership of the policy process	The ownership of the policy process is often taken away from local groups to policy experts. Discourses are also an example of the exercise of power by some sorts of people, arguments and organisations against others (Apthorpe 1986).
Preference to simplify	It seems that there is a tendency to simplify issues among policy makers; this is often an attempt to understand better complex situations. The main drawback of this is that it can cause to misrepresenting a situation and producing false information. Narratives and discourses are often tools of simplification.
Narrowing of alternatives	According to the linear model of policy making all options, which represent possible solutions to a problem are reviewed. In contrast, there is a vast literature, which suggests that policy makers consider a narrow range of options. For example, according to Lidblom (1980) policy makers consider feasible options only those that are marginally different from existing policies not those that would lead to radical changes.

Table 3.2 Policy process: cross cutting themes, adapted from Sutton (1995)

In doing so, it is necessary to consider who are the local actors that have power and authority within the regeneration policy process, what are the interests that they represent and the activities in which they are involved. This is connected with the overall issue of the ownership of the policy process; who participates in the regeneration process and what is their role. The categories of actors that participate to the regeneration process and the degree of power they exercise also have an impact on management aspects such as building consensus or stakeholder participation and on recognising who is more or less instrumental to the development of alternative options (Ambrose, 1989). Two other key aspects of the policy process are the process of simplification and the narrowing of the alternatives. Given the complexity that the notion of sustainable development entails both in terms of the range of issues confronted and of the lack of complete predictability involved, it is expected that the definition of policies requires some sort of simplification. This can lead to a misrepresentation of the issues posed by the notion of sustainable development, depending on the degree of simplification that is applied. In this context, the development of discourses about sustainable development is important because they can be considered tools of simplification. For example, frameworks such as SLED and the E^3 model (section 3.3) define the relevance of sustainable development within regeneration and, by doing so, contribute to the development of discourses that simplify the notion of sustainable development through the definition of underlying principles or basic policy goals that are relevant to local practitioners. At the same time, considering that policy development tends to be marginally innovative (Lindblom, 1980; Sutton, 1999), the simplification of sustainability issues and the development of discourses, that portray sustainable development in line with dominant ways of thinking or less challenging agendas, are likely to limit or narrow the consideration of policy alternatives.

Finally, it has to be considered that the definition of sustainable development as regeneration policy direction takes place within a well-characterised policy context, that of urban regeneration. In this respect, sustainable development policy and implementation occur in a context defined by the issues and priorities that current urban policy aims to tackle, by the development of ideas about specific policy approaches and by the system governing the implementation of regeneration programmes that defines what and who is included.

3.2.2 The development of urban policy: issues and approaches

The promotion of sustainable development as a theme of regeneration policy has to be considered in the context of pressing urban issues such as economic decline and social exclusion and in the light of current ideologies. In the formulation of urban policies, the context defines the priorities on the policy agenda (Fainstein and Campbell, 1996): historical situations such as the demand for housing and reconstruction in the post-war period and the economic decline and unemployment caused by the restructuring of the world economy have determined that certain issues have become more prominent on the urban agenda. Current priorities result from the historical situation in which cities and regions have found themselves, as a consequence of world economic restructuring, making economic development a priority of urban policies. Mayer (1995) points out that since mid-1970s, there has been an increasing engagement of local authorities in economic development strategies. In particular, the effort to co-ordinate local potential for economic growth has produced an integration of different policy areas as part of economic development measures. This means that economic issues have greater priority on the regeneration agenda and that other policy goals, such as environmental policy goals, are likely to become subsumed under economic strategies (Rydin, 1997). Ideologies have also shaped the different approaches to the regeneration of declining cities or regions (Fainstein and Campbell, 1996), thus constraining the choices that policy makers would consider and making some approaches more popular then others. For example, while in the 1980s, urban policies followed strategies of deregulation and privatisation grounded in the theory of filtering down of economic benefits, in recent years urban policy has emphasised the idea of delivering integrated solutions that deliver on more than one issue.

Since the post-war period, the urban agenda has been continuously redefined from its initial concern for physical improvement and social needs to its present comprehensive approach including physical, social, economic and environmental concerns (table 3.3). Reconstruction, revitalisation, renewal, regeneration and renaissance are among the key words used in the last decades to identify the objective and the direction of urban policies. After 1979, a specific urban agenda was established by the Conservative governments, which emphasised deregulation and entrepreneurship. Under this agenda, urban policies were shaped by ideologies of centralisation and economic liberalism. This combination has been termed 'authoritarian decentralisation' (Newman and Thorley, 1996), a notion that expresses the centralisation of power and the decentralisation of decisions to the market

Policy type \ Period	1950s Reconstruction	1960s Revitalisation	1970s Renewal	1980s Redevelopment	1990s Regeneration	2000 Renaissance
Strategy and orientation	Reconstruction and extension of old areas of towns and cities often based on a 'masterplan'; suburban growth	Continuation of 1950s theme; suburban and peripheral growth; some early attempt of rehabilitation	Focus on in situ renewal and neighbourhood schemes; still development at periphery	Many major schemes of development and redevelopment; flagship projects; out of town projects	Move towards a more comprehensive form of policy and practice; more emphasis on integrated treatments	Further emphasis on integration of economic, social and environmental measures
Key actors and stakehloders	National and local government; private sector developers and contractors	Move towards a greater balance between public and private sectors	Growing role of private sector and decentralisation in local government	Emphasis on private sector and special agencies; growth of partnerships	Partnership as dominant approach	Increased stress on long-term partnership
Spatial level of activity	Emphasis on local and site levels	Regional level of activity emerged	Regional and local level initially; later more local emphasis	In early 1980s focus on site; later emphasis on local level	Reintroduction of strategic perspective; growth of regional activity	Greater emphasis on local leadership within the context of regional strategies
Economic focus	Public sector investment with some private sector involvement	Continuing from 1950s with growing influence of private investment	Resource constraints in public sectors and growth of private investment	Private sector dominant with selective public funds	Greater balance between public, private and voluntary funding	Public sectors funding and private sector investment
Social content	Improving of housing and living standards	Social and welfare improvement	Community based action and greater empowerment	Community self-help with very selective state support	Emphasis on the role of community	Emphasis on people-actors of the changes that affect their environment
Physical emphasis	Replacement of inner areas and peripheral development	Some continuation from 1950s with parallel rehabilitation of existing areas	More extensive renewal of older urban areas	Major schemes of replacement and new development 'flagship schemes'	More modest than 1980s; heritage and retention	Stronger emphasis on the quality of the built environment
Environmental approach	Landscaping and some greening	Selective improvements	Environmental improvement with some innovations	Growth of concern for wider approach to environment	Introduction of broader idea of environmental sustainability	Development of the idea of sustainable urban living

Table 3.3 Changes in urban policy in the post-war period, adapted from Roberts and Sykes (2000)

place. In terms of urban policy, the 'authoritarian decentralist' approach allowed central government to set up frameworks to facilitate the operation of the market forces and developers. The reduction in the involvement of local authorities, of local democracy and political representation, the enhancement of the private sector and the role of property development are considered the main features of urban regeneration policy in this period.

Under the Conservative governments, changes in urban policy were not formalised in any policy document until 1988 when "Action for Cities" was published. This emphasised the role of government in facilitating private entrepreneurship and the priority that economic development had on social needs. In 1991, a new programme was launched, City Challenge, which introduced a competitive bidding approach in which local authorities were asked to participate. Under City Challenge, priority was given to projects able to attract private investment and successful growth for the area; beside, emphasis was put into involving the voluntary sector, universities, Training and Enterprise Councils and the local community. After two rounds of funding, City Challenge was suspended but the bidding system and many of its innovations re-emerged in 1993 with the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). In addition, the need for a co-ordinated approach between different programmes led, in 1994, to the creation of a network of regional Government Offices and to the establishment of the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) programme.

Since 1997, with the election of the Labour administration, urban policy has undergone further transformations: a strengthened regional dimension, a renewed role for local government, a clear policy focus on social exclusion at neighbourhood level and the proposal for an urban renaissance. In the paper "Regeneration programmes. The Way Forward" (DETR 1997b), the Government highlighted the importance of mainstreaming funds to the regeneration of deprived areas in order to deliver significant changes. Hill (2000) talks about the 'three key features' of Labour policy as the emphasis on targeting severely disadvantaged people and areas; working in partnership developing local capacity building to participate in regeneration; and the stress on the need for a collaborative approach among local, regional and central levels as well as across sectors.

The debate on the need for a regional tier of government has its roots in a number of factors such as the arguments on the importance for regional competitiveness in a globalising economy, the increasing fragmentation of governance at sub-national level and the promotion of political devolution (Syrett and Baldock, 2001). With the Regional Development Agencies Act (1998), a regional agency system was introduced with the aim

of establishing a regional framework for fostering economic development, social and physical regeneration; promoting business efficiency, investment and competitiveness; enhancing the development and application of skills; helping to maintain and safeguard employment; and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. The introduction of regional agencies together with the renewed leadership for local authorities are part of a modernising agenda introduced by the New Labour administration. Local authority leadership in the economic, social and environmental well being of the local areas expresses the need for a co-ordinated approach at the local level where local government works in partnership with private and voluntary organisation as well as communities.

A keystone of the Labour government approach to policy is represented by the commitment towards delivering joined-up solutions as an integrated policy response. The multidimensional character of urban problems has posed questions of how best to approach such complexity of interrelated issues and led to increasing stress on the need for a multi-agency working. Given that both state and market interventions have demonstrated limitations, the current approach to urban issues has proposed joint working as a third way formula to the management of the complexity of urban issues.

A key theme for current urban policy is social exclusion and the need to tackle deprived areas and excluded communities. The report of the Social Exclusion Unit "Bringing Britain Together: a National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal" (1998) set out a national approach to tackle the problems of deprived neighbourhoods. The report showed that working towards a more inclusive society would require finding ways to get people into work; creating good neighbourhood; fighting crime; providing the poorest people with better access to services; and improving co-ordination and co-operation between central and local government. The New Deal for Communities programme aims at tacking issues such as poor job prospects, high level of crime, low-level educational achievements and poor health. A key feature of the programme is the requirement to develop local partnerships with a specific commitment to community involvement.

Finally, another element of present urban policy is represented by the urban renaissance theme. In 1998, the Urban Task Force was commissioned to look at the causes of urban decline in the English cities. The White Paper "Our Towns and Cities: the Future - Delivering an Urban Renaissance" (DETR, 2000d) contains the government's response to the Urban Task Force report of urban renaissance. A key element of the strategy is the

concept that people's needs are the shaping force of the urban space and, therefore, strategies have to be adjusted to peoples and places. Strategies for urban changes are based on two elements: partnership and integration. Partnership is defined as the commitment of the government to work with local people, councils, regional bodies, business and voluntary organisations. Integration is identified as bringing together economic, social and environmental measures given that the objective is to achieve economic potential, social justice and equality of opportunities and to create places where people want to live and work. The steps towards renaissance are articulated in four policy blocks representing key features of the urban living such as the physical environment as the quality of the urban fabric; economic development as the creation of prosperity; the social aspect as the provision of quality services; and the form of governance as the participation of local communities.

The 1980s saw the emergence of a fragmented approach to the city in terms of strategies and governance. However, some of the trends developed in the 1980s have changed during the 1990s. The greater involvement of local agencies and the more prominent role of local authorities in formulating the bids are generally regarded as a change away from the 1980's approach to urban regeneration. Targets and the effectiveness of regeneration strategies have been at the centre of a vast debate especially considering the transformation in the principles guiding regeneration strategies through the last decades such as changes in the role and power of development agencies, local authorities and communities.

Present trends in urban policy tend to emphasise a holistic approach to policy characterised by collaborative, multi-agency working. By the end of 1990s, urban policy praises integration and partnership as key tools for an urban renaissance. However, Gibbs (1999) points out that policies and statements about integration of economic, social and environmental objectives are elusive as to how such integration can be achieved and the practice of urban regeneration presents little evidence of integrated thinking. As the Association of Local Government observes: *"...despite new thinking in UK and UE regeneration policy, the two policy paradigms of economic competitiveness and social cohesion still tend to operate as competing agendas, championed by different partners, with the environmental sustainability agenda alongside"*(ALG, 1999:50). Overall, it is possible to identify different policy areas that contribute to urban policy. Social exclusion, community involvement, neighbourhood renewal, economic regeneration and urban renaissance are the main policy areas that coexist and concur in the definition of the

regeneration agenda. Urban regeneration policy is characterised by the co-existence of a range of policy agendas as well as a range of agencies representing them. In such multifaceted context, it is not clear who is championing the sustainable development agenda or the way in which the traditional regeneration actors are engaging with the notion of sustainable development. However, the recently established Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) create single local bodies that should provide a major forum where different policy agendas are brought together.

3.3 Sustainable regeneration: operational frameworks

According to Gibbs (1999) the promotion of sustainable regeneration as a policy objective, or more generally the endorsement of sustainable development as a regeneration policy focus, has created a demand for theoretical frameworks in order to operationalise key sustainability themes. The most important contribution of these frameworks is that of trying to define the gap between the vast debate generated by the notion of sustainable development and the practice of urban regeneration. In this sense, they play a central role in the process of shaping the direction of sustainable development as a regeneration policy objective. Therefore, beside the definition of sustainable regeneration through policy documents, the development of theoretical/operational frameworks represents a key element to the construction of the relevance of sustainable development to the practice of urban regeneration. In this respect, it is important to identify the themes that are emphasised in these frameworks and the themes that are minimized, the ideas that are expressed and policy objectives that are identified.

Theoretical frameworks for sustainable development and urban regeneration focus on the importance for delivering holistic solutions comprehensive of social, economic and environmental considerations. However, among the theoretical frameworks for sustainable regeneration, two main directions can be identified: models focusing on the role of community participation and those concentrating on local economic development. In addition, the E^3 model represents a well-known approach to the conceptualisation of the notion of sustainable development where the economic, environmental and social imperatives are translated into the specific policy goals of economic competitiveness, social cohesion and environmental sustainability.

3.3.1 The E³ model

According to the Local Future Group sustainable development requires *"a 'paradigm shift' based on integrated thinking and an approach that internalises the social and environmental costs of growth that hitherto have been treated as 'externalities'"* (ALG, 1998:28). The E³ model reflects these considerations by defining the achievement of sustainable development as the reconciliation of the three main policy areas of economy, equity and environment. In doing so, it identifies a key win-win area where these three policy areas overlap identifying solutions that are inclusive of environmental, economic and social goals (fig. 3.1).
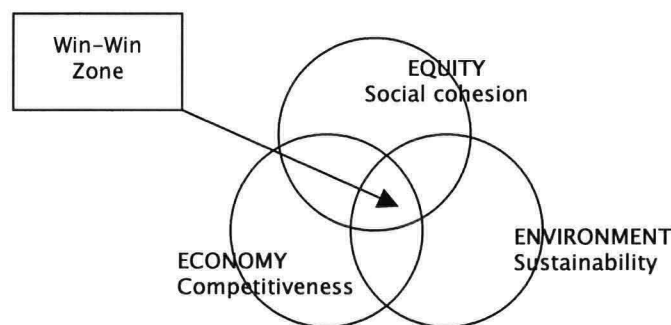
Fig. 3.1 The E³ Model, Local Future Group, source ALG (1998)

The policy goals of economic competitiveness, social cohesion and environmental sustainability are equally important policy goals; the search for win-win solutions represents the overall sustainable development target. At the same time, the model highlights the need for negotiating conflicts arising from the different policy agendas.

The E³ approach is linked to an urban economy model (fig. 3.2) that attempts to draw the connections between global and local drivers of changes in order to determine a set of economic, environmental and social impacts. Global changes such as geopolitical trends, economic and technological trends or socio-cultural trends have an impact on the local economy. Aspects such as the labour market, the industrial organisation and governance are affected by such trends determining specific policy impacts that, within a sustainable development context, need to be defined as economic competitiveness, social cohesion and environmental sustainability (ALG, 1998).

The E³ model re-proposes the three-spheres approach used to describe the sustainable development imperative of reconciling the objectives of economy, environment and

society (section 2.2) emphasising the possibility of achieving integrated solutions to urban issues. This model is based on an interpretation of sustainable development that is essentially about the benefit of adopting a holistic approach to policy development. In this respect, the challenge posed by the notion of sustainable development becomes addressing simultaneously the key regeneration policy goals of economic competitiveness, social cohesion and environmental sustainability.
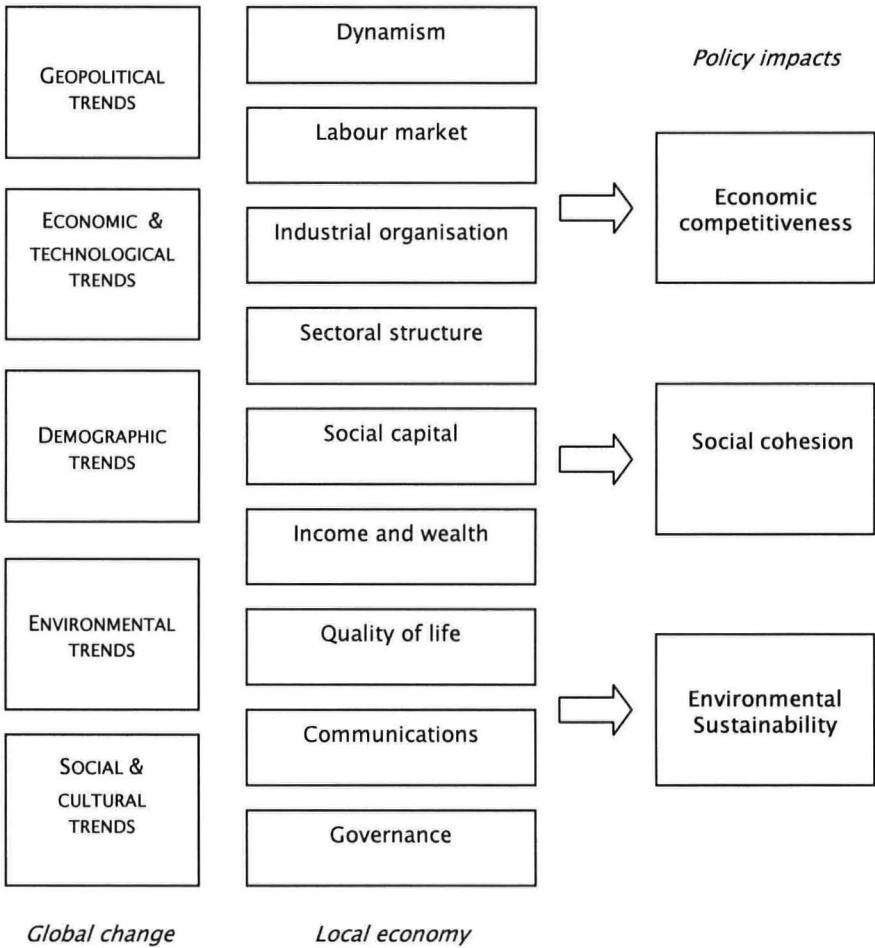
Fig. 3.2 A model of the urban economy, Local Future Group, source ALG (1988)

3.3.2 The community development approach

One direction in the interpretation of sustainable urban regeneration strengthens the importance of community participation. For Haughton (1998), the concern for bringing together sustainable development principles and the practice of regeneration derives from

investigating which values and principles have influenced regeneration initiatives during the last decades and which principles should guide today's strategies of urban regeneration.

> Sustainable regeneration, I would define as long term area regeneration processes, which necessarily combine social, economic and environmental actions, and which closely involve communities with all stages of the process. I would argue that regeneration initiatives which overly prioritise one area of action over another or which lack deep and meaningful community engagement, almost invariably fail in the long term to bring about benefits for those communities most in need. (G. Haughton 1998: 872)

Following his analysis, five main principles derived from the concept of sustainable development should underpin a community-based approach to local economic development and sustainable urban regeneration: inter-generation equity, social justice, geographic equity, participation and holistic approach (table 3.4). In this context, inter-generational equity is interpreted in terms of the creation of opportunities and infrastructures for future generations; areas in need of regeneration are generally characterised by a legacy of poor opportunities, such as low wage and precarious jobs, and a lack of community infrastructures that undermine long-term solutions.

Houghton's principles	Top-down approach	Grassroots approach
Inter-generational equity	Quick fixed approach to attracting investments and jobs driven by short terms targets and political goals	Long-term approach to local capacity and asset building. Emphasis on creating durable jobs
Social justice	Wealth creation ethic linked to theoretical attachment to trickle down. Wage reduction seen as acceptable way to create wealth and (arguably) job	Emphasis on socially valuable products and services, including rewarding training and jobs, including liveable wage
Geographical equity	Competitive ethos, open trade, place marketing and focus on attracting external investments irrespective of effects on other (potentially worthier) areas	Attempt to create a localised economy, with fair terms of trade locally and externally. Avoidance of zero sum inter-locality competition
Participation	Corporatistic inclusion of large institutional investors, plus some tokenistic engagement with community groups to 'buy' legitimacy	Engagement of local community with all stages of regeneration from design to implementation. Links to local democracy
Holistic approach	From economic development comes social well-being and environmental improvement. Trickle down works, though targeted linkage schemes might be acceptable	Virtuous integration of attempts to improve local economic development, social condition and the environment

Table 3.4 Principles of Community Economic Development (CED), source Haughton (1998)

The need to facilitate the participation of all sections of society in regeneration initiatives and to benefit those socially excluded is expressed by the principle of social justice;

addressing the causes of social and economic exclusion should represent an essential feature of regeneration, which aims to tackle social polarisation. The principle of geographical equity, or trans-frontier responsibility, underlines the idea that decisions should consider any external impacts whether these consist of influencing job locations or creating pollution and resource degradation. Participation represents another key principles of regeneration initiatives since it generates local ownership and brings an essential perspective on the area's existing potential. Finally, the holistic approach which recognises the importance of an integrated approach to policies in order to acknowledge the interconnection among economic development, social regeneration and environmental improvements. In addition, according to Haughton, it is by applying a grassroots approach that a substantial difference to regeneration policies and strategies and how they relate to these five principles can be made. In this sense, sustainable regeneration requires more community engagement as a key element of change, as opposite to the dominant approaches to social and economic regeneration.

3.3.3 The Sustainable Local Economic Development model (SLED)

> SLED is thus about identifying the whole range of economic development and regeneration options available, fully appraising the impacts of each, and prioritising those approaches that yield social economic and environmental benefits together, rather then one benefit at the expense of another. Adopting such a course has the potential to create jobs, promote social inclusion, improve the strength, health and capacity of local communities and improve the environment. (L. Newby 1999:68)

Built on previous works (by the New Economic Foundation 1997, CAG Consultant 1996 and the University of the West of England 1997) the agenda for sustainable local economic development (SLED, Forum for the Future's Local Economic Programme) represents another attempt to address sustainability principles within local economic development and regeneration. SLED aims to combine conventional economic development alongside innovative and community based solutions; considerations over the quality, quantity and location of economic activities; and job opportunities to be pursued alongside wider social and environmental benefits.

SLED is about local economic solutions addressing aspects related to the un-sustainability of current economic activities as well as devising new approaches to local economic development or development from within. In particular, the SLED agenda develops as alternative to current economic development patterns on the basis of principles derived from the notion of sustainable development. Principles such as thought for the future, fairness and equity, care for the environment, participation and partnership and quality of

life (table 3.5) are the themes against which conventional economic development is challenged and a more sustainable form of local economic development is promoted.

In addition, the SLED agenda is organised around a number of interrelated themes (table 3.6): capacity building and training; access to credit and capital; community enterprise; local business development; sustainable approaches to inward investment; responsible business practice; access to and distribution of work; and trading locally. Building the capacity of individuals and communities requires skills, knowledge and confidence as well as the access to contacts and institutions. Training, community development and capacity building have a key role to play in providing an essential foundation to tackle social exclusion and regenerate communities. Community enterprises and institutions are able to reach those marginalised or by-passed by the mainstream economy. At the same time, the whole range of community businesses, social enterprises and co-operatives contribute to regenerate communities by meeting wider social and environmental objectives.

Unsustainable economic development	SLED Principles	Sustainable Local Economic Development
A tendency to respond to short-term pressures without fully considering the long-term implications	*Thought for the future*	An emphasis on developing long-term solution
A tendency to disregard where jobs are created and who they are accessible to, and to ignore the need to build the capacity and opportunities of the most disadvantaged	*Fairness and equity*	An emphasis on increasing the capacity, opportunities and quality of life of those who are currently unemployed, excluded or in financial hardship
Paying little attention to the environmental impacts and opportunities when it is inconvenient to do so	*Care for the environment*	Actively promoting good environmental management, respecting the ecological constraints and exploiting 'green' business opportunities
A top-down approach that assume that the solution decided upon are good for those whom they are aimed at	*Participation and partnership*	Helping communities to develop their own economic solutions, valuing and involving staff in a business context and meshing economic development with Local agenda 21 and other local economic initiatives
A focus on increasing economic activities per se (measured by gross domestic product, investment levels, ect.) rather then on how that activity affects quality of life	*Quality of life*	Explicitly seeking and integrating improvements in all aspects of quality of life, social, economic, cultural and environmental

Table 3.5 Sustainable Local Economic Development (SLED) principles, Ekins and Newby (1999)

In turn these need to be supported by providing access to low cost credit and capital through solutions like credit unions and micro-finance schemes. Creating a supporting environment for local business development also includes a responsible practice in terms

of employment policy links with the local community and good environmental management. In addition, the creation of jobs has to be considered within a wider agenda that addresses issues of access and distribution of work such as childcare and public transport provision to improve accessibility; local labour schemes to match employers' needs with the skills of local people; intermediate labour markets to offer work experience while meeting specific community needs. Finally, matching local production with local consumption could generate benefits to the local environment, in terms of a reduction of pollution and transport, as well as increased potential business opportunities for local enterprises and a reduction in the loss of skills and wealth from disadvantaged areas. The focus of the SLED agenda is the sustainability of local economic development; in this sense it proposes an agenda in which regeneration keeps a strongly economic interpretation but address a range of social and environmental issues.

Themes	Issues
Capacity Building and Training	Focus on "development from within"
	Community development work
	Training for self-confidence and motivation
Community Enterprise and Economic Solution	Access to capital
	Focus on those by-passed by the local economy
	Community benefit not personal wealth
Responsible and Responsive Business Development	Providing a supportive climate for new and existing businesses
	Improving environmental and social performance in business
	Developing new environmental industries
Access to Sustainable and Fulfilling Work	Addresses the nature and distribution of work
	Positive contribution to society
	Improving access to work
Meeting Local Needs through Local Resources	Linking local production with consumption (e.g. food, timber, energy)
	Reduced transport use and pollution
	Increased local connectedness
Sustainable Approaches to Inward Investment	Inward investment not at the expense of development from within
	Selective approaches to investors
	Appraisal of social and environmental impacts

Table 3.6 Sustainable Local Economic Development (SLED) themes, source Gibbs (1999)

3.3.4 The frameworks' limits and contributions

The E^3 model, the SLED agenda and the CED framework are the main operational frameworks addressing the principles of sustainable development as regeneration policy

goals. There are common aspects between the SLED agenda and the CED framework for sustainable regeneration and local economic development (table 3.7).

The guiding principles of both frameworks have a clear similarity: inter-generational equity/thought for the future, social justice/fairness and equity, participation/participation and partnership, holistic approach/quality of life. Apparently a difference exists between what Haughton defines as "geographical equity" that implies considering external impacts whether they consist of socio-economic (influencing job locations) or environmental (creating pollution and resource degradation) issues and the principle of "care for the environment" (SLED) that has a more specific environmental focus. In particular, while SLED, under the above principle, proposes an important environmental agenda that includes the promotion of good environmental management, the respect of ecological constraints and the exploitation of green business opportunities, Haughton's framework for sustainable regeneration leaves the environmental dimension in a marginal role. In fact, although the environment is taken into consideration along with social and economic objectives in the "holistic approach", it remains vague what this means in theory and what it requires in practice.

Sustainable Local Economic Development Principles	Community Economic Development principles
Thought for the future	Inter-generational equity
Fairness and equity	Social justice
Care for the environment	Geographical equity
Participation and partnership	Participation
Quality of life	Holistic approach

Table 3.7 SLED and CED principles, source Ekins and Newby (1999) and Haughton (1998)

Both frameworks focus on promoting principles derived from the notion of sustainable development by discussing the need for reformulating the ideas that guide urban regeneration, as well as the advantages that they can deliver. By doing so, they promote an alternative approach to regeneration that is grounded on current social and economic themes such as capacity building and local economic development and on the key concept of an holistic approach. In this respect, while the contents of these frameworks are

extremely relevant to urban policy, they lack specificity with regard to the notion of sustainable development. Considering the alternative positions that the formulation and implementation of sustainable development policies can generate, it is important that a conceptual framework, which aims at translating sustainability principles into the practice of urban regeneration, should be able to generate and propose alternative paradigms to the process of regeneration where socio-economic transformations inevitably relate to environmental transformations.

The need for an integrated and holistic approach is determined by the complexity of issues that characterise contemporary urban conditions; while this is a necessary condition for sustainability is not a sufficient one. Considering the above frameworks, according to which criteria the *"integration of attempts to improve local economic development, social condition and the environment"* (Haughton, 1998:872) ensure sustainability? In such integration, have environmental, social and economic considerations the same importance? As argued in the previous chapter (section 2.2), addressing these aspects as equal can be considered inappropriate and does not ensure that environmental considerations will be integrated into decision-making given that economic development is traditionally the main concern of regeneration.

Main theoretical contributions on sustainable regeneration (Haughton 1998; Ekins and Newby, 1999) are grounded on issues of economic regeneration addressing sustainable regeneration with regards to local economic development theories (sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.3). This is partly due to the fact that since regeneration is traditionally concerned with economic issues, it becomes extremely relevant to address economic development from a sustainability perspective.

In the main frameworks for sustainable regeneration (table 3.7), the relation between economic development and the environment is poorly elaborated; although the consensus around traditional forms of economic development is criticised in favour of locally determined forms of economic growth, the role of the environment remains vague. In particular, the key sustainability argument of the relation between economic development and the environment is relegated under what is called 'holistic approach principle' and is not properly elaborated. However, these frameworks produce a key contribution in terms of the normative commitment as the call for social justice and equity. Again, the environmental dimension of such commitment is not addressed as the lack of any obligation toward the well-being of future generations demonstrates. Issues of equity are

formulated in terms of social equity such as access to jobs and opportunities for those currently financially disadvantaged and in terms of geographical equity as form of localised activities that do not impact negatively on the activities of other localities.

In addition, the other main element that is accommodated in these frameworks is the demand for participation in decision-making. However, as a consequence of the underestimated role of the environment in these frameworks, participation is not finalised to decision-making concerning the access, use and management of natural resources but to regeneration and local economic development decisions. Finally, it could be argued that these frameworks contain the specific policy goal of delivering a localised economy with a number of socially relevant solutions. Overall, the policy goal that they configure is that of local economic development while leaving key sustainability claims unanswered.

Finally, the E^3 model is characterised by a very clear interpretation of sustainable development as the reconciliation of the three thematic areas of economy, equity and environment, and, mainly by a straightforward message about its implementation as the search for win-win solutions. In this respect, the contribution of the model is its ability to export the concept of sustainable development to a vast audience, because of its translation into easily understandable policy goals and to make its endorsement potentially trouble-free.

3.4 Conclusion

Urban policy has developed throughout the last decades introducing alternative approaches to the solution of urban issues. The breadth of the notion of sustainable development has made it appealing to the complex and interrelated nature of urban matters while recognising the impact of cities on ecosystems. At the same time, the progress of the sustainability agenda in a number of interrelated policy areas has surely contributed to position sustainability on the regeneration agenda. However, while there is a high level commitment to the promotion of sustainable development as a policy objective (outlined later in chapter 5), the process of policy formulation and implementation at the local level is likely to be influenced by a number of factors. Firstly, it is necessary to consider that in the process of policy making and implementation changes will inevitably take place as the high-level policy commitment is interpreted by the local actors and is implemented within a specific local context. Secondly, the interpretation of the local actors implies the

development of discourses about sustainability that will define the setting in which alternative policy options are going to be considered. Thirdly, the process of policy making and implementation takes place in the context of urban policy, that is strongly characterised by specific agendas, such as economic development, by regeneration programmes, defining the contents and timing of regeneration initiatives, and by certain categories of actors.

In this context, frameworks such as SLED or the E^3 model play an important role in shaping the relevance of sustainable development to the regeneration agenda. The main contribution of these frameworks is the identification of themes and principles of sustainable development that would be applicable to urban regeneration and would be significant for key regeneration actors. In this process of operationalisation of sustainable development some issues are emphasised more then others; for example, delivering a localised economy with a number of socially relevant solutions and ensuring higher community involvement are key themes. However, some other themes are underplayed; for example, the relation between economic development and the environment is relegated under the 'holistic approach' communicating a simplified account of such a complex issue. Especially the E^3 model, by stressing on the 'win-win' solutions, portrays sustainable development as reconciling the three policy goals of economic competitiveness, social cohesion and environmental sustainability without exploring the complexity of such process of reconciliation. However, as Rydin (1999) points out, to say that the concept of sustainable development can bring together different policy goals or deny the possibility to reconcile conflicting interests is simplistic. Practical settings, in this case related to processes of urban regeneration, provide the conditions in which conflicts and synergies can be taken into account. The process of defining conflicts or synergies is mediated by the actors as those representing different interests and viewpoints and by the specificity of the context in which they are located, that is socio-cultural, institutional, physical and ecological (Söderbaum, 2000). This means getting a wider and better understanding of the way in which policy objectives are formulated and negotiated. This requires taking into account the role of regeneration agencies in interpreting sustainability principles and setting sustainability goals, and considering the institutional arrangements shaping the context in which the development and implementation of sustainability policies takes place.

Chapter four

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

"Valuations are always with us. Disinterested research there has never been and can never be. Prior to answers there must be questions. There can be no view except from a viewpoint. In the questions raised and the viewpoint chosen, valuations are implied" (Myrdal, 1978: 778)

4.1 Introduction

The contribution of social science research to sustainable development has been widely debated in terms of its absence as well as its critical role. Traditionally, environmental issues have been analysed and debated by natural science disciplines leaving social science contributions in a marginal position. This has been generally attributed to the difficulties that social science has had in engaging with nature as a opposite/negation of society and to the control that natural science has retained over the definition and understanding of environmental issues. In particular, Macnaghten and Urry (1998) observe that the role of social science in the analysis of environmental changes has been associated with the demand for adjusting social processes to sustainable measures strictly defined in technical terms. This has facilitated the role of some social science disciplines such as economics and geography in defining an environmental agenda. However, recently various other disciplines have contributed to redefine the role of social science with respect to research on the environment and *"a more socio-culturally embedded analysis of nature"* (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998:7) has emerged.

This chapter describes the research design and the fieldwork methodology. The purposes of the study and the research questions it attempts to answer are considered together with the methods that have been chosen to accommodate such analysis and the validity issues that arise. In addition the chapter introduces an overview of recent contributions of social science research to the analysis of social and environmental transformations; this is relevant in order to define, in the context of social science research, the approach followed by this study and consequently what contributions it aims to achieve. With respect to the research design, the choice of a qualitative design, the research purposes and the methods are outlined. Then, the fieldwork methodology is explained with regard to the definition of

the study area, the identification of the research participants, the methods of data collection and the process of data analysis.

4.2 Sustainable development and social science research

Redclift and Benton (1994) have argued that there are several insights that social science research can offer to the understanding of social processes and their environmental conditions. For example, arguments supported by either structuralist or agency-oriented approaches can provide relevant analysis and explanations of the elements limiting or facilitating environmental changes. A structuralist analysis would place emphasis on the structure of the context in which individuals make choices and, therefore, on their limited power to implement specific changes, such as attitude or lifestyle changes, even if environmentally damaging. On the other hand, an agency-oriented analysis would investigate the conditions under which individuals and collective agencies can make a difference, as in the case of the changes determined by the activities of environmental movements.

Similarly, arguments advocated by holistic or individualist approaches would argue, with respect to the implementation of environmental changes, that individual behaviour is shaped by collective frameworks in which individuals act, or, in contrast, that only individual demands and decisions are the base on which policy options have to be considered. The structure and agency argument, however, seems to be relevant to address some environmental issues, especially in the combined theoretical approach developed by Giddens. In this respect, Redclift and Woodgate (1994) suggest that according to Giddens 'structuration theory', the environment could be considered as a structure that enables as well as constrains human agency while, at the same time, human agency is able to change the environment. From a sociological perspective, the relationship between nature and society has also been defined in terms of co-evolution (Norgaard, 1994) to stress the complex interactive nature of ecological and social processes.

Overall, it is possible to identify a precise re-orientation of social science towards a reconsideration of the material interrelation between natural and social processes (Becker et al., 1999; Redclift, 1999; Acselrad, 1999); from a conceptualisation of society as separated from nature to a concern toward the relation between society and nature. This can be partly attributed to the need for investigating concepts such as sustainability that

requires us to view society and nature in relational terms. In this respect, Becker et al. (1999) point out that sustainability refers to a field of investigation, which is based around a society-oriented definition of problems raising questions about the way in which societies could shape their processes of transformation considering the requirement of development for future generations. In this sense, the topic of sustainability is essentially social since it involves *"the process by which societies manage the material conditions of their reproduction, including the social, economic, political and cultural principles that guide the distribution of environmental resources"* (Becker et al, 1999:4).

In this respect, Becker et al. (1999) present three main routes that social science research can explore with respect to sustainability. First, a social perspective can contribute to the investigation of the environmental impacts of social processes; secondly, it can contribute to the investigation of how the interaction between social actors and the environment is shaped by institutional arrangements; and finally, social science research can introduce an interpretative dimension to the study of sustainability, by exploring the meanings that are attributed to certain social practices, and consequently, the factors affecting the perception and valuation of the environment. This research can be located in the latter route since it employs an interpretative approach to the analysis of sustainability in order to explore how societal relationships with the environment are shaped in the context of urban regeneration practice. This includes an analysis of how the issues raised by the notion of sustainability are constructed by the actors in the leading discourses on regeneration and as matters of policy interventions.

The choice of an interpretative approach has also been dictated by a specific interest in conducting research with a strong actor-oriented approach as more significant for exploring sustainability related issues (Becker et al, 1999). In fact, although this study cannot be fully considered as an actor-oriented research, given the limited participation of the research participants in defining the topic of the research, it aims at producing a contribution towards actor-oriented research. In particular, the idea of an expert contribution to the understanding and development of sustainable regeneration strategies and objectives is refused in favour of producing a description and explanations of the factors structuring the actors' own formulation of sustainability related concerns and of the issues such a process of constructing meanings poses.

4.3 Research design

The research process goes from the theory of sustainable development to the practice of urban regeneration with the aim of confronting theory and practice with regard to the issues raised by attempts to implement sustainability principles. In describing the research design and its evolution, I will draw upon Maxwell's model (1996) of qualitative research design that stresses the interactive nature of the relationships among key design elements.

Maxwell's model (fig 4.1) is organised around five key components and focuses on the iterative process among them: purposes, conceptual context, research questions, methods and validity make up the underlying structure guiding qualitative research. In particular, Maxwell's model of research design emphasises the need for considering a design as a flexible element that invariably is transformed by the research process since the implications of the purposes and theories for the research questions and the chosen methods need to be continuously assessed as changes take place as the research proceeds.
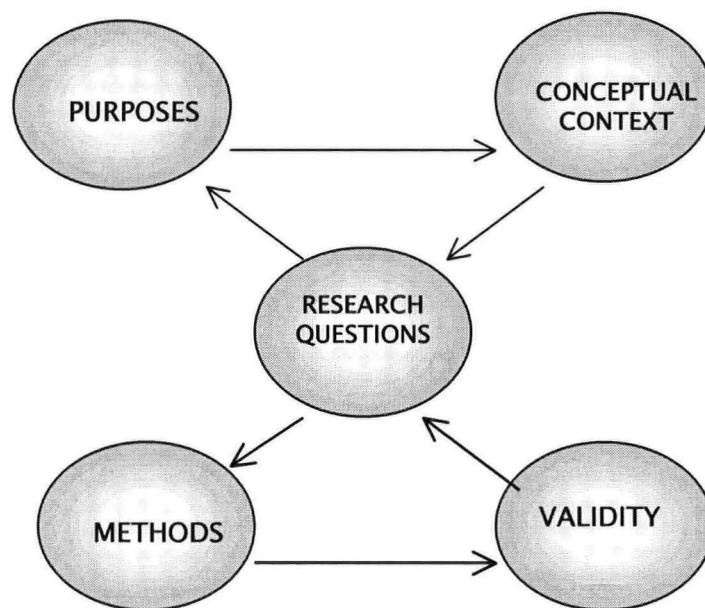
Fig. 4.1 Interactive model of research design, source Maxwell (1996:5)

During this study, research design and methodology have evolved alongside the research as some initial standpoints have become weaker and new insights have emerged influencing methodological choices. For example, the results of the interviews used for the pilot study highlighted some important elements such as the unfamiliarity of the research participants with key terms such as 'sustainable development' and 'sustainability' in

relation to regeneration. This has revealed a consistent gap between the language and the assumptions found in the policy literature and the situations on the ground where the use of certain concepts and terminology seemed very unpopular. As a consequence, this has posed the need to go back to review the purpose of the research in order to ensure that such an important aspect would be taken into consideration and therefore, to go back to the theories informing the research to find the necessary background to address such issues. Other more practical problems, such as losing accessibility to some specific contacts, have affected the initial research design, determining the necessity to reconsider the research question and the way in which it could be answered.

4.3.1 Purposes of the research

The well-established attention on sustainable development at the urban scale has gradually influenced specific policies and practices such as urban regeneration. This is particularly evident with respect to policy development; National and European initiatives for urban regeneration have all gradually incorporated terms such as sustainable development, sustainability and sustainable growth among their officially agreed aims. However, although sustainable development has become one of the key policy objectives of regeneration initiatives, the implementation of sustainable regeneration initiatives remains vague. In particular, while policy guidelines concentrate on the need for promoting sustainable development within urban regeneration, the reality demonstrates that there is a poor understanding of its meaning as a policy goal. A pilot study conducted at the beginning of the research revealed problems of definition and interpretation of sustainable development, a mismatch between the policy commitment towards the promotion of sustainable development and the objectives of regeneration initiatives, together with the limitations posed by other priorities and the consequent shortage of resources. It was found that the interests and the priorities of the different agencies involved in the regeneration process were reflected in their interpretations and definitions of sustainable development and regeneration. Overall, the pilot study provided an initial investigation of the actors' understanding and interpretation of the notion of sustainable development showing that regeneration and sustainable development were typically perceived as two distinct and opposite realms; the first related to the generation of job opportunities and economic growth, the second to environmental policies (appendix A).

The theoretical purpose that the research aims to achieve can be identified as gaining a better understanding of the factors shaping the formulation of sustainable development as a regeneration policy goal. In particular, while the regeneration policy context represents a structuring element governing the formulation of regeneration initiatives in the form of specific projects, the definition of such projects take place on the ground where policies are interpreted and implemented by a range of different actors. In this sense, the research is concerned with analysing the actors' understanding and construction of sustainable development as regeneration policy goal. The definition of regeneration long-term objectives and leading priorities represents the focus of the research as the context where the re-orientation of policy goals should take place in the light of sustainability principles. In this respect, the analysis of sustainability is concentrated around the description and explanation of the actors' account of regeneration goals.

The gap between the theoretical level, at which sustainable development is debated, and the policy formulation level, matches the gap that exists between policy frameworks and their implementation. In particular, while there are large numbers of studies debating the core ideas of sustainable development, policy guidelines remain poor with respect to many of issues that the notion of sustainability raises. For example, sustainable regeneration is often described as the overall objective of delivering economic competitiveness, environmental improvement and social inclusion. This interpretation evades a number of key issues such as the impact of current choices over the well being of future generations while, at the same time, posing some doubts about the way to reconcile contrasting agendas of economic competitiveness and environmental improvements. Defining the challenges posed by the notion of sustainable development simply in terms of win-win solutions seems quite simplistic if we consider the complexity of human-environment interactions. In addition, the gap between the language of policy guidelines and regeneration strategies and the language of the actual actors, observed during the pilot study, suggest a problematic situation with regard to the implementation of sustainable development. In fact, while the widespread policy reference to sustainability seems to suggest that sustainability has become an integral part of regeneration, the unfamiliarity of some of the local actors with the sustainable development argument demonstrate that on the ground, sustainability is not central to the regeneration agenda. Thus, scope exists for exploring the relation between the consensus about the policy objective of promoting sustainability within regeneration, that exists at high political level, and the actual process

of definition of the policy goals of sustainable regeneration at the local level, as made by the actors that design and deliver regeneration initiatives. This understanding aims to identify the factors constraining the process of defining sustainable development as a goal of regeneration policy as well as the factors that can facilitate such a process.

An additional purpose can be identified in the interest of contributing to actor-oriented research. The importance of actor-orientation in research is often debated with regard to policy-making. In the case of environmental policy, the target of policy is generally scientifically defined using concepts such as physical thresholds while giving societal interaction with the environment a limited importance. This has contributed to limit the use of social science contributions to that of trying to adjust societal processes to targets defined in non-societal terms (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998; Becker et al, 1999). On the contrary, a social-oriented view would start from the analysis of the social causes of un-sustainability in order to devise policies able to assist in the development of strategies to move towards sustainability. As Becker et al. underline: *"science would not claim the authority to define the goals of societal policies, but instead would co-operate with non-scientific actors and assist in a process of negotiation of societal needs and ways to satisfy them"* (Becker et al, 1999:10).

The nature of the research purpose has determined the choice of a qualitative research design as the more appropriate to accommodate such analysis. Qualitative research is traditionally appropriate to understanding the meaning that research participants give to events, situations and actions in which they are involved. In this respect, understanding the research participants' perspective has been considered not only as their account but also as an essential part of the reality that is the object of the study; central to investigating the meanings is how the participants make sense of it and how this influences their behaviour (Maxwell, 1996). Qualitative research is also useful to understand the context in which research participants act and the way in which the context influences their actions. In order to achieve this, qualitative research focuses on a small number of participants to maintain the individuality of their analysis rather then collecting large samples. This is particularly relevant considering the multiple trajectories towards sustainability that societal transformation can follow as result of their cultural, political and ecological starting points. Therefore, looking at the individuality of each situation both with regards to the meanings and the actions of the actors as well as the context that influence them is required. Finally, qualitative research tends to be exploratory by identifying aspects and influences that have

not been anticipated and by generating grounded explanations. Considering the complexity of the issues raised by sustainable development and by its implementation in the regeneration process, it is essential to adopt a research approach that allows for the exploration of unanticipated factors.

4.3.2 The conceptual framework

There are several elements that have contributed in defining the conceptual framework of this research. Ideas about the conceptualisation of the notion of sustainable development, considerations about the process of development and implementation of policy goals and some empirical information derived by the research pilot study, have all contributed to defining the scope of the research (fig. 4.2).

The research is informed by the idea that sustainability can only be defined in relational terms as a condition that characterises the interaction between society and the environment and that requires consideration of the environmental dimension as central to societal transformations (section 2.3). In particular, the search for sustainable patterns of development involves a process of reformulation of the goals and means of societal development. The conceptual framework that informs this study is based on the work of Norton and Söderbaum (sections 2.3 and 2.4); in particular, their conceptualisation of the role that human valuation plays in understanding and addressing issues related to human-environment interaction has been employed as a key research input. In particular, given a dynamic conceptualisation of sustainability as a viable long-term relationship between society and environment, the focus moves from a predefinition of sustainability goals towards the broad process of redefinition of societal goals and means of development. In this context, Norton's hypothesis about the role of human valuation as a key driver in the management of the relationship between society and environment (sections 2.3 and 2.4) becomes extremely relevant to understanding what people value rather than only assuming what they should value.

This seems particularly important in the context of policy development and implementation, since the actors' interpretation of the high-level policy commitment about sustainability is also shaped by their valuation of regeneration objectives and the environmental transformations that such objectives entail. In this context, the term 'valuation' is used to refer to the actors' way of thinking, attributing values (positive and

negative) and prioritising the objectives that they think regeneration should deliver and the environmental changes involved.

RESEARCH AIM:
exploring the process of
formulation of sustainable development as regeneration policy goal

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CLAIMS (Becker et al., 1999):

a) Analytical level: societal development cannot longer be considered without its natural prerequisites

b) Strategic/political context: to renegotiate the goals of future societal development and establish ways and means for their implementation

c) Normative commitments: intergenerational justice, intra-generational social justice, equity, and democratic participation

Sustainability as 'process' rather than state; how societies shape their process of transformation

Role of existing guidelines/ frameworks of sustainable regeneration in shaping actors' interpretation.

RESEARCH FOCUS:
whether and how urban regeneration goals and targets are being renegotiated in the light of sustainable development claims

Norton's hypothesis about the role of 'values' as key endogenous variable of human/environment interactions

Fainstein and Campbell definition of urban policy formulation and implementation; role of the context in terms of priorities, ideologies and social facts.

Söderabum's PEP: the importance of roles, relationships, interests and motives in shaping human understanding and valuation of environment and development issues

Pilot study (reveals poor understanding of the terms sustainable development, sustainability, sustainable regeneration)

Policy-making and implementation: local actors' interpretation, development of discourses about sustainability and existing policy context.

RESEARCH VARIABLES:

1) Actors

2) Policy framework

Actors' interpretation of sustainable development in relation to role in policy system

Actors' 'valuation' of sustainability/environment in relation to the definition of long-term regeneration objectives

Sustainable development as requirement in urban regeneration policies and programmes as key element of context for policy

Fig. 4.2 Research conceptual framework

Norton (1996a) sees human values as an essential feature of the process of change that is required to implement sustainability; by knowing how current priorities and objectives are constructed by the social actors, it is possible to identify ways to construct alternative goals. For example, he regards adaptive management as a potential tool to shape societal values through the process of social learning.

With respect to the process of policy-making and implementation, the research has also been influenced by considerations about the role of priorities and ideologies in shaping urban policy (Fainstein and Campbell, 1996), that represent the context in which sustainable development has to be implemented. In addition, local level policy-making and implementation is influenced by the way in which sustainable development is constructed as requirements in current policy documents.

4.3.3 Research questions

Given that the research aim consists in gaining a better understanding of the factors shaping the formulation of sustainable development as regeneration policy goal, a number of research questions have been identified. These are related to the policies (as a key structuring element of the regeneration process and of the actors' understanding of environmental and regeneration objectives) and to the agency of the actors (as those interpreting and implementing regeneration policies in the light of locally relevant objectives). In this respect, the three research questions this study explores are:

I.   In the context of the definition of sustainable regeneration as a policy objective, how are the issues rising from the sustainable development discourse incorporated into policy interventions? How is sustainability being interpreted in regeneration policies and local strategic documents? Which themes are emphasised and which are underplayed?

II.   Given the recent introduction of sustainable development within regeneration, to what extent are the actors familiar with the sustainable development discourse and what are the meanings that they give to the terms 'sustainable development', 'sustainability', and 'sustainable regeneration'?

I.   What is the actors' valuation of the long-term objectives that they think regeneration initiatives should deliver and of the environmental transformation such objectives

entail? What are the preferences they currently express? And what are their aspirations in the long-term?

4.3.4 Methods

The background of the research is based on the literature review covering the topics of sustainable development, and urban and regional regeneration. The review of existing literature on sustainable development provides the ideas to inform the conceptual framework. The notion of sustainable regeneration has to be considered within the vast multidisciplinary debate on sustainable development which is characterised by different ideological positions and consequently, alternative theories and paradigms.

The research focuses on the regeneration process taking place in the Lee Valley region; an area with significant socio-economic development problems that has been the object of several regeneration policy initiatives. The research questions (section 4.3.3) are answered using different methods such as policy document analysis, interviews and observations. The collection of data on the Lee Valley is based on policy document analysis; this covers national government guidance and strategies as well as local programmes, in particular, the Lee Valley regeneration documents. Policy document analysis has been conducted through close reading of policy documents in order to identify leading themes and ideas; in particular, attention has been given to try to identify the themes that have been emphasised and those that have been underplayed. The analysis of policy documents has been used to explore the changes in urban policy and the ideas informing present strategies and initiatives of urban regeneration; the development of the sustainable development agenda and its capacity to influence different policy areas; and the extent of sustainable development as a topic in policy documents.

In-depth interviews and observations are the primary source of fieldwork data. Interviews have been conducted with representatives of agencies directly involved in designing and implementing regeneration initiatives as well as in promoting the sustainability agenda. In the design of the interviews, a key issue is to what extent the methods should be pre-structured. According to Maxwell (1996) structured approaches can be useful to ensure comparability when using different sources and when researching differences between things and their explanation. In contrast, unstructured methods are valid for contextual understanding and useful in understanding very complex social phenomenon (Miles and

Huberman, 1994). Unstructured interviews have been used during the pilot study that was intended to be an exploratory study on the integration of the notion of sustainable development within regeneration. The choice of unstructured interviews is common to many pilot studies because it represents a valuable method to gather information about the field before designing a more precise method. In the case of this research, open-ended questions were formulated out of a list of topics concerning their understanding of local sustainability strategies, the influence of such strategies on regeneration themes, about the practice of regeneration projects and the importance of multi-agency working. The results of these interviews have been extremely important in guiding the research process towards the definition of the research questions and in informing the design of the fieldwork methodology (section 4.5). For the fieldwork, a semi-structured approach has been chosen. Time constraints and the need to answer specific core questions are the reasons for following a pre-structured approach. In a semi-structured approach the majority of the questions are the same for each interview but at the same time, a certain degree of flexibility is ensured by the possibility to alter the sequence of the questions and to probe for more information. In addition to the semi-structured interviews, observations have been conducted during the fieldwork in order to collect more information about the practice of the regeneration process such as the activities of local groups working towards the definition of regeneration bids or the community consultation events about proposed regeneration initiatives.

4.4 Validity Issues

The threat to the validity of a study can derive from the limited reliability of the methods that have been designed to answer the research questions; in addition, the consistency between the purposes of the research, the theories that support the study and the research questions has to be verified. Going back to Maxwell's diagram of interactive model of research design (fig. 4.1) there should be consistency between the arguments represented in the upper triangle and those of the lower one. However, the main threat to the validity of a study can derive from the data, and the way in which they have been collected as well as analysed (section 4.6).

This study employs in-depth interviews and observations as primary source of data to investigate the actors' valuation of regeneration objectives. In the same way, it aims to

collect data on the meanings that actors give to the term, sustainability, sustainable development and sustainable regeneration. By investigating only the meaning that the actors give to these terms, the result could be flawed because of the rhetoric on sustainable development that exists in the policy documents that could be easily reproduced by the actors. In contrast, by looking at the values, the attention moves to the elements shaping the formulation of regeneration goals. In fact, according to the theoretical framework that informs the research, valuation is a variable on which to assess the re-orientation of regeneration goals in the light of the issues raised by the notion of sustainable development. A critique of this assumption can be based on the idea that values are not the only element shaping the re-orientation of policy goals or more generally of the ideas that actors hold about regeneration and the role of sustainability arguments. In this respect, the study aims at exploring values and the factors shaping them such as the policy discourses, the role of the actors and the processes in which they are engaged. This aims to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the values as elements that affect the formulation of choices, in this case of regeneration choices, but also of the factors shaping values on the base that valuations represent important drivers in defining the relationship between environmental and societal transformations. In addition, while in the interviews, the arguments of the informants are presented in an individual form, observations are important to locate the discourse of the individual actors in their context, which includes the context of the relationships between actors. Informants' interviews and observation of key activities and events are the primary source of data; in addition strategic documents, regeneration bids and local action plans are collected as data. The choice of using different sources of data is mainly related to their relevance to the research question that the fieldwork attempts to answer. In addition, the need for reducing the bias and for improving the validity of the analysis requires, according to the principle of triangulation, the collection of information by different methods.

4.5 Fieldwork methodology

A sub-area of the Lee Valley region, namely the Upper Lee Valley has been identified as the area of study. Based on an initial pilot study of the Upper Lee Valley, which was done by conducting open-ended interviews with key informants throughout the Lee Valley and analysing local strategic documents, the fieldwork consisted of collecting relevant data on the actors' long-term values, goals and aspirations together with their interpretation of

sustainable development. The aims of the pilot study was to obtain background information on the issues linked to sustainable development and urban regeneration, to present the research to possible participants, and, on the base of their interest, to set up a relationship that would allow the observation of key activities and events. Setting a research relationship, or negotiating an entry, with possible participants has been a long process that has been evolving alongside the research.

4.5.1 The study area

Together with the Thames Gateway, the Lee Valley is one of the main regeneration and development corridors in London as various strategic documents for economic regeneration demonstrate (GOL, 1994, 2000; LPAC, 2000; LDA, 2000, 2001). However, at its southern end the Lee Valley overlaps with the East Thames corridor which results in areas including the boroughs of Tower Hamlet and Newham becoming increasingly incorporated in strategies and initiatives aiming at the regeneration of the Thames Gateway region rather then the Upper Lee corridor. This trend has been strengthened by the re-organisation of London's sub-regions and their relative strategies so that for the northern sub-region of the city now includes the three boroughs of the Upper Lee Valley (Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest) and the borough of Barnet. In the Economic Development Strategy produced by London Development Agency (LDA, 2001), the Upper Lee Valley is identified as the sub-regional scale of the Lee corridor at which regeneration priorities should be planned and addressed. The above factors allowed the identification of the three boroughs of Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest, which occupy the upper part of the Lee Valley, as a valid subset of the whole area. However, the selection of the Upper Lee Valley as a fieldwork area is also linked to scale considerations. Recently, there has been an increasing focus on the regional level (DETR, 1997a; 1998b; 2000a) as a key strategic scale and regeneration has become increasingly regionalised in the sense that regeneration initiatives have aimed to be linked to a regional strategic vision. At the same time, there has been a new interpretation of the neighbourhood as the local scale at which the regeneration of deprived communities should take place (Cabinet Office, 1998). Between these two scales, the local authority level has maintained and in some aspects strengthened its role (DETR, 1998b). The existence of a multiplicity of scales at which regeneration is addressed requires that the study area should reflect, even in part, the different scales at which policies and choices are made. For these reasons the study area has to be relatively

large so that it is possible to detect policies and initiatives at different scales and try to understand their interaction.

In recent years, the area has been targeted by several regeneration initiatives: these include past and present SRB funded programmes, the EU funded Objective 2 programme and the New Deal for Communities. The Upper Lee Valley area is characterised by areas that are among the most deprived in England and, at the same time, by potential positive aspects such as the amount of brownfield land (fig 4.3). The three boroughs of Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest that constitute the Upper Lee Valley are not similar with respect to issues of poverty, economic decline and deprivation. According to the Index of Local Deprivation, which is one of the main tool to assess areas in need of regeneration, Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest have different district scores and rankings: Enfield ranks 70th while Haringey and Waltham Forest occupy the 13th and 22nd positions respectively.

Upper Lee Valley Snapshot

- The Upper Lee Valley is home to 211,840 jobs

- It has a manufacturing core although employment is concentrated in retail, distribution and repair sectors

- The business base is predominately made up of small and medium enterprises with 26% of workers employed by firms employing less than 10 people

- It has the largest area of brownfield land and potential for commercial and industrial development in north London and a large number of smaller older industrial estates which require upgrading

- The area has some of the worst concentrations of employment in the country: rates in Haringey at 9% is three time the London average, in Waltham Forest at 7.3% more than twice the London average and in Enfield at 4.8% higher than the London average

- It is home of a population of diverse ethnic backgrounds facing higher level of unemployment than the already high average rates

- Around a fifth of residents have low or very low literacy and numeracy levels with relatively low levels of educational attainments in many schools

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Fig 4.3 Upper Lee Valley Snapshot, source LDA (2002)

However, the intensity of deprivation, which is shown by the average scores of the three worst wards in each local authority, gives an idea of the severity of the deprivation at ward level. In addition, the percentage of population living in wards that are within the 10% of the most deprived in England and the proportion of Enumeration Districts (EDs) falling within the most deprived EDs in England, shows the distribution of deprived areas within each district.

According to the Index of Local Deprivation, Enfield seems to have pockets of deprivation within mainly non-deprived areas; in contrast, Haringey has a wide spread deprivation given that an extremely high percentage of population (79.26%) lives in highly deprived wards as well as EDs (30.65%) within the 7% worst EDs in England (table 4.1).

District name	Degree score	Degree rank	Average worst 3 wards	Ward Intensity rank	% of LA pop. in worst 10% wards	Ward Extent rank	% EDs in worst 7%	ED Extent rank
Enfield	16.65	70	10.2	79	14.93	77	3.39	116
Hackney	35.21	4	14.7	8	100.01	1	60.79	1
Haringey	31.53	13	14.2	12	79.26	7	30.65	9
Newham	38.55	2	14.5	10	100.00	2	55.75	3
Tower H	34.30	6	15.1	5	99.99	4	58.26	2
Waltham F	26.68	22	14.2	13	66.77	12	16.34	25

Table 4.1 Index of Local Deprivation, adapted from DETR, 1998

Similarly, Waltham Forest is characterised by highly deprived wards where the majority of the population (66.77%) lives. The structure of the deprivation of Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest, as described by the Index of Local Deprivation, implies that regeneration initiatives in the three boroughs are likely to address different needs. At the same time the existence of the regional dimension of the Upper Lee Valley represents the attempt to address such diverse needs collectively.

4.5.2 The research participants

Within the area of study, a matrix of the key actors has been defined by identifying categories of actors such as government, business organisations, community and environmental groups, partnerships and professional bodies and different spatial levels such as the individual boroughs, the Lee Valley region and London wide (table 4.2). The categories of actors have been identified for their involvement in the regeneration process; in addition, key informants have been identified in respect to sustainable development initiatives. The distinction of different spatial scales at which to select the informants aimed at addressing the multiplicity of scales of regeneration especially with regard to its strategic and applied dimensions.

Given the regeneration leadership of local authorities, central importance has been given to interviewing representatives of local government involved in regeneration schemes such as European Structural Funds, Single Regeneration Budget and New Deal for Communities as well as local sustainability officers, possibly working in collaboration with regeneration units. At regional scale, representative of a statutory body such as the Park Authority has been identified as main actor while at London scale, key actors have been identified in representatives of the Government Office for London (GOL), of the London Development Agency (LDA) and of the Greater London Authority (GLA).

GOL represents a key interlocutor because of its central role in handling regeneration schemes such as the Single Regeneration Budget (now under LDA responsibility) and New Deal for Communities and for its long-term involvement in the European funded proposals for the regeneration of the Lee Valley. The LDA as the body currently responsible for funding regeneration schemes throughout London is responsible for shaping regeneration strategies as well as allocating funds. Finally, the GLA has a key role as the new strategic body for London.

Representatives of environmental and community groups have been selected with respect to their involvement in regeneration schemes and sustainable development initiatives; however, while at the local level, the activities of local groups tend to range from environmental to community initiatives making the distinction between environmental and community groups less visible, at a larger scale their activities appear to be more distinct.

Local groups representatives have been identified in the three boroughs because of their extensive activities related to regeneration schemes but also to sustainability projects. At the London wide level, environmental groups have been selected for their involvement in the regeneration agenda as in the case of both Going for Green and Friends of the Earth. With respect to the work of community groups, the London Regeneration Network has been identified as main interlocutor since it represents a vast number of community and voluntary sector organisations directly involved in regeneration schemes.

Partnerships are key regeneration actors since each regeneration initiative is based on work in partnership of different agencies. However, main partnerships exist at the regional level demonstrating long-term involvement in the regeneration of the area. The London Lee Valley Partnership (LLVP) and the Upper Lee Valley Partnership (ULVP) are two regional bodies representing public, private and voluntary sectors interests in regeneration. In this

respect they represents essential interlocutors on the regeneration process that have been taking place in the Lee Valley in the last decade and of the way in which this process has changed during these years.

With respect to business organisations, they were identified for their direct involvement in regeneration initiatives at the individual borough level as well as regional level. Finally, other important actors were recognised in the professional organisations such as consultancies that have a less public but still crucial role in regeneration, as they are very often responsible for bringing together bids and regeneration strategies.

However, given the variety of initiatives that are currently taking place in the area and the fragmentation of responsibilities, the sampling of the actors that would potentially become research participants, could be affected by crucial gaps. The importance of having specific actors as research informants was relevant to the aim of exploring the research questions with those effectively involved in regeneration. However, there are practical issues with identifying the right informants, often because of the fragmentation of responsibilities. For example, within local government, there are regeneration officers working on specific projects, there are those supervising the implementation of all regeneration packages and those involved at the strategic level in defining local policies. Because of their different duties and degree of accountability, they would provide different viewpoints; however, it is almost impossible, unless the research is conducted in collaboration with local government, to have the availability of more then one officer as informant. Similarly, it is difficult to keep up to date with all the initiatives since they develop along different timescales. During the period of this research, some projects were at an initial stage and, therefore, were able to offer information on the elements that are brought together in the definition of regeneration initiatives, while already funded projects have provided information about implementation aspects.

The fragmentation of responsibility, and, therefore, the limited access to the informants, and the difficulty of keeping track of all the initiatives inevitably affect the breadth of the investigation posing questions about the validity of the sampling process. For this reason it was decided to test the sampling by introducing at the end of each interview a question about who were, in the informant's opinion, the relevant actors that would be indispensable to interview. This procedure has allowed to test the validity of the sampling by confirming the relevance of certain actors and by including, where necessary, other research participants as a result of suggestions from other informants.

	Government	Environmental org.	Community groups	Partnership	Business	Other
Enfield	Local authority (regeneration & sustainability officers)	Ponders End Development Forum O–bay community group			Brimsdown Business Association	
Waltham Forest	Local authority (regeneration & sustainability officers)	Hornbeam Environmental Centre Community Development Pathways				
Haringey	Local authority (regeneration & sustainability officers)	Haringey Local Agenda 21 Community Steering Group				
Lee Valley region	Regional Park Authority			London Lee Valley Partnership Upper Lee Valley Partnership	North London Manufacturer Action Group North London Chamber of Commerce	G. Fordham Associates Ltd Centre Environment and Safety Management for Business
London wide	Government Office for London London Development Agency Greater London Authority	Going for Green Friends of the Earth	London Regeneration Network			Forum for the Future Civic Regeneration Ltd.

Table 4.2 Matrix showing the key actors within the study area

4.5.3 Interviews

Fieldwork data have been collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews. The fieldwork interviews have been developed using an interview design model; the main objective has been to clearly distinguish between research questions and interview questions as they belong to different domains. The research question is expressed in the language of the conceptual variables that the research aims to investigate while the

interview questions are empirical indicators of the variable under investigation, and must be developed in the language of the informants.

Following Wengraf (2001) interview design model (fig 4.4), the central research question (CRQ) has been divided into theory questions (TQs) as main research domains that have guided the development of interview questions (IQs). Each of the theory questions has been developed into an interview or informant question, with specific attention to using an appropriate language. Consequently, from an initial common CRQ-TQs structure, different interview schedules have been designed in relation to the different categories of informant (see appendix B).
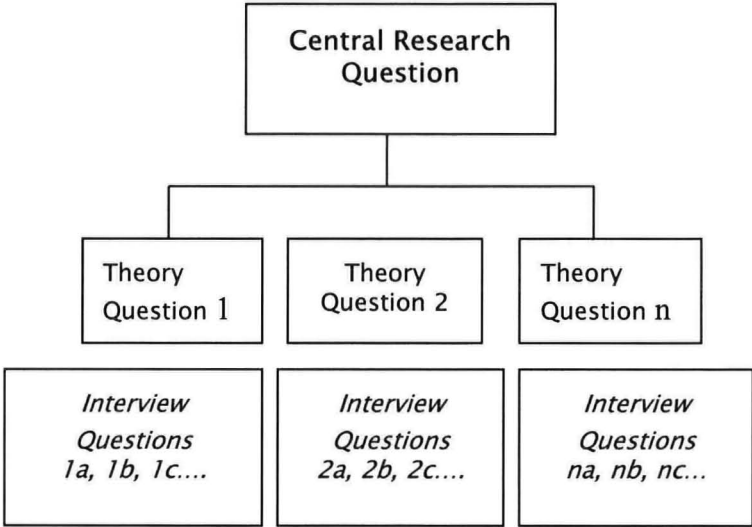
Fig. 4.4 CRQ→TQs→IQs, adapted from Wengraf (2001)

This approach is highly pre-structured since the development of the interview is meant to answer a specific research question. The process of CRQ and TQs help to define a coherent model to pass from the theory language of the conceptual context to the definition of the empirical tools that will attempt to answer the question. However, the choice of semi-structured in depth interviews maintains a certain degree of flexibility, given by the possibility of following up from the informants' answers, that allow to explore unanticipated aspects.

The research questions that the fieldwork aimed to investigate concern the values of the actors involved in regeneration and their understanding of sustainable development (section 4.3.3). From these research questions eight theory questions were formulated identifying the key aspects that it was necessary to investigate in order to answer the central fieldwork questions (table 4.3). The process of defining the central research

questions and then dividing them into theory questions involved several attempts in order to obtain a list of theoretical questions that are necessary and sufficient to answer the research questions. It represents a powerful process of continuous redefinition of the central research questions and the concepts that it contains.

	Theory Questions
TQ1	What is the role that the actor plays in the regeneration process?
TQ2	What are the preferences currently expressed by the actor?
TQ3	What are the future options and opportunities that the actor thinks regeneration should deliver?
TQ4	What are the means and strategies?
TQ 5	How does the actor value the environmental transformations that take place as part of the regeneration process?
TQ6	What concepts does the informant have that are equivalent to the concept of sustainable regeneration as currently expressed in policy documents?
TQ7	If the informant has come across the term of 'sustainable development', how does he/she understand the term and how this differs from his/her set of concepts or examples?
TQ8	In what way the informant definition of sustainable development or his/her equivalent set of concepts translated into actual practice?

Table 4.3 Theory Questions

Since the last decade, the design and the implementation of regeneration initiatives has been increasingly linked to the development of partnership that would bring together and integrate different agendas. Currently, urban policy tends to highlight the importance of community involvement or multi-agency working in designing and delivering regeneration initiatives; thus, a range of different actors are involved in the regeneration process. Consequently, a key aspect that needed to be determined was: *what is the role that the actor plays in the regeneration process?* (TQ$_1$).

At present, urban regeneration is defined as a comprehensive process aimed at delivering a long-term transformation of declining urban areas through initiatives aiming at regenerating economic, social and environmental aspects. At the same time, the notion of sustainable development is about the long-term impact of human development activities. Given that the range of different actors involved in regeneration have different agendas, it

was necessary to understand: *What are the preferences currently expressed by the actor?* (TQ$_2$) and *what are the long-term options and opportunities that the actor thinks regeneration should deliver?* (TQ$_3$). Consequently, to ask: *what are the means to the aspirations?* (TQ$_4$).

The conceptual framework that underlies this research suggests that sustainable development has to be formulated as a dynamic condition concerning the long-term viability of human-environment interactions. Therefore, understanding the interaction between the process of regeneration and its context includes exploring the way in which environmental transformations are valued by the actors and those he/she represents. This required investigating: *How does the actor value the environmental transformations that take place as part of the regeneration process?* (TQ$_5$).

The term sustainable development is increasingly used in urban policy although various studies have already pointed out that the term is vague and unclear for the majority of the actors (Gibbs, 1999). This means that it was necessary to investigate: *what concepts does the informant have that are equivalent to the concept of sustainable regeneration as currently expressed in policy documents?* (TQ$_6$) *if the informant has come across the term of 'sustainable development', how does he/she understand the term and how this differs from his/her set of concepts or examples?* (TQ$_7$) and as consequence: *in what way the informant definition of sustainable development or his/her equivalent set of concepts translated into actual practice?* (TQ$_8$).

From the theory questions, the interview schedules have been defined by articulating the concepts of the theory questions in interview questions where greater attention is posed to adjusting the interview to the language of the informants (table 4.4 and appendix B). In contrast, the interview questions developed for the pilot study have been slightly structured since the pilot study was supposed to be an exploratory study on the integration of the notion of sustainable development within regeneration. Open-ended questions were formulated out of a list of topics concerning their understanding of local sustainability strategies, the influence of such strategies on regeneration themes, about the practice of regeneration and the importance of multi-agency working. In this way, on the basis of problematic issues that had been identified around the research topic of sustainable development and urban regeneration a few open questions were developed for each of the sub-topics.

	Interview schedule Informant Business organisation representative
	TQ1 What is the role that the actor plays in the regeneration process? *IQ1 Could you tell me about your organisation, the (name) association* TQ2 What are the preferences currently expressed by the actor? *IQ2a In which regeneration initiatives are you currently involved?* *IQ2b What kind of projects are you running?* TQ3 What are the future options and opportunities that the actor thinks regeneration should deliver? *IQ3 Can you give me an example of what, in your opinion, regeneration should deliver?* • note at which spatial scale the informant refers, probe about different scales TQ4 What are the means and strategies? *IQ4a What do you think is crucial to get there?* *IQ4b What might make this not happen?* *IQ4c Given the present state of things, what is likely to be delivered?* TQ 5 How does the actor value the environmental transformations that take place as part of the regeneration process? *IQ5 In the Upper Lee Valley, which elements of the local environment do you think are important to the regeneration of the area? And why do you think so?* • probe with examples of natural environment (soil condition, water and waterways, air, biodiversity) and built environment (urban fabric, open spaces, transport infrastructure, land use) TQ6 What concepts does the informant have that are equivalent to the concept of sustainable regeneration as currently expressed in policy documents? *IQ6 Do you think it is possible to deliver economic regeneration, environmental improvements and social cohesion?* TQ7 If the informant has come across the term of sustainable development, how does he/she understand the term and how this differs from his/her set of concepts or examples? *IQ7a Have you heard the term sustainable development?* *IQ7b What is your understanding of the term sustainable development?* *IQ7c In the context of urban regeneration, is the word sustainable development useful to express new contents?* *IQ7d Do you think that the concept behind the term sustainable development has changed people's thinking about urban regeneration?* TQ8 In what way the informant definition of sustainable development or his/her equivalent set of concepts translated into actual practice *IQ8a Could you give me an example of a sustainable development initiative/project?* *IQ8b Why do you think it is a good example?* *IQ8c Could you give me an example of a specific action/event that has contributed in moving forward the sustainable development agenda?*

Table 4.4 Example of interview schedule

4.5.4 Observations

Observations of the activities related to regeneration initiatives such as meetings and public consultation events have been used to collect data on the context in which the research participants act. Field notes together with agendas and minutes of the activity represent the data collected during the observations. Observation has been possible on the basis of different agreements with the research participants. In some case, observation has been organised as part of a long-term agreement, such as the one set up with Enfield Council in relation to the design of regeneration bid for Edmonton area. In other cases, observation has been agreed on a single base.

4.6 Data analysis

Following the methodological process that has generated theory questions and then interview questions, the analysis represents the closing circle when the answers to the theory questions have to be explored. In order to do so, the interview material, that is the transcript of the interviews, is analysed for each of the theory questions (Wengraf, 2001). During the analysis, the theory questions are the tool for investigating the variety of aspects that constitute the central research questions that cannot be searched simultaneously without risking undermining their content. In fact, while the interview schedules represent the means of communication with the informant, the analysis has to be conducted with respect to the theory questions, rather then the interview questions, in order to answer the central research questions. In addition, since the argument built by the informant during the interview cannot be split into the single answers to the interview questions but represents a continuous argument, the answers to the theory questions cannot be searched within the individual answers to the interview questions but throughout the interview material. By analysing the interview material for each of the theory questions, the process of analysis acquires a systematic control over the data collected aimed at reducing bias in interpretation that can derive by limiting the analysis to the theory questions to the single answer to the interview questions. On the contrary, the answer to the theory questions can be found anywhere in the interview material, a part for the specific interview answer.

The analysis of the data collected during the interviews and the observations has been conducted using a qualitative data analysis package called ATLAS/ti. The advantages that

derive from using a software package for data analysis are connected to the possibility of following a systematic approach to the analysis of data and constantly producing records of the whole process of analysis and, therefore, making the process more transparent. Two principal modes of working with ATLAS/ti can be distinguished: a textual and a conceptual level. The textual 'primary documents' level includes activities like segmentation of data files, coding of text and the writing of memos. The conceptual level focuses on model building activities such as linking codes to form conceptual networks. Textual research activities include the breaking down, or segmenting, of the primary documents[1], that are the transcript of the interviews in a specific format, into passages, the adding of comments in the form of notes as well as the filing or indexing of all selected primary document passages, secondary text materials such as the field notes from the observations or the memos written after the interviews. In addition, ATLAS/ti networking feature allows the visual connection of selected passages, memos, and codes, into diagrams.

Finally, it allows the generation of output summaries of the work or part of it, such as the list of the coding, the memos or the quotations that can be used for theory building activities. This is facilitated by the use of "families" that are containers for objects such as primary documents, codes and memos. One important objective of using families is to cope with large amounts of objects by classifying them into sub sets, such as all theoretical codes, or all textual primary documents; in addition, the division of a set of objects into families reduces the portions of data requesting the researcher's attention.

The theory questions have generated corresponding "hermeneutic units" as the package working units in which to conduct textual research activities (fig. 4.5). Each of the units allows the researcher to work simultaneously on the codes, memos and quotations throughout the all interview materials. In addition, some sorting of the data have been employed by identifying families as categories of actors in order to divide the interview material into similar sections. However, the textual analysis has been conducted on the interview material of each informant and successively the families have been applied as containers of different categories of actors in order to check the compatibility within each category and to allow comparison among them (fig. 4.6).

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[1] The transcripts of the interviews are referenced as primary documents P1, P2... Pn.

Families have also been used as categories of codes in order to select all the codes that have emerged as result of the analysis of a certain theory question. Overall the manipulation of data using the families can be an explorative process that allows the researcher to concentrate attention on specific topics.
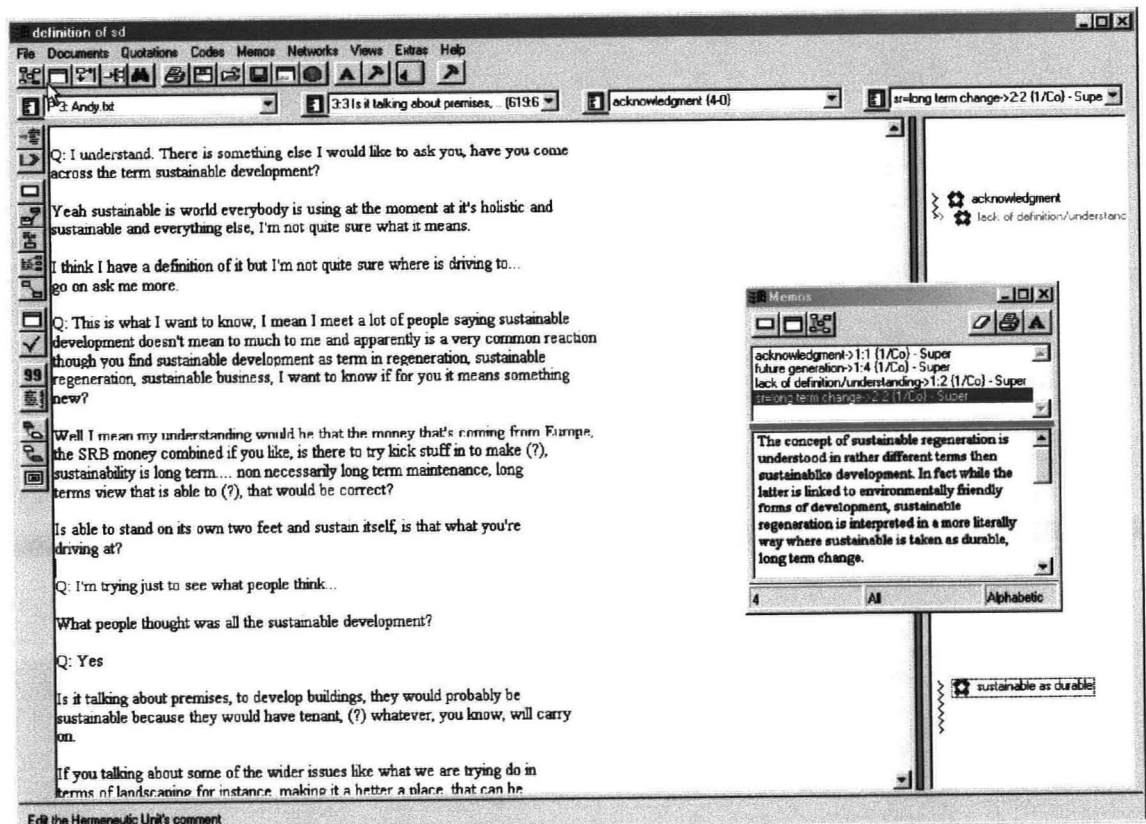
Fig. 4.5 Example of textual analysis, hermeneutic unit: definition of sustainable development

After completing the textual activity of coding the interview material, the interpretation has been conducted by exploring the data always within the context of each theory question. This has been done by using the output command of ATLAS/ti and by imposing different filters, such as the families, in order to obtain selected portions of data; on this base, the theory building activities have taken place. For example, with regard to the theory question about the preferences currently expressed by the actors (TQ$_2$), outputs have been produced of the codes in relation to the quotations, as the portion of the text at which they refer, and in relation to the categories of actors (appendix C). Then, codes and relative quotations and codes per categories of actors have been identified for the other

theory question (TQ$_3$), which is about the long-term objectives. This allowed the exploration of differences between present and future aspirations and to compare these differences among the different groups of actors.
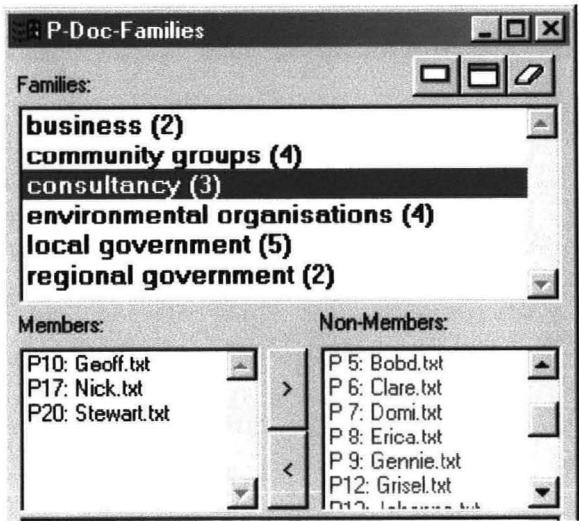
Fig. 4.6 Families of primary documents with ATLAS/ti
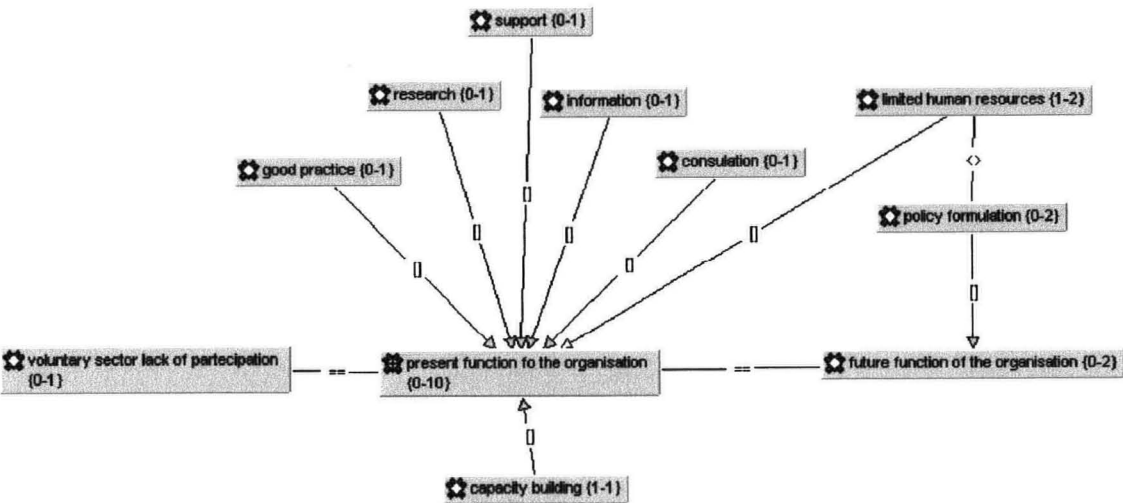
Fig. 4.7 Example of network diagram in ATLAS/ti

Finally, ATLAS/ti networking feature is the tool used during the analysis; the networking feature allows the visualisation of the relationship between concepts and ideas represented by codes, memos or selected textual parts. For example, with respect to the first theory

question, about the role of the actors in the regeneration process, the data collected during the interviews with members of community organisations contained much information about the function of community groups; in this case, the networking feature has been used to combine the different information in a manageable graphic form (fig. 4.7). One of the interesting features of drawing a network is the ability to define the character of the relationship between two or more aspects such as equivalence, association, casual links or opposition. Overall the networking feature has been used to think about the relation between codes and to define their relative importance in the theory building process.

4.7 Ethical issues

Ethical issues affect the research fieldwork in different ways, from setting up the relationships with possible participants, to the actual interviews and, most important, to the elaboration and use of the research findings. Ethical issues have resulted from the process of setting up the relationship with research participants in terms of negotiating between their interest in the research, and, therefore, their possible participation, and the objectives of the research.

The negotiation with the research participants is one of the elements that affect the research design since to the researcher demand for accessing information, interviewing members of agencies and participating in relevant activities there is often a counterpart demand that regards the relevance or the use of the research finding to the research participant. With respect to this study, this process has been central to guarantee the feasibility of the research. Several agreements have been pursued in order to conduct the fieldwork and the failure of some of these initial agreements has affected some research choices. However, this aspect highlights how the research design is part of the process that develops along with the research and the relationship with the research participant represents a key variable of such process. In this respect, ethical issues also regard the transparency of the negotiation with the research participant in the definition of the objective of the research and the use of its findings.

With regard to the interviews, anonymity and confidentiality have been agreed with each of the informants before the interview. In each if the transcripts anonymity has been respected by deleting names of people or localities as well as references to specific activities that would have made it possible to identify the informant. In addition, while

negotiating the participation to the research and before each of the interviews, it has been clarified that research participants, if interested, could have access to the research findings and comment on them, especially if they believed it could affect them. However, the use of their comments would remain within the final decision of the researcher.

4.8 Conclusions

Overall, this chapter has described the choices about the research design and the fieldwork methodology. In particular the research design has been explained with regards to Maxwell's model of interactive design that requires that the consistency between the research purposes, the theoretical framework, the research questions and the methods employed has to be continuously assessed. With regard to the fieldwork, methodological choices such as the sampling of the research participants and the selection of semi-structured in depth interviews have been explained together with a comprehensive account of the interview design model. The choice of a specific interview design model has been important in order to systematically characterise the process of definition of the research interviews and the process of analysis of the interview material. The analysis of the research questions (section 4.3.3) presented in this chapter, has been structured into the next chapters respectively about the policy context, the actors' interpretation of the sustainable development discourse and their valuation of regeneration long-term objectives.

Chapter five

THE POLICY CONTEXT

"What is sustainable development? At its heart is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come" (DETR, 1999b: par. 1.1)

5.1 Introduction

In 1997, with the fourth round of the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), sustainable regeneration was given formal recognition as a regeneration objective. The promotion of sustainable regeneration was, according to the SRB programme, one of the aspects contributing to the improvement of the quality of life of people in areas of need. In order to meet the SRB target, bidding projects were required to enhance the employment prospects, education and skills of local people; addressing social exclusion and increasing opportunities for the disadvantaged; supporting and promoting growth in local economies and businesses; tackling crime and drug abuse and improving community safety; and promoting sustainable regeneration, improving and protecting the environment and infrastructure, including housing (DETR, 1997). Alongside the SRB definition of sustainable regeneration, the guideline "Sustainable Regeneration Good Practice Guidance" (DETR, 1998a) focused on the role of regeneration partnerships, such SRB partnerships, as a major vehicle for contributing to the promotion of sustainable regeneration by bringing together different interests and pursuing an integrated working. However, the recent establishment of the Regional Development Agencies provided a further opportunity for the redefinition of sustainable development as policy theme. In fact, as part of their statutory purposes, Regional Development Agencies (DETR, 1997a; 1998e) had to contribute to sustainable development as part of economic development and regeneration strategies.

The aim of this chapter is to outline the current policy context concerning the promotion of sustainable development as expressed in official sources and to describe the 'official' evolution of policy. In particular, the promotion of sustainability as policy theme is reviewed at the national, regional and local scale. In addition, the chapter describes the policy context in London and in the Lee Valley region as relevant background for the research study area.

5.2 Sustainable development as a policy theme

There are different levels at which sustainability has been addressed as a strategic policy theme. At international level, EU policies and frameworks represent the main guideline instruments, while at national and local levels, the UK-wide sustainable development strategies and the Local Agenda 21 plans are the most important strategic documents. However, the recent introduction of Regional Agencies and Regional Chambers has repositioned sustainable development as a regional policy theme. In particular, regional sustainability has been identified as a key sub-national dimension necessary to the achievement of the objectives of the national strategy and, at the same time, as a new framework for the activities of local government under its renewed leadership.

At the national level, the review of the 1994 UK Sustainable Development Strategy, "A better quality of life. A strategy for sustainable development in the UK" (DETR, 1999a) contains the 'official' definition of sustainable development that has been re-proposed as a guideline definition in other key policy documents. In this respect, the strategy has clearly identified the objective of sustainable development as the improvement of quality of life and defined the notion of sustainable development around key driving principles. With respect to urban policy, the strategy refers to the objective of building sustainable communities as a means of improving the places where people live and work while giving them the opportunity to participate in developing their areas. This must be achieved with regard to resource use and environmental protection and seeking to promote social cohesion; in this context, sustainability refers to the integration of a broad range of policy areas such as regional development, planning, transport, health, housing, regeneration, and local government.

However, recent changes have seen the establishment of regional agencies to provide strategic regional thinking on economic development and a renewed leadership for local authorities in the promotion of economic, social and environmental well-being in their areas; in both cases, regeneration and sustainability represent key themes. The strategic dimension of sustainable development has acquired a very strong regional significance with the establishment of the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs); in this respect, the Regional Economic Strategies (RESs) are the new strategic documents where sustainability is required to be taken into account. In addition, the Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks are the documents that address sustainability at the regional scale and in relation to the RDAs activities. At the local level, the responsibility for Community

Development Plans, related to the promotion of economic, social and environmental well-being, is formulated with regard to the achievement of sustainable development (DETR, 2000c).

5.2.1 The national strategy on sustainable development

The UK policy agenda for sustainable development was initially introduced by the Government White Paper "This Common Inheritance". Published in 1990, it contained several commitments to action on the environment, which have been regularly reported in successive White Papers. However, following the Earth Summit agreements, key national strategies for sustainable development were adopted; together with "Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan", "Climate Change: The UK Programme and "Sustainable Forestry: The UK Programme", "Sustainable Development: The UK Strategy" (1994) represents the Government's formal commitment to sustainable development as expressed at the Earth Summit. According to the 1994 strategy, sustainable development aims at reconciling two main objectives: economic development, to secure higher standard of living for present and future generations, and the protection and enhancement of the environment. However, more recently, the policy agenda for sustainable development has been subjected to further development. At the national level, the review of the 1994 UK Sustainable Development Strategy, "A better quality of life. A strategy for sustainable development in the UK" (DETR, 1999a) has set out issues and priorities at national level for achieving sustainable development. According to the new strategy, sustainable development means ensuring a better quality of life for everybody now as well as for future generations. This requires meeting four main objectives: social progress which recognises the needs of everyone; effective protection of the environment; prudent use of natural resources; and high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

The strategy has drawn together a vast number of policies and actions aimed to promote sustainable development from meeting global conventions (e.g. through EU agreements) to national, regional and local responsibility. Economic, social and environmental capitals represents the three interrelated aspects of sustainable development; respectively, three main chapters of "A better quality of life", discuss how to create a sustainable economy, to build better communities for people to live and work, and to protect the environment and natural resources (table 5.1). In the last 2002 review of the national strategy, the role of

sustainable development has strategic theme is identified in the new regional agencies through the development of their Regional Economic Strategies (RESs) as the primary mechanism for the delivery of sustainable economic development across England.

Sustainable development strategy: economic, social and environmental goals

To deliver a more sustainable economy means...	To build sustainable communities requires...	To address environmental and resource challenges demand...
to do more with less: making better use of resources; a stable a competitive economy; to develop skills and reward work; goods and services which meet consumers' needs and are produced, and can be used, more efficiently; Government, producers and consumers working together to achieve long-term change.	strengthening regional and local economies; meeting people's social needs: promoting better health, housing and access to services and recreation; improving local surroundings: revitalising town centres, tackling degraded urban environments, and ensuring that development respect the character of the countryside; reducing crime and the fear of crime; addressing problems of poverty and social exclusion in the most deprived communities; making it easier for people to get involved in their communities; co-ordinating policies to bring these objectives together.	achieving major long-term cuts in greenhouse gas emissions whilst ensuring secure, diverse supplies of energy at competitive prices in environmentally-acceptable ways; improving the quality of air; safeguarding freshwater resources and water quality, at a time when pressures from climate change and household demand are likely to increase; safeguarding the health and productivity of the seas around our shores; minimising the loss of soil resources, and maintaining and enhancing soil quality; reversing trends of damage to our landscape and wildlife; reducing the spread of persistent or diffuse pollutants and improving management of waste; working with others to combat global challenges such as climate change and threat to biodiversity, oceans and forests.

Table 5.1 The UK strategy on sustainable development, source DETR (1999)

With the review of the initial strategy on sustainable development there has been a clear transformation of the meaning that it is given to the notion of sustainability. While in the first strategy, as a result of the international debate generated by the Earth Summit, the issue raised by the notion of sustainable development was defined as the reconciliation of environment and development, in the 1999 review sustainable development has been defined as the goal of ensuring a better quality of life. The difference between these two definitions of sustainability has determined a quite significant change in the meaning given to the notion of sustainable development. For example, while reconciling environment and development could represent a quite complex process, ensuring a better quality of life sounds a much more feasible goal. In addition, the four objectives of social progress,

protection of the environment, prudent use of natural resources, and high and stable economic growth are presented in a non-conflicting manner as four strands that need to be pursued at the same time.

Under a departmental reorganisation, the responsibility for sustainable development has now moved from the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), and now to the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). DEFRA is, therefore, currently responsible for promoting sustainable development across the UK and across government. Given the cross-cutting character of the notion of sustainable development, the department strategy on sustainable development (DEFRA, 2002) has emphasized the importance of working in partnership across local, regional and central government supporting the Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks and the Local Community Strategies as well as working in collaboration with the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit and DTI.

5.2.2 The regional dimension: RDAs , RESs and RSDF

At sub-national level, regional activity is undergoing a moment of transformation that has also led to a renewed focus upon sustainability at the regional level. Regional chambers and regional planning bodies have specific requirements for building sustainability into the Regional Sustainable Development Framework (RSDF) and Regional Planning Guidance (RPG). Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) provides the regional spatial framework for statutory development plans; they incorporate a regional transport strategy, that is linked to issues at wider scale, as well as plan for housing, infrastructure, economic development, environmental protection, agriculture and waste. Now RPG has a specific remit for implementing sustainable development, with a requirement for an independent sustainability appraisal of policies and proposals as well as consultation and reporting. Beside the Regional Planning Guidance, the two main documents that are meant to address sustainable development as a regional strategic theme are the Regional Economic Strategies (RESs) of the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and the Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks (RSDFs).

According to the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998, RDAs have the statutory purpose to contribute to sustainable development as a key part of economic development and regeneration strategies. Core functions of RDAs include the responsibility for regeneration funding; the development of economic regional strategies and the co-

ordination of inward investments; the reclamation and assembly of sites, and the contribution to a vast number of policy areas such as crime, further education, health, transport and land-use. According to the Regional Development Agencies Act, RDAs are expected to develop an integrated approach to regional economic issues by bringing together mutually reinforcing economic social and environmental objectives. In pursuing sustainable development, a key element is the development of a culture of sustainability appraisals; RDAs policies, programmes and projects are required to be based on the assessment of their impact on society, economy and environment and on high degree of participation of those affected. In the establishment of the RDAs, the contribution to sustainable development has been articulated through issues of physical built environment; integrating environmental, economic and social objectives in regeneration projects will promote bringing existing sites back to use, seeking new use for redundant building, promoting quality of design, integrating regeneration and economic development with transport and land use planning. In this context, the quality of the natural and built environment are seen as potential resource for inward investment, tourism and high value employment. A central argument in the policy guideline looking at the contribution of the RDAs to sustainable development is that while poor economic performance has led to environmental degradation, a growing economy will create the resources for environmental improvements (DETR, 1997; 1998).

> Underperformance in an economy risks putting a greater pressure on the environment: firms are reluctant to invest in plant and technology to reduce or eliminate pollution; business failures increase the amount of land falling derelict or subject to degradation; and the temptation to use up our "capital" resources (such as land and other natural resources), rather then employing more sensitive and sustainable forms of development, can become overwhelming. (DETR, 1997a: 40)

> ... environmental improvements (such as energy efficiency and better environmental management and reduction in the waste of raw materials and water etc.) can bring businesses significant efficiency gain. There can also be direct job creation in environmental industries. And an enhanced local environment can contribute to economic development and employment opportunities through encouraging tourism and inward investment. (DETR, 1998: par.17)

While the DETR (1997a; 1998) guidelines have provided the generic setting for defining the RDAs contribution to sustainable development, it is in the Regional Economic Strategies that the regional definition of sustainable development has been identified. Benneworth et al. (2001), in a study on the role of RDAs in promoting sustainable development as regional theme, observe that the RESs have produced a quite strong convergence around the definition of sustainable development rather then express regional

differences. This observation is based on a confrontation between initial draft strategies and final RESs; each of the regional strategies in its final draft has provided a quite similar definition of regional sustainability. As Benneworth et al. point out:

> In most of the strategies, a very similar diagram appeared – this suggested either that economic development drove social inclusion which in turn drove environmental protection, or that the simultaneous pursuit of all three would lead to sustainable development.... Thus there was very little distinctiveness in any of the strategies about the regions' own sustainability requirements, beyond RDAs aspiring to the pursuit of green practices. (Benneworth et al, 2001: 22)

In addition, the same study points out that sustainable development, far from representing an objective on its own, seems to be the context or the operating principle. This means that there is a lack of content on what represents sustainability and which kind of actions are needed to move towards it. According to Benneworth et al. (2001), the reasons beyond the similarity among RESs can be found in the difficulty of negotiating a definition of sustainable development that would bring together different regional partners as well as the precise central government guidance on sustainable development that might have limited the regional debate to the four national strategy principles (section 5.2.1). The similarity between the regional strategies, with respect to sustainable development, highlights a weakness in the conceptualisation of sustainable development as a regional strategic objective. However, RESs are strategic documents that have to be seen in relation to another important regional document, the Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks (RSDFs).

RSDFs are now required in each region with the aim to set out a regional vision for sustainable development, and the region's contribution to the achievement of goals established at the national level. Regional frameworks have developed involving a wide range of stakeholders to cover the broad range of issues that are relevant to the pursuit of sustainable development, considering that RDAs strategies and RPG were not designed to fulfil this role even representing key agencies. The frameworks should be broadly owned and endorsed by regional chambers; however since there has been a much more informal process in the definition of the RSDFs, different institutions have been involved in the development of the RSDFs. The RSDFs are expected to indicate links between regional activities and initiatives contributing to sustainable development; to identity challenges and conflicts helping to inform decision-making; to influence and guide other policies and processes; to address the four national objectives covering social, environmental, resource use and economic issues; and to develop measures of progress and monitoring (DETR, 2000a). Overall, RSDFs seem to complement the limited debate on sustainable

development of the RESs and eventually to represent a sort of accountability over the work of the RDAs; for example, some of the RSDFs draw upon the objectives of their relative RESs making explicit what it is required in order to achieve the RESs objectives in a sustainable way (Benneworth et al, 2001).

At regional scale, the statutory purpose of RDAs of promoting sustainable development, the sustainability appraisal of RPG and the preparation of Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks offer a positive opportunity for bringing sustainable development into a number of policy areas. However, among these bodies there is a lack of capacity to integrate the initiatives and to provide the necessary political leadership, as a study of the UK Roundtable on the regional frameworks points out.

> Sustainable development is a very broad concept, which involves bringing together many different issues and stakeholders. It is a process as much as a set of solutions, and depends on broadly based participation and consultation and debate leading to wide consensus on the right way to resolve issue and take action forward. It is thus essentially political idea. For all the new activity in the English regions they still lack this essential element of political leadership...no one body and no one political group is in the position to pull matters together and to take the leadership and responsibility for making (sustainable development) the key unifying concept at regional level. (UK Roundtable, 2000: 2)

The responsibility and leadership for regional sustainability remain unsolved specially because there is no requirement for any of the public sector bodies to act upon the Frameworks; at the end the effectiveness of the RSDFs seems to depend on the willingness of the Regional Chambers to hold the work of the RDAs accountable.

5.2.3 The local level: Local Agenda 21 and Community Planning

The key role of LA21 in delivering sustainable development at the local level has recently been emphasised by the reform of local government. The White Paper "Modern Local Government" (1998a) has set out a central role for local authorities in the leadership of their communities through the introduction of community planning to develop a comprehensive community strategy.

The subsequent Local Government Bill (1999) placed a duty on local authorities in England and Wales to promote the well-being of their areas with regard to the achievement of sustainable development.

> Every local authority is to have power to do anything which they consider is likely to achieve any one or more of the following objects- (a) the promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of their area, (b) the promotion or improvement of the social well-being of their area, and (c) the promotion or improvement of the environmental well-being of their area.... In

determining whether or how to exercise the power ... a local authority must have regard to the effect, which the proposed exercise of the power would have on the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom. (Local Government Bill, 1999: section 1)

In developing their strategies, local authorities and their partners should have regard to the Government's sustainable development strategy, which provides a national framework for integrating economic, social and environmental concerns, and the work at a regional level on Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks. (DETR, 2000c:16)

The development of community planning has been introduced to bring together local initiatives such as LA21, New Commitment to Regeneration, local transport plans, crime and disorder strategies, Health Improvement Plans and local environment strategies, and produce a comprehensive strategy for local areas. The community strategies are meant to allow local communities to articulate their aspirations, needs and priorities; to coordinate the actions of the council, of the voluntary, community and private sector organisations; and to shape the present and future activities of those organisations to meet local needs (Burgess et al, 2001). Local strategies have to include both long-term vision of the area and a short-term prioritisation of the goals that will contribute to the long-term objectives; the strategies have to demonstrate a shared commitment among the relevant partners and arrangements for monitoring and review.

At the local level, the initiatives introduced by the modernisation of local government (community planning) and those related to local responsibility for sustainable development (LA21) have common characteristics. The key role of local authorities as community leaders is the promotion of social, economic and environmental well-being, the involvement of local people and organisations, the development of a community vision for the local area, and the development and delivery of services for the well-being of the area and its community. In promoting well-being for their areas, local authorities should build on what has been achieved through LA21 and use existing LA21 partnerships for the process of producing a Community Strategy. The development and implementation of Communities Strategies is one of the duties of the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) together with the Neighbourhood Renewal programme. LSPs have been established with the specific purpose of rationalising the work of local partnerships, plans and programmes by bringing a range of local players in a single body aligned with local authorities boundaries. However, given the recent establishment of LSPs, it is uncertain how local plans, such as LA21 initiatives, will develop in relation to the work of this new local body. Policy guidelines on LSPs emphasise the potential for different initiatives to support each

other as the local partnership will provide the main local forum for decision-making (DETR, 2001c).

The other initiative linked to sustainable development is Best Value set out in the Local Government Act (1998) as the duty to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the way in which local government exercises its functions. Authorities are required to undertake performance review and publish a Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP). The implementation of community planning requires mainstreaming the work done on LA21 and other local plans bringing *"local sustainability into the heart of local authorities corporate planning"* (DETR/LGA, 2000:2).

This requirement is the subject of a Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI1) of local authorities' corporate performance on sustainable development.

> *...the Government believes that BVPI1 represents a good starting place for assessment of the level of local authorities contribution to sustainable development. It will consider, with the relevant interests, the potential for PIs in future years which better reflect the quality of authorities' work/performance on sustainable development (Audit Commission, 1999: 4)*

Local and regional government are undertaking a process of innovation with a great emphasis on mainstreaming sustainable development into policy formulation and implementation. The reform of local government has introduced interlinked responsibilities for local authorities such as the duty to promote the well-being of their areas and to secure Best Value in the provision of services. Both initiatives have implications for sustainable development and LA21. Guidance on integrating sustainable development into Best Value and community planning has been developed by LGA/IDeA. However, there is a risk that modern local government initiatives can marginalise or subordinate LA21, with respect to some of the issues raised by the pilot authorities; for example, the need to clarify the links and relationships between LA21, well-being, community planning and Best Value (DETR/LGA, 2000).

5.3 Regeneration and sustainability in London

As for the English regions, London has recently seen the establishment of a new agency, the London Development Agency (LDA), with responsibility for economic development and regeneration; business efficiency and competitiveness, employment and skill development; and sustainable development. The statutory purposes of the LDA derive from the same RDA Act (1998) that established the other Regional Development Agencies

with the difference that the LDA is connected with the establishment of a new government structure for London, the Greater London Authority (GLA). Under the GLA Act (1999), the elected Mayor and Assembly are responsible for a number of city-wide strategic issues such as transport, planning, economic development, environment, policing, fire and emergency planning, culture and health; the Transport for London (TfL) and the London Development Agency (LDA) have been set up to support the strategic work of the GLA respectively on transport and economic development and regeneration. In contrast from the other RDAS, the LDA is a Mayoral agency; the Mayor, rather then the Minister for the Region, is responsible for approving the LDA economic strategy and it is scrutinised by elected members of the Assembly creating an important element of democratic accountability. As with the other RDAs, the responsibility of the LDA for economic development and regeneration seems to be limited by a number of crucial factors. The low level of funding, the lack of responsibility over key policy areas such as housing and transport, and the complete reliance on government funding, are among the elements that critically limit its effectiveness. With respect to regeneration, the LDA is responsible for the Single Regeneration Budget but does not have control over the European Structural Funds and the New Deal that remain the responsibility of the Government Office for London (GOL). In addition the new key institutions of the Learning and Skill Councils (LSCs) and the Small Business Service (SBS) remain under the control of central government (Syrett and Baldock, 2001).

The establishment of the GLA has aimed at addressing the complex governance challenge that London poses while ensuring democratic accountability and a coordinated and unified approach to the delivery of policies. In fact, the Mayor has the responsibility for setting up eight city-wide strategies; economic development, transport, spatial development, cultural, noise, air quality, waste management and biodiversity. The Mayoral strategies have to be consistent among themselves and with respect to the three cross-cutting themes of health, equal opportunities and sustainable development. Overall, with the GLA, there is the attempt to produce a strategic vision for London that encompasses key themes such as those represented by the eight strategies and to address the complex challenge of governance that London poses. In fact, given its multiplicity of roles, London presents difficulties in reconciling its international role with the needs of its most deprived neighbourhoods; the needs of London as global city with the need of those living and working in London. The ability of the GLA to deliver a comprehensive governance of

London has to be seen in the context of its relationship with the central government and with the local authorities; these are different tiers of government that continue to hold specific responsibilities, such as those of planning control for local authorities of those of regeneration funding for the GOL, and their ability to work together needs time to be assessed. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that providing a strategic vision for London requires better agency coordination, policy integration and political accountability (Syrett and Baldock, 2001). These represent long-term challenges on which the effectiveness of the present institutional arrangements will be tested.

The complexity and diversity of issues that London raises needs a unified approach but at the same time it requires flexibility in order to address the challenges of a fast changing city. The LDA has the role of providing London with an economic strategy that reconciles the economic development requirements of London with those of its local communities. Regeneration and sustainable development are among the strategic objectives of the LDA (2001) economic development strategy "Success Through Diversity" the LDA economic development strategy sets out an agenda articulated around its statutory objectives of (1) economic growth, (2) knowledge and learning, (3) diversity inclusion and renewal, and (4) sustainable development (LDA, 2001). These four themes are further developed to generate a Charter for London (table 5.2) that highlights the objectives that need to be addressed in order to deliver on the strategic themes as well as the actions to achieve them.

The LDA strategy tries to address the complex challenge that the economic governance of London poses by recognizing its multiplicity of roles as world and European business center, and as a collection of local economies and communities. However, it appears that while the economic growth agenda is articulated around issues of investments and infrastructures that can promote London's competitiveness, the challenge of regenerating deprived areas within London seems more problematic. A potential strength is represented by the LDA responsibility for London' Single Budget and consequently by the opportunity to allocate this regeneration budget on a London-wide scale.

At the same time, the LDA strategy seems to recognize its limited role especially with respect to the Neighborhood Renewal Strategy and its delivery mechanism of the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). In this respect, the LDA anticipates its involvement in area-based regeneration in conjunction with the LSPs. In addition considering that the new regeneration funding streams, the New Deal for Communities and the Neighborhood Renewal Fund remain under the Government Office for London (GOL) control, the LDA

has to coordinate its interventions with those of the new funding regime. From this perspective and considering that other key agencies, such as the LSCs and the SBSs, remain under the central government control, the potential contribution of the LDA to coordinate regeneration initiatives is considerably restricted.

	THE CHARTER FOR LONDON
Economic growth *Supporting London's economic growth, both as a world business centre and as a balanced regional economy*	‣ Developing London's role as a world business centre and European business capital with multicultural diversity as one of its major strengths ‣ Ensuring London continues to support a broad range of economic activity ‣ Encouraging competitiveness, creativity and enterprise, particularly amongst small and medium sized enterprises ‣ Modernising London's infrastructure ‣ Creating new investment and land use opportunities for economic growth ‣ Building on London's position as a world leader in the application of information and communications technologies ‣ Promoting and supporting the development of the social economy
Knowledge and Learning *Developing London as a city of knowledge and learning in order to fulfill the potential of its people and its businesses*	‣ Working to improve achievement and standards in school age education ‣ Working with the further education and training sector to increase skill and qualification levels throughout the population ‣ Increasing knowledge transfer and innovation in business ‣ Promoting London's universities and higher education institutions as one of its key global strengths
Diversity, inclusion and renewal *Working to support London's continuing renewal as a vibrant and inclusive city, acknowledging the ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity of London's people as an asset*	‣ Celebrating diversity, building equal opportunities for all and promoting good equalities practices to produce long term business benefits ‣ Promoting social inclusion and renewal amongst all London's communities ‣ Working to increase the employment rate in London's most disadvantaged ‣ communities
Sustainable development *Ensuring that London's growth respects the need for social progress, environmental protection and conservation of scarce resources*	‣ Ensuring that the growth promoted in London is sustainable ‣ Working to achieve an urban renaissance in London ‣ Developing an environmental business sector and promoting green business practices ‣ Promoting Londoners' health ‣ Improving community safety in London

Table 5.2 The Charter for London, source LDA (2001)

With regard to sustainable development, the LDA strategy contains a commitment towards sustainable economic development. In line with the Guidance to the RDAs, the LDA is committed to the sustainability appraisal of the strategy that will include an estimate of the contribution that it can be made towards the climate change target of the Mayor's State of London paper and potential approaches to measuring the environmental impact of economic growth. In the LDA strategy, there is a formal commitment to encourage an efficient use of natural resources as well as the promotion of biodiversity protection. While these kinds of commitment appear nonspecific, because they lack further explanations of the actions that the LDA will take to achieve them, the strategy is more explicit on its contribution to the urban renaissance. In particular the LDA powers to compulsorily purchase land, and its development team inherited from English Partnerships, can work to deliver a better urban environment. The quality of the built and natural environment is considered a priority to retain world-class organizations, visitors and international events as well as a key driver to improve the quality of life of those living and working in London. With respect to the regeneration of deprived communities, investment for a better urban environment should be directed towards areas damaged by long-term disinvestments and neglect. An important element is represented by the commitment to protect employment-based land uses, as part of the Spatial Development Strategy, as the pressure for land-use changes can generate problematic imbalances. Finally under the sustainable development chapter, the strategy recognizes a role to the environmental sectors as new driving economic sectors able to generate new and diverse employment opportunities.

With the establishment of the GLA and the LDA, lobbying activities have intensified to influence the contents of the Mayoral city-wide strategies sometime producing different proposals. An alternative document to the LDA strategy, "Making London Work" (Hutchinson and de Zylva, 2001) produced by the Sustainable GLA coalition, represents an interesting attempt to generate a debate around the alternative kinds of economic development that London can pursue. The Sustainable GLA Coalition is a coalition of environmental organisations aimed at lobbying the GLA in the definition of the Mayoral strategies in order to promote the sustainability agenda.

The central point of the report is the idea of adopting an environmental approach to economic development in order to demonstrate its ability to create economic and social advantages. The report runs through six themes of urban regeneration, transport, energy, waste, eco-technologies and industries, and biodiversity to show the benefits that can be

achieved through an environmental approach. It also includes a set of recommendations (table 5.3) for the LDA that summarise the report's key proposals.

Making London Work	Report Recommendations The LDA should explore and champion:
	Minimum standard for inward investment to ensure that business assist London's social and environmental goals
	Integration of combined economic, social and environmental goals in regeneration initiatives
	London as centre of excellence for manufacturing, servicing and supplying new products that address social and environmental goals
	Initiating intermediate labour markets to prepare people for employment in new emerging businesses that London can benefit from
	London as a market for its own products and the development of a "made in London" marque for use of London made products specially those using London's rich seam of waste resources
	The smooth conversion of old manufacturing bases to meet the need of new industries (e.g. Ford Dugenham to produce low emission, low impact vehicles) as well as for new homes
	Encouraging public bodies and businesses to introduce purchasing policies prioritising environmental responsibility and local supply
	Working with Tfl to improve public transport, cycling and walking facilities in a way to provide new jobs and improve accessibility to employment opportunities
	Forging linkages with the Mayor's Waste management Strategy to maximise businesses opportunities to increase recycling rates, redesigning material flows and creating markets for recycled products
	Linking with the Energy Strategy to ensure energy saving measures and programmes provide employment opportunities, to investigate new market for renewable energy products such as solar PV including introducing requirements for PV investment
	Working with local authorities and other organisations to set up urban management partnerships to improve and maintain the urban fabric
	Carrying out research and appraisal of existing environmental technologies and related activities and identify the potential for further development. Assess the support needs for this sector
	Introduction of a presumption against greenfield development to encourage the reuse of the existing built environment and a tax regime with encourages repair and refurbishment of existing buildings
	Additional regeneration funds from central Government to reclaim, decontaminate and improve degraded land to be reused for employment and housing
	Identify locations for housing and other development that contribute to the creation of sustainable compact communities.

Table 5.3 Recommendations to the LDA, source Hutchinson and de Zylva (2001)

The importance of the documents lays in its attempt to generate an economic development proposal for London that is alternative to that of the LDA on economic development and therefore can bring about a debate on the future choices for London. At the same time, it represents a clear example of what is required to make London a more sustainable city and sets a counterpart to the definitions of the LDA and the Spatial Development Strategy of 'sustainable economic development' and 'sustainable world city'.

5.4 Regeneration: policies and strategies for the Lee Valley

The six London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Newham, Haringey, Waltham Forest and Enfield have been identified as one sub-region, the East London and Lee Valley (ELLV), by the Government Office for London in proposals for economic regeneration of key industrial areas. The six London Boroughs that make up the ELLV have experienced high reduction of industrial jobs between 1984 and 1991 (approx. 26,000). High unemployment and urban deprivation are among the major problems of the area beside low educational attainment, derelict land, weak transverse transport linkages and continuing decline of manufacturing.

In 1994 the European Commission approved the Objective 2 area (industrial areas in decline) 1994-1996 Single Programming Document (SPD) for East London and the Lee Valley. The strategy aimed to *"mobilise the area's potential assets of land, location, labour force, business and enterprise and environment... to the advantage of the region, its residents and London as a whole "*(GOL, 1994, p.16). The broad partnership supporting the strategy included the six local authorities, three TECs, the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, three City Challenge Companies, two Business Leadership Teams, two London Local Authority Associations, the voluntary and the further education sectors.

In 1997 the new SPD strategy for the period 1997-99 re-proposes as a central focus the need to strengthen the potential for employment creation in the area. The priorities of the new strategy included the growth and competitiveness of SMEs, development of business opportunity areas, technology transfer and community economic development. Achieving sustainable growth at the local level and involving people in achieving sustainable development goals in their neighbourhoods are part of the innovations of the new SPD strategy, linked to the pathway model introduced under the Priority 4 Community Economic Development; 14 pathways were developed to target the 35% most

disadvantaged in the Objective 2 area, in order to ensure an inclusive process in the formulation and promotion of community economic activities. Key factors for the development of the pathway model are: the necessity of a strategic approach to the need of the most disadvantaged in the labour market; the need to support bottom-up development; the lack of community accountability; the absence of community groups; the recognition of the importance of capacity building (LVSTC, 1997). The promotion of local economic initiatives, in the form of self-employment, co-operatives or community business/enterprise, was identified as fundamental to the economic development of the most deprived communities. Locally generated wealth, employment opportunities and investments were defined as key factors in achieving sustainable growth at a local level; in addition, community environmental regeneration (one of the strategic themes within community economic development) was identified as essential in involving local people in achieving sustainable development goals in their neighbourhoods (GOL, 1997).

The new SPD, for the period 2000-2006, presents several elements of continuity with its predecessor SPD. Its central vision focuses on addressing " *the imbalance in London's economy by tackling barriers to economic opportunity in key areas suffering industrial decline, urban deprivation, low economic activity and social exclusion so that new, sustainable opportunities are open to all people living and working in the Objective 2 area*" (GOL, 2000:5). Following on the previous document, the SPD sets out four priorities of community economic development; business development and competitiveness; infrastructure, premises and environment; and technical assistance. These priorities and the measures connected to them are also meant to be consistent with four horizontal cross-cutting themes of equal opportunities; supporting innovation; sustainable development; and ensuring local benefit for the residents of the Objective 2 area.

With the designation of the Objective 2 status and the development of the relative strategic documents, the Lee Valley has seen the development of several regeneration partnerships responsible for the delivery of the regeneration programmes. Partnerships can be defined as area-based (or vertical) partnerships if they have a specific geographic focus and sectorial (or horizontal) when they concentrate on a theme, a sector or an issue (ALG, 1998). In the Lee Valley, two regeneration partnerships, developed around funding bids, have been working throughout the whole area. In 1993 a strategic level partnership for the area, the London Lee Valley Partnership (LLVP), was set up *"to develop a modernised, competitive, diverse and expanding economy"* (LLVP, 1997, p.14) that would bring

prosperity to its business sector, new opportunities to its workforce and fostering a positive image of the region. London Lee Valley Partnership was set up as an economic development partnership to make use of a wide range of resources (private and public sectors) to maximise the potential for economic regeneration in the area. Its key aims included: to improve business competitiveness; to attract inward investment and sustain high quality jobs; to improve transport to - and within - the Lee Valley; to protect and improve the natural environment; to develop arts, culture, tourism and leisure; and to ensure that local people share in the benefits of development (LLVP, 1997). Recently the LLVP has changed its status to become a limited company still under the control of local authorities but with increased independent activity. In 1997, a sectoral (or horizontal) partnership was developed across the Objective 2 area; Pathways Committees were established to raise awareness of the role of the Pathways (under the Community Economic Development – Priority 4), to improve the capacity of organisations to participate in the Objective2 Programme and to devise scoring and selection mechanisms. To ensure consistency in the work of all the 14 Pathways, a Pathways Partnership was organised with two representative members of each Pathway. In 1998, the Pathways Partnership Group (PPG) became an independent entity; its aims included to exchange information, share best practice and address issues rising across the Pathways.

In addition to the LLVP and the PPG, several partnerships were set up in the Lee Valley especially as SRB partnerships (that are mainly local area-based partnerships) and educational/training sector partnerships (sectoral). These partnerships have different breadth; from neighbourhood level (e.g. the SRB partnership West Green Learning Neighbourhood that covers one ward), to council level (e.g. Waltham Forest Education Business Partnership), to broader area coverage. The Upper Lee Valley Partnership (ULVP) was set up in 1995 by the Borough of Enfield, Haringey Council and the North London TEC around SRB funding bids. The ULVP primary objectives include promoting business development and inward investment; increasing access to employment and training for local people; and improving the infrastructure and the environment of the Upper Lee Valley. Another example of partnership covering more then one borough, is North London Leadership (NLL); led by North London TEC, NLL brings together four local authorities and the North London Chamber of Commerce. However, a study conducted by the Centre for Enterprise and Economic Development Research (CEEDR) in 1999 gives an idea of the extent of partnerships in the area; it reported 36 partnerships

involved in economic regeneration in North London. The majority of them are engaged in projects related to training/education and business support; a minority deals with social regeneration, capacity building, physical infrastructure and environmental activities. However, recent changes in the institutional arrangements and the introduction of the LSPs, as a central mechanism to the delivery of the Neighbourhood Renewal agenda, are going to produce significant effects in the structure of the regeneration partnerships.

Given that the majority of the local partnerships have been engaged in economic regeneration projects, the sustainable development agenda is generally expressed in terms of physical improvements. Terms such as 'environmental quality' and 'environmental sustainability' are largely found in local economic regeneration documents, in relation to the limitations that congestion, image and accessibility to facilities pose to the ability to attract inward investment. Improvements of the physical environment such as promoting *"the visual attractiveness of undeveloped sites.... for private sector investments"* (NLL, 1998: 12) are considered vital contributions to economic strategies. A broader approach considers that *"the quality of the environment exerts an important influence over issues for commercial investments ...... environmental projects must be assessed in relation to their contribution to the regeneration of the local economy, but can also contribute to the development of higher environmental standards"* (Haringey Council, 1999a: 17-18). Definitions of 'environmental quality' are used to describe projects leading to upgrades and improvements *"to key train stations, enhancements to high street and shops and the establishment of a network of cycle routes across the area"* (ULVP, 1998:10). 'Environmental sustainability' in the form of physical environmental improvements is also used to address transport and mobility issues such as traffic, pollution, pedestrian and cyclists priorities, safety and accessibility. The SRB Round 5 *Communities, Connections and Co-ordination: a new Future for Finsbury Park*, led by local authorities, identifying improvements to 'environmental sustainability' as *"establishing a flagship public transport interchange, ...reducing traffic and pollution, ...creating safe, accessible and attractive links...to overcome the impacts of roads and rails"* (Bid for the SRB Round 5, 1999, p.2). In this projects, housing, transport and open spaces improvements are related to the promotion of a sustainable regeneration. In contrast, the SRB Round 5 *East London and Lee Valley Pathways Development Project* led by the London Voluntary Sector Training Consortium (LVSTC) reflects the interests of the voluntary and community sectors of empowerment and participation in the regeneration process. In this bid,

delivering community-led economic development activities, addressing environmental issues (through Local Agenda 21) and strengthening cross sector partnerships in order to promote social inclusion are the factors that contribute to the promotion of sustainable regeneration.

The recent changes in London' institutional arrangement have had an effect on the sub regional level of regeneration policy. The definition of the five LSCs has redesigned the importance of London sub-regions creating differences in power, such as the powerful Thames Gateway region, and invariably generating a redefinition of the regeneration partnerships. Under the LSCs boundaries the Lee Valley is split into the London North LSC, which comprises the boroughs of Enfield, Barnet, Waltham Forest and Haringey, and the London East LSC that covers the Thames Gateway area and the southern boroughs of the Lee Valley. This means that the upper part of the Lee Valley is increasingly identified as one sub-region while its southern part is more and more connected with the regeneration agenda of the Thames Gateway region creating pressures on regional partnerships such as the London Lee Valley Partnership to work closely with the Thames Gateway partnerships.

In the draft Economic Development Strategy produced by the LDA (2000), the Upper Lee Valley is identified as the sub-regional scale of the Lee corridor at which regeneration priorities should be planned and addressed. In the LDA final strategy (2001), the Upper Lee Valley is presented as an area of major employment opportunities that can preserve London's manufacturing economy while creating local employment. The LDA strategy considerations about the Lee Valley focus on the development of the infrastructures that are necessary to support the regeneration of the region. The strategy recognizes that new projects have been developed in the area, such as Innova Park and Tottenham Hale, but still emphasizes the importance of improving the accessibility to the development sites of the Upper Lee Valley. Although, the Lee Valley has been targeted by years of regeneration initiatives, the LDA strategy seems to use a recurring expression by pointing out that "*Its competitiveness is undermined, though, by limited access and deep-rooted problems linked to poor environment and rundown estates*"(LDA, 2001:par.15).

5.5 Conclusion

Since its formal recognition in the DETR Guidance on Round four of the Single Regeneration Budget (1997), promoting sustainable regeneration has become one of the requirements of regeneration bids. Subsequently, the promotion of sustainable

development has become part of the majority of the urban policy documents from the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (1998) to the White Paper "Our Towns and Cities: the Future - Delivering an Urban Renaissance" (DETR, 2000d) and the modernising agenda for local government (1998a). However, while the reference to sustainable development has spread throughout the regeneration agenda, it is necessary to acknowledge that it remains a low priority objective. A clear example is represented by the Regional Economic Strategies, recently endorsed by the RDAs, that have produced a weak interpretation of regional sustainability constrained by the national guidelines on sustainable development and by the difficulty of negotiating conflicting issues, such as those potentially raised by the notion of sustainable development, beyond the agreement upon a generic definition (section 5.2.2).

The national strategy of sustainable development has contributed to reduce the debate around sustainability by setting a specific interpretation of sustainable development in terms of a better quality of life for everyone that can be achieved by pursuing, at the same time, the four objectives of social progress, protection of the environment, prudent use of natural resources, and high and stable economic growth (section 5.2.1). The requirement for other strategic documents to comply with the national definition of sustainable development has limited the debate for a definition or interpretation of the issues raised by the notion of sustainable development. For example, in the case of the RESs, this has left little space for debate among the regional partners, despite the fact that there is a high degree of conflict presented by some issues (Benneworth et al, 2001).

In addition to the issue of the definition of sustainable development there are two other key elements that affect the significance of sustainable development as a strategic element: the lack of content and the lack of responsibility and leadership. Benneworth et al. (2001) point out that in the RESs, sustainable development far from representing a specific policy objective is more an operating principle or a context, because of the lack of any specific actions that can explain how sustainable development is going to be pursued. This remark can be extended to several policy documents where the promotion or contribution to sustainable development is required but, at the same time, it is never spelt out what actions are needed to achieve it. Sustainable development is therefore a sort of abstract objective that often stands for achieving a number of different things. This is a main policy weakness that contributes to making sustainable development about nothing and everything, but most of all indistinguishable from other policy objectives.

With respect to the responsibility for sustainable development, the prospect for the Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks to hold the RDAs accountable is not a formal requirement raising some doubts about the effectiveness of the RSDFs. In addition, the lack of democratically elected bodies, at the regional level, does not provide the needed leadership that decisions about regional sustainability would require (UK Roundtable, 2000). The difference seems to be offered by those regional arrangements where the Regional Chambers have endorsed the RSDFs giving them the legitimacy and the knowledge for decision-making (Benneworth et al, 2001). However, given the relatively recent establishment of the RDAs, and of the development of the RESs and RSDFs, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of the new regional institutional arrangements and their strategic documents. At the same time, it is clear that sustainable development is not a high priority for the RDAs as the lack of regional expression of sustainability have demonstrated. The accountability of the RDAs strategies will depend on the relation between the RSDFs and the Regional Chambers.

Another key relationship will be between the RSDFs and the Community Planning strategies that local authorities are developing. The extent to which Local plans will endorse the principles of the RSDFs is going to be a measure of the effectiveness of regional documents. The development of Community Planning has posed some doubts about its compatibility with Local Agenda 21 plans and the possible risk that they pose in weakening the LA21 process. In particular the presence of two objectives of the promotion of local well-being, as economic, social and environmental well-being, and the consideration on the achievement of sustainable development can either strengthen the significance of the sustainability as a decision-making criteria or flatten its importance behind the concept of local well-being.

Finally at the national level, the establishment of DEFRA as the new department with responsibility for sustainable development together with environment, food and rural affairs is another recent change. In this respect, it is difficult to judge its capacity to promote sustainable development across different sectors. Moving sustainable development from the DETR, to the ODPM, and now to this new department can be considered as a separation of the environmental agenda from key urban issues such as transport, planning and regeneration making sustainable development less of an urban issue. However, it is also possible that by being in a department that has a clear environmental direction, sustainable development can become more distinguishable, being

less about broad aspirations such as a better quality of life and more about concrete issues of the environmental and social impacts of economic choices of development and regeneration.

In the Lee Valley, the strategic guidelines set out by the three SPDs together with the government regeneration programmes have targeted the area in the last decade identifying main areas of concern. The issues of poor accessibility, rundown estates and high levels of unemployment are recurring problems in the Lee Valley. Within the SPDs, it is possible to identify key themes that represent leading policy discourses that have circumscribed regeneration to the three main themes of community economic development, business support and innovation and infrastructure development. Within these themes the notion of sustainable development has gradually appeared, although unfortunately generating a lot of ambiguity and vagueness around its meaning. Since the SPD for the period 1997- 99, sustainable development has been introduced as a cross-cutting topic generating the usual vague expressions of 'sustainable growth' and 'sustainable employment opportunities'. The London Development Agency strategy and the new SPD provide guidelines for regeneration, however, sustainable development is clearly a marginal theme, poorly debated and expressed in a confused manner. However, the need for generating a debate on the contribution of sustainable development to regeneration exists and the report "Making London Work" (Hutchinson and de Zylva, 2001) is an important example of how that debate is taking place, albeit in a relatively low profile manner.

Chapter six

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE ACTORS' INTERPRETATION

> *"And there is a real failure to fill that knowledge gap, that understanding gap...And we don't always understand the very different places that other people are coming from, different understandings. And I mean as far as I can make out there are very, very few people working on regeneration and economic development who have any education or understanding of sustainable development. And why should they? Because they don't see it as a part of their agenda... "* (P15: 188-219).

6.1 Introduction

One of the arguments associated with the notion of sustainable development is the lack of any unanimous definition. While this can be associated with the number of interconnected themes that constitute the notion of sustainable development and therefore to the number of disciplines' perspectives involved: a key reason is to be found in the political nature of these themes. In fact, it is important to acknowledge that, given the differences in ideologies and beliefs, many agendas for sustainable development can exist and that each of them reflects different positions on the role of the environment and the desired direction of human development (section 2.2).

In line with this consideration, it is reasonable to expect that those involved in designing and implementing regeneration initiatives hold an array of different interpretations and definitions of sustainable development. In the theoretical context, the recognition of different positions around themes such as environment, futurity, equity, growth and participation (section 2.2) can be related to the appreciation in theorists that underlying differences in ideologies and beliefs may lead to different interpretations. In contrast, the interpretation of the term sustainable development given by the informants (table 4.2) has to be considered as the result of a set of interconnected aspects such as the role, activities and interests of the informant, along with the characteristics of the local context in which he/she is positioned (fig 2.5). The role that the informant plays with regard to the regeneration process is connected with the activities he/she might be involved in, the related interests and the relationships that such a role entails. In fact, it is through the interactions of these aspects that ideas are developed and reassessed in what Söderbaum identifies as 'ideological orientation' (section 2.4.2).

In this chapter, the work of Söderbaum (2000) is used to explore why the meanings of sustainable development, as outlined in chapter 2, are so different from those identified by the informants. The chapter aims at describing and explaining the actors' interpretations of the terms 'sustainable development', 'sustainability' and 'sustainable regeneration' and how their interpretations fit in the formulation of the arguments used by the key actors to address sustainability as a regeneration theme in their area of responsibility.

6.2 The actors' *meanings* of sustainable development

While theoretical debates on the meaning of the term sustainable development share either common definitions[2] of the term or a set of predefined themes[3], the range of meanings that have been attributed by the informants lack any collectively accepted definition. In fact, it is difficult to identify elements or themes that could be considered common to all the different interpretations of the term 'sustainable development'.

Some informants have referred to meanings belonging to the environmental discourse on the long-term management of resources and the implication that this has on the well being of future generations. However, the majority of the informants have discussed the term 'sustainable development' in relation to two main distinct themes: the capacity to stimulate lasting changes or the objective of delivering community based initiatives. The interpretation of sustainable development as lasting development seems to derive from a literal interpretation of the term sustainable as lasting or durable. In contrast, the concern for community relevant initiatives seems to be linked to existing discourses among urban policy about the need for community development, ownership of initiatives and participation.

The existence of a variety of interpretations of the term sustainable development has to be linked to the variety of perspectives from which different actors view and participate in the process of regeneration. In this sense, most instructive is the statement of one of the informants that makes a distinction between the interpretation of sustainable development that she used to refer to during her past occupation at an environmental organisation, and

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[2] Well-known definitions of the term sustainable development are those expressed by the Brundtland Commission (WCED, 1987) and in *Caring for the Earth* report (UNCI, 1991)

[3] The term sustainable development is often defined in relation to key themes or dimensions such as environmental protection, futurity, equity and participation. See Jacobs (1997).

the interpretation that her present role in a regeneration agency tends to suggest. As she affirms:

"...so when I was there, the term sustainable development was, was in the, you know, that Rio summit...was it all about use of resources and making sure that resources are there for our children, our children's children and all that kind of things...Then when I moved into regeneration there was another meaning I suddenly realised..." (P 12: 232-240).

This is a clear example of how the role of the actor, along with connected activities and interests, articulate and define the set of ideas and thoughts that he/she holds about a specific issue, in this case about sustainable development. In fact, although theories influence and inform debates and consequently the ideas that are developed by individuals, this process takes place in specific contexts where concepts are 'translated' according to the interests and the activities that the role of the actor implies. In this case, while working for an environmental organisation has implied a set of ideas, supposedly expressed through specific activities, about the importance of resource conservation, being part of a regeneration agency has involved the employment of different ideas associated with the term sustainable development. The change in the meaning of sustainable development can be explained by considering not only the differences in the objectives, interests and motives behind different organisations but also the context in which they operate. For example, the institutional arrangements that govern the regeneration process partly determine the content of the process of regeneration and therefore the ideas that are associated with regeneration. In fact, although recent policy development tends to favour a bottom up approach to the definition of regeneration initiatives, the identification of areas of interest such as employment, crime or education remain predefined. Elements such as the interests and the activities of organisations, the policy framework and the local socio-economic context contribute to the determination of pre-constructed set of ideas associated with regeneration. Thus, how different actors reflect about sustainable development has to be evaluated considering these existing ideas and the interactions between various contextual elements.

In addition, although informants have been interviewed because of the specific role they play in the regeneration process, it should be considered that people have a variety of roles and consequently their ideas might differ when considered from different role's viewpoint. For example, in one of the interviews, an informant clearly articulated an argument against green oriented initiatives while speaking as a representative of an ethnic community group:

"Everything that is being coming forward from them (the council) *is totally channelled like green, green, green, green, green, green, green... which is the environment.... But also if this is the only thing or initiative coming from the government towards the community and the community groups, then they've been narrow minded or so slimming down this channel pushing everybody towards the same focus, which it could be devastating"* (P1: 564-576)

However when asked to provide an example of a good initiative, he talks about a green project to reduce car pollution:

" I could think green on this level, if I want to go green, I have an idea. In fact I've tried to develop it, I've gone to the business centre as well to wanted to develop it. We're talking about car pollution, we're talking about mothers taking kids to school causing congestion and pollution...." (sic)(P1: 802-807)

The apparent contradiction between the critique towards green initiatives that are described as *"devastating"* because they are limited in scope, and the example of the green idea to reduce congestion and pollution can be explained by considering that different roles provide individuals with different viewpoints and therefore ideas. In the first part, the informant is talking as community group representative; in contrast, in the second part, he is describing his personal business idea that could be suggested by his professional role. And there are also cases where the individuality of the perspective from which arguments are analysed is even more explicit, as one of the informants says:

"But the whole idea of having a sustainable community...It's definitely a new field, and I suppose I'm speaking very much as a women that how something feels is very important, I think, for me whether I get involved or not" (P9: 722-726)

All the interpretations given by the informants are inevitably highly contextual in the sense that their understanding of the notion of sustainable development is driven by the specificity of their role in regeneration, of the activities they are involved in and the interests they pursue. In this sense, this results in a variety of rather discrete discourses.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT → RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND FUTURE GENERATION

SUSTAINABILITY AS LASTING OUTCOMES

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY
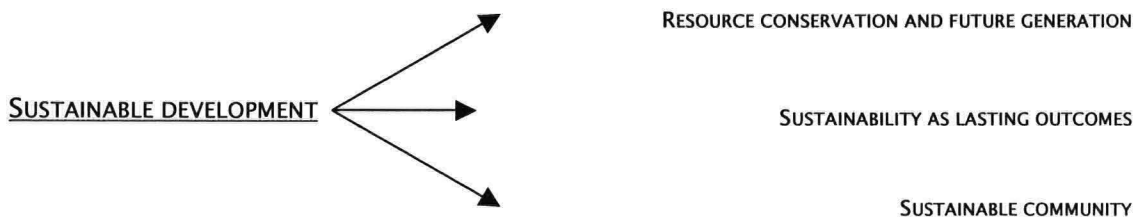
Fig 6.1 Actors' interpretation of sustainable development: main themes

However, the different meanings have been grouped in what can be defined as areas of commonality of ideas and images, that anyway contain radical differences: sustainable development as a concern for resource conservation and future generations, sustainability as a lasting outcome and the concept of sustainable communities are the main thematic areas into which the actors' interpretations have been divided (fig 6.1).

6.2.1 Resource conservation and future generations

The Brundtland definition of sustainable development[4], which is widely considered the original definition of the term, is not familiar to most of the research participants since only three informants refer to it. In particular, this kind of interpretation of sustainable development has been used in relation to the inter-linked ideas of the obligation towards future generations and the long-term management of natural resources. Sustainable development is thus defined around the theme of resource conservation as a moral commitment towards future generations. The definition of sustainable development as a form of development which takes into account the long term environmental and social impacts of meeting current needs, has been used only by informants who are members of environmental organisations and institutions and are therefore familiar with the wider environmental agenda.

However, due to the fact that regeneration has been traditionally concerned with issues of economic development and physical renewal, environmental groups remain in a marginal position with regard to regeneration policy making and delivy. This is also influenced by the fact that environmental groups are usually concerned with debating and raising awareness about the environmental or sustainable development agenda and in doing so they consider regeneration relevant to their work as well as planning, transport or economic development.

In this sense, regeneration is one of the many policy fields that need to be debated and influenced by environmental groups and consequently their interpretation of sustainable development remains firmly associated with the original definition of the term. In one of the interviews, the environmental argument for resource conservation is expressed using the concept of environmental capacity that finds its origin in the well-known argument

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[4] *"...development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*, WCED (1987) Brundtland Report

about limits to growth. The idea of recognising that there are physical limits to the capacity of the environment is used as a radical argument for promoting the idea of environmental efficiency as opposite to the current models of development based on the concept of economic efficiency. This meets the idea of social justice, on the ground that is not possible for the world population to consume as much as the people of western economies and therefore the moral obligation to reduce the ecological footprint of our cities.

The critique of current models of development has to be considered as an argument relevant to the wider urban policy; in fact, it is about changing the perception on underlying economic factors that guide development and regeneration and finding the space for alternative solutions. In relation to policy development, environmental groups aim to provide alternative solutions to the main concerns, support new ways of thinking, and make environmental perception of issues more tangible, especially in relation to typical regeneration concerns such as economic development and jobs creation. This is usually expressed through activities aimed at influencing the debate around specific policy fields and in consequence affecting the way in which certain strategies are going to be shaped. In this respect, sustainable development is also interpreted as integration. In particular, the concept of integration is used to describe approaches and decisions that take into account different aspects such as economic and environmental impacts. In this sense integration is about developing a new way of thinking that replace the current approach, which favours balance and consequently a process of trading off different aspects against each other.

In line with this way of thinking is the interpretation of the environmental argument through the notions of the 'green economy'. In fact, since regeneration is traditionally concerned with aspects of economic development, the term sustainable development has also been used to describe an alternative approach to economic development that fully consider the implications and advantages of environmental factors. In this sense, developing an environmental approach to economic development entails a number of different aspects ranging from the process by which individual businesses can become more environmentally responsible, to the possibilities offered by the market for environmental goods and services, to the way in which the whole economy functions. Such an interpretation of sustainable development is familiar to environmental organisations that have a predominately policy oriented activity and those that offer specific services such as environmental centres or consultancies. The former tend to be concerned with the wider

policy setting that a greener economy would require, the latter with providing information and support to individual business in order to develop a more environmentally friendly approach or to implement specific regulations.

Quite different is the way in which the resource conservation argument is made by local agencies that are specifically concerned with safeguarding local resources like open spaces. In this case, the interpretation of the environmental argument on the conservation of open spaces is specifically linked to the objective of protecting this resource for the use of future generations and it is discussed in relation to issues of strategic management. In particular, the term sustainable development, far from involving a critique of patterns of development, acquires its specific significance in relation to the way in which resources like open spaces are used. Sustainability is therefore often about balancing between the need for providing spaces for nature conservation and the development of human recreational activities.

However while the theme of resource management/conservation, and its relation to the well being of future generations, remains limited to the interpretations of the term sustainable development offered by members of environmental organisations and institutions, the concern for future generations (by itself) seems to represent a widespread idea. In fact, it appears in the discourses of other informants even if not clearly related to the concept of sustainable development. For example, in one interview the commitment to future generations is framed within the idea of working together toward a collective aim as opposed to the effect of individual actions. It seems that the use of an image such as helping and sustaining future generations is used to stress the value of working towards common goals. After a detailed description of the kind of resources his local community needs, the informant concludes by saying:

> *"And if you do have all this within a community, then you could jointly help the future generation rather then just say well, if I have money I do this, individual things and all those things, those really help because they say that united... we.... grow, divided we fall apart... Because if we are united in one goal then we can progress and then help the generation and sustain it too"*(P1 390-398).

In this case, the overall argument is clearly about the importance of sharing common goals in order to deliver community improvements. It also seems that the concept of 'future generation' is used as a powerful image of a collectively important target rather than to express a real present concern. The participation of community groups in local regeneration initiatives is generally linked to the desire to be part of the community by engaging in its development opportunities. In some cases, it is the concept of a 'sense of

community' that drives groups' interest in participating in regeneration; the idea of being part of a process that will 'rebuild' the social fabric of the community. However, it is interesting that, in the same interview, the idea of a future generation living in a better community is later expressed in relation to the commitment/requirement of improving environmental conditions.

"Fair enough we've got to save the environment. Fair enough we've got to save the earth. So that you have a future generation living in a very good community and so on and so forth"(P 1 564-571).

However, although the concern for future generations is expressed in relation to an environmental consideration, the way in which such consideration is raised is quite important. The overall argument made by the informant is a critique towards government support for green initiatives that are perceived as specific and limited. In this case, the key argument is about the variety of aims that community organisations have and the relevance of these aims to the needs of the community. Consequently for the informant, environmental issues even if important, cannot be relevant to every local group and green initiatives for their specificity tend to leave a number of issues unanswered.

Evidence of the issues that community groups face is the limited number of community led initiatives; current approaches to local regeneration are still perceived as top-down and imposed. In this sense, environmental initiatives can be considered in the same way since the definition of an environmental theme is a precondition to the initiative and the funding. As a consequence of the limited number of community led initiatives, community groups tend to perform a lobbying activity in order to integrate or influence the contents of currently funded projects. This kind of lobbying approach generates all sort of problems for community groups. For instance, the aspiration to be part of the community in terms of participating in local regeneration initiatives means that community groups sometimes tend to participate in initiatives even when these are not entirely relevant to the aims of the group. Such limited relevance can be either spatial, if projects are limited to specific localities, or thematic, as in the case of environmental topics for community groups concerned with issues such as health, the elderly or other locally relevant issues. As a result, community groups experience problems in involving members of the group in participating or supporting initiatives that are perceived as not relevant to them. In this sense, the informant has a clear interest in excluding environmental concerns from his agenda since it undermines the involvement and the participation of the members of his group and threatens group solidarity.

Consequently, the environmental argument of 'resource conservation and future generations well being' can mean different things when analysed considering the interests of different organisations. For example, the discussion has a clear policy focus in the case of environmental lobbying groups as opposed to the rather managerial arguments of environmental protection agencies. Finally, there are cases when the use of images like the 'future generations' is applied in a different context as in the case of community groups.

6.2.2 Sustainable development as lasting outcome

For almost a third of the research participants sustainable development is an expression used to indicate a state of enduring activity that can and should characterise projects or initiatives. Although definitions or examples might be quite different, the key underlying idea is that sustainability refers to a condition of continuity in the long term. As different informants have explained:

> "...talking about premises, to develop buildings, they would probably be sustainable because they would have tenant,...whatever, you know, will carry on" (P3 619-621).

> "They probably meant every project have somehow manage to continue..." (P9 720-721).

> " By sustainable development I see job creation and opportunities for employment being created that are actually going to be sustainable, that will continue to employ people, will continue to expand, will continue to..." (P5 438-442).

These definitions of sustainable development have in common the idea of a dynamic process that continues; this could refers to commercial buildings that are sustainable because of the tenancy process that ensures a continuity of financial income and use or to a development process by which job opportunities are created. In both cases the focus is on the type of function that ensures continuity considered through a particularly sectoral perspectives. So the process by which jobs are created and sustained is not discussed in relation to socio-economic or environmental conditions. It is sustainable in the sense that it keeps going; for example, buildings are sustainable if their commercial functions are maintained though time.

In some of the interpretations of sustainable development as lasting or durable development, the focus is on stressing the importance of promoting long term outcomes. A culture of long-term solutions and lasting changes has to be promoted as a substitute to a short term fix, especially with regard to the solution of long term problems as in the case of regeneration initiatives. This is central to the way in which government officers approach regeneration. The way in which long-term outcomes can be generated is debated in

managerial terms; examples are the focus on developing exit strategies or evaluating the ability of initiatives to continue in the long term as main conditions to their development. As these informants observe:

> *"There is no point in doing it unless, unless there is something sustainable about it (P24: 409-410).*
>
> *"So in a sense that is a de facto issue, is not something we would consider doing if you could actually see how it would continue and then there would certain point in making a long term change around certain issues" (P2: 28-32)*

Beside the development of exit strategies, another dominant idea about ensuring long term outcomes relates to the specific aspect of funding that represents a key element of regeneration initiatives. So, very often the concern for sustainability is expressed with regards to the issue that funding is limited and consequently, there is a limited value in supporting initiatives that are not likely to continue when the funding expires. Again, it is the mechanism by which an activity can continue, such as its financial resource, that is under evaluation rather then the impact of the activity itself or its relation to the wider context.

In this sense, sustainability seems to be used to express a strictly internal condition; initiatives that are able to continue in the long-term or to produce lasting effects are also identified as self-sustaining mainly with regard to their financial conditions. Therefore when initiatives that develop under a supportive regime such as a specific funding regime become financially independent and are able to maintain themselves and to keep performing a certain function, they are considered sustainable.

While these informants have expressed familiarity with the term sustainable development, their interpretations lack any reference to themes such as environment, futurity, equity and participation, which are key features of the notion of sustainable development as theoretically debated (sections 2.1 and 2.2). While the original definition of sustainable development[5] argues that a condition of lasting development, where lasting has inter-generational dimensions, can be achieved if existing limiting factors (such as environmental factors) are taken into account, this idea of lasting development seems to focus only on managerial and financial aspects to ensure continuity. In fact, in this interpretation of sustainability, both 'lasting' and 'development' are used to indicate something different. Lasting, long-term, durable does not have an inter-generational breadth as the lack of any reference to the well being of future generation might

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[5] Brundtland definition or similar definitions

demonstrate. Development is not used in the broad sense, as a process of socio-economic improvement but it refers to more specific initiatives as in the case of locally relevant economic development initiatives. These differences in the meanings of the terms 'lasting' and 'development' seem to be at the origin of the different use of the term sustainability or sustainable development. Apparently, it seems that sustainable development as a terminology has become diffuse but not the discourse behind it in terms of contents and therefore a literal interpretation of sustainable has become popular in some circles. As a consequence the issue about what makes development and regeneration sustainable from an ecological and social perspective seems to be missing among these actors.

Therefore, while this suggests that the informants are not familiar with the way in which sustainable development is theoretically debated, the policy framework in which they operate might have made them accustomed to the term, since sustainable development is a currently defined policy objective both in national policy guidelines and in local strategic documents. They are therefore obliged to recognise it and to be able to be seen delivering something that qualifies as sustainability in order to maintain their legitimacy and professional credibility. However, since the interpretations of the term are literal and are mainly rooted in the type of activity in which the informants are involved, the influence of the policy framework remains to be evaluated. In particular, it seems that both the theoretical debate and the policy framework have failed in generating an accurate debate on the meaning of the term or the set of ideas connected to it. And although these ideas would still be interpreted by the actors' roles, interests and activities, the lack of specific concepts connected with the term sustainable development, which is clearly revealed by the discourses of the informants, demonstrates the limited impact of both theoretical debate and policy framework on the actual practice of sustainable development.

This interpretation of sustainable as 'lasting outcome' seems to be most common to those acting within a specific policy context where the rhetoric of strategic long-term management of initiatives is becoming increasingly important such as local government officers. The themes of the exit strategies or the earlier considerations about possible long term outcomes belongs to a contemporary urban policy discourse; government officers at both local and regional level are concerned with regeneration as a process that should deliver effective changes. In this respect, sustainable indicates a common sense principle that guides the development and the selection of initiatives on the basis of their ability to deliver lasting changes.

However, although local government officers tend to express in this way their commitment to sustainable development, as depository of government policy for regeneration, their role develops around the interpretation of government policy and, on this base, the implementation of programmes. In this regard, their arguments about the possibility to deliver effective, long-term changes are in fact much more critical of both government policy and the impact of regeneration projects. For example, the changes introduced by the new policy agenda for neighbourhood renewal raise two main areas of concerns among regeneration officers. One is about the changes in the role of local authorities that the new policy agenda requires; the other is about the implementation of community led regeneration and management of neighbourhoods. The fact that local authorities perceive a gap between policy thinking and the ability to implement the new agenda in terms of joint working and community led regeneration seems to be part of a wider argument about government expectations and realistic results. Therefore, while there are several arguments about the changes that regeneration can realistically deliver, the term sustainable development seems to be used as an expression of political correctness to indicate the commitment to the delivery of lasting changes rather then to describe a specific way of working, or to indicate confidence that it can in fact be delivered.

The idea that sustainable development and sustainability means long-term outcomes or the ability to maintain or continue a given condition can be attributed to a literal use of the term and as a convenient way to meet government required criteria. However, within this interpretation it is possible to distinguish between ideas that are about the practice of regeneration such as the emphasis on having exit strategies and more strategic discourses about the need for lasting solutions.

6.2.3 The concept of a sustainable community

The idea of developing sustainable communities exists in the literature on sustainable development especially in the radical green ideology that looks at ideas such as bio-regionalism where communities are also characterised by a high degree of decentralisation of political, social and economic institutions. In contrast, for some informants the term sustainable community is used to indicate a state of overall improvement of life conditions. As one of the informants describes:

"I just feel when you bring in the whole thing, is not just about jobs and training. It's not about house and what sort of home you're living, you are looking at the safety on the streets, the

roads and things, you are looking at the sort of environment, the built environment as well as the green environment and how the whole community fits in" (P9: 764-770).

The idea of sustainable community is generally used to express an overall vision of the community that allows looking at a number of different issues that affect the lives of community members. In this sense, the idea of sustainable community is similar to concepts such as 'quality of life' or 'well being' under which different local or individual concerns can be grouped. However, this all-inclusive vision of a sustainable community is similar to the one described in *"A better quality of life. A strategy for sustainable development in the UK"* (DETR, 1999a), where building sustainable communities entails addressing issues ranging from health to housing, from strengthening local economies to improving local surrounding. The comprehensive vision of community problems and solutions described in the above strategy is a clear example of policy elusiveness in defining the term sustainable development and consequently in identifying what is its relevance to local communities. In consequence, the meaning that comes out indicates a mere good sense in dealing with local issues that includes a range of undeniably important aspects but fails to address the challenges that sustainable development poses to societies, that are about rethinking the ways in which development is achieved. This could be partly associated with recent changes in policy thinking as the focus of sustainable development policy has changed from debating the relationship between the environment and development to introducing the concept of 'quality of life' (section 5.2.1).

Among the informants, those that have used the concept of sustainable community as this all-inclusive approach to local issues are exclusively those representing community groups and organisations. This is linked to the interests that they pursue in their role of community representatives, which develops around locally relevant issues rather then as an expression of a predefined agenda. In this regard, it seems that the term sustainable is used to indicate an approach that is rooted in local issues and is multi-dimensional. In fact, for groups that are concerned with the purpose of participating in the community's future development, the main concern is represented by the lack of locally developed strategies that would generate such wide-ranging solutions. As one of the informants specifies:

"... if we fail to incorporate every other aspects within the community then we will be lacking or letting some people, within the community, down." (sic) (P1: 931-933)

The main argument is that the current approach to the development of local regeneration plans does not recognise the in-depth knowledge that community groups have of the needs of their areas and of the concerns of their members. Such knowledge and understanding

give them the legitimate claim to be involved in setting up the policy agenda for their local areas and to participate to the process of change that might affect their communities. In fact by being locally relevant, community groups tend to engage with a wide range of issues affecting the local community rather then a specific aspect. In particular they claim a broader understanding of the notion of community that includes social, environmental and economic considerations and are consequently concerned with the overall impact of development and/or regeneration projects on local areas. Community groups and organisations that have high on their agenda issues of community participation and involvement tend to provide a definition of sustainable community as an all-embracing vision. In fact, this would include a range of local issues and as a consequence would be relevant to the wider community enhancing involvement and participation.

Connected to this interpretation of sustainable communities, are the concepts of social capital and social economy. For some informants the idea of having a sustainable community finds its foundation in the interpretation of sustainable development as social capital defined as the human capital that a community has and its social network. Consequently, while the lack of networks between people results in a fragmented community, stronger links are the necessary basis for a sustainable community. In this respect it seems that the term 'sustainable' also indicates a condition of a more cohesive social structure (that might include a greater sense of belonging and therefore participation). In fact, in one of the interviews, the meanings given to the term 'sustainable' is used to indicate the idea of a comprehensive and multi-dimensional view to local problems and to identify the concept of social capital as a vital cohesive network for the community. These ideas are current themes of urban policy and belong to well-established discourses about the politics of regenerating deprived urban areas. In particular, they are dominant ideas for informants that represent the community sector and are specially concerned with the social dimension of the process of regeneration.

Similarly, great emphasis is placed on the role of the social economy in promoting alternative forms of development. In this case, the central argument proposed by the informants is that social unbalance is at the centre of any urban problem and its solution is of vital importance. In this sense, sustainable refers, on one hand, to a condition of increasing participation and empowerment, and on the other, to the development of socially valuable projects. The social economy provides services that are needed by the

local community and at the same time contains a strong element of capacity building. As one informant explains:

"Then if everybody is prioritising that way of development that is where your social economy starts to link at it and that's sustainable because it's providing a service to the local community" (P16: 395-397).

"Now that's what I call social sustainability, is kind of like understanding that the capacity empowerment building element of what you're doing takes you right away through..." (P16: 458-460).

Compared with the concept of sustainable community as an all-inclusive vision, the argument about the social economy is quite different since it stresses the role of the social economy as an alternative socio-economic model to provide socially valuable services. In particular, it refers to the process by which changes are achieved rather then simply on the issues that a sustainable community should be concerned with. This is quite an important difference in terms of the focus of the discussion; in fact, by looking at the process by which specific objectives can be delivered it is substantially different from only considering a set of service objectives or targets. After all, the debate around the notion of sustainable development, both as theory and policy development, is meant to focus on considerations regarding the way in which development is achieved rather then defining what are the objectives of development.

6.2.4 Actors' interpretations and leading discourses

The interpretations of the terms sustainable development and sustainability have been grouped under three main clusters of themes; resource conservation and future generations, lasting outcomes and the concept of sustainable community. However, among these main thematic areas, differences exist in relation to the dimension at which such themes have been developed; in particular, it is possible to distinguish between ideas that are debated in policy terms and those that reflect aspects related to the practice of regeneration (table 6.1).

The theme of 'resource conservation' includes the interpretations of sustainable development that belong to the environmental discourse of the long-term management of natural resource and the implication for future generations. This line of interpretation is quite different when it is developed in policy terms or with regards to implementation issues. In the first case, it includes main ideas such as the definition of environmental capacity, the development of a green economy and the promotion of integrated approaches; in the second case, it is more specifically concerned with issues of resource management,

particularly open spaces and habitats. In both cases, these sets of ideas have been expressed by informants entirely engaged with the environmental agenda as members of green lobbying groups and environmental institutions.

Themes Actors	Resource conservation and future generations	Themes Actors	Lasting outcomes	Themes Actors	Sustainable community
Env. groups, green lobbying groups, env. consultants	Policy direction environmental capacity green economy integration	regional bodies, local authorities, consultants	Policy direction long term solutions conditions of continuity	community development org.	Policy direction social economy social capital
regional agencies	Implementation resource management	local authorities, business organisations	Implementation exist strategy financial self-sufficiency	community & voluntary sector org., local community groups	Implementation multi-dimensional approach community involvement

Table 6.1 Sustainable development: themes, actors and dimensions

The theme of 'lasting outcomes' comprises the interpretations that seem to adopt a more literal interpretation of the term sustainable as lasting or durable. In this sense, it regards the kind of reasoning that emphasises the promotion of long-term solutions and the continuity of processes. While these represent the policy dimension of the promotion of lasting outcomes, in more practical terms, these concepts are translated into ideas such as the need to develop exit strategies and the financial self-sufficiency of projects. These ideas are familiar to government officers at local and regional level, since they are responsible for the delivery of long-term changes both as key regeneration player and as service providers, they can demonstrate a commitment to central government sustainability agenda by following this interpretation.

Finally, the idea of 'sustainable communities' seems to be articulated around key themes such as the concepts of social economy and social capital. However, in terms of the practice of regeneration, the idea of sustainable communities is used to express a multi dimensional approach to local issues and the commitment to increased and continuing community involvement and participation. These ideas are relevant to those concerned

with issues of community development such as those representing the interest of the community and voluntary sectors as well as local community groups that support a grass-root approach to the development of regeneration plans.

6.3 Sustainable regeneration

While the term sustainable development has produced a broad multi-disciplinary debate that to some extent has been translated into policy, the notion of sustainable regeneration is a complete policy creation. The term sustainable regeneration has existed formally in the policy language since 1997 (DETR, 1997) when the promotion of sustainable regeneration was identified among the key objectives of regeneration bids.

However, since those who participate in the regeneration process perform different roles and represent different interests, the ideas that are related to the term sustainable regeneration tend to reflect a variety of perspectives. The informants largely use the term sustainable regeneration to indicate long-term or lasting regeneration with regard to its outcomes. In this sense, the interpretation of sustainable regeneration is quite similar to the above use of the term sustainable that indicates lasting outcome as is typical among public sector regeneration agencies (6.2.2). In fact, themes that are considered under the term sustainable regeneration are often about the development of exist strategies and initial considerations about stability in the long-term. As one of the informants argues:

> *"But in terms of sustainable regeneration, I mean, to me there isn't any other way of doing it, we wouldn't actually have a policy or an initiative to produce certain things if we didn't think it's going to be sustainable"* (P2: 24-27).

The assertive character of this statement seems to suggest that for the informant the condition of sustainability intrinsically belongs to the development of viable regeneration policies and initiatives as a consequence of the approach she follows. Thus, sustainability seems to be an undeniably implemented feature of regeneration, although the lack of any argument about what makes regeneration policies and initiatives sustainable suggests a one-dimensional interpretation of the term. In fact, as the informant states later in the interview:

> *"So if you are not going to, you know, you wouldn't start a regeneration scheme if it didn't come down as a feature sustainability has got to be, I mean, has run through everything we do and there is no point in trying to even attempting to do things unless you sort of think, oh there is a kind of, you know, there is an exit strategy and there is a way out of there"* (P2: 402-406).

It seems that sustainability as a feature of regeneration is about having an exit strategy that ensures continuity of the project under different conditions such as the termination of

funding. In this sense, sustainability seems to be related to managerial aspects that emphasis an understanding of the long-term effects of regeneration initiatives. In more general terms, the term sustainable is also used to indicate a condition of normality, determined by the impact of regeneration initiatives and their ability to reverse negative conditions. In one of the interviews, the term 'sustainable' is used to define areas that have overcome the need for regeneration funding, thus have become self sufficient:

"It should become normal when somehow it shouldn't require the kind of constant stream of special intervention but that should somehow become sustainable" (P10 275-277).

What appears interesting about this kind of interpretation is the lack of any reference to the process by which urban areas can indeed become sustainable. In particular, the use of expressions such as *"...should somehow become sustainable"* indicates that the interpretation of sustainable regeneration is limited to the definition of a hypothetical condition rather then an argument on what would contribute to make regeneration sustainable.

In some of the interviews, informants make a distinction between the use and meaning for the terms 'sustainable development' and 'sustainable regeneration'. For example, an informant observes that while sustainable development is about environmentally friendly form of development, sustainable regeneration is about lasting outcomes. So while the use of the term sustainable to indicate lasting outcomes (section 6.2.2) seemed to suggest that those using a literal interpretation of the term were not familiar with its original definition, it appears that those aware of different meanings simply apply them according to different contexts. This confirms the idea that the role and the context in which the informant operates essentially determine or legitimise different sets of meanings. In this case, the informant is aware of the broad meaning of sustainable development as environmentally sound development but when it comes to regeneration, which is her own specific area of concern, the informant adopts the set of meanings that her role of local authority regeneration officer suggests towards the narrower notion of viable in the long term.

A different concept that is linked to the interpretation of the term sustainable regeneration is that of ensuring a high level of community involvement in the regeneration process in its planning, delivery and outcomes. As one informant clearly states:

"I think for sustainable regeneration people tend to think that you'll achieve sustainable regeneration by having a high level of involvement of the community, whoever they are, in regeneration" (P 12: 258-260).

In particular, as the following statements demonstrate, this interpretation of sustainable regeneration seems to indicate that the participation of those to whom regeneration is aimed is a pre-requisite for its long-term success:

"And if it's forced on people is not what they want as I said earlier, that's not sustainable and people aren't interested necessarily or they lose interest" (P13 224-225)

"And they (local people) *are concerned even about sustainability because is not, I mean, they are very, very aware of sustainability issues, although they might not have all the buzzwords, they know, they know what they want"* (P24 403-407).

The theme of community involvement is discussed in relation to two main points: the relationship between ownership and participation and the expertise that exists in the local community. Therefore sustainable is used to indicate a condition of involvement that derives from effective consultation with members of the local community and that therefore generates ownership of the initiative. This is also linked to the idea that local people know what is best for their communities and can articulate their preferences in relevant fora; in this respect sustainability is conditional upon building local expertise.

Informants that have community involvement and participation high on their agenda tend to use the interpretation of the term sustainable regeneration to legitimate the notion of community led regeneration; they can be organisations representing the interests of the community and voluntary sectors, local community groups and government officers ensuring that, as the new policy agenda requires, communities participate in regeneration. Community sector organisations are those that are more concerned with building the capacity of community groups to participate in regeneration, especially with regards to the difficulties that the regeneration funding process poses. These concerns are at the foundation of the development of some community organisations that perceive the issue of community sector involvement and participation in regeneration as one of 'missing out' on funding and, more generally, on opportunities. For local community groups, the main argument is about the current top down approach to the development of local regeneration plans that does not recognise the in-depth knowledge that community groups have of their local areas. In this sense, projects that have not been developed in full consultation with the local community, that do not contain the solutions for issues that are relevant for those at whom regeneration is aimed, are invariably of limited value.

In contrast the interpretation of sustainable regeneration as community led regeneration is proposed by central government officers in line with current policy direction which supports the view that communities are going to play an active role in regeneration

programmes. Central government officers perceive their role as supporting this process, in particular with regards to the development of Local Strategic Partnerships, by ensuring a far-reaching representativeness of the voluntary and community sector at the stage of policy making and priority setting.

Finally, a further interpretation of sustainable regeneration is related to theories of local economic development; in particular the term sustainable regeneration has been used to indicate a wider perspective on local economic issues ranging from business development to capacity building. Informants working on the broad theme of local economic development use this interpretation; in their interpretation regeneration is by definition wider than economic development and sustainability is about being sure that it encompasses social, economic and environmental aspects. In this sense, sustainable regeneration is used to describe a process that favours integrated solutions to what are traditionally considered purely economic issues. This interpretation of sustainable regeneration is mainly used with regard to the policy context in which regeneration initiatives take place; in particular, environmental consultancies and green lobbying groups make use of this interpretation in order to influence the development of local policy framework towards the promotion of better integration.

6.3.1 Different interpretations: policy discourses and roles

For the informants, sustainable regeneration has a variety of meanings (fig. 6.2) that seem to be connected with the roles, activities and interests of the informants themselves. From the fieldwork data, results suggest that for government officers sustainable regeneration is mainly about long-term solution and lasting changes. In contrast, for community sector representatives, sustainable regeneration relates to the process of high community involvement. Finally ensuring that solutions encompass social, economic and environmental aspects represents the concern of environmental consultancies and lobbying groups.

However, these three sets of meanings are not equally represented. The different weight that these interpretations of the term sustainable regeneration hold can be related to two inter-linked aspects: the power relationships between the different policy discourses upon which these ideas are based and the range of powers and responsibilities of the actors.

REGIONAL BODIES
LOCAL AUTHORITIES
BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS
CONSULTANTS

long term solutions
conditions of continuity
exist strategy
financial self-sufficiency

ENVIRONMENTAL
ORGANISATIONS
GREEN LOBBYING GROUPS
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY
SECTOR ORGANISATIONS
LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS

sustainable local economic
development
integration

SUSTAINABLE
REGENERATION

community
involvement

Fig. 6.2 Sustainable regeneration: actors and themes

On one hand, the relative importance of the different policy discourses that promote these ideas has an impact on the significance that these ideas hold within regeneration; in addition, the different power relationships, concerns and responsibilities of those who participate to the process of regeneration, make some ideas more influential then others. In particular, interpretations of sustainable regeneration as lasting regeneration or community involvement can be derived from leading regeneration policy programmes and therefore can be seen as ideas holding a certain policy importance. In contrast, the interpretation of sustainable regeneration as an integrative framework that aims at integrating social, economic and environmental aspects remains marginal to regeneration objectives.

With regard to the relative importance of different policy discourses, it is important to consider that sustainable regeneration is a policy-constructed term that has not been theoretically debated except for some specific contributions (section 3.3). In this sense, achieving sustainable regeneration has become one of the policy objectives of initiatives such as the Single Regeneration Budget without an underlying debate or the existence of theoretical models on the principles that urban regeneration should pursue in order to become more sustainable. In fact, according to Gibbs (1999), the changes in the policy context, both at the national and the European level, have determined the demand for theoretical models that could identify themes and principles of sustainability to be applied to regeneration initiatives. As a result, the term sustainable regeneration remains much more a policy-constructed term influenced by the contents of urban policy then theoretical

contributions. For practitioners on the ground, sustainable regeneration mainly tends to reflect the ideas of the new policy agenda of commitment to long-term solutions to urban issues.

The prevalent interpretation of the term sustainable regeneration is that of lasting regeneration that can be associated to the main policy discourse of the Renewal agenda that represents a leading policy programme aimed at reforming urban policy. In particular, the new policy aims at producing a comprehensive approach to regeneration initiatives that replace project-based funding with a more long-term strategic scheme to deliver the necessary changes. In this respect, the idea of promoting lasting solutions and its managerial aspects represented by elements such as exit strategies represent a key element. This explains why, given the central importance of this regeneration policy programme, the prevalent interpretation of sustainable regeneration among public sectors regeneration professionals is that of lasting regeneration and also why this interpretation is prevalent between government officers since they are directly concerned with the delivery of the new agenda. Similarly, the development of recent research (Fordham, 1995; Carley, 1998, 2000)[6] on regeneration programmes seems to give preference to a similar interpretation of the term sustainable regeneration as lasting regeneration. This use of the term, which presents no links with the original definition of sustainable development[7] and conspicuously excludes reference to environmental issues, can be explained by considering that the topic of these researches are fundamentally about the impact of urban policies and programmes. As consequence the interpretation of the term sustainable regeneration derives, even in this case, directly from the leading policy discourse that strengthens the importance of long-term solutions and is keen to avoid creating dependency on public subsidy.

Similarly the interpretation of sustainable regeneration that gives preference to the idea of high community involvement in regeneration can be associated with a well known policy argument about the need for community participation that goes back to the 1960s. The idea that regeneration is more likely to be successful if those at whom it is aimed participate in the process has always represented a central theme of regeneration although it has had different degrees of implementation. However, the present policy for Neighbourhood Renewal and programmes such as the New Deal for Communities make this idea central to

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[6] Researches funded and published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation under the Urban Regeneration Programme

[7] Brundtland or similar definitions

the design and implementation of regeneration strategies. This explains the widespread use of this interpretation of the term sustainable regeneration especially for those actors that are directly concerned with representing community and voluntary sector in the regeneration process.

In contrast, the idea that sustainable regeneration is about ensuring integrated solutions to economic, environmental and social issues seems to represent a more marginal idea within regeneration. In particular, overall sustainable development policy seems to be a rather marginal policy field especially with regards to the ability to shape urban policy; for example, a key policy theme such as the integration of environmental consideration into decision-making is a recurring argument that finds limited implementation in practice. In addition, such existing marginality seems to be strengthened by events such as the recent re-organisation of government departments which has seen the movement of responsibility for sustainable development the Environment from the Department of Transport and Regions (DETR) to the Department of Agricultural and Rural Affair (DEFRA). As a result, sustainable development policies are likely to be perceived as non-urban issues.

In addition, the relative impact of different interpretations of sustainable regeneration reflect the power relationships that exists among the informants because of their role in regeneration; some are key players and are involved in the design and implementation of regeneration initiatives, other are more concerned with influencing policies and strategies. Consequently, the ideas expressed by the informants can have a relative impact on the contents of regeneration initiatives. This is particularly evident when the term sustainable regeneration is defined as a regeneration bid objective; in this case, the perspectives of those leading the regeneration initiative together with their priorities are reflected in the contents of the bid and therefore in the definition of what contribution it makes to sustainable regeneration. As consequence, projects funded under the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) that have the promotion of sustainable regeneration among their main objectives, might in fact tackle completely different issues under this heading (section 5.5). However, it has to be considered that the process by which bids are arranged generally sees the involvement of different actors with different roles. In particular, while the main themes of regeneration bids are often developed in consultation with the wider community and with central government officers, external consultants mainly deal with the effective composition of the bid. Therefore, the analysis of sustainable regeneration, as a bid

objective, generally reflects complex negotiations between different partners as well as various editing activities.

It seems that although it is possible to identify three main areas of interpretations of sustainable regeneration (fig. 6.2) their significance varies in relation to two aspects: the strength of some policy discourses and the different actors' roles. The centrality of urban policy to regeneration makes some interpretation (particularly 'lasting outcomes') more influential than others; in addition, it shows how the term is still under a strong policy influence because of poor theoretical underpinning. On the other hand the complex character of regeneration initiatives which sees different actors coming together from different fields, representing different interests and holding different powers of decision making makes some interpretations more represented then others.

6.4 Conclusion

Although this study has endorsed the idea that sustainable development has to be understood as a social and political construct (sections 2.1 and 2.2) and therefore that many agendas inevitably exist, reflecting alternative positions on the role of the environment and the desirable direction of human development (Becker et al; 1997), the different actors' interpretations delineate a different condition. The variety of meanings given by the actors cannot be characterised in terms of different ideological positions around commonly understood themes but as discrete sets of meanings.

One explanation that has being suggested is that the role and the context in which the actors operate shape the process by which ideas are developed and reassessed. The theme of resource conservation and future generation, the one on sustainability as lasting outcomes and the concept of sustainable communities represent three different areas of concern that are addressed using the same terminology (section 6.2.4). Such variety of interpretations can be rooted in the different social processes in which the actors are engaged, and therefore the development of different interpretations can be considered in relation to the variety of social processes that coexist within regeneration. Processes such as economic development or community empowerment are articulated around ideas, institutional arrangements, policies and programmes; these constitute the contexts in which the different interpretations of sustainable development, sustainability and sustainable regeneration are articulated.

The meanings that are given to the term 'sustainable regeneration' are specifically linked with the roles, activities and interests of the informants but also to certain policy discourses. For government officers, sustainable regeneration is about long-term solution and lasting changes; in contrast, for community sector representatives, sustainable regeneration is about ensuring high community involvement; finally ensuring that solutions encompass social, economic and environmental aspects is the concern for environmental consultancies and lobbying groups. The relative importance of the different policy discourses that promote these ideas has an impact on the role that these ideas play within regeneration. An example of this is the interpretations of sustainable regeneration as lasting regeneration or community involvement that find their support in leading regeneration policy programmes and therefore can be seen as ideas holding a certain policy importance. In particular, the idea that regeneration is more likely to be successful if those at whom it is aimed participate in the process has always represented a central theme of regeneration although it has had different degrees of implementation. However, the present policy for Neighbourhood Renewal makes this idea central to the design and implementation of the whole regeneration strategy; this explains the widespread use of this interpretation of the term sustainable regeneration especially for those actors that are directly concerned with representing community and voluntary sector in the regeneration process. Conversely, government officers are more likely to use the term sustainable regeneration to indicate the long-term commitment to regeneration or the long-term effect of regeneration initiatives.

In addition, differences in powers and responsibilities among those who participate in the process of regeneration make some ideas more influential then others. For example, in the design and delivery of regeneration initiatives, local authorities are often key leaders; similarly community and voluntary organisations have an increasingly important role in the regeneration process. On the contrary, environmental groups play a very limited role, especially with respect to the development of local regeneration projects.

Finally, there seems to exist a sort of 'language/meaning convention' since some of the informants attribute different meanings to the terms 'sustainable development' and 'sustainable regeneration' in different contexts. This aspect is particularly important because the language and the development of conventional sets of meaning are relevant to the ability of progressing or inhibiting some ideas. In the case of regeneration, the key environmental dimension of sustainable development is strongly underplayed with the

result that the central claim that the notion of sustainable development has posed about the relationship between environment and development choices seems missing.

One of the problem connected with using the terms 'sustainable development', sustainability' and 'sustainable regeneration' to indicate different concepts is that of increasing vagueness in the lay use of the terms. This also means a difficulty in debating, for example, the objectives that a regeneration initiative should incorporate in order to be more sustainable and the criteria to assess it. Partnership and multi-agency working are keywords of current regeneration policy highlighting the importance of understanding the relationship among different actors even with respect to the process of communication. Thus, while it is important to acknowledge such diversity of meanings, rather than assume that all actors hold a similar interpretation of the term sustainable development, it is also important to recognise that they portray a reality where different meanings coexist under the use of a similar terminology creating a 'shared' language of sustainability that does not represent a 'common' language. In this way, the notion of sustainable development risks becoming less recognisable and therefore to lose political strength. Overall, the main problem that this can generate is that the actual process of communication, among the local actors, that should lead to the definition and implementation of sustainable development goals can be undermined. In addition, the co-existence of such diverse interpretations, in an environment that is characterised by partnership and multi-agency working, might suggest that there is a very limited debate around sustainable development as policy goal, apart from some 'common sense' agreement that is easily subscribed.

Chapter seven

REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT: THE ACTORS' VALUATION

> *...to claim that there is a single path to sustainability denies that different social actors may have a plurality of meaningful relations to the common elements of the material base of development.* (Acselrad , 1999: 38)

7.1 Introduction

Given the different understanding of sustainable development that exists among those involved in regeneration (section 6.2), and considering the policy-defined character of the notion of sustainable regeneration (section 6.3), it is important to explore, beyond these terms, the wider question of the interaction between society and the environment. In order to do so, Norton's hypothesis about the importance of valuation as a key variable in the management of the relationship between society and environment (sections 2.3 and 2.4) has been explored. In this context, the term' valuation' refers to the way in which the local actors construct priorities, attach significance to certain regeneration objectives and attribute negative or positive values to the environmental transformations that take place as part of the regeneration process. In the process of negotiation of regeneration goals and strategies, the valuation of regeneration objectives and of the environmental changes connected to them represents a central variable. In fact, by knowing how current priorities and objectives are constructed by the social actors and the role that environmental considerations play in such formulation, it is possible to understand how the actors' valuation influences the policy process (sections 2.3 and 3.2.1). In particular, key phases of policy making, such as setting priorities and considering alternative options are expected to be influenced by the way in which local actors construct priorities and assess the changes that regeneration are likely to achieve. Overall, this can contribute to identifying the factors that can foster the actors' understanding of sustainable development goals and the factors that can limit it.

This chapter describes how the long-term regeneration objectives are formulated by the actors and the role that consideration of environmental transformations plays in the process of definition of regeneration goals. The priorities in the regeneration agenda are analysed through an interpretative approach to the actors' account, perception and valuation of the

environment. In particular, attention is given to existing discourses about regeneration and environment and to the importance that such discourses may have with regard to the process of priority setting and goals negotiation.

7.2 Regeneration long-term aspirations

The wide-ranging character of regeneration together with the different range of actors involved in regeneration implies the co-existence of a variety of agendas through regeneration initiatives and consequently the expression of different long-term aspirations about what regeneration should deliver. In this context, it is possible to identify a number of key thematic areas around which main discourses are constructed with regard to what regeneration should deliver in the long term.

The process of regeneration contains long-term aspirations of change to the conditions of a certain locality; these changes are expressed as the need to reverse negative trends through the action of specific initiatives. Regeneration initiatives are generally presented as packages including actions aimed at tackling a variety of local issues ranging from economic to social aspects and physical environment improvements. Through regeneration, actors are engaged in pursuing a variety of processes that contain different aspirations (table 7.1); economic development initiatives, quality of life projects and community development activities are among the central objectives of regeneration.

Economic development and physical renewal have been the traditional objectives of regeneration initiatives during the last decades; today, with a renewed perspective, they seem still to represent what regeneration is about for local government officers. Although, the focus of economic development might have been widened beyond the aim of creating jobs towards incorporating some strategic approach to facilitate the access to job opportunities for the most vulnerable people, job creation remains a central objective of regeneration. Similarly, while the stress on large development schemes has been abandoned under the new policy agenda, improving the local environment as the conditions, use and quality of the built fabric seems to constitute the other main element of regeneration.

With respect to economic development, the preferences that are currently expressed include consideration and assistance for the business community mainly in terms of physical improvements to industrial estates and premises and support of sector

Categories of actors	Present preferences	Long term aspirations
Local government *(regeneration officers and LA21 officers)*	• Job creation • Training and education (access to jobs opportunities) • Improving local environment • Improving industrial estates • Renewing industrial premises • Improving infrastructures • Promoting LA21 • Waterways regeneration • Sustainable community project • Fuel poverty/energy efficiency • Reaching out into the community	• Making people economically active • Healthier community • Improving community safety • Providing sport facilities • Achieving minimum standards (e g employment, health) • Improving local environment (physical) • Community action plan • Community engagement
Community groups and organisations	• Capacity building • Community development activities (child care, community resource centres, youth training schemes, IT projects ect.) • Age/health projects	• Tackling democratic deficit • Mainstreaming social economy • Building social capital • Providing community infrastructures
Environmental groups and organisations	• Energy and water conservation • Fuel poverty/energy efficiency • Developing and promoting LA21 • Raising environmental awareness • Promoting debate • Policy lobbying	• Improving local environment • Increasing energy efficiency (reducing fuel poverty) • Increasing waste recycling • Increase environmental awareness • Keeping money locally (e g community banks) • Local economic growth • Mainstreaming sustainable development • Delivering cultural and ideological changes • Adopting minimum standards • Changing people perception
Business organisations	• Business retention • Improving industrial estates • Renewing industrial premises • Premises for new businesses • Protecting small and ethnic enterprises • Developing infrastructures • Improving local environment (green place, recreational areas)	• Economic development • Serving the City • Better tomorrow • Better place

Table 7.1 Actors' regeneration objectives

development. The creation of jobs is framed within the overall aspiration of making people economically better off; this is pursued by considering all those activities that might facilitate the access to job opportunities. Training and education programmes are therefore designed to create possible matches between jobs and local skills. The long-term target is that of making people economically active and therefore to improve their life opportunities as well as to reduce their dependence upon public sector money.

Improvement to the physical environment constitutes the other big part of regeneration objectives (ULVP, 1998; NLL, 1999; GFA Consulting, 2000); this includes a variety of projects targeted to the overall aim of improving the quality of life of the local community. This includes aspects dealing with increasing the perception of safety for the community, delivering better services and improving the quality and the condition of the built environment. These initiatives can be framed within a broad range of objectives aimed at improving quality of life in deprived neighbourhoods; this includes long-term objectives on key issues such as health and education, transport and accessibility, housing quality and sport facilities. These objectives can be considered as expressions of a regeneration policy remit, which contains the overall aspiration to reduce gaps between poor and wealthy areas or to achieve given minimum standard across a number of indicators such as health, education and employment.

Business organisations and strategic economic partnerships, such as the Upper Lee valley Partnership and the London Lee Valley Partnership, define the principal objective of regeneration as the economic regeneration of the region. Short-term strategies include attention to retain existing businesses and to attract inward investment in the area. Current preferences include improvements and renewal of existing industrial premises, the development of premises that are suitable for new kind of businesses and of infrastructures, such as transport infrastructure. The overall objective of economic regeneration is often expressed with regard to a key outcome, which is the creation of jobs. Economic development objectives are rarely accompanied by an indication of the kind of development that is pursued; economic development strategies and objectives seem to be strongly shaped by market forces.

Long-term visions of the region are expressed in general terms because of the flexibility of economic conditions and the negotiations between local needs and global forces. In this context, job creation represents an indiscriminate objective: based on the acknowledgement that the manufacturing sector cannot be revitalised to the extent of

reproducing the amount of jobs lost in previous decades, and jobs have to be created in other sectors. Community groups and organisations participate in regeneration with the clear objective of securing increased access and involvement in decision-making. Community involvement and participation are viewed as necessary to address the current democratic deficit and in this respect, they represent elements of the bigger project of democratic progress. Community development activities are supported to provide locally relevant services to the local community while building the capacity of individuals and organisations to participate; this is linked to the long-term objective of mainstreaming the social economy as the most appropriate form of local economic development that promote the self reliance of local communities. Another local long-term objective is the creation of infrastructures that can provide localities with the physical space necessary to implement local projects.

With respect to environmental groups, local groups that participate in regeneration through local projects are often concerned with mainstreaming the environmental agenda in the approach to local issues. This implies that part of their present objective is to raise environmental awareness towards key topics such as energy efficiency and waste reduction. However there are also more socially relevant aspirations such as the creation of local infrastructures, such as local banks. With respect to mainstreaming the environmental agenda into regeneration, environmental organisations are mainly concerned with the strategic dimension of regeneration; this brings them to work on a scale different from the local implementation of regeneration initiatives.

The existence of a variety of agendas that are brought together into regeneration does not mean that all these objectives share the same power relationship as some are traditionally more significant to regeneration. More powerful agendas, and consequently agencies, are those linked to economic regeneration and the provision of jobs creating an unbalanced debate with other agendas and those representing them.

7.3 Regeneration objectives and the environment

Within regeneration, the concern for environmental issues seems to be increasingly widespread; terms such as 'environmental quality', 'environmental improvements' and 'environmental sustainability' are becoming familiar to the strategies, bids and language of various informants. However, beyond the use of these terms it is possible to identify a

range of different interpretations of the term 'environment' and consequently of different arguments about the role of the environment in regeneration.

When considering the discursive construction of ideas about the role of the environment in relation to long-term regeneration objectives, it is necessary to acknowledge the heterogeneity of the language used by the informants especially with regard to the term 'environment'. It is widely recognised that the term 'environment' can be used to indicate almost everything; environmental issues can refer not only to the quality of air and water or to the depletion of natural resources but also to poor housing, road congestion, and crime rates. So, given that it is impossible to use the term 'environment' as a unitary concept, it is worth bearing in mind the comprehensive definition of the term used by Harvey when he says that:

> "Environment" is, after all, whatever surrounds or, to be more, precise, whatever exists in the surrounding of some being that is *relevant to* the state of that being at a particular place and time. The "situatedness" of a being and its internal conditions and needs have as much to say about the definition of environment as the surrounding conditions themselves, while the criteria of relevance can also vary widely. (Harvey, D. 1996: 118)

Therefore, it is because of such 'situatedness' and the individual 'conditions and needs' that the informants use the term 'environment' to refer to different issues and concerns. This does not mean that the environment is defined only as a result of social construction but that the relation that social actors have with their surrounding is multiple, relative and contextual. It is multiple because of the different roles that individuals have and as a consequence, terms such as 'environmental issues' or 'environmental quality' can indicate a range of different things within the same individual. The term 'environment' is used by the informants to refer to aspects and conditions of the built environment as well as quality and quantity of the natural resource base. Its importance has been described by the informants in relation to the idea of community safety; to symbolic values such as a collective metaphor of life, through to indicate specific processes such as the production of oxygen. In addition, the relation that social actors have with their surrounding is contextual in spatial and temporal terms. The environment is framed within different spatial constructs that varies from the local to the urban or regional scale, to the global dimension. Informants talk about environmental issues in relation to the degree of air pollution on their streets, to the city-wide ecological footprint through to global environmental concerns.

Among the informants, environmental considerations seem to have a certain importance in relation to key traditional regeneration objectives: to foster economic development and to

deliver better quality of life. Aspects such as poor landscaping, road congestion and neglected industrial estates are identified among the causes of poor environmental quality; better perception of the areas is traditionally part of economic development measures aimed at retaining businesses and attracting inward investment. As regeneration is traditionally concerned with tackling social imbalances, the objective of delivering a better quality of life for deprived communities is often connected with bringing environmental improvements in the form of things such as cleaner and safer streets, better playgrounds and open spaces, and improved transport facilities. However, beside this mainstream interpretation, there are also alternative discourses that link local environmental resources and environmental quality to the well-being of the local community.

7.3.1 Environmental improvements as economic strategies

A well-known argument about the role for environmental improvements is the one that links a better quality of the local environment to a strategy of economic development. The context of economic decline, unemployment and poverty that characterise the Lee Valley makes economic growth and job creation the priorities of the regeneration agenda. In this respect, environmental issues are subsumed under economic development measures as a result of policy guidelines and a strategic discourse that links a better quality of the local environment to the ability to attract investment and to retain business. As Mayer (1995) has pointed out, recent trends of economic restructuring have seen localities increasingly engaged in economic strategies. In consequence, by mobilising local potentials for economic growth, the distinction between policy fields has been undermined; labour market and social policy fields, educational, environmental and cultural politics have all become intermixed or parts of economic measures (Mayer, 1995).

Within regeneration, the idea that environmental improvements are part of economic development measures is a key recurring argument highlighted in local strategic documents (section 3.3) and supported by various informants. Key regional strategies in the Lee Valley (GFA Consulting, 2000) have been designed specifically to operate in support of business development and employment objectives. In particular, improvements to the local environment and infrastructures and to the overall image of the region are considered among the measures able to encourage business retention and inward investment. Environmental improvements are considered essential measures to improve the

perception of the region and eventually increase local self-esteem and improve the quality of life of the local community. In this kind of argument, the term 'environment' is used to indicate aspects of the physical built environment such as poor public transport, roads congestion, missing links between industrial estates and rail system and poorly landscaped areas as well as local aspects such as high rates of crime. Consequently, environmental improvements are identified, and eventually implemented, through programmes ranging from estate renewal, transport interventions, improvements to high streets and town centres, to better street lighting, greening and pedestrian safety (GFA Consulting, 2000).

Larger businesses seems to be particularly concerned with the way in which the whole Lee Valley is perceived and with the need to have a better managed area in order to attract more investment and business. As one of the informants observes, the main concern regards the quality of businesses and consequently the quality of the workforce:

> *"The larger businesses are generally concerned about the way the whole Lee valley is perceived ....Because if they don't then the general tenure of the type of businesses that they get into the Lee valley is going to be poor, the workforce will generally be poor educated, poorly trained, they won't be able to attract the right sort of workforce and everybody will suffer".* (P20: 223-4; 229-34)

Similarly, for representatives of the business community, environmental improvements are associated with the objective of developing a better place, which is able to attract better businesses possibly with more high skilled jobs and consequently to enable the area to become a better place. According to the representative of a main business organisation, the connection between environmental improvements and developing a better place takes form through landscaping measures; more plants, more grass and making the place greener are the kind of measures identified to make *"the whole place a better place"* (P3: 675). Consequently, by attracting businesses able to offer better jobs, the whole area becomes a better place. The expressions that are often used by the informant to describe such long-term view are those of seeing 'the bigger picture' and working for 'a better tomorrow'. By seeing 'the bigger picture' he seems to refer to the connection between environmental quality and quality of businesses and jobs. Environmental improvements defined as landscaping improvements are also seen as recreational measures for those working in the industrial estate but since landscaping measures are not traditionally considered a priority for industrial estates, raising funds is likely to be difficult unless people see 'the bigger picture'. In contrast, the objective of working for 'a better tomorrow' is strictly used to refer to the main objective of creating jobs. Thus, environmental improvements remain

instrumental to the long-term objective of building better future opportunities, which consists of attracting businesses and creating jobs.

In the economic development discourse, environmental issues are defined by the perception and needs of key actors such as the business community and by traditional economic development objectives such as the ability to retain businesses and to attract investments. The 'environment' is mainly defined in term of physical surroundings and environmental improvements are considered marketing measures that need to be put in place to ensure successful results in investment terms. In this sense, the environment has a straightforward economic value, which is not the one that is usually illustrated in the literature, generally in the form of environmental costs, but a value, which is part of the economic development equation. This interpretation, in its discursive construction, contains elements that define what are negative environmental issues in the Lee Valley and consequently what are appropriate environmental improvements, as those that will enhance economic aspects.

7.3.2 Environment and quality of life

Beside the economic development priority, regeneration is traditionally committed to delivering a better quality of life and overall to tackle social imbalances. In contrast to the economic perspective on environmental improvements that tends to be quite homogenous, the connection between a better quality of life and the quality of the local environment is articulated in a number of different ways. In particular when it comes to quality of life, the perception and needs of different actors influence the ideas and images of what contribute, in their opinion, to a better quality of life. This is reflected in different interpretations and definitions of the environment and its condition.

Improvement to the physical environment constitutes a traditional objective of regeneration; this includes projects aimed at cleaner and safer streets, better playgrounds and open spaces, and improved transport facilities. These kinds of initiatives are often described as measures that by delivering 'environmental improvements' contribute to improving the quality of life. In this respect, environmental improvements generally include aspects dealing with increasing the perception of safety for the community, delivering better services and improving the quality and the condition of the built environment. Although these initiatives are often identified as effective means, generally

on the basis of community consultation, to improve the quality of life of the local community, they seem to lack any strategic view being the result of day-to-day needs. It should also be considered that contributing to a better quality of life through improvements to the physical environment is a common discourse among regeneration officers as a key part of what they think regeneration can deliver. In particular, given existing criticism about the ability of regeneration initiatives to influence key structural economic and social aspects, improvements to the quality of the physical environment are considered realistic and effective targets in delivering a better quality of life for the local community. As one informant explains:

> *"I think that regeneration can assist, can make effective local intervention for example, investing money in public transport, so it can make a difference. And it can make a difference to...management could make a difference to clean up the environment, clean it up, tidy it up, proper better managed. This can be done, may be come up with changes that can make a difference.*
>
> *Hum.. but even here in (name), you know, we have done some quite good schemes which... has been made a difference? I don't know. Has been about... management, schemes about cleaning up bit of the environment, renewing street lighting or whatever, I mean, you know, there is a number of things that can actually make quality of life slightly improved, that can ... and say for making a better light, making safer entrances in and out stations, in a lots of ways in which you can just marginally but quite significantly improve people lives"*. (P4: 198-205; 268-76)

It seems that given the great challenge that regenerating deprived communities poses, the changes that regeneration initiatives can deliver are limited and marginal. In this sense, improvements to the physical environment represent a realistic and achievable target that eventually makes some tangible contribution to a better quality of life.

Within local government, another interpretation of quality of life has to do with the notion of health and the way in which the access to open spaces and sport facilities can contribute to a healthier lifestyle. A key emerging strategy is that of linking the use of open spaces and sport facilities with the need of deprived communities for physical and economic improvements. The idea is that by providing sport facilities to deprived communities it is possible to give people the opportunity to improve their health and well being. As a consequence, by developing a healthier community, it is more likely to have a more economically active community as well. But at the same time, the development of sport facilities is seen as an opportunity to provide a new range of jobs and careers to the local community. A similar type of argument has been made with regard to the proposal (now revoked) for the development of an athletics stadium at Picketts Lock. By representing a big development project, the idea of the athletic stadium was used to emphasise the positive economic effect of job creation that development schemes always entail as well as

the long term benefits for the local community of a high quality sport facility. In this respect, the evaluation of open spaces and sport facilities within the policy framework of sport and renewal seems to emphasise a renewed position for local government in the management of public spaces.

In these interpretations of the relation between environment and quality of life, the 'environment' is apparently very similar to the one described by the business community. It includes conditions and quality of the built environment and less physical, but still local, aspects such as crime rates and the perception of safety. However, in this case the definition of what is and what makes a better environment is very much developed around the evaluation and needs of the local community and consequently the quality of the local environment seems to acquire a social significance rather then an economic one.

The social value attributed to a 'better local environment' is also described by the concept of 'democratic environment'. The definition of regeneration outcomes as democratic is used by one of the informants to highlight the value of initiatives able to address collective local needs. This is viewed in opposition to those flagship projects that are not considered forms of pluralistic expression.

Quite different is the perception of the local environment when the relationship between open spaces and healthy lifestyle is considered from the perspective of community groups' representatives. Although the link between the environment and a healthy lifestyle is similarly articulated through the idea of using local open spaces as a resource for physical activities, the local environment is described in relation to issues of accessibility, ownership and political struggle. As the representative of a community group explains:

> *"So what we're doing is walking for health. Is getting people to take regular daily exercise and through the health authority, people has been referred by coronary, these are people who had operations and stuff. But we want to try and promote within the community, and a lot of people on that project were saying: "For what we're going to do we need huge, beautiful scene and parks in the borough"... Not just doing it in the posh park of the borough where the middle class whatever their ethnic background have time for leisure, you know...But to do it here where it matters, where they need it because they are stressed out".* (P9: 638-46; 682-88)

The position expressed by the informant is clearly linked to issues of the perception, accessibility and use of quality urban spaces like parks. It seems that behind the simple project of using open spaces for walking there is the political will to challenge a class-perception of leisure or well-being activities. In fact, in common with the informant's argument is the idea that traditionally the middle class has access to facilities that are not generally associated to deprived communities because they tend to address non basic

needs. On the contrary, she argues that activities like walking for health are necessary for the well being of the local people and using open spaces to walk is important if done in the local area where there is a need for it. The ideas/images that traditionally link beautiful parks with middle class activities need to be substituted by the image of local open space where members of the community can find the opportunity to walk. Consequently, the opportunity to have, preserve and ensure accessibility to open spaces in the local area represents the request for the right to have and use public quality space. In this interpretation, the protection and accessibility to local open spaces is connected to a process of community emancipation and empowerment.

The position expressed by the informant reflects Norton's argument (1999) on options and opportunities (section 2.3). In formulating the sustainability request for inter-generational obligation, Norton defines 'options' as natural resources available for human use and 'opportunities' as situation in which conditions, such as availability, allow the choice to use a resource. For the informant, the argument about the use of local open spaces can be compared to an intra-generational equity issue about providing opportunities for a deprived community to have access to those leisure activities that are normally available for the use of middle class people. In this respect, this view underlines how the protection of the resources is intimately linked to the conditions that govern the use or accessibility of the resource. Therefore on one hand there is the issue of defining what has to be protected and the process by which these decisions are formulated and pursued; on the other hand is the question of identifying the conditions affecting the use of those resources.

7.3.3 Environment as natural resource

The definition of environment as natural resource has a limited application among the informants; Local Agenda 21 officers and community representatives together with members of environmental groups are those that clearly refer to the environment as anatural resource and complain about the difficult of mainstreaming a concern for environmental issues within regeneration. Among the difficulties of increasing environmental awareness is the acknowledgement of the complexity of environmental issues. The temporal dimension of environmental changes alters the perception of problems as well as improvements making the impact of lifestyle behaviour difficult to perceive and to communicate.

For those who consider environmental issues as those related to the use of natural resources, aspects such as energy consumption represent a key concern. In this sense, the link between the quality of the environment and better life conditions is made by bringing together the need to reduce energy consumption, as a purely environmental need, with the need to tackle social problems such as fuel poverty. By reducing energy consumption, costs are reduced; by relieving some of the financial pressure, quality of life can be improved. This argument is generally portrayed as a good approach to mainstreaming environmental concern within conventional consumer interests such as expenses reduction. However, although it links environmental to socio-economic aspects and therefore could be relevant to a vast range of actors, it remains confined to those informants who are directly concerned with the wider environmental resource agenda as in the case of environmental or Local Agenda 21 officers and representatives of environmental organisations.

However, those concerned with mainstreaming environmental concern into policy view the association between the local environment and quality of life with suspicion. As one of the informants observes, the concept of quality of life is becoming synonymous with a better environment at the expense of the environmental agenda:

> *"...I don't think environmental concerns, you know, fundamental things about resource conservation and all of that issue, I don't think that has really been, been taken on board. It's now more about quality of life again and so on and that's pretty much the same sort of things what, you know, what have been trying to do in the past as well".* (P7: 236-42)

Among the informants that are not directly involved in environmental activities, the environment as natural resource is often limited to open spaces and in particular the Lee Valley park; this is strictly seen as a recreational facility that is able to add value, such as economic value, to the areas surrounding the park. An aesthetic assessment is also attributed to the environment as natural resource; as the member of a local environmental group pointed out, a better environment is visually connected to the idea of walking on paths with trees and flowers rather then to good air quality. While the first is something that can be easily achieved, improving the quality of air in urban areas requires radical changes to the way we live and travel.

Overall the environment as natural resource is the main absentee on the regeneration agenda leaving the debate about the role of environmental considerations in the long-term goals of regeneration initiatives lacking in its central argument.

7.4 Decision-making: setting priorities

"We here are not actually discussing the connection between regeneration and sustainable development at all, I mean, maybe some people are thinking we are but I can tell you we are not" (P4: 362-364)

Setting priorities for regeneration initiatives is necessarily driven by local needs. However, this process takes place within government policy frameworks and actors oriented agendas. Recently policy guidelines have emphasised the importance for regeneration initiatives to become a needs oriented process; in this respect, measures such as the Index of Deprivation have become increasingly important in defining areas in needs of regeneration funding. In addition, the new policy agenda for Neighbourhood Renewal has stressed the importance of building a process of inclusive partnership able to draw together key actors, and to define and implement local strategies. In this respect, the regeneration process is increasingly about identifying and negotiating priorities among actors representing different interests. However, because of the different power relationship between the various policy discourses (section 6.3.1), actors hold different degrees of influence over the process of identifying the priorities for regeneration.

The above arguments about environmental improvements either as economic development measures or as an attempt to contribute to a better quality of life are well-established discourses that find resonance in main policy guidelines and are traditionally part of regeneration objectives. In this sense, they represent very powerful discourses able to define and circumscribe the 'environmental dimension' of regeneration initiatives. In contrast, the concern for those issues that can be defined with regards to the relationship between human activities and the conditions of the natural environment appears to have a poor influence on the regeneration agenda. However, although such an environmental agenda is not traditionally part of regeneration objectives, regeneration as a social process cannot be separated by its material expressions. In this sense it necessarily implies choices about transformation of the physical environment and reflects opinions about the human/environment interaction.

Within regeneration, the environmental agenda seems to be judgmentally debated in relation to the process of setting priorities. In particular, by following a comparative approach, different priorities are traded off against each other leaving little space for what are generally called the 'green' issues. As a local authority officer clearly explains, when it

comes to regeneration concentrating on green issues or championing green initiatives is not on the agenda:

> *"For local authorities or local communities certainly take that thing* (concern for the environment) *that is down the bottom of the critical economic priority list and take it near to the top, is quite enormous amount of special kind of local leadership. Special kind of local, you know, ... some council that suddenly says: 'Yes, we agree everything we are doing is green, get the rest let's just green us'. In a council like* (name) *with a lot of unemployment, asylum seekers, home assisted, is not going to abandon everything it does instead of something that is going to be green council. They have just got far more important things to deal with".* (sic) (P4: 444-55)

What is interesting about this position is that it undoubtedly defines the limited weight that environmental or green issues seem to have; as the informant explains, there are 'far more important' issues in the borough to be considered. Therefore, the first point is about priorities; for example, tackling unemployment is more important than embracing a green policy/strategy. This idea is well visualised through the concept of a priority list where economic concerns are at the top and green issues at the bottom. As the informant explains in order to change or to re-shuffle the priority list, a great deal of leadership is required. According to this image, there are needs in the borough, upon which priorities are defined and can only be mutually exclusive; therefore, it is not reasonable to abandon everything to become a green council.

The key argument is not only about leadership but also about logical discernment of which among the present needs, regeneration funding has to try to address. The metaphor of the priority list is very strong; by supporting and reinforcing a trading off approach, which compares the relative importance of different goals, environmental issues remains second to priorities such as economic development and job creation. And what this approach stresses is that it would be irrational to think otherwise.

For those informants who are concerned with mainstreaming environmental agenda into decision-making, the central issue is about challenging current approaches to priority setting as well as the mindset about urban development. Two of the main arguments are developing a culture of integration in policy development and decision-making and being proactive in the identification and implementation of alternative solutions to current problems. In terms of decision-making, the current approach tends to see priorities traded off against each other; in this way, main concerns such as employment will remain always more important then the environment. In contrast some informants observe, a culture of integration would see the economic priorities remain as priorities while considering environmental approaches to their solution. However, the mainstream approach to priority

setting remains clearly driven by balancing alternative concerns. As a local authority officers explains, looking after the environment and spending time in environmental projects has to be considered within their prioritisation:

"I mean all the work I mentioned in (name) *that we are trying to do around the canal side environment ... which is, you know, a resource which businesses have always turned their back on, they've just used it as backyard you know of their business. And we try sort of setting plants, we've made a lot of progress putting in a walkway there and returning sort of certain habits, still natural sort of environment, that kind of things which is all...Yeah, I mean it's all stuff, you know, we are very keen to do. The difficulty with us is sort of prioritisation, so how much time do you spend on projects like that compared to, you know, our ... stuff which is basically, you know, try to create jobs and sustain jobs ".* (P 11: 389-404)

On the other hand, the way in which prioritisation is done varies among the informants as their activities are related to a range of different agendas; in particular, the value given to environmental changes depends on the different social processes in which the actors are engaged.

7.4.1 Development choices: the use of urban land

One of the elements on which debates on development choice are invariably related is the use of urban land. Land is a fundamental resource especially in urban areas where its finite characteristic is more visible; urban regeneration deals with land mainly in economic terms, as its availability for re-development or infrastructures is often central to regeneration. The different ways in which a resource such as land can be considered is linked to the activities and interests of the different actors and to their valuation of environmental issues.

The significance that is attributed to land, to its transformation and its conservation is totally embedded in the type of process in which the actor is involved. Local authorities, business organisations, community groups and environmental organisations are engaged in different processes of change ranging from economic development to community safety, through to community empowerment, capacity building and environmental awareness (table 7.1). Throughout these different processes, the use and conservation of a resource such as land is perceived and debated in a variety of ways.

As one of the informants clearly explains from an economic development perspective, pressures on land use change represent a significant threat to the ability to retain business and to create employment. The protection of commercial space is therefore a main priority:

"...in certain areas in the Lee Valley, it's almost conflict between commercial and residential, particularly in (name) for example, where a lot of commercial properties have been sold and turned in residential property. So you are actually losing the ability to actually use commercial property ever again, you know, because that's changed, the use has changed...So we are looking at very creative ways of trying and protect what we have inherited because once you lose that spaces to residential you never see them as commercial spaces again". (P5: 169-75; 183-5)

The protection of urban land from development pressure is also a main concern of environmental conservation agencies that are engaged with protecting, and eventually increasing, the amount of open spaces. In this case, the protection of open spaces is connected with issues of biodiversity protection and human leisure activities; these uses imply an ecological value in the first case, and a recreational value in the second. In particular, given current development pressures and long-established uses, being able to raise awareness about the importance, either ecological or recreational, of open spaces can be difficult as one informant explains:

"And you can see the park is very much, sort of, we call it a green land, or green wedge amongst the top of the urban environment and there is a lot of pressure for the, yeah, the area. Because historically has been very much an industrial area and everybody has sort of just disregarded the open space". (P6: 81-5)

A different viewpoint is that of a community development worker that sees in the amount of space, buildings and fields for the use of the local community an essential infrastructure on which processes of participation and empowerment can be set up and actually develop:

"That's the difference to actually have a social sustainable, social sustainability, you've got to have buildings with spaces to enable the community to operate, without buildings, without playing field, without that space to operate, then you can't run your project or your programme or your club or whatever". (P16: 421-25)

The three diverse ways in which different informants describe the importance of protecting, and eventually transforming, land are obviously rooted in the type of processes in which the informants are involved. This seems to determine the context for competing claims over the use of land, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. However, as far as different claims remain focused on sectoral perspectives, they provide unilateral views on development alternatives.

For the majority of the informants, land has an economic value since it is related to a number of economic processes ranging from production and consumption to property development and financial revenue. In this way, the land use is connected with local aspects such as development opportunities and job creation, transport and accessibility and less local factors such as market forces and developers interests. For these informants, the

economic value of land seems to be mainly considered in relation to the ability that economic activities have to provide jobs and, on this base, its value and transformation is largely discussed in relation to the impacts that different activities are likely to determine. Conflict over land uses is primarily conducted between residential or commercial uses on the bases that the first offers the highest economic return while the second offers employment. Within commercial uses, conflict arises in relation to the quality and quantity of jobs that can be created and the balance that can be achieved given existing market forces. Although some land uses such as distribution centres are not welcome because of the limited amount of jobs they offer compared to the amount of land they occupy, negotiating a balance is difficult when market forces and financial incentives drive towards it. As one of the informants observes:

> *"So it's a balancing act, we need to try and curb those activities if we can but market forces are such that you can't sit on derelict land that was here which is known as a (name), was vacant for 28 years, yeah. I mean at the end of the day the European money came in underpin that, allowed us to remidiate the land, get trade off the contamination issue that was there and allow to develop with some confidence to go head with 20 thousand square feet of space unit that are lawfully occupied".* (P3: 287-94)

The conflict between land uses seems to be of primary importance for local authorities and those business organisations that are concerned with the creation of stable forms of employment for the local community. In this sense, the informants seem to be overcome by market forces that are able to push forward unwanted uses, such as warehouse and distribution centres. In particular, this is considered counterproductive on the basis that it does not produce long-term security and skilled jobs while exacerbating traffic problems throughout the area. However, since land is considered purely in terms of economic value, its transformation remains debated in traditional market terms of demand and supply where the role of different actors seems to have a certain importance in relation to their ability to influence such process.

In the conflict over land uses, another central argument is about retail development that, like distribution centres, is not likely to provide skilled jobs while increasing local traffic and therefore generating a negative effect on air quality. Similarly, the issue seems to be about the ability to negotiate development alternatives within a framework that poses zero value on the option of no development even if to protect environmental quality. Consequently for those that are involved in negotiating development proposals, partially satisfying alternatives are often better then nothing and this seems to be justified by the awareness of the limited power that local actors have in relation to bigger economic forces.

However, for those who are affected by development choices but do not exercise much power in negotiation over development options, the criticism over retail development has a local dimension. In fact, as the representative of a community group observes, by allowing large retailers within the areas, the viability of small shops is totally undermined and therefore the ability to produce and retain some form of wealth within the local area is also affected:

> *"Some of the smaller businesses, the little shops, the groceries, are facing fierce competition from the supermarket here and then there is the shopping* (name). *So they have been so seriously undercut...You know, you think if this is a borough that believes in regeneration in the way they are. When you're doing something, you don't do to the expense of someone else job".*
> (P 9: 595-606)

The criticism over retail development is also largely debated in relation to the generation of car traffic and its negative impact on air quality. In particular, a member of a local environmental group points out that decision-making about large retail developments are generally supported by the argument that public infrastructures are good enough to allow development. On the contrary, when alternative forms of residential development are proposed as in the example of car free estates, the argument is that public transport infrastructures are not good enough to allow this kind of development. According to the informant, the political and economic will wins over the rationale for development: how can public transport infrastructure be good enough for retail stores but not for car free estates? This kind of reasoning seems to be part of the way in which issues are portrayed and debated so that we are happy to believe that as long as there is a rail or underground station near by, people will go to do their shopping by train. In contrast, alternative forms of development such as car free estates, by being outside conventional thinking, require a greater political will as they involve a commitment to look at things from different perspectives.

Finally among current discourses about land use, is the idea that mixed form of development where residential and commercial uses are kept together, offers viable solutions addressing some of the pressure from residential use while retaining a certain amount of working space. This kind of argument is also used to describe the development of a better urban structure that could reducing commuting time; by keeping houses and jobs together, people have less need to travel. However, this argument like the above about retail development employs a simplistic view of current attitudes to travel disregarding more complex relationships between locations and travelling needs.

7.4.2 Which kind of city do we want?

Discourses on regeneration initiatives tend to be confined to a local dimension. Regeneration initiatives generally concentrate on specific locations, neighbourhoods or industrial estates. However, while considerations on development choices and regeneration strategies are formulated acknowledging the existence of external drivers such as market forces, European incentives or national policies, they seem to be poorly related to the urban scale. Discourses on regeneration rarely address how initiatives or strategies relate to a wider urban perspective although they contain views portraying different ideas of the city. For example, various informants refer to well-known regeneration initiatives such as Dockland and Canary Warf as examples of either the limitation or the potential of regeneration to deliver changes. Contrasting positions on the success or failure of such initiatives are clearly related to opposite ideas of what regeneration should deliver: office space for a world financial centre or improvement to the quality of life of local communities? Such contrasting views are about different ideas of the kind of city different actors pursue and the way in which regeneration initiatives should fit into these ideas.

For those working on city-wide strategies such as the mayoral strategies of the GLA, considering the city as a scale of decisions-making represent a new important input to strategy development and policy lobbying. A central question to the development of strategic framework for regeneration seems to be related to the different ways in which London is being considered. Conflicting views oppose the traditional idea of London as a world financial centre against the idea of London as a collection of local economies; for example, options to increase the ability to attract inward investments are not welcomed by those interested on focusing on local indigenous growth.

Similarly, the consideration of conventional economic values is considered incompatible with the concern for the environmental impact of London. For instance, the emphasis on retaining the World City status has negative implications on the city's ecological footprint or on the cost of living in London. These conflicting views support alternative agendas that carry different power and consequently have different degrees of influence over the development of long-term strategies. As one of the informants points out, the development of city-wide strategies represent one of the places where alternative political agendas come into conflict and where more powerful agendas emerge to radically inform the direction of strategies. Talking about the Spatial Development Strategy, she points out that:

"... there are some fundamental contradictions like the issue around the airports, airports and development around airports are still there, still in the strategy and they seem an important drive of growth...So in theory if you have got sustainable development as cross cutting theme plus you've got that requirement for consistency, integration you're getting there. But obviously that's the theory and it so much depends on different political agendas, how far that goes... If you decide that airports, more airport is the future for London the world city, now that is your basic starting point, I'm not saying is anybody starting point, but if that is your starting point, then obviously there are fundamental contradictions with sustainable development, you know"
(P 15: 131-34; 272-82)

The co-existence of conflicting directions depends on different political agendas; beyond theoretical commitments, the reality of influencing strategy direction depends on the effective capacity to negotiate among contrasting agendas. For example, in the current leading view of London as a world financial centre, development choices and regeneration strategies are instrumental to such an image. As one informant clearly explains, it is necessary to provide the kind of development that is suitable for the financial centre to continue to exist:

"...is that the City has to be served, it's like a big spider seating in the middle of the web and it's pulling things in from all over London, and one of the reasons that they (Corporation of London) become members was to encourage this link with the City to be developed right ways up the Lee Valley, right ways across so that actually the City can be served" (P5: 649-53)

The metaphor of the spider is very effective in describing the centrality of London's financial sector; for the informant, the regeneration of the Lee Valley can be suitably seen has part of this wider objective of 'serving the City' by supporting and developing activities that cluster around the financial sector. This idea is also strengthened by the informant's belief that traditional manufacturing activities cannot be replaced because of structural changes in the economy; in contrast, since the financial sector remains a key driver of growth, attention should be given to related business opportunities and to the new fast changing leisure industry.

On the contrary, those involved in mainstreaming environmental considerations into policy development, would like to see a more proactive attitude in relation to issues such as the lost of manufacturing for example by supporting the production of green products for the local market. In addition, engaging in a debate about the kind of city people want is considered a necessary exercise to challenge conventional views and to see alternative solutions in a wider perspective. In particular, one informant argued that while current strategies emphasise the role of London as a World City, a constructive debate could argue for the meaning and value of London as a sustainable World City. This would imply re-thinking the fundamental values driving the production and distribution of wealth, the

conventional measures of economic success and mainstream attitude towards environmental issues.

Finally, the rhetoric of regeneration policy tends to focus on the capacity of local neighbourhood to be transformed so that the gap between wealthy and poor areas can be reduced. However, as one informant suggests a different analysis could be suggested: the existence of areas that are constantly poor suggest that they cyclically accommodate the most vulnerable groups of people, that certain areas perform a specific function within the urban economy by continuously providing space for low-income groups. This together with considerations about housing market and structure and the turnover of the population outlines different patterns within urban areas that challenge some of the basic ideas of current policy guidelines. However, thinking that cities will invariably have poor and wealthy areas and that these kinds of gaps are structurally part of the way cities accommodate migrant populations with different needs, represents a non-politically correct argument that has a very limited place in the discourse of the informants.

7.5 Conclusion

Within regeneration, the discursive construction of ideas about the environment reveals the strength of two main arguments: environmental improvements as measures to support local economic development and environmental improvements as a means to better quality of life. In both interpretations, the term 'environment' is used to mean physically determined local features and conditions together with local (non-physical but spatial) aspects such as crime or safety. However, despite the similarities, the main difference is that the evaluation of what constitutes 'environmental issues' and therefore environmental improvements is determined on the basis of economic value in the first case (section 7.3.1) and social value in the second case (section 7.3.2). Environmental improvements are considered as market-related measures in the promotion of the Lee Valley as desirable business location or as realistic means of improving the quality of life of the local community.

These two well-established discourses about the impact of environmental improvements to the regeneration of deprived areas, show the power of discourses to influence the definition of issues and to circumscribe the conditions of their discussion. In the economic development discourse, environmental issues are road congestion and poor transport links but not air quality. Environmental improvements include the renewal of the buildings of

out of date industrial estates but not necessarily the introduction of energy efficiency measures. Similarly when it comes to quality of life, environmental improvements range from better managed playgrounds to safer entrances for railway stations, but rarely include alternative initiatives such as car free estates. This means that the environment is largely debated in terms of it being a physical surrounding and rarely includes more radical thinking of the relation between human activities and the natural environment. While this reflects the power of discourses to define and reinforce one interpretation over another, it is also linked to the idea that some discourses are about what is realistically considered achievable and can deliver immediate tangible results. From the perspectives of many of the informants, regeneration can deliver improvements to the physical environment instrumental to both economic or social objectives, but is not able to deliver radical changes. These considerations are also examples of the contraction of rationality within discourses and the way in which it is used to shape arguments about priorities and decision-making. In particular, there seems to be a link between dominant discourses and the rationality applied by them against other arguments, such as in the case that there is enough public transport for retail developments, whilst there is not enough public transport for car free estates.

The strength of the above arguments about environmental improvements needs to be also considered in relation to the weakness of a possible third argument, which is about the environment as a natural resource. The argument that environmental improvements equate with maintaining the integrity of ecosystems and with the conservation of natural resources, which is where the sustainability debate began, is the most weakly developed position within regeneration. This can result from the limited knowledge that the local actors have of the environmental agenda given that local practitioners are traditionally engaged with economic development issues or community development projects. Obviously, since the interpretation of the environment as a natural resource is the main absentee of the regeneration agenda, the actors' understanding of sustainable development goals is flawed (section 6.3). This also creates space for alternative interpretations of sustainable development that are not linked to its core ideas (section 6.3.1).

However, the different value that is attributed to environmental improvements, either with an economic or social denotation, shows the variety of meanings that similar elements can have when viewed from different perspectives. Therefore, it places the actors and the processes in which they are involved in a central position when considering the interaction

between society and environment. The same environment/quality of life argument may contain very different implications when considered from the different viewpoints of the local actors. For example, the argument about the use of open space and sport facilities for the well being of deprived communities contains different claims when argued from different perspectives. So while regeneration officers are keen to explain how the use of open spaces and sports facilities can help a community to become healthier, and possibly more economically active, community representatives frame their argument within issues of accessibility and ownership of high quality open spaces as part of a wider discussion about community empowerment and emancipation.

The informants' positions about development choices also demonstrates how different actors, because of the nature of the processes in which they are involved, attribute different values to the use, conservation and transformation of land. Their interpretations can be seen as part of distinct discourses about economic development, resource conservation or community empowerment. On one hand, it appears that these different discourses determine competing claims about the use and transformation of available land and therefore offer an insight into different power relationships. Some discourses are more powerful because they relate to main processes such as economic processes and therefore are more successful in driving changes. This is clear in relation to the current approach to priority setting that is mainly based around distinct sets of priorities such as economic development and job creation. On the other hand, it is interesting to observe how it is almost impossible to attribute a single value to something like land because of the co-existence of different interpretations. If sustainability requires re-defining society's long-term goals in the light of far-reaching environmental considerations, it has to be considered how such a variety of interpretations can contribute to deliver changes. In this sense, it also seems important to consider how different ideas of the city contribute to the creation of the larger discourses that inform debates and eventually reveal, beyond the impact of local interventions, the wider direction of change.

Overall, the actors' valuation of the objectives that regeneration aims to deliver and of the environmental transformations that such objectives entail, offer an interesting insight into the power of discourses to define, reinforce and circumscribe some arguments and, consequently, to underplay others. However, the construction of such discourses seems to be primarily rooted within the social processes in which the actors are involved. In this sense, there seems to be a strong role for processes, such as economic development or

community empowerment, to influence policy making and, in this case, the formulation of sustainable development policy goals.

Chapter eight

CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Introduction

During the 1990s, urban regeneration policy saw the introduction of the notion of sustainable regeneration as a new paradigm interlinked to the policy demand for designing and delivering integrated solutions to the complexity of urban issues. The contribution of sustainable regeneration as a policy objective has been essentially defined around the idea of delivering, simultaneously, three different agendas of economic competitiveness, social inclusion and environmental improvement. In recent decades, the urban agenda has evolved from a strictly economic imperative that would eventually deliver on other needs such as social matters, towards more specific attention to the issue of social exclusion and the need for 'joined-up' thinking to deliver on more than one front. At the same time the commitment towards sustainable development both at international and national level, has generated the demand for mainstreaming the notion of sustainable development into urban policy. The evolution of urban policies and the progress of the sustainability agenda has contributed to shaping the policy context for the development of sustainable regeneration as a key policy objective. This has been initially pursued through policy guidelines addressing how sustainable development principles could be integrated within regeneration (DETR, 1998a) and by formally requiring the promotion of sustainable regeneration among the regeneration objectives of SRB bids (DETR, 1997a). The policy setting has then expanded into a number of new policy programmes such as the Neighbourhood Renewal agenda, new delivery mechanisms such as the Local Strategic Partnerships as well as new institutional arrangements such as the establishment of the RDAs and, in London, the LDA where contributing to sustainable development remains among their objectives.

In this context of increasing use of the terms 'sustainable development' and 'sustainable regeneration', as well as of development of a new related terminology, there are several doubts about the success of mainstreaming sustainable development into regeneration and about the role that the issues raised by the notion of sustainable development are playing in the urban agenda. In this respect, this research has aimed to achieve a better understanding

of the factors shaping the formulation of sustainable development as a goal of regeneration policy.

8.2 Limitation of the study

There are limitations that can be identified as shortcomings that belong to the research process and others deriving from the inadequacy of the research to investigate much wider questions. In the first case, it is important to include the limitations that have been generated by the limited access to the research participants. As explained in chapter 4, the sampling of the informants is affected by the impossibility of accessing all those involved in regeneration, as in the specified example of local authority officers (section 4.5.2). In addition, critiques can be made as to the representativiness of the community, voluntary and business sectors; sectors that surely comprise a multiplicity of interests and activities which this research might has been unable to fully represent. Furthermore, it is the case that the perspective of the wider public is not represented in this study since the interviews are limited to those directly involved in regeneration. The consideration of the views of the public could have opened another perspective to the research, involving a comparison between the view of the agencies as collective views and those of the public who can express both collective and individual views.

With respect to the adequacy of the research to investigate its stated purposes, it is necessary to recognise that it remains a limited piece of work, in terms of time and resources, and essentially an external contribution to the understanding of the issue of sustainable development within urban regeneration. In this respect an actor-oriented approach to the research would have provided different insights, since a higher involvement of the research participants would have produced important reflections on the results discussed below and more specific outcomes.

8.3 Results and implications

Different factors contributed to the shaping of the conceptual framework that informed this research. In particular the contents of existing frameworks on sustainable regeneration, the results of the initial pilot study, and recent theoretical contributions on sustainable development, have provided different inputs and understanding throughout the research process. The research has been informed by the ideas that sustainability is characterised by

a key ideological dimension, given that people hold different ideas about the role of the environment and the direction of societal development (section 2.2), and that it refers to a complex and dynamic condition related to the viability of the relationship between societies and the environment over a long time (section 2.3). These ideas have led to a consideration of how the different interpretations of sustainable development inform the process of the formulation of sustainable development policy goals within regeneration and how the actors' valuation of regeneration objectives contribute to shaping the relationship between societies and the environment.

In exploring the formulation of sustainable development as a goal of regeneration policy, attention has been given to the interpretation of this policy goal by local actors. This points to the significance of the development of discourses about sustainability that define the setting within which alternative policy options are considered. The development of discourses has been considered with respect to the actors' interpretation of the terms 'sustainable development', 'sustainability' and 'sustainable regeneration' and in relation to broader issues of their valuation of the relationship between regeneration objectives and environmental transformations. In addition, it has been emphasised that the process of policy making and implementation takes place in the context of urban policy that is defined by a range of policy agendas, particularly those of economic development, by regeneration programmes, that define the contents and timing of regeneration initiatives, and by certain categories of actors. Overall, the research variables have been defined in relation to the policies - as a key structuring element of the regeneration process and of the actors' understanding of environmental and regeneration objectives - and to the agency of the actors - as those interpreting and implementing regeneration policies in the light of locally relevant objectives (section 4.3.3).

The definition of the research variables in relation to the actors and policy framework, as the two central areas of investigation, requires a reconsideration of Söderbaum's conceptualisation (fig. 2.5 and 2.6) of the relationship between the actor and context in order to draw some final conclusions. Söderbaum describes the relationship between the actors and the context as a process of adaptation, suggesting a two way interaction, mediated by knowledge, power and resources. The findings of this research show that this two way interaction in fact exhibits considerable imbalance, with the context representing a key structuring element of the actors' interpretations of sustainable development policy goals as well as their valuation of regeneration objectives and environmental

transformations. An example is represented by the influence that leading policy discourses have on the actors' interpretations of sustainable regeneration as a policy goal (section 6.3.1). Similarly, the policy frameworks defined by the funding programmes, strongly constrain the actual definition of regeneration goals by identifying the themes as well as the timescales of regeneration initiatives.

However, it is possible to identify ways in which the actors can influence the context; ideologies, theories and lobbying activities are among the elements that are able to deliver changes in the context. For example, the findings of this research suggest that the lobbying activities of environmental organisations and consultancies can be identified as a way of influencing the context. In this respect, as Söderbaum highlights, power, knowledge and resources are key features determining the actual potential of these actors to deliver change. However, the results of this study indicate that, in the relationship between the actors and the context, the scale of policy making is a key variable. For example, the lobbying activities of environmental groups are clearly identifiable at a strategic policy scale, as in the case of the Mayoral strategies. In contrast at the local level, at the level of the implementation, environmental groups seem to have very little ability to influence the context. For example, by looking at the formulation of local actors' preferences, it was apparent that the preferences of local environmental groups tended to overlap with those of community groups, as their concerns become increasingly linked to the needs of a specific locality. In the specific case of the environmental groups analysed within this study, this resulted in a degree of visibility that varied with the scale of policy making. In this respect, it could be argued that it is at the strategic level that ideas and long-term visions are elaborated and therefore alternative arguments are most likely to influence them. In contrast at the local level, the specific conditions of each locality and the need to operate within existing policy structures significantly constrain the development of alternatives. At the same time, it should be noted that it is often only initiatives at the local level that can provide concrete practical examples of alternative solutions, which can play an important role in influencing contextual change.

Overall it seems that the issue of interaction between actors and context and the relevance of the scale of policy making, as in the case of the strategic level where ideas and long-term visions are constructed, emphasises the importance of the role of ideas and, therefore, of discourses. The results of this study indicate that the role of leading discourses about environment and regeneration are influential in circumscribing the actors' valuations of

environmental issues, environmental improvements and environmental changes (section 7.3). In the specific context of this research, the limiting role of such discourses is evident, as they constrain the way in which the environment is defined and valued by the local actors in a manner that leaves out the interpretation of the environment as a natural resource. As a consequence, they influence the way in which sustainable development as a policy goal is understood as well as the definition of policy alternatives.

The influential role of discourses has to be viewed in relation to issues of power. The different access to the policy process of the various actors and the different importance that ideas holds within a certain policy context, in this case within urban policy, is clearly apparent. Power is differently distributed among the actors, especially in relation to key phases of policy making such as setting priorities and considering alternative options. In fact, it should be stressed that, although working in partnership is a key characteristic of regeneration initiatives, actors hold different degrees of power. For example in the majority of the regeneration projects examined in this study, local authorities were the key leaders as well as the primary delivers of services. This consequently resulted in local authorities holding more power in setting the priorities of the regeneration agenda. In contrast, the majority of the community and voluntary groups interviewed expressed a clear difficulty in actually participating in the setting of the policy agenda. Regeneration initiatives are still perceived as predefined in terms of contents and objectives. In addition, certain ideas have differing importance within urban policy. The need to deliver long term change, the importance of community participation and ownership of regeneration initiatives, and the focus on holistic solutions that can deliver on more then one policy objective, are key ideas within contemporary urban policy and consequently occupy a considerably more powerful position than ideas about the environmental conservation of natural resources.

In addition, the variety of roles that each individual can take on has an influence on the development and affirmation of ideas. This aspect came through clearly during the interviews as the informants were expressing different viewpoints as a result of the different roles they were endorsing. On one hand this emphasises how the activities and the interests, related to the role of the actors, shape the actors' interpretations of sustainable development. However, the importance of different viewpoints with regard to policy making has to be considered in relation to the ability to bring different interests inside the policy process. In particular, in the process of defining goals and priorities the roles of the actors can represent an influential element. For example, according to some environmental

groups, having among those involved in regeneration initiatives individuals participating as parents would ensure that objectives such as air quality were more strongly supported. Therefore, the results of this research show that the specific role that the actors have in the regeneration process is indeed shaping their interpretation of sustainable development as a regeneration policy goal. However, at the same time, because of the multiplicity of roles that actors can take on there is space for different interests to be taken inside the policy process as they might arise from different roles.

Overall, in the definition of sustainable development as a regeneration policy goal, the discursive construction of regeneration objectives and environmental change plays a central role. There are leading discourses able to influence the policy process as they are produced and reaffirmed by the combined effect of certain policy themes and the actors endorsing them. There are less powerful discourses that try to put together an alternative account of both the objectives of regeneration and the role of the environment in pursuing such objectives. On the base of the results of this study it is possible to identify two main considerations about the ability of discourses to be influential. First, discourses are supported and strengthened by the policy framework; therefore, some policy themes have a central role in regeneration, as they are traditionally associated with regeneration initiatives. At the same time, regeneration practitioners are more familiar with traditional regeneration policy themes, such as economic regeneration or physical improvements, rather than sustainable development. In this sense, there seems to be an issue with the number of people endorsing certain ideas and therefore reproducing them through leading discourses. On the contrary, the number of actors involved in developing an alternative account is relatively small. Second, some discourses are linked to ideas that are associated with existing examples as in the case of specific regeneration projects. It seems that the ability to refer to practical situations is important in strengthening a discourse. In contrast, alternative discourses by referring to initiatives whose application is limited in practice, as in the case of car free estate, are perceived as less feasible and therefore remain only as theoretical considerations as long as pilot initiatives are not developed.

The answers to the research questions define an interlinked context where the policy, both as language and contents, the interpretations of the actors, and the objectives pursued are elements that result from each other influence and character. However, although such interaction represents a main aspect, the final consideration of the research findings needs to be broken down further in order to present a clear discussion of their significance. The

empirical findings provided by the study can be defined with regard to the research questions in three areas: the role of regeneration policy as context, both locally and nationally, in shaping the relevance of sustainable development to urban regeneration; the variety of interpretations of sustainable development; and finally, the importance of the processes, in which the actors are engaged, in shaping their valuation of regeneration long-term objectives and of the environmental transformations such objectives entail.

8.3.1 The policy framework

The contribution of sustainable development to the regeneration agenda as a subject of policy intervention is vague. The same definition of sustainable regeneration, formally introduced within the SRB programme in 1997, by aiming at *"improving and protecting the environment and infrastructure, including housing"* generalises the contribution of sustainable development to an area of concern that can include almost everything - the environment, infrastructure and housing – whilst also leaving space for different interpretations. As illustrated in chapter 5, under the objective of promoting sustainable regeneration, it is possible to find rather different aims ranging from delivering better transport facilities to those supporting cross sector partnerships (section 5.4).

Overall it seems that sustainable development has been simply added to the regeneration policy agenda without generating any change to it, aside from the obligation to refer to it. In fact, while it is possible to track the continuous development of the sustainable development agenda from its initial introduction as a policy objective in the SRB to its presumed strategic regional role in the RDAs, it is also necessary to acknowledge that its impact on the urban agenda seems very limited in practice. In this respect, the elusiveness of the policy language has played a crucial role. A central element has been represented by the national strategy for sustainable development *"A better quality of life"* (DETR, 1999), which introduced the objective of sustainable development as synonymous with quality of life. With this strategy, a new policy account has been offered about sustainable development that, far from representing the effort of reconciling environmental and development objectives, means ensuring a better quality of life for everybody, now and for generations to come. The difference between these two objectives has had an impact on the interpretations that have developed and the consensus that has been built across different groups of actors. While reconciling environment and development can be perceived as a

more conflictual target, ensuring a better quality of life can be seen as a more acceptable one. This is particularly important with regard to the four strands that the strategy identifies as elements necessary to deliver a better quality of life; social progress which recognises the needs of everyone; effective protection of the environment; prudent use of natural resources; and high and stable levels of economic growth and employment. The need for pursuing these four principles does not say anything about the conflicts that can arise from potential incompatibility between them, while at the same time it offers a variety of objectives that different groups of actors can recognise and champion.

The impact of the message of the national strategy on other policy documents and on the urban agenda has been generated by the requirement to adhere to the national strategy's definition/interpretation of sustainable development and its guiding principles. As Benneworth et al (2001) have clearly pointed out, this is the element that has generated a strong convergence among the strategic documents of the RDAs around the definition of sustainable development (section. 5.2.2). Government advice on supporting its own definition had given the RDAs little space to debate and to produce their own definition of sustainable regional development. In fact, instead of developing regional based interpretation of sustainability, the RESs have ended up proposing very similar diagrams and converging around the idea that sustainability means achieving 'win-win' solutions. According to Benneworth et al (2001) much of the debate has been constrained by what he calls the S/E/E model that shows social, economic and environmental forces linked together to achieve sustainable development. The limitation of this model (that is the E^3 model (fig. 3.1)), is that the assumption that economic growth is compatible to social inclusion and environmental protection via the search for 'win-win' situations, fails to underline that only some forms of economic growth can be compatible with environmental and social targets, and that for others, there remains a conflict between these three agendas and the different degree of priorities that they represent. The possibility of delivering 'win-win' solution is obviously a positive one, but the real issue is that this cannot be done without some radical change to the way in which economic growth is pursued or to the objective of economic development. It is not only by deciding to go for 'win-win' solutions that it is possible to achieve them, but this in fact requires renegotiating some of the traditional approaches to economic development and to the way in which priorities are set.

The Government's definition of sustainable development as a process for ensuring a better quality of life and the use of diagrams, where the social, economic and environmental dimensions support each other as result of 'win-win' solutions, have created an understanding of sustainable development based on the idea that economic growth will generate social inclusion and environmental protection. This easily allows for a consensus around the commitment to sustainable development as well as reducing the focus on debating conflictual situations. The result is that, it risks 'flattening' the notion of sustainable development by simplifying the challenges that a commitment to sustainable development would actually pose.

Another important aspect is the relation between the way in which sustainable development is constructed as an objective of policy and its interpretation and understanding by different groups of actors. By matching the achievement of sustainable development to the ability to deliver the three agendas of economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection simultaneously, the contents of the notion of sustainable development are replaced to the extent that it is difficult to identify specific actions towards sustainability. Again in the study conducted by Benneworth et al (2001) on the RESs contribution to sustainable development, it is stressed that sustainable development, far from representing an objective on its own, seems to be a context, a driver or an operating principle (section 5.2.2). The lack of explanation of what constitutes sustainable development as a policy objective that can be expressed through a set of actions or targets is common to many policy documents, where the contribution to sustainable development seems to represent just an added statement.

In the Lee Valley and for the period of this study (1999 to 2002), the main regeneration policy framework has been represented by the SPDs linked to the Objective 2 designation and by the SRB programme (Rounds 5 and 6). Both programmes have been characterised by a requirement for considering sustainable development within regeneration and, at the same time, by a limited reference to the relevance of sustainable development to the regeneration process. In this respect the introduction of sustainable development as a cross -cutting theme in the SPDs (section 5.4) remains a formal act that does not seem able to add any specific argument to the core discourse on the regeneration of the Lee Valley. The line of argument that can be identified throughout the SPDs, and recently re-proposed in the LDA strategy (LDA, 2001) puts together the main issue of economic decline of the Lee Valley with the need to address local issues such as its limited accessibility, the poor

environment and the rundown estates. In a context that looks at business support and physical improvements as two main regeneration concerns, sustainable development has been partly introduced in relation to community economic development. Sustainable development has been translated into the demand for locally generated wealth and employment opportunities. Overall the references to the creation of 'sustainable wealth' in the 1997 SPD and of 'sustainable opportunities' in the 2000 SPD refer to a literal meaning of the term sustainable as lasting; in this respect, it is necessary to acknowledge that the role of sustainable development in the SPDs remains more a formal policy exercise rather then a substantial contribution.

Overall, the limited impact of the notion of sustainable development within the regeneration policy framework results from a vagueness and ambiguity of contents together with an issue of language, in terms of an overuse of the attributes 'sustainable' and 'sustainability'. The widespread reference to sustainable development in policy documents leads to a lack of specification about the relevance of the notion of sustainable development to the regeneration agenda and of the actions required to implement such an 'overarching' policy objective. The policy representation of sustainable development has created vagueness and ambiguity which in turn has generated a lack of clarity among the different groups of actors, to the extent that it is possible to identify very different discourses connected to sustainable development and sustainable regeneration, reflecting the space left to local actors to formulate their own interpretations.

8.3.2 The actors' interpretations

The research has shown (chapter 6) that there are indeed a variety of meanings that the informants have associated to the terms sustainable development and sustainability and that they cannot be considered simply as the result of different ideologies. In fact, the meanings given by the informants to the terms 'sustainability' and 'sustainable development' lead to the identification of distinct set of interpretations rather then different positions around a common set of ideas. While the literature on sustainable development is articulated around different interpretations of the same core ideas (section 2.2), as a result of different ideological positions, the informants' interpretation is articulated into discrete sets of meanings. One explanation is that the role and the context in which the actors operate, shapes the process by which ideas are developed and reassessed. In addition, this

process takes place in a context of policy vagueness and ambiguity that has facilitated the construction of different understanding of sustainability. The meanings that are given to the term 'sustainable regeneration' are specifically linked with the roles, activities and interests of the informants but also to certain policy discourses. It seems clear that the discourses that have a certain policy resonance are reproduced within the interpretation and understanding of the concept of sustainable regeneration, while those that receive less attention on the regeneration agenda are left in a marginal position (section 6.4). Ensuring higher community participation is a key theme of present regeneration policy together with the commitment towards reforming urban policy through a comprehensive approach to regeneration initiatives that replaces project-based funding with more long-term strategic schemes. In contrast, the keystone sustainability argument of the link between environmental and developmental choices finds little resonance within the current regeneration agenda, apart from issues of improvements to the physical environment. Overall, the relation between the way in which sustainable development is represented as a subject of policy and the interpretations that specific groups of actors have constructed as a result of their role and activities, reinforces some meanings and inhibits others.

However, it is also necessary to recognise that the actors that are familiar with the original sustainable development argument may have a very limited role in regeneration. The involvement of environmental groups in regeneration is traditionally low and, where it take place, it overlaps with that of community groups, making themes of involvement and participation more relevant. At the same time, there are cases where the contribution of environmental groups to regeneration, as in the case of the Sustainable GLA Coalition, results in an attempt to generate a debate about alternative approaches to economic development and regeneration (section 5.3). In this respect, it is necessary to acknowledge the potential contribution that exists in the participation of specific groups of actors in regeneration in widening the debate on the issues raised by the notion of sustainable development and in making the case for their relevance to regeneration. In the formulation of sustainable development policy goals within regeneration, the rules governing the regeneration process represents a key structuring force, defining what and who is included. At the moment, the policy goals of regeneration programmes and the categories of actors that participate in the regeneration process, with their diverse power, roles and activities, portray a multifaceted reality, where different understandings of the meaning of sustainable development coexist under a similar terminology. This suggests that there is a limited

debate on sustainable development since is difficult to imagine a form of communication where participants use the same word to mean different things. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that an increased participation of environmental groups in the design and implementation of regeneration initiatives can be instrumental in promoting the debate on sustainable development. Environmental groups would promote debates on sustainable development policy goals as their organisation's priority. At the same time, increasing the involvement of environmental groups would require some sort of change in the rules that define who is included in the regeneration process.

The process of 'reciprocal influence' between the discourses that derive from the policies and those that are shaped by the actors, have gradually generated the development of new and sectoral meanings which cause, at the same time, a visible loss of the 'original' meanings of the notion of sustainable development. This loss is evident to the extent that it is possible to find policy reports and research (Fordham, 1995; Carley, 1998, 2000)[8] informed by the idea that sustainable regeneration means lasting regeneration, and therefore developed entirely outside the wider debate generated by the notion of sustainable development (chapter 2).

Overall the issue of the variety of interpretations that are attributed to sustainable development raises a necessary question over its validity: do we need the term 'sustainable development'? Can we talk about the themes that belong to the sustainable development discourse without using the term 'sustainable development' or do we need it and therefore is it important to restore its meaning? The idea that sustainable development has to be understood as a political and social construct recognises in its different interpretations a strength, as part of the necessary dialectic condition required to reshape societal goals and strategies towards sustainability. However, by giving completely different meanings to sustainable development, such a dialectic condition and ensuing struggle over the direction of social and political development, can be lost. In this context, what is required is clear recognition of the specific contribution of sustainable development, which does not mean that we need to reach a unitary definition or understanding. In fact, sustainable development represents a wide-reaching thematic container whose strength lies in drawing attention to issues generated by the interconnected nature of environmental protection, economic development and social justice and their diverse temporal scales. In this respect, discarding the term 'sustainable development' on the basis that its core issues can be

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[8] Research funded and published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Urban Regeneration Programme

addressed via consideration of its individual themes creates the problem of how to address the problematic relationship between the individual themes. At the same time, recognition that the term 'sustainable development' provides a specific contribution poses a problem of how to rehabilitate its meaning, but not in terms of one specific definition. The rehabilitation of the term requires understanding that sustainable development represents an important generator of awareness and debate about the direction of societal development: in other words agreement is necessary about the topic of the discussion. On the contrary, having actors' interpretations of sustainable development/regeneration that range from higher community involvement to lasting regeneration outcomes (section 6.2.4) undermines the potential contribution of the sustainable development discourse. Rehabilitating sustainable development requires, on the one hand, a process of education where there is more direct contact between scientific and lay interpretations of sustainable development, such as occurs in the case of actor oriented research. On the other hand, it requires an increased and open critique of the inappropriate use of the terms 'sustainable development', 'sustainability' and 'sustainable regeneration'.

Another relevant finding is that some of the actors intentionally attribute different meanings to these terms when used in different contexts. It is difficult to understand why some actors are likely to interpret sustainable development as a green approach to development initiatives or as concern about resource depletion, but would explain sustainable regeneration as lasting regeneration, except by recognising a sort of 'language/meaning convention' (section 6.4) that can derive from a logic of appropriateness with the culture of the organisation in which the actor operates (Rydin, 2003). However, the development of conventional sets of meaning is a central element affecting the ability of progressing or inhibiting some themes within the debate on sustainable development. Therefore if sustainable regeneration, for the majority of those involved in designing and implementing regeneration initiatives, is about lasting outcome or ensuring higher community involvement, it is clear that some key themes belonging to the notion of sustainability remain outside local debates on sustainable regeneration unless the actor decides to challenge the context in which such meanings are generated and reproduced. According to this analysis the actor represents a potential agent of change but at the same time the culture of the organisation in which he/she operates constitute a powerful structuring force. The relationship between the use of certain meanings and the culture, goals and priorities of certain organisations represents an aspect on which further work

could be done especially in order to understand the constraints and possibility that such relationship entails. With respect to the finding of this research, the process of intentionally attributing different meanings to sustainability has a limiting effect. In particular, the informants that were aware of a different meaning were not interested in bringing that new meaning into their organisation. Clearly these findings are not exhaustive, since this aspect was not the focus of the study, and further research can be developed to explore this aspect in depth.

Overall the development of discrete set of interpretations around the terms 'sustainable development' and 'sustainable regeneration', means that the actors use similar terms to indicate different things. The main consequence of this finding is that it demonstrates that sustainable development policy goals are not debated and poses a key question about the way in which such debate can be stimulated. At the moment, the different actors' interpretations of sustainable development, far from constituting *"the political struggles over the direction of social and political development"* (Jacobs, 1999:26), seem only to indicate a lack of dispute.

The recently established LSPs provide a new local forum that brings together a range of local agencies; they can be the object of further research in order to assess whether, by bringing together a wider range of actors, the debate on sustainable development can be stimulated and whether these local fora can be instrumental in raising awareness about sustainable development among those actors that are less familiar with the term. Therefore, if this research has highlighted the existence of discrete and contextual actors' accounts of sustainable development that suggest a lack of debate on sustainable development policy goals, further research needs to be directed at attaining a better understanding of the factors that can stimulate such debate by exploring the process of communication between the different actors.

8.3.3 The actors' valuation

This research has attempted to explore Norton's hypothesis about valuation as the key driver in the management of the relationship between society and environment. This has required investigation into the role of valuation in the formulation of environmental and regeneration goals and, overall, in policy making. In Norton's theorisation, the obligation to preserve options and opportunities for the well being of future generations represents the

core idea of sustainability. In the definition of what represents future options and opportunities, human valuation represents a central variable (section 2.3). In order to express current new preferences (such as sustaining future opportunities) and to link such preferences to physical features (such as resilience), Norton envisages for values to be considered as an integral part of the 'adaptational process' and for adaptive management to test and examine values and preferences as an empirical hypothesis (Norton, 1996a). While an examination of all elements of Norton's theory is beyond the scope of this research, his central idea about human valuation, as an important variable in the analysis of the relation between society and environment, has been explored. In particular, knowing how current priorities and long-term aspirations are constructed by the social actors and considering the role that environmental considerations play in such formulation, can explain how the actors' valuation influences the policy process. In fact, key phases of policy making, such as setting priorities and considering alternative options are expected to be influenced by the way in which local actors construct priorities and assess the changes that regeneration is likely to achieve.

In the formulation of regeneration objectives, the relation between present preferences and long-term aspirations is often mediated by issues of feasibility, in terms of realistic expectations of what can be delivered. Since regeneration is dependent on funding regimes, the formulation of regeneration goals and objectives has to be considered within a government framework that defines themes as well as timetables. Consequently, there is a considerable gap between the formulation of very generic long-term objectives and the identification of current feasible projects objectives. In this sense, the temporal dimension of regeneration initiatives seems to be shaped by the funding regime and its requirements, and by a certain degree of unpredictability that is linked to the continuous changes in regeneration policy and its funding system.

The construction of ideas about the role of the environment and the identification of environmental issues, improvements and changes, has shown a complex, and sometimes contradictory, construction of values. These contain different perspectives on what constitutes the 'local environment' and of its role in the transformations that regeneration initiatives can deliver. What prevails is a dominant interpretation of the term 'environment' that is used to indicate physically determined local features and conditions; within which environmental issues and improvements seem to be determined by either an economic or a socially relevant argument (section 7.3). The arguments about environmental

improvements, either as economic development measures or as attempts to contribute to a better quality of life, are well-established discourses able to define and circumscribe the 'environmental dimension' of regeneration initiatives. In fact, the interpretations of what is the local environment imply a consequent definition of what are environmental issues, improvements and changes. Overall, this shows the power of discourses to influence the definition of issues and the conditions of their discussion and consequently to circumscribe policy options. In this respect, it is important to acknowledge that the analysis of the actors' valuation has shown that the interpretation of the environment as a natural resource is the main absentee on the regeneration agenda. Clearly, this aspect has an impact on the overall actors' understanding of sustainable development policy goals since it deprives the notion of sustainability of its central argument. The limited interpretations of the environment as a natural resource needs further attention; generally it could be attributed to the fact that regeneration actors are traditionally distant from the environmental agenda. In addition, the policy framework that defines the thematic context in which regeneration initiatives are developed makes very little reference to environmental considerations.

In the formulation of regeneration objectives, the process of prioritisation represents a central aspect; local issues such as unemployment are considered key priorities that 'necessarily' prevail over other considerations. The prioritisation varies among the informants as their activities are related to a range of different agendas and obviously, the power relationship between different groups of actors involved in participating in the regeneration process, affects the definition of priorities. This poses a key question about the way in which the arguments of less powerful actors can become more influential and challenge dominant ways of thinking. According to the findings of this research, the combined effect of what is regarded as important by those that are involved in designing and implementing regeneration initiatives, together with the thematic frameworks defined by the policy context, shape the definition of regeneration priorities and the rationality supporting them (section 7.4).

However, although the actors' valuation of the environment in relation to regeneration objectives seems to be limited to well-established and powerful discourses and to the effect of prioritising some key concerns over others, the research findings suggest that the valuation of environmental changes also depends on the different social processes in which the actors are engaged. The research has shown that the importance that is given to processes of preservation and transformation of urban land, whether it is about

development options or about the conservation and access to open spaces, varies in relation to the different processes involved (section 7.4.1). The perception and the valuation of changes that are derived by choices about socio-economic transformations are embedded in the same processes of transformation. In this way the valuing of environmental change with respect to, for example, the protection and access to high quality open spaces can become part of a process of community empowerment and participation. This finding points to the fact that different social processes can be instrumental in the promotion of sustainability goals. Whilst it would be impossible to assume that all actors become involved or interested in processes of environmental protection, it is both desirable and possible to envisage a process whereby the conservation of natural resources becomes part of other processes of societal transformation.

Overall, the results suggest that there are three main elements shaping the process of actors' valuation of regeneration objectives and of the environmental transformations such objectives entail: the existence of powerful discourses that circumscribe the definition and the understanding of the role of the environment, and consequently policy options; the use of a certain rationality, often expressed through the trade-off approach between what constitutes regeneration priorities; and the character of the social process in which the actors are engaged.

The main aspect connected with the establishment of leading regeneration discourses where the environment has a limited position, is that key regeneration actors are traditionally not familiar with the environmental agenda. In addition, the policy framework defines topics and areas of concern for regeneration initiatives making some themes more relevant than others. In this sense the manner in which policy directions and leading regeneration discourses interrelate seem to work as an inhibiting mechanism towards certain arguments. In terms of a dominant rationality, there is widespread reference to the need to trade-off different objectives on the basis of their relative importance. Among the informants there is a common attitude of valuing environmental considerations as secondary aspects in relation to more pressing issues, such as job creation. The application of rationality in setting the priorities is generally justified by the requirements of the funding regime, in terms of evaluation of the outcomes of regeneration projects, and by the amount of funds available. In this respect, it seems that the scope of the sustainability agenda has been substantially narrowed to what is achievable and tangible and serves

economic or social goals, whilst meeting government expectations to acknowledge 'sustainability'.

Finally, the character of the social processes that are part of the regeneration process represents an important element in shaping the actors' valuation. In particular, it is possible to recognise that the valuation of local resources changes in relation to different processes in which the actors are involved. The research has explored this aspect in relation to the use of land and open spaces; however, this needs to be further explored in order to obtain a better understanding of the relationship between valuation and processes. At the moment it seems important to acknowledge that the objectives and the activities that characterise the different social processes are central elements in the construction of the actors' valuation of regeneration objectives and of the environmental transformations that are concerned with such objectives.

Ultimately the question is how can the role of environmental transformations be debated in a way that remains relevant to the different actors and processes, and that is instrumental to the promotion of sustainable development? Is Norton's idea about the identification of a deeper aspect, that he defines as nature's creativity, in which there is a common valuing of nature as a multiscalar system of creative process which underlies a multiplicity of ways in which humans value and relate to the natural environment, a possible way forward? Such an approach has the advantage of identifying a deeper underlying valuing of nature in a manner that embraces the multiplicity of ways in which different people value the environment in practice. Or are there other ways to shape the relevance of the environmental dimension of regeneration? Since there is a plurality of ways in which environmental transformations are perceived and valued, then the central issue becomes building environmental considerations into the various processes of economic development, community empowerment, quality of life that concur into regeneration. Overall, social processes seem to be important drivers as they play a significant role in shaping the actors' valuation of environmental transformations. In this sense, further work could be directed to a more specific examination of the valuation of environmental transformations in relation to different social processes in order to assess how environmental considerations can be promoted in a way that is relevant to the different actors and processes.

APPENDIX A

The pilot study

A pilot study was conducted at the beginning of the research in order to draw some preliminary considerations on the topic of the research that would help in the definition of the research questions. In particular, given the widespread reference to sustainable development and sustainable regeneration in policy documents and the development of operational frameworks addressing sustainability within regeneration, it was considered necessary to get a first evaluation of the relevance of sustainable development to the regeneration process taking place in the area of study. The pilot study included an initial analysis of the main local regeneration strategies and bids and a set of interviews with key informants throughout the area of study.

Results indicated that the interests and the priorities of the different agencies involved in the regeneration process were strongly reflected in their interpretations and definitions of sustainable development. Given that the majority of local partnerships were engaged in economic regeneration projects, the sustainable development agenda was generally expressed in terms of physical improvements. Terms such as 'environmental quality' and 'environmental sustainability' were largely found in local economic regeneration documents, in relation to the limitations that congestion, image and accessibility to facilities pose to the ability to attract inward investment. The term 'environmental sustainability' was often used in relation to physical environment improvements to address transport and mobility issues such as traffic, pollution, pedestrian and cyclist's priorities, safety, and accessibility.

Broad interpretations of sustainable development were summarised under terms like 'sustainable communities' and 'sustainable neighbourhoods' that included issues of land use and transport; local economic development and local labour; purchasing policies; alternative forms of finances; training and employment; empowerment and participation, safety and crime; and poverty and health. Within this variety of themes, common use of 'sustainable/sustainability' seemed also to refer to the concepts of long-term performance and self-sufficiency.

The different interpretations of sustainable development/regeneration, the variety of policy fields involved (e.g. land use, transport, local labour, purchasing policies, energy efficiency and so on) and the use of key headings (economic competitiveness, social cohesion,

environmental sustainability) contributed in making the communicative dimension of the sustainable development agenda a central issue. For a large number of informants, sustainable development principles and consequently policy documents were vague and distant from real life issues. Criticisms included that the concept of 'joined up thinking', often used in relation to sustainable development, was considered useful at a strategic level but did not provide the tools to balance or integrate different interests and agencies at the local level.

Except for those people directly involved in sustainable development policies and initiatives, for example those working on Local Agenda 21, the use of terms such as 'sustainable development', 'sustainability' and 'sustainable regeneration' was considered a policy and funding requirement more then an 'owned' vocabulary that could be used to express new policy concepts. Similarly members of community organisations pointed out that expressions like 'environmental sustainability', 'sustainable development' or 'capacity building' were not commonly used by people and therefore were not appropriate to support community empowerment and participation. In addition, criticism of the jargon of sustainable development policies was expressed by council officers and consultants who highlighted the gap between what common people regard as 'the environment' (i.e. clean street, refuse collection, traffic and pollution) and what academics and practitioners mean (for example the relationship between resources, emissions and ecosystems).

Overall, the pilot study provided an initial investigation of the actors' understanding and interpretation of the notion of sustainable development highlighting a gap between the consensus expressed at high level, through government policies, and the limited understanding and importance given to the sustainable development agenda at the local level.

APPENDIX B

Interview Schedules

B1	Local authority regeneration officer

TQ1 What is the role that the actor plays in the regeneration process?
IQ1a Could you tell me about the role of local authorities in designing and implementing regeneration?
IQ1b And what is exactly your job?

TQ2 What are the preferences currently expressed by the actor?
IQ2a Which regeneration initiatives are currently taking place in (name of the borough)?
IQ2b What kind of projects are you running?

TQ3 What are the future options and opportunities that the actor thinks regeneration should deliver?
IQ3 Can you give me an example of what, in your opinion, regeneration should deliver?

- note at which spatial scale the informant refers? probe about different scales

TQ4 What are the means and strategies?
IQ4a What do you think is crucial to get there?
IQ4b What might make this not happen?
IQ4c Given the present state of things, what is likely to be delivered?

TQ 5 How does the actor value the environmental transformations that take place as part of the regeneration process?
IQ5a In the Upper Lee Valley, which elements of the local environment do you think are important to the regeneration of the area? And why do you think so?
- probe with examples of natural environment (soil condition, water and waterways, air, biodiversity) and built environment (urban fabric, open spaces, transport infrastructure, land use)
IQ5b And which do you think are not essential? And why?

TQ6 What concepts does the informant have that are equivalent to the concept of sustainable regeneration as currently expressed in policy documents?
IQ6 Do you think it is possible to deliver economic regeneration, environmental improvements and social cohesion?

TQ7 If the informant has come across the term of sustainable development, how does he/she understand the term and how does this differ from his/her set of concepts or examples?
IQ7a What is your understanding of the term sustainable development?
IQ7b What would you say to somebody who says "I think sustainable development is a term that doesn't mean anything much to me"?
IQ7c In the context of urban regeneration, is the word sustainable development useful to express new contents?
IQ7d Do you think that the concept behind the term sustainable development has changed people's thinking about urban regeneration?

TQ8 In what way is the informant's definition of sustainable development or his/her equivalent set of concepts translated into actual practice
IQ8a Could you give me an example of a sustainable development initiative/project?
IQ8b Why do you think it is a good example?
IQ8c Could you give me an example of a specific action/event that has contributed in moving forward the sustainable development agenda?

| B2 | **Local Agenda 21 officer** |

TQ1 What is the role that the actor plays in the regeneration process?
IQ1a Is the work done around local agenda 21 and sustainable development in some way linked to regeneration initiatives?
IQ1b Have you, or someone else working on sustainable development, being involved in regeneration initiatives?
IQ1c If yes, which one and how has the role of LA21 changed with regard to regeneration initiatives?

TQ2 What are the preferences currently expressed by the actor?
IQ2a In which initiative, are you currently involved?
IA2b What kind of projects are you running?

TQ3 What are the future options and opportunities that the actor thinks regeneration should deliver?
IQ3a Can you give me an example of what, in your opinion, regeneration should deliver?
IQ3b Can you give me an example of what, in your opinion, local agenda 21, should deliver?

TQ4 What are the means and strategies?
IQ4a What do you think is crucial to get there?
IQ4b What might make this not happen?
IQ4c Given the present state of things, what is likely to be delivered?

TQ 5 How does the actor value the environmental transformations that take place as part of the regeneration process?
IQ5a In the Upper Lee Valley, which elements of the local environment do you think are important to the regeneration of the area? And why do you think so?
- probe with examples of natural environment (soil condition, water and waterways, air, biodiversity) and built environment (urban fabric, open spaces, transport infrastructure, land use)

IQ5b And which do you think are not essential? And why?
IQ5c Do you think the same is valid when we consider smaller areas, like a neighbourhood?
- probe with examples of local areas involved in regeneration

TQ6 What concepts does the informant have that are equivalent to the concept of sustainable regeneration as currently expressed in policy documents?
IQ6 Do you think that sustainability is about delivering economic regeneration, environmental improvements and social cohesion?

TQ7 If the informant has come across the term of sustainable development, how does he/she understand the term and how does this differ from his/her set of concepts or examples?
IQ7a In the context of urban regeneration, is the world sustainable development useful to express new contents?
IQ7b Do you think that the concept behind the term sustainable development has changed people's thinking about urban regeneration?

TQ8 In what way is the informant's definition of sustainable development or his/her equivalent set of concepts translated into actual practice
IQ8a Could you give me an example of a sustainable development initiative/project?
IQ8b Why do you think it is a good example?
IQ8c Could you give me an example of a specific action/event that has contributed in moving forward the sustainable development agenda?

B3	Local community group representative

TQ1 What is the role that the actor plays in the regeneration process?
IQ1 There is currently a lot of stress on the involvement of community groups in regeneration; what is your experience?

TQ2 What are the preferences currently expressed by the actor?
IQ2 Can you give me an example of the regeneration initiatives you are involved in?

TQ3 What are the future options and opportunities that the actor thinks regeneration should deliver?
IQ3a What would you like to see realised in the short term, after 5 years in (name of the locality)?
• note at which spatial scale the informant refers? probe about different scales
IQ3b And what would you like to see over a longer period, say 20 years?

TQ4 What are the means and strategies?
IQ4a What do you think is crucial to realise your 5-year target? And to your 20-year target?
IQ4b What are the main obstacles?

TQ 5 How does the actor value the environmental transformations that take place as part of the regeneration process?
IQ5a In the Upper Lee Valley, which elements of the local environment do you think are important to the regeneration of the area? And why do you think so?
• probe with examples of natural environment (soil condition, water and waterways, air, biodiversity) and built environment (urban fabric, open spaces, transport infrastructure, land use)
IQ5b And which do you think are not essential? And why?
IQ5c Do you think the same is valid when we consider smaller areas, like a neighbourhood?
• probe with examples of local areas involved in regeneration
IQ5d How big projects like the Stadium can help in regenerating this area? Is the same about the whole Upper Lee Valley? What would you like to see, instead?

TQ6 What concepts does the informant have that are equivalent to the concept of sustainable regeneration as currently expressed in policy documents?
IQ6 In regeneration strategies and bids is often written that it is necessary to deliver economic regeneration, environmental improvements and social cohesion, what do you think?

TQ7 If the informant has come across the term of sustainable development, how does he/she understand the term and how does this differ from his/her set of concepts or examples?
IQ7a Have you come across the term sustainable development?
IQ7b (If yes) What do you think sustainable development is about?
IQ7c In the context of urban regeneration, is the word sustainable development useful to express new contents?
IQ7d Do you think that the concept behind the term sustainable development has changed people's thinking about urban regeneration?

TQ8 In what way is the informant's definition of sustainable development or his/her equivalent set of concepts translated into actual practice
IQ8a Could you give me an example of a sustainable development initiative/project?
IQ8b Why do you think it is a good example?
IQ8c Could you give me an example of a specific action/event that has contributed in moving forward the sustainable development agenda?

B4	Regional partnership representative

TQ1 What is the role that the actor plays in the regeneration process?
IQ1 Could you tell me about the (name of the partnership)?

TQ2 What are the preferences currently expressed by the actor?
IQ2 Can you give me an example of the regeneration initiatives you are involved?

TQ3 What are the future options and opportunities that the actor thinks regeneration should deliver?
IQ3 Can you give me an example of what, in your opinion, regeneration should deliver?
- note at which spatial scale the informant refers, probe about different scales

TQ4 What are the means and strategies?
IQ4a What do you think is crucial to get there?
IQ4b What might make this not happen?
IQ4c Given the present state of things, what is likely to be delivered?

TQ 5 How does the actor value the environmental transformations that take place as part of the regeneration process?
IQ5a In the Upper Lee Valley, which elements of the local environment do you think are important to the regeneration of the area? And why do you think so?
- probe with examples of natural environment (soil condition, water and waterways, air, biodiversity) and built environment (urban fabric, open spaces, transport infrastructure, land use)
IQ5b And which do you think are not essential? And why?
IQ5c How big projects like the Stadium can help in regenerating the Upper Lee Valley? What would you like to see, instead?

TQ6 What concepts does the informant have that are equivalent to the concept of sustainable regeneration as currently expressed in policy documents?
IQ6 Do you think is possible to deliver economic regeneration, environmental improvements and social cohesion?

TQ7 If the informant has come across the term of sustainable development, how does he/she understand the term and how does this differ from his/her set of concepts or examples?
IQ7a Have you come across the term sustainable development?
IQ7b (If yes) What does it mean to you?
IQ7c In the context of urban regeneration, is the word sustainable development useful to express new contents?

TQ8 In what way the informant definition of sustainable development or his/her equivalent set of concepts translated into actual practice
IQ8a Could you give me an example of a sustainable development initiative/project?
IQ8b Why do you think it is a good example?
IQ8c Could you give me an example of a specific action/event that has contributed in moving forward the sustainable development agenda?

APPENDIX C

Example of ATLAS/ti analysis outcomes

HU[9]: actors' preferences
File: [c:\progra~1\atlasti\textbank\actors' preferences]
Date/Time: 2002/03/20 - 23:33:00

Code-Filter: All
----

fo[10]= achieving change
fo= alternative use of wealth
fo= better environment
fo= better place
fo= building renewal/business retention
fo= democratic development
fo= energy efficiency/fuel poverty
fo= improving quality of life
fo= jobs creation
fo= mainstreaming sustainable development

fo= more money for people
fo= premises for new businesses
fo= protecting small business, ethnic business
fo= serving the city
fo= space for high tech business
fo=car free estates
fo=engagement
fo=grow a community
fo=integration of sustainable development in policy
fo=local growth
fo=minimum standard
fo=promoting environmental activities
fo=providing sport facilities
fo=Quality of Life Index.
fo=supporting community buildings
means= information
means= realistic outcomes
means= resources/skills/transparency
means=breaking sustainable development in components
means=honesty/clarity
means=people of good will
means=pilot projects
means=workshops
pp[11]= age and health issues
pp= economic development
pp= improving building stock
pp= integration
pp= promoting environmental activities
pp= recreational area
pp= social exclusion
pp= transport
pp=capacity building
pp=changing people perception

fo= achieving minimum standards
fo= athletic stadium
fo= better industrial estates
fo= building a community
fo= community centre
fo= energy efficiency
fo= green economy
fo= improving the local environment
fo= keeping the money locally
fo= making people economically active and independent
fo= new development and better infrastructure
fo= process
fo= realistic expectations
fo= social economy
fo= waste recycling target
fo=closing the gap
fo=greener place
fo=healthier community/>economically active
fo=landuse change
fo=matching local skills with jobs
fo=open spaces
fo=proper involvement of community groups
fo=proving a function
fo=sport facilities community managed
fo=sustainable city
means= papers
means= regulations
means= vision of renewal
means=capacity building

means=leadership
means=people with kids
means=strategic thinking
pp =business retention
pp= community led regeneration
pp= green industry
pp= improving local environment
pp= opening debate
pp= reaching out
pp= regeneration of waterways
pp= sustainable industrial estate
pp=become local experts
pp=capacity building/mentoring
pp=community action plan

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[9] Hermeneutic Unit
[10] future options
[11] present preferences

200

pp=community development activities
pp=improve service provision
pp=influence policy
pp=less traffic
pp=planning guidance
pp=promoting high quality environment
pp=relation between spaces
pp=sport and renewal
strategy= capacity building
strategy= communality of vision
strategy= holistic package
strategy= LA21
strategy= mix of companies
strategy= plurality of views
strategy=business environmental performance
strategy=information
strategy=partnership

pp=environmental activities
pp=improving the area
pp=influence regional policy
pp=numeracy and literacy projects
pp=promote LA21
pp=raising awareness
pp=resources vs. alienation
pp=sustainable community project
strategy= co-ordinate job creation with training
strategy= education
strategy= involving young people
strategy= lobbying
strategy= partnership
strategy= starting from what is available
strategy=community decision-making
strategy=locally based
strategy=policy on mainstream services

HU: actors' preferences
File: [c:\progra~1\atlasti\textbank\actors' preferences]
Date/Time: 2002/03/20 - 23:42:22

Codes-quotations list
Code-Filter: local government

Code: fo= better environment {3-0}

P 4: Bob.txt - 4:4 (198:203) (Super)
Codes: [fo= better environment]

I think that regeneration can assist, can make effective local intervention for example (?), investing money in public transport, so (?) it can make a difference.

And it can make a difference to, (?) management could make a difference to clean up the environment, clean it up, tide
it up, proper better managed.

P 4: Bob.txt - 4:6 (504:505) (Super)
Codes: [fo= better environment]

And/or improving the environment so that you know, (?) shops in a household, you know the parks need to be looked
after, the playgrounds are, you know, (??).

P 4: Bob.txt - 4:13 (421:424) (Super)
Codes: [fo= better environment]

But I suppose I should say that, local authorities in   particular, are committed to public transport, are trying to improve the environment of people and so and such, to that extend they are trying to be sustainable, within the limit of resources.

P 8: Erica.txt - 8:8 (807:810) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [fo= building a community]

And really... you know, in a big city, the building of a small community is actually very important and if they are successful in doing that, then you have walk out (?), you have, you help people take responsibility and through that you can improve safety and you can reduce crime.

P 8: Erica.txt - 8:10 (823:830) (Super)
Codes: [fo= energy efficiency/fuel poverty]

Well I think, obviously health, health is in the sense of the waste of refurbishing the properties, I mean obviously that (?) improvement (??) if they have better insulation, better inefficiency, if they are spending less of their income.

If you say anybody who spend 10% or more of their income on fuel was actually in poverty and if you think about it, meters are the most expensive way of buying, because you are actually prepaying your fuel, your electricity or whatever.

Code: fo= mainstreaming sustainable development {2-0}

P 7: Domi.txt - 7:8 (304:305) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [fo= mainstreaming sustainable development

What I think, you know, regeneration, sustainable development should become part of integrated in any services, or in any, it should be mainstream really

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Code: fo= making people economically active and independent {1-0}

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:16 (430:431) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [fo= making people economically active and independent]

Hum well I think the primary, sort of primary (?) for the regeneration strategy is to make to allow people to be economically active and independent

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Code: fo= more money for people {1-0}

P 4: Bob.txt - 4:5 (495:502) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [fo= more money for people]

The key issue is... correctly improving the quality of people lives, preferably by trying to.. put more money in people pockets.

That's what the objective is going to be.

And if can't put more money in people pockets (?), training and education is something crucial so at least at some point they might get to get some money in their pockets.

Code: fo= process {2-0}

P 4: Bob.txt - 4:1 (42:48) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [fo= process]

I think it should deliver first of all a process by which local businesses, local people can access funding to revitalising, and sustaining their neighbourhood.

So it needs to create a kind of a process. And it needs to fund projects that can be accessed through that process.

P 4: Bob.txt - 4:3 (55:57) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [fo= process] [means= vision of renewal]

It should take this sort of overview and it should, I think, being about a process who took about sort of an intensive, (root?) thinking of the way in which   sub-regional or neighbourhood actually work.

Code: fo= realistic expectations {2-0}

P 4: Bob.txt - 4:8 (834:836) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [fo= realistic expectations]

And also I think, I've realistic expectation, having realistic expectations say you do, you do something realistic, you say: "I've got so much money, that's what I'm gone spend, I'm not expecting to get out of it.

P 4: Bob.txt - 4:9 (841:844) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [fo= realistic expectations]

It take them, you know 10 pounds of money, we spend 10 pounds in a sensible way and that's it. Did it have any effect?
But what do you expect from 10n pounds.

Code: fo= waste recycling target {1-0}

P 8: Erica.txt - 8:11 (832:842) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [fo= waste recycling target]

It's a very vicious circle for people (?), if you can do a practical measure to improve their actual home also the area round them you know, the.. a lot of the council initiatives are very important in terms of achieving national targets. For example recycling we expect to see what,, 25% I don't think we are anything, sort of achieving that target at all.

The borough is recycling 5 to 15% of household waste and to double that percentage by 2003, borough recycling less then
5% expected reach 10% by 2003. And (council) target is approximately 12%, you know, the council responsibility to
find and raise awareness in order to achieve the national target so obviously there is a lot of good initiatives going on.

Code: fo=healthier community/>economically active {1-0}

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:3 (82:83) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [fo=healthier community/>economically active]

So, you know, if you actually get the community healthier then they can actually been accessing (?), become more economically independent.

Code: fo=providing sport facilities {2-0}

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:21 (188:189) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [fo=providing sport facilities]

This is kind of open space, sport, health, well-being...the green industry side of it hum...

P 4: Bob.txt - 4:10 (867:868) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [means= realistic outcomes]

In other words we're going to have some realistic outputs, outcomes not outputs, but outcomes that makes sense to the people.

P 4: Bob.txt - 4:11 (874:878) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [means= realistic outcomes]

So we set ourselves some outcomes which mean something to local people, and are possibly achievable, because they are very localised, they're very specific, they can targeted, can be targeted with SRB funding or other government funding. We can probably do it, if we don't do it, we are incompetent, in other words do things that really test our competence.

Code: means= vision of renewal {2-0}

P 4: Bob.txt - 4:2 (50:53) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [means= vision of renewal]

And I get it needs to have a kind of vision of renewal, of revitalisation, have a kind of strategic overview of how everything fits together, no ideal world. You know, the physical, the social, the environmental.

P 4: Bob.txt - 4:3 (55:57) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [fo= process] [means= vision of renewal]

It should take this sort of overview and it should, I think, being about a process who took about sort of an intensive, (root?) thinking of the way in which sub-regional or neighbourhood actually work.

Code: means=breaking sustainable development in components {1-0}

P 7: Domi.txt - 7:7 (327:340) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [means=breaking sustainable development in components]

And I think if you break it down to its components then it might be more easy to integrate

So if it is about improving transport, you know, in terms of public transport, a modal shift for example is good to look at that If it is about waste reduction, then look at then, you know

If it is about waste reduction in the building, when you demolish buildings and so on that's a major issue. Breaking down into its components really then it becomes

Because sometime it is just lumped together and people lose sight what is actually, what it means or

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Code: means=capacity building {2-0}

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:19 (533:535) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [means=capacity building]

Yeah, everybody, yeah I mean everybody is grappling at the moment with Local Strategic Partnerships but one of the things that could say is all the, it's just, you know, the issue about capacity building keeps coming up.

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:20 (543:556) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [means=capacity building]

But nobody every mentions the big organisation, in a way the big organisation need it most because there people could make a lots of things happen and today actually hide about by a culture of clean all priorities, I don't really know how to talk to each other that well.

I mean there has been various different cross cutting partnership like safety network about this borough, that's
a time to do community safety so what basically the government (?) now you have another bit legislation and that's all what you've got to do now.

And so like health and local authority will come together at that one point and they will do that whatever that is, and then go on done that, it's all right and it doesn't actually inform the culture of the organisation very much and often the people that are given particular task to do the (?) anything to do (?) job.

Code: pp= economic development {1-0}

P 4: Bob.txt - 4:7 (507:511) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp= economic development]

So you know, the objective of this I suppose economic development and but I use that word 'economic' not just in terms of bringing investment into the borough.

I mean giving people opportunity to access jobs, after all there are a lot of jobs in London, so access to employment it seems to me.

Code: pp= green industry {6-0}

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:9 (191:192) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp= green industry]

As I said we've got quite a long tradition of different initiatives to do recycling and energy efficiency.

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:10 (204:206) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp= green industry]

Also things like recycling oil, getting ride of waste, industrial waste in an environmentally friendly manner has been sort of key part of it so that kind of formed clubs where were you can, you can actually get ride of your waste.

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:11 (252:255) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp= green industry]

We would rather work with the existent businesses because they do employ quite a few people to actually make the site visually better, visual amenity improvements, rationalise so they actually work better and we're looking at supporting them because, you know, they are doing a (?) of recycling.

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:12 (263:266) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp= green industry]

But also some of them actually is quite forward thinking and sort of to processes and (?) them, so to recycle different things and we're trying to get intellectual echo from the universities so they mentor these people as a sector and support them.

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:13 (271:274) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp= green industry]

Some of these are (?) very, very big firm, they do most of the waste collection and recycling for east London and you know, they are quite big (?) but we need to work with them so they start doing things, I'm suggesting they are not environmental friendly fashion, but they (?) improve.

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:14 (287:291) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp= green industry]

And we're just trying to with (name) for instance, the Forest Recycling is company which is community business and has a council contract for recycling so everybody at least in borough has a little black box and they leave out and they do their recycling and people glass, clothing and few other things from the black box.

Code: pp= improving local environment {1-0}

P 4: Bob.txt - 4:12 (268:276) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp= improving local environment]

Hum.. but even here in (location), you know, we have done some quite good (?) schemes which... has been made a
difference? I don't know.

Has been about (??) management, schemes about cleaning up bit of the environment, renewing street lighting or whatever, I mean, you know, there is a number of things that can actually make quality of life slightly improved, that can (?) and say for making a better light, making safer entrances in and out stations, in a lots of ways in which you can just marginally but quite significantly improving people lives.

P 8: Erica.txt - 8:1 (290:303) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp= reaching out]

I'is actually reaching out into the community and then I was invited to address the (council) (?) of churches and that was a very good opportunity because, the churches and the centres of faiths around the borough are trusted by the different communities and also it overcomes the translation problem.

For example as (name) (?), he supervises the neighbourhood agenda 21 post because they are SRB funded so there is a lot of work involved in that, but he is he speaks Asian languages, so he's going to (?) LA21 talks, now we maybe do some together and actually try and reach out more.

Because still a lot of people never heard of Local Agenda 21, they don't know what it means, it probably sounded an excellent term back in '92, an Agenda for the 21st century.

P 7: Domi.txt - 7:1 (59:62) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp= regeneration of waterways] [pp=sustainable community project]

At the moment it is the, well the "(name of locality Sustainable Community Project" and we also have developed something called the "(name of the council) Living Rivers Project" that look at the regeneration of waterways for both wildlife and people

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Code: pp=capacity building {3-0}

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:7 (174:177) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp=capacity building]

And we're trying to get people in south of borough, don't have a wide range of skills, need capacity building, start engaging with a lot of this different ideas and that (?) obviously the idea is that they will held them be more employable.

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:8 (179:180) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp=capacity building]

And more confident, take control of (?) stuff around them and they actually maybe get a carrier out of this,

P 7: Domi.txt - 7:5 (170:172) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp=capacity building]

And the other issue is to really build some local capacity to take maybe some project off the ground and support, you know, if there is interested people to actually help them fund raise and so on

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Code: pp=community action plan {1-0}

P 7: Domi.txt - 7:3 (152:154) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp=community action plan]

But I think what we what to arrive at, in the time that we have, is an action plan that we can then give to the (name of locality) Development Forum for them then to pursue, take forward

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Code: pp=improve service provision {1-0}

P 7: Domi.txt - 7:4 (160:166) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp=improve service provision]

But also our task will be to disseminate the findings from that exercise to different service provider within the area, so that will include the council and different departments within the council but also other organisation like (name) College, the Learning and Skill Council and so on and feeding that back to them. And hopefully through that they can, can adjust maybe some of their service provision

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Code: pp=numeracy and literacy projects {2-0}

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:5 (114:116) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp=numeracy and literacy projects]

And the other thing is that we also got quite well established community and voluntary sector groups who actually deliver numeracy and literacy trough school so they'll actually get kids.

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:6 (118:126) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp=numeracy and literacy projects]

They'll to a council estate, start kicking a ball around and then they start doing it in an organised way so there is a step between just kicking a ball around, non formal sport, and then going to more formalised sport which is about being team players, understanding rules and, you know, structuring your behaviour accordingly, all of that.

And then are teaching literacy and numeracy through things like scoring and also reading football programmes, so they
are actually trying to reach children and young adults who have low level of literacy and numeracy.

Code: pp=planning guidance {2-0}

P21: Sylvia.txt - 21:3 (195:207) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp=planning guidance]

I mean, what we are trying to do here is also having an input in terms of planning application, and one thing that
(?) I'm going to be try to do is the developing just a very simple guidance note to go out with planning application forms so that before a planning application comes in, once a planning application comes in and it has the building on this piece of land and it set (?) with this aspect or whatever, if you go back to the architect and say: "Oh have you tought about doing that?

Maximising solar gain and you know, this factor or the other..." it's to late. because if they want to that and they have already done that, they have to supply fresh planning application, they have to withdraw this one because technically speaking there is significantly enough difference, specially been consulted on this one.

P21: Sylvia.txt - 21:4 (228:230) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp=planning guidance]

I mean UPD has to be the strongest way to do it because they have policy, the guidance note that I'm going be producing is very much a kind of an (?) thing, just to get people to think about these things.

Code: pp=promote LA21 {1-0}

P21: Sylvia.txt - 21:1 (58:59) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp=promote LA21]

and I suppose one of the things I'm charged with as well is publicity, publicise Local Agenda 21.

Code: pp=raising awareness {3-0}

P 7: Domi.txt - 7:6 (288:291) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp=raising awareness]

But also in terms of the services that are provided and at the some time to raise awareness with other key service providers and the local community, the local people about the need to change their behaviour and to live more sustainable

P 8: Erica.txt - 8:2 (392:396) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp=raising awareness]

We're concerned to raise awareness about getting (?) the borough and they produce the transport choices map that shows all the bus routes, the trains, all the stations, the cycle network and then we added on secondary in the hope that parents might actually look at their children been able to sort of walk or bike to school safety rather then having a sort of bus across the borough.

P 8: Erica.txt - 8:3 (420:422) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp=raising awareness]

And then again that sort of raising awareness about all those initiatives, so we're looking for really if you like, sustainable energy projects but with a particular view to combating fuel poverty

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Code: pp=sport and renewal {3-0}

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:1 (62:65) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp=sport and renewal]

And a big part of our regeneration agenda at the moment is how to marry up the old spaces, the opportunity that the open land can offer people and so deprived communities. So how can deprived communities under (?) quite stress urban existence benefit from open space?

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:2 (67:71) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp=sport and renewal]

Now this takes you into all area about sport and well-being, health and well- being and in this borough we have the Health Authority which own SRB which is called the 'Health ladder to Social Inclusion' and we are trying actually to make a lot of linkages between healthy living agenda, general supplemented of medicine, eco-being and access to a proper range of services.

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:4 (85:87) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp=sport and renewal]

Hum, so (name) and Scope project which is about community access to all series of sport and health facilities that the community holds through community partnership and that's sort of flagship project we're working on at the moment.

Code: pp=sustainable community project {2-0}

P 7: Domi.txt - 7:1 (59:62) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp= regeneration of waterways] [pp=sustainable community project]

At the moment it is the, well the "(name of locality Sustainable Community Project" and we also have developed something called the "(name of the council) Living Rivers Project" that look at the regeneration of waterways for both wildlife and people

P 7: Domi.txt - 7:2 (129:137) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [pp=sustainable community project]

I have just prepared a report to cabinet about how we might take the "Sustainable Community Project" forward because there's a second one that we could implement, because Going for Green wants to implement two with each local authority

And we're looking at either working just with one community group and they can developing network of like an ethnic minority community group that look at environmental issue or replicate the same what we did in (name of locality) in another neighbourhood

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Code: strategy= capacity building {1-0}

P 8: Erica.txt - 8:7 (728:729) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [strategy= capacity building]

But I think the way forward really is capacity building between at the community level.

Code: strategy= communality of vision {1-0}

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:15 (303:306) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [strategy= communality of vision]

And it's a quite few of those kind of dotted around but we want kind of get sector support and growth by giving them a
(?) or encouraging with the cluster in single place and giving them communality of visionary, engendering communality of vision.

Code: strategy= education {2-0}

P21: Sylvia.txt - 21:2 (125:130) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [strategy= education]

I mean what, I suppose we all our own particular interest and my is definitely education.

You, know, I just think if you start early with the kids and talking about these things, you know, it's bit like the (???) and we have a, some very, very enthusiastic people who work (?) authority.

P21: Sylvia.txt - 21:5 (314:325) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [strategy= education]

But it's up together to education, have a lovely looking (?), that you might already know actually, but apparently a group of Scottish footballers supports came to, they were Danish supports who came to Scotland for some international football match and they all drunk incredibly excessively.

So they, all the supporters were absolutely drunk but the Danish supporters sorted their bottles into brown bottles and green bottles and that just shows that you have so ingrained, you know part of their culture, educated through it so that they even knew when they didn't, you know, they still knew what the right thing to do. That's why I believe so much in education

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Code: strategy= holistic package {1-0}

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:17 (442:448) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [strategy= holistic package]

So it's a long time ago now that's it was accepted that (?) initiatives things would be integrated, so hum you know, you actually do get ways of making people economically active through a holistic package.

So they've got piece of carrier advice, educational support, high tech training and job brokerage and hand holding, and money to a new suit to go to an interview, all of that stuff.

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Code: strategy= involving young people {1-0}

P 8: Erica.txt - 8:4 (507:510) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [strategy= involving young people]

But it doesn't, as far as I'm concerned It doesn't matter what the project is, be a recycling one or a trees one, you know, so whatever, but the young people you know are brilliant like that, they all raise awareness and you can attach things to, you can build on that.

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Code: strategy= LA21 {1-0}

P 8: Erica.txt - 8:9 (814:817) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [strategy= LA21]

I mean then (?) all this kind of stuff, kind from negativity from people seeing sort of no way out into relying on (?) and all the rest of it, I'm not saying Agenda 21 and sustainable development will completely, you know, but is a way forward, I genuinely believe that.

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P 8: Erica.txt - 8:6 (692:695) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [strategy= plurality of views]

It's very important that we look at things through different people eyes whether they'll be elderly,, whether they'll be young, whether they'll be women on their own, in different parts of the, you know, that's part of the community safety which is something else that regeneration money are funding.

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Code: strategy=community decision-making {3-0}

P 8: Erica.txt - 8:5 (655:657) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [strategy=community decision-making]

Which, which is healthy but is much better I think if the community can be involved in an early stage because you really want ownership, you really want the community to be involved.

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Code: strategy=policy on mainstream services {1-0}

P 2: Alison.txt - 2:18 (473:481) (Super)
Media: ANSI
Codes: [strategy=policy on mainstream services]

And it really that is trying to obviously work with government and drawn on in terms of good practice to make the neighbourhood renewal strategy because is the same thing.

And that's all I'm working on at the moment, is the you know, the premise that people you live in deprived communities still has less then average services. You know, people need the most get the worst services.

APPENDIX D

Methodology: a self-reflexive account

The process of operationalising the research design was characterised by two main phases: the development of the fieldwork interviews (section 4.5.3) and the sampling of the research participants. With regards to the sampling I developed, for my own use, a matrix (table 4.2) with which to identify categories of actors I needed to take into consideration and the different spatial scale (from local to London–wide) at which they operated. Then, I decided which organisations would be representative of the categories identified in the matrix.

In selecting the organisations that would be representative of the various categories of actors, I started from a survey of the organisations involved in regeneration mainly through the regeneration bids, in particular by looking at the regeneration partnerships supporting each bid. At this stage, I was facilitated by the contacts I developed during the pilot study as well as my increased knowledge of the regeneration initiatives taking place in the area of study. In fact, while during the pilot study I relied heavily upon snowballing in order to contact a range of different informants, for the fieldwork I tried to construct the sample in a more systematic manner. At the same time, I kept asking at the end of each of the interviews whether there was, in the informant's opinion, someone worth interviewing, as a test of my sampling decisions. This was important to validate my selected sample and better understand the roles and relationships between actors. For example, the majority of the informants suggested that I interview a representative of the Government Office for London (GOL). Although, it was already in my plans to interview a representative of GOL, this continuous suggestion about the importance of GOL helped me to reflect upon the influence that the relationship between central and local government had in the process of development of regeneration initiatives.

After identifying the organisations I wanted to contact for an interview, the most difficult thing was to decide which person to interview within each organisation. For example, with respect to local authorities the main issues was that within each regeneration unit there were a number of people with different responsibilities that could provide different accounts and viewpoints of the regeneration process. The ideal situation would have been that of interviewing more then one person, for example an officer responsible for the

implementation of regeneration initiatives and another more concerned with strategic aspects. But this was practically impossible given that each time I asked to interview an additional person my request was declined. Therefore I chose to select the person with the wider knowledge of the regeneration initiatives taking place in the Borough. For example during the pilot study, I interviewed the head of the regeneration unit for each of the local authorities in the study area. However, when I came back for the fieldwork interview, one of these informants had left and the new regeneration officer was relatively unaware of the different stages that the regeneration initiatives had progressed to. I therefore had to decide who was the best person to talk to. In this case, I contacted a regeneration officer that had a long-term involvement in the regeneration initiatives of the Borough and consequently could talk to me about a number of different strategies and projects.

While deciding about the organisations, I had to consider whether I needed to interview politicians. This thought came to my mind several times, especially after considering how different political agendas would influence the development of strategic documents, as was evident from the analysis of the Mayoral strategies. However, in the end I decided not to interview politicians for two main reasons. First, I thought it would be really difficult to access politicians, even at the local level, since I had already experienced difficulties in contacting informants that held a relatively public role. Second, I was concerned with the kind of information they would have about regeneration and sustainable development, and I thought they might express very generic viewpoints.

In all cases, once I identified a potential informant, I sent them a letter explaining the aim of the research, the objective of the fieldwork interviews and asking for his/her availability. The letter included details about the length of the interview, the intention to tape record and then transcribe the interviews, and the anonymity measures I would use. After the letter, I contacted each of the informants by phone to check their availability.

All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. In order to protect the identity of the informants, all references to names, location and specific events were removed while transcribing the interviews and substituted with generic person A, B, C or location x and y. For the data analysis, I decided to use a software package as I thought it would be useful in handling this amount of data. This was my first experience of analysis of qualitative data and I was worried about being able to deal, in a systematic way, with all this information. However, what I found really important in order to feel happy about the manner in which I was proceeding, was having a clear methodological approach. The interview design I

employed (section 4.5.3) as a consequence of a specific training course on semi structured interviews was essential in developing a sound way of linking the theory to the interviews, and was extremely important in the analysis of the interview materials in enabling me to move back from the interview to the theory.

With this strong link between theory and interview design the use of the software package was valuable in helping me to manage the data. Although I received a training course on NUD.IST, I decided to use ATLAS/ti for one main reason: it seemed to me that on NUD.IST I had to undertake some theory building while I was coding, as the 'nodes' (the name given to the codes in NUD.IST) are linked in a 'tree structure' highlighting relative connections and relationships. In contrast, with ALTAS/ti it was possible to split between textual analysis and theory building, which I found extremely useful. In fact, at first I concentrated on analysing the interview materials by coding the text. At this stage, ATLS/ti is very powerful as it allows the writing down and linking of memos at almost any phase of this process. I set up eight files, one for each of the theory questions (table 4.3), comprising all the interview materials. In this way I was able to look throughout all the interviews for each theory question and, after coding, explore the differences and the similarities among the positions of the various informants. To do this, I grouped the informants according to the categories of actors they belonged using the feature 'families', and similarly I grouped the codes according to their similarity of contents. In this way, I cut down the interview materials according to the various viewpoints arising from my theory questions and produced the material, which I reflected upon both on and off the computer, to do my theory building. I could have undertaken the theory building using ATLAS/ti as it has a very complex system with which to draw network diagrams, but I found this too time consuming and I would have needed to spend additional time exploring all the features of the software network diagrams.

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