

Understanding Cultural Participation and Value in Barnsley

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By

**Sarah Hughes
School of Museum Studies
University of Leicester**

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Sarah Hughes

Abstract

This thesis sets out to question representations of culture constructed in relation to the English town of Barnsley. The thesis asks whether such representations might be implicated in the reproduction of social and economic inequalities in relation to distinct geographical places and their communities and seeks to reveal new representations generated through detailed oral history interviews.

Drawing upon official statistics and a number of example press representations of Barnsley in relation to culture, the thesis begins by discussing existing constructions of Barnsley's cultural ecology. The thesis then considers narratives of cultural participation generated through oral history interviews undertaken with people from Barnsley in order to investigate the articulated experiences and stated cultural values of individuals who have spent their lives in the town.

The thesis gives voice to people from Barnsley as a route to complicating understandings of the cultural ecology of the town. The thesis also briefly investigates a key moment in the historical development of a particular cultural institution, the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation, seeking to understand the relationship between this history and some of the distinctive aspects of cultural participation and value forming a part of Barnsley's cultural ecology.

The thesis seeks to inform cultural policy debate through deepening understanding of, and gaining recognition for, particular aspects of cultural participation and articulations of cultural value existing within the town of Barnsley. Moreover, the thesis argues for the inclusion of diverse perspectives within cultural policy debates and decision making processes at all levels in order that our collective understanding of what culture might entail is enriched and our cultural policymaking is democratised, limiting opportunity for a narrowly defined 'culture' to be utilised as a tool in the reproduction of social and economic inequalities within society.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

John Kirk argued that ‘representations situate cultures and identities within the public imagination, even if there remains more to such formations and traditions than their representation alone.’¹ This thesis sets out to question representations constructed in relation to the cultural ecologies of particular geographical places, in this case with regard to the town of Barnsley.² The thesis will explore representations of Barnsley’s cultural ecology created through official statistics and representations in the press, before turning to examine whether there might indeed remain more to Barnsley culturally than such representations might suggest. As Stuart Hall highlighted, representations are constructed ‘to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people.’³ Hall emphasises the link between representation and power, in particular with regard to who has ‘the power to represent someone or something in a certain way.’⁴ This thesis asks whether the representations constructed in relation to the cultural ecologies of particular places might be implicated in the reproduction of social and economic inequalities, both in relation to distinct geographical places and their communities.

How, then, might representations of particular places’ cultural ecologies become implicated in the reproduction of social and economic inequalities? In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Pierre Bourdieu conceived of culture as a stake in societal power struggles, within which those in possession of particular forms of ‘cultural capital’ are able to draw upon and deploy this in order to gain distinction and advantage within an unequal society.⁵ If viewed within this context, the representations constructed in

¹ John Kirk, Steve Jefferys and Christine Wall, ‘Representing Identity and Work in Transition: The Case of South Yorkshire Coal-Mining Communities’, in *Changing Work and Community Identities in European Regions: Perspectives on the Past and Present* ed. by John Kirk, Sylvie Contrepois and Steve Jefferys (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 204.

² The term ‘cultural ecology’ will be utilised to refer to combinations of cultural institutions, provision, participation practices and value to be found within particular places.

³ Stuart Hall, ed. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: SAGE, 1997), p. 15.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge. 1984).

relation to the cultural ecologies of particular places might be understood to be influenced by, and to influence, the social and economic spheres, as well as the cultural.

In *Culture and Society* Raymond Williams discussed the term 'culture' in relation to its use both as shorthand for 'the intellectual and imaginative products of a society' and as a term referring to 'a whole way of life.'⁶ In *The Long Revolution* Williams insists upon the complexity of the term, and the embedded nature of 'culture' within the whole of human organisation and creativity, noting 'it certainly seems necessary to look for meanings and values, the record of creative human activity, not only in art and intellectual work, but also in institutions and forms of behaviour.'⁷

Certainly the development of cultural institutions and cultural participation practices might be seen as having been embedded within, and contingent upon, complex contexts and motivations - economic, geographical, historical, industrial, political, social and temporal - which have all ensured complexity and particularity in the development of our cultural ecologies. An increased understanding of such complexity and particularity is a key precursor to the development of a more nuanced understanding of our contemporary cultural landscapes and our contemporary cultural values and, as such, this thesis looks in detail at one particular cultural ecology – that of the metropolitan borough of Barnsley, South Yorkshire.

This thesis will consider narratives of cultural participation generated through oral history interviews undertaken with people from Barnsley in order to investigate the articulated experiences and stated cultural values of individuals who have spent their lives in the town. The thesis gives voice to people from Barnsley as a route to complicating perceptions of the cultural ecology of the town. The thesis will also briefly investigate a key moment in the historical

⁶ Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (London: Penguin Books, 1961. First published 1958), p. 273.

⁷ Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Rev. edn. Cardigan: Parthian, 2011. First published 1961), pp. 58-62.

development of a particular cultural institution, the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO), seeking to understand the relationship between this history and some distinctive aspects of cultural participation and value forming a part of Barnsley's cultural ecology.

The thesis seeks to inform cultural policy debate through deepening understanding of, and gaining recognition for, particular aspects of cultural participation and articulations of cultural value existing within the town of Barnsley. In exploring understandings of the term 'culture', the thesis argues for the inclusion of diverse perspectives within cultural policy debates and decision making processes at all levels in order that our collective understanding of what culture might entail is enriched and our cultural policymaking is democratised, limiting opportunity for a narrowly defined 'culture' to be utilised as a tool in the reproduction of social and economic inequalities within society.

Representations of Barnsley's Cultural Ecology

Before considering the narratives of cultural participation generated through the oral history interviews undertaken with people from Barnsley within this project, the thesis will explore representations created in relation to Barnsley's cultural ecology through official statistics and a number of newspaper articles comparing the cultural ecologies of different geographical places. It is intended that, through examining the aforementioned representations of Barnsley's cultural ecology, understandings of culture, participation and value might be discussed.

Official Statistics

Between 2008 and 2010 the Active People Survey, which since 2006 had been investigating participation in sport in the UK, collected data on participation in relation to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's National Indicators 9, 10 and 11, measuring use of public libraries, visits to museums and galleries

and engagement in the arts respectively. The survey, which collected data through telephone interviews, had a sample size during the period in question of approximately 190,000 adults (with a minimum of 500 interviews taking place for every local authority area).⁸ The size of the survey enabled the data, uniquely, to be analysed at local authority level, for local area statistics. Between 2008 and 2010, Active People Survey participants were asked: 'During the last 12 months, have you attended a museum or gallery at least once? During the last 12 months, have you used a public library service at least once? Have you attended any creative, artistic, theatrical or musical events in the last 12 months? Have you spent time actually doing any creative, artistic, theatrical or musical activities, or any crafts in the last 12 months?' The participation maps which were duly produced each year as part of the Active People Survey analysis depict the Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council area as having some of the lowest levels, comparatively speaking in relation to other local authorities, of participation in relation to the use of public libraries, visits to museums and galleries and engagement in the arts.

Ipsos MORI's Questionnaire Briefing Note for the Active People Survey termed the questions exploring use of public libraries, visits to museums and galleries and engagement in the arts, the 'DCMS Cultural Questions.'⁹ The representation of the Barnsley area depicted through Active People Survey statistics is therefore one of comparatively low levels of participation in relation to the survey's 'Cultural Questions.'

Arts Council England has since drawn upon Active People Survey statistics 'to create a list that ranks local authorities by level of arts engagement,' thus 'identifying places with the least engagement.' The resulting list includes Barnsley in the 'Lowest 20%' grouping.¹⁰ This grouping has been used recently to inform the allocation of Arts Council England's Creative People and Places funding. In the 2015 Report by the Warwick Commission on the Future

⁸ Department for Culture, Media and Sport. *Local Area Statistics – adult sport and cultural participation*. December 2010.

⁹ Ipsos Mori. Questionnaire Briefing Note for the Active People Survey . 2009.

¹⁰ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/>, accessed 1.12.14.

of Cultural Value, Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth, it is suggested that the Creative People and Places initiative is exploring 'how best to generate cultural demand and aspirations in areas of the country with very poor profiles in terms of cultural participation.'¹¹ The use of Active People statistics by cultural agencies and commentators has, then, resulted in the town becoming characterised as having a 'very poor' profile 'in terms of cultural participation.'

Representations in the press

A study of newspaper articles featuring in the UK broadsheet press in 2009 and 2010 in relation to Barnsley's bid for the UK City of Culture title has uncovered some illuminating examples of representations existing in this section of the media in relation to Barnsley's cultural makeup. Matthew Reason and Beatriz García found that the valuation of image and culture, or cultural image, 'is one consistently maintained in the broadsheets,' in contrast with the tabloid media where 'both are denigrated as unimportant, artificial or insubstantial,' and for this reason UK broadsheet newspapers were selected as a potentially fruitful data source for the retrieval of example newspaper articles.¹²

Under the headline, 'A City of Culture?' Maev Kennedy states, with reference to Barnsley's bid for this title, 'Some contenders may raise eyebrows.'¹³ In another article featuring in *The Guardian* on the same day, Kennedy states, 'Barnsley in South Yorkshire...must be the dark horse to become the first UK City of Culture.'¹⁴ In *The Independent*, Michael Savage asks the question 'Britain's cultural capital...Barnsley?' before adding, 'Unlikely candidates are lining up for honour.'¹⁵ *The Sunday Times* asks, in relation to the contest,

¹¹ The Warwick Commission. The Future of Cultural Value, Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth. 2015. p. 16.

¹² Matthew Reason and Beatriz García, 'Approaches to the newspaper archive: content analysis and press coverage of Glasgow's Year of Culture', *Media Culture Society* vol. 29, (2007), p. 304.

¹³ Maev Kennedy, 'We're in City of Culture contest...please don't tell anyone', *The Guardian*, 10 September 2009.

¹⁴ Maev Kennedy, 'Heading for the chop? Barnsley vies for culture title', *The Guardian*, 10 September 2009.

¹⁵ Michael Savage, 'Britain's cultural capital ... Barnsley', *The Independent*, 3 October 2009.

'Southend as the UK's first City of Culture, in 2013? Come off it. Maybe Carlisle? A joke, surely. Or Barnsley? Pull the other one...let's be serious.'¹⁶

A flurry of articles appearing in the UK broadsheet press almost fifteen years earlier, linked with the publication of *Top Towns*, a commercial publication by Caralampo Focas, Paul Genty and Peter Murphy in 1995, and the coverage of Barnsley within this study, similarly provides a number of illuminating examples of representations of Barnsley's cultural ecology. In July of that year an article in *The Guardian* reported upon how, within the study, 'Barnsley scored low for education, health, arts, culture, jobs, prices, and weather.'¹⁷ In *The Independent*, a report states, 'A controversial guide to Britain's best and worst towns is published next week. It puts Kingston upon Thames in top place and Barnsley in South Yorkshire at the very bottom.'¹⁸ *The Times*, under the headline 'Life is better in the South, study of towns shows,' reported, 'Kingston upon Thames is the best place to live...while Barnsley is the worst.'¹⁹ There appears to be nothing new in the making of comparisons between the cultural ecologies of different geographical places. But who is doing the comparing, and what purposes do such comparisons serve?

Examining Representations

The representations of the cultural ecologies of different local authority areas which result from the Active People Survey are, of course, based upon subjective decisions made in relation to the development of the survey questionnaire, the interpretation of the findings and indeed with regard to the policy impetus behind the survey. An understanding of cultural participation as being linked to specific questions about the use of museums, galleries, public libraries or creative, artistic, theatrical, musical or craft events or activities reflects a particular understanding of culture where the term appears to be

¹⁶ Richard Brooks, 'Biteback', *The Sunday Times*, 17 January 2010.

¹⁷ 'Barnsley finds meadow', *The Guardian*, 1 July 1995.

¹⁸ 'Sunny Lambeth beats beautiful Durham; It's bleak up north', *The Independent*, 1 July 1995.

¹⁹ 'Life is better in the South, study of towns shows', *The Times*, 1 July 1995.

used, in Raymond Williams' terms, as shorthand for particular intellectual or imaginative products.

As Andrew Miles has highlighted, the governmental focus upon participation reflected in the Active People Survey 'Cultural Questions' arose out of the commitment within the Department for Culture Media and Sport, under New Labour, to the widening of access to cultural institutions and programmes publicly funded by the government. Miles argues, 'The 'official' model of participation remains a top-down affair, operationalised as a demarcated set of activities and practices, defined largely by what government has traditionally funded, and informed by middle class norms and understandings of what counts as 'legitimate' culture.' He suggests, 'from this perspective, the 'non-users' of culture can, in turn, be construed as a social problem: a passive, isolated and inadequate group morally adrift from the mainstream and therefore in need of mobilisation.'²⁰ Perspective is indeed of significance here. In a Britain described by Alan Milburn as 'deeply elitist' due to a 'dramatic over-representation of those educated at independent schools' across Britain's leading institutions, including in the fields of politics and the media, 'locking out a diversity of talents and experiences' and making these institutions 'less informed, less representative and, ultimately, less credible than they should be,' the active encouragement of diverse perspectives in relation to policy questions across the spectrum, including in the cultural sphere, may well be essential in counteracting limited and limiting 'group think' and harnessing the 'diversity of talents and experiences' to be found across the whole of society.²¹

The representations of Barnsley's cultural ecology which emerge from the newspaper articles are, of course, also influenced by subjective decisions made in relation to the development of these pieces. Stephen Vella has noted how a critical reading of newspapers can provide significant insight into societies' understandings of themselves and the world around them through documenting

²⁰ Andrew Miles, 'Culture, Participation and Identity in Contemporary Manchester', in *Culture in Manchester: Institutions and Urban Change since 1800*, ed. by Mike Savage and Janet Wolff (Manchester: MUP, 2013), pp. 178-9.

²¹ Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, *Elitist Britain?* (2014).

how those working in the media have 'organised and presented information, filtered out or neglected other potential news reports, created influential categories of thought and established, enforced or eroded conventional social hierarchies and assumptions.'²² There have been differences in opinion regarding what the aims of news content produced by the contemporary media might be. John Richardson has argued that, 'The work of mainstream journalists mediates the relationship between ruling class ideology and news content and supports the hegemony by naturalising, or taking for granted, the inequalities of contemporary capitalism.'²³ Richardson here offers a view of newspaper discourse influenced by Marxist thought which particularly highlights a perceived link between a 'ruling' class-based ideology and newspaper discourse. Stephen Vella, on the other hand, has noted how, 'Behind a newspaper lies a vast, complex machinery of literary production and layered social networks, for which no one single individual is wholly responsible, even at the level of a news article.' Vella acknowledges that concentrations of wealth and power in any society will inevitably influence the spectrum of topics and opinions expressed in newspapers, thus highlighting the significant impact that wealth and power will have in influencing media content, whilst stopping short of presuming a direct link between a perceived 'ruling' class ideology and resulting newspaper content.²⁴

John Richardson highlights how, 'the continued existence of a news producer hinges on it selling its product,' and notes how 'texts generate their publics' and 'publics generate their texts.'²⁵ The relationship between news producers and news consumers is highlighted here, and the business interests behind this relationship. Richardson also highlights, however, the financial importance within the newspapers industry of selling advertising space. He comments that, 'media organisations earn more money by supplying a product that attracts the

²² Stephen Vella, 'Newspapers', in *Reading Primary Sources: The Interpretation of Texts from Nineteenth and Twentieth Century History* ed. by Miriam Dobson and Benjamin Ziemann (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 192.

²³ John E. Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers: An approach from critical discourse analysis*. (Palgrave, 2007), p. 36.

²⁴ Vella, 'Newspapers', p. 193.

²⁵ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, pp. 75-79.

richer strata of the audience,' as this, of course, ensures that advertisers will want to advertise. Richardson notes how, at the time of his writing, the 25% of the population predominantly buying and reading broadsheets in Britain own 88% of the wealth in the UK and thus argues, 'the less money you have, the less choice you have when it comes to buying a newspaper written with you in mind.'²⁶ Having acknowledged these business interests, and how these might indeed influence the content of the media, it is however also worth remembering that, as Richardson has noted, 'journalists work in a field of conflicting loyalties and duties: to readers, editors, advertisers, proprietors, the law, regulatory bodies, contacts, themselves and other journalists,' and thus it could be argued that the foundations and drivers behind any particular article are many and varied, and cannot be taken to be influenced by business interests alone. Ethical codes cover the process of news gathering in relation to seeking and reporting the truth, acting independently, minimising harm and being accountable. The British National Union of Journalists states that journalists 'shall neither originate nor process material which encourages discrimination, ridicule, prejudice or hatred.'²⁷

As Vella highlights, 'The obvious assumption is that the media content (what appears, what does not appear, the way the news is framed etc), will reflect the values, priorities and interests of the *buyers*, the *sellers*, the *product* and the *professionals* that serve them,' which reminds us of the myriad influences upon media content.²⁸ As such, Vella notes how contemporary newspaper studies have come to focus upon the ways in which texts 'betray complex ambivalences' towards important issues such as those of power, class and identity. He argues that rather than being seen as pure ideological monoliths, newspapers are better recognised as a 'contested ground in wars of cultural meaning',²⁹ an argument which has influenced the examination, here, of newspaper representations relating to Barnsley's cultural ecology, albeit alongside the additional arguments that concentrations of wealth and power

²⁶ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, pp. 79-83.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

²⁸ Vella, 'Newspapers', p. 199.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

indeed impact greatly upon media content and discourse, in particular within a media which, in Milburn's terms, might be labelled 'deeply elitist.'

As Richardson observes, 'we need to consider who gets to speak in the news.'³⁰ Owen Jones has argued that if the media profession was more reflective of wider society, media coverage might be expected to be more balanced.³¹ Richardson, meanwhile, has highlighted a consistent under-representation of members of the public within the news, arguing that 'access to the news is a power resource in itself.' He contends that the result is that journalists, having contingent notions of who ought to be treated as authoritative, accept 'the frames imposed on events by officials and marginalise and delegitimise voices that fall outside the dominant elite circles.'³² It is noteworthy, within the articles examined here, that despite the focus on the town of Barnsley within the articles, Barnsley voices are few and far between.

A point to note in relation to the example articles covering the UK City of Culture contest is the reliance of the articles upon inter-textuality. Stuart Hall argues that representations, 'gain in meaning when they are read in context against or in connection with one another.' Hall calls this a 'regime of representation,' or 'inter-textuality.'³³ Maev Kennedy at *The Guardian* suggests in relation to Barnsley (and Chorley), 'Some contenders may raise eyebrows,' assuming prior knowledge within the audience as to why eyebrows might be raised. Kennedy creates the headline, 'Heading for the chop? Barnsley vies for culture title,' for another article regarding the City of Culture bids. In this article Kennedy writes, 'Durham has its cathedral, Oxford its spires and Brighton its pavilion, but Barnsley in South Yorkshire, home of the football club, the chop and the country's first bottle bank, must be the dark horse to become the first UK city of culture.' Kennedy refers to other places on the list such as Bath and Norwich as 'cities with a wealth of obvious cultural attractions,' but neglects to explain to the audience the attractions referred to, assuming a prior knowledge

³⁰ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, p. 87.

³¹ Owen Jones, *Chavs: the demonization of the working class* (London: Verso, 2012), p. 105.

³² Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, p. 36.

³³ Hall, *Representation*, p. 232.

within the audience and relying upon presumed accepted regimes of truth in relation to these 'obvious cultural attractions.' Kennedy writes, 'If the former mining town should confound the odds and win, it could see the Grimethorpe colliery band playing in the guests.' This sentence illustrates Kennedy's assumption that readers should understand why a Barnsley bid for the City of Culture title would have to 'confound the odds' to win. Further reliance upon inter-textuality can be seen both through the headline to Michael Savage's article, which gives no explanation as to why Barnsley should be viewed as one of the 'unlikely candidates' in relation to a City of Culture title, and through Richard Brooks' article's opening statement, 'Southend as the UK's first City of Culture, in 2013? Come off it. Maybe Carlisle? A joke, surely. Or Barnsley? Pull the other one...let's be serious.' Remarkably, the question, 'what is culture in Barnsley?' is not asked in these articles. Rather than seeking to understand culture in Barnsley, these writers build upon an inter-textual representation of Barnsley's cultural ecology, which relies upon a narrow definition of culture. These writers seem unable to recognise, perhaps as a result of the 'group think' remarked upon by Milburn in relation to the 'deeply elitist' nature of some of Britain's leading institutions, including in the media field, that there may be other aspects to Barnsley's cultural ecology that they are missing, and that others may have different understandings of culture.³⁴

There are a number of points of interest to note, too, in relation to the representations created of Barnsley's cultural ecology through the example articles covering the publication of the *Top Towns* book. Firstly, the agency of the authors of *Top Towns* in constructing Barnsley as 'probably the worst place to live in Britain' is backgrounded in these articles through the use of metonyms, thereby perhaps seeking to negate controversy around the topic.³⁵ Whilst *The Telegraph*, for example, within its coverage acknowledges the 'controversial' nature of the *Top Towns* study, which could perhaps be seen to encourage readers to consider the constructed nature of the study, the *Telegraph* article goes on to background the agency of the authors of *Top*

³⁴ Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, *Elitist Britain?* (2014).

³⁵ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, p. 65.

Towns in constructing Barnsley as 'probably the worst place to live in Britain' through asserting that 'It [the report]' puts Barnsley at the bottom, rather than stating that 'They [the authors]' place Barnsley at the bottom, through the data generation techniques of the study. The article states that, 'The guide ranks the 128 places according to nine sets of statistics concerning jobs, prices, housing, education, environment, transport, health and fitness, crime, arts and culture and, finally, recreation and shopping.' Here, the agency of the authors is in the background and the 'statistical' basis to the study is highlighted, perhaps demonstrating the newspaper's aim to present the study as 'objective' and based upon 'scientific methods.' Also worthy of note is the assertion within the articles that Barnsley 'scored low' for culture, with such scores presented as unquestioned rather than presented as data generated by the authors of the study through active construction, with one reductive representation thus building on another. The *Telegraph* article, for example, fails to question how a much-debated concept such as 'culture' has been scored.

The use of the term 'Barnsley's defenders' in relation to comments made in response to the *Top Towns* book by Barnsley's Dickie Bird and Keith Borrett in one of the articles is also perhaps of significance. Richardson has highlighted how, 'the way that people are named in news discourse can have significant impact on the way in which they are viewed.' He asserts that journalists, in naming, 'choose to foreground one social category over other equally accurate alternatives.' Richardson argues that, 'the chosen referential strategies perform a function within the text. Not only do they project meaning and social values onto the referent, they also establish coherence relations with the way that other social actors are referred to and represented.'³⁶ It might be contended that, in foregrounding Dickie Bird and Keith Borrett's roles as 'Barnsley's defenders,' the article in question sets up coherence relations between them and the authors of the *Top Towns* study with Bird and Borrett pitted against the authors of the report, perhaps with an underlying assumption that the report, based on 'scores,' which might be understood to be 'objective,' is opposed to

³⁶ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, pp. 50-51.

the comments of 'Barnsley's defenders,' with the term 'defenders' perhaps suggesting a lack of objectivity?

The example articles covering Barnsley's bid for UK City of Culture therefore suggest that Barnsley's bid will 'raise a few eyebrows,' with Barnsley seen as 'an unlikely candidate', or a 'dark horse,' that would have to 'confound the odds' to win the title, with comments including 'pull the other one' or 'let's be serious' in relation to Barnsley's bid for the title. The impression given is that the idea of Barnsley achieving the title of UK City of Culture is to be viewed as something of a joke, and completely at odds with the inter-textual characterisation drawn upon, and built upon, by the writers which depicts Barnsley as an 'unlikely candidate' and 'dark horse' as opposed to being one of the 'forerunners' with 'a wealth of obvious cultural attractions.' Meanwhile, the example articles relating to the publication of the *Top Towns* study appear to unquestioningly report that Barnsley 'scores low' for culture. Hereby, it does appear that the authors of the newspaper articles in question accept as problematic, or render problematic, particular cultural ecologies from particular perspectives or, indeed, they do both of these things. Nikolas Rose poses, as an essential question for all historians to consider, 'How, and by whom, are aspects of the human being rendered problematic, according to what systems of judgement and in relation to what concerns?'³⁷ It is to some of these questions that the thesis will now turn, whilst also considering exactly who benefits and who loses, and even who may be harmed, when inter-textual representations which seek to denigrate the cultural ecologies of particular places are propagated.³⁸

Defining and Understanding 'Culture'

Maev Kennedy, in her article covering the City of Culture bidding process in *The Guardian*, suggests that, 'The longlist includes cities with a wealth of obvious cultural attractions such as Bath, Norwich, Brighton and Oxford,'

³⁷ Nikolas Rose, 'Identity - Genealogy - History', in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. by Stuart Hall (London: SAGE, 1996).

³⁸ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, pp. 51-52.

without discussing *to whom* these cultural attractions might be obvious, or *why* such cultural attractions might be obvious, and according to what criteria.

As Barnsley voices are thin on the ground in the articles discussed above, the *Barnsley Chronicle* coverage of the City of Culture bidding process can perhaps introduce a Barnsley voice into the debate. Steve Houghton, the leader of Barnsley Council, stated in the *Barnsley Chronicle* on Friday 12 December 2009, 'There's a long history of culture in the town starting from the heavy industry and mining right through to the more classical perception of culture like Cannon Hall and Wentworth Castle.'³⁹ This reference within a local narrative to both the culture relating to the mining industry, and then the cultural institutions in the 'more classical perception of culture' might be of significance. Laurajane Smith notes the use of a similar formation amongst participants in her research study examining Castleford's heritage. Here, Smith sees the conflation of mining heritage with the Roman heritage of the town as an attempt to legitimise the cultural heritage of the town through emphasising the 'legitimate' Roman heritage alongside the mining heritage which community members are keen to highlight too.

Smith states, in relation to heritage, 'It is itself a constitutive cultural process that identifies those things and places that can be given meaning and value as 'heritage,' reflecting contemporary cultural and social values, debates and aspirations.'⁴⁰ If 'culture' were substituted for 'heritage' such a statement might equally describe the process of identifying 'culture.' Smith notes how, what she describes as, an 'Authorised Heritage Discourse' both draws upon, and naturalises, certain narratives and cultural and social experiences.⁴¹ Perhaps such a process can similarly be detected in relation to 'culture' within the City of Culture coverage, with particular cultural experiences perhaps being drawn upon and naturalised. Smith highlights, however, the diversity of popular discourses and practices which sit alongside the 'Authorised Heritage Discourse,' observing that some such discourses may 'challenge, either

³⁹ *Barnsley Chronicle*, 12 December 2009

⁴⁰ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 3.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

actively, or simply through their existence, the dominant discourse.⁴² Perhaps this might similarly be the case in relation to 'culture.' Smith highlights how, 'a range of communities, defined either geographically or by cultural, social, ethnic, economic and/or other experiences, have increasingly asserted the legitimacy of their collective identities and social, political and cultural experiences.'⁴³

Smith has argued that heritage may have been used to 'regulate, legitimize and justify the maintenance of social hierarchies,'⁴⁴ noting that there is 'a hegemonic discourse about heritage, which acts to constitute the way we think, talk and write about heritage,' which 'promotes a certain set of Western elite cultural values as being universally applicable,' and which is 'institutionalised in state cultural agencies.'⁴⁵ Smith argues that, 'The power relations underlying the discourse identify those people who have the ability or authority to 'speak' about or 'for' heritage...and those who do not.'⁴⁶ The coverage of the City of Culture bidding process studied here might be seen to suggest, through the absence of Barnsley voices, that in relation to 'culture,' the people of Barnsley fall into the category of 'those who do not.'

Smith also notes, in relation to the 'Authorised Heritage Discourse,' that this is a discourse of 'certain class experiences and social and aesthetic value,' which works to alienate a range of other social and cultural experiences,⁴⁷ thus perpetuating social and political marginalisation.⁴⁸ It might be argued that the City of Culture articles suggest a similar discourse exists, based upon certain class experiences and social and aesthetic values, around 'culture.' Smith highlights the subjective nature of cultural value and meaning,⁴⁹ and notes how some groups, individuals or communities will 'have a greater ability to have their

⁴² Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p. 4.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

values and meanings taken up and legitimized than others.⁵⁰ She concludes that, 'the view of heritage in any given society will inevitably reflect that of the dominant social, religious or ethnic groups,' providing a reflection of 'the political, economic and social power of these groups.'⁵¹ Perhaps the same might apply in relation to the view of 'culture.'

This thesis has already noted that the definition of the term 'culture,' like that of 'heritage,' is not fixed. 'A society is poor indeed if it has nothing to live by but its own immediate and contemporary experience,' emphasised Raymond Williams, before noting, 'but the ways in which we can draw on other experience are more various than literature alone.' Williams highlighted, 'For experience that is formally recorded we go, not only to the rich source of literature, but also to history, building, painting, music, philosophy, theology, political and social theory, the physical and natural sciences, anthropology, and indeed the whole body of learning.' He also stressed, however, 'We go also, if we are wise, to the experience that is otherwise recorded: in institutions, manners, customs, family memories.'⁵² Noting that art constitutes simply 'one of a number' of means of describing, communicating and organising experience,⁵³ Williams insists, 'Everything we see and do, the whole structure of our relationships and institutions, depends, finally, on an effort of learning, description and communication. We create our human world as we have thought of art being created.'⁵⁴ Williams insists upon the complexity of the term 'culture', the significance of 'culture' in conveying and sharing meanings and in 'making unique experience into common experience,' and the embedded nature of 'culture' within the whole of human organisation and creativity.⁵⁵

Williams noted that, within any culture, 'from the whole body of activities, certain things are selected for value and emphasis.'⁵⁶ Williams highlighted, 'A tradition

⁵⁰ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p. 81.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁵² Williams, *Culture and Society*, pp. 248-9.

⁵³ Williams, *The Long Revolution*, pp. 43-50.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

is always selective,' whilst arguing, 'there will always be a tendency for this process of selection to be related to, and even governed by, the interests of the class that is dominant.'⁵⁷ Williams acknowledged, 'It is true that certain cultural forms have been used as a way of asserting social distinction,'⁵⁸ going on to argue that the subsequent condemnation of other cultural forms had been used as a way of demonstrating the 'inferiority' of those who value them.⁵⁹

As Raymond Williams highlighted over half a century ago, 'A good community, a living culture, will...not only make room for but actively encourage all and any who can contribute to the advance in consciousness which is the common need.' Williams argued, 'Wherever we have started from, we need to listen to others who started from a different position. We need to consider every attachment, every value, with our whole attention; for we do not know the future, we can never be certain of what may enrich it.'⁶⁰ Williams concluded, 'We have to live by our own attachments, but we can only live fully, in common, if we grant the attachments of others.'⁶¹ Here, Williams stressed the importance of 'the struggle for democracy.'⁶²

If definitions and understandings of 'culture' are not fixed, if these definitions and understandings reflect contemporary values, debates and aspirations, and if it is itself, in Smith's terms, 'a constitutive cultural process' that identifies those things and places that can be given meaning and value as 'heritage,' or 'culture,' then surely it is only through the inclusion of diverse perspectives within discussions on culture that our collective understanding of what culture might entail can be enriched and our cultural policymaking democratised. Surely, this could only be of benefit in contributing to 'the advance in consciousness,' which Williams saw as 'the common need.'

⁵⁷ Williams, *Culture and Society*, p. 308.

⁵⁸ Williams, *The Long Revolution*, p. 384.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 384.

⁶⁰ Williams, *Culture and Society*, p. 320.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 322-323.

‘Culture’ and Competition

A fixed and narrow definition of ‘culture’ might, however, offer competitive advantage to some. In the *Top Towns* book, which formed the basis for the flurry of newspaper articles from 1995 examined above, Caralampo Focas, Paul Genty and Peter Murphy state that one of their aims in writing the book was to discover ‘where are the best places to live in the UK?’ To this end, the authors ‘looked at statistics,’ arguing that this is ‘the only way you can fairly compare one place with another.’ Focas, Genty and Murphy highlight their methods and how, in relation to statistics, focusing on a number of key issues, they, ‘picked out important indicators,’ going on to note that, ‘from there we worked out how the county councils and metropolitan districts (and London boroughs) stacked up against each other.’⁶³ However, as this thesis proceeds from the premise that data is ‘generated’ rather than ‘collected,’ with the researcher’s role in ‘actively constructing knowledge’ acknowledged,⁶⁴ the assertion made by Focas, Genty and Murphy that statistics provide an opportunity to ‘fairly compare one place with another’ is placed in question because, as the authors themselves acknowledge within the *Top Towns* book, the choices made about what statistics to use, and what might be ‘important indicators,’ are entirely subjective and open to debate.⁶⁵

Focas, Genty and Murphy suggest in *Top Towns* that another reason for writing the book was ‘curiosity’, noting that, ‘We are a country still dominated, despite our finer feelings, by class distinction and the north and south divide.’ They go on to say, ‘We hope we have chosen the factors important to those of you moving to an unfamiliar area. And to those of you keen to prove, one way or another, that on balance you really do live in an enviable part of the country.’⁶⁶

The Arts and Culture section of the *Top Towns* study discusses theatre, opera, dance (ballet and contemporary), music (classical), museums and galleries,

⁶³ Caralampo Focas, Paul Genty and Peter Murphy, *Top towns: The Guinness Guide to Finding the Best Places to Live in the UK* (Middlesex: Guinness Publishing, 1995), p. 5.

⁶⁴ Jennifer Mason, *Qualitative Researching* (London: SAGE Publications, 2nd Edition, 2002), p. 52.

⁶⁵ Focas *et al*, *Top towns*, p. 5.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

cinema and television. Focas, Genty and Murphy rightly argue here that, 'There are literally dozens of factors that could make up anyone's perception of what is good or bad about arts provision in their area.' However, they then go on to say, '...But for most of us, good arts provision means how much choice there is in theatre, cinema, concert halls and museums in the immediate vicinity – so these four factors have been used to prepare our final tables.' It is worth considering who the 'most of us' spoken of by Focas, Genty and Murphy might refer to, and whether 'most of us' would agree that geographical places can legitimately be ranked in relation to 'Arts and Culture' through the counting of theatres, museums, cinemas and concert halls. Might not these measures be contested by diverse sections of the population with diverse interpretations of what 'Arts and Culture' might be all about?

In the *Top Towns* final tables scoring 'Arts and Culture' in particular geographical locations, Barnsley is 'ranked' 109th out of 128 areas. The authors suggest that those areas at the bottom end of the table might perhaps, 'be criticized for inattention to the stuff of culture and civilisation.'⁶⁷ Here the *Top Towns* authors render problematic particular cultural ecologies from a particular perspective whilst at the same time neglecting to discover or acknowledge the cultural participation practices and values of those living within the areas upon which they comment, or to include alternative perspectives from those living within these areas. In addition, in arguing that 'class distinction' and 'the north and south divide' endure, and in acknowledging the likely use of *Top Towns* amongst readers 'moving to an unfamiliar area,' or keen to prove that they 'live in an enviable part of the country,' the authors of the study perhaps illustrate how representations concerning the cultural ecologies of particular places may be influenced by, as well as influencing, the social and economic spheres, as well as the cultural.

Pierre Bourdieu conceived of culture as a stake in power struggles within society, in which those in possession, through social background or education, of particular forms of 'cultural capital' are able to draw upon and deploy this in

⁶⁷ Focas *et al*, *Top towns*, pp. 161-189.

order to gain distinction and advantage within an unequal society. Bourdieu argued in relation to culture, 'the more legitimate a given area, the more necessary and 'profitable' it is to be competent in it, and the more damaging and 'costly' to be incompetent.'⁶⁸ Tony Bennett, Mike Savage, Elizabeth Silva, Alan Warde, Modesto Gayo-Cal and David Wright have highlighted how, 'For Bourdieu the culture/power nexus consisted chiefly in a conception of culture as a possession – an asset that some social agents have at the expense of others – that is mobilised to competitive advantage.'⁶⁹ Certainly the study of the example newspaper articles covering the *Top Towns* study and the City of Culture initiative appear to support such an observation, with culture used as a form of capital, and with the cultural characterisations of particular places within the *Top Towns* and City of Culture articles 'mobilised to competitive advantage.'

Richardson stresses the importance, in analysing texts, of asking, 'How much power and social influence does the focus, or subjects, of the story have?'⁷⁰ Richardson urges scholars to ask of any given piece, 'what does this text say about the society in which it was produced and the society that it was produced for?' and, 'will it help to continue inequalities and other undesirable social practices or will it help to break them down?'⁷¹ The lack of Barnsley voices across the example articles studied is significant. As Stuart Hall acknowledges, the discursive approach is concerned with 'the effects and consequences of representation – its politics.' It examines, 'how the knowledge which a particular discourse produces connects with power, regulates conduct, makes up or constructs identities and subjectivities, and defines the way certain things are represented, thought about, practised and studied.'⁷² The representations constructed in relation to Barnsley's cultural ecology studied here cannot be viewed in isolation from the effects and consequences of these representations, their politics. The knowledge produced by this set of example articles can be seen to be influenced by power relations (seen for example through the lack of

⁶⁸ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 87.

⁶⁹ Tony Bennett, Mike Savage, Elizabeth Silva, Alan Warde, Modesto Gayo-Cal, David Wright, *Culture, class, distinction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009). p. 20.

⁷⁰ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, p. 221.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

⁷² Hall, *Representation*, p. 6.

Barnsley voices) and to influence power relations (through the continuation of inter-textual representations). Most disturbingly, the representations constructed might be seen to have wider effects, social and economic, in presenting Barnsley's cultural ecology as somehow problematic in relation to those of other distinct geographical places. This can be seen in stark relief through the *Top Towns* book, which explicitly states its aim to influence external perceptions of distinct locations in order to influence re-location decisions in 'a country dominated by class distinctions.' The press coverage resulting from the publishing of the *Top Towns* study disseminates the characterisations constructed through the *Top Towns* study more widely.

The representations of Barnsley's cultural ecology depicted through the official statistics and example press articles studied here illuminate values existing amongst some of those who have the authority to speak about culture through official means or through the media. As representations can shape society as well as being shaped by society it is imperative to ask what interests and aims might lie behind those representations which perhaps seek to de-value the cultural ecologies of particular places. It is also imperative to ask what impacts such representations might have.

Understanding Everyday Participation – Articulating Cultural Values

This study, which forms part of the 'Understanding Everyday Participation – Articulating Cultural Values' project, seeks to challenge cultural representations, such as those examined above, which are built upon narrow definitions of culture. This research seeks to deepen understanding of, and gain recognition for, particular aspects of cultural participation and articulations of cultural value existing within the town of Barnsley. The study aims to enrich our collective understanding of what culture might entail, thereby limiting opportunity for a narrowly defined 'culture' to be utilised for competitive advantage as a tool in the reproduction of social and economic inequalities within society.

The 'Understanding Everyday Participation - Articulating Cultural Values' project as a whole, led by Andrew Miles, and involving an interdisciplinary team

of researchers based at the Universities of Manchester, Leicester, Exeter and Loughborough, provides a framework, in seeking to challenge narrow definitions of culture, within which this study sits. The project seeks to deepen understanding of the participation practices that people have taken part in, and have felt to have mattered to them, throughout their lives. The project team contends that, 'Orthodox models of culture...are based on a narrow definition of participation: one that captures engagement with traditional institutions such as museums and galleries but overlooks more informal activities.' One of the aims of the 'Understanding Everyday Participation' project, therefore, is 'to paint a broader picture of how people make their lives through culture.'⁷³

The Understanding Everyday Participation project strives towards 'a more democratic understanding of participation.' Miles, the Principal Investigator on the project, has noted how 'democratic culture has been understood, up until now, in terms of giving people better access to established institutions,' whilst asserting, 'We would like to shift the balance in the opposite direction and get greater recognition for the importance of activities that people feel matter to them'.⁷⁴ Lianne Gibson, Co-Investigator on the UEP project, asks: 'Isn't the real challenge for cultural policy analysts and practitioners to identify the ways in which cultures can be funded, supported or created using the public purse in ways which are democratic and accountable? To support one person's or groups' culture is also to make a decision not to support another's; on what bases do we make these decisions?'⁷⁵

The 'Understanding Everyday Participation' project also puts a clear emphasis on the relationship between participation and place in its mixed methods approach to understanding cultural participation. Through the project, which runs from April 2012 to July 2018, fieldwork research is taking place in villages, towns and cities across England and Scotland. The PhD project of which this thesis forms a part, undertaken as part of the 'Cultural Policy and Place' aspect,

⁷³ <http://www.everydayparticipation.org/about>, accessed 3.5.17.

⁷⁴ <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/News-and-Events/Watch-and-Listen/Pages/Understanding-Everyday-Participation.aspx>, accessed 1.7.13

⁷⁵ Lianne Gibson, 'In defence of instrumentality', *Cultural Trends*, 17, 4, 2008, p. 248

led by Lisanne Gibson, of the 'Understanding Everyday Participation' project, contributes to the efforts being made through the 'Understanding Everyday Participation' project to deepen understanding of the nature of cultural participation and value within particular places, with Barnsley being just one of a number of locations under study.⁷⁶ This study aims to ensure better understanding of cultural participation and value in Barnsley in order to contribute to the wider 'Understanding Everyday Participation' project to develop a more democratic understanding of participation.

Approach

This thesis has already noted Smith's assertion, in relation to heritage, that, 'it is itself a constitutive cultural process that identifies those things and places that can be given meaning and value as 'heritage,' reflecting contemporary cultural and social values, debates and aspirations.'⁷⁷ John Pendlebury highlights the new understandings of the world brought about by 'postmodernism,' or the 'cultural turn,' which, he suggests, reveal the 'socially constructed nature' of heritage whilst presenting a critique of the authority of expert knowledge and values and signalling the dissipation of grand narratives.⁷⁸

Debates around the 'cultural turn,' which were explored by David Mayfield and Susan Thorne in their article, 'Social History and Its Discontents: Gareth Stedman Jones and the Politics of Language,' highlighted the shift which saw culture and language elevated to a more central position within historical studies. Mayfield and Thorne emphasise how, following the 'cultural turn,' it is 'conceptions' and 'ideas' and 'words,' rather than simply 'socio-economic relations,' which are seen to be the legitimate focus of historical research. Mayfield and Thorne acknowledge, however, the challenge of resolving the problem that 'the relationship between politics and society, social

⁷⁶ Lisanne Gibson, 'Book Review: Culture, class, distinction', *Cultural Trends*, vol. 19, no. 3, (2010), 245-248 (p. 247). Miles and Sullivan, *Understanding the relationship between taste and value*, p. 25.

⁷⁷ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p. 3.

⁷⁸ John Pendlebury, *Conservation in the Age of Consensus* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 223.

consciousness and social being, language and class, has long posed to historical analysis.⁷⁹

Raphael Samuel praised the efforts of historians associated with the development of 'people's history' in the twentieth century to advance both an 'archive based 'history from below'⁸⁰ and an oral history based recovery of 'subjective experience'⁸¹ and 'the texture of everyday life.'⁸² Building upon this tradition, this study has aimed, through the use of oral history methods, to capture narratives of 'subjective experience' relating to cultural participation in Barnsley. The study has aimed to balance such approaches, which might be seen to fall within the empiricist tradition,⁸³ with postmodern critiques of 'the confident empiricism of historians,' which highlight the role of the historian in the 'construction of knowledge itself.'⁸⁴ Oliver Daddow recognises 'the positioned nature of professional history,' arguing that, 'all knowledge is produced by individuals in the present and for the present.' Daddow emphasises the shift from a modernist point of view, which saw history as 'reconstructing the past out of the sources,' to a postmodernist point of view, which sees the historian 'constructing the past to fit his or her present agendas.'⁸⁵ Furthermore, as Sheila Watson has noted, oral testimonies are one of the methods by which individuals and societies themselves not only remember the past but also actively interpret it. Watson has noted that oral testimonies can be of particular importance within communities where a dominant discourse, inextricably tangled with relations of power in society, may have sought to 'obliterate or ignore' their 'cultural practices, history and knowledge.'⁸⁶

⁷⁹ David Mayfield and Susan Thorne, 'Social History and Its Discontents: Gareth Stedman Jones and the Politics of Language', *Social History*, 17, 2, 1992, pp. 165-188

⁸⁰ Raphael Samuel (ed), *People's History and Socialist Theory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. xv

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. xviii

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. xxx

⁸³ Oliver J Daddow, 'The Ideology of Apathy: Historians and Postmodernism', *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice*, 8, 3, 2004, pp. 417-437

⁸⁴ Samuel (ed), *People's History and Socialist Theory*, p. x1i

⁸⁵ Daddow, 'The Ideology of Apathy: Historians and Postmodernism', pp. 417-437

⁸⁶ Sheila Watson, *Oral History, Memory and Reminiscence*. University of Leicester School of Museum Studies Distance Learning Module 7

Taking all of this into account, it is worth noting that this thesis considers that, in seeking to delve into the past from the present, both historians, and those providing oral testimonies, actively interpret the past for the present. And whilst not everything comes down to how historians, or those providing oral testimonies, choose to see the past, or interpret it, equally those same historians, or those providing oral testimonies, cannot possibly see all that there is to see in the past. What they see, and interpret, can only ever be partial (and therefore cannot be a whole truth). Furthermore, their interpretations and representations of the past are selective. With so much past, it would be impossible for them to be anything else. And, of course, with the 'cultural turn' emphasising the role of culture, language, representation and meaning-making in constituting social identities, relations and indeed the social world in contemporary society, it would seem that the interpretations and representations of the past constructed by historians or those providing oral testimonies will be shaped by their own experiences and understandings of the world, their perspectives, too. This study, then, in seeking to introduce a historical dimension to contemporary understandings of cultural ecologies, follows Samuel's encouragement to bring 'the *interpretation* of the past and the understanding of the present into dialogue with one another,' with an *interpretation* of the past perhaps being the best we can hope for when faced with just so much past, thereby 'bringing a historical understanding to bear on the questions with which we are faced.'⁸⁷ As such, the study delves into the past in an attempt to influence the present and the future.

As this thesis has already considered, representations are about making meaning. Quite different representations can be constructed in relation to any given thing. As such, it would be impossible to represent Barnsley's cultural makeup accurately. There is simply too much to represent. Representations are partial and selective, through necessity. The official statistics and newspaper articles explored already in this thesis provide some examples of representations made of Barnsley's cultural ecology. Another representation of Barnsley's cultural ecology is generated through the narratives of cultural

⁸⁷ Samuel (ed), *People's History and Socialist Theory*, p. 1i

participation soon to be explored within this thesis. The significance of perspective has been highlighted through the 'cultural turn' in relation to the creation of representations, or interpretations, of the world. As such, it would seem that if particular perspectives dominate Britain's leading institutions, as Milburn suggests that they do, including in the fields of politics and the media, making these institutions 'less informed, less representative and, ultimately, less credible than they should be,' then the active encouragement of diverse perspectives in relation to policy questions across the spectrum, including in the cultural sphere, must surely be essential in counteracting 'group think' and harnessing the 'diversity of talents and experiences' to be found across the whole of society. This thesis calls for this to be striven for as a priority.

To clarify, this thesis does not claim 'truth' for this representation or that representation. Similarly, the thesis does not seek to say 'this is culture' or 'that is culture.' Rather, the thesis reasons that representations are shaped by perspective, and that 'culture' can mean different things to different people. The thesis therefore suggests that the more people involved in debates around culture, and in creating representations of particular cultural ecologies, the better. Ultimately, the thesis argues for democracy. It argues that people from diverse backgrounds should have equal opportunities to have their representations and interpretations of culture, constructed from their different perspectives, to be considered. This thesis aims to bring the voices of the research participants to the fore, responding to the aim of the study to include a wider range of people's voices in debates around culture and participation. Through including different perspectives, in interviewees' own words, the thesis demonstrates the value of including different perspectives in enriching understandings of culture.

Methodology

In Chapters 2 and 3, the thesis turns to consider narratives of cultural participation generated through oral history interviews undertaken with people from Barnsley in order to investigate the articulated experiences and stated cultural values of individuals who have spent their lives in the town. Building

upon the 'people's history' tradition lauded by Samuel, this study has aimed, through the use of oral history methods, to capture narratives of 'subjective experience'⁸⁸ relating to cultural participation in Barnsley in order to juxtapose such narratives with the equally subjective representations constructed in relation to Barnsley's cultural ecology through the official statistics and newspaper articles studied. It is worth noting at this point that this study does not seek to suggest that the articulated experiences and stated cultural values examined in the thesis are representative of any wider group, within Barnsley or elsewhere. The narratives of participation studied are intended simply to provide examples through which understandings of culture, participation and value can be examined and expanded. The study aims to paint a broader picture of what culture might entail, and in so doing, limit opportunity for a narrow 'culture' to be utilised in the reproduction of social and economic inequalities in relation to distinct geographical places and their communities. The study also aims to demonstrate, through its exploration of different perspectives and viewpoints on culture, explored in Chapter 4, the benefits of including diverse voices in debates around culture in enriching these debates.

In Barnsley, local government documents have emphasised the prominence of the town's former coalmining industry in relation to Barnsley's cultural ecology. For example One Barnsley's *Sustainable Community Strategy, 2008 – 2020* notes that 'Historically, a large proportion of our cultural provision was provided in conjunction with our coal mining heritage. It was organised by the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO) and provided a range of activities and facilities through subscriptions taken directly from miners' wages. This supported a number of miners' welfares which were hives of activity, supporting sports teams, brass bands and providing a hub for the community in many areas throughout the borough.'⁸⁹ For this reason interviews were conducted over the summer of 2014 with 19 people from Barnsley, born between the 1930s and 1960s and with a personal or family connection with Barnsley's former coalmining industry. Interviewees were approached through

⁸⁸ Samuel ed., *People's History and Socialist Theory*, p. xviii.

⁸⁹ One Barnsley, *Sustainable Community Strategy, 2008-2020*, 2009.

contacts within the National Union of Mineworkers Yorkshire Area, the Dodworth Miners' Memorial Fund Committee, Dodworth Colliery Brass Band, the Worsbrough Industrial and Social History Society and Rabbit Ings Country Park (located on the former colliery yard and spoil heap of the Monkton Colliery and then the Royston Drift Mine which closed in 1989) in Barnsley, to explore possible connections between the former coalmining industry, situated in place, and Barnsley's cultural ecology. The initial research participants recruited through the organisations outlined above went on to suggest further potential research participants and in many cases provided contact details for further potential interviewees.

Jennifer Mason has highlighted how, through qualitative research, we can explore 'the texture and weave of everyday life' and 'the understandings, experiences and imaginings of our research participants,' enabling us to 'celebrate richness, depth, nuance, context, multi-dimensionality and complexity.'⁹⁰ Mason has highlighted how researchers wishing to 'explain something about social process, social change, social organization, social meaning' argue that this 'requires an understanding of depth and complexity in...people's situated or contextual accounts and experiences, rather than a more superficial analysis of surface comparability between accounts of large numbers of people'.⁹¹ Andrew Miles notes how qualitative methods can reveal the 'contexts, meanings and significance of participation' with in depth qualitative interviews providing the opportunity for the probing of 'the apparent disengagement and marginalisation of those labelled as 'non-users' of culture on the basis of quantitative population surveys.'⁹² This study has certainly been committed, in its use of qualitative in-depth semi-structured interviews to methods of data generation that very much focus upon richness, depth, nuance, multi-dimensionality and complexity, whilst also providing research participants with the flexibility to enable them to shape the generation of data.⁹³ In-depth qualitative interviews sought to explore cultural participation practices

⁹⁰ Mason, *Qualitative Researching*, p. 1.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 65

⁹² Andrew Miles, *Culture, Participation and Identity in Contemporary Manchester*

⁹³ The topic guide utilised in the in-depth semi-structured interviews can be found in appendix 1.

and cultural values within Barnsley's local population, and to further investigate contemporary perceptions within the local population in relation to Barnsley's cultural ecology.

Thus, the study has aimed to be 'participatory'⁹⁴ in nature, in-keeping with the thesis' advocacy for the inclusion of diverse perspectives within cultural policy debates and decision making processes at all levels in order that our collective understanding of what culture might entail is enriched and our cultural policymaking is democratised. Participants have had the opportunity to actively shape the research process both through their involvement in the recruitment of research participants, and through their concentration, within their interviews, upon particular organisations and key moments of interest within the story of Barnsley's cultural ecology. Participants' views in turn influenced the archival research undertaken within the study. Jennifer Mason highlights how qualitative research is 'fluid and flexible, data-driven and context-sensitive.' She comments upon how 'in qualitative research, decisions about design and strategy are on-going and are grounded in the practice, process and context of the research itself.'⁹⁵ This study has certainly been conducted in such a spirit.

The study proceeds from the premise that data is indeed 'generated' rather than 'collected', with the researcher's (and participants') roles in 'actively constructing knowledge,' in this case through detailed oral history interviews, and their subsequent analysis, acknowledged.⁹⁶ As outlined in the previous section of the thesis, this study considers that both historians, and those providing oral testimonies, actively interpret the past for the present, with the interpretations and representations of the past constructed by historians or those providing oral testimonies shaped by their own experiences and understandings of the world, their perspectives, too. The thesis aims to bring the voices of the research participants to the fore and seeks, through including research participants' articulated experiences and perspectives in their own words, to deepen understanding of cultural participation and value within

⁹⁴ Mason, *Qualitative Researching*, p. 21.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

coalfield communities, starting from the testimonies of people within those communities. The themes structuring the oral history material within the thesis emerged entirely from a detailed analysis of the oral history interview transcripts. There were no pre-determined themes or categories set out prior to the detailed analysis of the oral history material. The study has utilised methods of analysis and explanation that 'involve understandings of complexity, detail and context,'⁹⁷ with connections between and across themes explored through discussion of the oral history material.

The thesis concentrates upon the experiences and values put forward by interviewees. It does not generalise that these experiences and values are necessarily representative of any wider group. As Mason has emphasised, qualitative research has an 'unrivalled capacity to constitute compelling arguments about how things work in particular contexts' with the significance of context and the particular seen as crucial 'in the development of our understandings and explanations of the social world.'⁹⁸ The research encompasses a situated study of a small group of individuals and contributes the perspectives of these individuals to the debate, deliberately avoiding generalisation. The research, in acknowledging the need to include different individual perspectives, highlights the importance placed within the study upon the valuing of individual perspectives from within and across different sections of society, thereby rejecting the idea that one perspective may necessarily represent that of others. The concentration upon exploring differing representations and perspectives – which forms the foundational structure of the thesis – builds upon the messages of 'the cultural turn'. Similarly, the use of quotations within the thesis, based as it is upon a recognition of the importance of perspective in the creation of interpretations and representations, coupled with an avoidance of generalisation, also build upon the messages of 'the cultural turn'.

⁹⁷ Mason, *Qualitative Researching*, p. 3.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

Through including participants' contributions, in their own words, the thesis aims to demonstrate the reflexivity shown by those interviewed in relation to the consideration given to decisions regarding cultural participation as well as demonstrating the complex contexts and motivations, articulated by research participants, underpinning interviewees' participation practices and values. Furthermore, through including different perspectives, in interviewees' own words, the thesis aims to demonstrate the value of including different perspectives in enriching understandings of culture. The original and detailed oral history data provides the foundations upon which, in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, conclusions can be drawn concerning cultural participation and value, which in turn make an original contribution to culture debates.

Mason has highlighted the importance of a reflexive approach to qualitative research, stressing that 'a researcher cannot be neutral, or objective, or detached, from the knowledge and evidence they are generating'. Mason prioritises the need for researchers to seek to understand their role in the research process.⁹⁹ Beverley Skeggs has argued that academics can 'recognise our position in...relations of power' and can 'do something about it' through generating a politics which takes into account the experiences of diverse sections of society. Skeggs argues 'to not do so is to produce irresponsible knowledge.'¹⁰⁰ This study has certainly sought to include voices in cultural policy debates in ways that, through their participatory nature, using direct quotation, aim to produce responsible rather than irresponsible knowledge.

Next Steps

The thesis will now turn to consider some narratives of cultural participation generated through oral history interviews undertaken with people from Barnsley, in order to investigate the articulated experiences and stated cultural values of individuals who have spent their lives in the town. As Suzanne

⁹⁹ Mason, *Qualitative Researching*, p. 7

¹⁰⁰ Beverley Skeggs, *Formations of Class and Gender* (London, Thousand Oaks & New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1997), pp. 168-9.

MacLeod has emphasised, it is only through deepening understanding of the cultural participation practices and values of diverse communities that dominant conceptions of what cultural provision is and could be can be challenged.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Suzanne MacLeod, *Museum Architecture: A New Biography* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 7.

Chapter 2 – People, Participation and the Embedded Nature of Culture¹⁰²

John Kirk has argued that ‘representations situate cultures and identities within the public imagination, even if there remains more to such formations and traditions than their representation alone.’¹⁰³ This thesis sets out to question representations constructed in relation to the cultural ecologies of particular geographical places, in this case with regard to the South Yorkshire town of Barnsley. The last chapter explored some representations created of Barnsley’s cultural ecology through official statistics and some example newspaper articles. This chapter, and the next chapter, will turn to examine whether there might indeed remain more to Barnsley culturally than such representations might suggest.

As would be expected, the narratives of participation generated through the study evoke a rich tapestry of diverse participation practices within Barnsley over the years. Vivid descriptions emerged of involvements with aspects of community, union and political volunteering and activism, miners’ galas and demonstrations, adult education, local history, playing and appreciating music, gig-going, sport, gardening, allotments, photography, walking, socialising, cinema, dancing, ‘club trips’, geology, gambling, drinking, as well as museum visiting and museum-making and theatre visiting and theatre making. Viewed from another perspective, Barnsley’s cultural ecology appears somewhat different from the representations constructed through the official statistics and example newspaper articles studied in this thesis. Interviewees notably described their involvement in diverse participation practices within the context of their family and community lives and networks, highlighting the embedded nature of their cultural participation practices and values. As this thesis has already noted, in *The Long Revolution* Raymond Williams insists upon the complexity of the term ‘culture’, and the embedded nature of ‘culture’ within the whole of human organisation and creativity. The oral history testimonies generated through this study highlight how the development of cultural

¹⁰² Williams, *The Long Revolution*, pp. 58-62.

¹⁰³ Kirk, ‘Representing Identity and Work in Transition’, p. 204.

institutions and participation practices in Barnsley have been embedded within complex contexts and motivations, with cultural institutions and practices forming part of a 'complex, organised whole'.¹⁰⁴

Family Ties

Family featured strongly in the oral history interviews undertaken within former coalmining communities in and around Barnsley and participation narratives included various examples of participation based around family ties. Interviewees described how members of their extended families had lived close by, and the impact of this upon their own, and other family members', participation practices.

Paul Darlow, who in the 1980s followed his father into the coalmining industry, commented, in relation to his memories of growing up in Dodworth in the 1960s and 1970s with his extended family close by, 'It was a very close knit family.' He continued, 'I would always go up to my grandma's, you know, and go and help my grandma because when people get old they need that support don't they?' He went on to say, 'And my dad supported my grandma a hell of a lot.' The family support networks Paul described extended to both older and younger family members. He recounted, 'my mam just loved being with the kids,' adding, 'She was a housewife. She used to look after her kids. That was a full time job.' He went on to say, 'She loved her family you know, she loved her grandkids. She loved her family and looked after us all.' When asked about the kinds of things his parents would do when they had spare time, Paul said, in relation to his mother, 'I'm trying to think...everything that she did was concerned with her grandkids and her kids I suppose, which is a good thing isn't it?' Paul stated, 'It was a lovely childhood. You look back with rose tinted eyes, but it was, it was a lovely environment to grow up in, loving, caring,' before going on to say, 'We never had any money, but we were happy, and that's it, happiness costs nowt does it? It was a community then, wasn't it?'

¹⁰⁴ Williams, *The Long Revolution*, pp. 58-62.

Mel Dyke, a miner's daughter, described her upbringing on Bridge Street in Barnsley in the 1940s. She said, 'I had a grandmother and two uncles and their wives and my father and mother on that street,' observing, 'it was the business then, you lived near your mother.' Mel added, 'It was that extended community notion. Few people had cars then, and very few miners had cars in the '30s... Those communities were self-helpful, self-governing, self-monitoring and mutually supportive. So it was like one great big family, very much so then.' Moving into adulthood, and her early married life, Mel described how 'Proximity to parents to help with the children,' influenced where her and her husband chose to set up home, adding, 'I went back to work eventually, and 'My mum looked after the kids.'

Ex-miner Mick Birkinshaw recalled his childhood in Royston, a village in Barnsley's coalfields, in the 1950s and 1960s in the midst of an extended family. He said, 'One of my earliest memories is collecting eggs for my grandad. I must've only been little and when I'd go in the hutch, I'd climb through a little hole, through a little doorway, and "Here, there's some here grandad," "Careful, don't break 'em.'" Mick spoke of his cousin, Ian, explaining, 'His mother, she had a career, she was a school teacher, and ended up being a headmistress,' and noted, 'so my mum and my grandma sort of helped...brought Ian up.' Mick described how his older brother and Ian (who were of the same age) thus became 'more like brothers,' spending much of their childhood together. Mick also described how his grandfather had a smallholding and a shop and how, 'another auntie, a great auntie, Auntie Phoebe, she helped out in the shop.' Mick remembered his mother 'plating up a Sunday dinner and me taking it down, with those cover things on, and taking it down to my grandma and grandad's.'

As well as outlining examples of how supportive family networks impacted upon his family's time, Mick also described how social time spent with wider family similarly impacted upon the family's spare time routines, explaining, 'There were aunties, well, great aunties to me, scattered all over Royston and I'm one of these I used to like visiting. We often did visit family. I can remember as a kiddie...we always went visiting.' In relation to Christmas morning Mick

described how, 'You did the rounds with everybody.' Mick outlines how this family tradition continued into his own adulthood, explaining, 'So I've all these aunties and up till me becoming an adult, and these were the last ones that were surviving, I still went to see them and took my daughter to see them.' Mick recalled, 'Auntie Eva, one of the other sisters, she used to love it when I used to take our Stacey and she's what, 34 or something now, you know, and my auntie used to love it when I used to take her round. "Bring her in, bring her in," and she'd sit her on her knee and that you know, another generation.' Mick went on to say in relation to growing up amidst his wider family, of which a number are no longer alive, 'It just seemed idyllic to me really. I think back now and it was an idyllic time for me because we were a family.'

Mick evoked vivid images of an everyday family life based around family routines. For example, Mick recited, 'It was always a thing that you did, every Saturday, we went into Barnsley to make the payments, pay off your settee, your fridge or your bed, you paid two shillings a week or whatever it was, and we went all round the places in Barnsley...you'd got the book, paid it off, and then we'd go into this café. We always had pie and peas. It was down the bottom of the arcade, left, you went up some stairs, there was always a queue upstairs, it was only small, it was always warm with steam, it was always busy, clinking and that, it was always pie and peas, it was all everybody had.' He went on to recall, 'But I also remember fish and chips, so it might have been every other Saturday...it must have been alternate or something like that. But it was fish and chips and then my dad would watch the results at teatime then and that was Saturdays.'

Moving on to adulthood, marriage and setting up home, Mick explained, 'My parents never moved anywhere, we never moved anywhere, Jean's from Royston, I'm from Royston, and we just stayed in Royston. I can't think why, the reason for that. We didn't look for anywhere else.' Describing everyday life in the family home Mick recounts, 'We always did things with the kids... We used to always get involved in making things for school...And I can remember our Stacey asking me one...it was something to do with history, to do with local history, and she asked me if I could help her because it was local history and

she knew I was into it... Yes, I got involved, and that started our Stacey asking me about local history.'

Mick goes on to describe how an interest in history has now been passed on through generations of the family, to his own daughter, and now to her daughter, as he remembers, 'I bought some books from a gala the other week, for our Ruby, because our Ruby likes history, my granddaughter, she just loves it, she says to me, "Tell me about olden times grandad." I said, "I've got these history books for our Ruby." She [Stacey] said, "Ooh, I'd like to look at them as well."' Mick explains, 'I do lots of things with our Ruby, well I do with all of them [grandchildren],' and recounts a recent visit with his granddaughter to the Coal Mining Museum, 'Yes, telling her about the pit and working down the pit and that.' Mick also described how he talks to his granddaughter about his own brother, mother and father and other family members no longer alive, explaining, 'We've been to grave stones of family members and that.' Mick added, 'She spends quite a lot of time with me, Ruby. I want to take her to more places now she's growing up... I want to take her to Hadrian's Wall, she loves Roman interests.' Mick went on, 'She's mad on the Beatles, and I am, and they say it's because of me.' Mick sums up, 'So our Ruby, she's the future, and my other two, Daisy and Jessie.' Mick also describes the passing on of other aspects of family life inter-generationally too, outlining, 'I was brought up with manners and things, and you like to think you've brought yours up like that... I don't think I sat down and taught that but in a roundabout way I've sort of done that I think. It's just more like accepted practice I think.' Mick gives an example of this, describing how his daughter, when she was a teenager, would go camping with friends, detailing, 'they used to go camping... stay out all night, as a gang, get a campfire going, drinking and that... but they always brought their litter home with them or made sure they'd put the fire out and that... they were respectful.'

Miner's daughter Dorothy Hyman described an early life amidst wider family networks growing up in the village of Cudworth in the borough of Barnsley, recounting, 'My dad came from a biggish family and so did my mum so we'd quite a few relatives round about... They were all in, most of them in,

Cudworth.’ Describing family life Dorothy recalled, ‘My dad worked at the pit,’ and, ‘We lived from week to week. We hadn’t a lot of money. If my mother wanted anything she got it on tick,¹⁰⁵ as they said, but she’d only get one thing at a time and pay for that before she’d get anything else.’ Dorothy said, of her father, ‘He thought a lot about his family, his family came first.’ Of her mother, Dorothy recounts, ‘My mother’s time was just taken up mainly with cooking and washing and ironing and keeping the house clean. We were always well fed, basic food.’ She also remembered that her mother knitted, whilst remembering her limitations in relation to sewing, continuing, ‘So as soon as I could sew, and I was always interested in handicrafts and sewing, soon as I could do that, I picked clothes out to be mended and washed,’ demonstrating how members of the family pitched in to help with family routines.

Dorothy also recalls how she used to clean for her auntie, ‘up to a couple of years ago,’ again demonstrating the wider family support networks which had an impact upon her time. Dorothy Hyman spoke of the family networks and support forming a part of her early life, as Paul Darlow and Mel Dyke did, within the context of a wider sense of local community. For example, in relation to the Olympic successes which she went on to enjoy in her early adulthood Dorothy acknowledges, ‘Most of all I remember the help and dedication of my family and friends who enabled me to follow my dream, and also the kindness and support of local people and work colleagues who shared in my success.’ Dorothy also acknowledges her close ties to her home town, commenting, ‘I never wanted to move away really...I’m very much tied to Barnsley.’

Miner’s son Eric Longford Jessop explains how, when he was growing up in the mining village of Dodworth in the 1940s and 1950s, he had ‘a maternal grandfather that lived 100 yards away, and cousins and aunties and uncles that were very close,’ along with a paternal grandfather that also lived close by. Eric evokes memories of how his Grandad Jessop, ‘used to take me up in the woods and show me rabbit holes and worm and mole casts, and tell me about trees and animals, squirrels, and things like that,’ and, ‘take me in his

¹⁰⁵ credit

greenhouse and show me his Camellias,' whilst also remembering how his Grandad Smith, 'used to take me to band practices and cricket.' Eric said of his childhood, 'Families in those days were very close because there wasn't the means of transportation there is today. Getting about wasn't as accessible as it is today... We walked everywhere.' In addition to the influence of the family members described above, Eric also recalled how, 'All the neighbours that lived around me, they all contributed to my education one way or another, whether it was Mr Stafford helping me to mend my bike, or George Henry Hart, book-maker, allowing me to drive his cars up and down his drive at a young age.' Eric also recounted how local musician Wilfred Taylor Hampshire took him on as a pupil when he was young and taught him 'a lot about music.' Eric recalled how Mr Hampshire, who he describes as, 'like a grandad to me,' rather than teaching him music theory, instead taught him, 'how to love music.' Eric describes the influence this had upon him, stating, 'Musicians who are technically capable aren't always as good as the people who play from the heart, and I consider I'm one of them.' Here, again, the influence of wider family and community networks can be seen to be of significance.

Ex-mining electrician Neil Hardman recounted a childhood spent amongst wider maternal family networks in Gawber, near Barnsley, in the 1950s. He remembers, 'Most of my mother's family...we lived in Gawber, in a slum actually, we lived in slums.' Neil remembers that the family were 'abjectly poor.' Neil recalls how his wider family featured regularly in his early life, recounting, 'My grandfather, Nip Denton they called him, he used to have donkeys and horses and was involved in fairs...as I got older there were always horses and ponies and horse and carts, they were a part of my life.' Neil, explaining that he had always been mechanically minded, notes that his grandfather, 'was always making things as well.' He said, 'He'd repair things, he'd repair his own shoes, he had a shed that was full of spanners...It was like an Aladdin's cave when you went to my grandads.' Neil went on to say, 'They were always making... my mum's side, they could always make stuff and some very good at it, they were really artists.' He remembered, 'They could make carts, and paint, wonderful paints. Ever seen gypsy caravans all painted up? They could do that.' Neil suggested 'I think it does rub off doesn't it?'

In relation to setting up home as an adult, Neil describes how his first marital home was close to his family, and explains, 'I love Barnsley' and, 'I've never had any thoughts of moving away from Barnsley.' Neil described how his close relationship with his parents continued after he'd moved out of the family home, describing how he 'always went home.' He recalls, 'It was always "I'm just nipping home."' In relation to his mother, Neil noted, 'If I didn't call four or five times a week she'd think there was a problem.' In relation to his own children and grandchildren, Neil says, 'I'm not bored with life. Especially when the sun shines, and I've got five grandkids, and we take them out for days.' Neil adds that his children and grandchildren, 'come every Sunday for dinner.'

Other interviewees described growing up in the midst of wider family networks. Steve Wyatt, an ex-miner at Dodworth pit, described how, 'In the street I lived in there was my Uncle Albert, which was my father's oldest brother, there was my Aunt Sarah, that was my father's sister, there was my Grandma Wyatt in the bottom house, there was us, and we'd relatives in the next street, and relatives in the next street.' Steve recalls how his involvement in supportive family networks impacted upon his own everyday life when he was growing up. He said, 'You'd got to go to the shop for your relatives. My grandmother, my father's mother, used to shout me to go to the shop.' He continued, 'When I came back from the shop, from going to the shop for her, there were two things on the table, it was either a slice of bread and jam, or two biscuits, but I could only have one.' Here, the economic circumstances of the family can be seen to impact upon everyday life. Recalling his parents' divorce in his childhood Steve remembered, "cos my father was never sending any money home and we were always skint it can be quite hard.' Steve describes, 'I used to go where they used to feed me.' He says, 'My mother's sister, our Enid, younger sister, I used to go to help her, I used to help her every Saturday shopping, 'cos she used to catch the bus from where she lived into the town and we used to go all over Barnsley looking for the bargains and stuff, and I used to help her, I used to carry the shopping for her, and 'cos I carried it she used to feed me you see, and she used to give me dinner on Sunday or whatever.'

Steve also describes in vivid detail a particular occasion when he was called upon to help his grandmother, detailing, 'My grandmother who lived down Worsbrough wrote a letter to my mother saying, "Betty, I haven't got no coal, can you get me some coal?" So I came home from school and my mother says, "Go down the cellar and get that Albert Hirst carrier bag," and they were made of brown paper then, "and fill that carrier bag with coal and take it down to your grandmother's at the Dale." And she gave me the bus fare...which was fourpence, or four old pennies. And I thought, "If I walk it into the town, I've saved a penny, and if I walk it back from town back home, I've saved twopence, that's for Steve in the shop." So I filled this carrier bag with coal, and it was raining, and I carried it down into the town and I got to where a pub called the Cross Keys is...And it was raining that heavy, and the bag was that wet, it burst out, the coal. So I put it outside of the door of the Cross Keys pub, at the side of the door. And I went home and my mother said, "Have you taken that coal to your grandmother's?" and I said, "No, the bag's burst open," so she gave me another carrier bag to go down and fill this bag with the coal and when I got there somebody had taken it! I came back home and my grandmother didn't get any coal that day!' Steve recalls, 'It was hard times.' He remembers, 'My mother used to have to send me to tick up at the shop.' Steve described, 'My mother used to always send me for a pound of butter...a pound jar of jam, a loaf of bread, and "don't forget my senior service" - cigs.' Steve exclaims, 'I had that much bread and jam when I was a kid I chuffing hate it, I hate the stuff. I hate it.' He added, 'I'll tell you what, a pound jar of jam and a loaf of bread goes a long way,' reflecting, 'You'd do all sorts to make the best.'

Steve went on to recall, 'You used to do jobs then, you see, you'd do owt, to get owt. You'd go and get bottles, you'd go and find bottles, 'cos at one time you could take bottles back to the shop and get money reimbursed for them.' Steve recounted, 'I started doing the papers me when I was nine years old. When I did them at nine I used to do the evenings. And then I went on from doing the evenings, I went on to doing the mornings and the evenings. I used to do the morning papers, go to school, come home, and then do the evening papers. And I used to do the Green 'Un on Saturday nights as well. I used to get fifteen bob for evening papers and twenty-one bob for mornings. And the worst day

was *Chronicle* day, 'cos there were double bags.' Steve remembers, 'I had a round and I used to go all over,' and notes, 'It was hard graft on Fridays.' Steve added, 'I used to do seven days a week, Monday to Sunday, on the daily papers, and Monday to Saturday night on the evenings.' Mick Birkinshaw similarly recalled his paper round, remembering, 'Getting up in a morning freezing and by the time I got back my mum's up, the fire's roaring, and it's ooh, lovely in the house.'

As the paragraphs above illustrate, the interviews undertaken through this research have highlighted the importance as well as some of the impacts of both immediate and extended family networks upon everyday life amongst interviewees as they were growing up in the coalmining communities of Barnsley and since. Interviewees described some of the rhythms of life within their immediate and wider family networks in the past and in the present. They described how they were called upon to give support to other family members at various times, both as youngsters, called upon to help older members of the family, and as older members of the family, helping to support children and grandchildren. Interviewees also described some of the support which family members had given them. Interviewees reflected upon the start their immediate and wider family networks gave them in life, from Dorothy Hyman's acknowledgement of her family's influence (along with the influence of the wider community) in relation to her Olympic success to the acknowledgement among some interviewees of the difficult economic circumstances which impacted upon them and their families over the years. Many interviewees reflected upon happy times spent with family members within a loving family environment and the wide range of interests and activities passed on through their family connections. Interviewees also reflected on routines and also 'manners' passed on, inter-generationally, through family networks.

Raphael Samuel, in his edited volume, *The Enemy Within: Pit Villages and the Miners' Strike of 1984-5*, argued that kinship was an important factor in accounting for 'the resilience of the strike' in 1984-5. Samuel suggested, 'Attention might be given particularly to inter-generational solidarity and exchange,' going on to say, 'It was improvised in the private rather than the

public sphere, and so received none of the attention given to the soup kitchens and the village action committees. But in many cases, to judge by individual accounts, it was Mums and Dads and in-laws who kept a family afloat, who provided treats and presents for grandchildren and brought food to the family table, and fuel to the boiler and the fire.¹⁰⁶ Interviewee Julie Medlam, a miner's daughter from Barnsley, who had just reached adulthood as the strike broke out, recounts her own experience of the strike, noting, 'I had to support my mam and dad through the strike.' Another interviewee, Pete Steadman, who came out on strike along with his colleagues at Goldthorpe pit in 1984, reflected upon how his mother-in-law had three sons and a son-in-law all on strike in 1984-5, meaning that, 'whatever bit they had,' had to be spread thinly. Certainly, kinship support networks have featured strongly in the narratives of participation generated through this study, both in relation to difficult times, such as in the case of the Miners' Strike, but also in relation to the everyday routines of life.

Friendships and 'Community' ties

Local friendship networks also featured strongly in the oral history interviews undertaken within former coalmining communities in and around Barnsley. Steve Wyatt described his formative years playing with other local children in the streets and 'ginnels' around where he lived. Steve evoked vivid memories of impromptu games, explaining, 'We used to laik¹⁰⁷ cricket and football. We used to make cricket bats out of square timber 'cos you couldn't afford a cricket bat.' He continued, 'You used to utilise things you see and initially, 'cos everybody was skint, you made the best, you made do, you had to do.' Steve recalled, 'You used to go in the allotments talking to the old codgers 'cos everybody was in the same boat.'

Mel Dyke described how, 'You played out, you played on the street, and games were seasonal.' Mel recalls, 'You had whip and top...there'd be nipsy, cricket,

¹⁰⁶ Raphael Samuel, Barbara Bloomfield, Guy Boanas ed., *The Enemy Within: Pit Villages and the miners' strike of 1984-5* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), p. 9.

¹⁰⁷ play

because the yards were big enough with built outhouses you could chalk the wickets on, and boys and girls played together.' Mel remembers, 'Skipping, hopscotch...and the rest. Happy days!' She adds, 'Bonfire night was lovely. Everybody got together and brought things, my mother would do parkin and other people did toffee and jacket potatoes. So I remember that as a relatively happy childhood. I didn't realise that we weren't well off because nobody was.' Dorothy Hyman similarly recalled playing out in the street, noting, 'We just played out. We played hopscotch, whip and top, skipping, standing on our hands. We had a back yard, there was a toilet and a dustbin hole, we'd call it, so we'd make that into a house, and we made shops, and so we entertained ourselves, gathered things and played at house and shops, dressing up, or two ball.' Dorothy went on to say, 'I can remember, it would have been after the wars, they arranged street parties, and races and things. The same with the coronation, some neighbours, we had a street party again and we had a coronation queen, because my sister was the street queen, and we had a parade and there were races and bonfires.' Dorothy remembers such events being organised, 'Through the street, and the neighbours,' adding, 'They'd collect a little bit of money every week, and we all were given probably a propelling pencil for the coronation and little things like that I remember.'

Barrie Almond, who worked in Barnsley's coalfields and now, in retirement, plays an active role in the Worsbrough Industrial and Social History Group, thinking back to his formative years recalls, 'Playing on the street, friendship, comradeship, with my mates,' whilst noting, 'I'm fortunate to still have mates who I went to school with.' Another Worsbrough Industrial and Social History Group member, Ian Paisley, remembering his youth, recalls, 'Making trolleys,' and 'Trolley races.' Another group member recalls, 'We used to walk to t'Craggs. You know Wharncliffe Craggs?' He adds, 'They're just simple things really aren't they?' whilst emphasising the importance of being, 'able to go and mix with other people,' stating, 'I think that was one of the main things.' Taking up this point, Ian Paisley goes on to remember, 'We used to spend all day on t'tennis court, t'old miner in the cabin there "Aye, go on, have another half an hour, nobody wants to come on," four of us, we'd sit down and have a little tournament, when Wimbledon was on, your mates'd be watching, we'd be sat

down having a drink of water, having a laugh, a game of football...All communal things.' He adds, 'We used to go trainspotting us. We used to go up Swaithe for the three o'clocker...that bloody train never turned up!' Ian recalls, 'I remember a lad who I knew...he read *Treasure Island*, so in the school holidays we were going to look for some treasure, so we went up Dovecliffe, 'cos I can remember...it's all trees. Then, there were just a few saplings. You could sit on t'bank. We took the book, with the map on, as though that were there, this was in our imagination. We spent a day looking for this treasure.' Ian concludes, 'My memories of childhood, maybe I was a bit lucky, were brilliant. I had some lovely mates. We had arguments and feights and all sorts, but by and large just everybody got on. And we did things.'

Ian recalls speaking with members of the community of all ages in his youth. He recalls, 'I can remember them building the clinic, and the old folks home at Worsbrough Dale, Oaklands...and we used to go in there, my grandma was in for a little bit, and it was great...And t'old blokes, there was a bloke, he'd got glasses on, upright bloke, he'd sit in t'window, and he'd see us when we'd come. Bus stop's there, with two benches. There was a bloke in t'end house, used to be a footballer when he was young, Sheffield United, he always wore a flat cap, he'd come out and talk about football to us, we used to be engrossed, we'd run home, get a penny for a bag of chips and we'd share the chips, and one or two of them would come out of the old folks home, this bloke with the glasses on in particular, and it was great.'

An interest in the concept of 'roots' and family and community ties is discernible in an article by Esther Leach which featured in 1998 in *The Independent* in relation to Barnsley, which suggested that, 'Friendliness, not prosperity, puts the town in the premier league.' Leach wrote, 'Despite its past difficulties, Barnsley still has an extraordinary hold over its inhabitants. A recent survey by the Council for the Protection of Rural England found that fewer than 115 people leave each year - the lowest figure of any town in the country.' Leach continues, 'If such a statistic raises an eyebrow or two down south, it is easily explained by the locals. "We lost everything and nothing when the pits closed, because we still have each other," said David Fretwell, 23, whose father was a

farmer and uncle a miner. "It's still there, that feeling for each other which keeps me here," he added as he tried to explain the elusive something that is Barnsley.¹⁰⁸ Esther Leach's suggestion, within the article, that the Council for the Protection of Rural England statistic quoted might raise a few eyebrows amongst some, whilst 'easily explained by the locals,' suggests that Leach understands the potential for such a statistic to elicit quite different interpretations and responses in relation to the perspectives, value systems, assumptions and norms of the reader. Certainly the interviewees involved in this research study, from their perspectives, clearly attached value to the family and community ties which they described in relation to their own lives in Barnsley.

Volunteering and community activity featured strongly within the narratives of participation generated through the oral history interviews undertaken in Barnsley. Paul Darlow, for example, remembered how his father, 'spent a lot of time doing things that were associated with the community.' Paul recalled, 'My dad was involved with it all, with the Labour Party and everything.' He went on to say, 'It was just a community in which everybody worked together, grew up together, did things together, and it was a nice environment.' Paul goes on to query, 'And I think that's key to it isn't it? What do you want society to be like? Do you want it to be all individuals fighting amongst themselves, or do you want it to be a collective?' Paul suggested, 'I think if people sat down and studied then they'd want a society in which we were co-operating and being dead right with one another. You'll still get people that went round pinching, you'll still get people that are anti-social. I'm not painting a picture of perfection. I don't think you can, can you, get perfection? But it's about living in a society that values...shares values, and values individuals rather than being all at one another's throats and fighting and arguing.'

Miners' Welfare Institutes

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/barnsley-why-its-so-grand-1149019.html>, accessed 10.2.15.

Beyond the family and community ties evident in all the interviewees' responses, particular organisations have played a key role in shaping the lived experiences of Barnsley inhabitants and enabling the community bonds described above. Former mineworkers and Dearne Miners' Welfare Scheme Committee members J.H. (Inky) Thomson and Ken Sanderson spoke about their involvement in their local Miners' Welfare Scheme from the 1960s and the 1970s respectively. Ken explained how he had also formerly served as a local councillor and as Mayor of Barnsley, and Inky detailed how he had also served formerly as a National Union of Mineworkers branch official and as a local councillor. In relation to the Dearne Miners' Welfare Scheme, Ken said, 'The Scheme was actually to provide recreation, socially and physically, to the local communities,' and he explained how, 'the Welfare Hall, which is now known as the Dearne Playhouse, was built and paid for by, I believe, the coal owners in the 1920s.' Ken added, 'We've actually maintained that ever since and it provides facilities for dancing, for art, for music, theatre.' He went on to say, 'along with that we also have the football field, the cricket field, we had two bowling greens that sadly...we lost those. Then we've actually got the fishing ponds, known as the Dearne Brig ponds.'

Inky explained how the representation on the Dearne Community Miners' Welfare Management Committee, and the different sections, was divided between 'so many representatives from the Council, so many from the pits, from Goldthorpe, from Highgate,' and explained that, in addition, 'from CISWO [Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation] being formed we had contact with CISWO and we could apply to CISWO with certain things.' Inky detailed how, 'Officially there was a place on there for the Coal Board... But they didn't very often attend.' Inky did, however, note that, 'they did contribute in terms of if we wanted something, some tackle from the pit, some winding rope for round the football field or something like that,' but he remembered, 'But there was a place on there, within the constitution, for the management to be represented, but they didn't take it up on a regular basis.'

Ken explained, 'the management committee for the Scheme, a lot of them...they were all trade unionists, NUM, everybody was.' Inky added, 'We

had a few NACODS [National Association of Colliery Overmen, Deputies and Shotfirers].’ Inky went on to point out that the Miners’ Welfare Scheme meetings, ‘used to get packed’. He detailed, ‘Every section was represented, had to give a report, the angling section, the theatre section, the cricketer section, the football section, bowls section, they all had to give a report.’ Ken added, ‘It was pride and a love for the Scheme.’ He remembered, ‘We used to have the annual Dearne Gala, and that was a massive turnout, and it gave somebody six months voluntary work to organise it and it kept the community together.’ Ken observed, ‘Now, without this heart, we all seem to be drifting away.’ Inky agrees, ‘It seems as though the community is being disbanded.’

Inky recalled how the Dearne Miners’ Welfare pantomime was, ‘an annual event that created a lot of organisation and a lot of interest.’ Ken noted how the theatrical section have performed the annual pantomime for over 60 years and emphasised, ‘I know buses have come from as far as Hull to watch them.’ Julie Medlam, miner’s daughter and now Theatre Manager at the Dearne Playhouse, which was formerly the Miners’ Welfare Hall, describes how, ‘They used to run the panto for weeks on end and there used to be a massive, massive cast.’ She adds, ‘All the families used to come in and do it, they were all working at the pits, and their entertainment, or their hobbies, were this.’ Julie points out, ‘There are photographs of the theatrical section. I think the first photo we’ve got is ’46, and you’ll see the vast amount of people.’ She notes, ‘There’s photos of a couple of them up there, who were in the cast, who retired in their 80s last year, so they’ve stayed for all that time.’

Inky noted the seasonal and cyclical nature of the Scheme’s activities noting how, ‘the football season it was the footballers, the cricket season it was the cricketers,’ and how there used to be, ‘the trips to Blackpool and whatever on the weekends,’ concluding, ‘what went around, came around.’ Inky continued, ‘It seems that...the camaraderie of the mines, was spilling over into the clubs, into the cricket, into the football, it was there. Although there was competition between collieries in some respects, there was also that comradeship.’ Ken recalled, ‘With the cricket now, our youngsters...they were coached by the

experienced lads in the first team, now our juniors are the Dearne first team, and they're winning everything, it's passing it on, isn't it?'

Inky likened it to 'Passing the baton on in a relay race,' and said, 'It's family orientated as well, it keeps families together.' Ken acknowledged, 'I've three daughters, two sons, and 18 grandchildren, one great-grandchild and one on the way. And we are a scheme, a family scheme.' Inky suggested that the Scheme acted as 'an extended family.' He said, 'You'd often got sons following their fathers on...the dad learning the lad.' Ken agreed, 'I've got seven grandsons that are fishermen, and a granddaughter, because I am.' Inky asserts, in relation to the Welfare Scheme, 'It's a facility that's being taken out to the detriment of the community, or being lessened, because it's still there, but it's not properly funded now. It's struggling.' Ken went on to note, however, that, 'Two of my grandsons...Jamie's 22 now, he's now a first teamer, and they are actually coaching the younger ones,' and Inky noted, 'Whether it's football, fishing or anything, you'll find, the same as when you went to the pits, the people with the experience help the inexperienced...they helped. And whether it's putting maggots on the hook or learning to play cricket or learning to play football, it's just in them, that sort of camaraderie's there.' Inky makes the analogy, 'Underground your safety depends not only on your eyesight, your physical awareness, it depends on the guy working up the gate from you, the person working next to you,' and concludes, 'So it's just bred in the family.'

Inky recalled, 'I was a union official at the colliery for a long time, and the sorts of things I used to get involved in, from marriage breakdowns to debt problems, and I helped people through them, and to see them come out the other end, it's very satisfying. It's like a big family.' Inky adds, 'Everybody knows, all the experts are saying, we've got a big upturn in mental health problems, growing, because of anxiety and boredom and not having something to concentrate your mind on other than how you're going to pay your next bill, and you've got obesity, because there isn't the sort of sporting facilities that there should be... we were activists, we were doing it, and often doing it without too much studying very often because it was a job that needed doing.' Ken agrees. Regarding what motivated them to get involved in the scheme, Inky said, 'A

general interest for bettering the life of those in the community. If you're involved in the trade union movement and suchlike you become focused on getting what's good for your members and those around and your members' families and you pitch in to get it.'

Another former Dearne Miners' Welfare Scheme Committee member and later General Secretary, Peter Steadman, recalls becoming involved in the Miners' Welfare Scheme when he was a miner in the years before the 1984-85 Miners' Strike when it was 'a hive of activity, an absolute hive of activity.' He remembers the active angling section, the bowls section, the cricket section, the football section, the theatrical section and the social section, based around the social club. Peter remembers, 'We had a board of trustees, and the board of trustees were appointed, four by the council, and four by the NUM.' He describes, 'Then we had, underneath that, a management committee and the management committee was the trustees plus delegates from each of the sections and additional delegates from the pits - from Barnburgh, from Goldthorpe, from Highgate, etc.' Describing how he became involved in the Miners' Welfare Scheme, Peter recalls, 'I worked at Goldthorpe pit. I was on midnights regular, and Sid Whitehouse was the General Secretary of the Miners' Welfare Scheme and he was also a Barnsley councillor and Sid used to work nights, and I worked nights regular, and he got me interested into local politics and I became a member of the Labour Party and then he asked me to come down and have a look at the Miners' Welfare Scheme.' Peter details his feeling that, during the 1984-85 strike, 'The Miners' Welfare Scheme was central, was central to keeping the community spirit.' He remembers, 'The soup kitchen...that was at the Welfare Hall...I took the kids nearly every other day, something like that,' and continues, 'The walk back to work, when we went back to work, started from the front of the theatre.' He remembers, 'that was the base for the Miners' Welfare and the pits.'

Raphael Samuel has highlighted, 'The remarkable demonstration which the strike afforded of community self-help,' asserting, 'The miners, in fact, though stigmatised as the 'enemy within,' were defending precisely those 'old-fashioned' values...which, in other spheres, the Prime Minister has made it her

platform to defend: the dignity of work, the sanctity of the family, 'roots.'¹⁰⁹ Samuel suggested that, 'The Miners' Welfare was at the heart of this communal bonding.'¹¹⁰ Peter Steadman highlights, 'Certainly my involvement has always centred around the Miners' Welfare Scheme,' and describes the Scheme as a 'catalyst' in his involvement with the community.

The Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation

The Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO) was formed in 1952. CISWO took over aspects of its work from the Miners' Welfare Commission, which had been in operation from 1939 to 1951 and which had itself followed the Miners' Welfare Fund and Committee which had been established in 1920. Under the Mining Industry Act 1920 a fund had been constituted for five years, based upon a levy on output within the coalmining industry, from which allocations were to be made for such purposes as miners' institutes and libraries, recreation and sports grounds, pithead baths, hospitals and convalescent homes, education and research scholarships and 'other objects connected with the social well-being, recreation, and conditions of living of workers in and about coal mines'.¹¹¹ A further levy upon coal industry royalties was established in 1926 for these same purposes. Legislation provided for further levies within the industry in subsequent years, but by 1951 funding was due to cease and therefore, at the suggestion of the Minister of Fuel and Power, the National Coal Board (NCB) and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) opened discussions to consider how welfare should be organised in the new circumstances arising from the post-war Labour government's nationalisation of the coal industry. It was agreed that responsibility for social welfare would pass to a new body called the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation which would 'promote and improve the health, social well-being and conditions of living' of those employed in the coal, and allied, industries and their families through the encouragement of a range of activities, including 'social and cultural' activities. CISWO utilised funds paid to the organisation

¹⁰⁹ Samuel, *The Enemy Within*, p. 5.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹¹¹ Ministry of Labour. 1931. *Ministry of Labour Gazette*.

from the NCB for capital outlay, whilst levies from miners' wages, collected at the local level, paid for the upkeep of, and ongoing activities within, miners' welfare institutes and grounds.

Following the exchange of a number of letters between leaders of the NUM and Coal Board management in relation to the development of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of CISWO, within one of which NUM leaders insist 'we are equal partners in this scheme,'¹¹² from the very first meeting of the CISWO Preparatory Committee, which took place in November 1951, it was agreed that the parity of representation principle, between 'the NUM and NACODS on the one hand, and the [National Coal] Board including managerial representatives on the other' should apply at all levels of the organisation. The NUM and NACODS representatives were democratically elected by their members.¹¹³ The minutes of the second meeting of the CISWO Council also record members' acknowledgement of the 'desirability of decentralising powers'¹¹⁴ to the Divisional Welfare Committees, which would, in turn, lead to the further delegation of powers to area, district or regional committees and indeed to individual institutes' management committees, which each followed the parity of representation principle, with NUM and NACODS representatives again elected by their members. As one CISWO memo from 1952 put it: 'the Organisation's work is carried on mainly through the medium of independent local trust schemes, each one having a high degree of autonomy.' CISWO's Sir Geoffrey Vickers acknowledged in the organisation's *Annual Report 1952* that it was not the job of the Organisation, at Council or Divisional level, 'to tell people what they wanted, still less what they ought to want,'¹¹⁵ and the report highlighted the importance of 'the voluntary effort put in by enthusiasts at the pit, in mining villages and towns' to the future success of the scheme, noting

¹¹² Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO) records, National Union of Mineworkers National Executive Committee, letter to Lord Hyndley, National Coal Board, 9 May 1951, Archive of National Union of Mineworkers (Miners' Offices).

¹¹³ CISWO records, CISWO Preparatory Committee, 15th November 1951, in Agenda and Minutes of Council Meetings 1-9, Archive of National Union of Mineworkers (Miners' Offices).

¹¹⁴ CISWO records, Third Meeting of the Council, 26th March 1952, in Agenda and Minutes of Council Meetings 1-9, Archive of National Union of Mineworkers (Miners' Offices).

¹¹⁵ CISWO records, Annual Report, 1952, Archive of National Union of Mineworkers (Miners' Offices).

that 'these are the people who make welfare a living thing.' The report emphasises 'The Organisation exists to encourage them.'

Peter Steadman, along with Ken Sanderson and Inky Thomson, indeed contributed much voluntary effort in seeking to ensure the success of the scheme in the Dearne area. Peter states, 'I think the principles that underpin what CISWO stand for are more than admirable,' highlighting his view that, 'it's been to the benefit, to the overall benefit of mining communities, that CISWO's existed.' Peter goes on to say that the aims and objectives of the organisation were 'about community cohesion, about looking after each other, about caring for each other. Certainly if you'd got something to offer what can you share? About organising, about being constructive.' Peter says, 'all those kind of positive connotations that I signed up to resonated with me.' He continues, 'Social justice and caring for your fellow man, that's the kind of things that pulled my strings and sent me in that direction and CISWO was a vehicle for me, the Miners' Welfare Scheme was a vehicle for me, to expand on that.' He concludes, 'I think that the aims and objectives of certainly the local Miners' Welfare Scheme was around community cohesion, trust, companionship, all those kind of things. It was the social aspects of what communities were all about – how can we support each other.' In relation to the activities he remembers, Peter highlights, 'The Dearne Gala and the Miners' Gala was a key theme and everybody looked forward to that because it was a contributory gala...We took over the grounds and that was a phenomenal success for many, many years.' He said, 'No sooner had one gala finished and you started organising the next one.' He notes how the Gala Committee each year raised funds in order to pay for the Gala and said, 'they just loved being involved in that, inception, ideas, and the development, the creativity, the cultural aspects they could bring to it.'

Peter also remembers, 'Sometimes we...certainly Ken and Inky's brother, I'm not saying provided surgeries, but, I used to go out with Inky and we'd have a welfare meeting and then we'd start at half six, seven o'clock, we'd wrapped up for about quarter past, half past eight, and then we'd have a few beers. I can guarantee then whether it was Inky, whether it was Ken, whether it was Inky's

brother, it was like a surgery. People coming in, one after other, and they'd be sat waiting, then that one would go and then another one would come up "I've got this, I've got this," "What do I do with this, what do I do with this, how do I fill this in." Peter highlights, 'that social aspect of looking after the community that you serve,' and emphasises, 'the cultural aspects of wanting to do good by your fellow man, or for your fellow man, within a community.' Peter explains, 'underground it's a different relationship, and it's that relationship that permeates within a Miners' Welfare Scheme and I think it was one of...it was a social conduit to welfare, to look after each other, a genuineness to look after each other. Not to say there weren't fallouts and rows and things like that, there was, but in principle you look at it, how it functioned and if there's benefits that come from a Miners' Welfare Scheme it's those kind of relationships.' Peter notes that the people who were active within the Miners Welfare Scheme, 'were the glue that kept that together,' whilst highlighting that, 'people like Inky and Ken' were 'fundamental for many years in maintaining that.'

Peter emphasises, 'Sid Whitehouse lit that spark many years ago and that's how it came out in me, wanting to be involved in the community, the Miners' Welfare Scheme.' Peter highlights, 'It gave me a focus in life, it gave me reassurance in my values, in my principles, about...how I'd brought my kids up...I like to think that the values that I'd got, the Miners' Welfare Scheme allowed me to expand on them and bring them, and my experiences with other people within that community, bring back into the home.' Peter continues, 'you sometimes think, well, why do you do it, but as a volunteer, sometimes you've got a...there's a thing inside you...It's the right thing to do, it's a good thing to do.' Peter adds, 'I've loved it...it's meant a lot to me and it's been a focal point of my life for over thirty years doing that kind of voluntary work,' and concludes, 'I would encourage anybody to get involved...If you've got an interest there will be a community group out there somewhere that you can share your views and contribute to...Go for it, go for it.'

In relation to the Miners' Welfare Schemes, Peter Clarney, who worked at Barrow Colliery after moving to the South Yorkshire coalfields from the north east, recalls that, at Barrow, the Scheme put 'a lot of emphasis on the youth.'

Peter suggests, 'It's a bringing together of people, the sharing of skills and knowledge. That's how I see it, and that's how it worked down there.' He concludes, 'I think it's a place that brings the threads of the pit and the village together.' Peter highlights the difficulties Miners' Welfare Schemes are experiencing in the current climate. He says, 'We're coming to the sticking point now, because nobody's got no money, CISWO say they've got no money, Barnsley Council with all the government constraints can't do what they used to do.' He concludes, 'It all comes down to pound notes. If they don't do something and take a more positive view, these places will vanish.' Many Miners' Welfare facilities have indeed already vanished. As Royce Turner, in *Coal was our Life*, notes in relation to Featherstone in the late 1990s, 'The welfare building has gone,' adding, 'it is as if the spirit of collectivism which it symbolised has gone with it too.'¹¹⁶

Ken Sanderson similarly notes how, since the demise of the mining industry, those involved with the Dearne Miners' Welfare Scheme, 'have had to cut the cloth accordingly, and each section has to raise its own revenue by hard work.' He explained, 'The football section, it's pay as you go, they actually pay to play, the cricketers pay to play, and the anglers pay to fish.' Ken noted the contrast with the period when the mines were open and contributions were made through miners' wages which, as Ken detailed, 'kept the Scheme afloat.' Regarding the impact the closure of the collieries has had on Miners' Welfare Scheme programmes in areas such as the Dearne, Inky exclaimed, 'Devastating, I would say devastating, they're really struggling now.' Inky described how the Scheme land, 'was left in perpetuity to the miners and those that come after the miners, the miners' families.' He said, 'I think it's sad that there's been a serious deterioration in the facilities that was there and left in perpetuity for the people.' He added, 'I think that that type of enjoyment led as well as to people being able to pursue their hobbies, to helping them to maintain a reasonable level of mental and physical health, I think it assisted them in doing that.'

¹¹⁶ Royce Turner, *Coal was our Life* (Sheffield: Hallam University Press, 2000), p. 167.

Inky notes, 'As the squeeze has come on local authorities, for whatever reason, the Tories, so the rich can get richer and the poor can get poorer I suppose, the suffering has been double suffering, because whereas they had the pit to finance what was happening, all the pits to finance what was happening, the local authority also was, I think we can say, understanding of the problems that they had when the pits went, and when the pits were running there was a joint effort, and all that now has disappeared, so it is one long struggle.' Inky details here how the Miners' Welfare and the local authority worked in partnership in the provision of Miners' Welfare facilities and activities and laments how, in the current climate of cuts, the maintenance of the sports grounds is no longer 'anywhere near the level that it used to be.' He continues, 'When you think of such things as bowls and fishing, they're obviously pursuits that people can follow when they've got a level of disability and lots of people who worked in the mines have got them levels of disability and that sort of less than strenuous activity can help them both physically and obviously with people can help them mentally, so it's really, in my opinion, the long term effect of it will be to offload cost onto the health service, because prevention is better than cure.' Inky mused upon how, 'Way, way back,' the coal owners, who Inky suggested were, 'in many, many, instances less than humane,' must have seen 'that the recreational part of life was advantageous to their workers.' Inky adds, 'And yet in the situation we've got now that is not the case.' Inky argues that the Miners' Welfare Scheme, 'should have public funding. It's for the wellbeing of the community. There's a knock on effect of not getting those sort of facilities health wise, mental and physical.'

Ken Sanderson explains how, in recent times, committee members submitted a bid to the Arts Council for the Dearne Playhouse. Peter Steadman remembers, 'That bid took me the best part of nine years to put together.' He explains, 'The original bid I put in was probably about '98/'99 and we were unsuccessful, we were turned down.' Peter adds, 'Through Inky and our MP we got it raised on the floor of the House of Commons.' He goes on to note, 'Jeff Ennis raised it...and they were given an assurance that it would be revisited, and within a matter of days I got a call from the Arts Council, and so over the next two or three years we restructured the bid.' Peter notes that £1.1 million in funding

was awarded to the Playhouse in 2006. Noting the success of the Playhouse in providing a facility for the local community, Ken nevertheless points to a current concern for those involved with the theatre, highlighting 'we're not quite hitting the targets to be self-maintained.' Ken says, 'Now then, we've sat round the table, do we put the prices up?' whilst pointing out, 'If we do, it's defeating what the Playhouse is trying to do, it's providing a facility across the board for everyone.' Inky explained, 'It's there for the people of this community to use,' and pointed out, 'There's a high level of unemployment now because the mines have shut and all the industries that supported the mines have shut as well, and so you've got a very low income economy in the Dearne now.'

Peter Steadman notes how the Playhouse is there, 'for the community.' He states, 'Miners' Welfare Schemes have had to raise their game in accessing funding.' He adds, 'Previously you were there just looking after the books for the money that came in. Now you're having to research and find the money.' He points out, 'I think that should continue but I think that that should be in addition to elements of public funding.' He adds, 'In general terms I think there should be an element of public funding.' Peter explains, 'I think that whether people are in work or unemployed, whether it's fishing, whether it's playing football, whether it's cricket, whether it's organising a show or going to the theatre people need those kind of elements to their lives just to live, to get through a week sometimes. So I think it's of paramount importance again for the social fabric of a local community that there is some kind of focal points or activities or a place, whether it's a Miners' Welfare Scheme or it's another charity or whatever it might be. But you know that kind of voluntary organisation in general.'

He goes on to note, 'But certainly looking at Miners' Welfare Schemes and how many lives it touches - I mentioned 77,000 in one year - how many lives it touches, I think to lose that would impact...it would have negative connotations on the community as a whole. Therefore I think that that would in turn call for funds from the public purse to support what it does, not necessarily to fund it all.' He concludes, 'In principle I think there ought to be an element of public support... without that kind of social glue that binds a lot of communities

together, it would be to the detriment of the community and the community would suffer in one way or another which would end up costing the public purse. I think that by investing in those kind of community concepts and aspects of voluntary groups and certainly of Miners' Welfare Schemes would pay dividends in the long term. So I think that by public funding, by income generation, and by grant support, you know, there needs to be a mixed economy within a Miners' Welfare Scheme.'

Other interviewees in Barnsley have noted the impact of Miners' Welfare and CISWO activities within their own narratives of participation. Participation in sporting activities in childhood led to achievement at the highest level for interviewee Dorothy Hyman. The Cudworth miner's daughter went on to win Gold, Silver and Bronze Olympic medals during her time in international athletics, along with Commonwealth Games medals and many other national and international honours, with Dorothy voted BBC Sports Personality of the Year in 1963 due to her outstanding sporting achievements. Dorothy describes training as a teenager at Hickleton Main Colliery Welfare Ground, where a cinder track had been laid, acknowledging, 'A lot of the facilities that I used were through the mining community,' and describes the impact CISWO athletics events, 'part of gala days but run through AAA [Amateur Athletic Association] rules,' had upon her development as a runner, and in fact 'on all athletes running then, because without these galas, there'd have only been one or two events.' Dorothy remembers, 'Once you started in May, there was an athletic meeting nearly every weekend,' and notes how competitors taking part in these events won prizes, commenting, 'a lot of them were fruit spoons and forks and cutlery sets and tablecloths. In that era those things were quite valuable.' Royce Turner has suggested that 'Traditionally, inextricably linked to the welfares was an emphasis on sport.' Turner notes, 'The welfares provided places where it could be organised and played.'¹¹⁷

Former Dodworth Colliery Miners' Welfare Brass Band bandsman and conductor, Eric Longford Jessop, recalls, 'when CISWO took over the band, it

¹¹⁷ Turner, *Coal was our Life*, pp. 177-178.

became Dodworth Miners' Welfare Band...they bought us a set of chairs, a set of instruments and accessories, a set of outrageous uniforms, a set of stands... Well it was like Christmas. It was just too good to be true really.' Eric recalls, 'We were very proud.' Eric added, 'We must have looked very smart,' whilst noting how 'somehow we started winning prizes again.' Eric suggests this had a great impact on the village, with the band 'turned out very smart.' Detailing how Dodworth's Miners' Welfare ground was started in 1926, Eric recounted, 'Funnily enough one of the instigators...was my grandad, who was elected to chair the proceedings as he was the chairman of the council at the time.' Eric goes on to note that, 'as a keen cricketer,' his grandfather, who worked at Wentworth Silkstone pit, was 'deeply involved' in the development of the welfare ground. Incidentally, Eric went on to say of his grandfather, 'He was chairman of the gardening society, chairman of the council, chairman of the chrysanthemum society, chairman of the Welfare. He was well respected in the village. He was also a union delegate and a real Labour supporter.'

Miner's son, Max Senior, who himself went to work at Wentworth Silkstone Colliery at 16, in the early 1960s, described the 'major impact' which he felt the Miners' Welfare and CISWO had in local communities such as Dodworth. He describes, in relation to Dodworth Colliery Miners' Welfare Brass Band, of which he is a longstanding member, 'If you wanted another instrument, you didn't have to go out and buy it like we do now. You could go to CISWO and say, "We need another cornet," and there'd be a pool of instruments that you could get.' Max also described how CISWO, 'redeveloped the Welfare itself.' Max recalled, 'I remember them doing the football pitch. I remember them building the stand. Then they went on to build shower blocks.' Max explained how miners at the local colliery had supported the Welfare facilities, noting, 'Every miner had I think it was two pence a week stopped out of their salary. Now when you're talking five or six hundred miners and it's every week, it soon adds up...Now of course when the pits close, the Welfare up there apparently has still got all the usual sections, like your bowling, your football, your cricket, band, the boxing, you name it, they're all there, but they have to pay their way now because there's no income from anywhere, and that's why it's struggling.'

In relation to CISWO, Barrie Almond asserts, 'It was a self-help thing, and a lot of pits used to pay a penny a week, and take deductions from wages.' Barrie adds, 'So the mining community used to look after itself, it was self-serving,' before concluding, 'Like my dad said "We fought for every yard." They did, they fought for every yard.' Ian Paisley adds, 'Your [Miner's] Welfare, your CISWO, you'd brass bands, you'd probably have a choir, you'd have lots of clubs, and you didn't necessarily have to be a miner to be a part of it, so it was a community thing, yes, and that's never been replaced, there's nowt here now that resembles it.' Ian notes how, 'every pit band, the musicians, they were people like Barrie who worked at t'pit or whatever who played in a band. Works bands. Where would they get that opportunity now? Nowhere!' Barrie continues, 'Who'll not know what it feels like to stand behind that banner when the band's in front, playing on a demonstration.' Ian responds, 'You're part of a collective in a band,' concluding, 'You can remember it, but it's not the same. You'll never get that same feeling...It was a collective.'

Ex-miner, Barry Moore, remembers from his time working in the industry, 'they'd have cups for every sport you wanted, bowling, cricket, everything, they got into it! It was marvellous, and it's gone.' Barry recalls how, 'In t' Miners' News, which we used to get monthly or weekly, if your pit was on the front page, it's like winning a football match, isn't it?' Barry recalls the way in which CISWO set up competitions in relation to a range of activities, noting 'they'd sponsor it at a place like this [Dearne Miners' Welfare Hall] and then at Grimethorpe and the week after you'd be at Denaby, and then the winning team would go somewhere else, you know, and it was always keeping you involved.' Here, Barry notes how the competitive structure, based upon miners' workplaces and the Miners' Welfare Institutes, provided a platform through which participation in a variety of activities could thrive.

Steve Wyatt reflected on his time in Dodworth when he was working at Dodworth Colliery. He remembers, 'I used to go to the Welfare and this, that and t'other. They used to have cricket. When you worked at the pit there was the CISWO organisation and they used to organise cricket events, sporting events - they used to have those in the Welfare.' Steve added, 'In Gilroyd Club

they used to have what they called the panel games then, the panel games they used to play were darts, dominoes, crib, card games, they used to always hold them down in Gilroyd Club... CISWO, they organised that.' Steve also highlighted, 'They used to have the Dodworth Feast and different things and there were lots of different activities what they did.' Steve remembered the varied activities which his work colleagues were involved with, commenting, 'A lot of them used to like to go to the pub. Some would go in the betting hole. They were all different. They all had different things. Some would go to the allotment. CISWO used to have at the Civic Hall, they used to have like a big garden event where you used to go, and anybody who worked at whatever pits in the area, you could apply and enter, so there used to be the onions, the carrots, and they were all amateur gardeners these, and they used to go and they'd be judged independently, flower growers, chrysanth' growers, all sorts, and some folk liked that, and that used to be a big event as well, that used to get well attended, that used to be down at the Civic, with CISWO, that happened maybe once, maybe twice, a year.' Steve went on to describe, 'Then you'd the miners' demonstrations that used to kick off every year, in June. They used to be in Barnsley, Rotherham, Doncaster, Wakefield...I used to go to them...They'd be organised by the Union, CISWO, NCB.'

Galas and Demonstrations

Mel Dyke recalls, 'The pits had their own gala days, and I have photos of me as a child and me as a teenager up at Worsbrough Park for the gala up there.' She remembers, 'My father would always march on miners' gala day, and I remember taking my own first child onto Dodworth Road, when we were living just off Shaw Lane, and him waving to my father marching with his pit and helping to carry the banner and my father beckoning me to run across with the buggy. Then my father taking the buggy from me, and giving the tassel to my son to hold, and march with him. It stayed in his memories, because he did it yearly then, until by the time he was fourteen, a year the march was in Doncaster, Tim helped with the banner as my father walked alongside holding a tassel. That's the story of a fit, athletic, active young man being crippled before

he was sixty, lungs gone.’ Mel emphasised the pride with which the miners marched.

With regard to miners’ demonstrations, Eric Longford Jessop, who played for Dodworth Colliery Miners’ Welfare Brass Band said, ‘they were special because you’d meet lots of old friends there. There would be over a hundred bands.’ Describing how ‘you met all the lads from all the other bands’ at the demonstrations, Eric noted, ‘There’s a fraternity, there’s an adhesion, there’s a tie, if you like, between bandsmen...You used to see people you hadn’t seen for twelve months, from the previous demonstration, and they’d always want to buy you a drink.’ With regard to marching at the demonstrations with the pit banner, Eric said, ‘To march in front of your banner, phew, that was it. “This is my pit banner. This is my village. This is my band!” There was great pride! And the mothers and dads, used to walk at the back of the band, and the banner, with great pride.’

Mick Birkinshaw remembers, ‘There was always a big gala in Royston in the summer,’ and notes, ‘The Welfare was a big player in that.’ Mick also remembered, ‘There always used to be a Royston sports week...there was all sorts going off, five a side, seven a side, full sized teams, cricket, netball, running, jumping, pole vaulting, everything went off, it was a really big event.’ Mick remembered taking part in it in the early 1970s, playing in goals at a football match in Royston park, recalling, ‘you couldn’t see out of the pitch for that many people stood, all the way round, all four sides, three or four deep, because it was that popular to do something like that in those days.’ Mick also remembered entering the CISWO photographic competition one year when he was working at the pit. Mick recalled, ‘I think I won a prize.’ He explained, ‘That was held in Pontefract, and because you won that, that then went to a national thing which was in the Winter Gardens in Blackpool, so we went to Blackpool for the day to see the photographs up on this display.’

The Miners’ Welfare Schemes across the Barnsley borough have clearly had great value placed upon them by some of the interviewees involved in this research study. However, Dennis, Henrique and Slaughter questioned, in

relation to their study in Featherstone, the importance of the Miners' Welfare Institute in the leisure time of the miner.¹¹⁸ Royce Turner, though, in his study, *Coal was our Life*, which returned to the town of Dennis, Henrique and Slaughter's earlier study, asserted, 'Miners' welfare clubs were truly communal facilities.' Noting, 'In many cases, they were often the only real focal point in the village,' Turner observes how, when they were first established, 'there was little or no public transport, and no private transport, except for bikes. You couldn't get very far, and had to look to your own village for everything. This was particularly important given that many mining localities were somewhat isolated geographically.' Turner thus argues, 'The importance of welfares should not be overlooked,' with the author noting how, for example, in 1955, the Miners' Welfare clubs were the fifth biggest distributor of films in the country.¹¹⁹ Turner emphasises how, 'Even as late as the 1984/85 miners' strike, welfares were often the epicentre of strike organisation and of the 'alternative' welfare state that developed at local level.'¹²⁰ Turner stresses, 'Welfares were infused with the spirit of progress: if we worked together, if we supported each other, we could make it into a better world. And if we couldn't, our children would.'¹²¹

Turner suggests, 'Mining communities were always fiercely proud. It was a trademark characteristic. There was a collectivity which instilled a culture of pride based on traditions of hard work, 'providing' for the family, and sharing and dealing with problems within the community. It was a culture fostered on a dream that tomorrow would be ours.' Turner recounts, 'There was a strong sense of realisation that yes, we were pretty close to the bottom of the social heap. And yet, I can remember so vividly the way that this was dealt with, the way that community pride provided the solution that stopped the problem dead. It was simple and, like so much else in mining towns, it was blunt. To anyone from another social class, from another social background: 'Tha no better than me.'¹²²

¹¹⁸ Dennis *et al*, *Coal is our Life*, p. 128.

¹¹⁹ Turner, *Coal was our Life*, p. 163.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 166.

Clubs

Mel Dyke recalled how her father ‘became a member of the Trades’ Hall Club,’ later becoming a Committee member there, and remembers his twenty-five year medal award ceremony for his service to the Committee. She recounted, ‘He was treasurer for a while and helped with the trips which they used to do annually. It would be Whit Monday or one of the bank holidays that they’d take all the children by coaches to the seaside – Blackpool, Scarborough, Bridlington etc.’ Mel remembered that her father also ‘played darts and snooker for the Club.’ Dorothy Hyman similarly remembered her father’s involvement in committee-ship at the Industrial Club in Cudworth. She said, ‘Committee meetings would be every Sunday morning I think. He didn’t go every day. He might pop in. He’d go for a drink on a Sunday dinnertime. And then they’d go probably Saturday night and there’d be a free and easy, and he’d go early ‘cos sometimes he’d have duties, and then my mother would go later, you know, go for a drink. She didn’t dance but she’d watch it, and then later on they would start with bingo and things like that.’ Dorothy noted how her parents would see other family members there, commenting that the Club ‘was a place they went and met.’

In relation to Working Men’s Clubs, Neil Hardman recalled, ‘When you first started drinking as a young man, you wanted to be part of a Club.’ He went on to say, ‘it was only like a step up from being a member of the snooker club or the whippet racing club, it was just something everybody else did. So it was a part of the working class culture.’ Neil suggests that, in the past, ‘There was always a drinking culture associated with mining. You went to pubs, drinking, around Barnsley.’ Turning to the present, Neil adds, ‘I go out for a drink in the afternoon, not every afternoon.’ Ian Paisley comments, ‘I’m not a big drinker now...but I like to go out and I like to have a chat. I can just have a glass of orange all night and have a nice chat.’ Inky Thomson observes, ‘It’s sad isn’t it? Pubs shutting and clubs shutting, where people did congregate and did talk and you got mixed interests, now it’s Gogglebox and a can.’ He goes on to say, ‘I can’t be accused of that, I go out every night. I don’t go out to get pissed, I go

out about nine o'clock, back in for 12. I have a few drinks and find out what's happening through the village.'

Ian Paisley, who grew up in the village of Worsbrough and is now involved in the Worsbrough Industrial and Social History Group, noted, 'Friday, Saturday, a lot of people, you know, pubs and clubs, went in the club, there'd be a turn on, you know, there'd be music, there'd be brass bands playing. Swaithe Club was one club I went to.' Ian described how in the past a local resident, Douglas Stables, had organised a monthly music evening.' Ian said, 'They'd get a good audience for it.' Ian also remembered, 'You'd go on a club trip.' Ian said, 'I very rarely went on the Barrow Club Trip because my dad weren't a member but all the village was empty basically.' He went on to say that, in adulthood, 'I was in t'Swaithe so I started taking my youngest two on the Swaithe one.' Steve Wyatt remembered how, in his formative years, 'The highlight of the year used to be when you went on the Club trip. That was it. That was your day away.' Steve recalled, 'The Working Men's Clubs went to the coast. They'd either go to Blackpool, Bridlington, Scarborough or wherever, and all the kids used to go because there used to be either loads of buses or a twenty-three carriage train.' Steve recollects that his uncle was on the Club committee and how his mother 'used to give him a bit of money towards paying for a ticket every week,' explaining, 'You'd got to buy so many tickets to qualify to go.' Steve remembered, 'When you went, you got free pop and crisps going, and free pop and crisps coming back, and you also got a bit of money to spend.' Steve explained how the Clubs 'all had big trips,' and remembered, 'like Barrow Club, they'd have a train, and the train would be umpteen carriages long,' and 'Swaithe would have twenty, thirty buses.'

Eric Longford Jessop recalled how his parents had played a key role in setting up an old people's treat committee. He describes, 'When I was a young man, my mother and my dad, and probably half a dozen other people, decided to instigate an old people's treat.' Eric explained how this committee would raise funds through raffling prizes donated by local shopkeepers and organising galas, concerts and social events in order to hold a tea for the older members of the community. Eric explained that the tea would be held in the school hall,

and described how, ‘all the old ladies would be given a box of chocolates, Dairy Milk, and the men would be given a packet of players, 20 players...and then when they’d had their tea, there would be a concert, and my brother would play a couple of solos on his cornet, and a lady called Pearl Fawcett, who was the accordion world champion from Darton, would play as well. Local singers, or somebody that could whistle and do bird impressions or something like that would put this lovely concert on for them. At the end of the evening all the old people would be taken back home.’ Eric recalled his mother making sandwiches and desserts for the tea. He also remembered pitching in to help where he could.

Barrie Almond, who worked at Barrow and Dodworth Collieries, thinking back to his childhood in Worsbrough, recalled, ‘Now then we could walk from our house in Dawcroft estate and go down Thomas Street or any of those streets that come parallel to the road, and there’d be people stood at the door, cal’ing,¹²³ from across the road, one cal’ing to t’other, and there might be three or four of them cal’ing. My mother used to take me into t’town as a young lad, it used to take ages to get from our house to get to t’bus stop, because they’d be cal’ing all t’way down, “Anyway, I haven’t got time, ‘cos I’m going to take him to town for a pair of shoes,” and it used to take ages to get there, and it used to be the same coming back, she used to take ages with t’shopping bag to get back, because everybody’s cal’ing across t’sreet, everybody’s at t’door wanting to know what’s going off “Have you heard so and so’s died...” Similarly, Paul Darlow commented, ‘I used to walk up Dodworth and I knew everybody.’ Steve Wyatt also described how, ‘You’d go down and see the old codgers in the allotments and that...walk all over, talk to different folk.’

Volunteering

Many of those interviewed detailed diverse aspects of work which they continued to be involved with in their local communities. Max Senior highlighted, ‘I’ve got so many things that I’m involved with that are voluntary.’

¹²³ talking

Max continued, 'I'm now Chair of Dodworth Band. I'm Chair of Amnesty International Barnsley, I'm a member of the Dearne Media Group...I'm Assistant Treasurer for the University of the Third Age in Barnsley...so I'm not bored.' Max explained, 'I've always wanted to help others. I know it's an old cliché, but I have.' Max outlined, 'Twenty years of my life I've spent fighting racism and injustice and prejudice. I'm still doing that today because I'm Chair of Amnesty.' Max spoke of a 'personal pride and personal satisfaction to what I do,' and commented, in relation to David Cameron's 'Big Society' slogan, 'We were doing that in the 50s!' Max highlighted, 'thousands, like me, have been doing it all their lives!' Max notes 'I'm a trustee at the Welfare as well, trying to keep the Welfare going, because that's on its backside, and its only on its backside because it doesn't have any money coming in like it used to do from CISWO.' Barrie Almond described how the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation continues to run convalescent homes and to provide support for ex-coalminers and their families in the community, noting their dependence 'on a lot of voluntary work.' Barrie outlined, 'I've done some for 'em.'

Julie Medlam described how, in Goldthorpe, 'What you have got now is a load of community groups saying, "Right, we've had enough now, we're going to have to do it ourselves!"' She adds, 'I'm starting to see a change in people's attitudes, "We're not going to get any help from anybody else, we'll do it ourselves."' Barry Moore recounted how, up the road in Thurnscoe, 'Eight or nine years ago, somebody said "We haven't got a memorial to the men at the pit," so I said, "No, we'll do something about it."' He continues, 'So we'd an idea to put some windows in Goldthorpe Church, and we got a bill, "How much is it going to be?" £12,000! So we went round the Club, and in 12 weeks we raised over £12,000, once we mentioned the miners, and what we were doing for the miners. We had a marvellous day, and we opened a book of remembrance for each of the four pits.'

Barry goes on to add, 'A couple of years later, we got a phone call, "Can you help us with what we're doing?" In 1912 there was a pit disaster at Denaby Colliery, 91 men were killed. They hadn't got a monument. A good cause. We told them how we raised money, and it worked again, and we raised just over

£30,000 over 12 months, and there's a monument there now.' Barry also described how he became involved in charitable activities at the Methodist Church in Thurnscoe. He recounts, 'We'd people coming from all over the place. We used to do second hand furniture and clothes.' Barry notes how, 'we got people donating clothes, we put kids' clothes away, and when the winter started coming we'd got clothes for kids, thing like that.'

Peter Clarney explained how the Community Partnership that he is involved in, which he and a group of others set up in 2004, has now taken over the former Rockingham Miners' Welfare and manages the building and sporting facilities. Neil Spencer, who is employed by the Forge Community Partnership to manage the Rockingham Centre, said, 'Forge as an organisation has always been that catalyst... long before any money ever came on the horizon, people were coming together to say "We've got these issues, nobody else is doing it, we've got to do it for ourselves" so the community activist model was there and was starting to have an impact.' Neil went on to say, 'Some of those very people that started that journey are still involved as unwaged directors of the company.' Neil points out that the strapline for the Partnership is about building on community strength. Neil asserts, 'That community strength is acknowledging and respecting what contribution everyone can make.' He notes how the Community Partnership 'still operates as a not for profit organisation,' stating, 'it currently employs through all its different facets 50 people, such is the size of it as an organisation, but yet any money that it generates it spends in its community.' Peter Clarney adds, 'What do we do? Do we say "Bugger it," or do we say "We're going to do something"?' Neil notes how, 'Forge maintains its position about being a catalyst.' He continues, 'It doesn't mean to say that we've got to do everything and its far from the directors' intention to do everything, but what they have they will offer in support of anyone through experience, resources, time, to help start something off.' He concludes, 'We were fortunate that the people involved with Forge stayed loyal with it, driven, with the vision, with the passion...to achieve something better for the community and all as volunteers.'

Conclusions

Drawing upon the oral history interviews undertaken within former mining communities in the borough of Barnsley, this chapter has discussed the significance of family, friendship and community within the narratives of participation generated through this research. Interviewees described some of the rhythms of life within their immediate and wider family networks in the past and in the present. They described how they were called upon to give support to other family members at various times, both as youngsters, called upon to help older members of the family, and as older members of the family, helping to support children and grandchildren. Interviewees also described some of the support which family members had given to them. Author Richard Benson in his book, *The Valley: a Hundred Years in the Life of a Family*, which explores life in his family in the Dearne Valley over the course of the last century, strives towards an explanation of how one of his family members, his cousin Gary, benefitted from time spent in childhood at his grandparents' home when he describes how, 'There, he comes to believe, his grandma and grandad had seeded his desire to help other people by demonstrating how help could be given.'¹²⁴ Perhaps this sums up some of the descriptions of supportive family networks which have been articulated through the interviews undertaken in this study.

The interviews undertaken have also demonstrated the significance of the idea of working together as a community and awareness of the importance of social groups and organisations amongst interviewees taking part in the study in the coalmining communities of Barnsley. Interviewees frequently made the connection between the dependence upon others underground which was characteristic of the coalmining industry and the resulting focus on a collective approach above ground. Some interviewees described the Miners' Welfare Scheme as an extension of family, with others noting how they took the values which they shared and developed through their work with the Miners' Welfare

¹²⁴ Richard Benson, *The Valley: A Hundred years in the Life of a Family* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 484.

(of looking after each other, caring for each other, sharing and being constructive) back into their family lives.

The Miners' Welfare Schemes across the Barnsley borough and the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation have clearly had great value placed upon them by some of the interviewees involved in this research study. Several interviewees detailed the voluntary effort they had contributed to these institutions. Others highlighted the benefits they had gained from the work of these institutions. CISWO and the Miners' Welfare Institutes, guided by principles such as parity of representation, the democratic election of committee members, the delegation of power, as well as funding, and the encouragement of voluntary effort, certainly appeared to offer, in Barnsley, an opportunity for the creative potential of the many to be harnessed for the wider benefit of the community. Many of those interviewed also described diverse aspects of voluntary work that they continued to be involved with in their local communities. Giving voice to the people interviewed in Barnsley, this chapter has demonstrated, through exploring some of the considerations behind interviewees' participation practices and values, the reflexivity shown by those interviewed through this study in relation to cultural participation.

In *The Long Revolution* Williams insists upon the complexity of the term 'culture', and the embedded nature of 'culture' within the whole of human organisation and creativity, noting, 'it certainly seems necessary to look for meanings and values, the record of creative human activity, not only in art and intellectual work, but also in institutions and forms of behaviour.'¹²⁵ Certainly the development of cultural institutions and participation practices described by interviewees in Barnsley might be seen as having been embedded within complex family and community contexts and values with cultural institutions and practices part of the 'complex, organised whole' highlighted by Williams.

¹²⁵ Williams, *The Long Revolution*, pp. 58-62.

Chapter 3 – People, Participation and the Values-Imbued Nature of Culture

This thesis has set out to question representations constructed in relation to the cultural ecologies of particular geographical places, in this case with regard to the South Yorkshire town of Barnsley. After exploring, in Chapter 1, some of the representations created of Barnsley's cultural ecology through official statistics and example newspaper articles, Chapter 2 began to examine whether there might remain more to Barnsley culturally than such representations might suggest. This chapter will continue to explore this same theme.

The narratives of participation generated through this study illustrate a rich variety of participation practices that have been valued within Barnsley over the years. Vivid descriptions emerged of involvements with aspects of community, union and political volunteering and activism, miners' galas and demonstrations, adult education, local history, playing and appreciating music, gig-going, sport, gardening, allotments, photography, walking, socialising, cinema, dancing, 'club trips', geology, gambling, drinking, as well as museum visiting and museum-making and theatre visiting and theatre making. Viewed from another perspective, Barnsley's cultural ecology begins to appear somewhat different from the representations constructed through the official statistics and example newspaper articles studied in this thesis. Interviewees have described their involvement in diverse participation practices within the context of their family and community lives and networks, highlighting the embedded nature of their cultural participation practices and values.

Activism: 'Community,' Collectivism, Equality and Fairness

A sense of activism in relation to concepts such as 'community,' collectivism, equality and fairness emerged as of significance within the interviews undertaken in Barnsley. Often this sense of activism was linked with union activity, in many cases in relation to the National Union of Mineworkers. At times links with the Labour Party were also discussed by interviewees.

However, interviewees also discussed their involvement in activities which were unrelated to specific institutions such as the union or the Labour Party but which still centred upon principles such as 'community,' collectivism, equality and fairness.

Paul Darlow spoke about his father's involvement in both the National Union of Mineworkers and the Labour Party, and the influence this had on his own political awareness. He outlined, 'My dad worked at the pit. He was a union official, branch delegate, which gave me an insight really into the political side of things.' Paul went on to say, 'My dad was a Councillor as well for a period, so he was busy with either union work at the pit or... It would take a lot of time.' Paul explained, 'The Labour Party and the union were the same thing more or less and he used to be Dodworth Labour Party. He was Chairman of the Dodworth Labour Party. The list of things that he did goes on, but he was always at a meeting.' Paul also remembers, 'People used to get in touch with him, come down and knock on the door, "So and so's wrong with the drains..." and he was very busy with that, very busy.' Paul adds, 'But I think in them days, well, they didn't get paid did they? It was just a part of society.' Paul suggested, musing on what might have influenced his father in relation to his becoming involved in the union and the council, 'My grandad's brother was a union man at the Levy [Wentworth Silkstone Colliery], and my dad must have took on that thing, because I know he was always for fairness.' Paul recalls, 'When I first started at the pit my dad had finished actually, and I went to Barnsley Main Training Centre to do my 20 days before I went back to the pit, and this old guy was on about comradeship, and he said, "Your dad," and he pointed to me and he said, "Your dad could give a reight lecture in comradeship," and I thought, I wish I'd have heard him.' Paul adds, 'And I can remember that the same bloke was on about the queen and it was like an induction to everybody, "T'bloody Queen, parading about in all her finery, we don't want that!" And that was brilliant!'

Paul recalls that his father 'used to hate Thatcher.' He adds, 'He used to sit there, he used to have a chair there, and when Cecil Parkinson came on he'd spit at the telly.' Paul conjures up an image of a scene in his formative years,

recounting, 'I can remember when...can you remember that Edwards, he shut British Leyland down when they were private, because it was a nationalised industry, and I can remember sitting in front of the telly and my dad was on about something and I said, "But why is he doing that?" I was only a bairn, we're talking now the late 70s, and he said, "Well, they're going to sell it off," and I said, "But they shouldn't be doing that because it's people that are going to lose their jobs" and all this...and that sort of led to an ongoing thing with politics.' Paul goes on to say, 'I've always had a hatred - hatred - for the Conservative Party.' He adds, 'They are opposed to everything that I hold dear to my heart.'

In relation to his own employment in coalmining in the 1980s, Paul recalls, 'I think I was 16 or 15 when I started, and I finished in '89.' With regard to beginning work in the coal industry, Paul says, 'I wanted to work at the pit. I thought it had got a future.' He explains that he only worked in the industry for nine or ten years. Paul evokes a vivid picture of his involvement in a demonstration in Sheffield from the period of his employment in the coalmining industry, remembering, 'Me and my mate...this is how it worked at the pit...we said "Right, Thatcher's coming to the Cutler's Hall at Sheffield." It was a famous thing. "We're going." So me and him, we went, on the day shift, to Woolley pit, we came home, we met in Barnsley, I was knackered as well, I'd been up since four o'clock, and we went on the train through our own devices, me and my mate Bernie...we went to Cutler's Hall to demonstrate against Thatcher.' Paul added, 'And there must have been 10,000 people demonstrating. This would have been '82. It was before the strike.' He concludes, 'And that sort of like sparked it off! Direct action!' When asked if he thought his work within the coalmining industry might have had any impact upon his political views, Paul exclaimed, 'Oh yes, big style, yes.' He explained, 'You learned a lot. I've been to university. The best university I've ever been to was working at the pit. There were people there who'd never ever had a chance to go to university, but they were so bright.' He added, 'You used to go down the pit and you could learn...you just listened, you'd just sit and listen.' Paul notes, 'And so it did shape you, yes, it shaped your politics. It shaped your view of the world,' asserting, 'It's your view isn't it, that shapes everything.'

It's your background. Politics doesn't just come separated from everything, it's about your background and everything, it's about your culture, it's about your culture, where you've come from.'

Paul spoke of a former colleague at Woolley Colliery who inspired him during his time there, 'a Dodworth councillor, called Jim Coulter,' who Paul described as 'very, very progressive.' Paul notes, 'He wrote a book on the Miners' Strike called *State of Seige*.' Paul recounts, 'He was from Scotland, he was a councillor in Dodworth, he was a Labour councillor obviously, and he used to work at Woolley, he was an electrician, and he shaped a lot of my political thinking.' Paul notes, 'He was a very, very intelligent bloke.' He describes how Jim Coulter went on to work for War on Want.¹²⁶ Paul remembers, 'He was dead right. I can remember going to Dodworth Labour Party meetings and it was, we used to have...We listened to a guy in Gilroyd Club who was in prison with Nelson Mandela...what more do you want? I think Jim Coulter organised that.' Paul added, 'I used to be in the Labour Party, and was involved through Jim Coulter.' Asked whether he had been involved in campaigning about local issues in the past, Paul replied, 'Yes, yes, a hell of a lot,' adding that one of the issues he has campaigned about in the past is in relation to building on green belt land, upon which he commented, 'There's no need for it I don't think.'

Steve Wyatt, outlining his early days in the coalmining industry, mentioned, 'I left school on the Friday, and I went to Dodworth pit and I got a job on the Monday.' Steve added, 'I started when I was 15', noting, 'And then when you're 16, you either go and do your underground training or you stop on the surface. I went and did my underground training.' Steve builds a picture of his early days at the pit, noting how initially he was 'sent with a road ligger,' laying rails for colliery tubs and trams to run on, and explaining how the experienced workers 'would show you how to carry on.' He went on to say, 'Then they put me on the haulage...and you work with blokes that were on the haulage, older than you, and they'd show you the craic and the carry on.'

¹²⁶ 'War on Want fights poverty in developing countries in partnership with people affected by globalisation. We campaign for human rights and against the root causes of global poverty, inequality and injustice'. <http://www.waronwant.org/about-us>, accessed 1.11.14.

Steve adds, 'When I was eighteen I went on the coal face and I did my face training.' Steve explained that he was 'a rank and file member' of the National Union of Mineworkers. He explained, 'We used to have our Union meetings in the Trades Club, at the bottom of Racecommon Road. They'd have them every other week,' adding, 'I used to go to the meetings and that.' Steve outlined, 'I'll tell you how it used to work. If everything was running sweet and happy, you got a few at the meeting. If the apple cart was upset, it was thronged out.' Steve highlighted, 'You'd get to know what was going off,' and emphasised, 'At Dodworth, we all stuck together,' adding, 'If you'd got some grievance or whatever, everybody stuck together and went on strike, everybody.' Steve concluded, 'We were very militant at Dodworth.'

Steve discussed the trade union movement, arguing, 'Without your trade union movement, or activity - and sometimes it's good and sometimes it's bad, but there's more good than bad - without the trade union alliance, if they could, they would definitely turn the clock back to the days of non-existent trade unionism, no danger of that.' He adds, 'A lot of people condemn the unions and a lot of people say "We don't want them" and a lot of people think that they don't do any good, but when you look at it, and the amount of good that they've done, they have done a lot of good, but they've only done it because our forefathers have fought for what we've got today.' Steve laments, 'But the liberty that we've got today is actually being eroded away all the time, because a lot of trade union laws have been eradicated.' He goes on to say, 'When I worked at the pit, there were two thousand men worked at Dodworth, and boys, and you'd talk to different folks about different things and it's all an education... and they educate you, and you glean off them. And just like trade unionism, they'd talk about different things, and what should be this and what should be that and whatever, and sometimes it's right and sometimes it's wrong, but a lot of the times, you get a lot of interesting information come out of that.' Steve highlights, 'You'd go to the union meetings and stuff and you'd learn things,' adding, 'You start, you educate your mind more because you read different books, not from a political point of view but from an aspect of how people in the past were suppressed, like the Peterloo massacre.' Steve notes, in relation to

the 1984-85 Miners' Strike, 'We were on strike for a reason, which you know, to save jobs and to keep the pits open that were workable.' He adds, 'We were in a civil war, honestly. We were suppressed with the state. Definitely. Totally suppressed.'

Steve suggests, 'The way we're going today, the people in power today, if they got their way, they'd eradicate all the trade union movement in this country, they'd wipe it off the face of the earth, there'd be no TUC, there'd be nowt, and the only reason they want to do it is because they can't get their own way all the time.' Steve adds, 'You get all these new industrial estates, and they'll employ five, six, ten, nine people, whatever. And, how many of them will be a member of the trade union in that area? Not a lot, because they're not being educated about the union and whatever.' Steve adds, 'These young uns out there they've, they haven't no political thoughts or whatever, none,' noting how, in his view, in the past, through work, 'not only at the pit, but in factories and other outlets,' workers did develop a political awareness. Steve goes on to say, 'The only reason they've introduced student fees, Mr Clegg from Sheffield and his mate Cameron, is because they want to keep working class people from ever, ever, ever getting in charge of the country in Parliament again.' Steve mentions that his niece, an archaeologist, is the first member of the family to go to university and says, 'There's nobody else ever done it. Not because they're thick, because they've not had the opportunity to go. And now all of a sudden, because of student fees, a lot of people can't afford it.' Steve concludes, 'We should be educating the people and getting the best out of our young uns today so that we can compete with the rest of the world.'

Barrie Almond, who worked at Barrow and Dodworth Collieries, insisted, 'You put a pit banner up and put our brass band in front of it, and I'd march off the end of Dover, over the cliff, I'd follow it. If they go over, I go over with 'em, I'd just follow the banner and the band.' Barrie went on to say, 'Unity is Strength, all them expressions on these banners about what our grandfathers and our fathers did in their generation, and how my dad used to say "We had to fight for every yard." That counts for something for me.' Fellow Worsbrough Industrial and Social History Group member, Ian Paisley, interjects, 'That is culture isn't

it?’ Another member of the Worsbrough Industrial and Social History Group adds, ‘I think culture’s been altered by government policies as well. You know, when they shut t’pits for a start. I mean they were massive employers. They weren’t like they are today, you know, industrial estates where six men work. And there were a lot more people worked together, and they’d a lot of clout hadn’t they? They’ve nothing today...they’ve disbanded us and I think they’ve done that on purpose to be honest, because they smashed the unions.’

He went on to say, ‘At big works it was like you discussed things. I knew far more when I was a kid, at 15 or 16, about politics. Nobody knows about that now do they? In big places it was all discussed. I knew politics, not intensely, but I knew who to vote for and things like that when I was young.’ Ian Paisley asserts, ‘It’s like getting rid of the unions, you know, you can argue “Well, they went on strike too much” and all this but the point is that was a collective...And they were strong together and it actually made better workforces because there were better conditions.’ Barrie Almond concludes, ‘Post 1940 we had a consensus, even in America. Then you have Friedman, Reaganomics, Thatcherism, whatever, and they used to say “it’s the weakest to the wall culture now.” It’s the laissez faire thing isn’t it? The strong survive. That determines everything. Politics determines everything. People in Westminster make decisions...’

Such sentiments have been echoed by Selina Todd who has suggested that, ‘After 1945, trade unions had held a degree of political power by virtue of representing a large proportion of the workforce; it was through trade unions that these workers participated in the democratic society in which they lived.’¹²⁷ Todd also notes, ‘By the end of the 1970s, the economic and political power of the working class was rapidly declining. Over the preceding decade, governments had accepted that profit-making and the people’s welfare were ultimately irreconcilable – a conclusion made more stark by the oil crisis and its repercussions. Faced with the choice, they chose loyalty to those who held

¹²⁷ Selina Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class, 1910-2010*. (London: John Murray, 2015) kindle, 58%.

economic power in Britain and beyond: to industrialists, businessmen and financiers. The major political parties were united in viewing working-class power as a threat to democracy, rather than being a prerequisite of it.¹²⁸ Todd notes that, 'Between 1979 and 1984 trade union membership dropped from 12.6 million to 10.3 million. This reduction was greatest in heavy industry, reflecting massive job losses in those industries that had traditionally been situated in northern England, Scotland and South Wales and which were heavily unionized.'¹²⁹

In relation to the National Union of Mineworkers, Peter Clarney noted, 'It's helped a lot of people, in relation to compensation...It's took away a lot of the hardship that people would have suffered through the negligence of the mine-owners, negligence of the Coal Board, it's helped families tremendously in that respect.' He went on to say, 'It's also brought people together.' Peter acknowledges, 'It's also broke families as well,' but reiterates, 'But it's also brought people together.' Peter recalls, 'Some people who worked down the pit were very intelligent because of what they'd read. There was reasoning, there were very, very good discussions down the pit, about work life "We should be getting a few more shillings for this." But political, yes... You'd get the young ones listening. The young ones would listen. It was a place of learning. It was definitely a place of learning.' Peter Clarney emphasised, in relation to the National Union of Mineworkers, 'It's educated a lot of people. The education programmes were brilliant.' He adds, 'A lot of people went to university from the miners' day release,' and detailed, 'When I went on day release to Sheffield that was industrial and economic studies, linked to industry. There was politics involved as well. That was preparing people for life.' Peter comments, 'I always tell people I've got two degrees me: one from Sheffield Hallam and one from the University of Life,' observing, 'Because you haven't got a degree or some letters by your name, people say you're thick, they're not, people are not thick, and people should be given credit.'

¹²⁸ Todd, *The People*, 61%.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 62%.

Ken Sanderson, former General Secretary of the Dearne Miners' Welfare Scheme, speaking in relation to the closure of Goldthorpe Colliery, pointed out, 'When Goldthorpe Colliery closed...and this is fact, the underground workings, there was developments done, with machinery in place, coal faces prepared, retreat coal faces, for two and a half years work, all paid for, and with just over 400 men Goldthorpe was consistently producing 1 million tonne of coal a year, and they were making hundreds of thousands of pounds a week profit, with a market that was grabbing the coal off us, because it was high ash content and they loved that at the power stations, but they made it unviable, so we closed. But there was at least two and a half years and there was no capital outlay at all and it was all paid for.' Fellow former Dearne Miners' Welfare Scheme Committee Member, and NUM Branch Secretary, Inky Thomson, continues, 'I think you had to suffer the real result of Maggie Thatcher which was to destroy, or attempt to destroy, the trade unions, rather than anything else.' Describing what had motivated him to get involved in trade unionism, Inky highlighted, 'The thing that influenced me basically was injustices.' He added, 'The other thing is I quickly realised that representation was important, and research was important.' He notes, 'I was on the union from '64 until after the pit shut in '85, and by the way we stopped out the whole of the strike and yet our pit was shutting, we struck not to keep our pit open, but for the wider...'

Another former General Secretary of Dearne Miners' Welfare Scheme, Peter Steadman, detailed how, through working regular nights with Sid Whitehouse, a previous General Secretary of the Miners' Welfare Scheme and Barnsley councillor, he became interested in local politics and became a member of the Labour Party. Peter Steadman highlighted 'It was Sid Whitehouse that was the spark that lit the fire I think really and got me involved with local politics and the community and the Miners' Welfare and then obviously the Miners' Strike.' Peter added, 'He was definitely a catalyst for me, Sid Whitehouse, and you know things like introducing you to *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist*, things like that, and reading that, and being in awe, you know really for me it just opened your eyes.' Peter described how, through the support of the National Union of Mineworkers, he was able to study economics, politics and industrial relations at Sheffield University on day release and highlighted how

one of the tutors at Sheffield at the time, Jim McDonald, a lecturer in Industrial Relations, was also 'a phenomenal inspiration.' Peter described how he 'got involved in the Miners' Strike, heavily involved,' noting, 'I was on the union by then at Goldthorpe Colliery, I was a branch official.' Peter continued, 'We felt we were on a moral crusade, and I didn't do it for Arthur Scargill. We didn't go on strike because Arthur Scargill said we'd got to go on strike. I'd got a lot of issues with Arthur. I didn't always agree with him, in fact, I probably disagreed with him a lot more than I agreed with him. It was about, again it was something from within that, about the strike, the Miners' Strike, rather than being told or instructed to go on strike.'

Peter described how, 'like every miner that had been on strike,' he and his wife and two children had experienced 'severe hardship.' Peter recalled having just bought a house prior to the strike, and described how, at the end of the strike, 'the house was repossessed,' noting, 'We lost everything.' In relation to the strike, Peter explains, 'It certainly brought you closer together and I've got fond memories of it, I've got fond memories of it. I've got some harrowing moments as well, when Davy Jones died at Ollerton and we were there and I was stood at the side of him. So I've got some harrowing moments as well, and I was at Orgreave.' Peter continued, 'I learnt more in that twelve months than I've ever learnt in any other time in my life. I look back on it, in the main, with very fond memories, harrowing at times, when you haven't got anything to put on the table and then losing your house, having your house repossessed.'

Peter notes, 'Margaret Thatcher came out with the famous quote if you can remember 'enemies within' and Ian MacGregor wrote his book called *The Enemies Within* and there's my picture in there, in Ian MacGregor's book...at Brodsworth Pit and it was on the front page of the Daily Telegraph.' Peter adds, 'That was about a month before the Miners' Strike. So we were fairly active, fairly active then, even before the Miners' Strike.' Asked how he felt about the miners being given the 'enemy within' label, Peter said, 'The enemy within? I don't know, I don't know. To the people that knew me, and the people that mattered, it didn't give a jot. For the people that you'd expect from *The Telegraph* and from the other side of politics it didn't make a difference to me

because their views didn't matter to me.' Peter describes how, after the strike, 'A job came up at Dearneside School, Premise Manager, and there was a house, tied accommodation, the old caretaker's house, and I applied for the job, and I got it.' Peter explained that he didn't want to leave the coalmining industry, but felt forced to, because of the repossession of the family home. Peter noted, 'I walked away without taking my redundancy from the pit, I resigned.' He recalls that the NCB offered him '£14,000 redundancy' but confirms, 'I turned it down,' explaining, 'I said "I've been on a soapbox for 12 months telling people not to sell their jobs."' Peter recollects, 'I said "no, I can't do it, I can't do it." So I walked away without taking my redundancy from the pit, I resigned.'

Peter went on to say, 'One door closed and another one opened and within twelve months of being Premise Manager straightaway I got involved in NUPE, National Union of Public Employees, and within 12 months I was a branch official of NUPE, and within two years I was a full time official with NUPE, and so I used to work as the full time trade union official for Barnsley.' In relation to the present, Peter affirmed 'I'm still a member of the Labour Party but I'm not an active member.' He went on to note, 'My daughter...she went, you know, with 'Coal not Dole' stickers all over on the way to school...so she was brought up in that. That radicalisation has stayed with her and she went on to do a law degree and then work with victims of domestic violence...So she's always been stood on a soapbox fighting the fight...she's been appointed National Programme Manager for the charity she works for.' He remarks, 'My wife always said..."You just sound so much like each other, you two."' Peter illustrates, 'My daughter sent me 'Stop them calling August 23rd Margaret Thatcher day.' I think there was a movement set up on line. My daughter sent it to me, so that's my daughter. "We've got to get a petition up because they're on about saying that they're going to have a day named after Margaret Thatcher on the calendar."'

Some interviewees, whilst suggesting that they themselves, or family members, were not necessarily politically active, or active within the trade union movement, nevertheless described their support for some of the principles

underpinning the trade union movement, and recalled the concern they felt upon the election of Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister in 1979. Dorothy Hyman recalled, in relation to her father, 'He believed in the unions, very much so, yes he did, he believed in the union. He was a union member and he would never have blacklegged. He'd have cut his hands off first before he'd have gone through a picket line. He was very union minded and very loyal.' Mick Birkinshaw declared, in relation to his time working in the coal mining industry, 'It was standard that you were in the union,' and, 'you believed in it.' Mick explained, 'I've never really been a political animal, I've never been a militant, but if there's been something we need to stand for I've stood behind it you know, in my work and that.' He goes on to say, 'But I do remember watching the news intently for the announcement of the 1979 elections and that Margaret Thatcher had got in, and I can remember saying "We're in for it now, the miners."'

Neil Hardman remembers, 'My parents weren't politically motivated in any shape or form, nor any of my family.' Neil notes, in relation to his father, who worked in the railways industry, 'I mean he would have been in a union,' but remembers, 'there were no strikes or anything or any political movement that my father was involved in.' Neil, a coal industry electrician, recalls, 'I was just in the union.' In relation to the 1984-85 strike, Neil recounts, 'I can remember the day that we went on strike saying to the lads that I worked with "I'll see you next year." Because I weren't politically active, but I knew how politics worked, and I knew the reasoning behind Mrs Thatcher, because I've always read, and not just read tabloid newspapers. If you read broadsheet newspapers you become more aware of what's happening... I felt we were going to get our arses kicked. I knew. I knew what was going to happen. I knew we were going to be on strike for 12 months, and then we'd go back, and they would shut all the pits... You just thought that it's inevitable, they know what they're doing.'

Neil continues, 'Because I can remember the way that they did it, they progressively demolished or got shut of the unions, like the steelworks, railways, nurses... I remember going on strike when the nurses were out, so I thought if they can do it to the nurses and the country not back them, once we

go on strike no-one's going to back us. I was aware that we were going to get whupped.' Neil goes on to describe the return to work after the strike, detailing, 'I remember marching back and from where we marched back from, the Rose and Crown at Darton, there appeared to be thousands of men and people supporting the miners and I was probably half way with the rest of the lads that I worked with, and I remember walking into the pit yard and there were hundreds and hundreds behind us...there were about two and a half thousand men at Woolley and then, like I say, there was a reduction in manpower and it was reduced to 800 men, so some had to go, redundant or go to other pits. The majority went redundant.' Neil highlights, 'My last three years I did 12 hours every day, Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve. I knew it was coming to an end.' Here, Neil describes how he could foresee the likely economic impact of the demise of the coalmining industry for himself and his family, and the resulting impact of this upon his day-to-day life at this stage.

Neil went on to describe how, in 1989, 'Woolley ended up closing.' He notes, 'I planned to have a year off, because I'd got quite a bit of money in the bank, and then my redundancy,' continuing, 'and then I went looking for a job, and didn't realise it was so difficult to get a job.' He describes, 'You'd to go on this training course, Barnsley Met training, you got £10 per week.' Neil recalls, 'We used to go beating up in North Yorkshire when I was unemployed, when I'd no job, we used to get paid £25 a day to send these pheasants up in the air to see all these lords and these ladies shoot them.' Neil recounts, 'We used to meet up in a gamekeepers yard. The beaters arrived first, and they were all there in NCB jackets and Water Board, all these old pit wellies and different...there's no hunting gear on, and all in old cars, beat up old vehicles, and then the shooting party would come in in Range Rovers with tweeds on, and brand new Range Rovers. I remember going once and there was this...it was a party of...it was the insurance company that covered British Airways or something like that, and they were just outside Harrogate, and they had Range Rovers, and they'd all consecutive number plates, and the women had gone on a spending spree to York, and they could only spend £10,000 per day, so the contrast between us and them!'

Richard Benson in *The Valley* suggests that by the early 1980s, 'Miners had known there would be some closures and changes to the coal industry.' Benson suggests that miners also predicted 'mass redundancies and offensives against the union too.' However, Benson goes on to assert, 'but what they really anticipate is more difficult to define. It is a strategic change; an attack on themselves as a group by people who dislike not only their trade union and industry, but also their ways of thinking, talking and living. "It'll not be about coal," says Gary,' Benson's cousin, "'it'll be about putting us back in our place.'" ¹³⁰ Richard Benson suggests that, in the early 1980s, there is 'a belief in the Dearne Valley that the government's chief aim is to weaken the union – and that weakening the union is the decisive step to diminishing the gains that mining people have made through the twentieth century.' Benson goes on to state, 'Closing a colliery could close down a social system,' and notes how, to his relations, Lynda, John, Gary and David Hollingworth at least, 'it feels as if the government and the police want to attack those systems as much as they want to close coal mines.' ¹³¹ Benson recounts a scene, described by his cousin Gary, of picketing at Kiveton Park. 'Police kicking in doors, marching in, dragging men out of houses....Women shouting, men shouting, kids crying, dogs barking; and, all along the road, police shouting in their strange accents. Fucking Yorkshire slags. Fucking Northern bitches. Fucking Northern bastards in their fucking Northern slums.' ¹³²

Owen Jones notes the content of the 1976 Conservative Central Office document *The Right Approach: A Statement of Conservative Aims*, which states, 'It's not the existence of classes that threatens the unity of the nation, but the existence of class feeling.' Jones argues that the Conservative government which came to power in the years after this document was published, in 1979, made 'a concerted attempt to dismantle the values, institutions and traditional industries of the working class.' Jones argues, 'The aim was to rub out the working class as a political and economic force in society, replacing it with a collection of individuals, or entrepreneurs, competing

¹³⁰ Benson, *The Valley*, pp. 357-358.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 413-414.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 423.

with each other for their own interests.’¹³³ Jones argues, ‘There has been no greater assault on working class Britain than Thatcher’s two-pronged attack on industry and trade unions. It was not just that the systematic trashing of the country’s manufacturing industries devastated communities – though it certainly did, leaving them ravaged by unemployment, poverty and all the crippling social problems that accompany them, for which they would later be blamed. Working class identity itself was under fire. The old industries were the beating hearts of the communities they sustained.’¹³⁴

Selina Todd has similarly argued, ‘In the wake of her landslide election victory in 1983, Margaret Thatcher’s government turned its sights on a far more important enemy than the Argentinians: the organized working class.’ Todd argues, ‘In 1984 the government’s determination to destroy the labour movement was made starkly clear,’ with the National Coal Board’s Ian MacGregor announcing plans to close 20 pits with the loss of 20,000 jobs, many in areas offering little alternative employment. Todd argues, ‘It did not make economic sense to close the mines. The Oxford economist Andrew Glyn convincingly argued that even if the pits were as uneconomic as the NCB suggested (and in fact many still had sufficient resources to merit mining for decades to come), the resulting unemployment would oblige the NCB and the taxpayer funding larger retirement pensions, thousands of redundancy payments and millions of pounds in unemployment benefit. It was cheaper to keep the miners in work.’ Todd thus concludes, ‘The decision to close mines was politically motivated.’¹³⁵

Royce Turner has argued, in relation to the 1984-85 Miners’ Strike, ‘It wasn’t the money that really mattered to the government. It had a different agenda. Really, it was all about crushing trade unionism.’¹³⁶ Turner notes in *Coal was our Life* how, in the past, ‘The union’s influence was considerable.’ Turner asserts, ‘The NUM’s role in the 1970s and 1980s was often castigated,

¹³³ Jones, *Chavs*, p. 48.

¹³⁴ Jones, *Chavs*, pp. 48-57.

¹³⁵ Todd, *The People*, 62%.

¹³⁶ Turner, *Coal was our Life*, pp. 43-44.

particularly by Conservative politicians and journalists of one sort or another who had little knowledge of what it was like to live in a mining town. But, overall, the NUM was a force for the good. It fought to get industrial diseases recognised, it fought compensation claims for the far too many people killed and injured in the industry, it fought for better wages and conditions on behalf of ordinary men who would not have been able to achieve that on their own.' Turner adds, 'The focus of the criticism, obviously, was the strikes and other industrial disputes, especially the national strikes. The mineworkers' union was characterised by some throughout the 1970s as being greedy, irresponsible. It was always far too simplistic an analysis. Disputes exist for a reason.'¹³⁷ Turning to the period in which he was writing, after the closure of the coal mines, Royce Turner describes 'Casualisation. Temporary work. Insecurity. Low pay. The post-coal economy of Featherstone and every other former mining town is characterised by the same themes.'¹³⁸

Turner goes on to note, 'By the time of the late 1990s, trade unionism in Featherstone, as a social and economic force, was virtually dead...In the new economic world, you are cowed and deferential. No longer proud. You can't strike. You daren't.'¹³⁹ Barnsley Council leader Steve Houghton has stated, in relation to the 1984-85 strike, 'They had the power of the state but we had our sense of community and our sense of right.' Steve Houghton has also said of the strike, 'We were beaten. Yet the sense of pride in our struggle never left us. We believed our cause was just – I still do.' In relation to his own circumstances, Steve Houghton has said, 'My job was lost in 1993...My last 19 years have been spent on the Council trying to repair the damage and restore our purpose.' The Council Leader has also insisted, 'Whatever challenges we face in the future we will have a sense of pride and a sense of history that we played our part in defending our communities and a way of life that we will never have again.'¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Turner, *Coal was our Life*, pp. 139-143.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

¹⁴⁰ Mel Dyke, *Grimethorpe Revival: Famous Faces Support a Coalfield Community* (Barnsley: Wharnccliffe Books, 2013), pp. 159-166.

The narratives of participation generated through the oral history interviews undertaken through this project have also highlighted aspects of activism which have not been directly linked with unions or politics, but which nevertheless have been founded upon particular motivations and values. Mel Dyke recalls how her father 'wasn't an active unionist, but he wouldn't have crossed a picket line.' Mel recollects, "'We're coming out' he'd say, never said 'I', 'We're coming out.'" She explains, 'Many of them, don't forget, were children at the time when there wasn't a union, and you would be turned out of your home and your job just for offending an over man, or whatever, with no comeback at all.' In relation to politics, Mel suggested, 'My father voted Labour because everybody knew, in a town like this, that the Conservative, Tory Party as they were known, were never going to do anything for this town.' Mel also remembers her own early adulthood, noting, 'I wouldn't become politically active', yet adding, 'For my twenty-first birthday I was given a year's subscription to Which? It was the brand new magazine and it was not just a learning curve, it was revolutionary. At that time consumers had legal cover but we didn't know it.' Mel explains, 'In 1962 in Barnsley we started one of the first consumer groups outside the London-Oxbridge triangle, Barnsley Consumer Group.' She clarifies, 'I like to think it wasn't political, but it was equally militant. I realise now I was becoming an activist.' Mel goes on to note that, over the years in Barnsley, 'As other kinds of voluntary groups started up, I would be invited to join them.'

Mel Dyke suggested, 'The NUM was absolutely instrumental in developing Further and Higher Education,' going on to say, 'There's no doubt. It's indisputable. They set up reading groups and reading rooms.' Mel highlights how politicians such as Hugh Gaitskell and Clement Attlee were on record as having uttered such words as "We hope the coalfields will send us more men of the calibre and the like of Roy Mason from Barnsley," noting, 'You know, we'd three mining representatives there at one time.' Roy Mason, born in a mining village in 1924, entered the mining industry at 14, became a branch official of the NUM in his mid-twenties and went on to study at London School of Economics as a mature student on a TUC scholarship. Roy Mason was elected as a Member of Parliament in 1953, going on to become Defence

Secretary in 1974. Mel also notes how, 'There was the Workers' Educational Association which was what made me realise how much time I had wasted.' Mel Dyke remembers 'going to WEA classes at night,' which was 'like a relaxation, learning about Oscar Wilde as well as loving his stuff.' Mel added, 'I only got into Oscar Wilde by seeing the two films that were on at the Ritz.' She said, 'Saw the film, thought "I must get to know more about this man" and that was my library pick-up from then on, and then the woman next door, who used to come in and do The Times crossword, said that her sister was a WEA lecturer and teacher at Agnes Road actually and she said "My sister told me to tell you that they've got a series of lectures on Oscar Wilde coming up" so I joined the WEA specifically for that, but then moved on to D H Lawrence and the rest.'

Mel Dyke went on to work in schools and colleges in the Barnsley coalfields from the late 1960s. Mike McCarthy recalls how, in the 1980s, Mel introduced him to the play *Children of the Dark*, 'performed by the pupils of The Oaks School in Barnsley where she was deputy head. It told the story of Victorian children killed and injured in a mining disaster that led to reform of child labour laws.' Mike notes how, 'Inspired by Mel,' the youngsters involved 'were shining examples of how art can illuminate the darkest times.'¹⁴¹ Mel was working as deputy head in a Grimethorpe school in 1992 when it was announced that Grimethorpe Colliery was to close. Mel Dyke, noting that her father and his four brothers, all miners, had each worked at Grimethorpe Colliery at some point in their lives, acknowledges, 'It was therefore predictable, if not inevitable, that I would have great empathy with and allegiance to that village.' Mel notes, 'My main concern in October 1992 was the predictable impact on the educational potential of the children in the surrounding communities.' Mel highlights, 'As an English teacher, my personal concern was how to engage them in a creative response which would give voice to their feelings in a way which could at least prompt understanding and at best empathy.' Mel documents how, 'The original plan in my mind was to organise a permanent written record of memories and stories.' She notes, 'We would gather memories, photos, views and

¹⁴¹ Dyke, *Grimethorpe Revival*, p. vi.

recollections from as many as felt the need to express them and turn them into a book.’¹⁴²

Grimethorpe Book in a Day, put together on Saturday 24th October 1992, was the result. At the time of the book’s publishing Mel said, in relation to the plan to close Grimethorpe Colliery and the resulting creative response, ‘Whatever the outcome, we have given something positive and not destructive. We have caught a moment in the life and death of a great little mining village.’¹⁴³ Mel’s recent book, *Grimethorpe Revival*, recalls this ‘creative counter movement in a coalfield community during the bleak days of the 1990s pit closures,’ detailing the work undertaken on the *Grimethorpe Book in a Day*, along with other activities such as the welcoming of the Scottish Miners’ March to the school in November 1992, and a visit to Downing Street. Speaking about Grimethorpe, Mel recounts, ‘We did our bit and said our piece,’ adding, ‘The banners then were ‘A job for life,’ ‘We’re fighting for the right to work.’’ Mel concludes, ‘The government was putting that village on a road to nowhere, but the community was saying we’re not staying on it, they were fighting back.’ Mel adds, ‘I want to kick-start that pride in our community again,’ noting, ‘It was a Russian author who said “If you want to look to the future, you must first look at the past, and learn from it” and that’s important.’

The sleeve notes of Mel’s 2003 book *All for Barnsley* notes that Barnsley is ‘Often regarded as just a former pit town’ and is ‘the subject of unfavourable comparison with other parts of the country,’ whilst highlighting that the book’s purpose is to celebrate the successes of those linked with the town ‘while encouraging today’s youngsters to achieve as much – or even more.’¹⁴⁴ In the foreword to the book, Stan Barstow writes, ‘Mel Dyke loves talent. She loves people who do things. She herself is a great ‘doer’, a mover, a maker of things to happen, particularly in the world of Barnsley education and the areas and activities on which it impinges and which it energises.’¹⁴⁵ Mel notes, ‘It was to

¹⁴² Dyke, *Grimethorpe Revival*, pp. 51-54.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹⁴⁴ Mel Dyke, *All for Barnsley* (Barnsley: Wharnccliffe Books, 2003).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

encourage emulation by highlighting that wide range of local skill, talent, persistence, gift, versatility, tenacity, lateral thinking, hard work or opportunistic chance-taking, that I wrote the books “All for Barnsley” and “Barnsley & Beyond.”¹⁴⁶ Joanne Harris describes Mel as ‘Barnsley’s most articulate ambassador.’¹⁴⁷ Mel recalls, ‘I’ve never forgotten being taken to the old Theatre Royal, when comics like Ken Dodd would knock Barnsley.’ She continues, ‘from being, what, 12 years old, I’d heard people like Ken Dodd making jokes. Wigan, Scunthorpe and Barnsley were the places it was alright to laugh at.’ Mel adds, ‘I said “It’s not,” and we’ve got more high achievers from this town than anywhere.’ She concludes, ‘So that was motivation as well. It’s that stubbornness. “You’re not getting away with that!”’

Mel describes how Barnsley Council Leader Sir Steve Houghton invited her to get involved with the development of Experience Barnsley. Mel describes how, as an active member of the Experience Barnsley Steering Group she, and others, ‘set out not to make a museum but a living heritage centre.’ She explains, ‘So it’s about people, and voices, and films and experiences, as well as artefacts. In a sense, the artefacts were the add-on, not the rest. And that’s why it’s so popular.’ She describes her desire to see those involved in projects such as the *Grimethorpe Book in a Day* and *Grimethorpe Revival* tell their stories to their grandchildren, adding, ‘and I hope go into Experience Barnsley and tell their stories there.’ She goes on to say, ‘So yes, I hope that word of mouth and those inspirations will keep it going. The Icelandic sagas were never written down, the Danish sagas weren’t. Viking history was, like ours, word of mouth.’

In 2013 Mel, along with local MP Michael Dugher and local employer ASOS, organised an event to mark the 20th anniversary of the closure of Grimethorpe pit in Westminster. The event aimed to ‘pay tribute to Grimethorpe’s proud industrial history and the incredible resilience of the community.’ At the time, Michael Dugher MP, commented, ‘Mel Dyke is an incredibly passionate

¹⁴⁶ <http://lifetime-fm.com/bbis/mel-dyke/>, accessed 1.11.14.

¹⁴⁷ Mel Dyke, *Barnsley and Beyond* (Barnsley: Wharnccliffe Books, 2007), sleeve notes.

champion for the area. Her books 'Barnsley and Beyond' and 'Grimethorpe Revival' are so important in remembering the past and in helping future generations.' He went on to say, 'She has done an amazing job in keeping the past and those memories alive, to be cherished for future generations.'

In *Grimethorpe Revival*, Michael Dugher states, 'I am a big believer that you have to remember where you came from. Our industrial heritage in South Yorkshire is incredibly important. Not just because we should pay tribute to the people who built our communities – those brave men and women who worked long, dangerous hours and in an industry that powered Britain's industrial revolution. That is why things like 'Experience Barnsley', the new museum, are so important. But the truth is it's important to think about the past because many of the virtues and the values of those mining communities are still as relevant today: like a belief in hard work; in the importance of community and the need to take pride in it; about togetherness, solidarity and honouring the duties that we owe one another.' Michael Dugher goes on to conclude, 'Places like Edlington or Grimethorpe are rightly proud of their past. It's the job of historians to keep those memories alive, to be cherished for future generations. But it's the job of us politicians to ensure that young people growing up in these communities today have decent opportunities to work and to live in the future. The pits may have gone, but those communities are still very much alive.'¹⁴⁸

The oral history interviews undertaken in former coalmining communities in Barnsley have therefore demonstrated how concepts such as 'fairness' and 'justice' have acted as a driving force in relation to particular participation practices. Interviewees have described how they, and family members, became involved in trade union and Labour Party activities in relation to a sense of fairness and justice. Interviewees have described how the pit was a place of learning where experienced workers passed on skills and knowledge in relation to their work in the colliery, but also in a wider sense in relation to ideas, institutions and practices. Interviewees described how, through their involvement in union and Labour Party activity, they had had the opportunity to

¹⁴⁸ Dyke, *Grimethorpe Revival*, p. 185.

hear about injustices in other parts of the world, and learned about historical injustices. Interviewees described the essential role the National Union of Mineworkers had played in relation to education in coalmining communities, with a number of interviewees having described how they personally benefitted from the NUM's support of their education. Interviewees recognised the key role the NUM has played in enabling its members to progress educationally and politically. Interviewees spoke of the union as 'a collective,' and counter-posed this basic idea to laissez faire ideas. In relation to the Miners' Strike of 1984-85 interviewees spoke of a sense of a 'moral crusade' in the face of what many sensed to be an attempt to destroy some of the particular institutions and ideas of their communities. Interviewees articulated their own activism in relation to their involvement in union and Labour Party activity, but also articulated how activism in relation to other practices, from developing a living heritage centre to pursuing a career in charity work, might also be based upon principles of fairness and justice. Interviewees often spoke of such values and practices in relation to those of previous generations who went before them. The study now turns to examine a particular sense of history emerging from the interviews undertaken in former coalmining communities in the Barnsley borough.

A Sense of History

Interviewees described the transformation which has occurred in the course of their lifetimes in relation to the demise of the coalmining industry and the advent of the 'post-industrial' era. Against this backdrop, interviewees also spoke of the passing on, from one generation to another, of ideas, knowledge and a sense of history, and the impact of these interactions upon their own participation and their aims for the future. At times, interviewees related this sense of history to 'class' and the concept of generational 'struggle' linked to a desire to build a better future for future generations. A number of interviewees expressed their desire to see this sense of history passed on to future generations, and indeed articulated their feeling that this was an essential pre-requisite to the further progression of society.

Paul Darlow described how the industrial landscape impacted upon him in his formative years, highlighting, 'the thing about growing up in this area then is there were a lot of industrial buildings that were still up.' He adds, 'all these things form a memory and it's that memory that I'm very keen to perpetuate through involvement with local history and things because it was a different environment... it was a source of employment... It was exciting as a kid to watch... It was just a big part of a bigger industrial thing.' Paul remembered, 'I'd sit there and my dad would tell me stories about when the steam trains were run, so it was all that sort of environment which sparked a little interest in history.'

Paul went on to say, 'It was a mining community. I don't know the percentages but a massive percentage worked at the pit, and if you didn't work at the pit you worked at Fox's, which was the Steelworks. There were 11 buses...you used to sit here where I'm sat now and watch the buses go up Stainborough Low to go to Fox's, to go to the pit, to go to the Levy, and then all that began to change I would say in the late 70s.' In relation to the pit where he worked, Paul recalled, 'They built a new washery plant at Woolley, which cost millions, and it just, that was it, Miners' Strike, shut two or three years later, gone! Everybody had to find different pits to go and work at. I went to work at Houghton Main. A guy told me, he says, "Get to Houghton Main, there's a hundred years of coal there." I went there and it had shut within five years. That's that. Game, set and match!' Paul goes on to observe, 'So you look at the deindustrialisation and it's got all sorts of social pressures...I think it was the NUM researcher said that it would take two generations to get over.' Paul asserts, 'It will take at least six or seven. What are you going to replace it with? They've replaced it with nothing. But the days of big industry seem to be well and truly over don't they?'

Paul adds, 'Looking at it socially...you worked in a big industrial environment...you worked with people in a collective environment. Well now a lot of the jobs are not like that, and people are not collectives, they're individuals now.' Paul declares, 'Every generation should make the next generation better, and I think we're not doing that at the minute, well, we haven't done it for the past 20 or 30 years. I think we've been on a downward

spiral and I think your rich...the gap...that was reported...the gap between the wealth, we're going back 100 years, we're going backwards and we should be going forwards.' Paul concludes 'I hope and pray that we come through and we win.'

Paul asks the question, 'Who was it that wrote that...you look at the past, even two seconds ago, there's two forces isn't there at work?' He fathoms, 'I think it was that Granville Williams in that *Shafted* book,' before going on to explain the point, 'There are two forces at work. One of them is memory, and the other one is erasure.' Paul continues, 'Well this is pertinent to what's happening now, isn't it? Because if you were a miner in the Dearne Valley, or Barnsley, or Dodworth, and you died in 1980 and you came back [it'd be] "Good grief, where's the pits gone?"' Paul insists, 'We've got to have that memory, because the government wants us to erase all that.'¹⁴⁹ He explains, 'That's another reason for having an interest in history. It's key that we get across to the young 'uns, "Dodworth's here because..." and "This has happened because..." and "All these benefits that you get is because...because something happened, it didn't just appear" and they'd like us to forget about that.'

Paul asserts, 'I think it's important to look at the past.' He goes on to recall that it was, 'Gramsci, wasn't it, that mentioned hegemony, and about how the ruling classes' ideas, they're not our ideas, they're totally different...but we're run along with them?' Paul questions, 'I mean if you look and dissected the royal family, what is the point in spending money on the richest person in the world? But get that argument on the telly and I'm a communist and I'm an anarchist and all this, but I think it's logic. To look at things logically, instead of being interpreted, and that's where Stuart Hall comes in isn't it? Didn't he mention about the way it's put across? It's that that's key.' Paul adds, 'Everybody accepts that we've got to have austerity. Everybody accepts it. "Oh, we've got to save money somewhere." We haven't. There's just a different way of doing things. We don't have to do it this way.' In relation to history, Paul highlights,

¹⁴⁹ John Pendlebury suggests that the 'physical relics of the coal industry were generally removed with unseemly haste following the pit closures in the wake of the miners' strike of 1984-5.' John Pendlebury, *Conservation in the Age of Consensus* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), p 81.

‘Like Niall Ferguson, people take him to be the gospel.’ Paul counters, ‘You think “No, he’s a Thatcherite.” He’s on about the free market dominates everything, and the British Empire was a brilliant thing. It was for them at the top, but it wasn’t for us was it? I didn’t benefit from it did I?’

Paul refers to a quote, ‘Men make their own history, but they don’t make it just as they please. They don’t make it under circumstances chosen by themselves but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.’ Paul notes, ‘Karl Marx wrote that, in 1852. But you think about that. It’s true isn’t it? I mean he wrote it 150 years ago but it’s true today. We do make history. We’re making history all the time. It’s the way that it’s...you get it from the past. Now, if you’ve erased that past, if you’ve erased it, then where can you go in the future? That’s why you’ve got to fight for a consciousness about what’s happened in the past, because all history is subjective isn’t it? You can’t be objective in history.’ Paul asserts, in relation to Marx, ‘It’s not the end of history, we’ve still got two classes opposing one another.’ Paul suggests, ‘The forces of reaction, the reactionary forces, that’s the army, the police and everything...if push comes to shove, the forces of reaction are going to be hard to tumble aren’t they? Capitalism evolves, doesn’t it? The Conservative Party’s a pragmatic organisation, it fits into circumstances.’ Paul sums up, ‘I’m on the side of interpreting the past, and looking at the past, and finding from it and learning from it, and if you start demolishing it and erasing it that goes and it’s bad for future generations then isn’t it? So yes, it’s very important.’

The passing on of this sense of history from one generation to another is illustrated vividly by Steve Wyatt, who remembers, ‘my grandmother, my mother’s mother, she always said Churchill was a warmonger, when I was a kid, she said he was a warmonger, Churchill.’ Noting how his grandmother’s brothers were colliers, Steve recalls how his grandmother had told him, ‘He wanted the army to come out and shoot the miners, Churchill, ‘cos he called them rats, he referred to us as rats, “drive the rats back underground.”’ Steve continued, ‘And my grandmother always hated him for that, for what he said.’ Richard Benson in *The Valley* similarly describes a scene from Goldthorpe in 1926 in which his grandmother, Winnie Parkin, hears from her father, Walter

Parkin, about the miners' dispute and the lockout and Churchill and his supposed friend, Lady Astor, with Walter referring to Churchill's instruction to police during the 1910 Tonypandy miners' strike: 'Drive the rats back down their holes,' with Winnie recalling Lady's Astor's use of the term 'the worms of the earth' to describe the miners. Benson writes of such interchanges, 'officially recorded or not, they dramatise what the miners know to be true, and to Winnie they become history.' Benson continues, 'It is the line about worms...that she will remember and pass down to her children and grandchildren.'¹⁵⁰

Eric Longford Jessop describes how he developed an interest in local history, 'I think through listening to my grandad. I used to sit with my grandad for hours and hours. I used to sit at the side of the fireplace on a little tuffit.' Eric explained how his grandfather, 'used to tell me all sorts of interesting things.' Steve Wyatt states, 'I've always been interested in history, always. I've always been interested in all types of history, so you'd just try and, what bit of free time you had, with history...' He notes, in relation to learning history at school, 'We had history lessons... But there's other things that comes into it, but what they don't tell you about.' Steve describes how he and another local historian, Pete Hamby, have worked together on developing local history books, 'bringing some form of history in written form and photographic form about Dodworth and Gilroyd that had not been done to show what it was in the past and what it is today.'¹⁵¹ Eric Longford Jessop has similarly developed a local history of Barnsley's brass bands.¹⁵² Eric and Steve have both been involved with the Dodworth Miners' Memorial Committee which sought to develop a memorial to commemorate local miners who gave their lives to the industry and to raise awareness of the village's industrial past. The memorial was unveiled to great public support in Dodworth in June 2013.

In the last chapter, Mick Birkinshaw described helping his daughter with her school homework, noting how, 'that started our Stacey asking me about local

¹⁵⁰ Benson, *The Valley*, pp. 28-30.

¹⁵¹ Peter Hamby and Steven Wyatt, *Honest Dodworth I & II*, 1990 & 1997.

¹⁵² Eric Longford Jessop, *Barnsley Brass: Echoes of Barnsley and District Brass Bands* (Barnsley: Wharnccliffe Books, 2006).

history,' with this interest subsequently passing on to his granddaughter, Ruby. Mick recalls taking his granddaughter to the Coal Mining Museum, 'Yes, telling her about the pit and working down the pit and that.' Mick also described talking to his granddaughter about his brother, mother and father and other family members no longer alive, highlighting, 'We've been to grave stones of family members and that,' with Mick declaring, 'So our Ruby, she's the future, and my other two, Daisy and Jessie.' Such a comment, along with a memory, shared by Mick, of his early days at the pit, perhaps highlight a sense of continuity, felt by Mick, across generations of the family. Mick recalls, 'I'd just started my coal face training and my daughter was born, Stacey, and I think the first night I went on the coal face...it was really scary, it was only as high as this table and I'm squatted under there...and I was sat under there thinking "What the hell am I doing here?" you know, and all I could see was Stacey, because then she was just a little baby, I don't think she could sit up then, she could lift her head up, and I just got this...I could just see her and I was thinking "This is for her" because obviously I was bettering myself financially you know, that sort of thing, a better life for us all, that type of thing.'

Richard Benson describes how, when he was researching his book, *The Valley*, David John Douglass taught him how to see his grandmother's stories 'in the context of the miners' sense of history.' Benson asserts, 'Coal mining was hard and dangerous work, and pit villages could be harsh places in which to live, but it seems to me that the decent people of Harry and Winnie's generation, and several generations preceding it, had a quiet belief that they were working together to improve themselves, their working conditions and their environments. This lent a sense of purpose, or at least of being headed somewhere; you had made the present more comfortable than the past, and the future would be more comfortable again.' In Raphael Samuel's *People's History and Socialist Theory*, David Douglass writes, 'It's been said that in the Durham and Northumberland coalfield, when you're a kid in a pit village, you don't get "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," or "Little Red Riding Hood" as a bedtime story. You get Churchill and the '26 strike and the betrayal of Thomas and the railwaymen and things like that.' Douglass writes, 'And it's this I want to focus on, because it's this manner of carrying history, of awakening a deep

curiosity in it, setting the starting blocks of learning, which is truly the miners' history. It was, after all, the way we, the miners, carried our history in recent years before we could read or write.'¹⁵³

In *A Miner's Life*, David Douglass and Joel Krieger discuss the miner's 'claim to continuity with the past.' They highlight, 'Without that sense of continuity, work down the pit would be meaningless, so the collier insists on his connection to history all the more passionately, the more he feels the continuity threatened or his place in the tradition derided. History preserves his dignity, so the claim to history becomes a personal thing and a tone of reverence casts its spell over the parade of events, some lived and all remembered.'¹⁵⁴ David Douglass described his own experiences of working in the coalmining industry, which was still alive at the time of his writing, within this sense of a longer history: 'We still have to stand in line like dummies while all the officials push their way to the front and ride up the pit before us. People think this kind of treatment which the miners have endured for centuries is a thing of the past, but as we see it, it is still very much with us. Outdated privilege is still rubbed in our face. How much have things changed?'¹⁵⁵

Richard Benson illustrates how, on 13 October 1992, when Michael Heseltine, the President of the Board of Trade, has announced in the House of Commons the closure of 31 of the last 50 working pits making 30,000 miners redundant, the largest mass redundancy in British history, Arthur Scargill appeared at a press conference sitting in front of a red banner bearing the words 'THE PAST WE INHERIT, THE FUTURE WE BUILD,' urging NUM members to take action.¹⁵⁶ Benson asks whether, from the late twentieth century onwards, that sense of purpose has 'ebbed away somewhat, and with it a component of an old sense of identity.' Benson notes, 'a question asked by people trying to revive ex-mining communities is: is it possible to draw lessons and values from

¹⁵³ David Douglass, 'The Worms of the Earth: The Miners' Own Story', in Samuel, *People's History and Socialist Theory*, cited in Benson, *The Valley*.

¹⁵⁴ David Douglass and Joel Krieger, *A Miner's Life*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), p. 14.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁵⁶ Benson, *The Valley*, p. 486.

the past that can be adapted to the future, and thus used to restore some of that lost identity?’¹⁵⁷

Barrie Almond describes the work of the Worsbrough Industrial and Social History Group, of which he is an active member. He says, ‘We’re a voluntary group, there’s no funding for it, it’s not a professional organisation, we educate from children in primary school to adults as old as you can get. We preserve the kind of history that we were never taught at school.’ Barrie goes on to say, ‘We were taught a lot about monarchs at school. They don’t interest me.’ He adds, ‘Then I started to educate myself about where do we come from. Local history. We want to educate and inform people about that. That’s the most important thing to us. It’s where we come from, it’s what we’re about, it’s what community is, it’s how we developed as local people living together collectively, and it’s what makes us how we are, the values in life, tell the truth, honesty, respect.’

Fellow Worsbrough Industrial and Social History Group member, Ian Paisley, continues, ‘It’s about creating a discussion as well. We don’t all agree but it’s having an area where you can discuss things.’ Barrie goes on to say, ‘The thing is, the most important thing is, never forget where you came from, and the only way to do that is to educate and inform, which is what we’re involved in doing.’ Ian concludes, ‘It’s important to keep it alive,’ adding, ‘We’ve got to continually do that now.’ He adds, ‘I think the thing with museums is...it’s not just like your big museums or your high culture which they should fund...I bet in Worsbrough if they said to us you could have a building there and put a bit of a museum together, how we used to live, that type of thing, we could put something decent on, which would be of value and that should get equal opportunities to get funding to develop because again it’s a smaller thing but it’s giving a value to a community so it’s not all about having to travel to London or even Leeds or wherever, it’s about saying, you know, you’ve got an opportunity to exhibit what you feel is your culture.’

¹⁵⁷ Benson, *The Valley*, pp. 515-516.

Peter Clarney similarly emphasises this sense of history with his assertion, 'Never forget where you've come from 'cos life's been a struggle. There is nothing ever been handed down to us. We've had to fight for everything we've got.' Inky Thomson highlights, 'It's never been easy to record working class history, you know, royal history is important to them in power and them who distribute the funding, and the fight needs to go on.' Inky adds, 'There is those amongst us that think mining should be forgotten and we're on the next page, but it's a very, very important part of history.' Julie Medlam adds, 'It is part of history, it's as important as people who went to war, it's the same thing...it kept the country going and it's got to be remembered... all the hard work, the people who suffered, the people who gave their lives working down the pit, that gets forgotten about.' Julie suggests that the telling of this history is key, and that 'it might just put it on an even keel so people can say "Well, yes, we can see now why they were so devastated as to what went off"... everything was devastated in one fell swoop, with all the pits shutting in one go, and people are still suffering from that, they're still suffering from that.'

Royce Turner, in *Coal was our Life*, argues, 'Beneath the surface, even if it is not always tangible, the perception in Featherstone that ordinary people are still in 'struggle' persists.' Turner continues, 'In 1993, for example, 100 years after two young miners were shot dead in a lock out dispute in Featherstone, the event was commemorated with a ceremony at the men's graves in the local churchyard. The cemetery was packed. A play was put on at one of the schools.' Royce Turner asserts, 'Memories of struggle last a long time.'¹⁵⁸ However, having set the nationalisation of the coal industry in the post-war Attlee government within the context of this longer history of 'struggle,' noting that 'plaques were erected outside each colliery which declared "This colliery is now owned and managed by the people"' at the time, Turner then concludes that, 'It is a spirit, a culture, a world, that has passed. It was a fleeting moment in political history; a moment in which it was thought that the collective could achieve more than the individual. It will never happen again...There are no

¹⁵⁸ Turner, *Coal was our Life*, pp. 44-45.

grand ideas anymore. Nothing we can strive for, and be proud to call our own.’¹⁵⁹

The sense of history illuminated here by participants in this research study suggests the presence of an active engagement with, and critical approach to, the past set within the context of interviewees’ hopes for a better future.

The Natural Environment

A particular attitude towards the natural environment featured within the oral history interviews undertaken in former coalmining communities in the borough of Barnsley. Interviewees described their deep connections to the natural environment linked to the geography of the industry in the area, the nature of the work underground and some of the economic realities of the industry. The natural landscape has formed a backdrop for time spent with family and friends, or for a particular sense of history, for some.

Mel Dyke has noted how the realities of working underground in the coalmining industry, and the geography of the industry, set as it was often within mining villages in rural locations, impacted upon participation practices in relation to the natural environment. Mel highlights, ‘The town is set in beautiful scenery, loved by those of us who choose to live here,’¹⁶⁰ and recalls, ‘I remember doing a placement at Jump and, like me, virtually every child in that very rural area with only an infrequent bus service used to walk with their fathers. It was the cramped conditions underground for many. Certainly my dad used to say, Sunday morning, he’d walk further than he’d crawled underground all week if he could, and that’s when my love of walking developed. We walked.’ Mel continued, ‘Down by the yellow waters was his favourite, down to Rockley. There was a Cedar of Lebanon down there that he adored, and a bluebell wood going back up Keresforth Hill up to Broadway.’ Mel added, ‘He loved it. He knew every plant, every flower, every tree.’

¹⁵⁹ Turner, *Coal was our Life*, pp. 146-148.

¹⁶⁰ Dyke, *All for Barnsley*, p. 9.

Neil Hardman acknowledges, 'I always liked the countryside, loved the countryside,' and remembers, 'My dad always took us walks. We always walked in the countryside.' Neil goes on to say, 'A lot of people who don't know Barnsley think it's this vast metropolis of industrialisation, not knowing that it's a wonderful place to live, it's full of countryside isn't it? But people don't know.' Neil continued, 'We'd walk into town or on old canal banks that still exist but people are not aware of them... Just walking and talking. You can't remember conversations that you did have, but I just used to enjoy the countryside and still do.' Neil describes how, as a boy, he made himself a bike from parts he found at the tip and therefore took up cycling too. He goes on to say, 'I've always walked. When I had dogs I'd probably do a hundred miles a week. I used to go out rabbiting before I went to work...and then come home and go out rabbiting. But even when we were married, me and Lorraine have always walked, miles and miles. Once you get a car you can get up on the moors and walk miles and miles on the moors that surround Barnsley. But there's plenty of nice walks just around Barnsley. My wife...She's feminine, but she's not bothered about getting mud on her boots or whatever, so I'm fortunate that way, she loves walking.' In relation to the 1984-85 Miners' Strike, Neil recalls, 'The start of the strike, we'd three kids under two, so things were hard. But we went in the countryside, because that year was nice, apart from the winter which was bad of course, and we took the kids out every day.'

Ian Paisley recollects, 'You know, like walking round, my dad always said "I'd sooner, if I'm out of work, I'd sooner be out of work in Barnsley, than somewhere like a big city, because I can walk here and I can walk miles and get that free beautiful countryside, wildlife, you know."' Ian adds, 'Somebody's reckoned that up and something like 70% of Barnsley is green belt, so that to me is our culture.' Barrie Almond adds, 'My friendship with my two mates, all we do now is we walk round, when we can walk round, and we just enjoy life as much as we can.'

Mick Birkinshaw remembers always having been interested in wildlife and the outdoors. He says, 'I can remember being little going hunting for eggs and that.'

I mean you can't do that it's illegal now, but that's what you did as a kid then, you went nesting to find eggs and you had a collection.' Mick recalled, 'A good time for me was like the school holidays, probably the six week holidays, because that was just playing outside. We used to go to Notton Wood a lot and there were always kids in Notton Wood.' Mick describes, 'we used to make dens and do egg collecting. There was a stream going through it but then it seemed to be wider and deeper. It's probably all silted up now. We used to make rafts and sail down it and things like that. It just seemed to be like one long happy life playing out all the time, and winters sledging.' Mick concludes, 'But playing out, playing out, freedom, is the biggest memory. And I think always being...coming home to a warm house, because there was always a fire lit.'

Mick explains that, on leaving school, he wanted to work for the Forest Commission. He recalls the school careers advisor talking him out of it, however. Mick evokes a memory from when he had built his own family of time spent appreciating the countryside, recounting, 'Something that our Stacey mentions now, she remembers when she was little we used to go onto Woolley Edge, or nip down into the Kingfisher, a fish and chip shop on Denby Dale Road going into Wakefield, we'd go down there, we've taken a flask and some stuff, pop, whatever, and we'd go and get fish and chips, go and sit on Woolley Edge and look at the view and eat fish and chips in the car. Just a little thing. We'd do things like that...Our Stacey remembers that now, in fact they do it...And she's three kids... it passes on, or potentially it can do.'

Mick went on to describe how, in later life, following the demise of the coalmining industry in which he had worked, he did go on to work in the countryside, initially as a public rights of way officer. Mick describes how his interest in the countryside and wildlife assisted in his securing employment in this area. He went on to describe his current role working at Rabbit Ings Country Park (located on the former colliery yard and spoil heap of the Monkton Colliery and then the Royston Drift Mine which closed in 1989), noting, 'This is what I wanted to do when I was at school.' Mick adds that he now has 'the job I always wanted,' whilst acknowledging, 'it's just took a few strange twists here

and there to get it.’ He goes on to say ‘My granddaughter, Ruby, my eldest, she’s 12 now, and she’s been on there [Rabbit Ings] with me all these years and she loves it up there, she calls me Adventure Grandad.’

Paul Darlow emphasises, ‘I grew up in these beautiful surroundings,’ continuing, ‘On a Sunday we used to go on a walk, you know, Sunday evenings, used to go on all these local walks.’ Paul notes, ‘As a young kid, you’ve got all these things on your doorstep. That’s what kids want. They don’t want to be sat in front of the telly. They want to be out there, playing in the fields.’ Paul went on to say, ‘I used to walk round them fields all the time. I was renowned for walking...I used to go fishing for bullheads, them little fish down in Stainborough Dam, and just walk everywhere. I’d go on my bike. It was just idealised. I’m portraying it to you like the bloody Waltons, aren’t I [laughs]? But that’s what it was and it wasn’t just me. My mate lived across there, my mate lived next door, I’d a mate across there, and we all used to do the same. Once the sun was out that was me gone.’ Paul concludes, ‘I love walking, I love cycling.’

Eric Longford Jessop recalled how, in his childhood, he spent a lot of time down at the local farm. He recollects, ‘I have a lot of happy memories from going down the farm and working, helping the farmer, from a very early age.’ He also recollects, ‘I was sort of a wanderlust kid, I used to roam all over...I used to just set off, and I’d be out all day. I’d probably take a couple of mates with me, or even go on my own. Fishing, wild apple collecting.’ Eric described, ‘We used to set off to a place, which was known locally as the dam...We used to go down there frequently...we would take a bottle of water and put some Kaylai (Lemon flavoured sugar) in it and make some pop, you know, grab a sandwich or something and off we would go. We would spend all day down there. It was just like going to the seaside really for us. We used to play in the river and catch fish, Sticklebacks eels and such.’ Eric adds, ‘If we saw a sign that said “Private Property, Do Not Enter” it would be “Right lads, come on.” I’m still a bit like that now. There were no boundaries as far as I was concerned.’ Eric remembers spending time near Strafford pit, and describes, ‘a large pond, used to supply the steam winders with water from the stream,’ going on to say, ‘we

used to call it the Bull Pond, and there were crested newts, and bulrushes and frogspawn and snakes in and around it, which was great for the lads.'

Steve Wyatt similarly described a childhood spent amidst Barnsley's natural environment. Steve remembered 'Ar, you used to go out in the morning and that was it, you didn't come back while ten o'clock at night.' Steve continued, 'When you think about it, before the motorway came through from Birdwell to Dodworth, all that was green spaced fields, all fields, there were streams with trout in when I was a kid...we used to go and watch and look at them, we used to go all over, we used to go riding Arthur Taylor's horses, without saddles on, we used to coax them to the side and jump on the back and ride them, holding the mane.' He added, 'We used to just go for the day. There'd be older lads and younger lads and you used to go. You used to take a bottle of water with you and be off. In summer time, that was it.'

Steve spoke of his concern for the environment, recounting, 'I was on to our local councillors we should stand up and say, "right, the government's saying we want all these houses building, we want this doing, you've got to build these, you've got to do this, you've got to do that, you've got to do the other," but why don't they look at it in a long term situation like your children, and their children and their children, that's like three generations, if they keep building and building on everything, there'll be no green space, there'll be no wooded area, there'll be no farmland left hardly.' Steve added, 'They don't realise what they're doing, they don't realise the long term effect of the damage, and all that they're doing is, everything they want is all down to profitability, and that's the problem.' Steve argues, 'They'll not be happy until there's no fish in the sea and no birds in the sky,' concluding, 'They keep saying the private sector works. The private sector does work. Ar it does, for these that've got the money to invest in it. It only works for a certain percent. It only works for the people that's got their profit margins in, and the people that's got investments in those companies. It's not working for me.'

David Douglass has commented, in his work, 'Most collieries are not the dark satanic mills one associates with crude industrialism. To the observer, they

may register a vague foreboding of what goes on out of sight, but there is a lovely irony to the placement of collieries. They emerge from the most beautiful country surroundings, unexpectedly coming into view amidst rolling hills and gloriously idle sheep. It takes an act of will to focus on the images below, when above one is embraced by a calm, natural beauty.' Douglass adds, 'The further from a town, the more men seem to sense this disjunction in their lives.'

Douglass suggests that this is perhaps a factor in the 'casual naturalism of some miners, this attachment to what is natural.'¹⁶¹ Ronnie Neville, commenting in the *Barnsley Chronicle* about Ashley Jackson's 'Framed Landscape' project, which captures views on the moorlands around Barnsley through the placement of picture frames in the landscape, premised upon Jackson's view that, 'The landscape is more than a passing view from a car window, it is our heritage, culture and more personally it forms part of our thoughts and feelings,'¹⁶² comments, 'The landscape itself is the work of art created by something far superior and should be enjoyed as such.'¹⁶³

Mel Dyke remembered how, when she was at high school, her father worked at Barrow pit. Mel recalls, 'He found some amazing fossils there - flower, leaf and fish fossils.' Mel went on to highlight how her father would read up on fossils when he found them, noting, 'He'd need to know more, and would dig.'

Mick Birkinshaw, recalling his time working at South Kirkby Colliery, remembers 'strangely enough I loved it...I was fascinated with the geology aspect of it – you're working in this strata...I was always looking for fossils and messing about looking for stuff or just fascinated by the faults that you saw or you might see a bit of oil come out, it might only be a little bit, or you might find a big tree trunk in a coal face and that...I was interested in that side of it.' Mick notes, 'Some of the seams I worked in weren't very deep but still 100 metres or so and there's all that rock above you and I was just fascinated by that, the weight and that, how it all works.' In relation to fossils found underground, Mick remembers, 'Frustratingly you could never get to them. A lot of the best ones

¹⁶¹ Douglass and Krieger, *A Miner's Life*.

¹⁶² <http://www.framingthelandscape.co.uk/how-it-all-began/>, accessed 12.12.14.

¹⁶³ *Barnsley Chronicle*, Friday 12 December 2014, p. 6.

would be behind these grills that went behind the steelwork to support the roof. You could see them but you couldn't get to them. And you never seemed to find that many. But I did find some once, at one pit I was working in, and they were perfect specimens, but they were right crumbly. As soon as you touched them they just fell apart, and there were loads of them, and I did find one hard one, it's a horsetail tip, both sides, slightly flattened, it was absolutely perfect, and I don't know what's happened to that one. I don't know where that's gone, but I got that one out.'

Mick notes how his interest in geology spilled over to life over-ground, recalling, 'If we went on holiday, we'd go to Whitby rather than, say, Scarborough, and we'd go on the beach looking for fossils, stuff like that, when my kids were kids, so there's always been something there, all my life.' In relation to his work at the Rabbit Ings Country Park, Mick explained, 'I did this fossil hunt,' noting, 'there were forty people came to that event,' and, 'we had to have another one as everyone was fascinated.' He goes on to note, 'Occasionally a kid will come and say "Look what I've found" and they'll find some beauties and I'm jealous, "look at that, the clarity of that, it's perfect," so there's still people doing it, you can see where they've been scratching, so people are still interested in it. I've got a little display in my office.'

Eric Longford Jessop recalls, 'As a child, one of my hobbies, I used to go on the muck stack on Church Lane and look for fossils. I used to have a great collection of fossils on the back windowsill...I had all sorts of fossils looking like bark, and shells, ammonites and fish, all sorts. My dad used to find ammonites two foot across down the pit. I had my own little collection.' David Douglass, in *A Miner's Life*, describes an incident underground where 'Once they actually discovered a giant fossil at Usworth Colliery...It was an enormous thing...The miners thought it was wonderful. They were awed.' Douglass continues, 'But the officials weren't too impressed, and they said to bore some holes in it and get it blasted down, and cut down, and get on with the work.' Douglass recounts how 'the men refused. They wanted to keep this thing...the miners did their best to preserve the whole thing...everything was held up. A guy from Newcastle University came along and identified it as an *anthracasaurus*, one of

two found in the world. It was fascinating to us, that this beast had actually walked around here in Usworth and Wardley, and here it was sharing our underground environment with us, even though it was dead.'

David Douglass and Joel Krieger liken 'the collier's sense of the pit,' to 'a peasant's connection with the land,' as unremitting, suggesting that, for those who have worked underground, 'There will always be a picture of the ground underneath,' even when 'the pit is gone.' Richard Benson describes how, back when the coal industry was still a part of the South Yorkshire landscape, his grandfather would take his cousin, Gary Hollingworth, out in his works lorry and tell him stories about history and geography. Benson notes how his grandfather 'teaches Gary the names of the different seams running through the earth below them.' Benson notes, 'If they pass a pit where there was once an explosion that killed men he tells his grandson the story, and then shows him the blue scars in his arm and describes his own accident at Manvers Main.'¹⁶⁴ Such a connection to the natural environment, both above and below ground, appears to run deep amongst many of those interviewed for this study in the former coalmining communities in the Barnsley borough.

Music

Music featured strongly within the narratives of participation generated through the oral history interviews undertaken in former coalmining communities in and around Barnsley. Max Senior and Eric Longford Jessop described their involvement in the Dodworth Colliery Miners' Welfare Brass Band. Max recalled, 'Two other brothers also played in Dodworth Band before me, so you can see how I actually got started.' He went on to evoke a memory, 'I was only maybe four or five years of age and I could hear music coming from downstairs when I'd gone to bed...I could hear this wonderful sound coming upstairs and I was a young child, I used to get out of bed and sit at the top of the stairs and just listen, and it was that that got me, and I can still remember the music they played to this day, I can still remember it.'

¹⁶⁴ Benson, *The Valley*, p. 264.

Max describes how his mother, 'believe it or not wanted me to learn to play piano, not a brass instrument!' He goes on to say, 'I think it's because she'd purchased this piano and she wanted me to learn to play piano.' Max recalls, 'She sent me for piano lessons,' but notes, 'I kept saying to my mum, "I want to play a brass instrument like our Les."' Max describes how his brother brought home a tenor horn, noting, 'I started tootling on this and the next thing I knew my mum had arranged for me to go for lessons to the then conductor of Dodworth Band and his name was Stanley O'Connor. We called him Stan. And of course I started going for lessons... So that was the start of me learning to play a musical instrument.'

Max describes how at the age of ten, 'one day Stan said "I want you to come and sit in the senior band to get some experience"' and Max describes how 'that was the start of me playing in Dodworth Band.' Max recalls, 'We used to practice twice a week,' noting, 'it used to be Tuesday night and Sunday night, six till eight.' Max remembers, 'They made me librarian, I used to love messing about organising music and what have you, and I used to go up three hours before practice started to light the stove so that the band room was warm for when they walked in, because we used to get the coke free, from the pit.'

Max recalls how, when he was playing in the band in the 1950s, most of the band were miners. He said, 'Most of them were actually miners...if they'd been on afters, sometimes the manager of the pit would let them out early to go to a band practice, and they'd walk in still in their pit muck some of them, still black.' Max notes, 'The manager of the pit was quite sympathetic to the colliery band, and if there was a major contest looming he would allow the players to finish early to come to the band practice, which was good.' Max concludes, 'But 90% in those days were miners. Today, no miners whatsoever! Ex-miners, yes, because I'm an ex-miner, Keith's an ex-miner and Mick's an ex-miner. They're the three ex-miners in the band, still.'

Max notes how his brother, Les, went on to national fame as solo euphonium player for Cresswell Colliery [Band]. He also notes that his mother 'was keenly

interested in the band, because she'd got three sons playing in the band.' Max described, 'I remember my mum, she used to help to run beetle drives, in the band room, on certain nights, they used to get the women together, and they used to run beetle drives and then they'd make a little bit of money which went towards the band.' Max also recalls, 'contests were a big thing in the brass band movement in those days, and my mother used to go, wherever we'd got a contest on, in another town or somewhere, she would be there and she'd sit there with a flask of coffee, with her flask and her sandwiches, and she'd sit there right the way through from the beginning to the end.'

Max spoke of how CISWO used to run contests. He notes, 'If you won the, what they called the Area Finals, you'd go on to the National Finals, which was usually held in Blackpool, or London, whichever it was. It was Blackpool for CISWO. London was the National Brass Band Association Finals. And I remember in 1979 Dodworth Colliery Band going and wiping the floor with everybody and winning the CISWO National Finals in Blackpool with a piece called John O' Gaunt, I'll never forget it!' Max suggests, 'because there were so many bands, it was a kind of, it was a culture within a culture, if you understand what I mean. Again, all volunteers. There were no professionals, they were all voluntary.' Max highlights, 'And CISWO still do run the contest to this day.'

Max recalled how, 'Many, many years ago brass bands in villages, they survived because every pit, through the unions, they used to have a penny or two pence stopped through their wages which went to the local brass band, so we were lucky, we had a good income from the money that was coming from the men at Dodworth Pit.' Max went on to say, however, 'But that closed, and so they lost that income, and that's when we had to become self-supporting.' Max goes on to note, 'Each member of Dodworth Band today, we all pay £15 a month just to keep it going, to survive.' In relation to his motivations to play in the band, Max said, 'Making music is wonderful. I just love making music.' He continues, 'When the band performs well, and it sounds well, sometimes it can make the hairs on the back of your neck stand up. It's difficult to describe but it's just wonderful, it really is, it's absolutely wonderful. And when you get

appreciation from other people for what you're doing, you can imagine, 25, 26 volunteers, creating music, not professionals, all volunteers, to create the sound that we do, it's just awe-inspiring sometimes.'

Eric Longford Jessop described his early entry in to the brass band world when 'Grandad Smith used to take me to listen to the band rehearse.' Eric notes, 'He had been a keen bandsman all his life, and took me to rehearsals every Sunday morning in the pushchair.' He recalls, 'When I was seven I wanted to join the band and they hadn't an instrument for me, so I learned to play the piano until one was available...later an instrument came my way and I went into the band. I went to the band twice a week but kept playing the piano.' He explained how, 'Most of the family played in the band,' noting, 'there are a lot of years of playing from the Jessop's and their relations in Dodworth Band I'm proud to say.' With regard to what motivated him to play in the band, Eric spoke of his enjoyment when playing with the band and also 'family tradition as well.'

Eric spoke of the 'immense pride' he felt at playing for Dodworth Band, and also at continuing into conducting in later life. Eric noted that he had aspired to become a conductor, and acknowledged 'I managed to be on the Executive Committee of the National Association of Brass Band Conductors, so I achieved something.' Eric went on to describe the work he and his wife had put in to rebuilding Dodworth Band in the 1990s, noting, 'When I took over the band in '97 it had become defunct, and I rebuilt it.' Eric explained, 'I used to be writing music for these kids at three o'clock in the morning. I would get up and write something, two or three hours of writing, and then go back to bed, to keep the band going.' Regarding his wife, Coral's, involvement, Eric said, 'She's always done things that band workers get involved in doing, you know, making money for the funds, selling tickets, organising things.' He continued, 'She organised beetle drives, whist drives etc. It made people closer to each other.' Eric asserts, 'By its very nature banding is nothing without camaraderie, and without the support from people it'll never work.' Eric noted, 'There's nothing that's been more important to me in my life than music, and particularly brass bands. I always had an interest in perpetuating and forwarding them.'

Many interviewees spoke of their appreciation of local brass bands, whilst acknowledging that such bands were in many cases struggling financially. Peter Clarney commented upon how, 'Every colliery had their own brass band,' noting 'some are still going on. It's tradition. It's tradition.' Peter likened the sound of the band to that of church bells, explaining, 'the church bells is to let people know that there's a service going off and to come to the church. Brass bands is the same. Brass bands is a way of bringing people together. If you have a brass band playing somewhere like we used to down the Welfare on the grass, people used to come and listen to it.' Barry Moore similarly remembered how each pit would have a band, and remembered, 'if your band were going to the finals, whether it was the Yorkshire finals or the national finals, how proud were your pit?'

John Kirk has outlined how the brass band articulated 'both a local identity (the village) and a wider occupational affiliation bound up with complex expressions of class and culture.'¹⁶⁵ Ian Paisley, in commenting in relation to the internationally acclaimed Grimethorpe Colliery Band, 'it puts Barnsley on the map. It shows that we can achieve,' [my italics] perhaps provides an example of Kirk's point. Ian added, 'and really every pit band, the musicians, they were people like Barrie who worked at t'pit or whatever who played in a band. Works bands,' asserting, 'you're part of a collective in a band.' He asks, 'Where would they get that opportunity now? Nowhere! So how many people are growing up without the opportunity of learning an instrument?'

In January 2013 the *South Yorkshire Times* reported that four MPs from the Dearne and Barnsley areas had asked to meet the Minister for Culture urgently, to discuss 'funding and the very future of brass bands in the UK,' following reports that Grimethorpe Colliery Band could have been forced to fold due to financial difficulties. A letter devised by the MP's stated: 'We believe that problems facing the Grimethorpe Colliery Band highlight the long-term, sustained inequalities in funding between different musical art forms, as well as a consistent failure to recognise that brass bands have a significant artistic and

¹⁶⁵ Kirk, 'Representing Identity and Work in Transition', p. 196.

cultural worth.’ The MPs continued, ‘In 2011/12, the Arts Council allocated funding totalling £26 million to the Royal Opera House in London and the English National Ballet received £6.4 million. In comparison, the organisation responsible for supporting 458 brass band groups nationwide, the British Federation of Brass Bands (now Brass Bands England), only received £23,000.’ The MPs’ letter continues, ‘Without this imbalance being addressed, the UK risks losing a musical tradition that is interwoven into many regions’ histories, a tradition that is so often at the heart of the communities to which they belong. And brass bands are not only a vital part of the UK’s heritage, they are still enjoyed by thousands of people around the country week in, week out...We believe that a fundamental shift, not only in arts funding, but in attitude, is needed to secure the future of brass bands such as Grimethorpe.’

Brass band music was not the only form of music to feature in the narratives of participation generated through the oral history interviews undertaken in former coalmining communities across the Barnsley borough, however. Max Senior, notes, ‘Not only was I a musician in the [brass] band, I actually did a lot of singing. And I was asked to join a group in the ‘60s.’ Max explains, ‘There was a group in Dodworth called the Night Jars, and the Night Jars, we used to rehearse every other night when I wasn’t at the band, I’d be singing with the group, and we got better and better and better to a stage where we started doing gigs.’ Max recalls, ‘We became so good, we had so many jobs on, I had to pack in being a miner.’

Mick Birkinshaw described his childhood memories of a musical household, noting, ‘My mum used to play the piano.’ Mick evokes a memory of his mother playing, noting, ‘I can remember standing...my eye level’s the same as my mum’s hands. So I must have been only little.’ Mick recalls that, like his mother, his Auntie Win also had a piano, noting, ‘They had a good living, and she had a grand piano style in their room in their house, and so you know you’d hear music there as well.’ Mick also remembers that his Uncle Malc, ‘he was a drummer, skiffle groups in the ‘50s and then he played in the clubs as the resident drummer and organist to the turn, the artiste.’ Mick also spoke of his brother, noting, ‘he was in a band in the ‘60s. He played bass and was the

singer, or one of the singers.’ Mick went on to say, ‘And I’m doing the same now. I play bass in a band.’ In relation to what influenced him to play music, Mick suggested ‘my brother, yes, yes, definitely. And I suppose I’d got a musical background in my family...there was always music.’

Paul Darlow recalled time spent gig-going in the 1980s. Paul recalled some of the difficulties of trying to fit an active appreciation of live music around the shift system in the pits. Paul recounts, ‘Me and my mate Punky...we went to watch the Pogues, and we were on the bloody day shift, and I think we got home at two in the morning, and I’d to be up at four.’ Paul observes, ‘There was always...there was an undercurrent of people that used to do that.’ He adds, ‘there was a culture of, it was just normal, it wasn’t just mining, go to any community and you’d always got people that were interested in different types of music. That’s what it’s all about isn’t it? It would be rubbish if everybody listened to the same.’ Paul went on to say, in relation to the music of the 1980s, ‘I suppose there was a link to what was going off in general because the Smiths and the Red Wedge tour...They did a thing about kick Thatcher out, rock against racism, all these things they all had a political...the Clash, the Clash had a big political thing and you sort of...well it sort of all snowballed, your politics, by...there’s a right band here called the Clash, and Easterhouse...They were revolutionary communists. But things like that, you’d think well, they’ve made this brilliant music and their politics are bang on.’

Sport

Sports participation and supporting featured prominently in the narratives of participation generated through the interviews undertaken in the former coalmining communities of the Barnsley borough. Participation in sporting activities in childhood led to achievement at the highest level for interviewee Dorothy Hyman. Cudworth miner’s daughter Dorothy Hyman went on to win Gold, Silver and Bronze Olympic medals during her time in international athletics, along with Commonwealth Games medals and many other national and international honours, with Dorothy voted BBC Sports Personality of the

Year in 1963 due to her outstanding sporting achievements. As a 13 year old Cudworth Secondary Modern pupil, Dorothy wrote in a school essay of her desire to become a great runner and 'perhaps an Olympic champion.' Few could have imagined that she would so swiftly reach this goal.

Thinking back to her youth, Dorothy recalls how her father, Jack, a miner at Monk Bretton, was always very interested in sport. Dorothy remembers her father coming to watch her running in an inter-school sports event when she was at junior school and recollects, 'He watched me run, and that was the first time really he got the idea that I could run.' She recalls, 'It started at first where he just took me to Cudworth Park. I don't know where he got his ideas from, but he knew to be good at running you had to practice, and I wasn't a member of a club then, so he just took me in the park and had me running round the park.' Dorothy recalls running at the colliery gala day at Monk Bretton Welfare Ground 'with girls much older than myself' and nevertheless doing quite well. Dorothy remembers that a work colleague of her father's at the pit had spoken to Eddie Fleetwood, a second team coach for Barnsley Football Club who coached a number of athletes at Barnsley Football Club, including Gloria Goldsborough, a local athlete who was doing well internationally at the time. She recalls, 'He'd had a word, and he said, "Eddie will have a look at her, take her to Bank End."' Dorothy explained, 'So we went up, and saw Eddie,' adding, 'I started going to Eddie's groups.' She continues, 'I finished up going to Hickleton [Main Colliery Welfare Ground] because that was the nearest,' outlining, 'I used to go twice a week, we hadn't a car then. I used to come from school and we used to catch the bus into Barnsley, out to Thurnscoe, and I'd train with the others, and then come back the same way, twice a week, so it would be bed time by the time we got back.' Dorothy recalls her father changing onto 'regular days' at the pit 'so that he could take me training.' Dorothy went on to note, 'Because obviously at first I started two days a week, but as I got more advanced I had to go every day, and sometimes six days a week, and he always was with me. Always.'

Dorothy described how she went on to take part in colliery meetings with handicap races in Derbyshire, Yorkshire and further afield along with, in time,

the Yorkshire Championships, the Northern Counties and the nationals.

Dorothy recalls winning a National Schools event at 15 and notes, 'from that I got asked to Lilleshall Sports Centre on an Ovaltine course for a week.'

Dorothy remembers, 'My dad went on the train, from Cudworth I think, all the way to Newport, got off the train, handed me over to this minibus that took you to the Centre, got back on the train and came back because he wouldn't let me go on my own.' Dorothy described how, as the running developed, it became not only a big focus for her own spare time but also 'for his as well. Yes. Every training session.' Dorothy remembered, 'And he always thought I'd do well, and he really had faith in me.' Dorothy also highlighted, 'My mum liked to come and watch me.' She went on to say, 'Once you started in May, there was an athletic meeting nearly every weekend,' noting that this would form a big part of each weekend for her family. Dorothy recalls, 'I was so busy I didn't go out and do the usual things that young teenagers do like going to dances because I lost touch with the friends I had at school and local friends, because I was training. That was my life.'

Looking back on her achievements from her home in Barnsley, Dorothy remembers, 'Of course the hard work and dedication needed is soon forgotten when standing on the podium,' noting, 'I liked running and I liked winning, it was something I could do and be good at.' Dorothy adds, 'Most of all I remember the help and dedication of my family and friends who enabled me to follow my dream, and also the kindness and support of local people and work colleagues who shared in my success.' Dorothy emphasises, 'I always had a lot of support, always. Everybody always had a word for me. Always shared, really, in my success, because they had parades when I came home from Games, parades and presentations and all sorts of things and of course I was asked to local things, like Darby and Joan, to present prizes, and schools, which I always tried to do.'

Dorothy's father died in 1962, and though Dorothy went on to compete at the Tokyo Olympics she retired afterwards at the age of 23. In relation to the far-flung places she visited as an athlete, Dorothy said, 'You went to all these places,' and, 'Yes, it made me the person I am really, because I was so quiet,

and so it broadened...and most people didn't leave the village, and probably I wouldn't have...so yes, it did, it made me, and I had to go places on my own as I got older, so it gave me confidence and it opened a new world to me really.' After her retirement Dorothy coached athletics at the Dorothy Hyman Track Club at Cudworth for 15 years, helping other athletes to develop. A stadium, named after her, was opened in Cudworth in 1973.

Mel Dyke remembered her father's sporting successes on the football field and noted how her father's silver cups for football would be polished 'with devotion and regularity' in the family home. Mel remembers her father playing for local teams, though he had trials for Leeds, Birmingham, Arsenal and Huddersfield. Mel explains, 'but he was badly injured in a local match...that finished his career actually.' In relation to her own involvement in sport, as a supporter, Mel recalls, 'I'd always gone to Oakwell [Barnsley Football Club's ground] with my dad as well,' and outlines, 'Up to having the children I had continued going to football,' explaining, 'then my dad took over taking Tim.' Here, Mel perhaps exemplifies the links which Garry Robson observes as existing between 'long-standing patterns of both familial lineage and affiliation through place' which supporting the local football team serves as a metaphor for, which he terms 'a matter of belonging.'¹⁶⁶

Paul Darlow highlights his support for Barnsley Football Club too, explaining, 'I've been a season ticket holder at Oakwell from about 1980.' He observes, 'a football club is an integral part...it represents that town... And the football club is very representative of a town. When we went in the Premiership, what did it do for Barnsley? It raised its profile. Suddenly we weren't whippets. Well, there was that element. But it should be about representing Barnsley in a fair way, and the football club does that.'

Ian Paisley asserts, 'Most people want Barnsley [FC] to do well, they might not be football fans, but for some recognition, to show that we can achieve, and I

¹⁶⁶ Garry Robson, 'Millwall Football Club: Masculinity, Race and Belonging', in *Cultural Studies and the Working Class*, ed. by Munt, (London and New York: Cassell, 2000), p. 223.

think all that is part of the culture really having something that you can actually relate to and identify with and be proud of, whatever it is.' Ian's point is in-keeping with Stuart Hall's assertion that football supporting, 'is a symbolic practice which gives meaning or expression to the idea of...identification with one's local community.'¹⁶⁷ Garry Robson asserts that football supporting can be interpreted as 'an expression of defensive but culturally entrenched opposition to bourgeois cultural hegemony.'¹⁶⁸ Such a class-based analysis is perhaps reflected in Ian Paisley's observation that, 'Football was working class.' However, Ian notes that, nowadays, 'it's out of the reach of the youngsters, working class.' Paul Darlow similarly notes, 'But again, football, as a cultural activity for the working classes, it's changed. People can't afford...So they've privatised that I suppose. They're even taking our culture away from us now.'

Interview participants spoke of the importance of volunteering in relation to local sporting activity. Mick Birkinshaw highlighted, 'I started off in late teens or whatever, local football. I started playing but I was never really that good so I didn't play that long, so I ended up doing a role within, and I ended up being the secretary for years, the club secretary, for the local Sunday League football.' He continued, 'that's what you did, you sort of were around pubs and clubs and your mates play football so you set a team up. And then I helped run the team.' Mick noted, 'That was your social outlet, if you like... Where we were based as a football team, you went out, I reckon you'd go for a pint in the week, you'd go Saturday night, Sunday dinner time, because you'd do a raffle or something like that, I'd be running a raffle or be running a ticket, fundraising things, usual club land, pub land stuff.' Mick went on to say, 'And I always wanted to have a good event, at the club or the pub, wherever we were based. And we had some cracking nights. We had, you'll probably not know these names but we had Johnny Evans, used to play for Barnsley in the '60s, doing the presentations, the awards for us, they were invited as guests, we got John Charles...he was a legend in the '50s and the '60s for Leeds United and Turin...he came, and what a gentleman he was. I loved meeting him, he was a lovely man...we always

¹⁶⁷ Hall, *Representation*, p. 5.

¹⁶⁸ Robson, 'Millwall Football Club', p. 227.

tried to get something special. And part of that...that's what I did. I did the organising for all this.'

Peter Steadman highlights a recent upsurge in sporting activity in the Dearne Valley, commenting, 'You look at what's happened down here at Manvers from Wath Colliery and how engaged that is now with water sports and the community and they've got 150-odd members, you go down there some days and there is hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people down there, different activities happening, and it's fantastic, it really, really is fantastic. We'll go down, we'll have a walk down, we'll go down with the grand-kids and you know have a coffee on the waterfront and it's brilliant and there is lots of volunteers down there and I was talking to a couple of them that spend days down there and so there's another group of volunteers with a special interest that's cropped up from nowhere in the last couple of years and I've got nothing but praise for them because I know what it's like.'

Outdoors Pursuits

The narratives of participation generated through the interviews undertaken within former coal mining communities within the Barnsley borough included many references to various outdoors pursuits. For example, Paul Darlow remembered, 'my dad used to garden. He was renowned.' Paul adds, 'My grandad used to work for the Dodworth Council when he finished at the pit,' explaining, 'I've got a newspaper cutting, of when he finished at the pit, he was a miner, 65, and Dodworth Council as it was then employed him to do all the gardens.' Paul continued, 'He was always a gardener. He had a smallholding. And that's the background to my dad really. My dad was a gardener, a right keen gardener.'

Steve Wyatt noted the range of outdoors pursuits amongst his colleagues at Dodworth Colliery, noting, 'some would have an allotment, some would have dogs, some were pigeon men.' Mel Dyke, thinking back to her childhood, recalls how her uncles had allotments, 'where they grew their own fruit and vegetables.' She adds, 'My father was the brother who didn't have an

allotment, the only one... the others were all into gardening, and kept chickens, so we were always well fed. Even in the war, the table was always good.'

Eric Longford Jessop explained, 'Home life was good because we used to have a big garden and my dad used to show me how to plant potatoes, cabbages, beans, etc. anything that could be consumed in the home.' Noting his father's generosity, Eric noted, 'Of course he gave half of it away to his mates!' Eric concluded, 'Apart from the pit and the band, that was his interest, and my grandfather's...they were all big gardeners, most people were in those days. You know, they all grew their own food during the war, they had to, and it carried on.'

Richard Benson, in *The Valley*, describes how, when his grandfather, Harry, is unable to manage all of his allotment through age, his son-in-law steps in to help him. Benson describes how they 'plan and plant cabbages, carrots, potatoes, cucumbers, chrysanthemums.'¹⁶⁹ Benson also notes how, during the strike, vegetables from the allotment had formed a key part of the family's resources.¹⁷⁰

Peter Clarney remembers, 'The Welfares used to put some fantastic vegetable shows on.' He continues, 'because our communities...from the past...they'd got to supply their own needs. They all had big gardens. Good gardens and big gardeners.' Peter also recalled, 'my grandfather used to say "a home should never go without food if he's got two ferrets and a whippet." Poaching!' Peter notes, 'and things like that, these were extras, 'cos they weren't getting a lot of shillings, they weren't getting a lot of money.' Peter outlines how the Allotments Act was introduced in 1922. He says, 'Every allotment was 33 yards by 11. After the war, when the council houses were built each garden had an allotment near enough...the point is that was a provider of food for you which was 12 months, it was continuous, putting food on the table.' Peter concludes, 'It's being able to provide for a family outside of the confines of industry.' Peter

¹⁶⁹ Benson, *The Valley*, p. 362.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 385.

Steadman noted how he, and fellow strikers, would go rabbiting during the 1984-85 Miners' Strike to provide food for the table.

In addition to providing food, the garden is also described by interviewees as having provided pleasure. Dorothy Hyman emphasises, 'I've always done my garden. I like doing my garden.' Eric Longford Jessop recalls, in relation to his Grandad Jessop, 'He was a big gardener. He was a gardening fanatic. I think that was his religion. He grew Camellias and things like that, and grapes in his greenhouse.'

Out and About

The narratives of participation generated through oral interviews undertaken across the Barnsley borough included detailed descriptions of trips into town to the market, the cinema, the theatre and more. Neil Hardman, thinking back to his formative years, vividly illustrated, 'My dad would take us into town on a Saturday. He'd take us to a café or we'd go for a bacon sandwich or a custard.' Neil adds, 'Barnsley Market was wonderful. It's sad that that's lost now because that was a cultural heritage that has been lost. There were proper markets. You go to other countries and see these markets and we all go "Lovely market," and that experience, and we had it in Barnsley and it's lost.' Ian Paisley recalls, 'The market was...well we used to sing a song at football matches, "We've got a market to spare." Everywhere you went they'd heard of Barnsley market, and it's like...it had got some recognition, you felt as if you got recognition didn't you?'

In relation to his childhood, Steve Wyatt recalled, 'Sometimes you used to go to the pictures on Saturday morning 'cos the pictures were open on a Saturday morning for the kids.' Steve adds, 'then you used to go to the baths, if you could afford to go to the baths, or you'd go round, make sure you could get some bottles to take back, so you'd got enough to go to the baths.' Mel Dyke remembered, in relation to her childhood years, 'We had five or six cinemas in Barnsley then.' She also recalls, 'We'd Saturday morning 'ABC minors'

matinees then at the wonderful Ritz Cinema that was brilliant and we should never have lost.’ Mel recalls how her Aunt went to the cinema every day and regularly took her cousin Sybil. Mel notes that Sybil, like herself, ‘is still mad about movies.’ Mel suggests that her parents, uncles and aunts, ‘were of that ‘20s and ‘30s generation which daydreamed Hollywood, and cinema changed their lives.’ Mel remembers, ‘My father, when he was on the right shift, would have a nap, and pick me up from school when I was too small to walk home, and every Monday we’d go to the Ritz. I grew up watching Humphrey Bogart, George Raft and Gary Cooper films.’ Mel added, ‘I used to go with my friends to the musicals, and they were stunning in those days, absolutely amazing.’ Ian Paisley remembers, ‘We used to go to the Saturday cinema.’ Ian recalls, ‘When Kes was shown at the Ritz, that’s where it was first put on in Barnsley, they were queuing reight up to t’roundabout.’ Ian adds, ‘My kids love it now,’ continuing, ‘That’s something to relate to, to even them, they can identify with that, can’t they? And it gives them a pride, gives them a feeling of their own...and really that’s what culture is, isn’t it? Getting the opportunities to make your own films.’

Mel Dyke noted how her father would take her to the Theatre Royal in Barnsley, pointing out, ‘my father loved the theatre as well...I remember queuing on Wellington Street to go in. I carried on as a teenager, going with friends to the live theatre and it’s still a love.’

Mel also emphasised the popularity of dancing over the years, noting in relation to her parents, ‘They were excellent dancers. In fact that’s how my parents met.’ Mel continued, ‘My father and mother were more modernist, the foxtrot was their favourite one, but my cousin, Sybil’s parents were wonderful old-time dancers.’ Mel recalled, ‘All the churches had their own dances too in the Church Halls so they went to St Barnabas Hall on Old Mill Lane, because that’s just off Bridge Street where they lived. They went there every Tuesday and Friday to old-time dancing and Alice would make the dresses she and my mother wore. She was an amazing seamstress.’ Mel adds with admiration, ‘She could design, cut without a pattern and sew.’ Mel recalls, ‘both my mother and father were incredibly aware of fashion. You worked all day, and you came

home and you changed to go out.’ Mel goes on to recount, ‘I remember the first time a young lady from a very good family in Penistone came out with our crowd and sneered at the rest of us, including me, who had “dressed up” to go out. “How very working class,” she said, and I thought “She’s absolutely right.” It had never occurred to me before. I thought “How very right you are, yes, but I’m sorry, I’m quite proud to be able to do that. I work all day.” I worked in a bank in a uniform then, and you wouldn’t go out in what you worked in. She had the privilege of not working.’

Neil Hardman similarly recalls, ‘We always used to dress immaculately, we used to put a show on. Because we worked in the pit, in dirty clothes, so it was, at the weekend, right, let’s get dressed up. And all of us used to be dressed smart, collar and tie on and shoes shined, but top quality clothes, it weren’t just a pair of shoes, they’d got to be proper ones.’ Ian Paisley also recalls the importance of being turned out well for an evening out. He remembers, ‘Everybody would be immaculately dressed. All the blokes were virtually always wearing a tie, because it was like “most of the week we’re in our work togs, now we’re clean and we’re showing we’re as good as anybody,” like, and I think that’s a pride, and it’s a culture of pride in what you actually do. There’s nowt wrong with having a dirty job, but we can also clean up, you know.’

The narratives of participation generated through oral history interviews undertaken across the Barnsley borough included detailed descriptions of trips out of town too. Mick Birkinshaw recalled, ‘We always went out into the country on a Sunday somewhere, it might have only been Woolley Edge, for a ride out, picking blackberries, things like that, or seasonal things, or maybe taking a flask, or certain times of the year you went up on to the moors and you got some heather and you put it on the grill of your car for good luck.’ Dorothy Hyman similarly remembers her father taking the family on day trips. She recalls, ‘my dad took us on little trips...he’d take us into Derbyshire and on the moors.’ Dorothy adds, ‘occasionally to the seaside when my dad got the car.’

Neil Hardman recalled, ‘My dad worked on the railways, and we used to go to Blackpool because he got free travel, and we always travelled first class, and I

can remember going to Blackpool 36 times one year! We used to go to Blackpool every weekend. And it was always first class. And there used to be...at that time there were steam engines, the carriages were proper carriages with sliding doors, and we used to have this compartment. We were poor but when we travelled we looked wealthy.' Neil also describes how, in childhood, he, his mother and his grandmother, 'used to go occasionally, every now and again, to visit stately homes, Chatsworth House, on Sundays, we'd visit them sort of places.' He went on to say, 'They'd be day trips. But I can always remember visiting these wonderful houses and seeing all the wealth that was involved in such visits. Coming from abject poverty and then looking at these wonderful stately homes.' He adds, 'they just appeared to be wonderful, and it was beyond your reach wasn't it, it was a dream land...it was something for my mum and my grandmother to get them away, out of the house sort of thing. That was just a day out.' Neil describes how, upon having children, his wife and he, 'wanted to educate our kids that there were other things.' Neil goes on to say, 'Things that I'd missed out on now became important, you start to appreciate things, so when our kids were born we took them to art galleries and museums and shows.' Neil clarifies, 'I recollect visiting these country mansions, and I'd liked history, but sort of never became attached to it, but then once you have kids your focus changes and you want to show your kids alternatives, you want your kids to be better than you are. You want to show them to appreciate culture and they do. My grandkids now they love visiting art galleries and they go to shows, something we never did.'

Conclusions

This chapter has considered narratives of cultural participation generated through oral history interviews undertaken with people from Barnsley in order to investigate the articulated experiences and stated cultural values of individuals who have spent their lives in the town. As would be expected, the narratives of participation generated through the interviews undertaken evoke a rich tapestry of diverse participation practices within the area over the years. Viewed from another perspective, Barnsley's cultural ecology appears somewhat different

from the representations constructed through the statistics and example newspaper articles studied earlier in the thesis.

A sense of activism in relation to concepts such as 'community', collectivism, equality and fairness emerged as of significance within the interviews undertaken in Barnsley. In relation to the Miners' Strike of 1984-85 interviewees spoke of a sense of a 'moral crusade' in the face of what many sensed to be an attempt to destroy some of the particular institutions and ideas of their communities. Interviewees described the passing on, from one generation to another, of ideas, knowledge and a sense of history, and the impact of these interactions upon their own participation and their aims for the future. At times, interviewees related this sense of history to class and the concept of generational 'struggle' linked to a desire for a better future for future generations.

Interviewees described their deep connections to the natural environment linked to the geography of the industry in the area, the nature of the work underground and some of the economic realities of the industry. Interviewees described a wide range of interests within which they have participated over their lives. When describing participation across a range of activities, interviewees have often referenced key themes, such as family and community ties, collectivism, voluntary effort and the sharing of skills and knowledge in relation to diverse participation practices. In *The Long Revolution* Williams insists upon the complexity of the term 'culture', and the embedded nature of 'culture' within the whole of human organisation and creativity, noting, 'it certainly seems necessary to look for meanings and values, the record of creative human activity, not only in art and intellectual work, but also in institutions and forms of behaviour.'¹⁷¹ Certainly the development of cultural institutions and participation practices described by interviewees in Barnsley might be seen as having been embedded within, and contingent upon, complex contexts and motivations - economic, geographical, historical, industrial, political, social and temporal – with cultural institutions and practices part of the

¹⁷¹ Williams, *The Long Revolution*, pp. 58-62.

‘complex, organised whole’ highlighted by Williams. Economic and work circumstances appear to provide a key backdrop in relation to many of the participation practices explored. Interviewees have, though, noted the demise of the once dominant coalmining industry and discussed some of the effects of this transition.

The last two chapters have suggested that the participation practices of interviewees in many cases have been driven by particular values. The next chapter will explore understandings of culture amongst interviewees in order to further examine some of the values underpinning the practices which interviewees have committed to over the course of their lives.

Chapter 4 – Understandings of Culture

Directly opposed to representations of Barnsley constructed in surveys and the mainstream media, this thesis has sought to understand, through an examination of narratives of participation generated through oral history interviews undertaken within the town, in a way which gives voice, unlike the representations examined, to people from Barnsley, whether there might remain more to Barnsley culturally than these representations suggest. Certainly the vivid descriptions of involvements in a whole range of practices highlighted in Chapters 2 and 3, suggest that, unsurprisingly, this is indeed the case.

The characterisations of Barnsley's cultural ecology constructed through the official statistics and media representations studied appear to have been based upon an understanding of 'culture' as shorthand for 'art and intellectual work.'¹⁷² Whilst it is important to note that a variety of aspects of 'art and intellectual work' found no shortage of appreciation and value amongst those interviewed in Barnsley for this study, many understood 'culture' to encompass much more than simply this. It is worth noting that this study does not seek to suggest that the understandings of 'culture' examined here are representative of those of any wider group, within Barnsley or elsewhere. The understandings of 'culture' studied here are rather intended simply to provide examples through which understandings of culture, participation and value can be discussed.

Defining and Understanding 'Culture' in Barnsley – prioritising the voices of Barnsley people

For Dorothy Hyman, culture in Barnsley was all about, 'people, and the community.' Barrie Almond stipulated, 'Unity is Strength, all them expressions on these banners about what our grandfathers and our fathers did in their generation, and how my dad used to say "We had to fight for every yard." That counts for something for me.' Fellow Worsbrough Industrial and Social History

¹⁷² Williams, *The Long Revolution*, pp. 58-62.

Group member Ian Paisley argued, 'That is culture, isn't it?' Ian went on to say, 'you tend to look at culture as the arts and things like that, but I look at it as a sense of belonging as well and some identification with where you live and what it's about.' Ian concluded, 'I look at culture and there were brass bands which were prominent, and you'd get a miners gala and other events and that gave you a real sense of pride in a way. Maybe at that time you didn't know necessarily why...It's a feeling...of help, and self-help, we helped ourselves, but we helped one another as well.'

Eric Longford Jessop asserts, in relation to Barnsley, that, 'One of its main cultures is actually charity.' Max Senior highlights the significance of voluntary action within Barnsley's cultural ecology, noting, 'When you really delve into it, right across Barnsley...there are people involved in voluntary activities that hardly ever get any sort of recognition.' Max adds, 'I could name at least a dozen, off the top of my head, of organisations...that's all voluntary, that people are involved in, and they are passionate about it, very much like I am with brass bands. I'm passionate about making music, I'm passionate about keeping the band going. It's a cultural thing.'

Interviewees recognised the diverse interpretations made of the term 'culture' and this seemed to shape their discussion of culture in Barnsley. Chris Skidmore, Yorkshire Area NUM Chairman, recognises, 'It's a big word is 'culture,' and said, 'When you're looking at the word 'culture,' we've got mining culture, we've got industrial culture. Just because somebody isn't born in the Thames Valley, or doesn't frequent Covent Garden, doesn't mean to say that they're not cultural.' Chris added, 'We've had lads down the pit who were cultural in their own way and were very talented artists.' Chris notes the significance of brass bands, highlighting, 'That is all part of our culture,' and continues, 'People like to march and make a statement,' noting 'the banners are also part of culture.' Chris adds, 'We always say that you learn from the experiences of the past to take them into the future, which is basically what we've got on our new banner, and it's an important lesson for people to learn.' Chris goes on to note, 'it's difficult at times to get your perspective over what your life's been like, and what life was like, to live,' before concluding, 'It's a

different culture to what you would have on some of the arts programmes, but it's still important in its own right, as far as I'm concerned.'

Inky Thomson, remembering the achievements of some of his colleagues at the pit, notes, 'There were all sorts of talents, that were suffocated by the need not to provide anything that would take people away from the mines when they needed coal...We had all sorts of talents, yes, but we were ring-fenced for mining when it suited them, when they wanted the coal.' Inky observes in Barnsley, however, a 'culture of people helping people.'

Julie Medlam, Theatre Manager at the Dearne Playhouse, housed in the former Dearne Miners' Welfare Hall, suggests in relation to Barnsley's cultural ecology, 'I think we are cultured.' Julie emphasises, 'I mean you only have to see how many young children in there [Dearne Playhouse] are doing different types of dancing today, that to me is very cultured, but somebody looking from the outside in would say "That's not culture."' Julie adds, 'Culture doesn't mean having a load of bairns enjoying themselves on a stage, singing songs, dancing, drawing, that's not what culture is, that's not what it means.' Julie stipulates, however, that 'trying to get people involved,' something that the Dearne Playhouse is endeavouring to do, is precisely what culture means to her, 'using what we've got here' to involve young people in 'singing, acting, working backstage, working with one another, writing things together.' Julie concludes, 'We've got a lot of creative people.'

Interviewees recognised the significance of perspective in the consideration of 'culture'. Paul Darlow observes, 'you've got to start defining what culture is haven't you, and working class culture?' In relation to culture in Barnsley, Paul noted, 'It's always been a music hall joke hasn't it?' Paul muses, 'I think it's going to take a lot of growing out of, that music hall joke about Barnsley.' He notes, 'Again, it's the way that it's been presented that's created that, not facts, it's not based on facts, it's based on how it's represented in the media.' Paul concludes, 'you've got to defend your town...everywhere has, but Barnsley's got to defend it even more because it's been portrayed as this hotbed of militancy.' Steve Wyatt asserts, 'Our representation on the telly, from their point

of view, you always get that impression they're biased...And it's the same in the papers. You get a lot of biased resemblances in the papers... they can be biased, and they can turn things to what they want.' Steve comments, 'It's like in the strike, in the 84-85 strike, the only true reflection that was ever wrote about truthfully from day one, to the last day of the strike, that was reported in the media, was the *Morning Star*. All the rest of them twisted it to suit...every one of them, that was all the Tory papers...and the same with the media, the BBC, and the ITV, they turned it to what they wanted, to suit. Even in the BBC, in the strike, they'd got MI5 with them, with cameras on their shoulders, I can tell you that.' Steve recollects, 'I always remember that morning, puts the telly on, the IRA had blown the Brighton bomb up, but before they said it was the IRA, they said it was us, "the National Union of Mineworkers has tried to assassinate Mrs Thatcher." And then they realised they'd dropped a bollock, and it was the IRA, but they thought it was us first off.'

Chris Skidmore argues, 'Media coverage...tells people what places are like, rather unfairly.' He suggests, "They're always on strike, they're always promoting violence," we get stereotyped into that way.' He adds, 'If we go down to Westminster for a meeting, the police down there want to know what we're doing...they make a beeline for us,' noting, 'and they don't understand our dialect half the time.' Noting that the local dialect is 'part of our culture,' Chris asserts that speaking in local dialect doesn't mean 'you haven't got good ideas, or good conceptions of what life should be like.' Chris concludes, 'We had a major strike in 1984 which possibly changed Britain for ever industrially, economically, also socially, and it's never been the same since. A way of life has almost disappeared. People still cling to that idealism but the ideals that we promoted from these areas – one for all and all for one – was basically people watched out for each other.' Referring to media interest in local reactions to the death of Margaret Thatcher, Chris recalled, 'They expected me to dance on the table and have a bottle of beer in my hand, and that's the stereotyping that we get in this area, especially Barnsley because of the links with the past, they think...everybody wants to bring a government down. They don't realise, or have never even thought, that people might just want to be left alone to get on with their life, however bad or however good it is. It's what you

make of it.' Chris declares, 'it's being inside that goldfish bowl and people looking in. They don't want to climb into the goldfish bowl...to try and understand.' He adds, 'I just don't think that basically that we're understood enough,' and notes, 'you've to understand people properly before you can make a judgement on them.'

Dorothy Hyman noted, 'Southerners have got an image of it [Barnsley] being backward I would say... and we get made fun of don't we? You know, comedians, if they bring Barnsley into it, it's always derogatory, really. But it doesn't bother me, it doesn't bother me.' Dorothy declares, 'I know we get made fun of but I think there's a lot of good people and good things have come out of Barnsley.' Dorothy notes, 'I've had such support from Barnsley people, and it's nice to be part of it really.' However, on a personal level, Dorothy recalls how, in the past, when taking part in athletics events nationally and internationally, people 'used to mimic my accent, or pretend not to understand what I was saying.' Dorothy states, 'I was quiet, but that made me quieter still,' highlighting the possible effects of such actions on a personal level.

Neil Hardman notes, 'I've always been aware that when you watch programmes there are stereotypes throughout the country. If somebody's a bit cute and a bit flash and a bit fly, it's always a cockney. I remember watching Porridge years ago and the thick bloke was from Barnsley...So...certain parts of the country associate thickness with northern-ness.' Neil adds, 'It's other people that stereotype Barnsley.'

Inky Thomson states, 'Now if you ask a person about a mining area that's never visited a mining area they've obviously had their opinion formed by what they've read in the press, so I should imagine they'd think we've all got a flat cap on, and got pigeons and ferrets, but it's not the truth, but that's the way the media have portrayed it over the years.' Asked why he thinks this might be the case, Inky argues, 'Because it's owned by them who it's advantageous to them to portray certain people in the way that they do portray them.' He goes on to say, 'Like they tried to criminalise all the miners, call them the enemy within, people who'd fought in the bloody wars and worked underground. It's the media. Five

of the mass media, well them who own it, they're the upper establishment.'

Inky suggests that the national media 'does not want the north to be portrayed positively,' as 'it's not in their interest.' Julie Medlam agrees, 'It doesn't, never has done. But there's a lot of people fighting for the greater good of the north, a lot of people. Yes, the power's not up here, the power, it's way down south, it's always going to be because that's London, that's what we get, but there's a hell of a lot of folk who are northerners who are very much more proactive now.'

Julie suggests, 'Because we don't kowtow to the people that've got the money, that's why they try to keep us out of...to shove us under the carpet.' She adds, 'There's so many people with an opinion that doesn't suit them, that that's why they shove them under the carpet.' Julie suggests that, 'There's too many people who are fed up of being bloody downtrodden.' Julie adds, 'They don't let us have our say. Them that's representing us don't let us have our say.'

Julie recalled, 'A couple or three years ago, Barnsley had actually put an application in to become the culture capital of the UK and it was a laughing stock. We were a laughing stock.' Julie added, 'The perception is we're pits, flat caps, pits, it's grey.' Julie notes how, after the Tour de France coverage on the television, which showed the countryside around the town, she had phone calls from people she works with up and down the country, "Was that where you live?" Julie comments, 'My back garden backs on to a beautiful country park, it's beautiful, but people don't see it, they only see what the media put, and it's the media's fault.' Julie says, 'There's really good folk round here,' but notes, 'When you've had that chucked at you, that you're as rough as they come, rough and ready, folk start believing it after a while. And they do I'm afraid. We need to change that, we need to change people's perceptions of what's going off round here, and if it means me working through this media that I've got here to try and do it, that's my aim. That's my aim.'

Peter Steadman similarly recognises the need for continued activism. He states, 'The need is not any less for having...for things like social cohesion, absolutely not, and developing cultural aspects within a community that people want to sign up to and want to hang their hat on.' Peter emphasises, 'We've got to get on and do this ourselves... I think we need to look at

developing...give power to some of the local community groups and funding to some of the local community groups to do some of the things that matter to local community groups... I think what it calls for now in order to let communities develop and find their own social cohesion is a bit more empowerment.' Mel Dyke suggests that the actions of local people are already beginning to make a difference. She remembers comedians in the past 'knocking,' and 'getting laughs out of' Barnsley, noting that this impacted upon the image of the town. However, Mel suggests that, with the development of Experience Barnsley, with which she has been actively involved, along with many others within the local community, over the years, she senses a developing pride, and increasing expectation in relation to Barnsley.

Whilst it is important to note that 'art and intellectual work' found no shortage of appreciation and value amongst those interviewed for this study in Barnsley, it is also important to note that many of those spoken with understood 'culture' to encompass much more than simply this. The people interviewed through this study also spoke of 'culture' as perhaps encompassing voluntary effort, caring for and helping others, bringing people together, fostering a sense of community, the sharing of skills, knowledge and experience, activism and 'being constructive' too.

In *The Moral Significance of Class*, Andrew Sayer discusses the use-value and exchange-value of particular resources and practices, noting, 'Marx used the use-value/exchange-value distinction to distinguish capital from mere machines, materials or buildings. The latter have use-value, but only become capital when they are acquired in order to command the labour of others and to earn exchange-value.' Sayer also discusses individuals' 'internal and external goods,' describing 'internal goods' as 'satisfactions of doing complex work well,' or 'skills and excellences we develop through participating in a regular and committed way in activities,' whilst noting, 'While I may achieve and enjoy internal goods through these activities, they may also bring me external goods

of approbation, fame, prestige and money.¹⁷³ Building upon these ideas, Sayer emphasises, 'The struggles of the social field are driven not only by actors seeking to attract external goods and to maximise the exchange-value of their capital...They are also about seeking use-values and internal goods and pursuing commitments for their own sake, regardless of whether they affect their standing relative to others.'¹⁷⁴ Certainly, discussions with interviewees concerning culture in Barnsley focused upon the use-values and internal goods that cultural participation might foster within their families and communities, rather than upon the exchange values and external goods that cultural practices might bring.

Sayer emphasises, 'Reflexivity is certainly not the preserve of academics but is common to people regardless of their social position.'¹⁷⁵ He highlights how, 'In their mostly sub-conscious and fallible, but mostly practically adequate ways,' people, regardless of social position, '*value* the world.'¹⁷⁶ Sayer concludes, 'Lay normativity is not reducible to habit or the pursuit of self-interest and power, but has a crucial moral dimension, relating...to a feel for how actions, events and circumstances affect well-being.'¹⁷⁷ As Sayer puts it, people's concerns in relation to the struggles of the social field include, 'Questions of just what is good in terms of ways of life, practices, objects, behaviours and types of character that people see as desirable.' He notes, 'Actors compete and struggle both for such goods, that is compete for things which are agreed to be worthwhile, and over the definition of what is valuable or worthwhile.' Sayer adds that these struggles are 'about how to live.'¹⁷⁸

Those involved in the interviews undertaken through this study had a clear sense of what they had valued over their lifetimes 'in terms of ways of life, practices, objects, behaviours and types of character.' That 'crucial moral

¹⁷³ Andrew Sayer, *The Moral Significance of Class* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). pp. 105-113.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3

dimension,' highlighted by Sayer, 'relating...to a feel for how actions, events and circumstances affect well-being,'¹⁷⁹ might perhaps be detected within interviewees' discussions concerning the significance of the idea of working together, with concepts such as 'community', collectivism, equality and fairness also emerging as of significance within the interviews undertaken. Interviewees described the importance, to them, of passing on, from one generation to the next, ideas, knowledge and a sense of history, whilst emphasising their hopes for a better future for the generations to come.

Funding 'Culture'

As Raymond Williams highlighted, 'A good community, a living culture, will...not only make room for but actively encourage all and any who can contribute to the advance in consciousness which is the common need.' Williams also noted, 'Wherever we have started from, we need to listen to others who started from a different position. We need to consider every attachment, every value, with our whole attention; for we do not know the future, we can never be certain of what may enrich it.'¹⁸⁰

Julie Medlam, Theatre Manager at the Dearne Playhouse, questioned whether 'every attachment, every value' is indeed considered, however, in debates around the distribution of public cultural funding. She remarked, 'There's a core group of people who make decisions on where the funding goes, there has to be, but that group of people are not a cross-section of people, they're a certain group of a certain type of people.' Chris Skidmore, Chairman of the Yorkshire NUM, argues, 'You've to question who makes up the board that decides where the funds are going to be spent. Making sure that Swan Lake's performed down in Covent Garden every year...would be alright for those sorts of people but what about a change?' Chris notes, 'We've got beautiful buildings. This [NUM offices] is, to a lot of people, a beautiful building. It takes a lot of upkeep. Yes, so does the Albert Hall. However, in order to spread a cultural message, then it's surely got to be divided up fairly.'

¹⁷⁹ Sayer, *The Moral Significance of Class*, p. 225.

¹⁸⁰ Williams, *Culture and Society* p. 320.

Fairness is perhaps one of the key issues here. Others involved in the interviews undertaken in former coalmining communities in Barnsley as part of this study similarly questioned whether 'every attachment, every value' is indeed considered in the distribution of public cultural funding. Paul Darlow highlights, 'they gave £50 million to the Royal Ballet, and I've got nothing wrong with the Royal Ballet, I sit and watch it, the Royal Ballet, I think it's a marvellous art, but £50 million to them and there's certain things up here that's dropping to pieces.' Paul continues, 'They've erased our history, or they've tried to,' commenting, 'there's no pit sites, apart from Barnsley Main, what's left. Why not give money to reinvigorating that? And saying look, this is what was in Barnsley.' Paul notes, 'The Coal Mining Museum, that's struggling, isn't it? So these organisations, they need funding. Dodworth Miners' Welfare for instance, that needs an injection of cash... Show a bit of interest, invest in that, so it's balanced.' Paul states, 'The thing is... there must be a policy, somebody must... who decides these things? Is there anybody representing people or organisations from the north, and not just Barnsley... if you're going to have a pot of money to help people, culturally, interpret the past, then surely it should be evenly spread.' Paul concludes, 'I hope somebody somewhere thinks of not just Barnsley but towns in the north.'

Max Senior comments, 'Let me tell you something, to run a brass band costs thousands, it really does, and when I see in the paper that the Arts Council pay millions to the opera and then peanuts to the brass banding world in South Yorkshire, and I mean peanuts, you're talking a few thousand pounds, I just think there's an inequality there... people down south have absolutely no idea or understanding of the kind of culture that we have... I'm dead critical of the Arts Council, they should really generate enough funding into that sort of culture, which is a volunteering culture, of people making music that's absolutely wonderful. I just think it's sad, because a lot of bands have gone to the wall because they can't keep going, they've no income. It's so difficult. And what's wrong in young people learning to play music? Learning to read music, and play your instrument. It's wonderful. They don't see it like that. They plough millions into opera, but yet if you want to go and see an opera in London

it'll cost you about £50. You want to go and see a brass band concert which is brilliant and it'll cost you a fiver. There's no comparison.'

Inky Thomson puts it this way, 'Why has some cities got great big opera houses that are well subsidised for people who don't need the subsidy?' In relation to the Dearne Playhouse, Julie Medlam notes, 'I'm now wanting to do some short stories, plays...working with miners' families...but getting any help and support financially for that...it's not available, it doesn't fall into the remit, it's not very fashionable for funding, because we're a charity, for us to do projects we have to apply for funding and it's not fashionable and it's wrong!' Julie adds, 'It's still seen as political, so it can hamper us... if we want to do something specific to the mining heritage...we find it really difficult to get the backing.' Julie reiterates, 'Them that's representing us don't let us have our say. And we do see that through this as well, through the arts, which is supposed to be for everyone, it doesn't matter where you are, you're supposed to have the same opportunity to participate in arts, but you haven't.' Julie notes, 'We've had such a lack of funding over the years,' adding, 'regarding the everyday running of the building and things that we might need to do, we've never had owt.'

Peter Steadman suggests, 'there is an elite cohort...that comes from all classes, that has a special interest, that seems to be at the front of the queue when any funding is being handed out.' He adds, 'You know you always seem to be at the bottom of the list at times... that happens time and time again and one would argue speaking as objectively as you can that there does appear to be an agenda, that some organisations that are more elitist and more focused in their...what they offer to the wider community tend to access greater levels of funding than others do. That's by activity.' Peter adds, 'Then you look at the regions, a regional breakdown even further and one would argue that the south east gets per head of population a significant higher level of voluntary funding whether it's the national lottery or whatever it might be than per head of population say in the north east and it's those things that stick in my throat because you see that time and time again... and that's with spending ten years of putting bids together and knowing where the money's going all the time and how money is being directed and how it's being channelled and how it's being

prioritised.’ Peter notes, ‘I’ve certainly read things about it over the last few years but I’ve certainly found that through experience as well. My experiences...it’s more than anecdotal. So yeah it’s depressing, it’s disappointing that that is the case.’

Conclusions

The characterisations of Barnsley’s cultural ecology constructed through the official statistics and media representations studied in this thesis appear to have been based upon an understanding of ‘culture’ as shorthand for ‘art and intellectual work.’¹⁸¹ Whilst it is imperative to note that ‘art and intellectual work’ found a great deal of appreciation and value amongst interviewees involved in this study, it is also important to note that many of those spoken with understood ‘culture’ to encompass much more than just this. Alternative conceptions of ‘culture’, spoken of in relation to Barnsley specifically, were articulated by a number of individuals interviewed in the town. Interviewees spoke of ‘people, and the community,’ ‘a sense of belonging,’ ‘charity,’ and ‘voluntary action,’ in their discussion of the term ‘culture,’ with one interviewee highlighting what he saw in Barnsley as a ‘culture of people helping people.’ Here, then, ‘culture’ might be seen to also encompass, in addition to ‘art and intellectual work,’ voluntary effort, caring for and helping others, bringing people together, fostering a sense of community, the sharing of skills, knowledge and experience, activism and ‘being constructive’ too. Here, again, the significance of perspective in the consideration of ‘culture’, and thus the importance of democracy in relation to cultural, as other, questions, is highlighted. In light of this, interviewees sought a fair approach to the distribution of public cultural funding and queried how reflective of wider society decision making bodies in the cultural sphere currently are. Interviewees did not seek to declare ‘this is culture’ or ‘that is culture’ in an authoritarian manner. Neither did they seek to suggest that their own definitions and understandings of ‘culture’ were somehow representative of others’ understandings, in Barnsley or elsewhere. Rather, those interviewed through the project recognised that ‘culture’ can

¹⁸¹ Williams, *The Long Revolution*, pp. 58-62.

mean different things to different people. As such, interviewees were keen to see more people, and a wider diversity of people, involved in debates around culture, and decisions around the funding of culture. Above all, interviewees were keen to see fairness prioritised in relation to the distribution of cultural funding.

Chapter 5 – ‘Culture’ and ‘Community’: Past, Present and Future

This thesis has considered narratives of cultural participation generated through oral history interviews undertaken with people from Barnsley. The thesis has sought to deepen understanding of particular aspects of cultural participation and articulations of cultural value existing within the town of Barnsley, thereby complicating representations constructed of the town’s cultural makeup and, more generally, understandings of culture.

Those involved in this study have discussed their rhythms of life within their immediate and wider family networks here in Barnsley in the past and in the present. The interviews undertaken have demonstrated the significance of the idea of working together as a community amongst interviewees taking part in the study in the coalmining communities of Barnsley. A sense of activism in relation to concepts such as ‘community’, collectivism, equality and fairness also emerged as of significance within the interviews undertaken here.

Interviewees involved in this study have spoken of ‘people, and the community,’ ‘a sense of belonging,’ ‘charity,’ ‘voluntary action’ and a ‘culture of people helping people’ in their discussion of the term ‘culture.’ As such, ‘culture’ might, in Barnsley, be understood to encompass voluntary effort, caring for and helping others, fostering a sense of community, the sharing of skills, knowledge and experience, activism and ‘being constructive.’ Such an understanding is in keeping with Williams’ understanding of culture as a record of ‘creative human activity’, reflecting particular meanings and values, manifested not only in ‘art and intellectual work,’ but also in ‘institutions and forms of behaviour.’¹⁸²

A number of those interviewed in Barnsley discussed cultural participation practices within the context of discussion regarding ‘working class culture.’ In examining ‘working class culture,’ Raymond Williams asserted, ‘The culture which it has produced, and which it is important to recognize, is the collective

¹⁸² Williams, *The Long Revolution*, pp. 58-62.

democratic institution, whether in the trade unions, the co-operative movement, or a political party.' He added, 'Working class culture...is primarily social (in that it has created institutions).' Regarding this 'working class culture,' Williams concluded, 'When it is considered in context, it can be seen as a very remarkable creative achievement,' whilst noting that, 'to those whose meaning of culture is intellectual or imaginative work, such an achievement may be meaningless.'¹⁸³ Here, Williams highlights the significance of perspective in the consideration of 'culture.' Williams qualifies, however, that, 'When we speak, for instance, of a working class idea, we do not mean that all working class people possess it, or even approve of it. We mean, rather, that this is the essential idea embodied in the organisations and institutions which that class creates.'¹⁸⁴ Williams emphasises that institutions which defend collectivist values, and seek communal advantage, do not in the process necessarily demote the importance of individual identities.

In relation to the Miners' Strike of 1984-85 interviewees spoke of a sense of a 'moral crusade' in the face of what many sensed to be an attempt to destroy some of the particular institutions and ideas of their communities. Interviewees described the passing on, from one generation to the next, of ideas, knowledge and a sense of history, and the impact of these interactions upon their own participation and their aims for the future. At times, interviewees related this sense of history to class, whilst stating their desire for a better future for future generations.

When describing their own participation across a range of activities, interviewees often referenced key themes, such as family and community ties, collectivism and the sharing of skills and knowledge in relation to diverse participation practices. In *The Long Revolution* Williams insists upon the complexity of the term 'culture', and the embedded nature of 'culture' within the whole of human organisation and creativity.¹⁸⁵ As this thesis has outlined, the development of cultural institutions and participation practices in Barnsley might

¹⁸³ Williams, *The Long Revolution*, p. 314

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-62.

certainly be seen as having been embedded within, and contingent upon, complex contexts and motivations, with cultural institutions and practices forming part of a 'complex, organised whole,' as highlighted by Williams. Economic and work circumstances appear to have provided a key backdrop in relation to many of the participation practices explored. Interviewees involved in the study in Barnsley have though noted the demise of the once dominant coalmining industry and have wondered about the potential effects of this transition, including in relation to culture, for future generations.

Concerns about any erosion of 'working class culture' and 'working class community' are not new in the academic world. Drawing upon his own personal experience, Richard Hoggart in *The Uses of Literacy*, vividly described a working class culture and community which he recognised from his own family background, whilst expressing concern at the erosion of this which he perceived as taking place in what he saw as an era of consumerism and mass culture in the 1950s. More recently Royce Turner in *Coal was our Life* and Simon Charlesworth in *A Phenomenology of Working Class Experience* each also expressed concern at the erosion of working class culture and community which they perceived as having taken place over the course of a period of de-industrialisation over recent decades. John Kirk, on the other hand, has discussed how far there is a tendency for scholars to always look at 'working class culture' and 'working class community' as under threat of erosion.

Under Threat of Erosion?

In 1957 Richard Hoggart in *The Uses of Literacy* expressed his concern that 'the remnants of what was at least in parts an urban culture 'of the people' are being destroyed' and that 'the new mass culture is in some important ways less healthy.'¹⁸⁶ Hoggart detected an 'interplay between material improvement and cultural loss,' which meant that 'more genuine class culture is being eroded.'¹⁸⁷ As John Kirk put it, Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* 'made strong claims for the

¹⁸⁶ Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (London: Penguin, Reprinted 1992. First published 1957), pp. 23-25.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 343.

cultural significance of northern working class cultures, whilst proceeding to map their seeming disappearance too.’¹⁸⁸

Jon Lawrence points to Michael Young and Peter Willmott’s 1957 study, *Family and Kinship in East London*, as of equal importance to Hoggart’s study in ‘cementing a powerful vision of a supposedly ‘traditional’ working-class social and cultural system said to be on the brink of dissolution.’ Lawrence notes, ‘in *Family and Kinship*, Young and Willmott argued that the British authorities had failed to recognize working-class people’s powerful attachment to place, and to the dense networks of kinship and neighbourliness built up over preceding generations.’ Lawrence notes that the study served as an account of ‘inexorable social processes undermining Labour politics by breaking up the party’s urban working-class heartlands.’ Lawrence highlights how Young and Willmott’s findings ‘played a central role in the construction of this model of the (disappearing) ‘traditional’ working-class community.’¹⁸⁹

Almost half a century later, Royce Turner introduces his study, *Coal was our Life*, based upon research undertaken in the West Yorkshire town of Featherstone, by stating, ‘The reasons for writing this book are simple. The social conditions, the way of living, the local economies, the values – at least among some sections of the community – have changed so dramatically in mining areas that they need to be documented. Mining towns and villages were never rich. But they did have a social stability. People did have a regular source of a reasonable income. There were structures in place which bolstered that stability: family and friendship ties; the union; the fact that you could nearly always get a job, if you wanted one. When the coal industry was closed down, that stability was destroyed.’¹⁹⁰ Turner goes on to say, ‘The story, from hope to despair, from regular money to scratting about for survival, from fierce pride to social dislocation, is a story worth telling.’ Emphasising the rapid demise of the coalmining industry over recent decades, Turner asserts, ‘What was gone was

¹⁸⁸ Kirk, *Class, Culture and Social Change*, pp. 31-33.

¹⁸⁹ Jon Lawrence, ‘Inventing the ‘Traditional Working Class’: A Reanalysis Of Interview Notes from Young and Willmott’s *Family and Kinship in East London*’ *The Historical Journal*, vol. 69, no. 2, (2016), pp. 667-693

¹⁹⁰ Turner, *Coal was our Life*, p. 1.

spirit...A spirit which had developed over generations, based on collectivism, kinship, advancement by co-operation rather than individuality.' Turner sets out his aim, 'to describe that spirit...and look at how it infused the community. And to describe, now that it is gone, the consequences of its departure, the ruptured society, the way that a collective community confidence has transmogrified into a series of survival strategies played out by individuals, many of them marginalised. It is the story of a working class community which suddenly has its world destroyed.'¹⁹¹

Turner emphasises the significance of social capital, which he sees as an essential part of the 'working class culture' and 'working class community' which he perceives as having existed in communities such as Featherstone in the past, noting "Social capital" is about co-operation, trust, friendship, self-discipline. It is about relationships between members of a community, be that at local or regional level. It is about social cohesion, and the moral code which governs behaviour within a group of people.' Turner asserts, 'When the local economies of mining areas were destroyed, the 'social capital' was destroyed too. The spirit that had held places together was drained, quickly, as if it was going down a plug hole,' concluding, 'It may well be possible, over time, if enormous effort is made, to rebuild the economies of mining areas on new lines...But rebuilding social capital, rebuilding the spirit, may take a lot longer. And it may well be too late.'¹⁹²

Simon Charlesworth states that his study, *A Phenomenology of Working Class Experience*, published in 2000 and based upon research conducted in his home town of Rotherham, South Yorkshire, 'is an attempt to set down a living record, a testimony to the dying of a way of life; the extinction of a kind of people.' Charlesworth contends, 'Since the 1980s, the gradual decline of the culture of the working class has been one of the most powerful, telling developments in British society.'¹⁹³ Referencing Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy*,

¹⁹¹ Turner, *Coal was our Life*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 278-280.

¹⁹³ Simon Charlesworth, *A Phenomenology of Working Class Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 1-2.

Charlesworth comments, 'Hoggart's early writing is mainly of historical interest now. The conditions he describes are long gone...The forms of association Hoggart captured are lost.'¹⁹⁴

In discussing some of the changes which he sees as having taken place over the course of his own lifetime, in particular in relation to de-industrialisation, Simon Charlesworth observes, 'Elementary solidarities of family, work and place, once consolidated by the culture of the trade union and tertiary education, have been washed away by the corrosive cleansing of laissez-faire economic practice; the logic of financial markets sacrificing for profit the cultural configurations that human decency requires.'¹⁹⁵ Reporting upon the research undertaken in Rotherham, Charlesworth notes, 'What emerged from men and women of all ages was a remarkably coherent story of the loss of a way of living that was based upon hard work and industry, within which there was a sense of friendship and relation, of basic dignity and respect.'¹⁹⁶ Charlesworth suggests that, 'The industrial past is still living in the dispositions of the old...But their culture is terminal. Not long for this world.' He adds, 'Within fifteen years the destruction of major industries in the area has destroyed the culture of labour that had been at the heart of the ethics of the people here, of their way of life, of their forms of respect and of care.'¹⁹⁷ Charlesworth goes on to say, 'Those around forty have a coherent way of describing their lives and a sense of what has happened to the working class, but, as one comes down through the generations, one moves away from the efficacy of any narrative of the social, away from the co-ordinates of class, and encounters an arid individualism.'¹⁹⁸

John Kirk detects a tendency for scholars always to look at 'working class culture' and 'working class community' as under threat of erosion. Kirk suggests that Richard Hoggart, in *The Uses of Literacy*, 'made strong claims for the cultural significance of northern working class cultures, whilst proceeding to map their seeming disappearance too.' Kirk also suggests that Simon

¹⁹⁴ Charlesworth, *A Phenomenology of Working Class Experience*, pp. 87-88

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 5-7.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-11.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-5.

Charlesworth, in *A Phenomenology of the Working Class*, 'sets up an opposition between "then" and "now"' and notes 'in it we witness a rich productive industrial culture eclipsed by history, which leaves in its wake the useless consolations of commodity desire.' Charlesworth's discussion of the Parkgate and Meadowhall shopping centres situated close to Rotherham, about which he writes, 'These are both sites where people once mattered, economically, because they worked. And now the same people return to participate as consumers,' serves as an illustration of Kirk's analysis.¹⁹⁹ Kirk suggests that (pessimistic) work charting the erosion of 'working class culture' and 'working class community' performs the function 'of confirming that class in some crucial, positive sense – in fact, political sense, which is really the crux of it – can no longer matter.'²⁰⁰

Selina Todd points to the long history of a 'then' and 'now' opposition in discussion of 'working class culture' and 'working class community' through highlighting how, in 1960, Michael Young argued that 'class based on production is slowly giving way to status based on consumption.' Todd argues that, in this way, Michael Young 'suggested that class was no longer a political force. People did not see themselves as part of a collective group of workers, who shared political interests defined by their need to sell their labour. They were now individualists, only interested in how much they could earn.' However, Todd has argued that, following the 1964 general election, 'As thirteen years of Conservative rule came to an end, the worries of some Labour politicians and social scientists that affluence would lead people to consider themselves to be middle class were agreed to be unfounded. Many workers believed that Britain was a two-class society composed of 'them' and 'us', and that 'they' held power unjustly. They identified themselves as working class not because of the amount of money they earned or the job they did, but because of their relationship to other people in the society in which they lived.'²⁰¹ Only a few years later, in *Working Class Community: Some general notions raised by a series of studies in northern England*, Brian Jackson chided 'At any point over

¹⁹⁹ Charlesworth, *A Phenomenology of Working Class Experience*, p. 33

²⁰⁰ Kirk, *Class, Culture and Social Change*, p. 34.

²⁰¹ Todd, *The People*, 52%.

the last hundred years it was felt that an old working class style of life was just disappearing.' Jackson observed, 'The truth is that working class life has always been changing,' whilst emphasising 'But also that the relative economic position of that class has altered little.'²⁰² Jackson concluded, 'The idea that the working class is ceasing to exist in the old way; a submerged and alternative culture based on habits of cooperation and values of community is false.'²⁰³ In relation to the contemporary period, Selina Todd argues that, 'Debates about how many people describe themselves as working class compared with yesteryear tend to suggest that there has been a seismic shift in society over the last fifty years: a rupture between a golden age of working-class life, and the neo-liberal reality of the never-changing present.' Todd suggests, 'regarding the past and the present that way encourages us to believe that the society in which we live can never be changed: that we have truly reached the end of history.' However, Todd concludes, 'But it is possible to see great continuities between history and the present, and these suggest that we can change our society for the better.'²⁰⁴

Jon Lawrence has noted that many 'classic post-war social histories' work with a 'cataclysmic model of social and cultural change,' in many cases citing the work of Young and Hoggart as evidence of the world that was lost, in developing 'the classic account of 'traditional' working-class life before 'affluence' and mass consumption supposedly changed everything.' Lawrence notes, 'Only recently have historians begun to eschew this narrative of 'rise and fall' in favour of more subtle accounts of the *reworking* of class identities and practices since the war,' arguing, 'There was no great moment of rupture, no cataclysmic exodus from mutualistic communitarianism to atomized, materialist individualism.'²⁰⁵

So, what concerns might lay behind the development of a 'cataclysmic' model of change? Michael Collins, commenting upon the lives of previous

²⁰² Brian Jackson, *Working Class Community: Some general notions raised by a series of studies in northern England* (London: Pelican, 1972), p. 170.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

²⁰⁴ Todd, *The People*, 78%.

²⁰⁵ Lawrence, 'Inventing the 'Traditional Working Class'', pp. 667-693.

generations of his own family in the twentieth century in *The Likes of us: A Biography of the White Working Class*, in noting, 'In many aspects the culture of the urban working class [in the mid twentieth century] was similar to that of Nell Hall's [earlier] generation, despite mutterings from various writers and historians that it had given up the ghost by the 1950s,' echoes Kirk's analysis of the work of Hoggart and others, with Collins suggesting, 'In some quarters it was believed that the working classes were forsaking a sense of community for a culture of materialism, individualism and competition.'²⁰⁶ Hoggart certainly expressed fear that accompanying the 'genuine and important improvements in the standard of life of working-class people,' came the temptation for 'a physically and materially emancipated working-class to have a largely material outlook,' leading to 'a paralysis of the moral will.'²⁰⁷ Hoggart also expressed concern at society 'reducing the larger part of the population to a condition of obediently receptive passivity, their eyes glued to television sets, pin-ups, and cinema screens.'²⁰⁸ When Michael Collins recounts George Orwell's observation in *The Road to Wigan Pier* that he had 'yet to meet a working miner, steel-worker, cotton-weaver, docker, navvy or whatnot who was "ideologically" sound,'²⁰⁹ along with Orwell's subsequent argument that 'It is quite likely...fish and chips, art-silk stockings, tinned salmon, cut-price chocolate, the movies, the radio, strong tea, and the football pools have between them averted revolution,'²¹⁰ Collins can perhaps be seen to echo the point made by John Kirk regarding the likely concern, existing amongst some on the left, behind (pessimistic) work depicting the supposed retreat of the working classes from 'community' – this being that class may no longer matter in the political sense.

Norman Dennis, Fernando Henriques and Clifford Slaughter might be seen to have in some ways echoed the concerns of Orwell outlined above in their 1950s *Coal is our Life* study of 'Ashton', within which they depict a 'frivolous'

²⁰⁶ Michael Collins, *The Likes of us: A Biography of the White Working Class* (London: Granta, 2004), p. 146.

²⁰⁷ Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, pp. 171-178.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 316.

²⁰⁹ In Collins, *The Likes of us*, p. 114.

²¹⁰ In Collins, *The Likes of us*, p. 126.

approach to recreation within the mining community of Featherstone. Clarifying that the term 'frivolous' is used 'as a contrast to those forms of recreation which pursue a definite aim such as intellectual improvement by means of study in adult classes or discussion groups, or spiritual improvement through membership of a church,' the authors suggest that the 'frivolous' approach to leisure in 'Ashton' is due to the 'danger of being killed at work,' the 'insecurity of income based upon the miner's greater liability to injury,' and 'the fact that in the past the miner has lacked security of employment.'²¹¹ Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter suggest that, in the Working Men's Clubs, 'In conversations about work and football general considerations or abstractions scarcely ever appear.' They note, 'There is a scarcity of conversation on the level of general principles.'²¹² Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter conclude, 'The clubs are vigorous centres of 'social intercourse', but are 'hardly active' in 'mental and moral improvement.'²¹³ The authors do note, however, that, 'At most of the clubs...there is a 'Best Room' in which the conversation ranges much more widely, and where those who "like to talk and debate", as one of them put it, can do so.' Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter state, 'The Urban District councillors are almost all 'Best Room' men,' and, 'The union leaders (branch committee members) use the 'Best Room'.'²¹⁴

Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter go on to suggest that those involved in the local Labour Party in 'Ashton' might be viewed as having 'a serious concern with the miners' predicament, and a determination to seek out its causes and its cure.' However, Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter comment that, whilst 'nearly all Ashton miners are members of the local Labour Party' through their trade union affiliation, 'only between fifteen and twenty take an active part.'²¹⁵ Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter, whilst noting that 'Ashton' has 'one of the largest women's sections in Yorkshire,' with nearly 100 members, with fortnightly meetings attended by between twenty and forty members, claim that

²¹¹ Norman Dennis, Fernando Henriques and Clifford Slaughter, *Coal is our Life* (London: Tavistock, 1969. First published 1956), p. 130.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 145.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

'the interest and activities of the women in the Labour Party in Ashton are 'social' rather than political in character.' They also suggest, 'This predominance of social rather than political interest in the Party is however not restricted to women members,' noting that 'while there were only 26 members at the annual general meeting of the local Labour Party in 1954, there were 153 at the annual dinner.'²¹⁶ Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter suggest that the 'facilities for adult education' in 'Ashton' are 'little used,' and whilst noting the heavy usage of the library, they add that 'only one quarter of the library books issued were non-fiction,' concluding, 'in general it can be said that Ashton's reading serves the same purpose as its cinema going...to convey the reader into a world quite different from his own or her own, and remote, therefore, from his or her problems.'²¹⁷ Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter also suggest that 'callin' (which the authors define as 'gossip') is 'the main leisure activity for women in Ashton.'²¹⁸

Dennis Warwick and Gary Littlejohn, who conducted further research in Featherstone decades after *Coal is our Life* was published, pose that Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter's study suggests that, 'Despite the struggle of the labour movement...the people of Ashton lived relatively bleak and insecure lives, which were made easier only by seeking frivolous pleasure.'²¹⁹ Warwick and Littlejohn, in considering what they saw to be the 'underlying motive' behind the *Coal is our Life* study, based upon 'the symbolic importance of the miners in the labour movement,'²²⁰ argue that, 'In adopting a Marxian framework of analysis the authors were examining the potential for the awakening of an emancipatory interest among what they took as proletarian workers.' Warwick and Littlejohn add, 'They were posing questions about the conditions for and limitations on the emergence of a revolutionary consciousness.'²²¹

²¹⁶ Dennis et al, *Coal is our Life*, p. 166.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

²¹⁹ Dennis Warwick and Gary Littlejohn, *Coal, capital and culture: a sociological analysis of mining communities in West Yorkshire* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 27.

²²⁰ Jonathan Winterton in Warwick and Littlejohn, *Coal, capital and culture*, p. 203.

²²¹ Warwick and Littlejohn, *Coal, capital and culture*, p. 27.

Warwick and Littlejohn go on to report upon the opinions of some of the local people they spoke with in 'Ashton' in relation to *Coal is our Life*. Their field notes record that one local trade unionist and Labour Councillor, 'thought it bad, because it gave a thoroughly distorted picture of the town,' in which, 'some aspects of life were over-emphasised, even caricatured, some hardly alluded to or even ignored completely.' The field notes record the same local Labour Councillor's view that the researchers, 'had come with firmly fixed stereotypes in their heads,' and, 'looked only for evidence which would support these,' as well as his view that the researchers had betrayed the trust placed in them as. 'the place was represented as a cultural desert,' with very little attention paid in the book 'to the role of the churches and chapels in the community or to cultural activities, especially music and musical shows.' Warwick and Littlejohn's field notes record that this local Labour Councillor, 'thought that the researchers had made little attempt to understand local life and local people.'²²² Here, Warwick and Littlejohn demonstrate the significance of perspective in the consideration of the cultural ecologies of particular places. Warwick and Littlejohn also illustrate the different representations that can be constructed in relation to the cultural ecology of a particular place from differing perspectives, driven by differing concerns.

The importance of giving voice to people within local communities, in their own words, and of including diverse perspectives within debates over culture, is emphasised by the comments, highlighted above, of the Labour Councillor in Featherstone. By including research participants' articulated experiences and perspectives, in their own words, this thesis aims to deepen understanding of cultural participation and value within coalfield communities, starting from the testimonies of people within those communities, rather than starting from a particular theory. Through including different perspectives, in interviewees' own words, the thesis demonstrates the value of including different perspectives in enriching understandings of culture.

²²² Warwick and Littlejohn, *Coal, capital and culture*, pp. 32-33.

'Retrospective Construction'?²²³

In contrast to those scholars who have expressed concern at a perceived erosion of working class culture and community, Joanna Bourke has questioned whether such a thing as 'working class community' has ever existed. Noting the proliferation of definitions in relation to the term 'community', Bourke states, 'generally, it is said to include elements of identification with a particular neighbourhood or street, a sense of shared perspectives, and reciprocal dependency.'²²⁴ Certainly Robert Colls, in his essay, 'When we lived in communities: working-class culture and its critics', recalling the 'community put together by where people lived' of his childhood in South Shields, recognised this spatial aspect to community.²²⁵ Richard Hoggart, in the 1950s, wrote of a sense of community arising 'chiefly from a knowledge, born of living close together, that one is inescapably part of a group.'²²⁶ Bourke suggests that use of the term 'working class community' is characterised by backward-looking romanticism, 'fostered in working-class autobiographies and oral histories, where social relations are often recalled through a golden haze,' and forward-looking socialism, in which socialist writers 'found solace in the 'traditional helpfulness' and 'splendid comradeship' of the poor.' Bourke discusses 'the way workers used the term 'community' as a weapon against the power of other classes' with 'community', conducive to class consciousness, representing 'resistance to capitalism.' Bourke notes, 'The 'community' was the neighbourhood which was, in turn, the class,' emphasising, 'Localities consisting predominantly of manual workers seem well placed to develop a consciousness of themselves as a 'community.'²²⁷ Bourke argues, 'The 'working class community' as it survived in the writings and in the political discourse of working-class commentators was a retrospective construction,' whilst contending, 'Faced with interlocking and sometimes

²²³ Joanna Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain 1890-1960* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p 169.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

²²⁵ Robert Colls, 'When we Lived in Communities: Working Class Culture and its Critics' in *Cities of ideas: civil society and urban governance in Britain, 1800-2000: essays in honour of David Reeder*, ed. by Robert Colls and Richard Rodger (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 285.

²²⁶ Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, p. 82.

²²⁷ Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain*, pp. 137-138.

discordant networks, individuals chose to give their allegiances to neighbours, kin, friends, and acquaintances on a more *ad hoc* basis.’²²⁸

Bourke’s terming of ‘working class community’ as ‘a retrospective construction’ is perhaps being addressed by Robert Colls when he asks, in relation to his memories of an afternoon in South Shields in 1965 in which he experienced a ‘flash of realization’ that what he saw outside his window was a ‘community,’ ‘Do I know what I actually saw? Can I know what I actually felt? Do I begin to feel like this because of how others have written about working class communities, or because of regret at what was to happen later to my own? Above all, *is it true?* Certainly.’ Colls recalls, ‘More, I saw that that community was, or had, or lived, or somehow encompassed, a culture.’²²⁹ Whilst recognising that in concentrating on ‘individual choices and personal strategies’ Bourke had explored the ‘complex and diverse’ lives of those living in working class communities and had ‘got to places many historians never reached,’ Colls concludes, in relation to Bourke’s understanding of the working class neighbourhood as ‘a *contracting society*,’ that, ‘It is hard to believe that in Bourke’s working class London, or in her industrial cities, relationships were so *ad hoc*, or so fleeting, or so anonymous, that they were unable to produce cultures common enough ‘as to constitute a shared identity.’”²³⁰

Colls qualifies that the ‘community’ that he saw outside his bedroom window in 1965 was not ‘all cosy and decent’ or ‘traditional and homogenous.’²³¹ Moreover, whilst Colls notes the impact of de-industrialisation, and all that has gone with it, upon the community of his childhood, illustrating, ‘These days, when I go back to Eglesfield Road where I was first shown community, there are no old folk on the front steps; there are no kids on the back field...no gangs of men striding home for twelve o’ clock dinner; no lines of washing; no knots of women holding the street as if they owned it’ and concluding, ‘The world Hoggart described not so very long ago is a way of life as dead as that of the

²²⁸ Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain*, p 169.

²²⁹ Colls, ‘When we Lived in Communities’, p. 285.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

North American Plains Indian or the Mississippi sharecropper,' interestingly he also queries 'whatever aspects of this old civilization continue to exist in other places.' Colls thus complicates the notion of the 'traditional and homogenous' working class 'community,' whilst also introducing questions in relation to the continued reworking of identities and practices.²³²

Responding to arguments suggesting that local identity and 'working class community' has been obliterated through the 'Northern employment catastrophe' of the 1980s, which played out 'against the background of a massive withdrawal of the institutions of the local and national state from earlier patterns of social provision and welfare,'²³³ Ian Taylor, Karen Evans and Penny Fraser, in *A Tale of Two Cities: Global Change, Local Feeling and Everyday Life in the North of England* argue that whilst the advance of 'mass media' and global economic competition has undermined the processes through which a strong and immediate sense of local identification is adopted by individuals, 'it would be a very sweeping generalisation that denied the continuing desire for such a local identity.'²³⁴ Taylor, Evans and Fraser detect 'the inescapable presence' of what Raymond Williams once identified as a 'residual culture' constructed over the last two hundred years of industrial production. The authors note, 'This residual culture remains a rich store of essentially local myths and folk wisdoms through which the local identities of citizens continue to be affirmed.'²³⁵ Taylor, Evans and Fraser emphasise, 'We found evidence in our enquiries of routine patterns of use of the city that drew heavily on the 'traditional', familiar cultural practices and rhythms of the mass manufacturing period.'²³⁶ Indeed, Taylor, Evans and Fraser, highlighting the suggestion that a significant proportion of the local population of South Yorkshire may actually have responded to the deepening crisis of its local economy simply by 'staying put,' question whether such a local identification may be a kind of sustaining alternative to the benefits of employment in a global free market economy.'²³⁷

²³² Colls, 'When we Lived in Communities', pp. 306-307.

²³³ Taylor *et al*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, p. 17.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

In response to criticisms of any 'backward-looking romanticism,' Taylor, Evans and Fraser emphasise that whilst 'The talk engaged in by the elderly about their cities has a very specific 'backward-looking' quality: it highlights, and usually celebrates, some notion of 'the past' (which may or may not be 'accurate' in some factual sense),' this functions 'as a way of speaking about current change and also about the general idea of progress.' Taylor, Evans and Fraser note that indeed one of the most powerful refrains running through their discussions with older people in Sheffield and Manchester 'was a kind of 'class and regional nostalgia' for the lost world of mass manufacturing and its associated set of social institutions and political and civic assumptions.' They highlight, 'Most particularly lamented was the sense of community that was universally asserted to have been characteristic of that particular historical experience.'²³⁸ Taylor, Evans and Fraser note, 'There were few enthusiastic declarations of preference for the competitive, individualistic life of the 'free market' in the 1990s.'²³⁹

However, the authors do comment that some participants celebrated 'the environmental improvements in the old industrial city,' which they note 'are an important corrective to any temptation to speak of the reminiscences of the elderly in our two cities in terms only of loss and regret.'²⁴⁰ Importantly, Taylor, Evans and Fraser emphasise that, 'The fears and anxieties which are expressed by the elderly can be understood as a kind of reflexive social commentary as to the unintended consequences of social change – in the case of this generation of elderly Northerners, the crisis of the local industrial economies.' They add, 'It is also to be understood, however, as a form of 'knowing' social commentary, in which the elderly are offering their wisdom – in metaphorical and heavily nuanced ways which, in other cultures, would be closely heard and apprehended – about 'the way things are nowadays.'²⁴¹ Taylor, Evans and Fraser detect, amongst older people in Sheffield and Manchester, an 'overwhelming sentiment' of 'sadness and even bitterness' at

²³⁸ Taylor *et al*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, pp. 243-247.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 248.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

the condition of these cities and, especially, of their people, and specifically 'at the fact that the promises of the earlier post-war period (an inchoate but firmly felt idea of 'progress and improvement' focusing on an enhancement of job opportunities, specifically, and also 'a better life' in terms of civic and public provision in areas like housing and education) appeared to have been dashed.'

Taylor, Evans and Fraser note, 'There was a particular bitterness that the opportunities confronting the next generation of 'our people', so far from being an improvement on the experience of earlier generations, would be more restricted and difficult.' The authors suggest, 'It was in this sense...that the attitudes of some of our elderly Northerners to the beggars and other young people on the streets involved some sense of solidarity or pity as well as discomfort or fear.' Taylor, Evans and Fraser go on to observe, 'There was a sense that the advent of individualistic consumption, and the loss of a sense of shared community on the streets, was a kind of devaluation of their own lives – not the legacy they would have wanted for 'their' cities.'

Thus, Taylor, Evans and Fraser conclude, 'So, we are suggesting, there was a particular kind of troubled nostalgia in operation here: not just passively for the orderly industrial community and its sustaining social relations...in preference to the Darwinian competition of 'the market', but also for an earlier moment in the lives lived by these elderly Northerners within such familiar industrial communities when it was legitimate, and certainly very common, for locals to expect some 'betterment' in the lives of local people as a whole; meaning here not just the buildings and the urban spaces but, indeed, the 'quality' of their working lives and life's other possibilities as well.'²⁴²

Vik Loveday, in discussing memory and nostalgia, recalls Walter Benjamin's observation in *Theses on the philosophy of history* that, 'To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was.' It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger.' Loveday notes Paolo Jedlowski's description of collective memory as, 'a set of social

²⁴² Taylor *et al*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, pp. 260-261.

representations concerning the past which each group produces, institutionalizes, guards and transmits through the interaction of its members,²⁴³ and argues that nostalgia has the capacity to perform a critical function in the present, highlighting, 'The devaluation or loss of coherent working-class identities precipitates a turn to the past,' whereby, 'looking backwards in this context provides a positive resource with which to defend against devaluation, while articulating loss.' Loveday highlights Alastair Bonnett's assertion that 'Attachments to the past and feelings of loss,' have the potential to be used as 'potent resources for resistance and critique.' In response to questions regarding whether a 'cohesive working-class consciousness ever really existed,' Loveday asserts, 'Cohesive working-class consciousness can arguably be seen as a 'collective wish image'; its objective existence might be disputed, yet the 'myth' of coherence is crucially excavated in the present as an identificatory resource.' Loveday notes that the 'particular kind of attachment to the past' which she presents through her research suggests that 'nostalgia should be understood as a kind of critical tool, mobilized in the construction of class-based identities to refute devaluation. In this sense, nostalgia exemplifies a retroactive attachment to the past in its hopes for a better future.'²⁴⁴

John Kirk similarly highlighted how, 'During a period of acute socio-economic restructuring, it is hardly surprising to encounter narratives of loss.' Kirk noted, 'What may be being lamented here is not the fact of change per se, but evidence that such change – in the hands of others, and beyond the control of those most affected by it – produces instead alienation from the very processes themselves and thus nostalgia here stands as critique.'²⁴⁵ The testimonies of interviewees in Barnsley, whilst undoubtedly containing vivid descriptions, past and present, of their experiences of 'community' in the town, certainly suggest an active and critical approach to understanding and interpreting the past, set within the context of interviewees' aspirations for the future.

²⁴³ Vik Loveday, "Flat-capping it': Memory, nostalgia and value in retroactive male working class identification', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 17, no. 6, (2014), 721–735, (p. 725).

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 721–735.

²⁴⁵ Kirk, *Class, Culture and Social Change*, p 137.

Place, Aspiration and 'Community'

When asked 'What does it mean to be working class?' former Labour MP and cabinet minister, James Purnell, suggested that 'a sense of history and a sense of place' count. Purnell, in relation to his then constituency, Stalybridge and Hyde, noted, 'people think of themselves as working class because of the community where they grew up, and things they do together and all the shared understandings which came from being in a particular place.'²⁴⁶ Simon Charlesworth notes the 'complex mixture of architecturally given space; of inherited historical sense; of social practices; of behaviour and institutions; of the space that particular persons live through,' forming 'cultural-historical contexts,' the sense of which 'is carried by the communal practices of one's immediate group and its relation to national political and economic structures.' Charlesworth thus argues, 'Through life in a place we become imbued with a sense of the world.'²⁴⁷

Owen Jones has noted, however, that under the New Labour government of 1997-2010, a government report published in December 2008 'highlighted the alleged 'under-ambition' of working class people living in the old industrial heartlands.'²⁴⁸ The Department for Local Government and Department for Children, Schools and Families document, 'Aspiration and attainment amongst young people in deprived communities,' notes that 'Attitudes, values, aspirations and sense of self-efficacy - our cultural capital - are developed by our interaction with the immediate environment around us (our parents, peers and role models, neighbours, schooling and workplace) and the wider society-wide influences acting upon us (such as the economy, technology, media and development of new ideas and innovations).' Here, the Department for Local Government and Department for Children, Schools and Families recognise the significance of 'place' in shaping individuals within society. The report emphasises that, 'Cultural capital has an important influence on the actions and

²⁴⁶ Owen Jones, *Chavs: the demonization of the working class* (London: Verso, 2012), p. 142.

²⁴⁷ Charlesworth, *A Phenomenology of Working Class Experience*, p. 16.

²⁴⁸ Jones, *Chavs*, p. 91.

behaviours we choose,’ before going on to note that, ‘These actions and behaviours, in turn, influence outcomes.’ The report suggests that, ‘A behaviour change approach may be effective in shifting the aspirations and broader attitudes that can prevent young people from fulfilling their potential.’²⁴⁹ The report asserts that, ‘Close knit local social networks, low population mobility and a history of economic decline appear to characterise neighbourhoods where young people are less likely to develop high educational aspirations,’²⁵⁰ and goes on to state that, ‘The lowest educational aspirations are found in ex-industrial communities, often in the north of England.’²⁵¹

The ‘Aspiration and attainment in deprived communities’ project was described by the Cabinet Office as a joint project between the Social Exclusion Task Force, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) exploring, ‘the potential to raise the attainment of young people in deprived communities, by raising aspirations and changing attitudes within these communities.’ The report included amongst its key findings the observation that, ‘in some very deprived communities – often ethnically diverse, mobile, urban neighbourhoods – young people tend to have high aspirations for the future. In other areas – often traditional working class communities in ex-industrial areas – low aspirations may be preventing young people from achieving their potential.’ Here, the DCSF and the DCLG conflate ‘traditional working class communities in ex-industrial areas’ with ‘low aspirations.’ The report also noted that, ‘certain community characteristics are associated with low aspirations,’ such as ‘insular social networks,’ and ‘low population mobility.’ The report goes on to say ‘These may be close knit, strong and cohesive communities. However, people may lack more diverse connections with people and places outside their immediate neighbourhood.’ The report notes that, ‘Parents are the most

²⁴⁹ Department for Local Government and Department for Children, Schools and Families, *Aspiration and attainment amongst young people in deprived communities* (2008), p. 13.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²⁵¹ DLG and DCSF, *Aspiration and attainment amongst young people in deprived communities*, p. 16.

important influence on children. But young people and their parents are also influenced by the people and places where they live.’²⁵²

The Inspiring Communities programme, sponsored by the Department for Communities and Local Government, was thus launched, ‘to raise the expectations and aspirations of young people.’ The overall objective of the programme was, ‘to improve the educational attainment of young people within 15 deprived neighbourhoods.’ Research undertaken as part of the programme suggested that a real challenge for the Inspiring Communities projects was, ‘not only to find a way of helping young people to overcome the barriers to achievement, but also to help them break out of negative comfort zones which have become normalised in their minds, and in the minds of other key influencers in their lives.’ The programme was intended, ‘specifically for neighbourhoods where low aspirations and narrow horizons would typically obstruct children and young people from realising their full potential.’ The *Inspiring Communities Customer Insight Research Report*, published in June 2011, suggested in relation to some of the areas featuring within the programme that, ‘Family was important for young people, who often described their parents as their role models; however, often parents were not equipped to offer a roadmap or precedent for their children.’²⁵³

Fifty years earlier, in *Coal is our Life*, Norman Dennis, Fernando Henriques and Clifford Slaughter posed the question, ‘Why do mining families stay in mining villages?’ Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter suggested that the ‘settled population of Ashton miners and their families’ had ‘social roots of a very strong character in the community into which they have been born.’²⁵⁴ Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter suggested that the men and women of mining families were, ‘for the most part living within easy reach of kinsfolk.’ They noted, ‘Among the older established families the visiting of relatives is a well-developed institution. At weekends, visits will be exchanged and many wives

²⁵² http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20081229135344/http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/socialexclusion_task_force/short_studies/aspirations.aspx, 16.12.08, accessed 10.2.15.

²⁵³ Department for Communities and Local Government, *Inspiring Communities Customer Insight Research Report*, June 2011.

²⁵⁴ Dennis *et al*, *Coal is our Life*, pp. 174-175.

see one or another of their kinsfolk every day.’ Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter pointed to the prevalence of families which extended, ‘much farther than the biological unit of parents and children,’ and noted, ‘the extreme of cohesion of an extended family in Ashton.’

In relation to family life in Featherstone, Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter suggested, ‘A woman fulfils herself in keeping her home clean and tidy; her family healthy and well fed.’ In relation to the wives and mothers in the mining families studied, the authors reported, almost questioningly, ‘Many of them say that they find satisfaction in the care of their children.’ In relation to, ‘the long-established method of bringing up children,’ which they perceived during their ‘community study’ in Featherstone, the *Coal is our Life* authors lamented, ‘the absence of any educational facilities for women which would enable them to do a good job in this sphere.’²⁵⁵ Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter noted, ‘One soon observes that in Ashton only the exceptional parents can really give any of their time to talking and playing with their children, seriously teaching them new things, introducing them to new worlds.’²⁵⁶ Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter suggested that the love of mothers in Featherstone for their children, ‘does not manifest itself in a serious and detailed consideration of the development and problems of each child and in a plan of action to bring up the child.’ They noted, ‘The simple fact is that mothers...are not educated in the necessary knowledge for this task.’²⁵⁷

Nevertheless, Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter observe that, ‘Men normally remain attached strongly to their mothers all their lives, visiting them regularly and helping them when they can,’ stating, ‘We can discern the social factors at the root of the attachment to the mother,’ emphasising, ‘It is she who has the responsibility of every day and every week caring for the children, ministering to their desires. It is she to whom they turn when they are hurt or upset; she is the one who provides comfort in all situations when the child is ill at ease. She is the provider of all things, and this is true for a long, long time after weaning. In

²⁵⁵ Dennis *et al*, *Coal is our Life*, p. 202-206.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 236-237.

fact until the children are working, she can only do well her job of 'looking after' them by self-abnegation and sacrifice of her time and effort.'²⁵⁸

Perhaps the 'Aspiration and attainment amongst young people in deprived communities' project and the Inspiring Communities programme, in suggesting that 'Certain community characteristics,' such as 'insular social networks' and 'low population mobility', are associated with low aspirations, whilst striving for a 'behaviour change approach' exploring the potential 'to raise the attainment of young people in deprived communities, by raising aspirations and changing attitudes within these communities,' could be seen to provide an example of the 'education' which Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter lamented the lack of fifty years earlier?

The generalised nature of some of the assertions made by Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter in their study of Featherstone is worthy of note. In the 1950s Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter concluded that the family, in Featherstone, was 'a conservative force, a force for inertia in the culture of this community,'²⁵⁹ with such a point perhaps confirming the accuracy of the claim made by Warwick and Littlejohn that the 'underlying motive' of the *Coal is our Life* study revolved around 'posing questions about the conditions for and limitations on the emergence of a revolutionary consciousness.'²⁶⁰ Such a perspective might be seen as having influenced the *Coal is our Life* study, and its assertions and conclusions. On the other hand, Raymond Williams pointed towards the significance of a very different perspective in the making of assertions and the drawing of conclusions with regard to family matters when he chided, 'For years, with their own children away at school, they [the Establishment] have lectured working-class mothers on the virtues of family life.'²⁶¹

²⁵⁸ One wonders whether Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter might point to such 'self-abnegation' in relation to their statement 'One notes in Ashton, as in other mining areas, the rapid decline in physical beauty among young married women.' Here, Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter's propensity towards generalisation, which here extends to young married women not only across Featherstone but also across other mining areas, reaches new heights! *Coal is our Life*, pp. 207-208.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 239

²⁶⁰ Warwick and Littlejohn, *Coal, capital and culture*, p. 27.

²⁶¹ Raymond Williams, 'Culture is Ordinary' (1958).

Some of the statements and terminologies being utilised within the framework of the government programmes examined above, despite dating from fifty years after Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter's study, might also be seen to be generalised in nature in a number of ways. It is important to note that such statements and programmes, in seeking to change attitudes and behaviour, might be seen to have been developed within the context of value systems which appear to operate in contrast to the value systems underlying, or driving, some of the behaviours which are being problematised within communities through such statements and programmes. It is, of course, essential to consider who is undertaking the consideration and assessment of the 'certain community characteristics' perceived within the communities under study, within what value systems, and within what web of assumptions, norms and standards.

As Lisa Mckenzie notes, 'Within the politics of social justice there needs to be an urgent address of how working-class neighbourhoods and communities are viewed.' Mckenzie highlights, 'they should be represented in a more positive way and less as merely a utilitarian concern and/or a drain on society,'²⁶² concluding, 'While there is recognition that poor neighbourhoods and their residents have social, political and cultural needs that are often not being met, at the same time, there are local practices and processes that are working.'²⁶³ Mckenzie adds, 'When welfare policy sets out to name and change those it sees as failures, it has an impact on how the wider population sees those people, and also how those people see themselves.'²⁶⁴

Stephanie Lawler, analysing a discussion of Roy Williams' play *Vultures*, which centres on a dispute between Sean Bishop, a white working-class man from the north east, and Yvette Mullins, a successful black author, who had, in their youth, been close, but whose 'paths had diverged because Yvette 'got out', and Sean did not,' highlights an illuminating exchange between Katrina Porteous

²⁶² Lisa Mckenzie, *Getting By: Estates, class and culture in austerity Britain* (Policy Press, 2015), Kindle Edition, 9%.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 11%.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 92%.

and Frank Cottrell Boyce in relation to the theme of 'getting out.' In it, Porteous queries, 'But why should one have to leave in order to have a better life?' Cottrell Boyce responds, 'I come across a lot of children in schools that I go to, who don't want to go, who've got no aspiration to get on the train, because they've got no aspiration of any kind whatsoever.' Lawler emphasises how, 'Instead of replying to Porteous' question (why should people have to leave?), Cottrell Boyce highlights a 'lack of aspiration' which means, he believes, that people don't want to leave (implying that they should).' Lawler suggests that Cottrell Boyce's comment in relation to the theme of 'getting out' is perhaps illustrative of a particular contemporary representation of working class communities as having 'No aspiration,' with such communities characterised as ones which 'stay fixed, away from the global flows that characterize progress.' Lawler argues that, through such a representation, 'Class inequality can be turned into individual lack of aspiration,' noting Beverley Skeggs' assertion that 'spatial fixity has come to signify a lack of class value through unmodernity.'²⁶⁵ Annick Prieur, who has noted how a 'so-called cosmopolitan attitude' has become important as a 'marker of distinction' has highlighted how 'the preference for the local or the international follows cultural capital and connects to more fundamental divisions.' Prieur points to Craig Calhoun's argument that 'cosmopolitan discourse too easily encourages the equation of the global with the modern and the national or local with the backwardly traditional.'²⁶⁶

Robert Colls points to how, 'In a post-industrial, post-colonial, post-masculine, post-Christian world of fluid identities, ethnic diversities and global markets, the position of white working class men who stayed attached to one place and a certain way of doing things (their own) looked distinctly uncomfortable.'²⁶⁷ John Kirk noted how identity politics, in emphasising contingency, fluidity and difference, led to a 'de-recognising (or eliding)' of 'differences of class,' with 'community' becoming 'an eternally suspended thing,' viewed as dangerously

²⁶⁵ Stephanie Lawler, 'Heroic workers and angry young men: Nostalgic stories of class in England', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol.17, no. 6, (2014), pp.701-720.

²⁶⁶ Annick Prieur, 'Contemporary Cultural Capital: Two New Tendencies', Conference Paper, Emerging Cultural Capital and New Forms of Distinction: The Launch Workshop of the Stratification and Culture Research Network, 12 September 2013, London School of Economics.

²⁶⁷ Colls, 'When we lived in communities', p. 306.

‘unitary’ or ‘homogenous.’²⁶⁸ Kirk noted how in the postmodern era, ‘the whole issue of class gradually becomes, in the words of one commentator, the ‘forgotten identity of identity politics.’²⁶⁹ Kirk noted Beverley Skeggs’ point that, ‘in arguments around cultural identity – and despite the general stress on relativism – not all cultures are regarded as equal. Indeed some cultures just can’t cut it, are in key ways fundamentally regressive, and these cultures come increasingly to be coded as those aligned to the working class.’²⁷⁰ Skeggs has emphasised how, ‘This identification of a pathological cultural hindrance to modernity is the means by which structural problems are transformed into an individualized form of cultural inadequacy, in which a position of self is offered to the working-class; but this is not the optimizing self or the subject of value...but rather a self who is immobile, useless and redundant, who cannot, because of their location in pathological culture, make anything of themselves. This self becomes not just an individual’s problem, but a threat to all respectability, a danger to others and a burden on the nation.’²⁷¹

Half a century earlier, Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter perceived, in Featherstone, ‘a culture firmly embedded in social relations built up over nearly a century around the local colliery and within a period of history which has had direct and unmistakable impact on the miners of Great Britain.’ They concluded that ‘Family life as lived in Ashton is only the product of this culture; its members are only the participants in that social structure.’²⁷² In Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter’s ‘community study’ of the coalmining area of Featherstone, the social structure figured as the framework upon which the family life and culture which the authors described was built. As Warwick and Littlejohn put it, ‘the social and economic conditions of Ashton disadvantaged the adults and children. Their culture, their lives and their community were closely bound by a very inequitable and conflict-ridden economic system, over which they had little control.’²⁷³

²⁶⁸ Kirk, *Class, Culture and Social Change*, pp. 67-68.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

²⁷¹ Beverley Skeggs, *Class, Self, Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 80.

²⁷² Dennis *et al*, *Coal is our Life*, pp. 244-245.

²⁷³ Warwick and Littlejohn, *Coal, capital and culture*, pp. 26-27.

However, within the contemporary period, Skeggs argues, 'structural problems are transformed into an individualized form of cultural inadequacy' with class 'ignored by those with the privilege to ignore it.'²⁷⁴ Building upon Skeggs' argument, John Kirk suggested that identity politics debates rejecting class and class analysis as belonging 'to an essentialist mode of thinking inadequate for new times,' which he saw as located in the intellectual elite, 'remain grounded materially in class interests.' Kirk expanded, 'Such theories are articulated and disseminated by a professional, well-educated middle class – mostly intellectuals and academics, across both gender and ethnicity – in whose interests they are developed. They are 'middle class movements,' thus disinclined to contest the class-divided nature of a late capitalist society in which they are handsomely rewarded.'²⁷⁵

Kirk notes Skeggs' point that it is often those in 'the white working class' who have 'been used as symbols of a generalised "backward-ness," a constitutive limit, necessary to figure the middle classes as positioned at the "vanguard of the modern" and in a moral category referring to liberal, cosmopolitan, work and consumption-based lifestyles and values.'²⁷⁶ Kirk suggested that, through such a process, 'the privileged lose any moral obligation or sense of responsibility towards the poor and deprived.' Andrew Sayer notes, 'Working class pride has declined along with the mass collective worker, labourist institutions and the industrial base that supported it, while individualisation has grown.' He adds, 'This has been coupled with the rise of the meritocracy, which passes off class differences as differences in merit arising from a fair process of individual competition.'²⁷⁷ Sayer concludes, 'The evasion of class and the illusion of meritocracy encourage moralising policies...which effectively pathologise individuals by holding them responsible for class disadvantages.'²⁷⁸ This point is of paramount importance within this study, which asks whether the characterisations constructed in relation to the cultural ecologies of particular

²⁷⁴ In Sayer, *The Moral Significance of Class*, p. 15.

²⁷⁵ Kirk, *Class, Culture and Social Change*, p. 97.

²⁷⁶ In Kirk, *Class, Culture and Social Change*, p. 98.

²⁷⁷ Sayer, *The Moral Significance of Class*, p. 181.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

places might be implicated in the reproduction of social and economic inequalities, both in relation to distinct geographical places and their communities.

Once again it is of paramount importance to question *who* is undertaking the consideration and assessment of the 'certain community characteristics' under examination, within what value systems, and within what web of assumptions, norms and standards? Again, the significance of perspective in the consideration of any cultural ecology is highlighted.

Labour MP John Cruddas emphasises, in relation to 'the discourse around aspiration,' that, in his view, there has been 'a very restricted notion of what it is.' Cruddas suggests that the term has come to be associated with the aspiration 'to own more material things' whereas he suggests that aspiration might be linked to other aims for a more 'fraternal' or 'neighbourly' society.²⁷⁹ As Andrew Sayer has pointed out, 'studies of happiness in relation to wealth show that, above a basic level, increases in wealth make little difference to happiness. Friendships, recognition, love and satisfying work are more important. The pursuit of wealth as a source of happiness is illusory.'²⁸⁰

Dennis Warwick and Gary Littlejohn in their study, *Coal, Capital and Culture* discuss the notion of 'Community as a Social Ideal.' They note that one of the most widely used slogans of the 1984/5 Miners' Strike was 'Close a Pit: Close a Community,' arguing, 'This slogan was clearly intended to appeal to those who saw 'community' as an ideal.' Warwick and Littlejohn assert, 'The strikers and their supporters aimed to force their opponents, the Coal Board, the government and others, to accept that closing pits was not just an economic or political decision, but one which hit at the moral roots of human society.'²⁸¹ In aiming to define 'community', Warwick and Littlejohn state, 'Community for us is the probability of the settlement of a number of persons within a locality leading to the formation of local social networks. These will be linkages between

²⁷⁹ Jones, *Chavs*, p. 89.

²⁸⁰ Sayer, *The Moral Significance of Class*, p. 228.

²⁸¹ Warwick and Littlejohn, *Coal, capital and culture*, pp. 1-2.

people, either as individuals or households, on grounds of common working conditions, kinship, neighbourliness (propinquity) and friendship. Further, individuals, households and social networks may through a lengthy period of interaction develop common traditions, common sentiments and values,' which may become 'a basis for solidary action.' Warwick and Littlejohn highlight the importance of 'the explicit sharing of knowledge, skills and values' within a 'community,' stating, 'There is a strong probability that such a collection of local skills, communication networks, social values, and shared prestige and status rankings becomes a kind of cultural capital, which will be distributed perhaps unevenly through a locality. Joint possession of this capital provides a basis for local status differences, and local cultural capital becomes a means of maintaining the distinctiveness of one locality from another.' They note that 'history and biography have combined to create a consciousness of skills, knowledge and sensibilities, which may amount to what we can call a local cultural capital, with means of reproducing that by key individuals and groups.'²⁸² The authors also suggest that their research demonstrates that there is much support 'for criticisms of the belief that, with the advance of modernity, traditional social networks would disappear.'²⁸³

In 2006 John Prescott's Office of the Deputy Prime Minister produced a number of research studies linked to the *State of the English Cities* report. In *State Of the English Cities: A comparison of public attitudes in urban and non-urban areas across different regions* it was suggested that those populations living in the north and west were more likely than those elsewhere to have lived in an area for a long time. The study suggested that 57% of respondents living in the north and west of the country had lived in their neighbourhood for over 15 years, compared to 44% of respondents living in the south and east. The report also suggested that those populations living in the north and west were found to be more likely to have close friends or family living nearby than are those in the south and east, asserting 'This provides a good illustration of the likely differences between these two areas in terms of the prior geographical mobility

²⁸² Warwick and Littlejohn, *Coal, capital and culture*, p. 165.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

of their residents'. The study goes on to say, 'Given these differences, it is not surprising to find that people in the north/west are the most likely to see their relatives and family at least once a week'. The report goes on to note, 'Nearly seven in ten in north/west urban areas do this, compared with six in ten in urban areas in the south/east (and just over five in ten in London)'. The *State of the English Cities* report suggests that 'Overall, urban areas in the north and west of England emerge as more 'cohesive' than those elsewhere'.²⁸⁴ Here, the 'cohesive' nature of urban areas in the north is emphasised.

Royce Turner in his *Coal was our Life* study, undertaken in Featherstone half a century after Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter's study in the town, found that 'Despite the demise in mining, Featherstone's population suffered only minor decline.' Turner suggests 'This is possibly, in part at least, because of people's strong attachment to the town,' and notes, 'Almost everyone I spoke to in Featherstone laughed in dismissal when I asked if they would ever choose to live anywhere other than Featherstone.' Turner emphasises, 'For the majority, it was an idea not even worth consideration,' highlighting the comments of interviewees such as, 'I've grown up here. You know everybody,' 'I love it,' and 'I've found that people who've moved away...they always come back...they still come back to their roots.'²⁸⁵ Turner asserts, 'there was a comfort and security in the pit village, where you knew everybody.' He points out, 'You can see it as negative, because it's parochial and inward looking, or you can see it as a sanctuary: you know everybody and everybody knows you.' Turner states 'Parochialism was limiting, but parochialism also meant strength.'²⁸⁶ Arguing that, 'miners didn't like to leave their home town,' Turner suggests, 'That reluctance has been inherited by their sons and daughters. The overwhelming majority of the kids, asked if they would be prepared to leave Featherstone, said they would rather stay.' Turner recounts, 'The ties felt were ties to family and friends.'²⁸⁷ He comments, 'The known world is a comfortable world, but it can be a limiting world. You might aspire to great things, but not achieve them

²⁸⁴ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, *State Of the English Cities: A comparison of public attitudes in urban and non-urban areas across different regions*, p. 200.

²⁸⁵ Turner, *Coal was our Life*, pp. 51-57.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 171-172.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

if you are in the wrong place.’ Turner concludes, ‘The truth is, as with most mining and ex-mining towns, only a very few will, in the end, leave and substantially diminish their links. There is a certain magnetism that holds people to places like this, and forces them back after escape attempts have been made. You have to be truly determined to really get away.’²⁸⁸

Here, Royce Turner highlights some of the complexities at play in relation to geographical mobility and immobility, complexities which different departments of the New Labour government of 1997-2010 similarly considered, highlighting the importance of perspective in the consideration of such phenomena. Lisa Mckenzie argues, ‘Being part of a community, the sense of belonging and the strong sense of who you are, is often lost in contemporary Britain.’ She notes, ‘this can still be found...among the people who need and recognise community as important to their well-being.’ Mckenzie notes how those individuals who do ‘need and recognise community as important’ tell ‘their own narratives of local identity and community, pride, and the importance of belonging,’²⁸⁹ highlighting, again, the significance of perspective, and therefore, the importance of democracy, in the consideration of culture and community.

Conclusions

Stephanie Lawler has highlighted the inadequacy of representations constructed of the white working-class and discusses the contrast made between ‘then’ and ‘now,’ in which the working class of the ‘now’ exists as a negative image of the ‘then.’ Lawler notes that this pairing situates the contemporary white working class within the nostalgic narrative of decline, an occurrence which Lawler notes has a ‘long history.’ She goes on to say, ‘I want to suggest that such narratives have little to do with working-class people themselves, but betray hopes, fantasies and anxieties on the part of middle-class observers, especially those on the political Left – who have, as Valerie Walkerdine notes, rarely found ‘The ‘Working Class’ they are looking for.’ Lawler suggests that, from the standpoint of left politics, working class people

²⁸⁸ Turner, *Coal was our Life*, pp. 260-261.

²⁸⁹ Mckenzie, *Getting By*, 90%.

have been positioned as particularly disappointing, 'cultural dupes who want the trappings of capitalism at the expense of the real class struggle.'²⁹⁰ Lawler notes, 'The 'Working Class' have long existed as the crystallization of sets of fantasies. For commentators on the political Right, they represent disorder and threat, and, as Valerie Walkerdine (1997) has pointed out, these fantasies, for commentators on the political Left, have been about a historic mission to bring about social change, and in this they have become cast as a disappointment.' Beverley Skeggs has noted how the working classes have 'always been the site for the projected longings of the rebellious middle classes who put their investment in change in others rather than themselves.'²⁹¹ Warwick and Littlejohn, in their discussion of Dennis et al's *Coal is our Life*, pose that the book seems 'to indicate a failure in the local culture.' Warwick and Littlejohn state, 'It was not the cutting edge into the deprivations and inequalities of a class divided society. The serious institutions, like the Labour Party, Adult Education and the churches, were judged either to be largely ineffective in promoting serious causes, or to have declined in membership and lost the impact they might have had in the past.'²⁹² John Kirk has detected a 'denial of working class agency' and 'an anguished resignation at the perceived apathy of the people,' as well as 'a philanthropic desire to bring relief,' amongst some of the writings on working class culture and community by those on the left.²⁹³ In contrast, Kirk notes the 'resolute, if qualified, optimism' of Raymond Williams,²⁹⁴ noting Williams' insistence on working class agency undermining any dominative modes.²⁹⁵

Those involved in the interviews undertaken through this study had a clear sense of what they had valued over their lifetimes, in Andrew Sayer's terms, with regard to 'ways of life, practices, objects, behaviours and types of character.' Family featured strongly in the oral history interviews undertaken

²⁹⁰ Steph Lawler, 'Escape and Escapism', in *Cultural Studies and the Working Class*, ed. by Sally R. Munt (London and New York: Cassell, 2000), p. 123.

²⁹¹ In Lawler, 'Escape and Escapism', p. 126.

²⁹² Warwick and Littlejohn, *Coal, capital and culture*, p. 24.

²⁹³ Kirk, *Class, Culture and Social Change*, pp. 31-37.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 44.

within former coalmining communities in and around Barnsley. Interviewees spoke of the significance of the idea of working together, with concepts such as 'community', equality and fairness emerging as of significance within the interviews undertaken in Barnsley. Interviewees described the importance they place upon passing on, from one generation to the next, ideas, knowledge and a sense of history, whilst emphasising their hopes for a better future for the generations to come. Whilst concerns were expressed at the impact of the changes that had taken place over the course of their lifetimes, interviewees spoke of the sense that they had of their own children and grandchildren carrying forward many of the values and aspirations which they hold dear into the future.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

John Kirk has argued that ‘representations situate cultures and identities within the public imagination, even if there remains more to such formations and traditions than their representation alone.’²⁹⁶ This thesis set out to question representations constructed in relation to the cultural ecologies of particular geographical places, in this case with regard to the South Yorkshire town of Barnsley.

The thesis started from some of the representations constructed, through official statistics and in media representations, of Barnsley’s cultural ecology. The thesis then sought to understand, through an examination of narratives of participation generated through oral history interviews undertaken within the town, whether there might remain more to Barnsley culturally than such representations suggest. Certainly the vivid descriptions which emerged of involvements in a whole range of practices, and which I have worked hard to present through the voices of the interviewees, suggested, unsurprisingly, that this is indeed the case. The thesis has noted how, when describing participation across a range of activities, interviewees have often referenced key themes, such as family and community ties, collectivism, voluntary effort and the sharing of skills and knowledge in relation to diverse participation practices.

The characterisations of Barnsley’s cultural ecology constructed through the official statistics and media representations studied appear to have been based upon an understanding of ‘culture’ as shorthand for ‘art and intellectual work.’²⁹⁷ Whilst it is important to note that a variety of aspects of ‘art and intellectual work’ found no shortage of appreciation and value amongst those interviewed in Barnsley for this study, many here understood ‘culture’ to encompass much more than simply this. Alternative conceptions of ‘culture’ were articulated by a number of individuals interviewed in Barnsley, with ‘culture’ seen to encompass,

²⁹⁶ Kirk, ‘Representing Identity and Work in Transition’, p. 204.

²⁹⁷ Williams, *The Long Revolution*, pp. 58-62.

in addition to 'art and intellectual work,' voluntary effort, caring for and helping others, bringing people together, fostering a sense of community, the sharing of skills, knowledge and experience, activism and 'being constructive' too.

The persistence of an understanding of 'culture' as particular varieties of 'art and intellectual work' and the subsequent skewed representations of the cultural ecologies of particular geographical places, based upon subjective and limited notions of what culture might be all about, is perhaps inevitable unless diverse perspectives are included at all levels in the debates and decision making processes relating to cultural policy.

However, Bourdieu conceived of culture as a stake in power struggles between different sections of society with the space for these struggles no neutral space but rather a space of reproduced inequality, in which those in possession of particular forms of 'cultural capital' are able to draw upon and deploy this to gain distinction and advantage within an unequal society. Perhaps, therefore, a narrow understanding of the term 'culture' as particular selected forms of 'art and intellectual work' which enables 'cultural capital' to be deployed for competitive advantage is simply more profitable (for some) than a wider understanding of the term 'culture,' which might better enable the creativity of the many to be harnessed for communal advantage.

Final Thoughts

This thesis has sought to inform cultural policy debate through deepening understanding of, and gaining recognition for, particular aspects of cultural participation and articulations of cultural value existing within the town of Barnsley. Moreover, the thesis has argued for the inclusion of diverse perspectives within cultural policy debates and decision making processes at all levels in order that our collective understanding of what culture might entail is enriched and our cultural policymaking is democratised, limiting opportunity for a narrowly defined 'culture' to be utilised as a tool in the reproduction of social and economic inequalities within society.

The thesis has considered that cultural practices might be seen to be influenced by a crucial moral dimension, with 'culture' part of choices made 'about how to live.'²⁹⁸ Sayer makes a crucial point in arguing that 'the pleasures and sources of fulfilment in working class culture' can be acknowledged 'without lapsing into a complacent excusal of inequality or a patronising idealisation of working class culture.' Sayer suggests that, through such an acknowledgement, a deeper understanding may be gained in relation to 'one of the reasons why resistance to inequality is not greater.'²⁹⁹ For if cultural practices might be understood to be influenced by a crucial moral dimension, and if, for some, 'culture' might, rather than being about the pursuit of 'power and status,' instead be about 'how to live,' then it might be expected that individuals may, through their commitments, pursue a range of fulfilments, with some aspiring to a society or 'community' which prioritises considerations other than the pursuit of power, status or wealth.

As Raymond Williams highlighted, 'A good community, a living culture, will...not only make room for but actively encourage all and any who can contribute to the advance in consciousness which is the common need.' He added, 'Wherever we have started from, we need to listen to others who started from a different position. We need to consider every attachment, every value, with our whole attention; for we do not know the future, we can never be certain of what may enrich it'.³⁰⁰ However, in a Britain described by Alan Milburn as 'deeply elitist' due to a 'dramatic over-representation of those educated at independent schools' across Britain's leading institutions, including in the fields of politics and the media, 'locking out a diversity of talents and experiences' and making these institutions 'less informed, less representative and, ultimately, less credible than they should be,' the active encouragement of diverse perspectives in relation to policy questions across the spectrum, including in the cultural sphere, may well be essential in counteracting limited and limiting 'group think'

²⁹⁸ Sayer, *The Moral Significance of Class*, pp. 2-3.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

³⁰⁰ Williams, *Culture and Society*, p. 320.

and harnessing the ‘diversity of talents and experiences’ to be found across the whole of society, for the benefit of all.³⁰¹

In its exploration of cultural participation and value in Barnsley, this thesis has, through its consideration of aspiration and community, and its discussion of dearly held values concerning equality, fairness and respect, established the significance of perspective in the consideration of ‘culture’, and thus the importance of democracy in relation to cultural, as other, questions. As such, perhaps a democratic cultural policy might seek to ‘widen access’ to institutions upholding and extending values such as equality, fairness and respect above all else? CISWO and the Miners’ Welfare Institutes, guided by principles such as parity of representation, the democratic election of committee members, the delegation of power, as well as funding, and the encouragement of voluntary effort, certainly appeared to offer an opportunity for the creative potential of the many to be harnessed for the wider benefit of the community, and yet these institutions, and many others, rarely feature in some of the (rather circular) debates considering cultural policy. Perhaps they should.

³⁰¹ Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, *Elitist Britain?* (2014).

Appendix 1 – Oral History Interview Participants, Information Sheet for Participants, Research Consent Form and Topic Guide

The following people were interviewed as part of the research project of which this thesis forms a part:

Steve Wyatt

Mel Dyke

Mick Birkinshaw

Dorothy Hyman

Maxwell Senior

Chris Skidmore

Paul Darlow

Eric Longford Jessop

Neil Hardman

Peter Clarney

Neil Spencer

J.H. (Inky) Thomson

Kenneth Orrell Sanderson

Julie Medlam

Barry Moore

Peter Steadman

Ian Paisley

Barrie Almond

Worsbrough Industrial and Social History Group member

The following information sheet for participants was utilised as part of the research project of which this thesis forms a part:

**How has Barnsley's Cultural Ecology been shaped?
Information Sheet for Participants**

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the 'How has Barnsley's Cultural Ecology been shaped? A History of the Present' research study. The research, which is being undertaken by myself, Sarah Hughes, a PhD Researcher with the University of Leicester's School of Museum Studies, is being funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council as part of the Understanding Everyday Participation project. Further information about the Understanding Everyday Participation project can be found on the project website at: www.everydayparticipation.org.

The study will aim to investigate the cultural activities that people in Barnsley have participated in, and have felt to have been of importance to them, both in the past and in the present. The research will focus in particular upon former coalmining communities. The study will aim to investigate key moments in the historical development of cultural institutions and programmes in Barnsley. In doing this, the research will aim to inform cultural policy debates in the present through deepening understanding of, and gaining recognition for, the cultural activities that people in this former coalmining area have participated in and have felt to have mattered to them and their lives.

As the research project aims to explore the cultural activities that people in former coalmining communities in Barnsley have participated in, and have felt to have been of importance to them, research participants for this study have been recruited through organisations linked with the former coalmining industry. I am interested in interviewing, or facilitating group discussions amongst, people who have lived in Barnsley since birth and who have a personal or family connection to Barnsley's former coalmining industry. I would like to talk to you about the activities you have participated in over the course of your life and hear about how these have been influenced by your life history. I would also like to talk to you about your perceptions of Barnsley's cultural makeup. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions that I will ask you, and if you do not want to answer some of the questions that will be fine. Interviews and group discussions should take no more than 2 hours of your time.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the project at any point whilst the research project is taking place. If you are uncertain or uncomfortable about any aspect of your participation please contact me (my details are listed at the bottom of this information sheet) to discuss your concerns or to request clarification on any aspect of the study.

I would like to have your permission to be able to record the interview/group discussion. It is possible that your words may be used in the PhD thesis to be produced as part of this research project and in other publications produced as part of the Understanding Everyday Participation project, but only with your permission. There are a number of options for you to choose from with regard to the confidentiality of the information you provide to me through participating in the research project. Please complete the attached consent form to indicate your preferences in relation to this. I would ask you to be aware, however, of the possibility of your identity being recognisable from the information that you give even if you request in the attached consent form that your words be anonymised.

If you have any questions about the ethical conduct of the research please contact the School Research Ethics Officer, Dr Giasemi Vavoula, by telephone on 0116 252 3963 or via email at gv18@le.ac.uk.

Thank you very much for participating.

With best wishes,

Sarah Hughes

Sarah Hughes
PhD Researcher
School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, Museum Studies Building, 19 University Road, Leicester LE1 7RF

The following research consent form was utilised as part of the research project of which this thesis forms a part:



Research Consent form

I agree to take part in the 'How has Barnsley's Cultural Ecology been shaped? A History of the Present' project which is research towards a PhD at the University of Leicester.

I have had the 'How has Barnsley's Cultural Ecology been shaped? A History of the Present' project explained to me and I have read the Information Sheet for Participants about the 'How has Barnsley's Cultural Ecology been shaped? A History of the Present' project, which I may keep for my records.

I understand that the 'How has Barnsley's Cultural Ecology been shaped? A History of the Present' project will be carried out in accordance with the University of Leicester's Code of Research Ethics which can be viewed at <http://www2.le.ac.uk/institution/committees/research-ethics/code-of-practice>

I understand that there are a number of options for me to choose from with regard to the confidentiality of the information I provide through participating in the research project and I indicate my preferences in relation to this below.

I have read and I understand the information sheet	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and they were answered to my satisfaction	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time whilst the research project is taking place	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to the interview/group discussion being recorded and my words being used in a PhD thesis and other publications produced as part of the Understanding Everyday Participation project (including those to be made publicly available and available via the world wide web)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
I give permission for my real name and institutional affiliation to be used in connection with any words I have said or information I have passed on	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
I request that my real name be used in connection with any information I have provided or comments I have made	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
I request that my comments are presented anonymously but give permission to connect my institutional affiliation with my comments (but not the title of my position)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
I request that my comments are presented anonymously with no mention of my institutional affiliation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Name [PRINT]

Signature Date

The following semi-structured interview topic guide was utilised as part of the research project of which this thesis forms a part:

Childhood

Could you begin by telling me when and where you were born?

Early Family and Home Life

Where did you live as a child? Do you know the reasons why your parents/carers came to live there? Were you far from your parents'/carers' work?

Could you tell me about your family background? Who lived in the family home?

Could you tell me about other family members that featured in your early life? What jobs did your parents/carers do? What jobs did your grandparents do (if known)?

Could you tell me about your childhood home? What is your earliest memory of home? What family routines were there? Were there any particularly prized/valued possessions in the home? If so, what were these, and why do you think these items were particularly valued?

Could you tell me about the activities your parents took part in during their spare time? What activities did they participate in outside the home? (How often did they go out? What did they do? Where did they go? How long did they spend? Who did they participate with?) What activities did they participate in inside the home? (What did they do when they stayed in? How long did they spend doing this? Where did they do this? Who, if anyone, did they do this with?) How did spare time activities fit around work patterns, for example on weekdays/weekends? Did these activities change over time during your childhood? Did your parents ever give any reasons as to why they participated in these activities? Which of the interests and activities your parents took part in were most important to them and why did you think this might be?

Could you tell me about the activities your grandparents took part in during their spare time? What activities did they participate in outside the home? (How often did they go out? What did they do? Where did they go? How long did they spend? Who did they participate with?) What activities did they participate in inside the home? (What did they do when they stayed in? How long did they spend doing this? Where did they do this? Who, if anyone, did they do this with?) How did spare time activities fit around work patterns, for example on weekdays/weekends? Did these activities change over the time you knew them? Did your grandparents ever give any reasons as to why they participated in these activities? Which of the interests and activities your grandparents took part in were most important to them and why did you think this might be? Did your grandparents have any particularly prized/valued possessions? If so, what were these, and why do you think they particularly valued these items?

Could you tell me about your leisure time activities when you were growing up? What activities did you participate in outside the home? (How often did you go out? What did you do? Where did you go? How long did you spend? Who did you participate in this activity with? Were you allowed out on your own?) What activities did you participate in inside the home? (What did you do when you stayed in? How long did you spend doing this? Where did you do this? Who, if anyone, did you do this with?) Did your spare time activities change over time as you were growing up? Were you encouraged to follow any particular activities as a child? Why did you participate in these activities? What motivated you? What prompted you to get involved? Which of your interests and activities were most important to you and why?

Which festivals, bank holidays or other special times did your family celebrate? How were these celebrated?

Where did you and your family go for days out?

Could you tell me about whether politics played any role in your life as you were growing up?

Could you tell me about whether religion played any role in your life as you were growing up?

Childhood Neighbourhood

What was your local area like when you lived there as a child? What did you like about the area? What did you dislike? What kinds of people lived in the area? Did you feel a sense of belonging? Was there a sense of community? Did the area change during your time living there? What games did you play in the streets? Were there local shops, cinemas or other facilities/amenities that you used close by? Were you close to the countryside? Did you spend time in the countryside and if so what did you do there?

Schooldays

How far away from home was your school? How did you get there? What was your favourite subject at school? Did you continue in this interest at home? Were your childhood friends mainly friends from school or from home? What kinds of things did you and your friends like to do in school playtimes? What kinds of things did you and your friends like to do after school and at weekends?

Adulthood

Starting Work

What was your first job? What local industries were there to provide work when you left school? Did anyone in your family/group of friends leave the local area for work? Did you have the chance to stay on at school to take qualifications?

Did you get involved in any professional organisations or trade unions through work?

What sorts of things did you spend your wages on when you had just started working? What would you do in your leisure time after work/at weekends? Did you socialise with people you worked with? Was your social life connected to work in any ways?

Setting up home

Could you tell me about moving out of the family home to set up home? Where did you live? What were your reasons for choosing to live there? Were you far from work? Who lived there? What jobs did you do? What household routines were there?

Could you tell me about the activities you, and other members of your household, took part in during your spare time? (How often did you, and other householders, go out? What did you do? Where did you go? How long did you spend? Who did you participate in activities with?) What activities did you, and other householders, participate in inside the home? (What did you, and other householders, do when you stayed in? How long did you spend doing this? Where did you do this? Who, if anyone, did you do this with?) Did your spare time activities change over time?

Which festivals, bank holidays or other special times did you celebrate? How were these celebrated?

Where did you and your household go for days out?

Working Life

Returning to your working life, did you stay in the same job for a long time or did you change jobs frequently? Can you tell me about how the kind of work available in the area changed over the course of your working life and your feelings about this? Did you return to study at any point in your life (either through work or separately)? Did you get involved in any professional organisations or trade unions through work? Did you socialise with people you worked with? Was your social life connected to work in any ways?

Home Life and Recent Participation

Where do you live now? How long have you lived here? What were your reasons for coming to live here?

Who lives with you? What jobs do/did they do?

Could you tell me about the activities you, and other members of your household, take part in during your spare time? (How often do you, and other householders, go out? What do you do? Where do you go? How long do you spend? Who do you participate in activities with?) What activities do you, and

other householders, participate in inside the home? (What do you, and other householders, do when you stay in? How long do you spend doing this? Where do you do this? Who, if anyone, do you do this with?) Have your spare time activities changed over time?

Which of your interests and activities are most important to you and why?

Are there any activities that you deliberately avoid and, if so, why?

Which festivals, bank holidays or other special times do your household celebrate? How are these celebrated?

Where do you and your household go for days out?

What are your most prized possessions and why?

What or who would you say have been the major influences on the development of your tastes, interests and activities?

Has politics played any role in your life?

Has religion played any role in your life?

Identity

Generally speaking, could you tell me how you define yourself?

Do you think of yourself as belonging to a social class?

How much do you think your occupation or working life has shaped your sense of who you are?

Neighbourhood

What is your local area like? What do you like about the area? What do you dislike? What kinds of people live in the area? Do you feel a sense of belonging? Is there a sense of community? Has the area changed during your time living there? Are there local shops, cinemas or other facilities/amenities that you use close by? Are you close to the countryside? Do you spend time in the countryside and if so what do you do there?

Barnsley and Culture

How would you describe Barnsley as a place? What are the most important stories to tell about Barnsley? What does Barnsley mean to you? How would you describe Barnsley's heritage?

How would you describe culture?

What do you think of when you think of Barnsley and Culture?

What do you think people from elsewhere think of in relation to Barnsley and Culture?

Do you feel that Barnsley has improved culturally over the course of your life?

Are there any organisations or institutions that have contributed to your cultural participation in Barnsley?

Are there any organisations or institutions that are important to you?

Are there any organisations or institutions that no longer exist that you feel should still be in existence?

Can you recall the closure of any cultural institutions in Barnsley that you had strong feelings about (either disappointment/anger or relief/pleasure)?

Can you recall the opening of any cultural institutions in Barnsley that you had strong feelings about (either disbelief/anger or pleasure)?

Can you name any local buildings, places or landmarks that are particularly important to you?

Do you feel that funding for cultural programmes is distributed fairly across the UK?

Do you feel that funding for cultural programmes is distributed to the right cultural institutions and programmes?

Do you feel that government funded cultural institutions and programmes are relevant to ordinary people?

Do you feel that public money should be spent on museums, the arts and similar cultural programmes? Why/why not?

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