# Cogs, community and car boot sales:
*Understanding motivation in policy networks*

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**DECLARATION:**

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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**Abstract**

This study was undertaken in order to gain an understanding of what motivates people to participate in policy networks that is broader than the assumption that actors are motivated by the rational attainment of policy goals implicit in policy network analysis. A review of the literature on policy network analysis, policy network management, inter-organizational relationships and work motivation theories underlines the need for concepts and theories that explain motivation in policy networks in the widest political, social and economic context. A subsequent review of the literature on the policy process, on social networks and on inter-firm networks identifies 14 micro theories of motivation all with the potential to be applied to policy networks. Field research into the motivations of actors in South East Wales advice networks using a metaphor based questionnaire further reveals a rich variety of motivations and, taken together with the conclusions of the literature review, suggests that motivation in policy networks is both complex and diverse and will need to be better understood by those seeking to understand and to manage policy networks.

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*"Every father's daughter,*
*and every mother's son,*
*knows the only thing the same,*
*is that it aint for anyone'*

**Guy Clark, 'Hank Williams said it best'.**

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# 1. Introduction

## Significance of the Study

This study, in seeking to identify what motivates people to participate in policy networks, is dealing with a key aspect of the policy process because policy networks are an increasingly significant aspect of the way in which the policy process is understood and influenced. Policy networks have been increasingly portrayed as an important natural feature of the policy process over the last three decades (Rhodes, 1992; Marsh, 1998; Thatcher, 1998) and, whilst their significance has become increasingly recognised, so to has the prospect of forming and steering policy networks to address particular policy tasks to the extent that: "Governments can choose between governing structures. To markets and hierarchies we can now add networks." (Rhodes, 1997: xii) Policy networks have consequently been put to work in the service of government in order to solve a whole range of policy development and implementation problems. They can be found, for example, co-ordinating health services (Ferlie and Pettigrew, 1996; Shortel et al, 2000), involving communities in urban regeneration (Skeltcher et al, 1996) and delivering organic agriculture (Greer, 2002). Policy network management clearly offers genuine possibilities of co-ordination, innovation and implementation for some of today's most difficult policy challenges. Kickert et al go further and argue that because public policy 'of any significance' is made and implemented in networks of interdependent actors, then public management should be seen as synonymous with network management (Kickert et al, 1997: 2).

## Purpose of the Study

This study builds on the assumption that an explanation of motivation in policy networks is essential for both the understanding and management of policy networks as it helps to put the 'people back' into a field dominated by structural approaches (Rhodes, 2002). Its purpose is to contribute to the field by conducting original research on an issue that has been generally neglected

by theorists and practitioners alike because of a one dimensional approach that assumes that actors in policy networks are rational and simply in pursuit of policy goals. In addition the study aims to provide material that will be of practical use to those undertaking the activity of policy network management.

Specifically the study aims to answer the following research question:

**What motivates people to participate in policy networks?**

In addressing this question the following sub questions will also be considered:

- Are actors in policy networks motivated by more than the rational attainment of policy goals?

- Are actors in policy networks motivated by the desire to co-operate with other actors on shared issues of concern?

- Is there a link between the organizational roles of network actors and their motivation to participate in policy networks?

## Research Strategy

The study will be conducted in five stages:

- Firstly a critical review of the literature on policy network analysis, policy network management, inter-organizational relationships and work motivation will be conducted in order to gather and assess concepts and theories relevant to understanding motivation in policy networks.

- Secondly a review of the literature on the policy process, social networks and inter-firm networks will be conducted to identify micro theories that explain motivation within policy networks.

- Thirdly the methodology for the field research will be examined including a discussion of the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches and an explanation of the selection and design of the research method; the development and use of a metaphor based questionnaire. Ethical issues will also be considered.

- Fourthly the findings of the field research, conducted through advice providers' networks in South Wales, will be described including the outcomes from a network managers' workshop, the data gathered from a questionnaire and the results of a network managers' feedback session.

- Finally the implications of the research findings in respect of the research question and the sub questions will be discussed and implications for theory and practice, as well as ideas for further research, will be presented.

**Operational Definitions**

***Policy network motivation*** is defined here as the application of the concept of work motivation to policy networks.

***Work motivation*** can be described as "…forces within an individual that account for the level, direction, and persistence of effort expended at work" (Schermerhorn, et al, 2000)

A ***policy network*** can be defined as '…a (more or less) stable pattern of social relationships between interdependent actors, which take shape around policy problems and /or policy programmes' (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000).

***Policy network management*** is defined as "… an example of governance and public management in situations of interdependencies. It is aimed at *coordinating strategies of actors with different goals and preferences with regard to a certain problem or policy measure within an existing network of interorganizational relations." (Kickert et al, 1997: 10)*

# 2 Literature Review Part 1

The question of what motivates people in policy networks has been largely neglected within the literature on policy network analysis and policy network management. This neglect follows from an implicit assumption by most in the field that individuals within networks are rational actors in pursuit of policy goals so that, whilst the rational actor is a key element of policy network analysis owing to its theoretical roots in policy science (Klijn, 1997), network management '…is aimed at creating conditions where goal-oriented processes can take place' (de Bruijn and ten Heuvelhof, 1997: 120). This view has, however, been challenged by some and Rhodes (2002), in particular, has argued for approaches that 'put the people back in'. Nevertheless, the absence of a coherent body of work on motivation in policy networks means that concepts and theories will need to be borrowed from overlapping fields namely inter-organizational theory and work motivation theory. Therefore, in the first part of this literature review, relevant concepts and theories will be gathered from these two fields and conclusions drawn. Firstly, however, the literature on policy network analysis and policy network management will be assessed.

**Policy Network Analysis and Policy Network Management**

Whilst policy network analysis, which emerged in the mid 1970's and has its roots in a combination of policy science, organizational science and political science (Klijn, 1997: 29) and has expanded rapidly in recent years (Thatcher 1998; Borzel, 1998; for an overview), there are no books, articles or papers dedicated explicitly to exploring the question of motivation and neither can any discussions be found within any of the general texts on policy networks. This neglect of motivation as a question within policy network analysis can be traced back, in part, to the positivistic emphasis of theorists so that, as Rhodes argues, the positivist epistemology adopted by social scientists

studying policy networks leads them to treat them as social structures with an existence independent of network actors and so: 'The networks to which individuals belong allegedly establish the content of their beliefs and interests' (Rhodes, 2002: 400). This failure to put 'the people in' to networks can also be regarded as a reason why policy network analysis has failed to move beyond descriptions of policy networks and to provide explanations for their formation and operation so that 'there seems to be general agreement in the literature that the strength of the concept lies in its descriptive value and that there are serious shortcomings when it comes to explaining policy outcomes' (Blom-Hansen, 1997: 673). Whilst 'defining policy networks seems to be a never ending story' (Blom–Hansen, 1997: 672); others have questioned whether the policy network concept is, or ever can be, anything more than a descriptive metaphor (Dowding, 1995).

Whilst policy network analysts have not felt compelled to pay serious attention to the question of what motivates actors in policy networks it has, however, been an issue that has begun to infringe upon the literature on policy network management even if this is a field that has itself attracted very little attention. As Rhodes observes, there is no 'bestseller with snappy aphorisms and vivid stories' for governance and network management as there are in abundance for traditional management approaches (Rhodes, 1997: xv) and it is also telling that policy network theory, despite its substance, has so far had little impact on those people who actually find themselves in the position of network manager (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000). An exception to this trend is the volume on Managing Complex Networks edited by Kickert et al (1997) that provides the first real attempt to systematically address the issue of policy network management and to move beyond the previously descriptive focus of analysts and to provide 'tools' rather than 'insights' (Rhodes, 1997: xiii). Within this volume, however, the references to motivation are implicit rather than explicit so that, for example; '…the perspectives and preferences of actors linked in networked patterns of interdependence are not constants, but variables' (O'Toole et al, 1997: 147) and, '…the actors that need to be mobilized into networks for policy implementation are likely to have complex

sets of overall preferences and agendas for action' (O'Toole et al, 1997: 146) so that; a policy network can be characterised as a 'classic mixed motive game' (O'Toole et al, 1997: 147). Usefully, however, 'Managing Complex Networks' does provide an important context for understanding policy network motivation by describing how networks are shaped by the perceptions of individual actors. What happens in policy networks is that actors themselves shape the network through their interactions based upon their own perceptions of what the policy network is or should be (Termeer & Koppenjan, 1997). These interactions generate shared patterns of activity and behaviour, determined by the particular circumstances of each policy network, which have been labelled as *rules*. So, for example: 'Rules are social constructions of actors in a network, and they differ from network to network' (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000 p145). If we are serious about understanding policy networks then: 'Particular attention should be focused on the process of reformulation and reinterpretation of rules as a consequence of circumstances external to the network and the strategic choices of actors' (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000, p145). This means that, as there is no single structure of authority, network mangers have to '…handle complex interaction settings and work out strategies to deal with the different perceptions, preferences and strategies of the different actors involved' (Kickert et al 1997, p11). Van Raak and Paulus provide an excellent illustration of why policy network managers need a good understanding of what actors want from their networks:

> "In the Netherlands, facilitators have often tried to implement rules that they considered the best solution to a problem situation, without even considering the meaning of the rules and the situation for the participants. Unless the facilitators were lucky (the participants by chance also considered the situation a problem and they accidentally agreed with the rules), their initiatives failed and scarce resources like money and manpower were wasted."
>
> (Van Raak and Paulus, 2001: 222)

The literature on policy network analysis and policy network management fails to provide a systematic analysis of what motivates people to participate in policy networks. However, both Rhodes' critique of the policy network

analysis literature and the concerns of some within the policy network management field outlined above, suggest that such a systematic analysis is needed and that it should include an understanding of motivation from an individual, as well as from an organizational, perspective. For this reason the literature on both inter-organisational relationships and work motivation will be reviewed to see what concepts and theories can be applied to the question of what motivates people to participate in policy networks.

**Inter-organizational Relationship Theory**

Policy networks are a form of inter-organizational relationship and so the literature on inter-organisational relationships provides an important context for understanding what motivates participation and, whilst there is 'no consolidated body of inter-organisational theory' (Williams, 2002), there is nevertheless a rich variety of literature and research on inter-organisational forms of working including collaboration, co-operation, co-ordination, partnerships, alliance and joint working. Oliver (1990), for example, provides a framework that has proved popular and influential to describe the six 'critical contingencies' of relationship formation. The six contingencies are; *necessity*, which means that relationships are formed as a consequence of legal or regulatory requirements or as a result of mandates from higher authorities; *asymmetry,* where an organisation is prompted to exercise power, influence or control over another organization or its resources in order to further its own aims; *reciprocity*, where organizations develop co-operation, collaboration and co-ordination in order to pursue common or mutually beneficial goals or interests; *efficiency*, meaning that organizations attempt to maximise the ratio of there inputs and outputs based on transaction cost economisation; *stability*, which can be understood as an adaptive response to environmental uncertainty; and *legitimacy*, whereby organizations form relationships in order to demonstrate increased reputation, image, prestige or congruence with prevailing norms.

Whilst this model is useful in developing the notion that participation in policy networks is a product of the rational pursuit of organizationally set policy goals, it is also has it's limitations; primarily it's neglect of the role of the individual actor. As Oliver (1990) points out, the framework assumes that organizations decide to form inter-organizational relationships on the basis of consciously formulated rational reasons and that decisions are made from a 'top management' perspective and not at a 'sub unit' or individual level (242-3). This can be seen as an example of the 'fixation with the organizational and inter-organizational domain levels' that 'understates and neglects the pivotal contribution of individual actors within the collaborative process' (Williams, 2002) and provides a set of concepts that only tell part of the story not least because 'you cannot read off beliefs and preferences from institutional position' (Rhodes, 2002: 399). If this inter-organizational perspective is going to be of value in explaining what motivates people to participate in policy networks then it needs to be combined with a understanding of motivation from an individual perspective.

**Work Motivation Theories**

The literature on work motivation provides a great deal of value in terms of understanding what motivates people to participate in policy networks although concepts and theories cannot be taken from an organizational context and placed uncritically within a policy network context as the environments are fundamentally different. In reviewing the theoretical landscape of work motivation, it is important to recognise that there is unlikely to be one single theory that can explain all aspects of motivation and '…the search for a generalised theory of motivation at work appears to be in vain' (Mullins, 2001: 424). However, a useful organizing principle is the distinction made between needs theories, which explain motivation in terms of how the work environment might meet the perceived needs of the individual, and process theories, which focus on the cognitive processes internal to the individual which determine motivation. A broad summary of these theories is provided by Mullins (2001). In terms of needs theories, Mullins highlights three principle contributions, that he refers to as content theories; Maslow's

'hierarchies of needs' model, Alderfer's modified need hierarchy model and Herzberger's two-factor theory which all, in broad terms, suggest that the satisfaction of needs is the primary work motive for people within an organizational hierarchy. Maslow's hierarchy starts with physiological needs, moves through needs associated with safety, love and esteem and ends with self-actualisation. Whilst there are exceptions to this order, the general point is that once one set of needs have been satisfied, these needs are no longer a motivator and motivation is then influenced by the next level. Alderfer developed Maslow's theory in two main ways: Firstly he refined Maslow's five levels down to three focusing on existence needs, associated with sustaining human existence and survival, relatedness needs, associated with social and interpersonal relationships and growth needs, associated with the development of potential linked to self esteem and self-actualisation. The second development from Maslow was to propose a less hierarchical conception of the way in which different needs are related thus giving managers the freedom to explore meeting other areas of need where some other area is blocked whether or not they are in order. Herzberg's two factor theory proposes only two sets of factors which influence motivation these are hygiene factors, which are broadly similar to Maslow's lower level needs, and motivators or growth factors which are closer to Maslow's higher level needs. The key thing about the hygiene factors is that the achievement of them does not provide satisfaction for workers but simply prevents dissatisfaction occurring. If managers really want to motivate then they must look to the motivators. The theories of Maslow, Alderfer and Herzberg are summarised in table 1.

A further development of needs theories is provided by McClelland whose achievement has identified four primary motivations; the achievement motive, the power motive, the affiliate motive and the avoidance motive. The first three of these correspond broadly to Maslow's self-actualisation, esteem and love needs. One of the most important aspects of McClelland's work is his emphasis on the differences between individuals, in particular in terms of the achievement motivation. Hence identifying high achievers becomes an important part of the management task. These needs theories of motivation

are valuable for understanding motivation in policy networks because they focus on what the organization or the policy network can offer to the individual in order to encourage participation. In particular these theories map out a complex interplay of different needs and aspirations whether professional, intellectual, social, emotional and economic, or otherwise, which need to be understood if motivation is to be understood.

***Table 1: Linking Maslow's, Alderfer's and Herzberg's theories of motivation (Mullins, 2001)***

| **Maslow's hierarchy of needs** | **Alderfer's ERG theory** | **Herzberg's two-factor theory** |
|---|---|---|
| Physiological | Existence | Hygiene Factors |
| Safety | | |
| Love | Relatedness | |
| Esteem | | Motivators |
| Self-Actualisation | Growth | |

Equally valuable are work motivation theories that concern themselves with a cognitive perspective, and with modelling the individual decision-making processes that lie behind different behaviours. These theories include the expectancy-based models, equity theory, goal theory and attribution theory. Expectancy based models suggest that '…motivation is a function of the relationship between: (1) effort expended and perceived level of performance; and (2) the expectation that rewards (desired outcomes) will be related to performance. There must also be (3) the expectation that rewards (desired outcomes) are available' (Mullins, 2001: 436). Motivation is therefore linked to a conscious decision about which behaviour will lead to the most favourable consequences. The first and perhaps most significant example of this theory is Vroom's expectancy theory. This model is based on three key variables which are valence, which is how attractive an outcome appears to an individual, instrumentality, which is the recognition that achieving particular outcomes will lead to further and potentially higher benefits and expectancy which is the perceived relationship between the possible behaviour and the likely hood of achieving the desired outcome. The combination of these

factors will determine the 'motivational force' for an individual to undertake any given form of behaviour. Whilst this has been expressed as a mathematical equation perhaps the key thing to note is that if any of these three factors have a low score then the motivational force will be low. Equity theory provides another dimension to the process approach by examining people's feeling about how they have been treated in comparison with how they feel others have been treated. Based in exchange theory this approach argues that people evaluate the balance of their perceived inputs that they make to the organization compared with various possible outcomes (e.g. promotion) and then they compare this with others. Perceived unfairness can lead to feelings of inequity which may then result in behaviours that are dysfunctional in terms of the organization. Goal theory suggests that people strive to achieve goals in order to satisfy their emotions and desires. These goals guide people's responses and motivations. Crucial factors for motivation are the absence of goals and the degree of difficulty or challenge that these goals entail. Goals may be set internally or externally or negotiated between the two. What is useful about these theories is that they ask us to form a model of the individual in terms of motivational processes and these models should apply equally well to work motivation and policy network motivation.

Whilst theories of work motivation add a great deal to our understanding of policy network motivation, they cannot be applied directly because the in-work environment and the policy network environment are so different. Primarily this is because work motivation is a concept rooted firmly in organizational behaviour that deals '…only with events and phenomena related to people in a work context' (Ambrose and Kulik, 1997: 231) and it is invariably applied in a setting that is assumed to be both rational and highly structured. Shamir, for example, argues that work motivation theories, in particular where the focus is cognitive, are biased towards these types of organizational environments and that they '…are useful in situations where goals can be clarified, where there is an abundance of rewards, and where rewards can be linked to performance' (1991: 407). However, as Shamir argues, not all organizational situations are 'strong' in this way and many are in fact weak

because, for example, of a shortage of rewards or due to different cultural interpretations of power or the value of differentiating between individuals. In summary Shamir suggests that '…current motivation theories may be particularly useful in situations that strongly determine behaviour and less useful in 'weak' situations where the variation in behaviour is both larger and more reflective of variation in individual motivation' (1991: 407). If this statement is true for 'weak' situations in organizations then it must be doubly true for motivation in policy networks.

However, whilst the work motivation literature cannot provide a full answer to the question of what motivates people to participate in policy networks, it does provide an analysis that is much broader than the simple rational, policy goal attainment model which underpins policy network analysis and so has the potential to provide a much fuller explanation. Work motivation theories also indicate that there is unlikely to be one single theory that can explain all aspects of motivation and that it is important to have different theories at our disposal as collectively they '… provide a framework within which to direct attention to the problem of how to best motivate staff to work willingly and effectively' (Mullins, 2001: 424). Similarly Ambrose and Kulik (1999) argue that the 'old friends' of motivational theory should be arrayed as a 'theoretical smorgasbord' as '…keeping the theories separate preserves their unique contributions' (280). This 'micro theoretical' approach can be applied to understanding motivation in policy networks as it fits well with the idea that policy network analysis needs integrate meso and micro level analysis because '…it is the behaviour of actors that leads to policy outcomes' (Daugbjerg and Marsh, 1998: 67).

In summary, it is evident that the literature concerned with policy network analysis, policy network management and inter-organizational relationships fails to provide an explicit treatment of what motivates people to participate in policy networks. However, critiques of these fields, that argue for approaches that 'put the people back in', lead to the possibility of understanding motivation in policy networks from the perspective of the individual actors. The literature

on work motivation provides a rich source of concepts and theories that can be brought to bear on the question of what motivates people in policy networks although the difference between the organizational context in which such concepts and theories are set and the environment of the policy network must be addressed. Nevertheless, the possibility of developing a 'smorgasbord' of micro theories of motivation which are relevant to policy networks is suggested and this will be developed in part two of this literature review.

# 3. Literature Review Part 2

In the first part of this literature review a 'smorgasbord' of micro theories was suggested as a way to address the question of what motivates people to participate in policy networks in the absence of any other coherent treatment of the issue. In this second part of the literature review, therefore, a number of micro theories will be identified through a review of the literature on the policy process, social networks and inter-firm networks. Before this, however, it is important to define what a micro theory of motivation in policy networks will consist of.

In identifying micro theories that explain participation in policy networks it is important to address both the perceived offer of the policy network and to provide a model of individual that explains their behaviour. In terms of the explanation of the offer of the policy network from the perspective of the individual actor, this is essential because of the ultimately voluntary nature of policy network participation whether form the individual perspective or from the organizational perspective such as explained by Oliver's framework (1990) for example. Furthermore there is a clear correspondence between the concept of policy network 'offer' and the needs theories of work motivation. By considering these needs theories it is also possible to introduce concepts broader than the attainment off policy goals such as political, social end economic ends. As well as defining the perceived offer of the policy network from the individual perspective any micro theory also needs to provide a model of the individual's decision-making process. The absence of such a model has already been identified as a weakness in policy network analysis by some so that: 'Policy network analysis …must incorporate an explicit model of the actor if the concept is to enable the analyst to move beyond mere description and into the more interesting field of policy explanations' (Blom-Hansen, 1997: 669). Furthermore: 'The micro-level of analysis deals with individual actions and the decisions of actors within the networks and must be underpinned by a theory of individual behaviour'

(Daugbjerg and Marsh, 1998: 54). Models of individual behaviour can be informed by the process theories of work motivation in the same way as network offer can be informed by the needs theories of motivation. In order to identify micro theories of policy network motivation, the literature on theories of the policy process, social networks and inter-firm networks will be reviewed. Each identified micro theory will be labelled and a final typology provided along with a discussion of any arising key themes.

**Theories of the Policy Process**

Six micro theories of policy network motivation can be identified by looking at theories of the policy process; firstly by looking at new institutionalism and then at other overarching theoretical frameworks including Institutional Rational Choice, Advocacy Coalition Frameworks and Structural Choice theory. In terms of new intuitionalism, Blom-Hansen, having recognised that policy network analysis lacks explanatory power without a micro theory of the individual, links it to this framework, which is a 'multi disciplinary enterprise covering the fields of political science, economics, sociology, and organizational theory' (1997: 673) that stresses the importance of the way political life is organized, and the importance of formal and informal rules, for understanding the behaviour of individuals. New institutionalism came about as a reaction to the behaviouralist traditions of the 1950's and 1960's that see political outcomes as simply the aggregation of the behaviour of individuals. Blom-Hansen argues that, if we see policy networks as institutions, we can fill in the gaps at the micro level. Within this framework Blom-Hansen takes the homo-economicus micro theory of individuals, which 'sees individuals as rational beings in the pursuit of self-interest by means of a logic of consequentiality' (674), and places it alongside the classic typology of policy networks proposed by Marsh and Rhodes (for example; Marsh, 1998). This typology places policy communities, which are tightly knit and exclusive groups of policy players, and issue networks, which are loosely connected and open networks of individuals with a common interest, at opposite ends of a spectrum. Usefully, Blom-Hansen distinguishes between two distinct logics

for actors engaging in institutional arrangements (i.e. networks); a co-operative logic, whereby actors can see the collective benefits of forming common institutions, and a selfish logic whereby actors see institutions as essentially distributive mechanisms which they can manipulate towards their own ends. By cross referencing these two strands of the homo-economicus model of the individual as highlighted by Blom-Hansen with the typology of policy networks proposed by Marsh and Rhodes, it is possible to generate four micro-theories of motivation in policy networks. These are summarised in table 2.

*Table 2: Policy Network Motivations derived from Blom-Hansen*

| | Co-operative 'homo-economicus' | Distributive 'homo-economicus' |
|---|---|---|
| Policy Community | Policy Co-ordination | Policy Influence |
| Issue Network | Policy Issue Involvement | Power Gain |

Here then are four micro theories of policy network motivation; *policy co-ordination*, *policy influence*, *policy issue involvement* and *power gain*. The 'policy co-ordination' motivation is what we would expect to see if we place the 'co-operative' homo economicus in a policy community. This fits very neatly with the theory of motivation that can be implied from policy network analysis more generally, where actors are rational and concerned with the attainment of policy and programme goals and, critically 'are mutually dependent so policy can only be realized on the basis of co-operation' (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000: 139). Whilst the complexity and problematic nature of processes within policy networks are never underestimated, this is an example of the underlying assumptions of policy network analysis in their pure form, resonating with the optimism that policy networks can solve policy problems and resolve many of the wicked issues facing government today (Rhodes, 1997). Whilst actors are rational and focused on the attainment of policy goals, or the delivery of programmes, they recognise that they are unable to achieve these goals independently, and that they need to join forces with others with the same, or complimentary, goals in order to gain access to resources that they do not posses. They perceive that the policy network

offers the environment in which this type of co-ordination can take place. This is also perhaps the theory implicit in government support for policy networks as problem solvers. It is possible to define a second micro theory of policy network motivation by linking the idea of the coordinative homo economicus to the idea of an issue network which links much more into the idea of policy networks as a form of governance. In this scenario, individuals, whilst still rational, recognise the importance of debate in order to solve complex policy problems and further recognise the need to involve a wide range of stakeholders in that debate. Recognition is also an issue for the individual actors in as far as their arguments are acknowledged and considered, as they believe they have a legitimate point of view. The policy network in this instance is perceived to offer a forum for debate and broad strategic problem solving. This motivation is labelled 'policy issue involvement'. A third micro theory, 'policy club membership', refers to the desire to belong to a tightly defined and exclusive policy community. The 'homo-economicus' model of the individual in this case has a purely selfish motivation and so is less interested in the policy outcomes as in personal influence and power. The policy network is seen as the route to this as, in this instance, it will typically consist of a closed group of powerful and influential individuals. Membership of this type of policy 'club' comes with status and the opportunity for personal improvement. Whilst a policy club derives much of its attraction to selfish homo economicus from its exclusiveness the more open issue network also has its attractions. A broader, more open network provides opportunities for 'power games' with more or less powerful actors (Blom-Hansen, 1997). In this scenario the behaviour of actors is driven largely by political uncertainty and their primary motivation is their personal interests rather than any beliefs (Schlager and Blomquist, 1996). The micro theory in this instance is labelled 'power gain'.

New institutionalism is far from being the only overarching theoretical framework that seeks to explain the policy process. It is not, however, particularly easy to map the field of policy studies. Schlager, for example, describes it as "…possessing mountain islands of theoretical structure, intermingled with, and occasionally attached together by foothills of shared

methods and concepts, and empirical work, all of which is surrounded by oceans of descriptive work, not attached to any particular mountain island of theory (Schlager, 1997: 14). Sabbatier, however, identifies seven frameworks of which two could be described as 'mountains' (1999: 263). These are Institutional Rational Choice Theory and Advocacy Coalition Frameworks each of which contains developed models of the individual that many other of the lesser frameworks do not. Institutional Rational Choice assumes that 'policy change results from actions by rational individuals trying to improve their circumstances by altering institutional arrangements' (Schlager and Blomquist, 1996: 653). Decisions are made based on immediate circumstances and the perceived interests of the actors who operate within rules that they are also able to change. Within Institutional Rational Choice actors are boundedly rational and make decisions to maximise utility. Within this framework actors can be described as 'rational problem solvers' (Schlager, 1996) and 'Satificers' (Schlager, 1999). Actors operate by using trial-and-error learning to reduce uncertainty. In this context policy networks offer an opportunity for satisficement, that is, the chance to solve whichever problems happen to be presenting in a work context with the minimum of effort, by providing access to a range of other actors who may prove to be useful at any given time. This, then, can be identified as a further theory of policy network motivation that is labelled '*satisficement'*. The Advocacy Coalition framework is based within a broadly pluralist perspective and holds that 'policy subsystems' within the policy process are driven and shaped by collations of actors who have shared beliefs both about what the policy process should achieve and about how it operates. Within this framework 'information and learning' are key motivating factors (Schlager and Blomquist, 1996: 657) and the focus of explanation is that negotiation, debate and dialogue between different actors and coalitions causes beliefs within the system and of individual actors to change over time and hence to shape policy.

*Table 3: Summary of Policy Network Motivation Micro Theories Derived from Policy Process theories*

| Policy Network Motivation | Parent Paradigm | Model of the Individual | Policy Network Offer |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Policy co-ordination** | New Institutionalism / Policy Network Analysis | Rational goal attainer (co-ordinative) | Closed access to actors with required resources and same / complimentary goals |
| **Policy issue involvement** | New Institutionalism / Policy Network Analysis | Rational goal attainer (co-ordinative) | Open opportunities for debate and for views to be acknowledged |
| **Policy club membership** | New Institutionalism / Policy Network Analysis | Rational goal attainer (distributive) | Access to closed group of Influential and powerful individuals |
| **Power gaming** | New Institutionalism / Policy Network Analysis / Structural Choice | Rational goal attainer (distributive) | Opportunity for power games |
| **Satisficement** | Institutional Rational Choice | Interest led boundedly rational problem solver | Range of opportunities to solve immediate problems |
| **Belief advocation** | Advocacy Coalition Framework | Belief led boundedly rational information seeker | Actors with similar beliefs and opportunities for information sharing |

It is this focus on beliefs rather than interests that distinguishes Advocacy Coalition Frameworks from Institutional Rational Choice although, like Institutional Rational Choice, the individual in Advocacy Coalition Frameworks is 'procedurally rational' and: 'The individual engages in limited search processes, makes choices based on his or her subjective representations of the situation and satisfices. Analysts attempting to understand the individual's behaviour must learn about those subjective representations - an individual's perceptions as well as his or her information resources and information-processing capability' (Schlager and Blomquist, 1996: 660). Beliefs and information are the two key concepts so that actors' beliefs serve as perceptual filters in their receipt of information but information can also change beliefs (Schlager, 1996). For these individuals the policy network provides an opportunity to engage in activities to obtain resources to reinforce their beliefs and to gain political support (Sobeck, 2003) and to accumulate and make use of information in order to drive policy change. This policy network motivation is labelled '*belief advocation'*. This is the last of the six micro theories of policy network motivation derived from reviewing broader

theoretical frameworks seeking to explain the policy process. A summary of all six is provided in table 3.

**Social and Inter Firm Network Theories**

As needs theories of motivation indicate, if an understanding of motivation from an individual perspective is to be comprehensive, then it needs to encompass explanations wider than those focusing on the policy process alone and, in particular, to focus on those explanations that address social and economic aspects of networks. By doing this it is possible to identify a further eight micro theories of policy network motivation to add to the six already identified although, as with policy studies, the theoretical landscape concerned with networks in a more general sense is far from easy to navigate. Whilst interest has undoubtedly increased over the last few years, there is nevertheless a wide and perhaps bewildering range of approaches to networks beyond just policy studies so that, as Oliver and Ebers observe, 'the increase in the number of studies has contributed to a rather messy situation marked by a cacophony of heterogeneous concepts, theories and research results' (1998: 459). Whilst attempts to map the field are hard to come by, the review by Oliver and Ebers, and the attempt by Araujo and Easton (1996) to provide a 'limited sketch of the various ways in which the term network has been used in different paradigms' (63) provide ample evidence of its diversity and complexity. What the two studies also agree on is the potential for greater 'cross-perspective dialogue' and the need for researchers to sufficiently 'orientate themselves within the field as a whole. However, like policy studies, there are identifiable mountains in the theoretical landscape and two of these are social network theory and interfirm network theory.

Social network theory originates from sociology and social anthropology and focuses on how people seek to meet individual and collective needs through their family and community relationships. The concern has been to show how these relationships determine the behaviour of individuals so that: 'Actors in social networks are regarded as embedded in concrete patterns of social

relationships, which produce opportunities and constraints, and their behaviour can only be understood in relation to these structures' (Araujo and Easton, 1996: 72). Social relationships are not simply features of social structures, however, they can also be seen as social capital which provides a resource for individuals whether through family relationships, social connections or through other acquaintances (Coleman, 1994). Significantly, it is the weak, 'acquaintance' ties that individuals have, such as those that typify relationships in policy networks, which provide some of the most useful resources for individuals. Granovetter (1973), for example, has suggested that the value of social capital and the ability of social networks to solve problems and respond to external changes are enhanced if relationships between individuals are weak, acquaintance relationships, rather than close personal relationships. In summary social capital can be defined in this way:

> "Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having to characteristics in common: They all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence." (Coleman, 1994: 302)

What sets social network approaches apart from other network approaches is an emphasis on psychology and the ability to look beyond the rational and conscious aspects of individual human behaviour. The overriding concern on structure, however, again means that theorists have paid little attention to individual motivation. In a recent article Kadushin (2002) further suggests that many network theorists, seeking overarching explanations, have been wary of exploring the motivation of individuals, as this cannot be easily applied to organizations. This failure is perhaps more deep rooted in sociological theory so that: 'Most sociological theorists who invoke a motivational model often do so either at a fairly superficial level or utilize formulations that may seem old fashioned to contemporary theorists' (81). Despite this, Kadushin argues that the rationale for network behaviour within social network theory can be traced back to a concern with individual social psychological development and he further argues that; 'a quest for the sources of network motivation leads to an

important discovery that has profound implications for network theory at all levels. There are two, not one, basic motivations for relations that are grounded in very early childhood development: the quest for support and comfort, and the quest for efficacy and mastery' (78). Kadushin further argues that these two 'quests' can be associated with two very different types of network structure so that:

> "There are basically two kinds of human drives that cluster two types of motives or feelings: the first is the drive towards safety which clusters the motives and feelings of dependency, trust and support; and the second is the drive towards effectiveness which clusters the motives and feelings of mastery, competition and envy. Strikingly these two clusters are associated with the two most fundamental characteristics of social networks: density and cohesion on the one hand and structural holes or competition or brokerage on the other." (80)

In other words the networks that provide strong personal and emotional support will be characterised by strong ties in a dense structure whereas those that provide for personal gain will be characterised by the weaker, 'arms length' ties theorised by Granovetter, and by structural holes, in other words, gaps in the network that can be exploited by playing unconnected individuals off against each other. Two micro theories of motivation from social network theory can therefore be identified and applied to policy networks. The first is 'personal support' where the policy network is perceived as offering a dense network of close relationships for an individual who can characterised as dependent support seekers and the second is 'personal gain' where the network offer is that of arms length acquaintances within a network structure that affords the opportunity for exploitation and where the individual can be characterised as competitive, envious and seeking mastery.

Table 4: Two micro theories of social network motivation

| Micro Theory | Model of the Individual | Perceived Policy Network Offer |
|---|---|---|
| **Personal support** | Dependent, trusting support seeker | Dense structure of strong relationships giving personal / emotional support |
| **Personal gain** | Competitive and envious seeking mastery | Structure of weak relationships with gaps affording opportunities for exploitation |

Apart from the social network 'mountain', the other major feature of the network theory landscape, outside of policy network analysis, is the mountain of theory dedicated to interfirm networks (Barringer and Harrison, 2000). Which focuses on how 'interorganizational relationships help firms create value by combining resources, sharing knowledge, increasing speed to market, and gaining access to foreign markets' (Doz and Hamel 1998, cited in Barringer and Harrison, 2000). This predominantly economic perspective provides some of the most straightforward explanations of policy network motivation as, like Oliver's (1990) inter-organizational contingency framework, it takes an organizational perspective rather than an individual one and, as a consequence of this, sees the network world as a rational one where the interest and goals of organizations are paramount and the individual is assumed to be the rational agent acting on behalf of the organization.

In identifying six micro theories of policy network motivation from the interfirm literature, Barringer and Harrison's recent summary of six paradigms has been used as it explains the formation of interorganizational relationships by drawing from the 'huge' and 'fragmented' literature on interorganizational relationships (2000). These paradigms are; Transaction Costs Economics; Resource Dependence; Strategic Choice; Stakeholder Theory of the Firm; Organizational Learning and Institutional Theory. The first paradigm identified by Barringer and Harrison; Transaction Costs Economics (TCE) 'focuses on how an organization should organize its boundary spanning activities so as to minimise the sum of its production and transaction costs' (2). In other words firms can look to an option other than 'making' or 'buying' when judging the

cheapest way to do something – they can opt to 'partner' thereby sharing costs, bringing in expertise and reducing the uncertainty of future costs. The weakness of TCE is that it is clearly a very narrow, rational and purely economic theory of motivation that ties everything involved in an interorganizational relationship back to the bottom line of the firm concerned. However, it is a paradigm that may echo strongly with many of the smaller community and voluntary organizations involved in policy networks for which lower costs and increased income are a matter of survival rather than profit. The second of Barringer and Harrison's six paradigms is that of Resource Dependence. This starts from the assumption that firms will need to draw resources from the environment around them if they are to be successful, in particular rare or specialised resources that cannot be generated by the firm itself such as skills, market power or intelligence.

One particularly important form of resource dependence is where firms form alliances to take advantage of complimentary assets such as between small innovative biotech firms and large powerful pharmaceutical companies (4). What is useful about this paradigm is that it develops the idea of mutually rewarding relationships between independent organisations over a longer term as opposed to more 'transactional' approaches where interactions are 'one off's. Clearly these kinds of relationships and alliances can exist without wider networks although they are something that networks can encourage to happen – in particular by providing a medium through which potential partners can meet. Strategic Choice is the third of Barringer and Harrison's paradigms. It essence it incorporates ideas from all of the other paradigms into the theory that decision makers in firms have at their disposal a wide range of possible reasons for entering into interorganizational relationships and that they are able to consciously plan courses of action accordingly. The weaknesses of this paradigm are its broadness and lack of focus but what it does provide, however, is a useful image of networks as 'battle grounds' that decision makers enter to achieve their goals through a range of tactics. The fourth paradigm is stakeholder theory. This holds that firms build relationships with its stakeholders in order to further its aims. These stakeholders might include investors, suppliers, employees, customers, competitors and local

communities. (6) These relationships can be a powerful way of aligning interests and of reducing environmental uncertainty such as through common lobbying campaigns or through flows of information. What is useful about this paradigm is that it provides another perspective on how organisations use interorganizational relationships to manage the environments they find themselves in and, whilst the empirical evidence appears to be thin, it does provide a bridge from economic theory to more policy orientated perspectives through an emphasis on the idea of cooperation. In a public policy perspective the idea of participating in a network in order to get closer to your stakeholders, especially where those stakeholders are local communities, is very much in tune with current thinking for many public and voluntary organisations.

Barringer and Harrison's fifth paradigm is Learning Theory. Consistent with the growing body of research that suggests that knowledge is the key to competitive advantage for many firms, this paradigm suggest that firms are motivated to enter into interorganizational networks through a desire to gain greater organizational learning. The creation of new knowledge is also more likely to happen where the boundaries between firms are less rigid and more open and it is this 'intellectual capital' that is so highly prized in today's knowledge economy. An interesting division is made in the literature between those 'learning' relationships which are for exploration, for example for innovation, invention and research, as opposed to those that are formed for exploitation, for example for improving existing capabilities or for reducing costs. What is interesting about this point is that it draws a distinction between those relationships that are established to create something additional and to be synergous and those that are formed to create 'selfish' advantage for the organization. This echoes with the distinction between altruistic and selfish behaviours noted in both the policy network and social network contexts identified above. The weakness of Learning Theory, however, is the intangible nature of the resources and products involved, however, from a policy network perspective, where new ideas and accurate intelligence are valuable currency learning theory has a lot to offer. The final paradigm of Barringer and Harrison's six is Institutional Theory. This

Table 5: Theoretical Explanations for Interorganizational Relationships adapted from Barringer and Harrison (2000)

| *Theoretical Paradigm* | *Description* | *Rationale / Motivation* |
|---|---|---|
| Transaction Costs Economics | Focuses on how an organization should organize its boundary-spanning activities so as to minimize the sum of its production and transaction costs. | Minimization of the sum of production and transaction costs. Can reduce uncertainty and reduce costs. |
| Resource Dependence | A theory rooted in an open system framework that argues that all organizations must engage in exchanges with their environment to obtain resources. | Organizations wish to exert control over organizations that possess scarce resources or to fill a perceived resource need. |
| Strategic Choice | Study of factors that provide opportunities for firms to increase in competitiveness or market power. Profit and growth are typically the major firm objectives that drive strategic behaviour. | An organization will enter into relationships if the financial benefits of doing so exceed the costs. Strategies may increase the ability of a firm to deliver superior products and services efficiently or work to decrease competition in an industry. |
| Stakeholder Theory of the Firm | Organizations are at the centre of an interdependent web of stakeholders and have a responsibility to consider the legitimate claims of their stakeholder when making decisions and carrying out business transactions. | Organizations form relationships to align their own interests with the interests of stakeholders and also to reduce environmental uncertainty. |
| Organizational Learning | Concerned with the processes that lead to organizational learning. A key factor is absorptive capacity, which is defined as a firm's ability to recognize the value of new knowledge, assimilate it, and apply it in a business setting. | Absorb as much knowledge as possible from partners, thus increasing organizational competencies and ultimately adding value to the organization. |
| Institutional Theory | Suggests that institutional environments impose pressures or organizations to appear legitimate and conform to prevailing social norms. | Organizations wish to obtain legitimacy or succumb to pressures by mimicking firms that have established 'legitimate networks. |

suggests that legitimacy and conformity in the context of the social and business environments that firms find themselves in, are important commodities for firms. As a consequence firms may try to increase their visibility, reputation, image and prestige through association with better-established companies or other respected bodies.

This kind of legitimacy may serve not only to improve the standing of a brand amongst customers but may also act as the key that opens other doors. Other dimensions of this are the benefits for a firm's image to be gained through 'social worthiness' by associating with charities for example, and the

simple desire to conform to what other firms do in order to reduce the risk of being outside the prevailing norms so that conformity may be driven by external pressures as well as by perceived advantage. Institutional Theory is clearly a very partial explanation of the behaviour of firms in interorganizational relationships and this is its main weakness. However it does add an important extra dimension to explaining why firms do participate in these types of relationship and it adds an extra explanation as to why people might be motivated to participate in policy networks on behalf of their organizations. Again, when it comes to attracting funding or convincing people to participate in new areas of work legitimacy through association can be a very productive commodity. Within all of these paradigms the individual is treated as an agent of the organization and this is taken to be the model of the individual for each as they are translated into micro theories.

**Summary**

In this second part of the literature review 14 micro theories have been identified and together they provide an original typology of policy network motivation that is summarised in table 6. At the same time common themes across the reviewed literature have emerged. The first is that there seems to be agreement that network types are unlikely to exist in their pure form and, like the motivations that lead to their formation, network characteristics are likely to be mixed and messy. This means that the interests of different actors may be conflicting or even contradictory. Kadushin, for example, argues that: 'Networks are created as a consequence of both safety and effectiveness drives; neither alone will suffice' (80). Barringer and Harrison similarly suggest that, within the context of inter-firm relationships, no single paradigm can capture the complexities of network relationships in particular as firms themselves will have a variety of different reasons for entering into them. The second issue is that certain characteristics of the policy network offer, whilst appealing to some individuals, will make the policy network decidedly unattractive to others in respect of three key characteristics; membership, interactions and resource sharing. Membership here refers to the openness

*Table 6: Typology of micro theories of policy network motivation*

| | Micro Theory | Parent Paradigm(s) | Model of the Individual | Perceived Policy Network Offer |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Policy Process | Policy co-ordination | New Institutionalism / Policy Network Analysis | Rational goal attainer (co-ordinative) | Closed access to actors with required resources and same / complimentary goals |
| | Policy issue involvement | New Institutionalism / Policy Network Analysis | Rational goal attainer (co-ordinative) | Open opportunities for debate and for views to be acknowledged |
| | Policy club membership | New Institutionalism / Policy Network Analysis | Rational goal attainer (distributive) | Access to closed group of Influential and powerful individuals |
| | Power gaming | New Institutionalism / Policy Network Analysis / Structural Choice | Rational goal attainer (distributive) | Opportunity for power games |
| | Satisficement | Institutional Rational Choice | Interest led boundedly rational problem solver | Range of opportunities to solve immediate problems |
| | Belief advocation | Advocacy Coalition Framework | Belief led boundedly rational information seeker | Actors with similar beliefs and opportunities for information sharing |
| Social Network | Personal support | Social Network Theory / Social Psychology | Dependent, trusting support seeker | Dense structure of strong relationships giving personal / emotional support |
| | Personal gain | Social Network Theory / Social Psychology | Competitive and envious seeking mastery | Structure of weak relationships with gaps affording opportunities for exploitation |
| Inter-firm Network | Organizational cost minimisation | Transaction Cost Economics | Organisational agent | Organizations with which to share costs / risks |
| | Organizational resource sharing | Resource Dependency Theory | Organisational agent | Organizations with desirable resources |
| | Organizational strategic opportunity | Strategic Choice | Organisational agent | Broad range of relevant strategic players |
| | Organizational stakeholder alignment | Stakeholder Theory of the Firm | Organisational agent | Stakeholder groups and organizations |
| | Organizational learning | Learning Theory | Organisational agent | Organizations with specialist knowledge |
| | Organizational legitimisation | Institutional Theory | Organisational agent | Organizations with credibility and respectability |

or closedness of the network and will be of particular concern to actors in the policy frame such as those seeking policy club membership or those interested in a more inclusive approach such as those with a policy issue involvement motivation. Similarly, from a social perspective, those seeking personal support will be more interested in tightly defined networks than those seeking personal gain. In terms of interactions it is important to note the

difference between those seeking long-term relationships and those seeking one off transactional contacts. Examples of motivations fitting the former would be personal gain or organizational resource sharing whereas satisficement or personal gain would fit well with the later. The last category is resource sharing which builds on the difference between co-ordinative and distributive networks highlighted by Blom-Hansen (1997). It could be argued that the majority of the motivations identified are distributive, in other words selfish, with policy co-ordination and, possibly, policy issue involvement and belief advocacy being the exceptions. The distinction remains important, however, if we recall what government in particular hopes to gain by fostering and promoting policy networks. These discussions, however, remain theoretical speculations unless they can be supported with empirical evidence. In the next two chapters, therefore, field research aimed at examining policy network motivation focusing on a policy network of advice providers in South Wales is described.

# 4. Methodology

## Overview of Design and Research Questions

The aim of this study, as previously stated, was to answer the following research question:

**What motivates people to participate in policy networks?**

And to address the following sub questions:

- Are actors in policy networks motivated by more than the rational attainment of policy goals?

- Are actors in policy networks motivated by the desire to co-operate with other actors on shared issues of concern?

- Is there a link between the organizational roles of network actors and their motivation to participate in policy networks?

Following these sub questions, the literature review suggested that:

i. People in policy networks can be motivated by a wide range of political, social and economic factors extending far beyond the rational attainment of policy goals: Only four of the fourteen micro theories of policy network motivation were underpinned by this model of the individual.

ii. There is a wide range of theoretical explanations for policy network motivation that do not involve the pursuit of shared policy goals. In fact only two of the identified micro theories suggest this.

iii. Motivation to participate in policy networks is likely to be determined by organizational interests. The six micro theories associated with the literature on inter-firm networks suggest this.

The aim of the field research was to gather empirical evidence, across whole networks, which could test the conclusions of the literature review. A metaphor-based questionnaire was selected as the most efficient way of getting a picture of policy network motivation across whole networks. The intention was to capture complex ideas about motivation in policy networks simply and efficiently. Whilst this is perhaps an unorthodox method of social research it was the best way of addressing all methodological considerations including underlying philosophical assumptions, the aims of the research and the practical constraints affecting the research. Each of these considerations will be discussed below.

**Method Selection**

Philosophical assumptions are important for social research although exactly how important is the source of a great deal of debate, the principal reason being that, unlike in natural science, the nature of knowledge in social research is highly contested. Whilst there have been many attempts to capture the true nature of social knowledge (hermeneutics, phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, ethomethodology, feminism, critical theory and postmodernism have all contributed) the most significant debate is that between the positivists and the interpretivists. Broadly speaking, positivists hold that the social world has an objective existence that can be revealed through scientific research methods in a similar way that natural science can understand atoms and molecules as independent of the researcher (Kolakowski, 1993, for example). Interpretivists, on the other hand, deny that any aspect of the social world can have an existence independent of human understanding and agency and can only be understood in this context (Hughes, 1990: chapter 5, for example). Their methodological approach will

then follow from whichever choices are made. So, for example, a commitment to a positivist epistemology will most likely lead to a generally quantitative methodology that in turn will lead to the use of methods such as survey research and statistical analysis as the primary research tools. Alternatively, a commitment to interpretivist ideas about social knowledge will most likely lead to a primarily qualitative methodological approach which in turn will lead to the use of methods such as participant observation or semi structured interview.

The field research for this study was designed from an interpretivist perspective contrary to most research into policy networks and into networks more generally where consequently qualitative methods are generally underrepresented (Oliver and Ebers, 1998). Research into policy networks has also been criticised for being methodologically uncritical so that: 'Although the analysis of policy networks has become one of the dominant approaches for the studying of policy making… there is a paucity of methodological and reflexive accounts which explore how they are researched' (Duke 2002: 41). From an interpretivist perspective, however, the argument is that policy networks can only be understood as a social construction of the actors who operate within them. In this context it is not possible to conceive of policy networks as 'things in themselves'', and it is only possible to know them through the meanings attached to them by policy network actors. This approach follows the arguments made by Rhodes, (2002) that the positivist approach to understanding policy networks is seriously flawed. Consequently Rhodes argues for a constructivist approach as an alternative as 'we must develop decentred accounts that explore how individuals construct networks against a backdrop of traditions' (2002: 401). A tradition here refers to 'a set of understandings someone receives during socialisation' and, whilst traditions only influence rather than determine individual beliefs and actions, networks cannot be understood without them. So, for Rhodes: 'There is, therefore, no essentialist account of a network because individuals inherit, interpret and hand on distinct and distinctive stories of 'what goes on around here' (2002: 401). Furthermore, from his own fieldwork Rhodes suggests that the term 'network' has different meanings for

every individual within the network and that each of these meanings must be captured if networks are to be understood and that these meanings cannot not be assumed or 'read off' from network or organizational position. In short Rhodes is arguing for a decentred approach that 'explores how actors understand the networks in which they work' and 'takes such understandings as its basic building blocks' (2002: 413). This qualitative approach is well suited to gathering evidence about policy network motivation and uncovering the meanings that people attach to their individual behaviours and to perceived network 'offer'. This field research is therefore underpinned by the philosophical assumption is that social knowledge is socially constructed and that motivation in policy networks does not exist apart from the perceptions of policy network actors and the meanings that they apply to their own behaviour and their own policy networks.

Whilst these philosophical assumptions lead towards qualitative and ethnographic methods, the research aim points towards quantitative methods not least because of the intention to gain the 'big picture' across whole networks. Whilst an in depth understanding of individual network actors is both important and useful as Rhodes (2002) has suggested, in this research the concern is to look at motivations across entire networks and hence the priority is for knowledge to be 'broad' rather than 'deep'. This reflects the majority of research looking at work motivation that is overwhelmingly biased towards the positivistic approach in psychology where the focus has been on questionnaire studies of both attitudes and behaviour (Ambrose and Kulik, 1999). This presented a methodological problem for the field research as an interpretive approach points towards an ethnographic method whilst the research aim of gaining a cross network understanding suggested the need for a quantitative approach. Practical considerations were also an issue as it would simply not have been possible to gain an ethnographic understanding of so many individuals given that this research was conducted within the context of a part time Masters course within limited resources. In order to solve this problem it was necessary to identify a method that would borrow from both the positivist and from the interpretivist traditions. This is not, however, unusual. There are, in fact, a 'great many who fall somewhere in

the middle of this philosophical and methodological continuum, borrowing from either end, attempting, with various degrees of success, to steer a course between the two poles' (O'Connell-Davidson and Layder, 1994: 32). Bryman also notes growing evidence of research that integrates both qualitative and quantitative approaches (1998: 141) building on, for example, ideas of triangulation, facilitation and complimentarity (Bryman, 1998). This kind of observance of methodological pluralism gives confidence to those who believe that, in practice, the social researcher *should* be free to use the methods that fit the task in hand best. For these researchers the choice of methodological approach then becomes more of a technical question than a philosophical one. As Bryman observes:

> "The crucial question according to the technical version of the debate is not whether there is an appropriate fit between epistemological position and method but whether there is an appropriate fit between the research problem and the method"
>
> Bryman (1998: 140)

In summary, therefore, whilst it seemed obvious that only an interpretive approach would allow the motivation 'stories' of individual actors to be revealed, in practical terms, in order to gain a cross network understanding, it became apparent that a questionnaire, and hence a more positivistic approach, would be required. In order to try and satisfy both of these aspirations the decision was made to adopt a method centred upon the use of a metaphor based questionnaire.

**Research Design**

Having selected metaphor based questionnaire as the research method the next stage was to design the research and this was done by adapting previous research into teachers' images of their schools undertaken by Fisher and Grady (Grady et al, 1996 and Fisher and Grady, 1998) who developed and used the Images of Schools through Metaphor (ISM) 'as a simple, economical questionnaire to allow school leaders and researchers to survey

teachers' images of their school' (Fisher and Grady, 1998: 334). This use of metaphor builds on a view that metaphoric images both reflect and shape the way that people understand the reality around them and 'are capable of giving us a new understanding of our experience [and thus] can give new meaning to our pasts, our daily activity, and to what we know and believe' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 139). As well as for schools research, metaphors have been used in a wide range of research settings to look at, for example, home ownership (Gurney, 1999), the internet (Balloffet, 1999), advertising (Coulter et al, 2001), teamwork (Gibson and Zellmer-Bruhn, 2001) and teaching and learning (Gurney, 1995), and techniques using metaphors have become widely used in market research (Zaltman and Coulter, 1995; Zaltman, 1997). Whilst metaphors can be used as a creative device to explore the tensions and similarities between two distinct objects or ideas, it is as a shorthand way of describing complex ideas that metaphors are used in the ISM questionnaire. It is in this way that metaphors can be used in ethnographic research as a way capturing shared ideas and to describe the unfamiliar or unknown (Van Maanen, 1988) and that they have been used very successfully to describe organisations (Morgan, 1997). Crucially, 'Metaphors carry implicit connotations' (Patton, 2002: 505) and whilst this is an aspect that makes them so useful in uncovering deeper aspects of meaning, it also means that care must be taken because it cannot be known that everyone's interpretation is exactly the same.

The questionnaire was focused on the metaphors that would describe the ideal advice network for network actors. This followed the assumption that there is a direct connection between an actor's image of an ideal network and their policy network motivation(s) so that, for example, an actor who describes their ideal network as a 'market' is likely to be motivated by the prospect of brief transactions to solve immediate problems. The advantages of this approach included; the potential to capture 'thick' descriptions from policy network actors in a very efficient way; an avoidance of direct questions about individual motives with some of the more negative aspects such as personal gain, for example, dealt with more abstractly in metaphors such as 'windows of opportunity'; and the potential to capture both rational and non-rational

motivations. Use of this method, however, came with the awareness of a potentially serious weakness relating to the use of a survey questionnaire in what is essentially a piece of qualitative research. The key problem, as noted above, is whether it is safe to assume that one actor's interpretation of a given metaphor is broadly the same as another. Whilst Fisher and Grady do attempt to address this by building in a check into the questionnaire design process, it is nevertheless necessary to attach this as a health warning to a metaphor questionnaire of this type.

As the subject of the research, actors in advice networks in South East Wales were chosen. These networks are supported by the Community Legal Service (CLS). The CLS is a governmental body that administers the funding of legal and other advice services. It was set up in order to replace the previous legal aid system with a more strategic funding structure. These policy network actors were chosen for the following reasons:

- The CLS had specifically identified a network approach delivering their policy aims so that: "CLS partnerships are local networks which bring together funders, service providers and representatives from other groups, including local health authorities and community groups." (Legal Services Commission, 2004: 15)

- The area of South East Wales is geographically separate from the area in which the researcher's full time post was based meaning that there would be no personal familiarity with the subjects of the study

- CLS Wales were willing to offer access to their policy and development officers and the use of their mailing lists

- The management of networks had been identified as an issue for the organisation and so they could see some value in the research

- Advice networks were of particular interest as a form of policy network as they covered the public, voluntary and private sectors.

It was clear from the ISM example that the designing of the questionnaire was an important part of the research process and it was for this reason, and because it provided the opportunity to triangulate the results that it was decided to commence and end the research process with a workshop of network managers. The first would allow network managers to explore metaphors of their policy network and feed into the design of the questionnaire and the second would give the same group an opportunity to comment on the research findings and provide an additional evaluative voice. The research process was therefore divided into four stages:

a. Network managers' workshop
b. Questionnaires development and distribution
c. Questionnaire analysis
d. Feedback session

The research took place between October 2003 and May 2004.

## Research Procedures

### a. Network managers' workshop

The first stage of the research, the network managers' workshop, was held in October 2003 in the offices of the Community Legal Services in Wales (CLSW) in Cardiff. In total 10 policy officers from CLSW took part and all of them spent at least part of their time managing advice networks in Wales. The aims of the network managers' workshop were:

- To share with the network managers the idea of using a metaphor-based questionnaire for the research in order to check its credibility

- To involve the network managers in the research process in order to gain ownership and to help with the design and distribution of the questionnaire

- To identify metaphors for policy networks

- To identify which metaphors described the ideal network for the managers'

Participants were briefed on the aims of the research, the purpose of the workshop and the use of metaphors. Participants were happy to be involved and could see a practical value for their own work. The workshop was then conducted in two stages; a discussion of possible metaphors that could be used to describe networks and a ranking of the most meaningful of those metaphors identified. In order to stimulate ideas from the participants, four sets of images were prepared prior to the workshop to correspond broadly with the political, economic and social themes identified in the rough guide and a further set to correspond with the ideal model implicit in government approaches. This visual technique borrowed from approaches used in advertising such as the Zaltman Technique (Zaltman and Coulter, 1995) and was intended to encourage the participants to think across the whole range of possible theories without actually putting words into their mouths. The 4 sets of images are attached at appendix 1. All suggested metaphors were noted on a flipchart and, at each stage, comments were invited from the group and recorded and further questions prompted the participants to explain why they thought networks might be like particular metaphors. Participants had little difficulty identifying metaphors and were able to identify 51 that are listed in table 8.

Participants said that they found the exercise both enjoyable and useful and that they liked the idea of using metaphors to better understand actors in networks. Participants were also very positive about the idea of the

questionnaire with one suggesting that it should be based on images rather than words.

Once the list was completed participants were given 6 sticky dots each and invited to place them on the flip charts next to the metaphors which they felt described actual networks and then given 6 sticky dots and invited to place then next to the metaphors which they felt described their ideal networks. Participants were then asked for their final comments and evaluation of the workshop.

### b. Questionnaire development and distribution

Following the workshop a set of 42 metaphors was developed for the questionnaire. This was done by referring to the 14 micro theories of policy network motivation identified in the literature review and identifying three metaphors that captured some aspect of each whilst, at the same time, cross referencing to the outcomes of the network managers workshop ensuring that the list included the highest ranked ideal network metaphors identified by the network managers. Table 7 shows how metaphors were matched up with the 14 micro theories of policy network motivation.

**Table 7 Metaphors matched to policy network motivations**

| Policy network motivation | Model of the individual | Policy network offer | Metaphor |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Policy co-ordination** | Rational goal attainer (co-ordinative) | Closed access to actors with required resources and same / complimentary goals | Cogs turning together*<br>A human pyramid*<br>A flock of geese* |
| **Policy issue involvement** | Rational goal attainer (co-ordinative) | Open opportunities for debate and for views to be acknowledged | A debating chamber<br>A jazz orchestra<br>A focus group |
| **Policy club membership** | Rational goal attainer (distributive) | Access to closed group of Influential and powerful individuals | A shared promise<br>A closed circuit*<br>The bridge of a ship |
| **Power gaming** | Rational goal attainer (distributive) | Opportunity for power games | A poker game*<br>An electric grid*<br>A workshop |
| **Satisficement** | Interest led boundedly rational problem solver | Range of opportunities to solve immediate problems | A supermarket<br>A helpline<br>A toolkit |
| **Belief advocation** | Belief led boundedly rational information seeker | Actors with similar beliefs and opportunities for information sharing | A broad church<br>A common language<br>A telephone exchange |
| **Personal support** | Dependent, trusting support seeker | Dense structure of strong relationships giving personal / emotional support | A community*<br>A support group*<br>A safety net |
| **Personal gain** | Competitive and envious seeking mastery | Structure of weak relationships with gaps affording opportunities for exploitation | A new country to explore<br>Stepping stones<br>Windows of opportunity |
| **Organizational cost minimisation** | Organisational agent | Organizations with which to share costs / risks | A market place<br>A car boot sale*<br>A lighthouse |
| **Organizational resource sharing** | Organisational agent | Organizations with desirable resources | A dating agency<br>Ballroom dancing<br>A treasure map |
| **Organizational strategic opportunity** | Organisational agent | Broad range of relevant strategic players | The weather forecast<br>An ocean to sail across<br>An aerial photograph |
| **Organizational stakeholder alignment** | Organisational agent | Stakeholder groups and organizations | A family<br>A shareholders meeting<br>An anchor |
| **Organizational learning** | Organisational agent | Organizations with specialist knowledge | A conference<br>A research laboratory<br>A library |
| **Organizational legitimisation** | Organisational agent | Organizations with credibility and respectability | A passport<br>A theatre<br>A mark of quality |

* Links to a metaphor identified at the networks managers focus group

The next stage was to develop the questionnaire. A draft list of the 42 metaphors was circulated to the network managers and, following their comments; a number of alterations were made. A first draft of the questionnaire was then checked with a small group of policy officers, not linked to the network managers, as an informal pilot. This check included a

review of the meanings on the metaphors to ensure that individual interpretations broadly coincided. The final questionnaire was designed using the Likert scale as a standard method used for attitude surveys in psychology (Oppenheim, 1992). A four point scale of; strongly agree; agree; disagree; and strongly disagree was chosen with a 'don't know' rather than a neutral point. This was in order to ensure that respondents were able to positively associate a meaning with the metaphors, as a 'no opinion' option would have been ambiguous on this point. It is important to note that data collected using the Likert scale can be interpreted in three main ways (Reid, 1987). It can be interpreted as nominal data, which simply means that the different point values have no defined numerical values, it can be interpreted as ordinal data which can be ordered on a scale, or it can be interpreted as interval data which means that and the points can be translated into sequential numbers, with equal distances between them, which can then be subjected to statistical analysis. Whilst the nominal and ordinal interpretation of data collected using the Likert scale is straightforward, the interpretation of data as having interval values is controversial as 'the intervals between values cannot be presumed equal' (Jamieson, 2004), and needs to be treated with care. In order to discover how motivation related to structure, respondents were also asked for information about their sector, their role and their employment type. In the interests of capturing the more negative aspects of motivation the questionnaire does not mention motivation and is designed to be anonymous. The final questionnaire is attached at appendix 2.

Once the questionnaire was finalised, 487 were distributed via the Wales Community Legal Service mailing list. These included 219 voluntary contacts, 84 private sector contacts, 107 public sector contacts and 77 councillors. This constituted the entire available target population.

The majority of questionnaires were sent to a named individual and a pre paid envelope for responses was included. A three-week deadline was given for responses and an e-mail reminder was sent one week later, with an electronic version of the questionnaire attached, to encourage responses. Following this 83 Questionnaires were returned within the given deadline. These included one that was spoilt and one that was returned uncompleted with the comment

that it was too difficult to understand. Of the remaining 81 responses, 34 indicated that they were voluntary sector, 5 indicated that they were private sector and 38 indicated that they were public sector. The total response rate was approximately 17% and, whilst the response rate was not particularly high, the level of response provided enough data to allow the analysis to be reasonable meaningful. Having said this it is important to note that the 17% of questionnaires returned represented a self-selecting sample of the target population and could not therefore be presented as representative. Particularly disappointing was the low level of private sector respondents meaning that little could be learned about this group.

### c. Analysis of the questionnaire results

The questionnaire results were looked at in terms of item validity, frequency, modes and means. The first stage of analysing the data was to check the validity of the questionnaire items which Grady et al (1996) had done using three tests. The first test concerned the level of agreement about the meaning of the items, the second concerned the rate of identification which each of the items, which meant for Fisher and Grady that each attracted less than 30% neutral or unsure responses, and the final test focused on the usefulness of each of the items in determining differences between respondents which, for Fisher and Grady, meant each item yielding responses for at least four out of five points of their scale. In terms of the level of agreement about the meaning of the items this had been built into to the questionnaire design stage as noted above. As for the second test, all 42 items had an identification rate of between 75% and 98% and so passed and, for the final test, all 42 items had a response at least of three of the four scale points with all bar one (poker game) having a response for all four scale points.

Having checked the validity of the data four basic forms of analysis were conducted on the data using Microsoft Excel. Firstly a simple frequency table was constructed. Secondly a table showing the modal response for each point on the Likert scale for each item. Whilst basic, this form of analysis is

appropriate as; ‘for ordinal data one should employ the median or mode as the 'measure of central tendency'' (Jamieson, 2004). Thirdly a mean score was constructed for each item. This analysis assumes that the points on the Likert scale are interval and have an equal distance between each other. Whilst this may be a contentious assumption it nevertheless allows for the items to be placed in rank order and for comparisons to be made between different variables relating to the respondents.

### d. Network managers’ feedback group

To conclude the research a feedback session was held with the network managers. The aims of this were:

- To share the results and get their reaction
- To see what they felt the implications might be for their practice

Following a presentation of the main results and some tentative conclusions, the network managers were asked for their views and ideas. They reported was that, since the initial workshop, they had developed their own thinking on what network actors might want from their networks and how they might want to participate. They also thought that the questionnaire would be a useful tool for gauging what actors wanted for networks, in particular as this was a question which they had not previously asked. Both through their experience of the research and their own recent experience they now regarded this as an important question. However they also raised questions about whether the questionnaire was truly able to determine what people wanted, in particular whether negative motives could really be brought to the surface. Managers also questioned whether the low response to the questionnaire reflected a lack of interest in the network per se. Generally the managers group felt that the questionnaire could provide a useful and organic view of a network but that it should be used as one of several tools for network management.

## Ethical Considerations

The importance of an ethical approach has long been upheld within social research in particular where research has focused on more vulnerable or powerless members of society (Hornsby-Smith, 1993). Whilst this research has not focused on these types of people it is nevertheless considered important to follow the general guidelines set out for researchers such as those established by the British Sociological Association. These include explaining as fully as possible to participants what the research is about, who the researcher is, why it is being done and how the results will be disseminated (Hornsby-Smith, 1993). In line with these guidelines information about the research was shared at the managers' workshops and included within the introduction to the questionnaire (appendix 2). In order to ensure that there could be no possibility of direct effects from the research on individual network actors, the responses were collected anonymously and only summaries have subsequently been disseminated.

# 5. Findings

From the research process there were three sources of data:

a. Network managers' workshop
b. Questionnaire
c. Feedback session

The findings from each are described below.

## Network Managers' Workshop

The network managers' workshop revealed a wide range of metaphors for networks that could be easily identified by the managers group. The 51 picked out by the managers reflected each of the four perspectives suggested by the visual prompts. Whilst none of the metaphors attracted the support of more than half of the participants, the ones which gained the most support as descriptions of actual networks were 'shepherding sheep' and 'children's' orchestra'. In terms of the ranking of the metaphors describing the ideal network of the network managers', 'cogs' attracted the 5 votes whilst 'community', 'support', 'completed circuits' and 'human pyramid' all attracted 3 votes. The full results of this exercise are included in table 8 along with the list of identified metaphors. The semi-structured discussion allowed the group to spend time exploring the metaphors that they felt to be most relevant to their own experience and to this end they spent most time on three:

- The 'car boot sale' metaphor as they felt it conveyed the fact that many actors in their networks were interested only in very brief transactions at the minimum possible cost. This indicated a strong recognition of the 'satisficement' motivation.

- The shepherding sheep metaphor. This reflected a perceived lack of motivation of actors.

- The metaphor of the ‘children’s orchestra’ which again reflected both the need for co-ordination and a perception that network actors were in need of a high level of guidance if that was going to be achieved.

Whilst there was a strong sense of a number of different ideal network types, consensus was not high in the group about either actual or ideal network types and this suggests the existence of different perceptions.

## Questionnaire

The analysis of the questionnaire results was done by frequency (table 9), by mode score (table 10) and by mean score (table 11). The analysis revealed a wide diversity of ideal networks identified with every questionnaire item receiving at least some support and many receiving a high degree of support. Within this analysis, however, some ideal network types received a generally higher level of support whilst some others received a generally lower level of support. A summary of the most and least supported metaphors is provided in table 13. For the frequency analysis ‘most supported’ is defined as having more than 25 of the respondents strongly agreeing that the item would be their ideal network type whereas ‘least supported’ means that more than 25 strongly disagree that this is the case. For the mode score analysis ‘most supported’ is simply defined as being where the mode is ‘1’, that is the largest group of respondents are those that ‘strongly agree’ with the ideal network metaphor as opposed to the least supported which is where the mode score is ‘4’ (strongly disagree). For the mean score analysis the items have been ranked in order of mean score and the top five and bottom five have been identified as the most and least supported respectively.

Table 8: Advice network metaphors identified at the policy network managers' workshop

| Metaphor | group | total | real | Ideal |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bond | a | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Club | a | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cobweb | a | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Community | a | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Focus | a | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Gel | a | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Handicap | a | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Link | a | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Opportunity | a | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Pattern | a | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Support | a | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Team | a | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Blind Faith | b | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Completed Circuits | b | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Crossed Wires | b | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Family | b | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Flock of Sheep | b | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Game of Cards | b | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Generator of Energy | b | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Pack of Cards | b | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Parallel Lines | b | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Shepherding Sheep | b | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| Spiders Web | b | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Car Boot Sale | c | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| Coffee Morning | c | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Fruit Machine | c | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fruit Market | c | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Gamble | c | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Giving Up Smoking | c | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Lottery | c | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mothers Union | c | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Office Party | c | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Roller coaster | c | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| School Dinners | c | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The Real Thing | c | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Children's Orchestra | d | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Chinese Finger Trap | d | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| International Football Team | d | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| London Underground Map | d | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Maze | d | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Mine field | d | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Spaghetti | d | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Spasm | d | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Telephone Exchange | d | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Traffic Lights | d | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cogs | e | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Flock of Geese | e | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Human Pyramid | e | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Planning Committee | e | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| School of Fish | e | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Truss | e | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *Totals* | | *59* | *29* | *30* |

Table 9: Questionnaire response frequencies

| AllCases | No. identified | % identified | Strongly agree | tend to agree | tend to disagree | strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aerial photograph | 69 | 85 | 8 | 34 | 18 | 9 |
| Anchor | 63 | 78 | 5 | 24 | 15 | 19 |
| Ball room dancing | 61 | 75 | 1 | 14 | 27 | 19 |
| Bridge of a ship | 63 | 78 | 5 | 24 | 22 | 12 |
| Broad church | 64 | 79 | 14 | 27 | 17 | 6 |
| Car boot sale | 69 | 85 | 1 | 18 | 28 | 22 |
| Closed circuit | 62 | 77 | 0 | 7 | 26 | 29 |
| Cogs turning together | 67 | 83 | 23 | 33 | 9 | 2 |
| Common language | 74 | 91 | 33 | 35 | 4 | 2 |
| Community | 76 | 94 | 38 | 29 | 6 | 3 |
| Conference | 73 | 90 | 16 | 21 | 24 | 12 |
| Dating agency | 73 | 90 | 1 | 18 | 24 | 30 |
| Debating chamber | 74 | 91 | 20 | 25 | 17 | 12 |
| Electric grid | 61 | 75 | 8 | 25 | 13 | 15 |
| Family | 75 | 93 | 18 | 37 | 10 | 10 |
| Flock of geese | 61 | 75 | 2 | 9 | 24 | 26 |
| Focus group | 74 | 91 | 22 | 35 | 13 | 4 |
| Helpline | 74 | 91 | 34 | 27 | 10 | 3 |
| Human pyramid | 62 | 77 | 9 | 14 | 21 | 18 |
| Jazz orchestra | 61 | 75 | 1 | 16 | 20 | 24 |
| Library | 76 | 94 | 31 | 38 | 6 | 1 |
| Lighthouse | 68 | 84 | 6 | 36 | 11 | 15 |
| Mark of quality | 68 | 84 | 29 | 26 | 12 | 1 |
| Market place | 73 | 90 | 16 | 31 | 18 | 8 |
| New country to explore | 64 | 79 | 7 | 25 | 22 | 10 |
| Ocean to sail across | 63 | 78 | 1 | 15 | 22 | 25 |
| Passport | 65 | 80 | 8 | 21 | 23 | 13 |
| Poker game | 66 | 81 | 0 | 1 | 20 | 45 |
| Research laboratory | 71 | 88 | 8 | 21 | 23 | 19 |
| Safety net | 72 | 89 | 16 | 35 | 15 | 6 |
| Shared promise | 67 | 83 | 14 | 28 | 21 | 4 |
| Shareholders meeting | 69 | 85 | 7 | 17 | 32 | 13 |
| Stepping stones | 70 | 86 | 14 | 38 | 10 | 8 |
| Supermarket | 75 | 93 | 13 | 38 | 13 | 11 |
| Support group | 79 | 98 | 34 | 39 | 3 | 3 |
| Telephone exchange | 71 | 88 | 16 | 33 | 9 | 13 |
| Theatre | 63 | 78 | 1 | 12 | 27 | 23 |
| Toolkit | 70 | 86 | 15 | 38 | 10 | 7 |
| Treasure map | 67 | 83 | 6 | 25 | 17 | 19 |
| Weather forecast | 64 | 79 | 4 | 16 | 29 | 15 |
| Windows of opportunity | 71 | 88 | 20 | 40 | 8 | 3 |
| Workshop | 70 | 86 | 13 | 36 | 17 | 4 |

Table 10: Mode scores for each questionnaire item

Underline indicates that the mode represents 50% or more of cases

| | All | Pub | Vol | Fund | Prov | Pol | Rep | Front | Man | Vteer | Paid |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aerial photograph | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Anchor | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| Ball room dancing | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Bridge of a ship | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| Broad church | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | **1** | 3 |
| Car boot sale | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Closed circuit | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Cogs turning together | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | **1** | 2 | 2 | 2 | **1** | 2 |
| Common language | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | **1** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **1** |
| Community | **1** | 2 | **1** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **1** | 2 |
| Conference | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Dating agency | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Debating chamber | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | **1** | 2 | **1** | 2 |
| Electric grid | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Family | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Flock of geese | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Focus group | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Helpline | **1** | **1** | 2 | 2 | **1** | 2 | **1** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **1** |
| Human pyramid | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| Jazz orchestra | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| Library | 2 | **1** | 2 | **1** | **1** | **1** | 2 | **1** | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Lighthouse | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Mark of quality | **1** | **1** | **1** | 2 | **1** | 2 | 2 | **1** | **1** | **1** | 2 |
| Market place | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| New country to explore | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Ocean to sail across | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Passport | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| Poker game | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Research laboratory | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Safety net | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Shared promise | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Shareholders meeting | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Stepping stones | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Supermarket | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Support group | 2 | 2 | **1** | 2 | **1** | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | **1** | 2 |
| Telephone exchange | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Theatre | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| Toolkit | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | **1** | 2 |
| Treasure map | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Weather forecast | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Windows of opportunity | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Workshop | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

Table 11: Mean scores for each questionnaire item

| | ALL | Pub | Vol | Fund | Prov | Pol | Rep | Front | Man | Vteer | Paid |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aerial photograph | 2.41 | 2.50 | 2.30 | 2.40 | 2.35 | 2.26 | 2.32 | 2.19 | 2.43 | 2.10 | 2.52 |
| Anchor | 2.76 | 2.71 | 2.73 | 2.17 | 2.76 | 2.69 | 2.56 | 2.74 | 2.83 | 2.71 | 2.84 |
| Ball room dancing | 3.05 | 3.00 | 3.08 | 2.82 | 3.05 | 2.87 | 2.76 | 3.09 | 3.08 | 3.13 | 2.96 |
| Bridge of a ship | 2.65 | 2.41 | 2.88 | 2.08 | 2.66 | 2.80 | 2.50 | 2.67 | 2.73 | 2.56 | 2.88 |
| Broad church | 2.23 | 2.40 | 2.07 | 2.15 | 2.00 | 2.25 | 2.14 | 2.00 | 2.20 | 1.78 | 2.30 |
| Car boot sale | 3.03 | 3.06 | 2.97 | 2.86 | 3.13 | 3.16 | 3.05 | 2.96 | 3.09 | 3.00 | 3.07 |
| Closed circuit | 3.35 | 3.31 | 3.50 | 3.17 | 3.36 | 3.38 | 3.39 | 3.14 | 3.40 | 3.57 | 3.50 |
| Cogs turning together | 1.85 | 1.81 | 1.83 | 1.67 | 1.81 | 1.79 | 1.85 | 1.72 | 1.89 | 1.20 | 1.75 |
| Common language | 1.66 | 1.71 | 1.63 | 1.50 | 1.60 | 1.58 | 1.71 | 1.52 | 1.62 | 1.42 | 1.55 |
| Community | 1.66 | 1.70 | 1.59 | 1.69 | 1.58 | 1.55 | 1.61 | 1.38 | 1.74 | 1.42 | 1.80 |
| Conference | 2.44 | 2.53 | 2.41 | 2.25 | 2.36 | 2.42 | 2.65 | 2.32 | 2.48 | 2.40 | 2.61 |
| Dating agency | 3.14 | 3.03 | 3.27 | 3.14 | 3.17 | 2.95 | 3.09 | 3.26 | 3.09 | 3.36 | 3.07 |
| Debating chamber | 2.28 | 2.35 | 2.27 | 2.29 | 2.24 | 2.30 | 2.09 | 1.85 | 2.39 | 1.92 | 2.27 |
| Electric grid | 2.57 | 2.61 | 2.54 | 2.23 | 2.52 | 2.40 | 2.50 | 2.41 | 2.62 | 2.56 | 2.81 |
| Family | 2.16 | 2.06 | 2.23 | 1.87 | 2.15 | 2.33 | 2.00 | 1.96 | 2.28 | 2.00 | 2.13 |
| Flock of geese | 3.21 | 3.22 | 3.23 | 2.82 | 3.21 | 3.00 | 3.05 | 3.04 | 3.26 | 2.86 | 3.15 |
| Focus group | 1.99 | 1.92 | 2.10 | 1.88 | 1.94 | 2.11 | 1.96 | 1.81 | 2.07 | 1.82 | 2.06 |
| Helpline | 1.76 | 1.76 | 1.77 | 2.00 | 1.67 | 1.79 | 1.79 | 1.74 | 1.93 | 1.62 | 1.76 |
| Human pyramid | 2.77 | 2.74 | 2.78 | 2.54 | 2.73 | 2.38 | 2.50 | 2.52 | 2.77 | 2.50 | 2.74 |
| Jazz orchestra | 3.10 | 3.00 | 3.19 | 2.83 | 3.12 | 2.93 | 3.11 | 3.19 | 3.08 | 3.57 | 2.92 |
| Library | 1.70 | 1.67 | 1.74 | 1.69 | 1.59 | 1.65 | 1.56 | 1.50 | 1.70 | 1.54 | 1.70 |
| Lighthouse | 2.51 | 2.38 | 2.70 | 2.23 | 2.46 | 2.50 | 2.21 | 2.38 | 2.60 | 2.63 | 2.36 |
| Mark of quality | 1.78 | 1.81 | 1.79 | 1.80 | 1.67 | 1.89 | 1.95 | 1.50 | 1.86 | 1.40 | 1.68 |
| Market place | 2.25 | 2.29 | 2.29 | 2.47 | 2.16 | 2.06 | 2.09 | 2.12 | 2.31 | 2.15 | 2.36 |
| New country to explore | 2.55 | 2.67 | 2.42 | 2.29 | 2.46 | 2.50 | 2.53 | 2.46 | 2.57 | 2.50 | 2.67 |
| Ocean to sail across | 3.13 | 3.14 | 3.26 | 2.83 | 3.09 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 2.96 | 3.25 | 3.13 | 3.18 |
| Passport | 2.63 | 2.58 | 2.83 | 2.47 | 2.57 | 2.33 | 2.55 | 2.57 | 2.59 | 2.43 | 2.73 |
| Poker game | 3.67 | 3.66 | 3.66 | 3.77 | 3.71 | 3.56 | 3.71 | 3.75 | 3.63 | 3.80 | 3.81 |
| Research laboratory | 2.75 | 2.68 | 2.82 | 2.44 | 2.61 | 2.40 | 2.76 | 2.68 | 2.63 | 2.40 | 2.90 |
| Safety net | 2.15 | 2.18 | 2.14 | 2.06 | 2.02 | 2.05 | 2.08 | 1.85 | 2.18 | 1.64 | 2.17 |
| Shared promise | 2.22 | 2.28 | 2.21 | 2.29 | 2.20 | 2.35 | 2.17 | 2.35 | 2.27 | 1.91 | 2.21 |
| Shareholders meeting | 2.74 | 2.71 | 2.89 | 2.64 | 2.77 | 2.53 | 2.76 | 2.79 | 2.74 | 2.40 | 2.89 |
| Stepping stones | 2.17 | 2.22 | 2.10 | 1.93 | 2.18 | 2.00 | 1.96 | 2.07 | 2.19 | 1.77 | 2.21 |
| Supermarket | 2.29 | 2.27 | 2.30 | 2.27 | 2.27 | 2.16 | 1.96 | 2.34 | 2.29 | 2.15 | 2.28 |
| Support group | 1.68 | 1.84 | 1.58 | 1.75 | 1.59 | 1.70 | 1.69 | 1.66 | 1.73 | 1.38 | 1.73 |
| Telephone exchange | 2.27 | 2.22 | 2.39 | 1.87 | 2.24 | 1.70 | 2.29 | 2.30 | 2.24 | 2.11 | 2.45 |
| Theatre | 3.14 | 3.10 | 3.15 | 2.69 | 3.11 | 2.88 | 3.00 | 2.96 | 3.21 | 3.30 | 3.04 |
| Toolkit | 2.13 | 2.15 | 2.07 | 2.06 | 2.08 | 1.95 | 2.04 | 2.00 | 2.07 | 1.70 | 2.14 |
| Treasure map | 2.73 | 2.78 | 2.70 | 2.50 | 2.77 | 2.47 | 2.47 | 2.80 | 2.79 | 2.67 | 2.77 |
| Weather forecast | 2.86 | 2.89 | 2.89 | 2.77 | 2.82 | 2.79 | 2.90 | 2.91 | 2.85 | 2.90 | 3.20 |
| Windows of opportunity | 1.92 | 1.91 | 1.81 | 2.00 | 1.88 | 1.79 | 1.73 | 1.85 | 1.88 | 1.75 | 1.86 |
| Workshop | 2.17 | 2.29 | 2.14 | 2.07 | 2.12 | 2.22 | 2.35 | 2.16 | 2.27 | 1.73 | 2.21 |

Table 12: Questionnaire items ranked by mean score

| Item | Mean score |
|---|---|
| 1. Community | 1.66 |
| 2. Common language | 1.66 |
| 3. Support group | 1.68 |
| 4. Library | 1.70 |
| 5. Helpline | 1.76 |
| 6. Mark of quality | 1.78 |
| 7. Cogs turning together | 1.85 |
| 8. Windows of opportunity | 1.92 |
| 9. Focus group | 1.99 |
| 10. Toolkit | 2.13 |
| 11. Safety net | 2.15 |
| 12. Family | 2.16 |
| 13. Stepping stones | 2.17 |
| 14. Workshop | 2.17 |
| 15. Shared promise | 2.22 |
| 16. Broad church | 2.23 |
| 17. Market place | 2.25 |
| 18. Telephone exchange | 2.27 |
| 19. Debating chamber | 2.28 |
| 20. Supermarket | 2.29 |
| 21. Aerial photograph | 2.41 |
| 22. Conference | 2.44 |
| 23. Lighthouse | 2.51 |
| 24. New country to explore | 2.55 |
| 25. Electric grid | 2.57 |
| 26. Bridge of a ship | 2.65 |
| 27. Treasure map | 2.73 |
| 28. Shareholders meeting | 2.74 |
| 29. Research laboratory | 2.75 |
| 30. Anchor | 2.76 |
| 31. Human pyramid | 2.77 |
| 32. Weather forecast | 2.86 |
| 33. Car boot sale | 3.03 |
| 34. Ball room dancing | 3.05 |
| 35. Jazz orchestra | 3.10 |
| 36. Passport | 3.11 |
| 37. Ocean to sail across | 3.13 |
| 38. Dating agency | 3.14 |
| 39. Theatre | 3.14 |
| 40. Flock of geese | 3.21 |
| 41. Closed circuit | 3.35 |
| 42. Poker game | 3.67 |

Table 13: Most and least supported metaphors

| | **By Frequency** (data table 2) | **By Mode score** (data table 3) | **By mean score** (data table 4 & 5) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Most Supported | Strongly agree > 25<br><br>Community<br>Support group<br>Helpline<br>Common language<br>Library<br>Mark of quality | Mode score = 1<br><br>Community<br>Helpline<br>Mark of quality | Top 5 Mean scores<br><br>Community<br>Common language<br>Support group<br>Library<br>Helpline |
| Least Supported | Strongly disagree > 25<br><br>Poker game<br>Dating agency<br>Closed circuit<br>Flock of geese | Mode score = 4<br><br>Closed circuit<br>Dating agency<br>Flock of geese<br>Jazz orchestra<br>Ocean to sail across<br>Poker game | Bottom 5 mean scores<br><br>Poker game<br>Closed circuit<br>Flock of geese<br>Theatre<br>Dating agency |

These findings show the ideal networks that actors in advice networks in South East Wales would prefer or would not prefer and, by implication, show the types of qualities that these networks would have to demonstrate in order to motivate them to participate. What the findings suggest is a preference for social support (community, support group, common language), individual support (helpline, library) and status (mark of quality). Conversely the results suggest that respondents would be unlikely to participate in networks that promote power games (poker game), high levels of co-ordination (closed circuit, flock of geese, jazz orchestra), strong single relationships (dating agency) or strategic opportunity (Ocean to sail across). Although each of the metaphors is open to interpretation and would benefit from further clarification from the respondents (theatre, for example, may be open to several interpretations) the overall pattern of responses suggests a level of consensus. This consensus is further reflected in the degree of similarity between the responses when broken down amongst the different categories of respondents. None of the different groups appears to show a significantly different pattern of responses compared to the population as a whole. This perhaps adds weight to the argument that agency in policy networks is not simply a product of structural position (Rhodes, 2002).

The questionnaires also revealed support for many ideal network types that could be described as contradictory. So that, for example, the idea of the network as a support groups seems to contradict the idea of a network as the bridge of a ship, or another example would be that the idea of a network as cogs turning together contradicts the idea of the network as a debating chamber. However, these contradictions are perhaps implied rather than explicit and generally the most supported metaphors, such as such as support group, common language, community and helpline appear to be complimentary. The biggest potential contradiction appeared to be the one between actor motivations compared with manager motivations. This was not only suggested directly by the managers but was also borne out by the questionnaire results with most of the metaphors identified as 'ideal' by the managers ranked lowest in order of preference by the network actors for example flock of geese or closed circuit.

## Feedback session

In the feedback session the managers' group had the opportunity to comment on the questionnaire findings and to compare them with their own experience. Members of the group commented at this stage that the first workshop had in fact led them to thinking about network types and qualities in a way that they had not done previously. This had led to them rethinking the way in which they facilitated their network events. The issue of motivation was also discussed explicitly in this session. Generally the managers associated their experience strongly with the questionnaire findings and, in particular, they recognised the need for social support and for satisficement as strong motivations for the network actors who they worked with. The group also associated their experience with the finding that network actors were generally not concerned with, and even negatively disposed to, the idea that networks should foster policy co-ordination. This is perhaps linked to the generally negative perception that the managers group also had of motivation in policy networks that was described in terms of the low commitment that they often experienced from network actors. This low commitment was

illustrated by the way in which many people ‘just turned up for meetings to check out if anything might be useful, refused to contribute and left as soon as they had got what they wanted’. Managers also emphasised how people engaged to protect their own interests and took part simply to ensure that they did not lose out or miss out on something that was going on. In this sense the managers described ‘fear of missed opportunities’ as a motivation. Managers had also observed that people wanted to ‘gatecrash other people’s networks’, which ties very well to the ‘personal gain’ motivation identified in the typology. The low response rate of the questionnaire was also suggested as a symptom of low motivation by the mangers in the feedback session.

# 6. Discussion

This study has aimed to answer the following research question:

**What motivates people to participate in policy networks?**

In addressing this question the following sub questions were also posed:

- Are actors in policy networks motivated by more than the rational attainment of policy goals?

- Are actors in policy networks motivated by the desire to co-operate with other actors on shared issues of concern?

- Is there a link between the organizational roles of network actors and their motivation to participate in policy networks?

In this final chapter conclusions will be drawn in terms of the overall research question and the sub questions including whether the empirical evidence collected from the field research supports the conclusions suggested by the literature review. Implications for theory and practice will then be identified and ideas for further research discussed.

## Conclusions

**What motivates people to participate in policy networks?**

In order to answer the research question two different forms of research have been undertaken. Firstly a review of the literature of the policy process, social networks and inter-firm networks was used in order to *deduce* the existence of different motivations in the form of micro theories. Secondly field research on advice networks in South East Wales was used to collect empirical evidence

about motivation types through a metaphor-based questionnaire. What both pieces of research have suggested is that motivation in policy networks is both complex and subject to a wide range of explanations. As with work motivation, no single theory will suffice and each individual case will need to be treated on its own merit. In other words, it is not safe to make assumptions about what motivates people to participate in policy networks.

***Are actors in policy networks motivated by more than the rational attainment of policy goals?***

The literature review suggested that a wide range of political, social and economic factors have the potential to influence motivation in policy networks and this was supported by the findings from the fieldwork leading to the following conclusion:

> ***Conclusion 1***
> *People are motivated to participate in policy networks by a wide range of political, social and economic factors*

Both the literature review and the field research suggest that people in policy networks are motivated by much more than simply the rational attainment of policy goals. The literature review identified 14 micro theories of policy network motivation each containing an identified network 'offer' and a model of the individual. These micro theories suggest that theories of the policy process, of social networks and of inter-firm networks all contain potential explanations of what motivates people to participate in policy networks and that these need to be considered by policy network analysts and managers alike. The fieldwork also supported this conclusion and, whilst some metaphors were supported more than others each of the 42 items gained at least some support.

> ***Conclusion 2***
> *People in policy networks are very likely to be motivated by social-psychological factors*

The literature review identified the micro theory of 'personal support' as an explanation for policy network motivation. Tellingly two of the ideal network metaphors associated with this micro theory, namely community and support group, attracted the highest levels of support from the questionnaire responses: 67 of the 81 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the community metaphor and 73 of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the support group metaphor. These two items had also been identified by the initial managers' workshop as ideal network metaphors suggesting further that the importance of social psychological support for actors in policy networks is widely recognised in practice.

***Are actors in policy networks motivated by the desire to co-operate with other actors on shared issues of concern?***

The literature review suggested that the desire to co-operate on shared issues of concern was only one of many factors potentially influencing motivation in policy networks. The field research supported this.

> ***Conclusion 3***
>
> *People in policy networks are not necessarily motivated by a desire to be co-ordinated with others in the pursuit of overarching policy goals*

Critically the policy co-ordination motive for participation in policy networks had at best a mixed level of support from the questionnaire respondents. Whilst the 'cogs turning together' metaphor attracted a reasonable level of support, the 'flock of geese' and 'human pyramid' metaphors associated with policy co-ordination attracted only low levels of support. This lack of enthusiasm for co-ordination amongst network actors was clearly also a source of frustration for the managers' group as was reflected in there use of the 'children's' orchestra' and the 'shepherding sheep' metaphor. Both of these metaphors illustrate very well the nature of the co-ordination task as perceived by the network managers. For the network actors, however,

individual, rather than collective benefits, presented themselves as the primary motivators:

***Conclusion 4***

*People in policy networks are very likely to be motivated by the potential of policy networks to satisfice them in their own work objectives*

The literature review identified that satisficement had become an increasingly important explanation for individual behaviour for actors within the policy process and this was borne out strongly by the empirical evidence from the fieldwork. The strong support for the helpline and library metaphors from respondents in particular suggests that high levels of utility coupled with low levels of commitment is a powerful motivational combination for policy network actors. This was also recognised by the managers' group who were able to give many examples of satisficing behaviour from their own experience. At the same time the very low level of support for the dating agency metaphor further supports the idea that participants are more likely to be interested in one off transactions than they are in investing in more significant relationships.

***Is there a link between the organizational roles of network actors and their motivation to participate in policy networks?***

Whilst much of the literature on interorganizational relationships and inter-firm networks focuses on the importance of organizational interests as the key factor in determining participation in networks, this was not borne out by the fieldwork.

***Conclusion 5***

*Motivation in policy networks is not linked to organizational role*

Neither the literature review nor the fieldwork provided any evidence to suggest that motivation is influenced by network position. The same patters

of support for the different metaphor items were reflected across all of the subcategories of respondent whether they were organizational position, functional role or sector. This supports the view of Rhodes (2002) that people make networks not the other way round and that preferences cannot be read from network position; each individual is potentially subject to a complex interplay of motivational influences and each must be considered separately.

**Implications for Theory**

Whilst the aim of this research is to provide conclusions that can be generalised to other policy networks this is not necessarily straightforward. The case for generalization is supported by the convergence of the findings of the literature review and the fieldwork; the former deducing the existence of a wide range of policy network motivation types from other theories and the later inducing a number of policy network motivation types from empirical data. In terms of the field work the findings should also be applicable to other similar advice networks across the UK given that the operating environment is not subject to any uniquely Welsh conditions; the Welsh Assembly, for example, does not have a significant role in advice networks of the type studied. Nevertheless there are reasons to suggest that the conclusions are not easily generalised to other policy networks. As a policy issue advice provision may well be different to other issues such as health or tackling poverty, as it is not clear whether it inspires the same kinds of commitment as other policy issues. Similarly the way in which the Community Legal Service, which seeks to manage the network, is regarded may be a factor that is not present in other policy networks. Nevertheless, the conclusions from this study present a challenge to policy network analysis in that they contradict the assumption that actors in policy networks are simply motivated by the rational attainment of policy goals. If policy network analysis is to move from 'mere description' into explanation then the complex motivations of policy network actors will surely need to be fully understood.

## Implications for practice

In terms of policy network management the research suggests that there is a big gap between what managers expect from a network and what the actors want. The managers' ideal network, perhaps unsurprisingly, was one which was highly co-ordinated and policy goal orientated characterised by the 'human pyramid' or 'flock of geese' metaphors whilst for the actors, the evidence from the field research suggests a policy network geared towards satisficement and social benefits. Managers seemed to be well aware of this gap as was borne out both by some of their actual network descriptions such as 'shepherding sheep' and 'children's orchestra' and by their negative descriptions of the behaviours and motivations of network actors. This 'motivation gap' is clearly a key challenge for the managers in the researched networks and potentially for policy network management more generally. Policy network motivation also has the potential to influence network effectiveness and this was borne out by the field research. Whilst the managers group felt that motivation was not an issue that they had really considered before, following the research process they nevertheless considered it to be one that they would look at in the future. In both the workshop and the feedback session they identified the motivation of network actors as a factor likely to have an impact on the network. The way in which managers structure and support policy networks will be closely linked to the levels of participation and these two ideas are connected through the concept of policy network motivation. In practical terms if they are to engage with actors motivated by social and emotional needs and by satisficement then they will need to implement management strategies in terms of information and meetings that reflect this.

In practical terms the three themes identified by the literature review, that is, whether the network has an open or closed membership, whether interactions are transactional or relationship based and whether resources are co-ordinated or distributed, all translate into practical choices for the network manager about how the network is supported. How well these choices are

made is to a large extent depends upon how well the network manager understands what actors want to get out of their networks and how they want to interact. The wrong choice can have a negative effect on policy network effectiveness so that, for example, a strategy which focuses on a high number of informal meeting opportunities for actors to build relationships is not going to impress an actor seeking a single piece of information that they need for a funding bid. The likelihood is that different management strategies will encourage some actors and deter others but, without an understanding of what actors' motivations actually are, it is difficult to judge what these effects might be.

This research has also produced two things that will potentially be of practical value to network managers. The typology of micro theories of network motivation, that can be used as a framework for thinking about motivations in a policy networks, and the ideal network questionnaire, that can be used by policy network managers to get a snapshot of motivation across an entire policy network. The managers group showed interest in both the typology and the questionnaire and this further supports the argument that policy network motivation is an issue of practical importance for people involved in the policy process.

## Ideas for Further Research

Undertaking this research has raised a number of questions that could usefully be addressed in further research. Firstly, *can the gap between manager and actor motivations be resolved by management strategies or is it a necessary weakness in all managed policy networks?* In other words, if policy network actors are not motivated by 'policy co-ordination', does that mean that policy networks are not going to be capable of achieving such co-ordination? Secondly, *what management strategies, if any, can influence policy network motivation?* Given that the perceptions of actors about the network are formed through interactions with other actors it may well be possible to engage management strategies that shape these perceptions. It

may also be possible that the perceptions and motivations of actors are formed outside the influence of network managers and are beyond influence. Thirdly, *what more can be learnt about policy networks by using metaphors?* In particular it would be useful to use metaphors to gather 'rich' descriptions of policy networks through in depth interviews and focus groups rather than the 'thin' descriptions gathered through the questionnaire and to use the creative potential of metaphors as well as their descriptive power. It would also be useful to take some of the metaphors used in this research and explore in more depth, perhaps by using focus groups, what the different types of ideal policy networks imply for actors and mangers alike. In particular it would be interesting to see whether this kind of metaphor-based dialogue could be used as a tool for developing and shaping policy networks. The final question is *what motivates actors in other types of policy network*? My research looked at policy networks focusing on advice services in South Wales. There must be opportunities to learn a great deal more by taking a comparative view of motivation across different policy networks.

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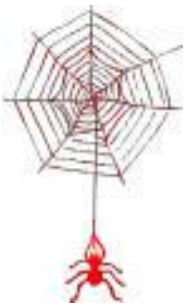
# 8. Appendices

## APPENDIX 1: Images Used for the Network managers' focus group

Group A: Images associated with social motivations in networks

Group B: Images associated with political motivations in networks



Group C: Images associated with economic motivations in networks

*Group D: Images associated with co-ordinating motivations in networks*

## APPENDIX 2: Advice Network Questionnaire

I am writing to ask you to help me with some research I am doing. The research is about what people involved with developing and providing advice services want from the networks they are involved with. By networks here I mean informal partnerships of organisations such as those associated with the Community Legal Service. This research focuses on SE Wales and is aimed at informing partnership work more generally. It will also form part of a Masters Degree. The results will be fed back to the Legal Services Commission Team in Cardiff who helped me with the mailing of this survey and will also be available to you on request. I hope that this questionnaire will also be helpful for you and will give you a chance to reflect on what you want from your networks. It should not take more than a few minutes to complete and I would be really grateful for your help!

*Dave Mckenna*
***March 2004***

### A. Ideal Networks

*The 42 images in the list below have been chosen to try and illustrate different ideas about networks. Some of the images may seem a little strange but there really is a reason behind all of them! Hopefully, you will be able to identify with at least some. Please take a moment to think about what you would ideally want from an advice network and then have a quick look through the whole list before giving your responses.*

My ideal advice network would be like...
**Please cross one box in each row (Strongly agree / Tend to agree / Tend to disagree / Strongly disagree / Don't know)**

1. a research laboratory
2. a supermarket
3. a poker game
4. a jazz orchestra
5. windows of opportunity
6. ballroom dancing
7. a car boot sale
8. a dating agency
9. a family
10. a market place
11. a shareholders meeting
12. a lighthouse
13. an anchor
14. a theatre
15. the bridge of a ship
16. a mark of quality
17. a community
18. a treasure map
19. a telephone exchange
20. a shared promise

21. an aerial photograph
22. a toolkit
23. a support group
24. a new country to explore
25. a library
26. stepping stones
27. the weather forecast
28. a closed circuit
29. a flock of geese
30. a helpline
31. an electric grid
32. a broad church
33. an ocean to sail across
34. cogs turning together
35. a common language
36. a debating chamber
37. a focus group
38. a safety net
39. a conference
40. a passport
41. a human pyramid
42. a workshop

## B. About You

(1) I work for… ***Please cross*** *one* ***box only***

- Private sector organisation
- Community / voluntary group
- Public sector organisation
- Other / don't know

(2) My work involves… ***Please cross*** *all boxes* ***that apply***

- The funding of advice services
- Policy work / research
- Providing advice service
- Representing the users of advice services

(3) I would describe myself as a…. ***Please cross*** *all boxes* ***that apply***

- Frontline worker
- Manager
- Volunteer
- Paid employee

**Thank you for your help**.
*Please return by* **5th April 2004,** *using the prepaid envelope provided, or to:*
**Dave Mckenna, Questionnaire Response, FREEPOST SWC0034, SWANSEA, SA1 1ZZ.**