

[Paul Crawshaw and Donald Simpson \(2002\) 'Comprehensive Community Initiatives: Addressing a 'Problem' in Local Governance or Creating One?'](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/7/1/crawshaw.html)
Sociological Research Online, vol. 7, no. 1,
<<http://www.socresonline.org.uk/7/1/crawshaw.html>>

To cite articles published in *Sociological Research Online*, please reference the above information and include paragraph numbers if necessary

Received: 29/10/2001 Accepted: 12/5/2002 Published: 31/05/2002

 **Abstract**

Pervaded by 'third way' values and identified as archetypal Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs), programmes such as Education Action Zones (EAZs) and Health Action Zones (HAZs) follow a procedural rationale based on heterarchy and partnership. They are a response to an alleged prior fragmentation of service provision in welfare across sectors. Employing evidence from an evaluation of an EAZ and HAZ in one location, this article makes two claims. First, it is claimed that the extent of the alleged 'problem' of fragmentation across the governance of local social and welfare services prior to the introduction of these CCIs is contestable and was exaggerated for political purposes. Second, despite the application of CCIs in the form of EAZs and HAZs, it is claimed that a continuing problem of fragmentation across local governance of social and welfare services is evident. Several insights from the emerging theory of governance failure are employed to offer an explanation for why this situation has occurred.

Keywords:

Comprehensive Community Initiatives; Education Acton Zones; Fragmentation; Governance; Health Action Zones; Partnerships; Third Way

 **Introduction**

1.1

Recent UK government policy has allegedly followed a 'third way' in social and welfare provision. Third way values have pervaded various areas of policy-making, including the new series of area based programmes which have been conceived as part of strategies to address problems facing some of the UK's most deprived communities. Identified as archetypal Comprehensive Community Initiatives ([Judge and Bauld, 2001](#)), such programmes place a strong emphasis upon 'joined up policy' and 'partnership working' as a response to an alleged prior fragmentation of service provision in welfare across sectors. This approach is intended to provide joined up solutions to the interrelated problems of poverty, inequality and exclusion.

1.2

The first part of this paper questions the extent to which fragmentation in local services was a 'problem' prior to the Labour government taking office in May 1997. It draws on ideas in the emerging tradition of critical discourse analysis ([Wodak et al, 2001](#)). The text and discourse that makes up policy in the area of local governance is explored and is

conceptualised as a social phenomenon. In particular, an attempt is made to look at the genesis and structure of the discourse of fragmentation in local governance found in central government policy. This first section also cites work from the USA on CCIs and in doing so provides a useful resource for those interested in the debate surrounding 'good governance and the urban question' ([Jessop, 2001](#)). Such literature on CCIs offers several concepts which might provide useful insight in terms of helping investigate what are regarded as 'difficult' social phenomena ([Connell et al., 1995](#)).

1.3

The second part of the paper reflects upon evaluation studies of two such area based programmes in the North of England, the Townville Education Action Zone (TEAZ) and the Townville Health Action Zone (THAZ). The findings of these studies challenge the assumptions often made by government policy that such initiatives provide a panacea for solving 'problems' of fragmentation in welfare provision by creating joined up solutions. This paper explores some of these issues using interview data collected as part of both studies and discusses the effectiveness of such programmes as new forms of governance for communities facing inequality and exclusion. An impressive corpus of research is emerging examining the potential of EAZs ([Dickson and Power, 2001](#); [Dickson et al., 2001](#); [Hallgarten and Watling, 2001](#); [Jones and Bird, 2000](#)) and HAZs ([Powell and Moon, 2001](#); [Judge and Bauld 2001](#)) as new forms of heterarchical governance mechanisms. However, some gaps are evident in this emerging work. First, while such discussions might include one or more EAZ or HAZ, no attempt is made to look at the experiences of those involved in different types of CCIs in one location. Second, such work is largely speculative, drawing on national and local policy documents with little empirical evidence to support explanatory claims. Third, the research in these areas mainly examines governance through CCIs in terms of the contribution made, or not made, by various 'partners'. This only partly investigates their impact in terms of the main reason provided for their introduction - namely, that they address an alleged prior problem of fragmentation in local governance. Fourth, it is largely based on an engineering model of research with an assumption that CCIs will be successful in improving the quality of governance in localities. Research must therefore provide knowledge which will help CCIs function more effectively. In this way, theories regarding governance are underdeveloped and the possibility that all governance mechanisms may inevitably be limited is ignored. Many previous studies are myopic in the sense that they disregard powerful extraneous factors in the wider context which can be restricting to the progress of CCIs in terms of establishing new forms of heterarchic governance.

1.4

The final section of the paper attempts to tackle all these limitations. It reports findings from two CCIs in one location. It focuses on the issue of fragmentation of local governance, claims that this continues to be evident and that CCIs have not been a panacea. Importantly it also draws from a theoretical framework developed by several writers to help explain why CCIs in Townville have not met prior expectation with regard to this perceived problem of disintegration ([Jessop 2000](#)). Theorists concerned with governance have pointed to the inevitability of its failure in trying to manage complex systems. It is claimed that such failure is an inevitable consequence of attempts to govern liberal societies ([Malpass and Whickham, 1995](#)). This is because any project of governance is incomplete with respect to the objects and practices it governs, and, as such, any such project of governance is always subject to and implicated within other governance systems ([Malpass and Whickham, 1995](#)). Thus, the governance of health or education finds itself within a number of other competing discourses of governance, many of which act upon the same objects and practices.

1.5

Empirical examples from evaluation studies of an EAZ and HAZ in a location given the pseudonym of Townville are used to show that this theory is highly plausible. Evidence is

employed to illustrate the incomplete nature of heterarchical forms of governance through CCI's such as EAZs and HAZs. The central finding from the evaluation work in Townville is that CCI's in the form of the TEAZ and THAZ have not necessarily resulted in greater alignment in governance either in each area of education and health or indeed across these fields in the sense of meta-governance. The emerging body of work on governance through CCI's mentioned above has already demonstrated the patchy success and difficulties which the new CCI's have had in terms of involving certain 'partners' traditionally 'locked out'. The discussion in this paper will hopefully add to this knowledge base by illustrating the continuing problem of fragmentation across local social and welfare services. CCI's in Townville have not been a panacea in this respect and several concepts from the emerging theory of governance failure will be employed to offer an explanation for why this situation has occurred.

The Third Way and Joined up Policy

2.1

As noted, since taking power in 1997 - and their subsequent re-election in 2001 - the UK 'New Labour' government has attempted to forge a 'Third Way' in social and welfare policy. This represents a shift from both the market driven policies of the previous Conservative administrations and 'Old Labour' commitments to the exclusivity of the public sector in providing social and welfare services. Such a 'third way' attempts to construct a middle ground between these two traditional ideologies of right and left. Welfare shaped in this way across the UK and the US is said to be a response to the alleged failures of both the neo-liberal market and 'big government' or statist solutions ([Hill, 2000](#): 62) as co-ordinating mechanisms. The third way thus represents a shift from traditional ideological divides between left and right towards a politics of pluralism which aims to encapsulate both the state and the market, the public and the private, to forge pragmatic solutions for the construction of social democratic societies. This does not mean attempting to reconstruct the old social democracy, but to, as Giddens notes; 'transcend both the old style social democracy and neo-liberalism' ([Giddens 1998](#): 26) in pursuit of a third way more suited to social, economic and political complexities of detraditionalised late modern societies. The rationale underpinning this aim is a recognition that individuals are in need of help to deal with the risks resulting from globalisation, yet which can also recognise public distrust of 'big government' ([Hill, 2000](#)).

2.2

Policy comprises text (in this context text refers to written documents) and discourses (ways of talking and thinking about certain issues - e.g. the functions and roles of CCI's). These are implicit in one another ([Ball 1994](#)). Third way creed has been adopted by the UK New Labour administration as a political philosophy and is shaping much of the text and discourse that comprises the government's policy. In particular, the following set of guiding principles are central:

1. International co-operation as a basis of foreign policy
2. A knowledge based economy where governments enable, not command
3. A strong civil society with strong communities
4. Modern government based on partnership and decentralisation ([Hill 2000](#): 63)

2.3

These principles are underpinned by a commitment to service delivery through partnerships between public authorities, voluntary agencies and the private sector. The policy document, Meet the Challenge: Education Action Zones, for example, notes:

...a partnership approach within Education Action Zones is essential. Local people are in the best position to identify the real concerns and challenges facing their schools. They can also bring into education new skills, funding and

different ways of working. Businesses can provide management and leadership expertise, or enter into new contracts for delivering services. Parents can help ensure the schools provide a high quality education, and that in return they get support from the community ([DfEE, 1999](#): 4).

2.4

It is this element of third way policy advocating both partnerships and local accountability for service provision that will form the focus of the discussion that follows. Such policies illustrate the pragmatic tone of the third way as it has been appropriated in both the UK and the US, thus 'What matters is what works to give effect to our values' ([Blair, 1998](#)). The implementation of such policies in the UK has seen a shift in social and welfare services to incorporate partnerships between diverse service providers from both the public and private sectors - regardless of traditional ideological debates and objections. The shift strongly reflects the New Labour belief that 'at the heart of the third way is pragmatism rather than ideology and a strong belief in partnership' ([Blunkett, 1999](#)). Service provision in health, education and welfare must therefore demonstrate integrated or 'joined up' solutions and transcend traditional boundaries between the public and private sectors in favour of a 'pragmatism' committed to doing 'what works'.

Models of Local Governance

3.1

The term 'governance' refers to a means of organising, controlling and regulating societies which is typically achieved through processes of administration (see [Rose, 1993](#)). This draws on the Foucauldian notion of governmentality that is concerned with the exercise of authority over both individual and collective conduct through expertise ([Rose, 1993](#):93). The resulting models of governance or what [Malpass and Whickham \(1997\)](#) describe as 'governmental projects' which emerge take diverse forms from 'macro projects undertaken by organisations ('governments') established for the purposes of regulating the lives of whole communities (e.g. Health Action Zones and Education Action Zones)...or 'micro projects' such as are involved in the running of one's daily work schedule.' (p. 93). Governance, or models of governance can thus be conceptualised at an individual, community, societal, national or even international level. Within late modernity neo-liberalism is said to represent the dominant mode of governance of nations and societies evidenced by the dominance of the market as a system of social organisation and has been said to result in growing processes of globalisation, detraditionalisation and individualisation (see [Giddens 1998](#)).

3.2

In the UK context, neo-liberalism emerged in the 1980's as the dominant response to the supposed failure of statist policies to govern societies effectively ([Jessop, 2000](#)). However, by the early 1990's in the UK and other European countries, a Third Way was being mooted as a potential solution to the failure of both the state and market based mechanisms in addressing complex economic, social and political issues. Third way promoters increasingly began to espouse the benefits of rejecting the rigid polarisation between the anarchy of the market and the hierarchy of state intervention in favour of a 'heterarchical' mode of governance. All models of governance are thus characterised by different conceptions of how societies should be organised politically, economically and socially. Neo-liberal policies implemented in the UK in the 1980's advocated a shift from the 'hierarchical' or statist mode of governance dominant in the post war period towards 'anarchic' or market driven societies based upon competition. 'Heterarchical' models of governance represent an amalgamation of these two models, and therefore attempt to apply practically some of the key tenets of third way policy. The state and the market are assumed to have failed as co-ordinating mechanisms and this is said to be reconcilable by transcending traditional boundaries and cutting across market-state divides. These new

forms of governance thus aim to reconcile a neo-liberal emphasis on economic efficiency and dynamism with a traditional left concern with equity and social cohesion ([Jessop, 2000](#)). It has been suggested that in this way 'the third way seeks to combine economic dynamism with social justice. Indeed it does more, it avows that one depends crucially on the other' ([Blair, 1999](#)). There is therefore no outright rejection of state or market involvement in social and welfare provision on ideological grounds. Rather, a new role for government is sought as 'enabler' helping to remove barriers, freeing up opportunity and providing extra support where it is needed to ensure that everyone can take advantage of opportunities ([Blunkett, 1999](#)).

◆ Comprehensive Community Initiatives as Third Way Policy

4.1

Third Way concepts such as heterarchy and partnership have been operationalised in the series of community based social policy initiatives introduced by the UK New Labour government since 1997. In order to help achieve their ambitious targets of equity, inclusion and joined up policy, one of the first actions of the administration was to embark on a series of such area based community programmes, or what will be referred to here as Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCI's) ([Connell et al, 1995](#)). Borrowing heavily from programmes developed in the US, CCIs are complex partnership programmes designed to work by targeting areas of high deprivation with concerted programmes of social improvement, often using models of community development and empowerment. New UK programmes such as Sure Start, New Deal for Communities (NDC's) and the two initiatives which provide the empirical focus for this paper - Health Action Zones (HAZs) and Education Action Zones (EAZs) - are complex partnership programmes designed to bring together service providers in the public, private and voluntary sectors to work towards ambitious targets of area improvement by reducing inequalities in health and education. Areas typically marked out by local authority boundaries and school catchment areas are allocated such funding as part of a competitive bidding process and programmes are usually time limited.

4.2

As complex programmes involving diverse partners in horizontal relationships to collaboratively manage the process of area improvement and tackle inequalities, such CCI's typify heterarchical modes of governance. Programmes are generally governed by partnership boards made up of diverse service providers drawn from health, education, community, voluntary and private sectors attempting to work together in horizontal power relations. Projects attempt to implement initiatives and programmes ranging from community planning and area regeneration to private sector support of school improvement schemes whilst working in partnership with local communities.

4.3

Such CCI's have a long tradition in the US ([Connell et al, 1995: 1](#)). During the final two decades of the 20th Century, national or community foundations across the US also started to develop a new crop of CCI's - all with the goal of 'promoting positive change in individual, family, community circumstances in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, by improving physical, economic and social conditions'. As Connell et al contend, this new set of CCI's contained several or all of the following elements and aimed to achieve synergy across them:

4.4

Expansion and improvement of social services and supports, such as child care, youth development and family support, health care including mental health care; economic development, housing rehabilitation and/or construction, community planning and organising, adult education, job training, school reform and quality of life activities such as neighbourhood security and recreation programs. Moreover, most CCI's operate on the

premise that the devolution of authority and responsibility from higher level auspices to the neighbourhood or community is a necessary aspect of the change process ([Connell et al., 1995: 1](#)).

4.5

The current series of CCI's in the UK do not however represent a wholly new venture in terms of policy. Area targeting has a long history as part of attempts to tackle geographically focussed deprivation and the current initiatives have similarities to the Community Development Programmes (CDP's), Educational Priority Areas (EPA's) and Urban Programmes of the 1960's and 70's. These earlier initiatives used methods of partnership working and community involvement and empowerment that are key tenets of the newer 'zones', but were criticised for being underpinned by a 'top down' approach to involving communities in local policy making ([Raco, 2000](#)). It is alleged that rather than being inclusive, the latter policies resulted in local partnerships being imposed from above ([Peck and Tickell, 1994](#)). The newer 'zones' are also similar to initiatives such as City Challenge and Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) introduced by Conservative governments in the 1980s and 1990s. These initiatives were underpinned by neo-liberalism and the procedural rationale of the market. They 'emphasised local competition and the construction of local partnerships to bid for funds' (Raco, 2000). The newer 'zones' also involve bidding by local partnerships. The earlier neo-liberal initiatives such as City Challenge and SRB attempted to 'promote self-reliance, local initiative and reduced 'dependence' on the welfare state' through creating 'active citizens'([Raco, 2000](#)) as consumers. The newer 'zones' share this neo-liberal objective of constructing active citizens, but the emphasis is on citizens as 'stakeholders' with a 'voice' in the running of services rather than simply consumers of the services.

4.6

Where the newer 'zones' differ to all the prior initiatives mentioned is in their conception as 'testbeds for innovation' intended to exert a significant modernising influence. They aim to be characterised by change and experimentation, often in the form of third way policies of pluralism and joined up thinking. In particular EAZs and HAZs are intended to be 'pathfinders' and 'trailblazers' capable of addressing the perceived problems of 'fragmentation' in local education and health provision. A partnership model based on the principles of heterarchy involving inter-sectoral and inter-agency collaboration is intended to underscore the management of both programmes. EAZs and HAZs also pool budgets, and it is intended that such an approach enables agencies to work together in new ways without the prior emphasis on departmentalism. This is what one Headteacher involved in this study describes as a 'pick and mix approach'. So, despite having some similarities in terms of their operation, it was expected that each EAZ and HAZ would have unique characteristics largely because the rationale for these CCI's are also 'dialogic rather than monologic, pluralistic rather than monolithic, heterarchic rather than hierarchic or anarchic' ([Jessop, 2000](#)). This assumes that there is no one best governance mechanism. Because of this recognition diversity across EAZs and HAZs is (in theory) encouraged.

Methods

5.1

The arguments presented in this paper are based on evidence from evaluation research of the Townville Education Action Zone (TEAZ) and the Townville Health Action Zone (THAZ). Townville is a large town in the north of England built upon traditions of heavy industry in the forms of steel and chemical production and ship building. The de-industrialisation processes begun in the 1980's has affected Townville significantly and in recent years the area has undergone significant social and economic decline and experienced the concomitant problems of deprivation, ill health and low educational attainment. The residents of Townville experience some of the most severe health and

educational inequalities in the UK.

5.2

According to the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions Index of Deprivation 2000, 3 of Townville's 26 local authority wards ranked in the top 10 most deprived localities in the UK. Fifteen of Townville's 26 wards were in the top 200 most deprived wards in the UK. In 1998 51.5% of pupils in the Townville EAZ were eligible for free school meals. This compared to 33.8% across Townville LEA as a whole and 19.8% nationally. At the time when the Townville EAZ and HAZ were established in 1998, the unemployment rate in the Townville EAZ was over 3.5 times higher than the national rate. In 1997 only 12% of pupils in Townville EAZ schools achieved 5 or above A-C grades in GCSE examinations. This compares to 29% for Townville LEA and 45% for England and Wales. The Townville LEA area as a whole had an unemployment rate that was 5.3 percentage points below the rate for the Townville EAZ, but 5.8 percentage points above the national average. Data from the local Health Authority indicates the poor levels of health in Townville with 16% of the population experiencing long term limiting illness ([Tees Health Authority, 1998](#)).

5.3

As a result of these significantly negative socio-economic characteristics the area has seen considerable investment from government funded area based programmes or community initiatives designed to work towards equity and inclusion. These have included both the earlier Conservative administrations programmes such as City Challenge and Single Regeneration Budget as well as a number of newer zones developed under New Labour. In recent years Townville has acquired a Health Action Zone, Education Action Zone, Employment Action Zone and a growing number of Sure Start programmes, all working towards similar aims of equity and inclusion. This has led to the area being characterised as 'zone city' and growing demands for the efficacy of such programmes to be evaluated. The research described here results from the growing need for evaluation of such interventions with both local authorities and communities becoming increasingly concerned with 'what works', alongside a growing disillusionment with quick fix solutions and short term initiatives.

5.4

The research documented here has its origins in evaluation studies funded by the Townville HAZ and EAZ programmes which were collaboratively designed to provide space for reflection on the initiatives as well as assessment of outcomes. It has been ongoing since 1999 and the authors have adopted a formative and summative emphasis, using an eclectic range of quantitative and qualitative methods. This ensures that both process and outcomes are covered and an appropriate evidence base underscores any evaluatory or prescriptive claims made. The data presented in this paper are drawn from in depth interviews that attempted to ascertain the perspectives of key stakeholders involved in the TEAZ and THAZ.

Fragmentation in local governance as a discursive formation

6.1

The implementation of heterarchical modes of governance through CCI's such as EAZs and HAZs reflects a belief that to address the interconnected problems facing many urban areas there is a need to develop strategic frameworks at the urban regional level. As [Powell and Moon\(2000\)](#) state, these types of CCIs reflect the discourse of collaboration espoused by the New Labour administration. A consensus is based on the premise that successful urban regeneration requires a strategically designed, locally based, multi sector, multi agency approach ([Carter, 2000](#)). As noted earlier, statist and market based co-ordination mechanisms are perceived as having failed leaving a 'legacy of deep division and inequality'. With such initiatives tending to be driven by either the state or the market it

is claimed that people and communities themselves have often felt 'locked out' of the process ([Blunkett, 1999](#)). A further problem of such approaches has been the alleged fragmentation brought about by provision of services through either disparate providers or competing market operators ([SEU 1998](#)). By adopting approaches to governance based on heterarchy and local partnerships, advocates of current policies suggest that this apparent problem can be addressed through creating better integration of services at a local level thus enabling policy to be more relevant to people's lives ([Blunkett 1999](#)). CCI's such as EAZs and HAZs have been adopted in the UK to address this alleged problem of fragmentation. They are attempting to work towards providing integrated solutions to the interrelated problems of inequality and deprivation.

6.2

However, modest data gained from the research reported in this paper may raise questions about the extent to which fragmentation of local governance was a problem prior to the government taking office. There appears to have been a degree of over exaggeration attributed to this alleged problem prior to the Labour government taking office in 1997. Certainly those interviewed in Townville have pointed to some fragmentation and suggested that the development of initiatives such as the THAZ has provided opportunities to 'join up' service provision:

For me the HAZ involves different professional groupings who maybe wouldn't normally meet working together to try and look at health objectives from a slightly different view to the way they've been looked at before. Using health money to pay for things which perhaps traditionally health money wouldn't have paid for.

6.3

These informants have also provided some evidence that suggests that in Townville attempts had been made to provide 'joined-up' strategies prior to the existence of initiatives such as the THAZ and TEAZ. In Townville, for example, an Education and Training Task Group had been operating for some time prior to EAZs being mooted. The Task Group included representatives from both schools (including parents), FE colleges, the local university, business, training providers and the careers services and the group had initiated several educational developments. However, as a head teacher participating in this research notes, the EAZ forum that followed was not developed around this previous group.

When it first started I would have kept it as the task group. The task group I would have turned into the forum for the action zone. The task group had about twenty members and many of the elements of the forum represented upon it. That was the group that did all the discussion leading up to the action zone. Then it was abandoned.

6.4

Such evidence casts doubts on some of the more extravagant assertions made in the planning and policy documents relating to urban regeneration policy, and suggests that problems were perhaps assumed to exist in localities that were not always apparent or were over-stated. Speeches from ministers and some national policy documents have served to construct the discourse of 'fragmentation' in social and welfare services and they have espoused the need for joined up solutions to joined up problems. However, there are some interesting discrepancies in terms of the policy texts. In *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, the government's substantive national framework guiding social policy and action, a prior 'tendency to parachute solutions in from outside rather than engaging local communities' is identified. 'Above all', it is suggested that 'a joined up problem has never been addressed in a joined up way'. In particular, it is asserted that 'at the neighbourhood level, there has been no one in charge of pulling together all the things that need to go right at the same time' ([Social Exclusion Unit, 1998](#):

9). The term 'never' used in this document has been italicised because it is significant. It reveals how language can be used to perform a function. Terms such as 'never' are examples of extreme case formulations which are used to make the position of the speaker appear more persuasive. Also the extensive use of metaphor in the above extracts betrays a similarity with policy documents issued by previous Conservative governments. The latter were also imbued with large amounts of metaphor that was often used to obfuscate. In this same way, the metaphor used in *Bringing Britain Together* may be performing a masking function that attempts to prevent more critical analysis in terms of the extent of the 'problem' it alleges.

6.5

An interesting contrast can be made between the language used above in a document designed for wider public consultation and the tone adopted in the documentation sent directly to those potential partners in local communities charged with implementing CCIs. In the initial bidding process for EAZs it was expected that a number of applications would build on partnerships already in existence, for example, through links between cluster schools. There was therefore an opportunity to extend and develop local partnerships and, as noted, in this sense the authors of the Townville LEA-led bid for an EAZ could point to established networks that appeared to be valued. It has been claimed that this was part of the reason why Townville was successful in being asked to establish an EAZ. Two views of the extent of fragmentation and partnerships in local governance of education can be discerned depending on which account one is listening to or reading. Essentially evidence from the Townville evaluations and from analysis of policy text and discourse does question the claim that 'joined-up' solutions to 'joined up' problems have 'never' existed. This is not to suggest that fragmentation of services was not evident and potentially problematic in some areas. But the extent of this 'problem' can be questioned. It also raises questions about why such a discrepancy should be evident in terms of this issue.

6.6

To explain this potential anomaly it is important to view the contents of documents such as *Bringing Britain Together* as important tools in constructing and articulating fragmentation in local governance as a problem. *Bringing Britain Together* allows for this alleged problem to be made 'amenable to diagnosis and treatment'. It is viewed as carrying some 'authority' because it is enunciated by the Social Exclusion Unit - an organisation established with the remit to 'develop integrated and sustainable approaches to the problems of the worst housing estates, including crime, drugs, unemployment, community breakdown, and bad schools etc' and report to the Prime Minister himself. This suggests that its conclusions will somehow be neutral and have the required 'symbolic capital to make performative utterances' ([Atkinson, 2000](#): 214), and conveniently ignores the fact that many of the key persons at the Social Exclusion Unit were hand picked by the Prime Minister largely based on their own commitment to the Third Way creed. This process in exaggerating a problem has been characterised as 'image making, where the images have to do fundamentally with attributing cause, blame and responsibility [...] Political actors deliberately portray [problems] in ways calculated to gain support for their side' ([Stone, 1989](#): 282). The first and second chapters of *Bringing Britain Together* are not surprisingly entitled 'Defining the problem' and 'What works, what we have learnt?' respectively. This process also serves to 'close off' the possibilities for alternative courses of action to be considered.

6.7

The creation of the Social Exclusion Unit and the selection of key personnel for it should be seen in the context of what are termed 'discourse coalitions', groups of actors or organisations who share a discourse about the social world and the way in which it operates. The extent of the 'problem' of fragmentation of local governance in documents such as *Bringing Britain Together* then is not necessarily any reflection of social reality - although this is not to deny that some fragmentation may have been evident in local social and welfare services. Rather, it is helpful to see the 'problem' as a social construction - a

discursive formation that supports political direction in a context where competition exists between discourses and the paradigmatic form of power enables certain interests to blend their capacities to achieve common purposes ([Stone, 1989](#)).

6.8

In this sense, discourse coalitions often use a 'mode of rationality' ([Clegg, 1989](#)) which offers direction in terms of addressing 'problems'. A key concern of those members of the fragmentation discourse coalition has been a desire to create more effective networking and partnership involving greater numbers of people and a greater sharing of power - i.e. a heterarchical form of local governance. CCIs - in the form of EAZs and HAZs - are believed to be especially suited to addressing this concern because of certain characteristics that they possess. First, they are horizontally complex and, although each CCI will have certain uniqueness, 'all are based on the notion of working across systems and sectors'. Second, CCIs are also vertically complex in that they are attempting to achieve change 'at the individual, family, and community levels, and are predicated on the notion that there is interaction among these levels'. CCIs are community- focused but 'are designed with an appreciation for the need to draw upon political, financial, and technical resources that lie outside the community. CCIs are also flexible and evolving interventions designed to respond 'to the dynamics of the neighbourhood'. CCIs 'have fairly explicit goals about community participation, leadership development, empowerment and community building. They also aim for significant changes in the ways institutions operate in the community' ([Connell et al, 1995](#): 3-5).

CCIs and a Continuing Problem of Fragmentation in Local Governance

7.1

By focusing on TEAZ and THAZ the remainder of the paper will consider some of the implications for local governance of the proliferation across the UK of CCIs which have become the preferred mechanism for better managing and co-ordinating localised urban renewal in line with the values implicit within Third Way dogma. The official discourse espoused in policy texts implies that CCIs - such as EAZs and HAZs - are the only mechanisms for achieving improvements in local governance. In, for example, its justification for why EAZs are needed the DfEE noted that they were required 'to involve parents and local communities in the education of children, to reduce social exclusion and to develop effective partnerships at local level' ([DfEE, 1999](#): 3). However, delivery through EAZs and HAZs of this form of heterarchic governance with a strong emphasis on partnership need not necessarily prove more efficient procedurally than the market and state as a co-ordination mechanism. Nor is governance through CCIs 'guaranteed to produce more adequate outcomes. A commitment to continuing deliberation and negotiation does not exclude eventual governance failure' ([Jessop, 2000](#): 17). From emerging research in the area, three main delimiting structural factors have been identified in terms of influencing the success, or not, of CCIs in promoting a 'new' form of local governance based on partnership models. First, there are limitations for any form of governance operating in a market economy. Second, temporal influences can impinge on new mechanisms such as EAZs and HAZs. Third, complex hierarchical and vertical forms of working through EAZs and HAZs can be a minefield in terms of the key concerns of new types of governance through CCIs - i.e. networking and partnerships. All these factors restrict the effectiveness of CCIs in terms of creating more 'joined up' governance ([Stoker, 2000](#): 3).

Market Effects

8.1

All forms of social co-ordination mechanisms operate within a capitalist market. External factors stemming from the effects of the market influence local governance in whatever

form. TEAZ and THAZ are no exception. Those responsible for decision-making across these CCIs must give consideration to balancing 'marketised and non-marketised forms'. In this sense new heterarchical varieties of governance through EAZs and HAZs provide a new 'meeting ground' in terms of the ongoing conflicting logic between, on the one hand, market approaches emphasising 'accumulation' and, on the other hand, 'big government' approaches emphasising political mobilisation' ([Jessop, 2000](#): 19). It is not credible to claim that this dilemma can be avoided or even negated to some extent by relying on partnership and negotiation around a consensual project. Rather than heterarchy based on pluralism, hierarchical 'top-down' governance has continued to be evident and prevented the likelihood of blossoming of partnership working.

8.2

While diversity across CCIs is encouraged in order to tackle problems unique to the localities in which they are situated, globalisation in the form of world-wide developments in technology, politics and economics is a 'homogenising stimulus'. Strongly shaped by human capital theory, 'the economic has become the first and final arbiter when it comes to policy' ([Fielding, 1999](#): 176). In terms of education and training, for example, there is a strong push to fit the nation's young people with the skills they require to start work - including national numeracy and literacy skills. To this end, government policies such as national strategies for numeracy and literacy have impacted on the workings of all EAZs and have resulted in an homogenising influence. A head teacher in TEAZ made the following comments in this respect:

There is still a push to raise standards in this area of [Townville] but I also think that there is a government agenda that they are trying to push through the EAZ. [...] I think at the beginning there was a very strong sense of the community bringing us all together to share things and I actually do not think that that is there as much. Individual schools will do what the government tells you what you have to do.

8.3

Similarly, in the case of HAZs, shifting government policy relating to what the aims of the zones should be have had significant impact on local initiatives which were initially conceived to be responsive to local problems. This has been influenced by broader agenda's for reform within the NHS which have pushed for the 'modernisation' of services:

I see the HAZ aims as changing quite dramatically. Because whereas we had a lot of small projects we were able to bid in to, this opportunity no longer exists. And effectively what they are changing towards is reducing Chronic Heart Disease, Mental Health and reducing fatal illness. They are the main focus because they are the main target for the government.

8.4

In the case of both the TEAZ and THAZ, it is clear that this continuing 'top-down' approach to policy making has not been conducive to creating the correct environment for partnership working in localities. There has been a movement away from their initial aim of providing local solutions to local problems by being responsive to local needs. Such centrally driven approaches are often not flexible enough to be responsive to the local needs of communities and this perpetuates a lack of alignment. As one THAZ respondent noted:

The disadvantage can be that what the community wants aren't the governments objectives. You go out and consult the community and what they want isn't five pieces of fruit a day it's community safety.

8.5

Shifts away from local and participatory modes of governance can thus lead to the needs of

communities failing to be met. Within such models the complexity of heterarchical modes of governance are not addressed as hierarchical, top down modes of policy making are still dominant.

Temporal effects

9.1

Developments in the local governance of education and health through TEAZ and THAZ have also been strongly influenced by the time periods through which they have been established. Several key persons from the TEAZ claim that the precipitate launch of the zone has caused significant problems - including making things 'bitty'. A rush to start the TEAZ without staff in place resulted in an initial period of uncertainty when no clear direction was evident and a certain amount of drift could be perceived. In its first year this led to a back log and a further rush to spend money before the end of the financial year. Indeed, one head teacher in TEAZ indicated that a lack of co-ordination resulted in the problems of fragmentation of provision being exacerbated rather than eased:

Very bad start. We started in September 1998 and we did not appoint the Director until nearly November. We were winging it really. Hymn and a prayer. Finances did not arrive until January and they had to be spent by virtually the beginning of February. All kinds of little anomalies that crept in. We felt rushed and it is the snowball effect again. [...] Things are getting bitty. We need to just stop and take a breadth, look at where we are going and then consider it very carefully.

9.2

This was also reflected at the beginning of the THAZ, with partners being required to bid for funding rapidly, and projects often being developed without the necessary planning to support successful implementation. As one THAZ stakeholder stated with reference to how project work was originally decided upon.

I think in the first stages there was a massive rush to commission schemes. I think in general people just commissioned things quickly because they had to do it without much thought. I'm not sure there's adequate synchronisation between HAZ and the rest of the projects.

9.3

One might have expected some initial teething problems but unfortunately disintegration persists across the TEAZ and THAZ. The following comments by the TEAZ's Project Director were made over two years after the zone became active:

To say we'll give a bit of money to education and we'll give a bit of money to health and a bit to employment and that somehow at local level you'll get joined-up thinking is mistaken. [...] I think the government needs to look strategically. It's committed to this certain idea, the pots of money idea. It actually needs a co-ordinator to be the link person. [...] I think there is now a very big issue.

9.4

This is reiterated by stakeholders involved in the THAZ:

It tends to be the same people going to the same meetings and that's why I think some of the structures have to be streamlined.

Dilemmas in Partnership Working

10.1

In trying to achieve new forms of local governance based on heterarchy it has been claimed that developing effective interpersonal, inter-organisational and inter-systemic co-ordination is inherently problematic. As noted, CCIs such as TEAZ and THAZ are also vertically and horizontally complex in terms of integrated working. This means that partnership working through CCIs such as the TEAZ and THAZ can be undermined by several predicaments that are very difficult to resolve.

10.2

A first quandary counters 'co-operation with competition'. Over the previous decade before the TEAZ was set up the market approach underpinning educational policy-making had championed competition between schools. Years of marketisation appear to have had some implications for the fostering of a new collaborative approach between the schools involved in the TEAZ. On the one hand much of the previous Conservative government policy reforms remain in place. While schools were involved in local partnerships and initiatives such as City Challenge (in which they were expected to work with other partners in the formulation of a bid), they were concurrently operating in the local educational quasi market which placed an emphasis on schools competing as individual organisations. This educational quasi market remains. Within the TEAZ, for example, schools continue to compete for pupils and there are surplus places in some schools. The schools are also all geographically close to one another. Schools, therefore, are keen to publicise anything which gives them an advantage in this respect. School staff are not likely to be keen to co-operate with anything which provides another school with an advantage when it comes to advertising itself. The issue of one school in the zone acquiring technology status has caused some bad feeling. On the other hand there also seems to be a cultural legacy left by the previous emphasis on competition. Referring to a residential weekend devoted to planning ideas for the interim action plan, the head of one school observed that 'openness' had not been evident and asked 'why should we give away all our ideas with no return'?

10.3

This touches on a second quandary faced by those hoping to establish a consensual approach based on heterarchy - i.e. the problem of countering openness with closure. In TEAZ differences over openness and closure with regard to the management of the zone have resulted in participation becoming an invidious experience for some partners. Argument around the basis of membership for the TEAZ forum provides an example. A head teacher in the zone made the following comments:

The partnership is too big; the forum is a waste of time. There are a lot of business people who are sleeping partners. [...] I've stopped going to the meetings. They are ramshackle affairs.

10.4

Similar concerns around the problems of partnership working are expressed by THAZ stakeholders, who feel that they are a complex and time consuming process which can be difficult to manage effectively.

I do think it has to be said that partnership is a huge consumer of time. I do think that the government has this view of partnership that you meet for an hour every three months and that's your partnership. But if you're going to make a partnership work you have to do a lot of networking and meeting with people and discussing ideas and reaching agreement. And when there's a lot of initiatives which require partnership boards in a small authority like ours it stretches you very thin.

10.5

As the quotes above indicate, across TEAZ and THAZ there has been 'fall-out' in terms of the partners and this can only mean continued fragmentation. However, this has been

tolerated because it has not affected the governability of the zones as such. Governability is important as it is claimed that heterarchic forms of governance through CCIs will 'permit longer-term strategic guidance (lacking in markets) whilst still retaining flexibility (lacking in statist hierarchies with their rule-governed procedures)' (Jessop, 2000: 22). However, attempts through TEAZ and THAZ to counter governability with flexibility in an acceptable balance have resulted in another quandary. Certain contestable issues have threatened to destabilise the capacity of the partners in CCIs to effectively guide the initiatives. Because of the sensitivity of some issues - and the pre- eminent desire to make CCIs governable - operations can be restricted. As one head teacher noted the TEAZ's flexibility to be reformist and innovative has been seriously curtailed by the 'locking-in' to established routines and practices in an attempt to maintain governability. This delimiting process counters against more 'joined up' approaches:

We discussed changes in salaries. We discussed employment rights. All these issues came up. But there were so many unknown answers. Everyone was aware of the issues for debate but there were no answers. [...] I think the zone's been set out in a placating kind of way. What can we get going that's bland, that's doable, that won't offend anybody?

10.6

In terms of the THAZ, stakeholders suggest that although the zone started out as innovative and challenging it has moved towards more mainstream agendas that fit in with more mainstream health service priorities.

The priorities seem to be different now from when it first started. It used to be about innovation, but now it seems to me to be about modernising health services. There is all stuff around partnership working which is the same as originally and they still apply. It seems to be that it is about using a small pot of money to modernise the mainstream health service.

10.7

As noted, CCIs also attempt to achieve synergy between improvements in education, health care and social services. However, problems of co-ordination are even more likely when two CCIs work together to address interdependent issues. There is some evidence to suggest that poor co-ordination of the school nurse initiative mentioned above has resulted in displacement with benefits causing disbenefits elsewhere - including further disintegration. A head teacher of a primary school made the following comments about a TEAZ/THAZ school nurse initiative whereby five school nurses are being provided to work across secondary schools:

Well that has had a negative impact as far as we are concerned because our school nurse [...] is now part of the team based in [a secondary school]. We don't really have a school nurse anymore. We have somebody who is sort of care-taking it but I cannot remember the last time when she came into school. This nurse went from being our school nurse and the school nurse for a number of other primary schools over to the Health Action Zone and that link has been fragmented.

Concluding remarks

11.1

This paper has attempted to discuss challenges apparent in the implementation of CCIs in the form of EAZs and HAZs. As noted, such initiatives are intended to address a prior problem of fragmentation in local educational and health services resulting from a lack of collaboration between stakeholders. This is to be achieved by introducing new forms of partnership working based on consensus. This paper has attempted to show that the extent

to which fragmentation was a 'problem' in localities such as Townville may have been overly stated in government policy texts and discourse. This is not to deny that some fragmentation was evident in localities. As noted this can partly be attributed to the establishment of a quasi markets in areas such as education and health services. But it is helpful to view the ways of talking and thinking about this 'problem' of fragmentation in government policy as a discursive formation. This discursive formation has acquired an action orientation. It has been used to legitimate a version of events. But using insights from a critical discourse approach this paper claims that the discursive formation that brought us the 'problem' of fragmentation in local governance prior to 'New Labour' taking office in 1997 did not necessarily transparently reflect reality. While fragmentation was evident, the extent of this 'problem' in some localities may have been exaggerated in the text and discourse that makes up government policy. The exaggeration of a 'problem' of fragmentation functioned to create a version of social 'reality' through the process of social exchange and shared meanings. It is claimed that the exaggeration of this 'problem' discharged a political function because, first, those proponents of third way politics that pronounce on the 'problem' have gained authority and, second, the 'problem' has been used to legitimate a course of action as a remedy.

11.2

The remedy has necessitated the creation in the UK of a modified concept of CCI and its operationalisation through initiatives such as EAZs and HAZs. But, rather than being seen as panaceas for 'problems' of fragmentation in local governance of social and welfare programmes, evidence from evaluations of the TEAZ and THAZ suggest that the establishment of CCIs have actually caused several difficulties. Evidence from both the TEAZ and THAZ evaluations was used to demonstrate how the application of CCIs does not necessarily mean 'joined-up' integrated approaches to governance are more easily achievable. Fragmentation continues to be a feature of the local governance of education and health in Townville. The paper offered an explanation for this perpetuation of divisions despite new modes of governance based on partnership and collaboration.

11.3

In attempting to construct heterarchical modes of governance, CCI's such as the TEAZ and THAZ have aimed for collaboration between agencies and communities and the development of new ways of working. Despite the merits of such approaches, they find themselves competing with other systems of governance that are not necessarily compatible with partnerships and collaboration, such as the example noted earlier of the quasi market in education. This potentially can lead to fragmentation of the process, as, for example, schools must operate in the continuing context of a quasi market with its procedural rationale based on competition and divisions. It would be incorrect however to conclude that the process of engaging in projects such as CCI's is a futile one. The very 'process' of attempting to develop such heterarchical modes of governance based on partnership is a valuable one. As participants in both evaluations have noted, it brings about a process of change that begins to shape how services are developed for the future. This does not necessarily result in immediate output in reducing health or educational inequalities, but sets underway the development of more holistic services that provide valuable foundations for future work. Thus, although the process of governance in whatever form will operate in a context in which restrictions are placed on operations, the work of such projects allows for future development and new processes of governance to be implemented.

References

ATKINSON, R (2000) 'Narratives of policy: the construction of urban problems and urban policy in the official discourse of the British government 1968-1998', *Critical Social Policy*,

20, 2, 211-232.

BALL, S. (1994) *Educational Reform: A Critical and Post-Structural Approach*, Buckinghamshire: Open University Press.

BAULD, L., JUDGE, K., LAWSON., MACKENZIE, M., MACKINNION, J. and TRUMAN, J. (2000) *Health Action Zones: Progress in 2000*, Glasgow, University of Glasgow. BLAIR, A. (1996) *New Britain. My Vision of a Young Country*, London, Fourth Estate. BLAIR, A. (1998) *The Third Way: New Politics for the New Century*, London, Fabian Society.

BLAIR, A. (1999) 'Facing the Modern challenge: The Third Way in Britain and South Africa'. Speech given in the Parliament Building, Cape Town, South Africa, January 8th.

BLUNKETT, D. (1999) 'Empowering People and Communities for a Better Future'. Speech to mark the 30th anniversary lecture organised by the National Centre for Social Research, June 16th.

BLUNKETT, D. (2000) 'Democracy needs re-think when as many vote in big brother poll as in the last European election', DfEE Press Release, 12th October. CARTER, A. (2000) 'Strategy and Partnership in Urban Regeneration', in: G. Stoker (editor), *The New Politics of Local Governance in Britain*, Basingstoke, Macmillan Press Ltd.

CLEGG, S. (1989) *Frameworks of Power*, London, Sage.

CONNELL, J., KUBISCH, A, SCHORR, L. and WEISS, C. (1995) *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives: Concepts, Methods and Contexts*, Washington, The Aspen Institute.

DFEE. (1998) *Handbook for Education Action Zones*, London, DfEE.

DFEE. (1999) *Meet the Challenge: Education Action Zones*, Sudbury, DfEE.

DICKSON, M. and POWER, S. (2001) 'Education Action Zones: a new way of governing education?', *School Leadership and Management*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 137-141.

DICKSON, M., HALPIN, D., POWER, S., TELFORD, D. and WHITTY, G. (2001) 'Education Action Zones and Democratic Participation', *School Leadership and Management*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 169-181.

FIELDING, M. (1999) *Editorial. Taking Education Really Seriously: two years hard labour*, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, Vol. 29, No. 2, pp 173-181.

GIDDENS, A. (1994) *Beyond left and right: the future of radical politics*, Cambridge, Polity Press.

GIDDENS, A. (1998) *The Third Way: the renewal of social democracy*, Cambridge, Polity Press.

HALLGARTEN, J. & WATLING, R. (2001) 'Buying Power: the role of the private sector in Education Action Zones', *School Leadership and Management*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 143-157.

HILL, D.M. (2000) *Urban Policy and Politics in Britain*, Basingstoke, Macmillan Press Ltd.

JESSOP, B. (2000) 'Governance Failure', in: G. Stoker (editor), *The New Politics of Local Governance in Britain*, Basingstoke, Macmillan Press Ltd.

JESSOP, B. (2001) 'Good Governance and the Urban Question: On Managing the

Contradictions of Neo-Liberalism' . JONES, K. & BIRD, K. (2000) 'Partnership as Strategy: public-private relations in Education Action Zones', *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 491-506.

JUDGE, K and BAULD, L. (2001) 'Strong theory, flexible methods: evaluating complex community based initiatives', *Critical Public Health*, 11,1, 19-39.

MALPASS, J. and WHICKHAM, G. (1995) 'Governance and failure: on the limits of sociology', *Australia and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 31, 3, 37-50.

MALPASS, J. and WHICKHAM, G. (1997) 'Governance and the world: From Joe Dimaggio to Michel Foucault', *The UTS Review: Cultural Studies and New Writing*, pp. 91-108.

PECK, J. and TICKNELL, A. (1994) 'To many partners... the future for local regeneration partnerships', *Local Economy*, 9, 251-265.

POWELL, M. and MOON, G. (2001) 'Health Action Zones: the 'third way' of a new area based policy?', *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 9,1, 43-50.

RACO, M. (2000) 'Assessing community participation in local economic development - lessons for the new urban policy', *Political Geography*, 19 (5), 573-599.

ROSE, N. (1993) 'Governmentality and Expertise in Advanced Liberalism', *Economy and Society*, 22 (3).

SOCIAL EXCLUSION UNIT (1998) *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, London, HMSO.

STOKER, G. (editor) (2000) *The New Politics of Local Governance in Britain*, Basingstoke, Macmillan Press Ltd.

STONE, D. (1989) 'Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agenda', *Political Science Quarterly*, 104, 2, 281-300.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION UNIT (1998) *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, London, HMSO.

TEES HEALTH AUTHORITY(1998) Electoral Ward Profiles, Teesside, Tees Health Authority.

THEAKSTON, J., ROBINSON, K.D. and BANGS, J. (2001) 'Teachers Talking: teacher involvement in Education Action Zones', *School Leadership and Management*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 183-197.

WODAK, R. and MEYER, M. (2001) *Methods of critical Discourse Analysis*, London: Sage Publications.

