# POPPER, INSTITUTIONAL LOGIC, AND THE SECRET LIFE OF NEIGHBOURHOODS

Lee Heley
Centre for Institutional Studies
University of East London
Stratford, LONDON E15
e-mail: leeheley@nminterlock.org.uk

This paper takes key aspects of Karl Popper's approach to institutions and develops them with reference to Anthony Giddens' work on structuration to create a schema of 'institutional logic'. It then applies this schema to a small piece of social engineering: neighbourhood management currently being implemented by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The paper highlights the tension in Popper's approach to institutions as entities with "ends", to be judged by their effectiveness in achieving them, and his situational logic, which focuses on the rationality of individuals, and their actions. The gap between individual and institution is bridged by structuration theory, and rules existing as memory traces in people's minds governing individuals' practices. Crucially those practices, at the moment of their enactment, either maintain or change the rules. The relationship between Giddens' theory and Popper's world 3 are drawn out. A rationalist schema for institutional logic (IL) is outlined which states that there are objective, necessary consequences of rules patterning institutions, and that attention to the development of these explicit and implicit rules enables the technical transition of policy to practice.

The paper applies IL to neighbourhood management, to traces the neighbourhood level logic that starts to pattern cross-organisational institutional behaviour.

Neighbourhood management is an institutional test of the policy hypothesis that "a neighbourhood manager with non executive responsibility for service delivery within a neighbourhood working with public agencies, local residents, and some funds, will be able to improve education, environment, housing, employment, health and community safety standards over a 7 year period." The paper considers early evidence testing this policy to show how the creation of local agreements, budgetary rules, neighbourhood information, reflected power - the known and secret rules governing the implementation of the programme - create unexpected changes in the institutional logic of the neighbourhood.