LUND UNIVERSITY

Negotiating Post-Carbon Futures

Divergent Imaginaries in the Redevelopment of Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station

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ABSTRACT

The UK achieved the ambitious goal of becoming the first G7 country to phase out coal-fired electricity, with its last power station, Ratcliffe-on-Soar closing in 2024. Ensuring this generation of transitioning communities does not follow in the footsteps of 'left behind' UK ex-mining villages for example, is imperative. This study investigates and compares the imaginaries of place leaders and locals in a region experiencing a post-carbon transition, from a critical realist perspective. The paper addresses the current gap in imaginaries literature to thoroughly engage with subjective theories such as sense of place and value judgments, as well as understanding the implications of imaginaries on economic processes. A conceptual framework is built to extend Benners (2025) conceptualisation of imaginaries, by delineating four key dimensions: spatial, temporal, thematic and tonal. The framework is then applied to the case study of the redevelopment of Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station in Nottinghamshire, to compare the imaginaries of place leaders and locals, by conducting six semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The findings are then operationalised within an index developed in this paper, to quantitatively map out the orientation of actors' imaginaries. The study finds that the two groups diverged, to varying degrees, across all four dimensions of imaginaries. Additionally, it identifies a lack of attachment between past/place-oriented imaginaries and future/space-oriented imaginaries, resulting in development plans without a narrative. It concludes by advancing the need for sense of place and subjective emotions to be inherent in future development plans for the ex-power station site, to reduce the risk of future conflict and promote a successful post carbon transition.

Key words: Imaginaries; Regional Transitions; Post-Carbon; Communities; Place Leaders.

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1. Introduction

The urgent, global need to decarbonise has profound effects on regional development policy, especially in historically carbon-intensive regions. Whilst decision makers or 'place leaders' must conform to (inter)national targets, this may not always receive the approval of the residents most impacted. In September 2024, the final UK coal-fired power station (Ratcliffe-on-Soar, Nottinghamshire) ceased operation, making it the first G7 country to entirely phase out coal-fired power generation (Sillars, 2024). The accompanying developments are far more than a political or environmental mission and the implications for local communities are often far bigger, yet overlooked. A recent survey showed almost half of Britons believe the net-zero transition is happening *to* them, not *with* them (O Regan and Gollings, 2025), signalling a pressing need to improve social considerations in green transition policies. The growing need to decarbonise, increase energy output and build critical infrastructure capacity, leads to numerous visions for the future of places like Ratcliffe-on-Soar. Deciding what to do post-closure means engaging with the multiplicity of future propositions constructed by agents, according to their own values and preferences, also known as 'imagined futures' (Benner, 2025, p.271).

I am comparing place leaders' and locals' imaginaries in response to the widespread recognition that regional development policy often fails to address the context specific desires of community members (Grubb et al., 2025; Denyer, et al., 2026; Benner et al., 2026), similar to the just transition concept, but looking beyond skills and employment. The terms 'locals' and 'communities' are used interchangeably throughout this paper. Whilst it is true that place leaders may be local to the area in question, this paper defines locals as citizens, residents and service users directly affected by policies in their area. Despite continued reference to supporting communities during transitions, UK green transition policies put a disproportionate emphasis on employment levels and skills transfers, rather than wellbeing. One possible explanation is that engaging with subjective data, feelings, attachments and nostalgia are not easily quantifiable/generalisable into policy reports or planning documents. This must be addressed and reformed to avoid the mistakes of past nation-wide industry closures. During the closure of textile industries or mining industries for example, failure to address the specific needs of the host communities led these regions into economic decline and fostered hopelessness, political apathy and distrust amongst the community, sparking a large amount of literature on 'left behind regions' (Markusen, 1996; Tierney et al., 2024; Atkins, 2024; Ballinger and Sedmak, 2026). Rather than looking retrospectively, engaging with concepts of the future can help adopt a preventative, community-based approach to regional transitions.

The plethora of goals, priorities and visions for the future is most frequently divided between endogenous and exogenous actors; justifying my study's differentiation between decision makers and locals. It is safe to assume that decision makers are guided more by instrumental factors, international agreements and improving national statistics, while communities prioritise factors impacting their day-to-day quality of life. Additionally, locals, particularly those in industrial regions, wield memories, attachments and identities inherent in their area (Sovacool et al., 2025), which may conflict with decision makers' more generalist propositions.

Since all transitions comprise endless trade-offs, recognising areas of divergence and convergence is imperative to devising the most agreeable solutions**.**

There is an identified scarcity of academic literature addressing the importance of futures (Gong, 2024), especially within economic geography that tends towards more retrospective, process tracing approaches. Academics have specifically identified a lack of engagement with imaginaries in sustainability transitions in hypothesising solutions to unprecedented problems (Gong, 2024; Benner, 2025). The concept of imaginaries has been a successful step towards a deeper engagement with different visions for the future but requires elaboration. Furthermore, I have identified the need for further engagement with subjectivity, when studying the future and transitions. Using Benner's (2025) conceptualisation of imaginaries as inspiration, I developed a conceptual framework which delineates four dimensions of imaginaries: spatial, temporal, thematic and tonal, comprising nine subdimensions. This provides a better understanding of actors' future imaginaries (often influenced by the past), their similarities and differences and the implications of such divergence for regional development and conflicts.

1.1. Research Aims and Questions

This paper addresses a conceptual and methodological gap in the literature. Conceptually, there lacks a framework clearly identifying and distinguishing the different dimensions within imaginaries and the subjective data comprising them. Methodologically, there lacks an accompanying tool to map out the orientation of imaginaries. To address this gap, my overarching aim is to investigate and compare the imaginaries of place leaders and locals in a region experiencing a post-carbon transition from a critical realist perspective, combining imaginaries with agency and economic geography. This paper has a two-fold academic contribution: 1. To develop the concept of imaginaries conceptually 2. To operationalise and apply the imaginaries concept to an empirical case study, by developing an index to measure this.

I will contribute to the literature on imaginaries by fortifying Benner's (2025) time-geography conceptualisation with further subjective engagement. To achieve this, I will develop a conceptual framework that aids a deeper understanding of imaginaries, by combining (evolutionary and institutional) economic geography with subjectivity and agency (within humanistic geography, sociology and psychology). This will help us contextualise what specifically comprises place leaders' and locals' imaginaries, simplifying the identification of disjunctures and convergences between them. The framework shall then be applied to the case of the closure and subsequent redevelopment plans for Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station.

Concurrently, this paper will answer the following questions:

- How can we understand the dimensions of imaginaries between place leaders and locals?
    - How do differences in imaginaries between place leaders and locals shape tensions/conflict?
    - How do differences in imaginaries between place leaders and locals influence processes of regional development?

- How could these tensions/conflicts be resolved/avoided?

My research adopts a mixed-method approach. Empirical data will be collected using semi-structured interviews and reviewing policy documents, planning reports and news articles. The data will then be aggregated into the Imagination Orientation Index (IOI), which I have created to quantify and map out these differences.

My aim is to provide the reader with an in-depth understanding of concepts pertaining to future visions within sustainable transitions, specifically imaginaries, as well as the value that studying subjectivity and emotions strong in industrial regions can add to understanding different imaginaries between actors. My proposed conceptual framework offers a way to break down imaginaries amongst stakeholders in an area facing uncertainty. In turn, we can identify the challenges these divergences in imaginaries can bring and their influence on regional development processes.

The remainder of the thesis is structured as follows: section 2 reviews existing literature on regional transitions, the future, imaginaries and subjectivity, spanning evolutionary economic, institutional economic and humanistic geography, concluding with my conceptual framework. Section 3 provides a contextual background to current national and international climate policy related to coal fired power and to Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station. Section 4 recounts the methodological process and research methods adopted to find, collect, analyse and display my empirical findings, including my IOI created to collate my data. Section 5 breaks down the findings comparing the imaginaries of place leaders and locals within Ratcliffe-on-Soar, into the four dimensions created in my conceptual framework. Section 6 discusses the implications of these findings in terms of a better understanding of imaginaries, regional development trajectories and conflict management. Section 7 concludes the research as well as suggesting areas for further research.

2. Literature Review

My conceptual framework is proposed to fulfil my research aim, to understand and compare the imaginaries of place leaders and locals. A range of concepts will now be examined to explain these discrepancies from multiple perspectives. The studied literature broadly draws upon work within evolutionary and institutional economic geography and humanistic geography. Imaginaries is an ideational foundation in my research, broadly described as ‘collectively available symbolic meanings and values’ (van Lente, 2021, p.23) which provides a form of sensemaking to the multiplicity of preferences for transitioning regions. Institutional economic geography is useful in highlighting the multi-scalar interactions that unfold during transitions, recognising that various structures and institutions influence decision makers’ ideas of an optimal future. Sense of place is a theory prevalent in humanistic geography that delves into the individual-level emotions, memories and relations attaching people to a place. Such attachments can influence their visions and preferences for what happens during a transition. Combining these theories of structure and agency is in line with the critical realist underpinning of my paper and helps to add nuance to economic geography’s (more retrospective) approach.

Together, they help foster a more holistic, balanced approach to understanding and delineating the differences in imaginaries between place leaders and communities.

Section 2.1 outlines work on regional transitions, the role of and interactions between, locals and institutions within transition and identifies shortcomings of UK regional transition policy. Section 2.2 emphasises the importance of studying futures more, the need to combat the growing sense of 'futurelessness' and how obtaining value judgements and 'knowledge surrogates' creates a stronger comprehension of preferences for the future. Section 2.3 focuses specifically on the concept of imaginaries, using Benner's (2025) conceptualisation to understand it's temporal and spatial dimensions, the importance of studying imaginaries in the face of threats, and the distinction between endogenous and exogenous place leaders' narratives/imaginaries. Section 2.4 covers theories of subjectivity, value judgments and sense of place, which helps explain the strong people-place attachments in carbon-intensive regions, including specific findings from Ratcliffe-on-Soar. Section 2.5 concludes the review by proposing a conceptual framework which utilises the literature to extend Benner's (2025) time/space conceptualisation of imaginaries with an additional thematic and tonal dimension.

2.1. Regional transitions

Economic geography contains much work on the regional development of post-carbon/post-industrial regions. However, since evolutionary economic geography, adopts a retrospective approach, much literature on regions experiencing decarbonisation/deindustrialisation views the future as an 'end' (Grabher, 1995; Boschma and Martin, 2010; Boschma and Frenken, 2018). In other words, they seek to explain the structural reasons *why* these areas suffer economic decline major industry closures, subsequently being classified as 'left behind' regions (Markusen, 1996; Tierney et al., 2024; Atkins, 2024; Ballinger and Sedmak, 2026). My research adopts a more prospective approach, seeking to identify the divergence in imaginaries that could potentially cause conflict or regional decline in the future.

Institutional economic geography attends to interactions between institutions on a multi-scalar level and their potential to influence economic processes (Gertler, 2018). As the term multi-scalar is polysemous, my research defines it as spatial multi-scalarity, aiding the distinction between decision makers' more space-oriented imaginaries guided by wider (inter)national goals, and locals' more place-oriented imaginaries, guided by day-to-day lived experience, elaborated on in section 2.4.1.

There is a plethora of literature and empirical work highlighting the need for regional development and just transition policies to better incorporate citizens' demands and investigate this from a pluralistic, rather than top-down, perspective (Suitner and Ecker, 2020; Cha and Pastor, 2022; Grillitsch, et al., 2025; Denyer et al., 2026; Benner et al., 2026). Studies show that instrumental factors, such as technological change and reskilling workers, take preference over the adaptability of institutions and organisations in just transitions (Benner, et.al., 2026). Numerous other empirical studies have sought to look at how tensions between competing narratives, actors and institutions ought to be managed within regional transitions (Suitner and Ecker, 2020; Cha and Pastor, 2022; Gong, 2024; Denyer et al., 2026). The apparent trend is that inflexible institutions and structures with top-down approaches are much less likely to

ensure social justice (Matern et al., 2025; Denyer et al., 2026). Suitner and Ecker's (2020) study on regional energy transitions in Austrian peripheralized regions finds that technocratic approaches in institutionalizing energy transition pathways impede community engagement. Magaz-molina et. al. (2025) identify a lack of recognition of cultural heritage in decarbonisation policy across south-western Europe, resulting in discontent and conflicts between decision makers and communities. Moreover, Benner et.al., (2026) highlight the need for place-based just transition policies to strengthen civil society's voice in decision-making processes. Providing empirical evidence of the feelings of residents in Ratcliffe-on-Soar, compared with existing development plans, will help identify potential areas of dispute, how this may impact regional development and how it could be prevented.

Presently, there is a tendency for the evidential base of UK regional development decisions to be largely monetary based, not accurately reflecting the wants and needs of locals, aligning with Benner et. al's (2026) EU-wide observation. Relying on purely monetised data when evaluating energy transition policies, such as cost benefit assessments, cannot 'internalise the diversity of human values' (Grubb et al., 2025, p.5), discounts distributional implications and allows short-term targets to prevail over long-term ones. The incorporation of more-than-monetary data must be promoted, by advancing a deeper understanding of imaginaries in post-carbon regional transitions. Grubb et. al's (2025) analysis is of Ofgem, however the same argument can be made for the UK impact assessment on 'The Future of Coal Generation in Great Britain'. Despite quoting using a qualitative method to measure local impacts of the closure of coal-fired power stations, it treats individuals as merely a statistic (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2019). The assessment concludes that impacts of closures will be small, because those employed in the production of electricity represented 0.1% of the working age populations (ibid). This generalised approach to looking at community impacts justifies a blanket approach, curated by exogenous actors (the national government), which tends to result in undesirable outcomes for communities.

Cowell and Pasqualetti, (2026) adopt an assemblage approach to grasp this 'dynamic, messy, processual nature of change' (p.2) and the complex, context-specific interrelations between agents, structures, market forces, heritage and geographical context that determine the purpose of coal plants post-closure. Institutional economic geography reminds us to consider the multi-scalar levels of influence that may determine place leaders' imaginaries, which in turn impacts policy decisions. Instead of the variables impacting the decision-making process, my focus is on the interrelation/intersection of imaginaries that influence transition trajectories, between place leaders versus locals, since this is where the main incongruency has been identified (Suitner and Ecker, 2020; Benner et al., 2026). To create just transition policies that serve the population, we must engage with visions and preferences for the future.

2.2. The Future

The study of futures, originating in sociology (Bell, 2007) is imperative to studying sustainability transitions, as they comprise unprecedented challenges impacting regions and global society as whole (Gong, 2024; Benner, 2025). Incorporating futures into academic discourse and policymaking helps build 'transformative resilience' in the face of external

shocks, changing climate patterns and societal attitudes (Martin and Sunley, 2020). There is a significant gap in evolutionary economic geography (EEG) in studying the future to better grasp and predict path development of regions, as it is often considered an end, rather than a determining factor (Gong, 2024). Additionally, it does not consider historical perceptions of the future as part of path dependence (He and Sheng, 2025). This obstructs a deeper understanding of regional transitions, since different actors' expectations of possible/desired future outcomes will determine the strategy taken (ibid).

Gong (2024) emphasises how, despite remaining mindful of regions' pasts and the cultural /emotional significance, allowing a region's past to *solely* determine its future, often leads to the same mistakes that led it to decline in the first place - also explained by cognitive lock-in (see 2.4). She suggests studying the past, present and future simultaneously, to maximise the social, environmental and economic benefits of the present and future, whilst situating it within context specificities, heritage and emotional attachments. Studying futures can also help address the growing pessimism people have towards the future and 'futurelessness' narratives (Gong 2024; Tutton, 2023). Understanding what local people desire can help switch narratives of hopelessness to narratives of hope, projecting confidence within communities, investors and officials (Gong, 2024). How do we study the future in practice? For Gong (2024), this comes from a deeper engagement with normative stances (see 2.4). Bell (2007), differentiates between three futures: the possible, the probable and the preferable future, requiring a simultaneous engagement with the power of knowledge, agency, economic processes and value judgements. Whilst my research will not strictly differentiate between, rather combine, these three subbranches of futures, I will examine actors' value judgements of what a good or bad future may look like, to map the orientation of their imaginaries.

As we cannot definitively describe the future, actors use what Bell and Olick, (1989) term 'knowledge surrogates', i.e. posits for the future. Since not everyone uses the same knowledge surrogates, studying their composition is vital to understand their societal implications. In my study, the engagement with subjectivity and specifying imaginaries in four different ways, via my conceptual framework, helps us to understand the position from which actors have constructed their visions for the future.

> '*The future does not exist, but images of the future exist*' (Fergnani and Chermack, 2021, p.4)

There is clearly a plethora of ways of interpreting and viewing the future; the concept of imaginaries can help us delineate these different images of the future (and past) more specifically.

2.3. Imaginaries

The term 'imaginaries' suffers from conceptual fuzziness but is broadly defined as:

> '*Collectively held, ideationally created and discursively shaped representations about economic, technological, cultural, and/or political developments that incorporate (often idealized) references to the past or future and/ or geographical references, and*

that assume causative power when used strategically by agents to advance specific goals' (Benner, 2025, p.269).

Benner (2025) breaks down imaginaries as specific time/ geography configurations. The time dimension ranges from imagined histories to imagined futures, and the geographical dimension ranges from imagined spaces to imagined places (see Figure 1). Notably, imagined spaces and places may overlap with histories and futures, due to the significance of memory and past experience in forming a 'place' (see 2.4.). In addition, the spatial distinction is not a strict binary, as perceptions of the past can be mobilised into present thinking and future plans (ibid); any one imaginary can encompass one, more, or all these categories (Benner, 2025).

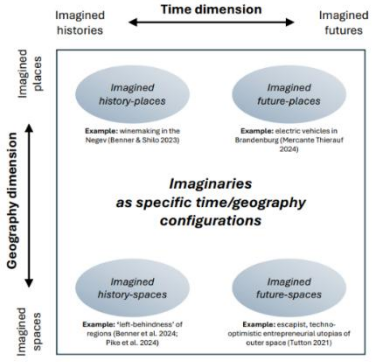

Figure 1. Imaginaries as specific time/geography configurations (Benner, 2025)

Gong and Truffer (2024) emphasise the pertinence of studying regional imaginaries in the face of disruptive threats; studying the 'intangible facets' and 'soft factors' increase the probability of a successful green transition, in an industrially characterised region (ibid). The major disruption resulting from the closure of the power station and ever-changing development plans in Ratcliffe-on-Soar can be considered a threat, making this research relevant to my study. However, Gong and Truffer's (2024) work centres on the electrification of the automobile industry, which faces remarkably different threats and solutions, since it is not embedded in as many national targets and regulations as the UK energy sector.

Roessler et al's (2025) distinction between exogenously and endogenously routed narratives inspired my decision to distinguish between imaginaries of place leaders and locals. 'Place leaders' are actors that have a 'disproportionate ability and interest' to drive and influence regional development, by aligning stakeholder interests and mobilising resources (Roessler et al., 2025, p.3). They exist in contexts where dominant narratives (shared by the majority), counter narratives, future-oriented narratives and past-oriented narratives co-exist (ibid). As previously mentioned, such counter narratives are often formed by communities when they do not feel their needs are reflected in policy, making this disjuncture an important object of study. Roessler et al's (2025) analytical framework breaks down the process of narrative emergence and mobilisation, (see figure 3.) The emergence and mobilisation phases are most relevant to this study as this is where imaginaries are uncovered.

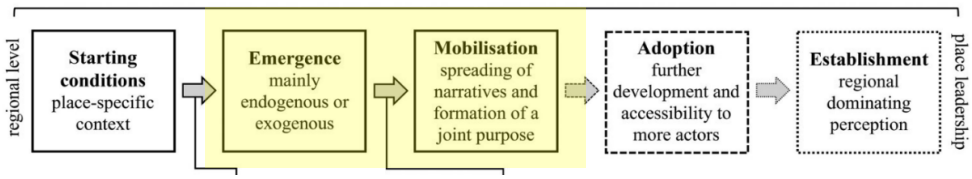

Figure 2. External framing of 'time-specific' opportunity spaces (Roessler et al., 2025, p.4)

A key pattern identified in their work was that narratives emerging inside the region (by endogenous place-leaders) appear more effective at aligning actors towards common objectives and implementation (Roessler et al., 2025). Additionally, narratives initiated exogenously require more local translation and anchoring by place leaders than endogenous narratives. Comparing place leaders' and communities' imaginaries is relevant here because they have distinct levels of endogenous and exogenous knowledge and concerns. Whilst narratives and imaginaries are not synonyms (narratives being more of a story specific to the context), the same pattern can be expected for imaginaries, especially temporal and spatial imaginaries.

However, the exogenous/endogenous distinction should not be deployed alone in addressing the gap between imaginaries of leaders and locals; there is a difference between an (ex/end)ogenously developed *objective* and an (ex/end)ogenous *actor*. A place leader could be geographically endogenous (live in the area) but guided by exogenous objectives (e.g. national policies). Here, it is necessary to also draw upon the place versus space distinction (see 2.4.), to fully understand the impact of where imaginaries originate, as well as its predisposition to the 'sense of place' within the community. Consequently, this allows for a differentiation between the position of the actor and the orientation of the imaginary. The concept of imaginaries must be fortified with theories of subjectivity and normativity to advance the delineation of preferences for the future during transitions. In addition, Concepts of memory, nostalgia and identity will strengthen our understanding of the '(often idealized) references to the past' (Benner, et.al., 2026, p.269).

2.4. Subjectivity/Normativity

Since the future is inherently subjective, based on value judgements and 'knowledge surrogates' (Bell and Olick, 1989), normative studies are vital in investigating posits for future and imaginaries. It is widely known that memories, nostalgia and identities are strongly shaped by the incumbent sector in (especially extractive) industrial regions (Bell and York, 2010). Engaging with these feelings can offer deeper insight into past-oriented future imaginaries (i.e. preferences for the future that are grounded in memories of the past). Additionally, investigating the difference between economically-motivated, socially-motivated and environmentally-motivated imaginaries and whether they are positively or negatively framed, helps us precisely pinpoint areas of convergence and divergence between actors.

Emery (2018) specifically refers to the North Nottinghamshire coalfields when arguing that disregarding the emotional and affective dimensions of deindustrialisation can lead to conflicts, unsuccessful mobilisation and undesirable outcomes for the community. Cha and Pastor (2022)

Denyer, et al (2026) and Sovacool et al. (2025) all use heavily qualitative work to explore varying normative stances and value judgments and how this influences multiple visions for a 'good future' in areas experiencing post-carbon transitions. Pappa's, (2025) investigation into the resistance to change amongst residents in Ratcliffe-on-Soar provides a strong evidential base in my research. She rationalises the resistance towards post carbon realities through identity, emotion and attachment theory, stating that the reasons for disapproval of such transitions are psychological, not economic. The reasons for disapproval may not be wholly economic, but this is why it is important to distinguish between the spatial/temporal dimensions of imaginaries and the thematic dimension, to avoid any sweeping generalisations. These psychological factors also have significant economic implications and regional development trajectories, which must be studied.

Grillitsch et. al., (2025) introduce a theoretical framework combining the change agency and the capability approach ([1]) into regional development policy, this not only explains processes of change, but places a *value* on said changes to citizens, derived from subjective data. They seek to highlight the importance of incorporating more-than-monetary data into regional development policy, debunking the misconception that policies favouring economic growth produce an equal growth in welfare. Similarly, Hansen's (2022) investigation into the power of the foundational economy (centred on the production of goods and services critical to human welfare) to address societal problems, shifts the focus onto more subjective individual human needs. Examining the balance between social, economic and environmental imaginaries between place leaders and communities is a step towards promoting regional development policy that serves both groups of actors. This is an important distinction for my study since place leaders tend to be guided more by change agency/economic growth, whilst individuals tend to be guided more by personal wellbeing. Whereas Hansen (2022) looks at how beyond-growth approaches can solve particular issues (social polarisation, interregional inequality and environmental sustainability), I seek to uncover how we can better understand beyond-economic oriented imaginaries, using theories like those in Pappa's (2025) study.

2.4.1 Place versus Space

How people view the future is dependent on their relationship with their surroundings. Sense of place theory, popular in humanistic geography, notably elaborated by Tuan (1971), serves as a conceptual base for the spatial dimension of imaginaries in my framework (see Table 1).Whilst space is merely an objective geographical location, not necessarily inherent in any meaning, place has personality, commands awe and/or evokes affection (ibid). Place is created through identification of public symbols (e.g. cooling towers) or through repeated experience

[1] *The change agency, in the context of regional development is the ability of an actor to make change, often categorised into 3 forms of agency (aka. The Trinity of Change Agency): Schumpeterian innovative entrepreneurship, institutional entrepreneurship, and place-based leadership* (Grillitsch and Sotarauta, 2020).*The capability approach is a normative theoretical perspective to well-being, quality of life, and social justice, used to used to evaluate several aspects of people's well-being, such as inequality, poverty, the well-being of an individual or the average well-being of the members of a group*(Robeyns, 2005, p.95; Grillitsch and Sotarauta, 2020).

(e.g. through employment) (ibid). Similarly, Massey, (1995) challenges the static definition of place, stating that places are 'articulated moments' and ever-changing, formed and reformed by local history and global processes. Sovacool et al. (2025) specifically includes sense of place theory in their study, concluding that lived and place-based experiences have a direct impact on locals' imaginaries. This theory can complement economic geography, which focuses on socio-economic activities and a region's relational significance, by adding subjective social value. When studying community struggles, sense of place can also explain the unexplainable feelings of loss during transitions, even when economic gain has been achieved.

Understanding the difference between space and place adds depth to Benner's, (2025) place versus space distinction of imaginaries. Sense of place is strongest when people feel threatened (Tuan, 1971). Tuan talks of the 'we they' syndrome in space, (see figure 1), showing the different scales upon which groups of people feel united or divided amongst other groups, ranging from the local community to the nation. Whilst Tuan uses this figure to discuss suspicion of 'foreigners', the same rationale can be used to explain how communities separate themselves from place leaders at the regional and national level, when threatened by major redevelopment plans. This complements Gong and Truffer's (2024) discussion on how

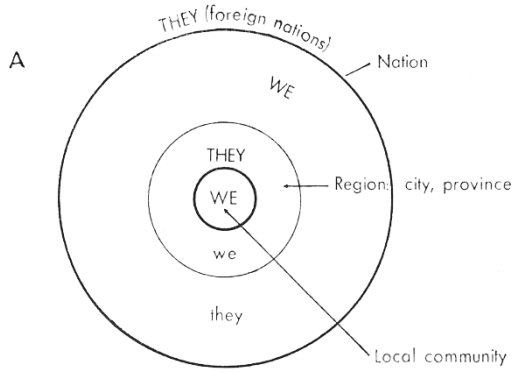

Figure 3. We/they distinction in Places (Tuan, 1971)

disruptive threats in industrial regions have strong implications for future decisions; but instead of external market-led threats, they could originate from other actors. Tuan's and Massey's elaboration on sense of place deepen our understanding of strong identities and memories in industrial regions and how this may contrast with place leaders' imaginaries, consequently impacting the success or trajectory of regional transitions.

Lock-in, the situation where a region is unable to adapt to evolving economic situations, has become central to studying why transitions are more difficult in some places than others (Goldstein et al., 2023). Articulated by Grabher (1995) lock-in (or 'rigid specialisation' as he terms) can be grouped into three categories: functional lock-in, political lock-in and most notably, yet least researched, cognitive lock-in. Cognitive lock-in describes a situation where a common mentality or 'strong ties' mean continuity is preferred to innovation or diversification. This hostility towards change inhibits the prosperity of the region in the long term (ibid). Cognitive lock-ins tend to be referred to in the context of industrial shocks in the traditional sense, but by combining this with Tuan's (1971) we/them classification, cognitive lock-in may also translate to antipathy towards non-contextually sensitive development plans. Whilst Grabher's (1995) work centres more on the weakness of strong ties between companies in a

region, the strong sense of place, nostalgia, and attachments amongst locals may be a source of lock-in in places like Ratcliffe-on-Soar, especially if not fully understood by place leaders.

Overall, literature on the importance of subjective markers such as identity, emotion, attachment and sense of place, will be an important base in looking at the orientation of imaginaries pertaining to the future redevelopment of Ratcliffe-on-Soar.

2.5. Summary and Conceptual Framework

Since covering theories and past works on regional transitions, the future and value judgements, I shall outline my conceptual framework for a deeper understanding of imaginaries. The framework will be used to distinguish between the imaginaries of place leaders and locals within Ratcliffe-on-Soar, to fulfil the identified need for better engagement with communities in regional transition policy (Suitner and Ecker, 2020; Cha and Pastor, 2022; Grillitsch et al, 2025; Denyer et al, 2026; Benner, et al, 2026). Engagement with subjectivity fortifies all four dimensions of imaginaries in my study.

Table 1 shows the four identified dimensions of imaginaries. The reviewed literature reveals multiple areas for study: to consider visions of the future when studying sustainable transitions, to conceptualise these imaginaries to reveal their complexities and variations, and to engage with subjectivity/normativity to understand the deeper levels and dimensions of imaginaries. My framework will enhance EEG research on transitions, by using Benner's (2025) time-geography conceptualisation and fortifying it with an additional two dimensions, thematic and tonal, to allow even further engagement with value judgements and theories of subjectivity. My research builds upon Grillitsch et.al's (2025) suggestion for further research: unveiling similarities and differences of pathways of change in different contexts, questioning who is heard and participates in regional development processes. Instead of comparing pathways of change, I am focussing on similarities and differences of *perceptions* of future change. Using Figure 1 to break down imaginaries aids a better understanding of the mismatches that may result in conflicts, depending on which imaginaries prevail.

The temporal dimension is divided between past versus future oriented imaginaries (Table1). Alongside Benner's (2025) model, there will be crossovers between these categories. Although my research focuses on imaginaries pertaining to the future of Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station, Benner's distinction between past and future imaginaries still inspires my model; the varying imaginaries connote the area's history as a major industrial hub and its future role in facilitating the UK-wide green transition. Past imaginaries are complemented by Pappa's (2025) identification of emotion, identity and attachment theory as key factors influencing locals' imaginaries. Concepts of memory, nostalgia and identity will strengthen our understanding of the '(often idealized) references to the past' (Benner, et.al., 2026, p.269). Grabher's (1995) work on cognitive lock-in is valuable in recognising how psychological factors, especially experience, influences/hinders regional development. Similarly, my framework will be used to look at how past and future oriented imaginaries (alongside the other dimensions) can influence regional development when at odds with one another. Future imaginaries refer to those pertaining to the creation of something new, not previously linked with the area and often have a close link to space-oriented imaginaries.

The spatial dimension, also guided by Benner's (2025) work, is divided into space versus place and maintains the assumption that there will be overlaps with the temporal category. It was also adopted to add nuance to Roessler et al's (2025) distinction between endogenous and exogenous actors; thus space-oriented imaginaries shall be interpreted as more exogenous, pertaining to the regions role on a national or international level in relation to other regions. Meanwhile, place-led imaginaries take into account the region's sense of place (Tuan, 1971; Massey, 1995) and typically have a strong link to past-oriented imaginaries. I will build upon the sense of place concept by discussing how different spatial imaginaries cause tensions between locals and decision makers and how this may impact regional development. Consequently, place-oriented imaginaries naturally will also contain elements of memory, attachment and nostalgia as elaborated by Pappa's (2025) work. Since the transformation within Ratcliffe-on-Soar is part of a wider (inter)national plan to decarbonise the UK economy, institutional economic geography's recognition of multi-scalar influences on economic processes, is translated into comparing space-oriented imaginaries (using the region as a lever within wider national and international targets) and place-oriented imaginaries (more context specific and focussed on day to day lived experience).

The thematic dimension adds depth to the concept of imaginaries, to further investigate the value judgments and knowledge surrogates (Bell, S.E. and York, 2010) that actors use when envisioning the future of a transitioning region. Cowell and Pasqualetti's (2026) identification of the plethora of uses of ex-power stations in the UK signals the need to provide explanations for development decisions, beyond temporal and spatial imaginaries. As personal and geopolitical circumstances change, actors have different political priorities. Thus, we must also distinguish between social, environmental and economic imaginaries. The social, economic and environmental dimensions are added to respond to work on ensuring just transitions (Cha and Pastor, 2022; Denyer et al, 2026; Benner et al, 2026) as well as highlighting the need for considering more-than-monetary objectives (Grillitsch and Sotarauta, 2020), balancing economic growth with wellbeing and sustainability. Grillitsch et.al's (2025) combination of change agency-style and capability approach style frames this dimension, since place leaders tend to be guided more by change agency/ economic growth, whereas individuals tend to be guided more by personal wellbeing. Once again, crossovers between these categories can occur depending on one's interpretation. For example, creation of jobs could be interpreted as either a social or economic imaginary.

To target the gap in incorporating value judgements, I have added a tonal dimension to the conceptualisation of imaginaries, which also addresses the alarming growing sense of 'futurelessness' (Tutton, 2023; Gong, 2024). Here, I have distinguished between positive and negative imaginaries, which can also be interpreted as optimistic versus pessimistic imaginaries. This is inspired by Denyer et al's (2026) investigation into what a 'good future' looks like for workers experiencing transition, as well as a personal recognition that identifying the themes and origins of actors' imaginaries is one thing, but unless we know their sentiments, it limits how constructive this knowledge can be. This is also important since even though actors may diverge in their imaginaries in terms of what is a priority, what is viewed as positive

or negative can be even more valuable in alleviating the risk of conflict or failures in regional development policy.

Dimension of Imaginaries	Subdimension	Question
Temporal	Past versus Future	To what extent are future imaginaries grounded in experience of the past/future between place leaders and locals?
Spatial	Place versus Space	To what extent are imaginaries place/space-based between locals and place leaders?
Thematic	Social versus Economic versus Environmental	To what extent are imaginaries socially, economically and environmentally motivated between place leaders and locals?
Tonal	Positive versus Negative	To what extent are imaginaries positive/negative between place leaders and locals?

Table 1. Conceptual Framework

3. Contextual Background

3.1. Policy

3.1.1. International Climate/ Coal Policy

A rapid phase out of coal is required to achieve the 1.5 °C warming limit laid out in the 2015 Paris Agreement (Hill, 2020, p.137). During COP23, 48 national governments (including the UK) committed to phasing out existing unabated coal power by 2030 in OECD/EU countries and by 2040 globally. This was enacted through the Powering Past Coal Alliance (PPCA), comprising 65 countries (PPCA, 2026), signalling a positive commitment to the cause. However, critics observe that countries with no coal in their electricity mix and/or an existing phase-out plan, make up the majority of the PPCA (Blondeel, Van De Graaf and Haesebrouck, 2020); large emitters such as China and India are notably not members. At present, there are still are over 2400 mothballed or operating coal-fired power stations in the world (Global Energy Monitor, 2026), flagging much work yet to be done.

3.1.2. Just Transition

Originating in 1980s US trade unions, ‘just transitions’ broadly refer to the protection of social rights during major economic transitions (UNDP, 2022). More recently, it has specifically referred to protecting workers and communities during green transitions. The ILO defines it as ‘Greening the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind.’ (ibid). Examples of just transition policies include: increasing green jobs/upskilling, reducing disproportionate impacts on minorities, community consultations etc. During COP30, ‘Countries also agreed to develop a just transition mechanism, enhancing cooperation, technical support and capacity-building.’ (de Carvalho, 2025). This vague language does not demonstrate a clear commitment to ensuring socio-economic rights during the energy transition. The UN aims for this mechanism to be operational by COP31, but this is not yet binding (Argueta, 2025).

3.1.3. UK Climate Policy/Coal Phase-out

The UK had a 142-year long history with coal powered electricity (Poynting and Stallard, 2024); The UK's (and world's) first coal-fired power station was built in 1882 in London (Chesher, 2024). The 2008 Climate Change Act targeted the coal industry to bring down national emissions, given its higher proportional contributions to other fuels (UK Government, 2008). In 2015, The UK government officially committed to ending use of coal fired power stations by 2015; the deadline was brought forward a year in 2021 (UK Government, 2021). After experiencing its first few coal-free days in 2016 (Schonhardt, Storrow and Holzman, 2022), UK coal-fired energy was officially terminated in September 2024 (Poynting and Stallard, 2024). This achievement made the UK the first G7 country to completely phase out coal-fired power generation (Sillars, 2024).

The UK was able to completely phase out coal largely as a result of its burgeoning renewables industry, which propped up electricity generation. At the end of 2024, the UK government published its Clean Power 2030 Action Plan, taking a 'data driven approach' to achieving its goal of 100% of energy consumed and 95% of energy generated, to come from clean sources (renewables and nuclear) by 2030 (Department for Energy and Net Zero, 2025). However, current data shows the government must massively accelerate the deployment of renewables and the efficiency of planning departments, to achieve this goal. At the end of 2024, 58% of electricity consumed and 63.7% of electricity produced, came from clean sources (Bolton, 2026). A study conducted by Cowell and Pasqualetti, (2026) found that over 90% of the 12 most recently closed coal-fired power stations in the UK were being repurposed for renewable energy uses (other purposes included mixed-use developments, logistics hubs, housing etc).

There is a risk that prioritising the speed of rollout may come at the expense of thorough engagement with communities. The Department for Energy and Net Zero repeatedly cites incorporating and protecting the rights of communities during this rapid transition, but with vague language such as: 'We will ensure communities directly benefit from clean energy infrastructure they host by building upon existing approaches and encourage consistency in community benefits across technologies' (Department for Energy and Net Zero, 2025).

Figure 4. Location of Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station on a map of the UK Google Maps, 2026)

3.2 Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station

3.2.1. Ratcliffe-On-Soar

Ratcliffe-On-Soar is located in the East Midlands of England, approximately 10 miles southwest of Nottingham, within the Rushcliffe district. The decision to choose Ratcliffe-on-Soar was based upon numerous factors. Firstly, the region's long history with coal production. The Nottinghamshire region has been synonymous with the coal industry for centuries, with the first mining activity thought to have taken place as early as the 13th century (Beckett and Amos, 2019). Between the 18th and 20th century, coal production in the East Midlands grew to account for over 10% of UK total coal output (ibid). Further exploitation of coal reserves during WWI led to some villages experiencing population growth of almost 600% (ibid). By 1986, 24,000 industrial workers were employed by British Coal in Nottinghamshire, creating a strong sense of community in the region, hosting families of multiple generations all, working within the coal sector (ibid). The village of Ratcliffe-on-Soar, adjacent to the power station, has around 171 inhabitants (City Population, 2024). Secondly, the municipal climate ambition in Nottinghamshire. In 2019 Nottingham City Council set an ambition to become the first carbon neutral city in the UK by 2028 (also known as CN28), setting out several sector-specific policies such as energy, water, transport, waste etc (CN28, 2026). Thirdly, the fact that Ratcliffe Power station was the final coal-fired power station to close (Ambrose, 2024) and that its future development plans are undecided, despite being aware of its inevitable end for almost a decade, (Rushcliffe Borough Council, 2022; 2026a; 2026b) makes investigating imaginaries more pertinent.

3.2.2. Power Station History

Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station, occupying around 270ha, began generating electricity in 1967 (Uniper, 2025). Its immense size and convenient positioning off the M1 motorway, has made it a defining part of the landscape, acting as a signal to locals that they are almost home. It was built as part of a nation-wide rollout of 13 'superstations' in the mid-1960s, following a surge in demand post WII (ibid). At its peak, the site could generate enough electricity to power over two million homes (ibid). The power station was the centre of many people's lives, employing up to 3000 people at once (Ambrose, 2024). The site has been under the control of many organisations over its lifespan, beginning its journey under the control of the government, before the electricity industry was privatised in the 1990s (Uniper, 2025). Following this, it was bought by Powergen, who were later acquired by E.on in 2002 (ibid). In 2016 E.on then created an independent company, Uniper, who took over Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station and are still in charge of the decommissioning and redevelopment presently (ibid).

3.2.3 Closure of the Power Station and Conflicts

Before the government announced the phase out of coal, the power station was subject to much public criticism and outrage. Most notably in 2009, when over 100 activists were arrested for plotting to shut down the plant for a week (BBC Nottinghamshire, 2011). There were also public protests where people gathered to chant 'Ratcliffe-on-Soar, rotten to the core, we ain't gonna burn your coal no more' (Lee, 2013, p.250). At this point, the counter argument from decision makers was based on the illegality and danger posed protests, rather than justifying the purpose and value of the plant (BBC Nottinghamshire, 2011).

Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station was the final power station to close because of its innovative solutions such as the 'flex ops' project, which allowed it to adapt to flexible production of coal during the gradual phase out. It was also able to implement high-efficiency emission controls to reduce nitrogen oxides and sulphur dioxide, until its closure on September 30, 2024 (Uniper, 2025). This made the power station subject to fewer oppositions, as the priority was closing the most polluting stations.

Following the announcement of its closure, there have also been significant heritage-led protests against the demolition of the power station's cooling towers, due to the cultural significance they are thought to provide the region with and the 'great affection' people have for them (Mellor, 2025). These preservation efforts were firmly rejected by decision makers, citing expensive maintenance costs, safety hazards and the need to prioritise green energy initiatives (Taylor and Shipton, 2025). Demolition of the towers is currently scheduled for 2029-30, following approval from Rushcliffe Borough Council, with spokespeople citing the significant costs and obstruction to future developments that retaining the towers would bring (Mellor, 2025).

3.2.4. Future Plans for the Power Station

An area as large as Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power station has immense potential for future developments. From November 2021 to January 2022, a draft public consultation was released for initial plans for the power station post-closure (Rushcliffe Borough Council, 2026a). Since

then, there have been several more Local Development Orders (LDO), consultations and amendments, the most recent consultation amendments released in March 2026 (Rushcliffe Borough Council, 2026b). Proposals for the site have included (but are not limited to): battery gigafactories, renewable energy generation, gypsum mining and multi-use developments (Uniper, 2025). More recently, the proposal to build a data centre has gained a lot of traction. In September 2024, the UK government designated data centres as critical national infrastructure, alongside energy and water systems (Clark, et.al., 2025). Consequently, local planning committees must consider the need for data centres when deciding planning applications and setting policies (ibid). The East Midlands Combined County Authority has submitted a bid to government for an AI Growth Zone centred on the site, which would include the creation of a data centre on the site, (West Bridgford Wire, 2026). This has sparked concerns over energy demands amongst locals. Whilst the parliamentary report predicating the need for data centres states: '*predictions about the future energy consumption of data centres are uncertain*' (Clark, et.al., 2025), the National Energy System Operator, NESO, argues that projected growth of data centres in Great Britain could '*add up to 71 TWh of electricity demand*' in the next 25 years, redoubling the need for clean power (Kleinman and Shveda, 2025).

The redevelopment of Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power station will be an addition to the wider East Midlands Freeport (EMF) proposal, approved in 2023 (Uniper, 2025); The EMF is the only inland freeport in the UK, aiming to attract investment in private sector redevelopment, the power station site being a key target (ibid). The redevelopment also aims to enhance local business retention rates, as well as potentially creating up to 8000 jobs, although it is not specified what these jobs are in and if they are targeted at locals impacted by the power station's closure (ibid).

The complex and ongoing debates between actors with regards to the past, purpose and future of the power station, amongst the plethora of government targets, serves as a reminder as to why we need to study their imaginaries.

4. Methodology

In line with much contemporary economic geography research, my thesis is guided by critical realism (Benner, 2025). Ontologically, critical realism accepts a reality that is impossible to grasp entirely, hence the aim is to get as close as possible to understanding reality at its core (Mukumbang, 2023). To do so, we must study the role of independent structures that influence actors' actions, whilst recognising the role of the subjective knowledge and experiences that shape actors' reasoning (ibid). This requires retroduction, working backwards from observed events, to identify the mechanisms underneath (ibid). This paper studies the structures, such as legislation, policy and economic processes, simultaneously with human value judgements, memories and experiences, to better understand place leaders' and locals' imaginaries. The aim of this paper is understanding and comparing the dimensions/subdimensions of imaginaries between place leaders and locals within a regional transition. Such subjective data was acquired through qualitative research via semi-structured interviews, to uncover themes and meanings present in stakeholders' opinions and preferences. It adopts a mixed method approach, as an

index was created to quantify and aggregate the data. The research has taken a descriptive deductive approach as a theory (imaginaries) was used to guide the criteria for observation (Fife and Gossner, 2024). Since the goal was to explore the standpoints of stakeholders, I did not begin with a set of hypotheses to predict a relationship between the actors and their imaginaries and instead, laid out a set of research questions (see 1.1). Data and methodological triangulation were used: data triangulation through obtaining data from multiple groups of people (place leaders and locals) and methodological triangulation through combining interview-based data with document analysis (Panke, 2018, p.230). Data triangulation minimises unintentional biases presented by me when interviewing, whilst using interviews allows for a more authentic account of the situation than present in officially published literature.

4.1. Sampling

The sample of primary data comprised six semi-structured interviews and 17 documents (news articles, policy documents and a history book). The criteria to find place leaders was people who had some decision-making power over the future of the site, spanning the public and private sector, in line with Roessler et al's (2025) definition. I searched for contact details of local, regional and national government bodies on Google, as well as companies involved in the redevelopment, demolition, or future investment of the area and reached out via email (Appendix G). The criteria for locals was those who wanted to voice their opinions/concerns on the future of the site. For those still residing nearby, I looked for people within approximately a 10km radius of the power station; at this distance, the power station is still visible and local impacts on traffic congestion, local businesses etc would be noticeable on a daily/weekly basis. Locals also classified as past and present workers at the power station, who may live further away, but have spent a considerable amount of time in the area (five+ years), enough to have a sense of place. Since memory and nostalgia was a key theme in this research, I chose not to discount those who had since moved away from the area post-closure. Participants were found via posting an advertisement in five Facebook groups (Appendix B, Appendix F), which received over 2000 views collectively. I also directly contacted over 60 people on Facebook and LinkedIn, found via searches based on company and location, as well as local community centres, in the hope of snowballing. I also posted 20 physical advertisements (Appendix F) on noticeboards within Ratcliffe-on-Soar village, Kegworth and Clifton. I obtained News articles, policy documents and a history book to find quotes displaying imaginaries. The documents were selected based on a google search ‘Ratclife-on-Soar power station’ + ‘closure’ or ‘redevelopment’. The search was left purposely broad to see what articles and papers were deemed most relevant, most reliable and most popular, with the assumption that this would correlate with the dominant viewpoint. Citation chaining was used to cover a broad range of sources across time and to understand the complex changes in development plans. Since the Uniper history book (Uniper, 2025) was used in my data collection, triangulation was necessary to negate any potential biases they may carry. For example, it is unlikely they would share quotes of anyone who may hold negative opinions of the power station or its redevelopment.

4.2. Data Collection

All six interviews followed a semi-structured format and were held online across WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Facebook. The breakdown of interviews/interviewees can be found in Appendix D. I prepared 10 broad questions (Appendix E) to ask the participants, designed to allow each participant to engage with both sides of each of my dimensions of imaginaries, to not introduce bias. The aim was to discover which questions they engaged with more. For example, I asked participants what they would consider both a good and bad future for the site, inspired by Sovacool et al (2025) and Denyer et al's (2026) work. The interviews lasted between 36 and 51 minutes. I used manual summary transcription, any notable quotes used in the thesis have been transcribed verbatim. To triangulate with my interviews, I found 27 documents, 17 of which were processed. Since four out of six interviewees were locals, there was a stronger emphasis to find documents portraying the imaginaries of place leaders. Documents were discarded (Appendix C) based on being largely descriptive or not displaying subjective opinion-based statements on the development of the area. All data collected across the documents/articles was accurate as of 30April 2026.

Since my aim is to develop a framework to understand and compare imaginaries, this paper is analytically generalisable, not empirically generalisable (Drisko, 2025). Simply put, my framework and index could be used to look at other areas facing a conflict of imaginaries between two groups (ibid). I do not claim the empirical findings of this paper can be generalised to represent the entire population of locals and place leaders since subjectivity is a key tenet of this research (ibid).

4.3. Data Analysis

The interview transcripts and relevant documents were then filed into Nvivo for content and thematic analysis, a qualitative research method used to identify, analyse, organise and, describe themes found within a data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Each interviewee and quoted stakeholder was assigned a case classification by role, either place leader or local. An iterative qualitative analysis process was undertaken. First, I coded the documents and transcripts inductively, to discover initial patterns and themes not specific to my framework (Bingham, 2023); here 164 initial codes were generated (Appendix K). I then proceeded with a round of deductive coding, where the codes were grouped according to my four imaginary dimensions (Bingham, 2023). This process was repeated to ensure thoroughness, with the second round of deductive coding grouping the material according to the nine subdimensions of imaginaries. I ran four matrix coding queries across the two case classifications (place leader and local) and for each code correlated to the dimension categories (e.g. social, environmental and economic for the thematic query). This query counted the number of references for each code and displayed them as a percentage of the total references per dimension, per role (e.g. out of all spatial references that place leaders gave, what percentage were past-oriented) (see Figure 6.; see Appendix I). I calculated it this way rather than what percentage of references within a dimension originated from an actor group (e.g. what percentage of all past-oriented references originated from place leaders) because there was not a perfectly even number of references from each group of actors and so this would have skewed the results.

4.3.1. Imaginary Orientation Index

I created the IOI to demonstrate where actors' imaginaries lie on a spectrum and clearly display any disparities between them. Figure 5 shows the IOI equation. The index ranges from -100 to +100. Once the IOI has been created and interpreted (see Table 2) for each group within a dimension, the difference between the IOI of each group within a dimension would represent how significant of a gap exists between the groups per imaginary dimension. An example of the IOI calculation and the categorisation can be found in Appendix A.

Imaginary Orientation Index = % (Dimension category A) - % (Dimension category B)

Figure 5. Imaginary Orientation Index equation

IOI	Imaginary
+100	Entirely category A oriented
0	Balanced
-100	Entirely category B oriented

Table 2. Imaginary Orientation Index Interpretation

This index offers a clear way of placing actors' imaginaries on a scale, displaying how imaginaries differ between actors. Quantifying qualitative data is a good way of aggregating my findings and simplifying complex datasets. Quantifying actors' imaginaries across different categories also allows for standardisation, to identify where the biggest areas of convergence and divergence are, between dimensions, helping to answer my question of where conflict may arise and how this can be mediated. A limitation of this method is that it could not be applied to the thematic dimension of imaginaries. Since the thematic dimension to imaginaries is separated into three subdimensions, that are not obvious counterparts, it would not be possible to apply the index to this category without it being completely arbitrarily weighted. Vitally, this data must be combined with content and thematic analysis to provide depth and nuance. Finally, I performed thematic analysis again, to build the narrative of my findings, identify common or diverging themes amongst the two groups. This helps to answer the question, how may diverging imaginaries create conflict and how could these conflicts potentially be resolved/avoided?

There were numerous ethical considerations to ensure informed consent, privacy and transparency. All interviewees were sent a consent form to fill out (Appendix H) and have been given a pseudonym to maintain privacy. All participants were informed of the purpose of the thesis at the beginning of the meeting. Interviews were transcribed by hand as I did not have access to a transcriber without internet access. No sensitive personal data was collected during this thesis.

4.4. Limitations

I have encountered unpredicted challenges during the process. For example, on two occasions, participants who had agreed to an interview did not attend, bringing my number of participants down from eight to six. Since many of the workers at the power station have retired, the average age of my target participants are not typically online as much as younger generations, which made it harder to get in touch with them. This is why I posted paper advertisements on local noticeboards in Ratcliffe-on-Soar and visited the local community centre, in the hope of finding participants. In addition, multiple participants expressed limited knowledge of online meeting platforms and so I had to adapt the format from Teams/ Zoom, to a telephone call, which removes any non-verbal queues that may have been useful. Since I do not live near the region, it was not possible to physically visit more than once. When visiting Ratliffe-on-Soar in person, it was a Monday afternoon which would have reduced the number of people passing on the street to approach, the local community centre was also only open for a couple of hours,which I had missed, however I did send follow up emails upon which I was referred to one of my participants. With more time, I would hope to have gained a more diverse base of participants, specifically in gender. Despite posting in online groups comprising thousands of people and directly reaching out to females, all my participants were male. This does not discredit the validity of my findings, as it reflects the overwhelming male representation in the engineering industry in reality. It is in the interest of the place leaders to display a positive outlook on the future developments, to attract investment and project confidence, which may not accurately represent their true imaginary, but it does accurately reflect the imaginaries materialised in regional development policy.

5. Findings

Figure 6 displays the two groups' imaginaries, mapped by the nine sub-dimensions of imaginaries. This is based on the percentage of references (out of the dimension category) that were linked to each sub dimension for each actor (see Appendix I). The smallest divergence was seen in environmentally-led imaginaries, 19.4% of place leaders' thematically-oriented references were environmental, compared to 11.83% of locals'. The largest disparity between the group was between their spatial imaginaries (see Figure 7) imaginaries, 49.69% of place leaders spatially-oriented references were place-oriented, compared to 78.16% of locals' (see Figure 6). Figure 7 maps out the two groups' IOI spatially, temporally and tonally (table of these results are found in Appendix J). The closer to the centre the actors are, the more balanced their imaginaries. The further apart the actors sit, the more divergent their imaginaries are. Here we can see the two groups diverge the most on the spatial IOI and the least on the tonal IOI, with place leaders being almost perfectly balanced on the temporal scale (see Figure 7).

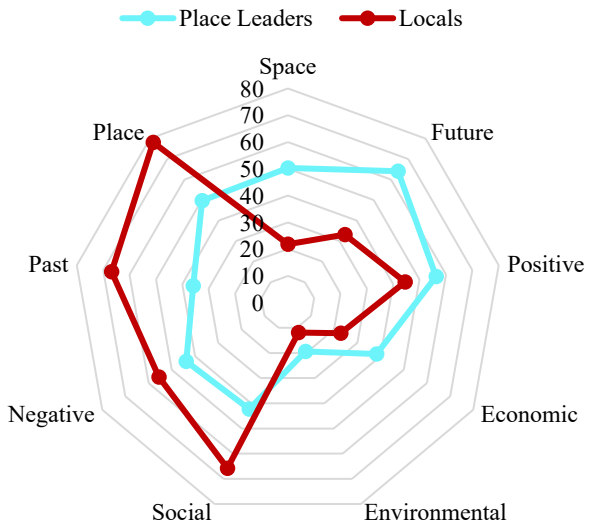

Figure 7. Radar plot showing percentage of references across nine subcategories of the four dimensions of imaginaries, comparing place leaders and locals.

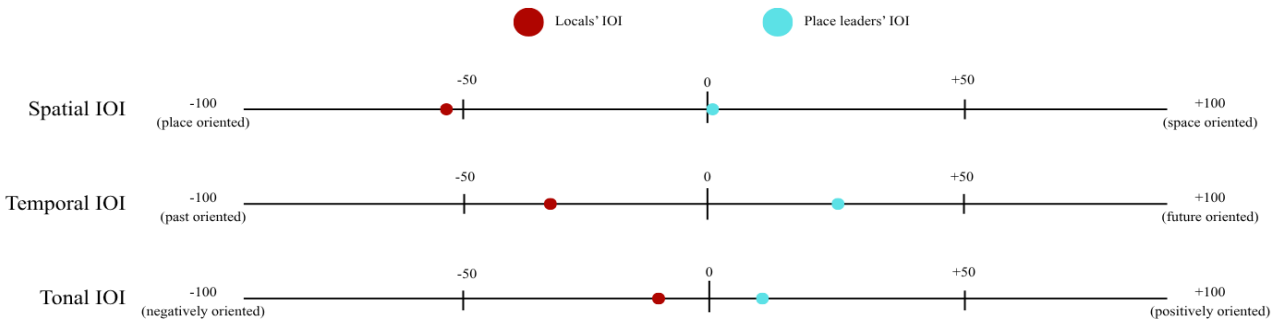

Figure 6. IOI by actor group

5.1. Spatial

The empirical material reveals the overall trend that place leaders displayed more space-oriented imaginaries, whilst locals were more place-oriented. Looking more closely, we see that for place leaders, this was grounded more in discussing Ratcliffe-on-Soar's strategic potential to act as a tool for wider national and international policies; '*Ratcliffe Site will play a vital role in delivering on the Government's ambition*' (Arup, 2025) (upscaling data centre capacity and achieving net zero targets) as well as its role to act as a lever boosting regional prosperity. However, the balance was fairly even, with many place leaders making several references to Ratcliffe-on-Soar as a place also. Place leaders IOI was 0.62 (see Figure 7), signalling only a slight preference for space-oriented imaginaries. One place leader acknowledged the current plans for the ex-power station fail to attach themselves to the area's sense of place and lacks a narrative to engage communities in the plans.

> *'Let's start talking about how the site works, how its configured, access to the site, it starts to tell the local people a story […] People want to see the site come into use, but they want to feel like there's a wider narrative and story.'* – Interviewee F

Place leaders displayed a strong consideration of both national targets and local heritage. Even if the discussions of place were more in the context of the lack of 'place making' in the plans, there was a recognition of the room for improvement.

For locals, the difference was more pronounced, with almost 80% of spatial references being place-oriented, compared to around 20% space-oriented (see Figure 6). Figure 7 shows that local's IOI was -33.64, showing a much stronger preference for place-oriented imaginaries, resulting in a IOI difference of 56.94 between the actors. This is expected from locals, as a sense of place is reliant on prolonged exposure, habitual behaviours with and attachment to, an area (Tuan, 1971). The referenced experiences ranged from those who worked at the power station and the life-long friendships made there, to those who marvelled at the cooling towers immensity, recalling seeing them emerge over the horizon to signal that they are arriving home. Some quotes that stand out include:

> *'Coal and coal fired power stations were part of the fabric of society*' – Interviewee D

> *'You never forget the people that you meet and the camaraderie that you share*' – Ex Power station worker (Uniper, 2025, p.607).

> *'The visual impact, the size and the scale, to see it emerge on the horizon when you're driving on the motorway is quite special'.* – Interviewee C.

This quote exemplifies Tuans (1971) mention of public symbols in places that command awe, proving a strong sense of place amongst locals.

Alongside a sense of place comes a sense of loss when major change is imminent, many locals expressed the 'emotional' experience of witnessing the power station close down:

> *'It was an emotional experience to see Unit 1 during its preservation run on its last day of operation*.' (Uniper, 2025, p.186)

This manifested into imaginaries displaying a preference for continuity and recognition of heritage, overlapping with the temporal distinction discussed subsequently. However, a contradictory, unexpected theme that emerged was that the strong sense of community was not entirely universal, due to the seasonal nature of work at the power station. One local made little reference to a sense of place within Ratcliffe-on-Soar, due to the 'isolation' of the power station and influx of seasonal workers.

> *'The power station was sort of plonked in the middle of an existing community, its pretty isolated [..]It's difficult to comment on 'community impact' since there were so many seasonal workers. I wouldn't say there was much of a shared interest'* – Interviewee A.

The 'shared interest' was in reference to preferences for the future of the power station site, highlighting the danger of grouping all locals' into one voice, not all locals' have the same memories and sense of place, since some were more transient than others.

5.2. Temporal

In accordance with Benner's (2025) conceptualisation of imaginaries, there was a strong correlation/overlap between spatially-oriented and temporally-oriented imaginaries found in the empirical material. Place leaders' discourse was more centred around the future, creating something new for Ratcliffe-on-Soar, such as hosting emerging technology sectors, bringing in new skills and workers and '*creating regional opportunity*' (Interviewee C). The word opportunity here is particularly important as it signifies something that does not yet exist and what *could* result from this redevelopment. This was similarly evident in formal communications from place leaders:

> *'This is an opportunity to potentially create a site of regional and national importance, accommodating new industry and businesses with many high-skilled jobs.'* (Rushcliffe Borough Council, 2022).

Despite overlap, there was a larger disparity temporally than spatially within place leaders' imaginaries; 64.08% future-oriented compared to 35.92% past-oriented (see Figure 6), giving them an overall IOI of 28.16 (see Figure 7), a clear inclination towards future-oriented imaginaries.

Given their stronger sense of place and memories to share, it was unsurprising that locals on the other hand demonstrated more past-oriented imaginaries than future-oriented ones: 66.82% to 33.18% (see Figure 6), giving them an overall IOI of -33.64 (see Figure 7). Locals tended reminisce more about their memories of the power station, what it added to their lives personally and consequently, what is now lacking in this transition phase. Such losses included the physical work, the personal relations and the loss of the power station's national purpose. The power station's vital role in 'keeping the lights on' was referenced by five out of six interviewees, which spilled over into their future-oriented imaginaries, to ensure this sense of purpose was continued, whatever that may be. Locals displayed different imaginaries in terms of what sector may come to characterise the area, but what they agreed on was for this to be linked to the areas past:

> *'It would be nice to think something that's been destroying the environment could be turned into something more sustainable and give back to environment rather than take away.'* – Interviewee E.

> *'What would be really nice is if they left it as a museum as a case of the last of the plants, all the others have been knocked down or in the process of being demolished, so if they had something to say yeah we've moved away from this but this is what basically led the countries power for 67 years.'* – Interviewee B

This preference for continuity and preservation of heritage in the form of a museum, over innovation or diversification, could signal an example of cognitive lock-in, as described by Grabher (1995).

In contrast, whilst place leaders recognised local's affinity with the heritage of the site, their focus remained on what was practical and financially viable:

> *'I appreciate that people want the cooling towers to remain, but they really are quite expensive to keep up and if they're not useful, it doesn't make a lot of sense in terms of creating opportunities' – Interviewee C*

One striking trend found was that when discussing awareness of future plans, uncertainty was displayed or directly mentioned by every local interviewee,

> *'I'm not that familiar, other than them [the cooling towers] being demolished'* – Interviewee E
>
> *'I have no idea what the plans out there are'* – Interviewee D
>
> '*I've vaguely heard some of the plans for the site'* – Interviewee B
>
> *'I'm not sure really I don't keep too much up to date with it'* – Interviewee A

The IOI difference was the largest in the temporal category than any other, 61.8 (see Figure 7), signalling a major area of divergence between the groups. The fear of change and uncertainty evident in locals' imaginaries could offer a strong indication as to why local's imaginaries were mostly past-oriented, because they have no evidential base to form opinions of the future.

5.3. Thematic

The two groups showed similarities in the proportion of socially, economically and environmentally-oriented imaginaries. Both groups displayed socially-oriented imaginaries the most, followed by economic and then environmental (see Figure 6). However, taking a closer look, we can see that what comprises these imaginaries is still quite disparate.

Starting with socially-oriented imaginaries, place leaders focussed more on the opportunity to bring in jobs and improve the number of high-wage, high skill workers, stating the redevelopment will help support '*an estimated 7,000 – 8,000 jobs based around advanced manufacturing and energy uses*' – (Uniper, 2025). Such claims were met with scepticism from locals, with one interviewee arguing:

> *'A lot of the time they'll tell you it'll it be some hundred jobs but the local people never see those jobs'* – Interviewee D

Socially, locals made more references to the relations, activities and community groups founded off working at the power station. One ex-worker stated:

> '*I'll be sad to see it go, not just the site but the social side*' (Uniper, 2025, p.480)

as others go into more depth reminiscing:

> *'We had a football team we'd play every Thursday, I know there was also a history society and even attempts to make a community garden*' - Interviewee D.

These reflections spurred concerns for some that the closure of the power station brought an end to the activities that the workplace provided.

> *'Life in general semes to have become more organised and risk averse and here you've seen that with dying community groups, you've got to get permission to do anything these days or you get told "you can't do this because it's not safe"*'. – Interviewee D

These were not themes recognised by place leaders, who claimed to ensure that the redevelopment would create:

> *'An environment which promotes a healthy work-life balance, with outdoor spaces where people can meet, relax and exercise'* – (Rushcliffe Borough Council, 2022).

Place leaders displayed a much closer gap between references to socially and economically oriented imaginaries, just less than a 4 percentage-point difference (see Figure 6), compared to locals' much starker margin of over 40% (see Figure 6). Place leaders showed strong interest in maximising cost efficiency, and attractiveness to potential investors. When discussing future visions for the power station site, objectives mentioned included:

> *'Securing attractive benefits to promote private sector redevelopment investment*' (Uniper, 2025, p.205)

with one interviewee aptly summarising:

> '*The redevelopment will be market led'* - Interviewee C

The two groups showed similar levels of engagement with environmentally-oriented imaginaries, both centring on the site's potential to deliver renewable energy, with varying degrees of approval. They also both mention the aesthetic impact on the environment that the development will have, repeatedly referring to the station as a 'dramatic landmark' (Barnes, 2025) having '*iconic impact on the landscape*' (interviewee C) and the consequent loss following its demolition. Here we can see the overlap between spatial and thematic imaginaries as the public symbols simultaneously carry environmental weight.

5.4. Tonal

The positive/negative distinction between place leaders' and locals' imaginaries is the broadest grouping, yet still empirically significant. The groups showed a smaller divergence in this category. Place leaders displayed mainly positive discourse, with an IOI of 11.73, whilst locals displayed more negatively framed imaginaries, resulting in an IOI of -11 (see Figure 7).

When asked what a good future for the region would look like, the answers reflected the thematic trend above, with place leaders citing things like economic growth, high-wage high skill jobs etc, perfectly summarised by one place leader who emphasised:

> '*I remain extremely optimistic […] I think the benefit could be considerable.'* – Interviewee F

This differed from locals' positive statements, which reflected the potential to foster greater communication, improve skills and counteract the past environmental damage done. This is except one respondent who stated:

> *'My opinion is to go to hell with this 'zero stuff' its costly and it's not working' [..] it's an absolute fallacy, it's never been thought through*' – Interviewee D

A large proportion of the positively framed quotes from locals were in reference to their past experiences and memories, as mentioned earlier. One of the main references within negatively-oriented imaginaries was the aforementioned uncertainty and a dissatisfaction of place leaders' current approach to the redevelopment, shown by the quote:

> *'I do not think any of them have freely grasped the needs of the work force.'* – Interviewee D

Negative concerns for the future/visions of a bad future were almost identical between the groups. When asked what a 'bad future' may look like in the region in their opinion, interviewees responded:

> *'Another bad option would be for it to become an industrial wasteland*' – Interviewee C
>
> *'For it to be left empty and left fallow'* – Interviewee B
>
> *'If it was left to go to rack n ruin'* – Interviewee D
>
> *'For it to be derelict'* – Interviewee E

Whilst one respondent said:

> *'More warehouses and logistics centres, there seems to be a trend for amazon warehouses and the like to be popping up in brownfield sites and this is bad for employment prospects*' – Interviewee A

The similarities in tonal imaginaries, specifically relating to the redevelopment of the power station is a major area for conflict resolution which shall be discussed.

Dimension	**Place-leaders Imaginaries**	**Locals' Imaginaries**	**Example quotes**		**Key Tension**
			Place leaders	**Locals**	
Temporal	Future oriented, forward planning, projections, targets	Past-oriented, nostalgic, preference for maintaining heritage	*'This is an opportunity to potentially create a site of regional and national importance, accommodating new industry and businesses'*	*'What would be really nice is if they left it as a museum as a case of the last of the plants'*	Future vision **versus** lived continuity

Spatial	National space, economic value of region, lack of narrative, relational space, levelling up the region.	Place oriented, lived experience, attachments	*'Ratcliffe site will play a vital role in delivering on the Government's ambition'*	*'Coal and coal fired power stations were part of the fabric of society*'	Strategic abstraction **versus** lived experience
Thematic	Predominantly economically oriented	Socially oriented, wellbeing, community activity	'*The redevelopment will be market led'*	*'here you've seen that with dying community groups, you've got to get permission to do anything'*	Growth **versus** social experience and wellbeing
Tonal	Optimistic, opportunity focused	Mixed, sceptical, concerns	*'I remain extremely optimistic'*	*'I do not think any of them have freely grasped the needs of the work force.'* –	Optimism **versus** scepticism

Table 3. Summary of Findings

6. Discussion

Detailing the content of the diverging imaginaries above allows us to discuss its implications, both for how we understand diverging imaginaries and why this is important for tracing regional development processes and inter-actor conflicts. This chapter shall thus be separated into my four aforementioned research questions.

6.1. How can we understand the dimensions of imaginaries between place leaders and locals?

The research aim of this study was to investigate, compare and understand the imaginaries of place leaders and locals in a region experiencing a post-carbon transition from a critical realist perspective. We have now identified, through deploying the IOI, that place leaders and locals within the redevelopment of Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station are on opposing sides of the spectrum across all dimensions of imaginaries (see Figure 7). This poses the danger of causing conflict between the groups, which has profound implications on the regional development trajectory. However, the extent to which the groups diverge differs significantly across the dimensions, which is why breaking down their imaginaries into the four dimensions and nine subdimensions is so important in identifying the potential causes of conflict, and harnessing the existing areas of convergence.

The biggest divergence between the groups was in their spatial imaginaries. Place leaders heavily focussed on the site's power as a regional and national lever to improve employment statistics, attract innovative industries and help achieve (inter)national climate targets. Whilst this offers huge benefits, such plans need to be embedded within a narrative that attaches locals to the cause and earns their support. This is in line with existing research showing how exogenously initiated narratives require more 'local translation' and 'anchoring' (Roessler et

al., 2025). This observation can be aided by the thematic and tonal dimensions of imaginaries as in this case, they have proved to be areas of closer convergence than spatial and temporal dimensions. Meanwhile, locals had much more place-oriented imaginaries, with some attached too much to the nostalgia and identity of the region, at the expense of blindness to changing geopolitical circumstances that require the integration of new industries and technologies, such as renewables and data centres. There was consistent reference to Tuan's (1971) and Massey's interpretation of a sense of place within local's imaginaries, in the way the cooling towers commanded awe on the horizon of the motorway (cementing themselves as a public symbol) or the daily habits moving to and from work, the weekly sports events or the same bakery they would stop by on their commutes. In addition, I identified evidence of the aforementioned 'unexplainable' feelings of loss that can emerge when a sense of place is so strong, seen by the repeated mention of the 'emotional' experience of the power station closing, without much further elaboration.

As per Benner's (2025) conceptualisation, there was a strong overlap between the spatial and temporal imaginary dimensions. As locals reflected fondly over memories of the power station and their scepticism of the future, leaders were focussed on what can be created, although many locals referenced the short sightedness of leaders future plans. The smallest divergence was tonally, which is encouraging to see Tutton's (2023) and Gong's (2024) observations of futurelessness are not as bleak as predicted. In addition, the thematic similarities between the groups serves to create optimism, if these areas of convergence are utilised within narratives created in the future plans of leaders.

6.2. How do differences in imaginaries between place leaders and locals shape tensions/conflict?

The identified divergence of imaginaries between the two groups has the potential to cause dispute if left unresolved. It is evident that the large disparity in spatial imaginaries results from local's continuous reference to place-oriented imaginaries and a strong attachment to the region. As Grabher (1995) elaborates, these strong attachments, if held by the majority of locals, can manifest into cognitive lock-in, especially if not fully understood by place leaders. Whilst leaders have also displayed recognition of Ratcliffe-on-Soar's strong industrial heritage for example, their difficulty seems to be in communicating this to locals. The recurring theme of scepticism and uncertainty amongst the community serves great potential to cause discontent, as they fear the area is losing its identity since the closure of the power station, due to place leaders' pursuit of profit. The repeated mention of a fear of proliferation of homogenised logistics warehouses and loss of community groups that the power station generated, is another example of local's strong desire to have redevelopment policies that represent the 'Ratcliffe spirit' that filled the area for over 60 years. The overwhelming feeling from locals was that they had been left in the dark about what was going to happen on their doorstep, which is where the main source of potential conflict originates. Many locals described the decision makers as short-sighted, that they followed the somewhat unpredictable fluctuations of the market and external investors, instead of what will create a longevous, happy, thriving community. This aligns with Grubb et al's (2025) observation of UK energy

transition policy, allowing monetary short term targets to prevail over long term targets around human values. Thus, community members need to be actively involved, or at least regularly informed, about ongoing developments to prevent conflict.

Where there is lack of communication and dialogue, there is also a misunderstanding of what the other group is advocating for. Place leaders believed the main local opposition about the loss of the cooling towers and traffic concerns. Whilst it is true some locals were concerned about this, a much more common (and unrecognised) concern was the loss of community and social activity since the closure of the power station. The number one most cited positive memory of those who worked at the power station was the people, the workplace 'families' and the sense of place that radiated. Thus, this large gap left since the closure needs to be filled with an emphasis on rebuilding the sense of community in the area, to avoid discontent. Equally, most locals, when asked about the motivations of the place leaders, said future plans will ultimately be dominated by what makes money. Whilst of course economics will always play a large role in redevelopment of any region, my empirical findings indicate that locals could benefit from greater communication with decision makers, to know that place leaders desire to maintain heritage and culture post-transition, subsequently filling locals with confidence and optimism.

Threat is a theme covered by much work focusing on communities experiencing regional transition and sense of place (Tuan, 1971; Grabher, 1995; Gong and Truffer, 2024) . Overall, short sightedness and everchanging plans and announcements on the decision makers behalf leaves locals in the dark. Here, uncertainty is translated as a form of threat and preference for monetary targets is perceived as undemocratic, pushing locals' towards an even stronger attachment to the past, preference for continuity and scepticism of the future. Tuan's (1971) we/them distinction remains relevant here, but instead of a fear of foreigners, locals display a fear of external actors with no contextual or subjective knowledge that seek to transform Ratcliffe-on-Soar, with no explicit purpose guided the plans. The findings in this paper serve as a clear indication as to where the potential causes for conflict are during the redevelopment of Ratcliffe-on-Soar, which is a lack of attachment between past/place-oriented imaginaries and future/space-oriented imaginaries. The thematic and tonal dimensions of imaginaries can act as the intermediary to harness the common ground between these opposing imaginaries (see 6.4.). If the future of Ratcliffe-on-Soar lacks character, or its purpose appears to be the result of an arbitrary short-sighted decision, this will cause large scale discontent amongst locals and even potentially drive them out.

6.3. How do tensions influence the regional development processes?

Whilst place leaders repeatedly cite wanting to create high skill jobs, thriving industries and a happy healthy workforce, a plan without a sense of place that continues the existing story of Ratcliffe-on-Soar risks driving out the existing community. If place leaders fail to study the 'intangible facets' and 'soft factors' (Gong and Truffer, 2024), within local's imaginaries in Ratcliffe-on-Soar - such as sense of place, memories, social priorities and scepticism - the chance of a successful sustainable transition is reduced massively. Simultaneously, it is less

likely to result in the desired effect of bringing in new residents and workers, if the region has no distinguishable features setting it apart from other developing regions in the UK that host data centres and logistics warehouses. The strong preference for past-oriented imaginaries amongst locals could serve as a form of lock-in for the trajectory of Ratcliffe-on-Soar, if left unchecked. Equally, the everchanging plans and lack of direction from place leaders could also cause lock-in, if the communities are not actively included in decision making. Stronger active opposition or support from locals could act as a catalyst for certain plans to go ahead, rather than allowing place leaders (investors) to bid against each other indefinitely.

Another potential scenario that may emerge, if these tensions continue unresolved, is the creation of a different form of 'left behind' communities. Unlike the traditionally referenced 'left behind' communities, where nothing replaces the industry that closes down (Tierney et al., 2024), Ratcliffe-on-Soar may face a situation where industries are moving in and the region is physically developing, but the people are not brought along with it. In other words, those who are uninformed about the drastic changes in their area become 'psychologically left behind'.

6.4. How could these tensions/conflicts be resolved/avoided?

To avoid a new generation of left behind communities, this paper seconds Atkins (2024) call for academia to adopt a proactive approach to decarbonisation that anticipates future processes. If more attention is given to breaking down the imaginaries, using tools such as my IOI, there is potential for a highly successful post-carbon regional transition in Ratcliffe-on-Soar. A greater engagement with the variation in subjective feelings, emotions and standpoints of stakeholders which the IOI summarises, allows for a more successful post-carbon transition. As alluded to, more attention needs to be dedicated to attaching nationally-led goals to context specificities in Ratcliffe-on-Soar, to reduce tensions.

In addition to this, there already exists many areas of convergence (or smaller divergence) upon which the two groups can build upon. A good future for the site, cited by both groups, was a future maintaining purpose, continuing the historical, vital role it played in 'keeping the lights on' for the country. This purpose is a source of pride for decision makers and locals alike. The fact that the two groups ranked the imaginaries thematically in the same order (see Figure 6) indicates it is not necessarily *what* the site is being used for that causes disagreement, as long as it maintains purpose, character and includes the community in the journey. Whilst the specificities of what comprised the socially led imaginaries may have differed (jobs versus leisure) this contradicts the belief of locals that decision makers are only guided by economics. The slight 8 percentage-point difference in environmentally-oriented imaginaries (see Figure 6) is also an area of convergence to build upon. There are multiple ways in which the areas of divergence can be fortified with the areas of convergence. For example, since both groups showed favoured the future role of Ratcliffe-on-Soar in achieving sustainability goals, this could be paired with more place-specific community led approaches such as community gardens previously set up by the power station's workforce.

Whilst there is a desire to increase the number of high skilled jobs in the Ratcliffe-on-Soar area, there should also be a focus to maintain the workforce that already exists, by creating a thriving community around it. There is already a strong community base, as some interviewees cited

still regular meeting up with ex-colleagues of the power station. It is thus the duty of the decision makers and the next generation of industries controlling this area, to actively involve the existing community, in order to keep this spirit alive. Communication is also key to avoiding conflict between the two groups. This does not have mean regular lengthy town hall meetings, but, as some interviewees mentioned, simple informative leaflets or blog posts to update residents with any developments or pushbacks, allowing feelings of uncertainty and threat to subside. The regular local development orders that have persisted are a step in the right direction, but often this can appear complex and time consuming to locals, deterring them from being involved in the transition. As Massey (1995) reminds us that places are ever changing articulated moments, it is important to regularly review the orientation of actors' imaginaries to align interests and reduce conflict.

7. Conclusion

The findings of this study help contribute to a better understanding of the dimensions of imaginaries between place leaders and locals in a region embarking on a post-carbon transition. The reviewed literature helped me to identify a gap in current economic and evolutionary economic geography literature in engaging with the concept of futures and imaginaries. This paper has sought to contribute to the literature on imaginaries and EEG, whilst building upon the call for a deeper engagement with subjectivity, and value judgements, using theories of sense of place, memory and identity (Tuan, 1971; Massey, 1995; Pappa, 2025) as a base. Using Benner's (2025) conceptualisation of imaginaries as inspiration, I developed a conceptual framework (Table1) which delineated four dimensions of imaginaries: spatial, temporal, thematic and tonal, comprising nine subdimensions. Empirical data was collected via document analysis and semi-structured interviews on the imaginaries of place leaders and locals in Ratcliffe-on-Soar, in relation to the recent closure and subsequent redevelopment of the power station. The data was then grouped into the nine identified subdimensions, allowing me to create the IOI, which aggregated the data and placed the actor's imaginaries on a spectrum.

The overall trend found that the two groups diverged most in their spatial and temporal imaginaries when discussing the redevelopment of the power station site. The qualitative research and engagement with subjectivity and value judgements allowed me to precisely map out the areas of convergence and divergence, how this has the potential to create conflict and how conflicts could be avoided. In line with previous research (Pappa, 2025) there is a strong sense of place present amongst locals in Ratcliffe-on-Soar, which is made stronger by uncertainty of future plans, increasing the tensions between them and decision makers. Equally, this case study mirrors previous reflections on the short sightedness prevailing in regional development policy (Grubb et al., 2025). The tendency for decision makers to favour space-oriented imaginaries over place-oriented ones reflects this, as well as the uncertainty and scepticism towards decision makers persisting amongst locals. This creates tension between the two groups when community members feel separated from the decisions that impact them most. The additional thematic and tonal dimensions of imaginaries are a positive reminder of how some dimensions can be used to bridge the gap between the groups that exists within other dimensions, in pursuit of development policies that serve both parties. The two groups placed

social, economic and environmental imaginaries in the same order as a percentage of their total thematic references. This could be a source of mediation, if these polices are attached to a narrative, linking the purpose of the redevelopment to the area's strong industrial heritage and social bonds that are declining since the closure of the power station.

There are a number of areas for further research upon which this paper can serve as a strong foundation for. The first would be to compare the data on imaginaries of the two groups over time, to see if their imaginaries change, once the development has been implemented. Secondly, to compare an area such as Ratcliffe-on-Soar which has not completed its development, with an area that has already experienced a post-carbon transition, to draw inspiration and suggest specific development plans. The third would be to further investigate the demography of the participants, to see if there are variations in imaginaries in terms of age group, gender or political ideology for example. Finally, it would be necessary to do further research dividing place leaders between those representing the public and private sector, to see the interaction and tensions between imaginaries of these two groups and how this also influences development trajectories and conflicts.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Dimension categorisation for IOI calculation and Example calculation.

Dimension	**Category A**	**Category B**
Spatial	Space	Place
Temporal	Future	Past
Tonal	Positive	Negative

Example IOI Calculation

Temporal Imaginary Orientation Index = % (Future oriented references) - % (Past oriented references)

Place leaders' temporal IOI = 64.08 – 35.92 = +28.16

Locals' temporal IOI = 33.18 – 66.82 = - 33.64

Appendix B: List of Facebook Groups contacted.

Kegworth Village

Castle Donington, Hemmington & Lockington Community Page

UK Power stations

Our Rushcliffe

We are Nottingham

Appendix C: List of articles reviewed, included and not included for data collection.

Documents and articles included in data collection	Articles not included in data collection
https://www.placemidlands.co.uk/data-centre-plan-for-former-ratcliffe-power-station/ https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/local-news/long-standing-ratcliffe-soar-power-9596823 https://westbridgfordwire.com/ratcliffe-power-station-site-plans-expected-to-allow-data-centres-on-southern-land-too/ https://www.gbnews.com/news/ratcliffe-on-soar-carbon-demolished https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cz910pp3gwvo https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/local-news/ratcliffe-soar-residents-end-era-7428261 https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c79w93v9z4yo https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce8dz54zep7o https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/media/ag0bgbgo/ratcliffe-ldo-display-boards-august-2022.pdf https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5fd74d7c8fa8f54d564af0a9/early-coal-close-impact-assessment-.pdf.pdf https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ckglpw2yrrlo https://www.emfreeport.com/ https://democracy.rushcliffe.gov.uk/documents/s19210/Enc.%201%20for%20Ratcliffe%20on%20Soar%20Power%20Station%2	https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/eastmidlands/news/2107587-ai-vision-reimagines-future-of-ratcliffe-power-station https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/news/musicians-create-musical-legacy-in-ratcliffe-cooling-towers https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ceq1r5lnypyo https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/czdj9qzejymo https://www.nottinghamworld.com/news/major-ratcliffe-on-soar-power-station-update-as-demolition-timeline-is-mapped-out-5347639 https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/more-cooling-towers-set-to-vanish-after-nottinghamshire-listing-bid-fails https://www.timeout.com/uk/news/the-iconic-cooling-towers-near-the-m1-that-will-soon-be-torn-down-102225 https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/local-news/major-planning-safeguard-east-midlands-10605280 https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/local-news/vital-upgrades-take-place-between-10775480 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c886qd2g80xo

0Local%20Development%20Order%20Amendment.pdf https://planningon-line.rushcliffe.gov.uk/online-applications/files/2549C5EC952A3166C0283FA01E9F85FD/pdf/25_02015_LDO-EAST_MIDLANDS_COMBINED_COUNTY_AUTHORITY__EMCCA_-1999493.pdf https://democracy.rushcliffe.gov.uk/documents/s17199/Enc.+1+for+Local+Development+Order+Ratcliffe+on+Soar.pdf https://ratcliffe-history-book.com/lander	

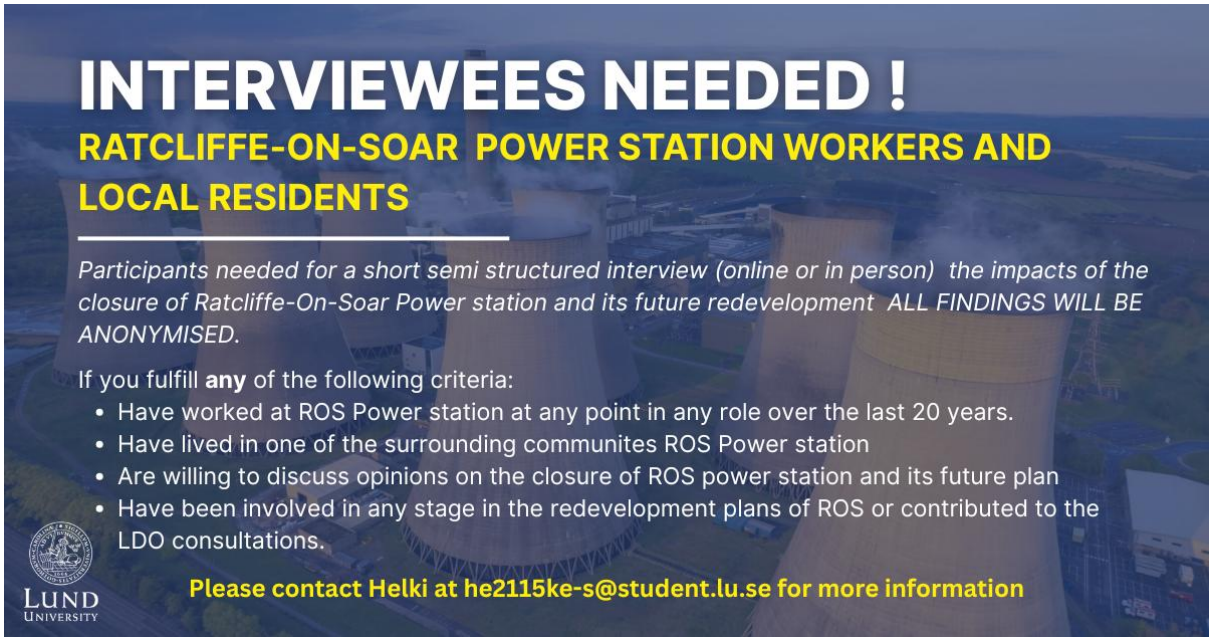
Appendix D: Breakdown of interviews & interviewees.

Pseudonym	Role	Age group	Gender	Interview format	Transcription format
Interviewee A	Local	61-75	Male	Telephone call	Manual
Interviewee B	Local	46-60	Male	Zoom meeting	Manual
Interviewee C	Place leader	61-75	Male	Teams meeting	Manual
Interviewee D	Local	75+	Male	Facebook call	Manual
Interviewee E	Local	46-60	Male	Teams meeting	Manual
Interviewee F	Place leader	30-45	Male	Teams meeting	Manual

Appendix E: Sample of interview questions.

1. When you think of the power station, both when it was operating and now, what stands out to you most?
2. Are you familiar with any of the plans and proposals for the future development of Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station? **Local specific**
3. Are you familiar with any opposition or pushback so far, how would you describe these oppositions and how do you think these tensions have been managed? **place leader specific**
4. What would a good future for Ratcliffe-on-Soar look like in 10 years time?
5. What would a bad future look like?
6. What do you think there is to be gained from the redevelopment?
7. Do you think anything has been lost since the closure?
8. What do you think are the key motivations/ objectives of the decision makers in charge of the redevelopment ? **local specific**
9. What are the key guiding objectives/ sources of evidence used in the redevelopment plans? **Place leader specific**
10. What do you think are the key tensions between the community and decision makers in the context of this redevelopment?

Appendix F: Advertisement posted in Facebook groups and on noticeboards.



Appendix G: Template for emails sent to prospective participants.

Dear [INSERT NAME],

My name is Helki Kerrigan and I am a Masters student in Human Geography at Lund University, Sweden. I am currently writing my thesis on the impacts of the closure of Ratcliffe Power station, the plans for its future and the impact on local communities.

I am reaching out with regards to the data collection part of my thesis, which requires me to conduct short interviews with key stakeholders within the Ratcliffe Power station's past and future. The interview would be semi structured and can be held both online or in person and would need to be conducted **before the 29th April.**

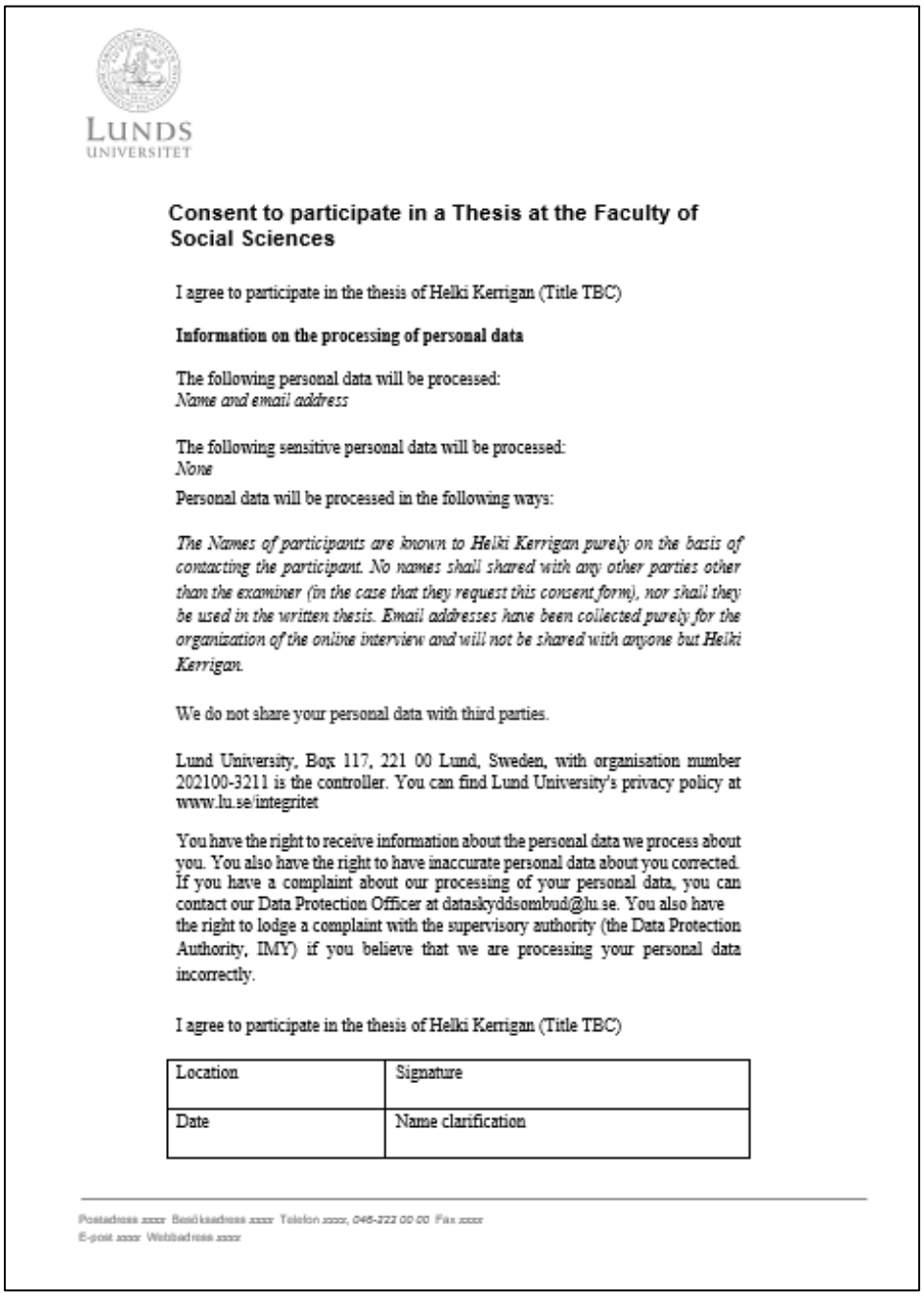
As [INSERT RELEVANT POSITION], I believe you could offer invaluable contributions to this research and would be keen to hear your perspective and insights on this monumental regional development project. Any contributions you would make would be anonymised/ pseudonymised in the thesis.

If this is something you would be interested in taking part in, please let me know, with any further questions you may have on the project and I will answer any concerns.

I look forward to your response,

Helki Kerrigan

Appendix H: Participant consent form.



LUNDS UNIVERSITET

Consent to participate in a Thesis at the Faculty of Social Sciences

I agree to participate in the thesis of Helki Kerrigan (Title TBC)

Information on the processing of personal data

The following personal data will be processed:
Name and email address

The following sensitive personal data will be processed:
None

Personal data will be processed in the following ways:

The Names of participants are known to Helki Kerrigan purely on the basis of contacting the participant. No names shall shared with any other parties other than the examiner (in the case that they request this consent form), nor shall they be used in the written thesis. Email addresses have been collected purely for the organization of the online interview and will not be shared with anyone but Helki Kerrigan.

We do not share your personal data with third parties.

Lund University, Box 117, 221 00 Lund, Sweden, with organisation number 202100-3211 is the controller. You can find Lund University's privacy policy at www.lu.se/integritet

You have the right to receive information about the personal data we process about you. You also have the right to have inaccurate personal data about you corrected. If you have a complaint about our processing of your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer at dataskyddsombud@lu.se. You also have the right to lodge a complaint with the supervisory authority (the Data Protection Authority, IMY) if you believe that we are processing your personal data incorrectly.

I agree to participate in the thesis of Helki Kerrigan (Title TBC)

Location	Signature
Date	Name clarification

Postadress xxxx Besöksadress xxxx Telefon xxxx, 046-222 00 00 Fax xxxx
E-post xxxx Webbadress xxxx

Appendix I: Table of Nvivo matrix query results by reference.

Dimension	Dimension category	% of Place leaders' references	% of Locals' references
Spatial	Place	49.69	78.16
	Space	50.31	21.84
Temporal	Past	35.92	66.82
	Future	64.08	33.18
Thematic	Social	42.28	65.79
	Economic	38.33	22.83
	Environmental	19.4	11.83
Tonal	Positive	56.23	44.5
	Negative	43.77	55.5

Appendix J: Table of IOI results of each actor group.

	Place leaders IOI	Locals IOI	IOI difference
Spatial	0.62	-56.32	61.8
Temporal	28.16	-33.64	56.94
Thematic	NA	NA	NA
Tonal	11.73	-11	22.73

Appendix K – Initial code list from Nvivo.

Place

Search Project

Name	Files	Reference	Created on	Created b	Modified on	Modified b
work community	7	32	26/04/2026 11:00	HK	26/04/2026 12:40	HK
Code ial significance	7	13	26/04/2026 11:33	HK	26/04/2026 11:33	HK
symbiotic relations between lcoal business	1	2	25/04/2026 15:26	HK	25/04/2026 17:50	HK
skills shortage	2	2	25/04/2026 17:22	HK	25/04/2026 17:50	HK
regional objectives	3	3	25/04/2026 15:29	HK	25/04/2026 17:22	HK
ratcliffes position in supporting decarbonisatio	1	1	25/04/2026 14:40	HK	25/04/2026 14:41	HK
purpose	2	2	25/04/2026 16:42	HK	26/04/2026 12:41	HK
protecting local business	1	1	25/04/2026 12:24	HK	25/04/2026 15:23	HK
past quarry contention	1	1	25/04/2026 14:58	HK	25/04/2026 14:58	HK
new jobs not benefitting local people	1	1	25/04/2026 12:44	HK	25/04/2026 12:44	HK
Memory of environmental harm	1	1	26/04/2026 10:37	HK	26/04/2026 10:38	HK
maintaining work force	1	3	25/04/2026 12:11	HK	25/04/2026 15:43	HK
loss of heritage	1	2	26/04/2026 12:51	HK	26/04/2026 12:51	HK
loss of community	1	3	25/04/2026 16:47	HK	25/04/2026 16:48	HK
job loss	3	3	25/04/2026 15:35	HK	25/04/2026 15:35	HK
Heritage	4	10	25/04/2026 16:36	HK	26/04/2026 12:41	HK
giving back to the local environemnt	0	0	25/04/2026 14:31	HK	25/04/2026 14:31	HK
domino effect on local business and bi product	3	4	25/04/2026 15:39	HK	26/04/2026 11:59	HK

HK 26 Items

Space

Search Project

Name	Files	References	Created on	Created by	Modified on	Modified by
sustainability goals	6	8	25/04/2026 14:30	HK	25/04/2026 17:07	HK
seasonal and transient workers	1	1	25/04/2026 15:27	HK	25/04/2026 15:27	HK
removal of cooling towers	2	2	25/04/2026 14:12	HK	25/04/2026 14:50	HK
power station isolated	1	5	26/04/2026 12:36	HK	26/04/2026 12:36	HK
obtaining approval	2	3	25/04/2026 16:32	HK	25/04/2026 16:34	HK
not community oriented	1	2	25/04/2026 16:37	HK	26/04/2026 13:18	HK
market led	3	4	25/04/2026 17:22	HK	25/04/2026 17:24	HK
lack of consistency in plans	1	1	25/04/2026 15:51	HK	25/04/2026 15:51	HK
lack of community	1	1	26/04/2026 12:06	HK	26/04/2026 12:06	HK
good for employment	3	4	25/04/2026 12:22	HK	25/04/2026 17:07	HK
general job creation	2	2	25/04/2026 12:57	HK	25/04/2026 17:23	HK
following the market	1	1	25/04/2026 17:12	HK	25/04/2026 17:13	HK
contribution to national economy	2	4	25/04/2026 11:59	HK	26/04/2026 12:42	HK

HK 13 Items

Future

Search Project

Name	Files	References	Created on	Created by	Modified on	Modified by
waste incinerator plan	1	1	25/04/2026 14:54	HK	25/04/2026 14:55	HK
upskilling	3	5	25/04/2026 15:42	HK	25/04/2026 16:26	HK
uncertainty	5	13	25/04/2026 15:50	HK	25/04/2026 17:52	HK
regional plan	2	5	25/04/2026 16:33	HK	25/04/2026 17:42	HK
protecting environment for future	2	2	25/04/2026 14:39	HK	25/04/2026 15:01	HK
prospective job creation	4	5	25/04/2026 12:56	HK	25/04/2026 17:08	HK
proliferation of warehouses	1	1	25/04/2026 15:37	HK	25/04/2026 15:38	HK
potential warehouses	1	1	25/04/2026 12:21	HK	25/04/2026 12:21	HK
potential data centre	1	1	25/04/2026 14:03	HK	25/04/2026 14:03	HK
keeping cooling towers	1	1	26/04/2026 11:39	HK	26/04/2026 11:39	HK
hope for sustainability	3	4	25/04/2026 14:29	HK	25/04/2026 17:08	HK
happy for demolishment	1	1	26/04/2026 11:51	HK	26/04/2026 11:51	HK
future of plenty of people still working	1	1	25/04/2026 12:05	HK	25/04/2026 12:06	HK
future economic growth	4	5	25/04/2026 12:51	HK	26/04/2026 12:01	HK
freeport	1	1	25/04/2026 15:22	HK	25/04/2026 15:22	HK
fear of lack of purpose	5	7	25/04/2026 15:17	HK	25/04/2026 15:17	HK
decarbonised future	1	1	25/04/2026 14:41	HK	25/04/2026 14:41	HK
bringing new people	2	2	25/04/2026 12:10	HK	25/04/2026 12:17	HK

HK 18 Items

Past

Search Project

Name	Files	Reference	Created on	Created b	Modified on	Modified b
work memories and community	8	27	26/04/2026 11:05	HK	26/04/2026 13:00	HK
Code l memory and attachment	5	8	26/04/2026 11:34	HK	26/04/2026 11:39	HK
seasonal workers	1	1	25/04/2026 15:28	HK	25/04/2026 15:28	HK
resillience	1	5	26/04/2026 13:15	HK	26/04/2026 13:15	HK
remeniscant of local business booming	1	1	25/04/2026 15:24	HK	25/04/2026 15:25	HK
previous policy commitments	1	1	25/04/2026 16:57	HK	25/04/2026 16:57	HK
preserving heritage	5	11	25/04/2026 16:36	HK	26/04/2026 13:01	HK
past quarry contention	1	1	25/04/2026 14:56	HK	25/04/2026 14:57	HK
noise complaints	1	1	26/04/2026 12:55	HK	26/04/2026 12:55	HK
Memory of environmental harm	1	1	26/04/2026 10:40	HK	26/04/2026 10:40	HK
loss of spontenaity and freedom	1	2	25/04/2026 17:47	HK	25/04/2026 17:47	HK
loss of skills	1	1	25/04/2026 17:52	HK	25/04/2026 17:52	HK
loss of heritage	1	2	26/04/2026 12:52	HK	26/04/2026 12:52	HK
loss of community	3	5	25/04/2026 16:50	HK	26/04/2026 11:21	HK
loss of by-products	2	3	25/04/2026 15:41	HK	25/04/2026 15:41	HK
keeping the lights on	4	7	26/04/2026 12:43	HK	26/04/2026 12:43	HK
job loss	3	3	25/04/2026 15:35	HK	25/04/2026 15:35	HK
history of low skill jobs	1	2	25/04/2026 15:43	HK	25/04/2026 17:23	HK

HK 25 Items

Economic

Search Project

Name	Files	References	Created on	Created by	Modified on	Modified
too expensive to maintian cooling toweres	1	1	25/04/2026 14:10	HK	25/04/2026 14:10	HK
purpose	6	7	26/04/2026 12:44	HK	26/04/2026 13:02	HK
protecting local business	3	5	25/04/2026 12:25	HK	25/04/2026 17:53	HK
no effect on local business	1	1	25/04/2026 16:40	HK	25/04/2026 16:40	HK
maximising utility	3	4	25/04/2026 14:11	HK	25/04/2026 17:21	HK
loss of by-products	2	3	25/04/2026 15:41	HK	25/04/2026 15:41	HK
lack of purpose	3	3	25/04/2026 15:14	HK	25/04/2026 15:16	HK
future economic growth	3	9	25/04/2026 12:53	HK	25/04/2026 17:45	HK
freeport	2	2	25/04/2026 15:22	HK	25/04/2026 17:17	HK
financial viability	1	1	25/04/2026 17:14	HK	25/04/2026 17:17	HK
encourage innovation	2	2	25/04/2026 11:57	HK	25/04/2026 15:33	HK
Attracting investors	4	6	25/04/2026 11:56	HK	25/04/2026 17:26	HK

HK 12 Items

Environmental

Search Project

Name	Files	References	Created on	Created by	Modified on	Modified by
sustainability	3	4	25/04/2026 14:29	HK	25/04/2026 17:08	HK
renewable energy	2	2	25/04/2026 14:44	HK	25/04/2026 14:52	HK
Memory of environmental harm	1	1	26/04/2026 10:40	HK	26/04/2026 10:40	HK
impact on 'landscape'	5	7	26/04/2026 11:42	HK	26/04/2026 11:43	HK
giving back to the environment	3	4	25/04/2026 14:34	HK	25/04/2026 14:51	HK
environmental concerns	3	5	25/04/2026 14:55	HK	25/04/2026 15:10	HK
deacrbonisation	1	3	25/04/2026 14:41	HK	25/04/2026 16:58	HK
against net zero	2	4	25/04/2026 11:53	HK	25/04/2026 11:53	HK

HK 8 Items

Social

Search Project

Name	Files	References	Created on	Created by	Modified on	Modified by
working with heritage england	1	1	25/04/2026 14:15	HK	25/04/2026 14:16	HK
work community	6	29	26/04/2026 11:25	HK	26/04/2026 13:16	HK
upskilling (2)	3	6	25/04/2026 15:44	HK	25/04/2026 17:53	HK
social aspect of power station	0	0	26/04/2026 11:23	HK	26/04/2026 11:23	HK
request to list the cooling towers	1	1	25/04/2026 14:19	HK	25/04/2026 14:19	HK
questioning sociteal benefit of plans	1	1	25/04/2026 15:15	HK	25/04/2026 15:15	HK
preserving heritage	3	7	25/04/2026 16:36	HK	25/04/2026 17:35	HK
political power	1	1	25/04/2026 16:35	HK	25/04/2026 16:35	HK
political gain	1	2	25/04/2026 16:34	HK	25/04/2026 16:35	HK
overregulation	1	2	25/04/2026 17:47	HK	25/04/2026 17:47	HK
not community oriented	1	1	25/04/2026 16:38	HK	25/04/2026 16:38	HK
noise complaints	1	1	26/04/2026 12:55	HK	26/04/2026 12:55	HK
new jobs not benefitting local people	1	1	25/04/2026 12:44	HK	25/04/2026 12:44	HK
maintaining work force	1	2	25/04/2026 12:16	HK	25/04/2026 12:16	HK
loss of indsutrial history	1	1	25/04/2026 15:15	HK	25/04/2026 15:15	HK
loss of heritage	1	2	26/04/2026 12:52	HK	26/04/2026 12:52	HK
loss of community	1	3	25/04/2026 16:51	HK	25/04/2026 16:51	HK
lack of community	1	1	26/04/2026 12:07	HK	26/04/2026 12:07	HK

HK 26 Items

Negative

Search Project

Name	Files	References	Created on	Created by	Modified on	Modified by
unreflective employment statistics	1	1	25/04/2026 12:38	HK	25/04/2026 12:39	HK
traffic concerns	2	3	25/04/2026 13:59	HK	25/04/2026 16:22	HK
sadness	3	3	26/04/2026 11:57	HK	26/04/2026 12:14	HK
not community oriented	1	2	25/04/2026 16:39	HK	26/04/2026 13:18	HK
noise concerns	0	0	25/04/2026 13:59	HK	25/04/2026 13:59	HK
noise complaints	1	1	26/04/2026 12:57	HK	26/04/2026 12:57	HK
new jobs not benefitting local people	1	1	25/04/2026 12:43	HK	25/04/2026 12:43	HK
Memory of environmental harm	1	1	26/04/2026 10:44	HK	26/04/2026 10:44	HK
loss of spontenaity and freedom	1	2	25/04/2026 17:48	HK	25/04/2026 17:48	HK
loss of local business	1	1	25/04/2026 15:24	HK	25/04/2026 15:24	HK
loss of heritage	1	2	26/04/2026 12:52	HK	26/04/2026 12:52	HK
loss of community	3	5	25/04/2026 16:53	HK	26/04/2026 11:30	HK
loss of by-products	2	3	25/04/2026 15:42	HK	25/04/2026 15:42	HK
lack of plans	1	1	25/04/2026 17:33	HK	25/04/2026 17:33	HK
lack of community	1	1	26/04/2026 12:07	HK	26/04/2026 12:07	HK
job loss	3	3	25/04/2026 15:36	HK	25/04/2026 15:36	HK
high skill shortage	2	2	25/04/2026 17:18	HK	25/04/2026 17:54	HK
fear of lack of purpose	5	7	25/04/2026 15:12	HK	25/04/2026 15:12	HK

HK 24 Items

Positive

Search Project

Name	Files	References	Created on	Created by	Modified on	Modified by
work community and social aspect	8	29	26/04/2026 11:25	HK	26/04/2026 13:03	HK
warehouses would be good	1	1	25/04/2026 12:18	HK	25/04/2026 12:19	HK
supporting decarbonisation goals	2	3	25/04/2026 14:42	HK	25/04/2026 17:09	HK
resillience	0	0	26/04/2026 12:47	HK	26/04/2026 12:47	HK
purpose	2	2	26/04/2026 13:04	HK	26/04/2026 13:04	HK
protecting environemnt	0	0	25/04/2026 14:37	HK	25/04/2026 14:37	HK
preserving heritage	3	7	25/04/2026 16:37	HK	26/04/2026 11:44	HK
no effect on local business	1	1	25/04/2026 16:40	HK	25/04/2026 16:40	HK
innovation	3	3	25/04/2026 15:34	HK	25/04/2026 17:18	HK
hope	4	6	25/04/2026 14:28	HK	26/04/2026 12:46	HK
future of plenty of people still working	3	3	25/04/2026 12:07	HK	25/04/2026 17:54	HK
encourage innovation	1	1	25/04/2026 12:01	HK	25/04/2026 12:01	HK
data centres would be good	1	2	25/04/2026 12:18	HK	25/04/2026 14:05	HK
bringing new people	1	1	25/04/2026 12:08	HK	25/04/2026 12:09	HK
boosting economic growth	4	9	25/04/2026 12:02	HK	26/04/2026 12:04	HK

HK 15 Items