

Participation and community on Bradford's traditionally white estates

A community research project

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An interactive research project with residents of two traditionally white estates in Bradford. This study explores their perceptions of community and attitudes towards participation, both on the estates and with external agencies.

The research explores why, given the partial achievements and commitment to improving the lives of some of the most excluded social groups in the UK, government has been unable to generate self-sustaining improvements in these kinds of settings.

The report:

- explores the spatial and social dynamics of exclusion on the UK's traditionally white estates and the effects of outside perceptions of these estates on residents' self-esteem and aspirations;
- examines the two estates where this research was based;
- outlines the visual and other methods used for working with residents to ensure that they expressed their own views and analysis of their situation;
- analyses the perceptions of estate residents about their communities and their attitude towards participatory opportunities created by themselves and by external agencies.

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Executive summary

The aim of the research for this report was to find out how residents on two of Bradford's traditionally white estates understood their communities and how and where they participated within them, as well as in spaces offered by agencies and statutory bodies. One of the estates was no longer 'white', as a third of the residents were from minority ethnic backgrounds. We used an intensive interactive methodology, which placed the emphasis on enabling residents to express their own opinions, particularly through visual media. The research led us to ask why, given the partial achievements and evident commitment to improving the lives and livelihoods of the most excluded social groups, the Labour Government (1997–2010) was unable to generate self-sustaining transformations in such settings.

Social housing in the national context

The report first explores the broader national context of what has happened to social housing over the past four decades. The problems facing estate residents originated in the 1980s, with policy shifts and structural changes over which they had no control. One result of these changes was a diminishing of social housing stock and its status. Estates are often viewed by the outside world in derogatory ways, partly as a result of these changes in the role and purpose of social housing. External judgements, together with low educational achievement, can lead estate residents to internalise a view of themselves as the 'lowest of the low'. In the course of the last decade, in particular, traditionally white estates have also opened up to minority ethnic residents as well as newcomers, such as asylum seekers and migrant workers from Eastern Europe. In the midst of many stresses in individual lives and multiple deprivation, estate residents find that people with distinct cultures, and often difficulties of language and communication, have come to live among them. Unsurprisingly,

these newcomers can easily become the focus of the many frustrations in people's lives.

Labour came to office in 1997 and focused a great deal of attention and resources on these areas of social exclusion. While there is evidence of considerable progress in improving estate infrastructure and employment levels, there was an intrinsic contradiction in the approach. At the same time as it ploughed resources into estates and other areas of marginality, it promoted a communitarian discourse of moral responsibility, in which the behaviour of poor people was blamed for the loss of traditional virtues and values. By moving away from the framework of inequality, Labour also removed an important explanation for ongoing poverty, which could help residents to analyse their situation. In the meantime, senior managers in agencies who work on estates as well as the local council can easily become directly or indirectly complicit in the perpetuation of the problems. In particular, we would note tokenistic consultations; lack of respect for residents' knowledge and experience; defending the status quo; prioritising positive narratives for government and thinking they know what is best for communities where they spend little time. These attitudes anger and demoralise residents, particularly those who devote their time and energy to improving conditions for their neighbours. In feedback from estate residents to this report in draft form, we were asked particularly to emphasise this point.

Where we worked

We worked on two estates in Bradford District: Braithwaite and Guardhouse estate and Scholemoor estate. Both have high levels of deprivation and unemployment. The former is mostly white British, whereas the ethnic make-up of residents on Scholemoor has changed: in 2001 it was 68 per cent 'White British' and 29 per cent 'Asian' or 'Asian British'; more recently there has been a shift in the ethnic make-up with the arrival of Slovakian and Slovakian-Roma families.

Methodology

The research for this project involved an intensive 18-month engagement (2008–9) with residents on the two estates. Residents and agency workers were involved throughout the process, up to and including dissemination (including this report and other publications). We worked with four community researchers from the estates and used a variety of visual methods, community map-making, photography, visual focus groups and participatory video. Findings were fed back to the communities at several stages in the research.

Community and participation from the perspective of estate residents

It must be emphasised that there is no such thing as a generic estate. While the conclusions below reflect some generalisations from the estates where we worked, each estate and its communities are different and non-homogenous and should be treated as individual areas with their own needs and norms.

Conclusion 1: ‘Community’ still has meaning on both estates; however, it is now qualified. ‘Community’ is something that has to be activated and renewed in the midst of counter-trends that have led people to ‘lock their doors’. People have become more interested in personal issues than social ones over the last ten to twenty years.

Conclusion 2: Physical appearance is vital to morale on estates and the self-esteem of residents. Incomers need to be told about issues relating to gardens, fences and rubbish so that new residents do not become scapegoats for older residents’ frustrations. Estate residents need to be shown respect by workmen and builders.

Conclusion 3: Fear and insecurity are serious problems for estate residents, and they take multiple forms. They are generated by a minority, but nevertheless impact on all who live on the estates. Social life suffers when fear means that there are ‘no-go’ areas on estates, hidden to outsiders, and when there are also times not to be on the streets. Speeding motorbikes create worries as much as theft and vandalism. Taboo subjects of domestic violence, ‘grooming’ and sexual abuse are not publicly acknowledged

but create serious trauma and mental health issues. Male attitudes towards women are sometimes sexist and demeaning, which impacts on women’s health and well-being. Residents often turn to each other rather than the moralising outside world for help. Sometimes they seek their own retribution for wrongs.

Conclusion 4: Many residents on the estates hold a range of strong prejudices and resentments. Prejudice and resentment can be expressed towards people from other community centres and organisations, those who live in different ‘territories’ on the estate and also towards those with mental health issues, problem families or newcomers. Tensions were highest on the smaller estate, which already had a significant proportion of Asian British households and more recently Slovakian and Slovakian-Roma families and some asylum seekers. There is little attempt to facilitate understanding, communication or interaction on the estates, even though there are people within all communities who would welcome such initiatives. On neither estate is there a significant shift towards organised racism. Rather, there is a disconnection with all forms of politics and decision-making. Efforts to challenge prejudice of all kinds are needed and strategic support to help people reflect and analyse their gut feelings towards newcomers and those who are ‘different’. In the end, residents need to feel they are treated with respect in order to treat others in the same way. Our findings are in line with two other JRF-funded pieces of research (Illingworth, 2008; Orton, 2008) that found evidence of racist attitudes but sought to explain the complex origins of these and called for more support to new families and efforts to build interactions and connections between residents.

Conclusion 5: There are many agencies working to improve the estates, but there is not sufficient coordination or common agenda between them, nor is there adequate understanding of what it is to be a resident. While there is dedication and commitment to change, agencies fail to communicate with the broader community about their activities, preferring consultations with limited participation and what many residents feel is a pre-set agenda. Agency workers need to be trained to understand the complex social situation on the estates, the frustrations this generates and

how to communicate better with residents living difficult and vulnerable lives. Opportunities provided by agencies for residents to give their views are often badly thought through consultations.

Conclusion 6: Support for community associations and facilities for children and young people are most important for residents. The boredom of young people generates some of the greatest frustration and anxiety on the estates. People want an active youth service and police who aim to engage with the youth rather than just admonish and punish them. The community centres and the services they offer are highly valued, but they require more resources and support for the many volunteers involved. It is important that funding is geared to encouraging community associations to promote wider participation in the community and not just to deliver services. It is also important for funders and agencies to realise how the agendas they impose on community organisations may themselves hinder outreach and engagement by community workers and activists.

Conclusion 7: It is important to recognise the hard work of those residents and activists who strive to change their estates. Often this is done quietly, without pay or recognition of financial costs to themselves. They are often sidelined by their own communities because of what they do and they are treated in a tokenistic way by managers and agencies who wish it to be seen that they have 'consulted' residents. The amount of time and effort these residents invest in their communities is often not recognised by agencies, who sometimes even take the credit themselves for it or disregard it. Senior managers sometimes think that because they are more experienced and educated, they know what is best for the communities.

Conclusion 8: Many residents have become highly cynical and disillusioned with the gains that might be made from participation in community activity. Many feel they lack the skills to participate and have nothing to offer. They may interpret 'consultation' as a sham where decisions have already been taken or where residents can only affect nominal change because council and agency staff have already decided what is needed for the community. Activists can be overburdened with their duties and suffer antagonism and

misinterpretation about why they are involved. Outstanding individuals can often become spokespeople, voicing the views of residents to agencies, but this may also empower them over others, and does not guarantee they will be taken seriously. The way forward is not so simple as to suggest that residents always know best. However, residents clearly do understand the problems facing the estates better than anyone and must be part of the solution, working together with the agencies and other bodies that are trying to improve life on the estates.

This research project aimed to elicit perceptions of community and participation among residents on two of Bradford's traditionally white estates. At the same time, it aimed to encourage community residents to reflect on the context and articulate their views of estate life and problems to policy-makers in the district. These aims were carried out by working with community researchers from the estates and by using participatory methodologies, which emphasised visual ways of expressing knowledge and experience. Many estate residents feel they have nothing to say and/or nowhere to be heard. The methodology revealed deeply embedded low esteem, social fragmentation and a range of fears; at the same time it showed that there were many efforts going on to restore pride in areas often felt to be despised by the outside world. The research aimed to generate better understanding of estate dynamics as well as to stimulate processes of reflection, analysis and change.

This was a qualitative research project with an action-oriented approach. We gave priority to our interactions with residents, continuously engaged with them concerning the issues they raised, supported their activities and hosted some of our own. Although there were many contradictions in our role as university researchers and the social realities we were researching, we are persuaded that our methodologies enabled us to get closer to the lived reality of estate residents than extractive research, which gives nothing back to communities. The report offers a view of their social realities based on an 18-month period of listening, learning and interacting.

This report will first locate our research within a field of public discourse and academic research on 'the council estate'. This has turned these areas into one measure of Labour's project of social renewal, which began in 1997. In 2001, the Social Exclusion Unit declared that 'within 10–20 years, no-one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live' (quoted in Turnstall and Coulter, 2006: p.xii); almost halfway to that target, council estates are still seen as 'problem' areas. And people living on them

know it. Secondly, we discuss the location of these estates in Bradford. Thirdly, we explain the report methodology and critically reflect on its aspirations and achievements. The fourth chapter explores the two themes of community and participation and what can be learnt from them. We conclude by drawing out the policy implications of our research.

1 'Estatism': social and spatial dynamics of exclusion in the UK

If the ghetto areas of the major American cities took the main impact of economic restructuring in America, social housing estates and deprived neighbourhoods did the same in Britain. The collapse of household incomes in social housing tells the story. In 1979, a quarter of the households with the highest 40 per cent of incomes lived in social housing; by 1994, this had dropped to less than 5 per cent. Meanwhile, the proportion of social housing tenants at the bottom end of the income scale grew from only half in the lowest 40 per cent of incomes in 1979 to well over three-quarters by 1994. And the average income of households living in social housing fell over ten years from three-quarters of the national average in 1980 to less than half (below the European Union poverty threshold) by 1990. (Page, 2000: p.11)

Council estates: past and present

In the UK, council estates were established in the early twentieth century as social housing for the working class, expanding after the Second World War but still geared towards workers on mixed incomes. They were homes that many valued and sought. However, as Lynsey Hanley points out in her book *Estates*, there was already a crucial difference in political perspective between Labour and Conservative governments on the purpose of social housing. The Conservatives saw it as merely a step towards private ownership. Under the Conservatives, the post-war Bevanite concepts of quality and dignity (Hanley, 2007: p.95) were replaced between 1955 and 1965 by industrial methods of mass construction. Council homes 'went from being the crowning glory of the new welfare state to mass-produced barracks' (ibid.: p.103), though inequality also declined in these decades. However, by the 1970s the crisis in

Britain's post-war economy was apparent, social tensions grew and the social democratic consensus that had underpinned post-war growth fell apart.

At the end of the 1970s, the new Conservative Government set in motion a dynamic that was to change even more radically the character of these estates. First, economic restructuring dismantled traditional industries; unemployment passed the three million mark in 1983 and reached 11 per cent in 1993 (Hills, *et al.*, 2009: p.3). The decline in manual labour which had begun in the course of the twentieth century accelerated rapidly; whereas three-quarters of the working population were manual workers at the beginning of the twentieth century, this had fallen to 38 per cent by the end; the proportion of professionals and managers rose from 8 per cent to 34 per cent (Bottero, 2009: p.8). Economic restructuring created a new kind of temporary, insecure, flexible and low-paid employment in new service industries, and jobs very different from the relatively stable employment in manufacturing and heavy industry of the past. Female employment rose, but mostly in precisely these insecure job markets. The effects were felt particularly in the northern industrial towns, and in male employment, with young men facing a very different labour market from the one their fathers had faced.

The proportion of social tenant householders in paid employment fell from 47 to 32 per cent between 1981 and 2006 (Hills, 2007: pp.2–3). In addition, the 'right to buy' policy of the early 1980s significantly reduced the supply of social housing. The national stock of council homes in England was halved between 1979 and 2004 (Turnstall and Coulter, 2006: p.59). There were 2.3 million council homes left by then (compared with 5 million or 29 per cent of households in 1979); by 2004 the social housing sector totalled 19 per cent of all households (4 million households), of

which 11 per cent were council homes and the rest belonged to housing associations (ibid.).

New lettings in social housing have focused on need. Allocation through points and needs was intended to offer a fair system; however, it also meant that social housing came to be dominated by families with the most severe problems. As Steve Garner observes:

... social housing is no longer a normal entitlement for people who cannot afford to buy: it is a last-gasp resource for the residual very-low income and benefit receiving section of the working class. As of 2002, one of every two lone-parent families lived in social housing.

(Garner, 2009: p.46)

Tenants in social housing now have high rates of disability, are more likely to be lone parents or single people and to be aged over 60 (Hills, 2007: p.3). Although predominantly white, they house growing numbers of black and minority ethnic residents. More than a quarter (27 per cent) of all black or minority ethnic householders are social tenants (including around half of Bangladeshi and 43 per cent of black Caribbean and black African householders), compared with 17 per cent of white householders (ibid.). There is also much less movement out of social housing: more than 80 per cent of those living in social housing today were also within the sector ten years ago (ibid.).

It was community researchers from the two estates who coined the word 'estatism' to capture the sense among estate residents that there are specific social dynamics of place associated with council estates and that residents experience prejudice based upon where they live. The research demonstrated many positive features and a sense of solidarity against an outside world that ruthlessly labels and categorises them. We will discuss the positive components of this self-description below, but there is no doubt that it has a bitter edge even for those who coined it. Every incident connected with an estate leads to media focus and editorials which draw out only the negative dimension. Even the 2009 *Guardian* article (published just as this report was being written) which in the quote on page 9 tried to analyse the problems, came up with the headline: 'From salt of the earth to

scourge of society'. This followed the torture, nearly to death, and sexual assault of two children by brothers aged 10 and 12 and the bullying of Fiona Pilkington and her family which led to her killing both herself and her disabled daughter. Such headlines are by no means new. Writing about estates in the early 1990s, at the time when the American concept of the 'underclass' was shaping much debate (Charles Murray, who coined this term, visited the UK in 1990 and 1994), journalist Bea Campbell summed up what had happened:

The word that embraced everything feared and loathed by the new orthodoxy about class and crime was estate: what was once the emblem of respectability, what once evoked the dignity and clamour of a powerful social constituency, part of the body politic, but which now described only the edge of class and the end of the city. 'Estate' evoked rookery, slum, ghetto – without the exotic energy of urbanity. (Campbell, 1993: p.319)

The headlines appear not to have changed, even though the Labour Government was very active in devising measures to address the issue of social exclusion and the failure in the 1980s and 1990s to overcome multiple disadvantages. There have been improvements, as the next section will discuss.

Council estates and Labour: improving landscapes?

Social exclusion is not just about estates, but when Labour came to office in 1997, the evidence that poverty and social problems were concentrated in particular places was strong. Minority ethnic residents were four times as likely to be in poor areas as their share in the total population. The almost exclusively white council estates (at the time) were also marked by poverty, alongside some older industrial areas (Power, 2009: p.126). The Social Exclusion Unit, set up in 1998, launched a raft of initiatives that focused on these areas in the 86 most deprived local authorities, beginning with the New Deal for Communities in 1998, Sure Start in 1999, and followed by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, the National Strategy for Neighbourhood

Renewal, Neighbourhood Management and the Neighbourhood Warden pilot scheme. Anne Power's review of government evaluations of these initiatives show that progress was made between 1998 and 2008 in narrowing the gap between the poorest areas and the average in terms of services and conditions, both for the most deprived 44 local authority areas and the most deprived 10 per cent of neighbourhoods. The independent research of the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), which covered 12 areas representing different urban and regional characteristics, also found that there were particular gains in environmental quality, in general tidiness, care, the upgrading of existing homes and open spaces and in resident involvement (ibid.: p.127). The poorest areas have benefited from targeted programmes, and low-income families from anti-poverty and family support measures. The overall conclusion is that intensive support and action does work, but only if it is sustained over time. As area initiatives come to an end, the future is uncertain. There was evidence that the improvements were uneven across services and that much depended on whether there was dynamic leadership at local authority level. Power concluded that only by combining ongoing small-scale reinvestment with area management could the viability of disadvantaged areas, where tenants on low incomes cannot generate the resources to turn things round on their own, be restored (ibid.: p.129).

Another long-term study focused on 20 unpopular council estates in England over a 25-year period, tracking them through visits and interviews in 1982, 1988, 1994 and 2005, with an emphasis on change over the last decade (Turnstall and Coulter, 2006). This study puts into perspective the proportion of council housing which could be characterised as 'difficult to let' or with 'liveability problems'. Broadly, in both 1980 and 2005, 5 per cent of council housing was described as 'difficult to let'; a report to central government in 1991 found that up to 25 per cent of this was in 'deprived estates'. By 2003, up to 19 per cent of mainly council-built areas were said to suffer from 'liveability problems' (ibid.: p.1). It is these areas that have shaped the public mind and led to the phrase 'sink estates'. The Turnstall and

Coulter study found, however, that considerable progress had been made in narrowing the gaps and addressing the most serious problems in the 20 estates they examined as compared with local and national standards. Between 1995 and 2005 there were higher employment and lower unemployment rates, improved educational performance, higher house prices and reduced crime in these areas. They attributed these improvements to targeted regeneration and investment through national and local policy and local housing management through local policy and resident activism. The strong economy and housing markets since 1995 were also a factor.

However, the report also found that the gap between economic activity rates on the estates compared with their local authorities and the nation as a whole was beginning to increase again, while gaps on many measures of deprivation had reduced but not disappeared. The authors' conclusion is not dissimilar to Power's (2009): an intensive policy effort can achieve results. An example of this is given by Lynsey Hanley (2007). Broadwater Farm Estate in Haringey was once infamous for rioting, the death of PC Keith Blakelock, 42 per cent unemployment, racism, high crime and a flawed concrete structure. Following an inquiry into the 1985 riots, the government invested £33 million in the estate, with the long-term outcome that:

There were no robberies and only one burglary in 2005 – down from 850 in 1985. For the first time in 20 years, there is no permanent police presence on the estate, but there are on-site housing officers whose names and faces are known to every resident. Such difficult, large and multiply deprived estates are only capable of working when there exists a combination of political will, financial resources and intensive management by a resident team of estate managers and maintenance staff, and enough committed tenants to provide a sense of stability and hope. (Hanley, 2007: p.129)

Such improvements take time, resident participation, dynamic leadership, officer commitment and respect – and money. This begs the question of what happens when the

intensive effort declines and ‘normalisation’ (Turnstall and Coulter, 2006: p.62) sets in, with lower priorities for the estates and less local management and resident involvement. In addition, the economic downturn is likely to add to pressures on areas that have remained vulnerable. The most recent figures for England in 2004–5 show that 69 per cent of those living in social housing remained in the bottom two-fifths of income distribution, and even fewer, 19 per cent, came from the top half of the income distribution than six years earlier (Hills, 2007: p.8).

In his 2007 report on the future of social housing, Hills made a strong link between employment and housing:

By Spring 2006 more than half of those of working age living in social housing were without paid work, twice the national rate. Some of this is unsurprising given the labour market disadvantages of many social tenants, such as lack of qualifications or disability. However, this does not appear to be the only explanation: employment rates of those living in social housing with particular disadvantages or with multiple disadvantages are substantially lower than those of people with similar disadvantages but living in other tenures. Even controlling for a very wide range of personal characteristics, the likelihood of someone in social housing being employed appears significantly lower than those in other tenures. There is no sign of a positive impact on employment of the kind that the better incentives that sub-market rents might be expected to give. (ibid.: p.5)

Hills’ report points to the tensions and trade-offs in the social housing sector. Social housing is a subsidised sector offering people on low incomes better quality housing than they could obtain in the private sector; however, the declining stock and availability of social housing creates a rationed market. Those in social housing cannot aspire to enter the private housing market, where the high costs of mortgages and deposits are out of their reach. The government has tried to introduce mixed income into new built stock. Yet as two-thirds of social housing is still in areas originally built as council estates, and nearly half

of it in the most deprived fifth of areas (ibid.: p.179), this is not a realistic prospect for most council estates. Ultimately, argues Hills, ‘it is promoting the improvement of incomes and supporting the livelihoods of existing residents, and removing the barrier to them doing so, that will be most important’ (ibid.: p.183).

Nevertheless, it is these barriers that matter. We have seen serious efforts since 1997 to improve social housing and address the deprivation increasingly concentrated among estate tenants. The problem is that the fundamental problems have not changed enough. The barriers are multiple. They are in the macro-economic policy environment, which in 2009 had turned in a very negative direction, with unemployment passing the two million mark. They are in the tensions over social housing within a society that has come to give overwhelming value to private ownership, and in the very high cost of private homes. They are in the persistent income and social inequalities that plague the UK. Given these objective barriers, what weight do we give to simultaneous subjective ones? How far does the negative self-perception and identity of people in social housing inhibit possibilities of changing the conditions on their estates? Social housing remains a vital component for some four million households, giving stability, quality of housing at low rents and, as Hills points out, ‘a base upon which people can build the rest of their lives’ (ibid.: p.201). How can estate residents come to see themselves as protagonists in the struggle for re-dignifying their neighbourhoods as well as demonstrating the value of social housing to our society? And how far could such agency overcome the ongoing material reality of worklessness, unemployment and exploitation as people are forced to sell their labour at the lowest rates as the only alternative to unemployment?

‘The hidden injuries of class’: subjective barriers to change

A number of studies point to ‘neighbourhood effects’ (Kintrea and Atkinson, 2001), to the ‘poverty of place’ (Fitzpatrick, 2004) and to geographical inequality (Dorling, *et al.*, 2005; Thomas, *et al.*, 2009). These suggest that

additional negative effects come from living in deprived areas. Some of these are non-material in nature, and include 'stigma, low expectations, poor self-esteem, powerlessness and fear of anti-social behaviour' (Fitzpatrick, 2004: p.4). The notion that people come to internalise a sense of worthlessness has been recognised for some time now. It was perhaps first articulated with respect to the impact of colonialism on black identity, articulated in Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* (1961). The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has noted (2005: p.171) the structure of capital(s) or resources of different kinds available to the poor, in order to explain internalised and 'naturalised' social marginality. He drew attention to how we differentially and unequally absorb and acquire capitals as resources and potentialities in varied forms (social, cultural, linguistic, symbolic, political and economic) and in given 'fields' of social interaction and power asymmetries. These are expressed in predispositions, attitudes, values and ways of being that are taken for granted but greatly impact on life chances.

The issue here is not just the problematic experiences of 'fields' and place. It is also the social relationships and inequalities embedded in space – the relationship between council estates and other neighbourhoods of the cities they belong to, which inculcate deep feelings of inferiority and despair. The conclusions of a 2009 study of Sheffield entitled *A Tale of Two Cities* could describe most of the large cities of the deindustrialised north of England and echo the history outlined earlier:

Inequalities between the city of Sheffield and its neighbours and within Sheffield were at a historic low in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. In the 1960s, and before, great investment was made in poorer areas through, for instance, the building of better local authority housing. Economic trends then were fortunate, national and local policy benign and social differences were in many ways diminishing between the traditionally richest and poorest of the city's districts. All that ended with the recession of the early 1980s, a national government that appeared to have a callous lack of concern for the city, especially its poorest districts, and a local council which could not overcome these

dual forces of international economic downturn and national political indifference. In the late 1990s following another, smaller, recession, a change in national government to one more concerned about inequality and under the beginnings of an economic boom, slight reductions in the inequalities were recorded in the years 2001/02/03. However, overall progress was patchy. Economic forces towards increasing inequality were often not countered by the degree of commitment made even by well-meaning policy-makers to reduce inequalities. During the first decade of the current century it became clear that many social inequalities within cities such as Sheffield were continuing to rise despite much of the extra resources resulting from the national economic boom being redistributed to rebuild and improve infrastructure in places such as Sheffield's poorest districts. There were huge falls in unemployment and life for the poorest was improved. However, it did not improve as much as the living standards were rising in the richest areas.

(Thomas, et al., 2009: p.106)

The sociologist Richard Sennett aptly entitled one of his books *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, and has explored the social and individual impact of 'invidious comparison' (Sennett, 2003). Modern society, he argues (p. 89) 'invites us to envy; in a world bent on destroying tradition and inherited place, on affirming the possibility of making something of ourselves through our own merits, what keeps us from becoming another person? All we have to do is imitate the sort of person we would like to be. If we take up this invitation, however, we lose our self-respect.'

Lynsey Hanley has powerfully translated these academic ideas into individual lived experiences on working-class estates and what she calls the 'wall in the head':

If you attend a school on a council estate, having come from a council estate, you get a council-estate education. It's not so much that you get told that kids like you can't ever hope to achieve their full potential; it's just that the very idea of having lots of potential to fulfill isn't presented ... The wall is about not knowing what is out there,

or believing that what is out there is either entirely irrelevant to your life, or so complicated that it would go right over your head if you made an attempt to understand it.

(Hanley, 2007: pp.152–3)

In addition to these qualitative sources, there is the quantitative analytical work of Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett (2009), who sought to show how ‘the scale of inequality provides a powerful policy lever on the psychological well-being of all of us’ (p. 5). These authors divert attention from the idea that the behaviour of the ‘poor’ is the problem and refocus on the negative impacts of the growth of inequality on the poor and the wealthy, on mental and physical health and well-being throughout society. All human beings suffer serious health effects from low social status (which is relative to a person’s own social group as well as to social groups perceived as ‘higher’ in our internalised but seldom articulated social rankings), as well as other factors such as lack of friends and stress in early life (ibid.: p.39). The middle classes suffer these effects as much as anyone else, but are partly cushioned by material and educational advantages. For the poorest sectors of society, there is the additional impact of being seen to be ‘at the bottom’, and the inability to accumulate ‘capitals’ in Bourdieu’s sense that could help build resilience. It is not surprising that residents in such areas develop a collective as well as an individual sense of worthlessness and frustration, which is transmitted through the generations.

The dark side of Labour’s focus on the ‘most deprived’ was the duality of its discourse. On the one hand, social programmes aimed to target the poor and social exclusion, and, as we have seen, substantial resources were mobilised for this purpose, with many committed employees of the national and local state devoting their energies to it. On the other, the communitarian discourse of rights and responsibilities presented the poor as exemplifying a moral crisis in society. Family dysfunctionality, poor parenting, anti-social behaviour, drug-taking and fecklessness were as much part of Labour’s political language as poverty, vulnerability and exclusion. The ‘poor’ are therefore either recipients of state welfare and support or they are the focus for societal

opprobrium during intermittent outbreaks of moral panic. Officers implementing government programmes may be benign in their interventions, but discouraged from seeing the people they work with as capable human beings, immersed in complex crises of self-identity and daily efforts to cope with life in the face of multiple challenges. Their ‘beneficiaries’ recognise that they are ‘targets’ and regarded as ‘problems’, and weigh this up against the desperate need for better services and facilities. The space for self-esteem through self-action is eroded.

Estate residents struggling to improve their own lot often blame those who have given up the struggle and who generate difficult problems for others. Many see themselves as ‘respectable’ working-class members and they also worry about poor parenting within ‘problem families’ on the estates and fear the unruly young men who hang around the streets with nowhere to go. These are issues described in all research on council estates, including our own. Other fears emerge concerning incomers onto the estates of all kinds. Sometimes this is racialised, but not always. On one of the estates studied for this report, Braithwaite and Guardhouse, there were complaints about the ‘dumping’ of problem families forced out of other estates in other towns, or people who had been resettled from different areas of England after they had served prison sentences. As Steve Garner points out in his studies of Bristol (2009: p.49), the focus of resident anger very much depends on local context. He found that black and Asian neighbours were sometimes included in the ‘we’ of white working-class discourse because they were known neighbours rather than anonymous members of a collective ‘other’. The ‘other’ for the people he worked with were new minorities, such as Somalis, or Poles or Portuguese. In Bradford, where we worked, the traditional ‘Asian other’ was being displaced for some by the asylum seeker and migrant worker from Eastern Europe, and these were resented by the Asian and white working-class communities alike. In other words, the hierarchies of ‘blame’ and distancing ebb and flow, which is not to diminish their significance, especially when organisations such as the BNP and the English Defence League seek to mobilise people through them. Underlying them, however, are these

'hidden injuries of class' and their generational transmission, the real everyday struggles for dignity and livelihood, the sense of hopelessness in regard to the future and the absence of encouragement and opportunity to analyse, reflect and to challenge pejorative messages from media, politicians and the 'respectable' classes.

From extractive to interactive research: aims and methods of our research

This is the point where our research project comes in. The previous discussion is not new; others have made similar points. The Runnymede Trust published a collection of essays in 2009, *Who Cares about the White Working Class?*, in an effort to draw attention to the impact of inequality on some of the poorest communities in England, and to take the discussion away from an ethnicised framework pitting 'white' against 'black' (whatever form the latter takes). Our work sought to go beyond our own perspectives as professional, middle-class researchers of a world we could never fully experience, and to find a methodology which would enable residents who were interested to enter into research with us so that they and we could better understand their communities and experiences. We chose to work in two estates in the Bradford District where we already had connections and where we had generated some local interest and ownership of the project before seeking funding.

What were our aims? We set out to understand how people on our council estates see their 'communities', what motivates them to participate in improving their environment and how they relate to neighbouring ethnic minority communities. The research was influenced by the experiences of some of the research team with poor communities in the global South, notably Latin America. Here, there is no benign state intervention; on the contrary, many communities in the region's large cities are subject to the constant abuse of state security forces, struggle in an unregulated informal economy and live with a degree of precariousness that is not comparable to even our most deprived English neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, there is a greater creativity, self-organisation and analytical

capacity to unpack the power relationships in which people are embedded. This is often facilitated by politicised social movements, community groups and non-governmental organisations. Although this tendency is not to be exaggerated or idealised, it is palpably present. Participatory experiments in Latin America are notable for the impetus that a more activist culture has given them (Pearce, 2010). Such context-specific outcomes cannot be replicated, but our research did aim to explore whether a more interactive research methodology could generate self-activity and capacity among residents to speak with confidence to the powerful: officers, professionals and service providers on the estates.

Such an aspiration was not as quixotic as it might appear. In the early 1990s, a US anthropologist, Susan Hyatt, conducted her doctoral research in two of Bradford's estates, Thorpe Edge and Lower Grange. Her thesis charts the ups and downs of women's involvement in community action on this estate, in some of which she actively participated. At that time, Lower Grange was a 'hotbed of activist endeavours' (Hyatt, 1996: p.25), and Hyatt dwells on the importance of these experiences for mothers struggling with poverty and disadvantage. The legacy of activist experience was also palpable in the women we invited from Canterbury estate to the final feedback conference for our research. Despite a general decline in such activism and a suspicion that the women were often used as a token presence for tenant consultations on their estate, they were still able to articulate their situation and their claims in a confident and analytical way. In her thesis, Hyatt quotes from Rose Thompson, an activist from a Keighley council estate, who produced a booklet of her own following a frustrating experience of participating in a project to document experiences of poverty. In her introduction, Thompson addressed John Major, the prime minister at the time:

Dear Mr Major ... I'm writing this because I care about people who have been forgotten by the people who are in power. People who live in poverty have no power themselves, there is no way to escape from their 'no win' situation, no way to draw attention to their plight. I hope you come to understand how hardship caused by the

lack of money destroys people both mentally and physically and how it destroys the self respect of families and communities.

(R. Thompson, quoted in Hyatt, 1996: p.350)

This kind of analysis emerges when poor people self-organise and confront pervasive obstacles to change in the nature of social structures as well as the world of policy. In the course of such action, they no longer blame themselves as others blame them for their condition and they begin to comprehend the power asymmetries that block their progress. The sense of neglect articulated by Rose, however, was transformed under Labour in 1997, by the converse: an active interventionism into the world of the 'socially excluded' which brought real improvements but which stigmatised and demoralised in its own way. Labour's targeted programmes for the excluded did not build their confidence to address their own problems; it confronted them with a new disempowering discourse of moral responsibility.

Taking place in the wake of a long decline in the activism that had emerged under the Conservative governments of the 1980s and 1990s, and Labour's subsequent efforts to target the poor, our research played a very limited role in rekindling dignity through self-understanding and activism. We are also outsiders, funding-dependent, forced to shift to the next project once this research ended, and we recognise the limitations of our efforts. However, we made a sincere attempt to work differently, as this report will demonstrate. As a result, we feel that we did generate insights that could not have been achieved in any other way. We worked with community researchers from the estates who provided experience and knowledge we could not have gained ourselves. We did our best to support local efforts to bring about change where possible. There are still many actual and potential activists on the estates. While they would not place their actions in a political context, they are nevertheless a reminder of how some estate residents still dedicate their lives to improving their communities. A conclusion of this study is for policy-makers to support these efforts, with patience, openness to learning and by offering critical friendship. Those residents working for these ends often do so in divided, fragmented, conflictive and demoralising

environments. They find it hard to generate wider and deeper participation. They easily become frustrated and sometimes accrue too much power themselves. Sometimes they are resented by others who feel excluded from the 'community space'. However, if the hidden injuries of class are to be overcome, these efforts need to be encouraged to be more inclusive and able to address conflicts. Community activists are a source of dignity and solutions appropriate to the lived reality of estate residents. This is not an easy path for policy-makers and providers, as it is slow and complex. However, it is a route to more sustainable social change.

2 Introducing the study locations

‘The heart out of their lives’: poverty and place in Bradford and Keighley

The Metropolitan District of Bradford is located in the North of England and comprises several urban areas, including the City of Bradford, and several outlying towns, including Keighley. Wealthy neighbourhoods contrast strongly with areas of low economic activity and high deprivation, particularly within the inner city areas of Bradford and Keighley. The high levels of deprivation found in particular areas of Bradford, including Braithwaite, Guardhouse and Scholemoor, are tied up with the recent history of the area, particularly since deindustrialisation (Milne, 2007).

During the nineteenth century, Bradford was regarded as the ‘wool capital of the world’ (Darlow, *et al.*, 2005: p.22), home to the Wool Exchange, where world wool prices were set. Keighley also flourished through its production of worsted – the Prince Smith and Son mill was the largest of its kind in Europe. Engineering and manufacturing were at the forefront of the district’s economy, and it had a flourishing financial centre (LSC, 2005). Rapid industrialisation brought with it an inflow of immigrants which strongly shaped the social profile of the district, particularly after the Second World War.

The expansion in manufacturing industries continued from the 1950s until 1974, when the oil crisis, followed by the world economic crisis of 1979 and the shifts in the global division of labour, began to undermine its advance. A rapid contraction in the labour market had a significant impact on the district from which it has still not recovered. Bradford, whose motto is ‘Hard Work Conquers All’, found itself entering a period of economic decline, with serious social implications. By 1984, one in seven Bradfordians was unemployed (Firth, 1997: p.131). The council produced a report that year, ‘The Changing Face of Bradford’, which

acknowledged ‘There seems little doubt that the poverty, isolation and unemployment in many areas of Bradford creates undercurrents of depression and stress, which saps people’s energy, taking the heart out of their lives’ (quoted in Carr, 2003: p.190).

Data from the 2001 Census shows that Bradford by then had the highest proportion of adults who had never worked of all districts of West Yorkshire, and much higher than the national average (14 per cent compared with 9 per cent in England and Wales: Aitken, *et al.*, 2007: p.21). Despite an increase in employment between 2005 and 2007, by that date Bradford’s employment rate was 68.5 per cent of the working-age population, significantly below the regional (73.2 per cent) and national (74.3 per cent) averages. The increase in jobs did not compensate for the growth in the working-age population, and Bradford continues to be behind the national and regional averages. From the point of view of this study, the important point is the geographical concentration of unemployment and worklessness and the correlations with other figures for multiple disadvantage. Whereas the worklessness rate for Bradford (February 2006) is 18.1 per cent compared with 14.9 per cent nationally, this increases to 28 per cent in the 20 per cent most deprived areas of the district (*ibid.*: pp.30–1). Our study starts here. The two estates where we worked in this project are both located in this 20 per cent category. The impact of the district’s economic decline has been greatest in particular areas, and the estates where we worked exemplify this.

Braithwaite and Guardhouse, Keighley

Located on the western outskirts of Keighley is the Braithwaite and Guardhouse estate. Bordering the predominantly Asian Victorian terraced area of Highfield, the historic villages of Braithwaite and Laycock and opening out onto

countryside, the estate was built in the interwar period to provide social housing. It comprises roughly 2,500 residences, mainly semi-detached pebble-dashed houses, although there are also bungalows, warden-assisted accommodation for the elderly and several small flats. The estate has a mix of Housing Association property (Incommunities, formerly the Aire-Wharfe/Bradford Community Housing Trust) and privately owned accommodation, after some former council tenants exercised their right to buy.

Statistics from the 2001 Census for the Keighley West ward, in which Braithwaite and Guardhouse estate is located, show that 96 per cent of the residents are 'White British', compared with 76 per cent in Keighley as a whole. Unemployment stands at 6.4 per cent with 39.6 per cent having no qualifications. There is a higher than average level of social housing, with 21.4 per cent of houses being owned by the council or housing associations (the district average being 16.3 per cent).

There are currently three schools on the estate – Merlin Top Primary School (formerly Guardhouse Primary School), the first post-war primary school in Keighley; Our Lady of

Victories (a Roman Catholic primary school) and Braithwaite Special School (which became Phoenix Primary Special School in 2010). Merlin Top and Phoenix Primary Special schools were located in different areas of the estate, but a new building initiative meant they could relocate to a combined site (the location of the former Whinfield Centre) in February 2010. Local residents also send their children to Laycock Primary School in nearby Laycock village. Around 60 per cent of children who go to school in Braithwaite and Guardhouse claim free school meals.

The size and steeply sloping site of the estate mean that residents with mobility and health problems, the elderly and those with young children find it hard to walk across the estate and residents depend on the bus service, community transport and their own or friends' cars to get around, or they avoid the hills.

Braithwaite and Guardhouse has two community centres, the Braithwaite and Guardhouse Community Association (BGCA) which is managed by local residents and which hosts a community development worker, and the Braithwaite People's Association. The BGCA was formerly based at the Whinfield Centre in the

Figure 1 Braithwaite and Guardhouse estate, David Wright, November 2007



Braithwaite area of the estate, located at the top of a steep hill above the 'ring', the central roundabout on the estate. The building was condemned in early 2008 after a car drove into it, and the BGCA moved to a new community space at Merlin Top Primary School in April 2010. The BGCA runs and supports a number of initiatives including a club for the over-60s, mother and toddlers' groups, a youth group, and inter-generational work between primary school children and pensioners.

The second community centre, the Braithwaite People's Association, is a grassroots network of volunteers and groups located in the Keith Thompson Centre situated by the main roundabout on the estate ('the ring'). The People's Association was set up after local grassroots activists bought the building from the Children's Society in order to supplement provision for people on the estate. It is currently managed by a full-time unpaid worker and several unpaid volunteers who run a variety of different activities including Bingo, a youth disco, a well-attended daily community café, healthy eating initiatives and a night for people with learning difficulties.

Figure 2 The former Whinfield Centre, Jai, May 2008



this used to be our fave place but is now abandoned

The caption reads 'this used to be our fave place but is now abandoned'.

Figure 3 The Keith Thompson Centre, Cherita Payne, November 2007



Scholemoor, Bradford

In contrast, Scholemoor is a small, inner-city, post-war housing estate located in the Great Horton Ward of Bradford next to the predominantly Asian area of Victorian terraces in Lidget Green, two miles from the city centre. The estate houses around 1,500 people in 500 semi-detached pebble-dashed, red brick terraces, an area of bungalows providing warden-assisted accommodation for the elderly and several small one-bedroom flats. These residences are a mix of Housing Association property (Incommunities, formerly Bradford Community Housing Trust, BCHT) and privately owned accommodation, after some former council tenants exercised their right to buy. There are numerous 'snickets' cutting through the estate to link one part to another. The estate is split into two parts by Clayton Road, a main road which runs from the city centre through Lidget Green and out into Clayton. Where the estate divides it does so into unequal parts with the main area (roughly 400 households) built around

the Ashy (a former sports field), two shops and a take-away restaurant. The smaller part of the estate is regarded by residents from both areas as being separate from Scholemoor estate.

Statistics available from the 2001 Census show that the ethnic make-up of residents on Scholemoor was 68 per cent 'White British' and 29 per cent 'Asian' or 'Asian British'. Since the census was taken there has been a shift in the ethnic make-up of Scholemoor with the arrival of Slovakian and Slovakian-Roma families. At the time of the research there were around 50 residents from these communities living on Scholemoor, often with family members and friends living in nearby Clayton and Lidget Green.

In 2001 the estate had an unemployment rate of 8.4 per cent, and 53.4 per cent of working-age residents had no qualifications. Statistics from 2005 show that Scholemoor had more than 20 per cent youth unemployment. These unemployment figures have almost certainly risen with the closure of a large national employer and two large local employers which between

Figure 4 Scholemoor terraces, E.-J. Milne, January 2007



them provided employment to more than a third of the residents. Around 47 per cent of households have children claiming free school meals. The small size of the estate and its location next to bigger and more affluent wards (e.g. Clayton and Thornton) means that it often loses out on funding to neighbouring localities.

Scholemoor has one community centre located in the heart of the estate at the edge of the Ashy. This centre is owned by the Integrated Youth Services and has been historically used as a base for twice-weekly youth club sessions. Responding to the needs of the local youth and residents, a local activist and the youth worker

in charge during our research, successfully recruited volunteers, worked additional nights and raised £10,000 for extra initiatives for young people. By the end of our fieldwork, four nights a week of youth provision were being offered to teenagers and an afternoon a week for younger residents, in conjunction with the Early Year Services and the community development worker (temporary post). Youth service provision works best when it is led by residents or activists who are youth workers with a deep knowledge of local issues and social relationships.

Figure 5 Scholemoor Community Centre, Louise Kilburn, February 2008



3 Researching with communities

Methodological design and innovative and interactive research methods were integral to this research. Residents and agency workers were involved throughout the process, up to and including dissemination (including this report and other publications). This section outlines and reflects on the methods we used.

Community researchers

In October 2007, we recruited four residents, two from each estate, to work with us for one day a week for twelve months. This was increased in May 2008 to employ two of the community researchers for three days a week after one community researcher resigned, having been offered more permanent work, and another left for health reasons.

To recruit residents we had to circumvent the normal parameters of university recruitment (through *The Guardian*, for example, a newspaper which few residents read). Instead, we distributed flyers to all the houses, community spaces, schools, pubs and local businesses advertising the posts and encouraging community activists and agency workers to spread the word.

Bradford University regulations offer a particular rate of pay according to academic qualifications and formal employment experience. This too became problematic as the positions did not fall easily within university grading criteria, even though funding had been granted for £8 an hour. Other aspects of the traditional university recruitment process were also problematic and had to be circumvented: Bradford University expected applications via online application forms, not through a letter outlining knowledge and experience of the local community; candidates were expected to be shortlisted rather than all candidates interviewed as we promised; interviewers are meant to be university employees who have attended the once-yearly training for

managers, rather than estate residents or activists with valuable local knowledge – an asset that we insisted our recruitment panel should have.

The community research posts were temporary and part-time. This had consequences regarding employment and housing benefit and several potential applicants did not apply as they would be ‘out of pocket’ or would have to come off benefits for temporary and partial employment. Literacy is also poor among some residents, but application processes required candidates to be able to read and write to a moderate level. We were told by residents that universities were exclusionary, intimidating, middle-class, corporate institutions and being employed by or becoming part of such an institution put some off applying.

In addition, while we were trying to recruit we found that the idea of ‘community research’ was not easy to explain. Nevertheless, we were able to appoint two community researchers from each estate. From the beginning, however, there was a tension around the employment status of the community researchers. Were they subject to exactly the same management criteria and performance expectations as any other university employee? The researchers had many personal difficulties, and how much we should expect of them – or them of us – was occasionally very difficult. A great deal of time was invested in training and supporting the community researchers, and we found it hard to negotiate both the need to focus on supporting them and having time to work with the residents on the estates.

Becoming a community researcher in the university had some effect on their status in their communities and sometimes it was assumed that they could solve problems for residents. As Louise Kilburn, one of the Scholemoor researchers, reflected:

I have received nothing but welcome comments since becoming a community researcher for

Scholemoor, everyone has been so positive! But sometimes people seem to have the idea that I can make changes with the flash of a wand!

(Louise Kilburn writing in her diary,
3 December 2007)

When we took up the post it was advertised as being 7 and a half hours a week, flexible time ... However, unlike academics who live elsewhere, the community we are researching is our home, our friends, the place [where] we are already active and known. As someone already involved heavily with community work I (and the others) soon realised that a researcher is never off duty – so to speak. There is always someone who stops you in the street on the way for a pint of milk to discuss the lack of fencing or a crime issue and what you are going to do about it. Academics can walk away, we can't!

(Cherita Payne writing in Milne, *et al.*, 2008)

A positive consequence of being involved in the research was that the community researchers found themselves invited to events, consulted and granted access where previously they had felt unwelcome or dismissed. However, this sometimes led to accusations from neighbours that they were becoming too close to the agencies on the estate. Another challenge was that there are territorial and political divisions on the estates (as there are in many spaces) and our researchers could not claim to represent their diversity. Appointing particular researchers meant that the research could be seen as partial even though this was something we tried to acknowledge, mitigate and explicitly resolve. No matter who was appointed, the researchers would still have been perceived by some as being aligned with particular groups or beliefs.

There were benefits from having both academics and community members on the research team. One of the important aspects was that it allowed a division of labour between academic and community members in carrying out data collection, thus maximising access. The social distance of the academic members from the estates sometimes allowed us to cross political lines and territories which community researchers could not:

Academics – even though they aren't residents do have their benefits(!). As community researchers we are caught up in local politics and also we don't always know all about our estates (not least because our position as residents means that we are often disregarded or do not have the tools to get information).

(Cherita Payne and Louise Kilburn writing in Milne, *et al.*, 2008)

Having academics who know the community and have long established friendships with residents (some of whom we don't know) can also really help in terms of gaining access/giving a different perspective/smoothing things over and getting access to spaces where we as residents are not allowed to reach.

(Cherita Payne and Louise Kilburn writing in Milne, *et al.*, 2008)

Community map-making

During the research process we used community map-making in three different ways to access different types of information from residents and agency workers. As part of their training we asked the community researchers, in pairs, to draw a map of their estate. This allowed them to become aware of and discuss differing yet complementary knowledge of spaces, infrastructure, politics and agency involvement in their own communities.

A second form of map-making involved community researchers approaching residents through their networks, the people they met in daily interactions and also local agency workers. They asked people to draw maps of their estate, illustrating how and where they took part in formal and informal activities and interactions. Participants were interviewed and recorded as they drew their maps and in ensuing discussions.

Some 35 people participated, mainly as individuals, drawing maps in the privacy of their own home and opting to use pseudonyms, although we also had three instances where maps were created in collaboration between groups of two or more residents, and in three instances they were created by agency groups. We found it hard to contact adult men. This was partly due to their working hours, partly different forms of socialising and also

because of the make-up of the community research team. The two community researchers who remained with the project were younger women. The mapping showed that young people up to the age of 21 had far wider social networks in which they participated. They knew others through going to school, attending youth clubs, sports clubs and social events and going to friends' houses. Adults were far more isolated and restricted. If they had children we found that they might mix with other young parents and go to the shops, but they were conscious of safety issues and avoided certain places.

The third form of community map-making involved using two hand-drawn maps of each estate (1.5m x 1.5m) which we placed in spaces frequented by residents (roundabouts, shopping areas, community centres, outside schools, etc.). People were asked to place different coloured stickers on the map marking the places where they went (green stickers), where they did not go because they did not feel safe (red stickers) and where they lived (blue stickers). The maps began to illustrate some of the spaces where residents do or do not go inside their own communities. They showed clearly that there

Figure 6 Scholemoor map, E.-J. Milne, November 2007



Figure 7 Saj and Lou drawing their map of Scholemoor, E.-J. Milne, November 2007



Figure 8 David and Cherita drawing their map of Braithwaite and Guardhouse, E.-J. Milne, November 2007



Figure 9 Braithwaite and Guardhouse map, E.-J. Milne, November 2007

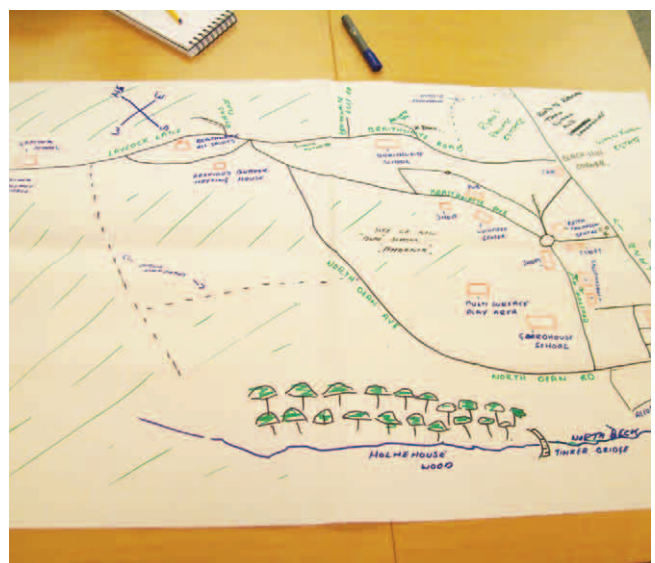


Figure 10 Individual map by Mrs T., January 2008, Scholemoor

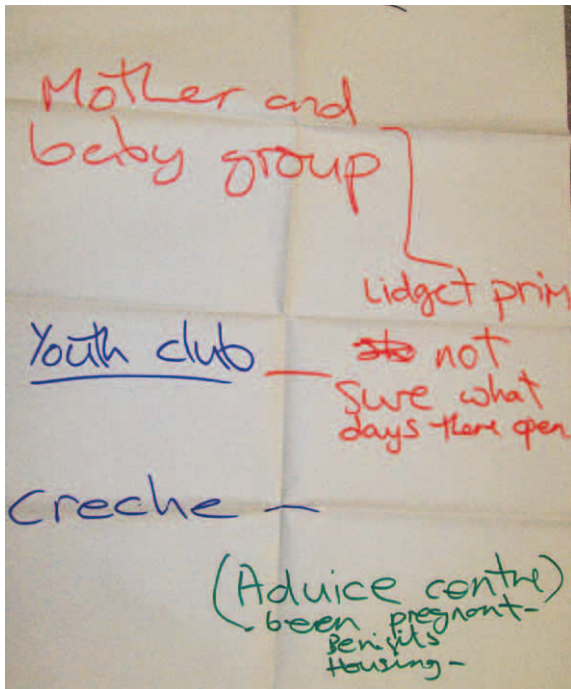
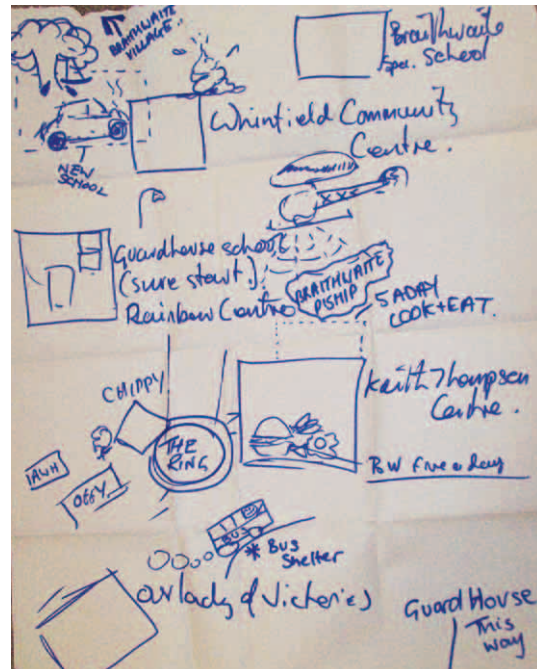


Figure 11 Group map by the 'Keighley Fixers', January 2008, Keighley



is a level of territoriality and that residents do not move freely throughout their estates. While carrying out the mapping in public spaces, our physical presence made the research visible and the team more approachable. Residents got to know us, talked to us and observed what we were doing. It also allowed us as a team to witness daily interactions and residents' use of their localities. The use of sticker maps in public areas was a turning point in the research. Before this we had found it almost impossible to access groups or individuals with whom we did not already have contact. In particular, it allowed us to build relationships with the Slovakian and Slovakian-Roma community on Scholemoor whom we had not been able to meet in a more natural situation other than by knocking on their doors. For the map-making on Scholemoor we took along an interpreter. The Slovakian and Roma residents were stunned that there was an activity on their estate with a Slovakian interpreter. Our conversations revealed that some of the young people did not know that they could go to school in the UK; others said they didn't know they could get free health care – at that time members of their community were trying to raise funds to repatriate one of the Slovakian residents who had health issues.

Photographs: participatory representations of community and participation

The use of photography was central to the research project. All of the team had digital cameras which they used to record research activities. This was to allow a visual record and to act as an aide-memoire, as well as producing data in itself. We used photographs in different ways at various points in the research process. Aside from using the cameras to keep visual records and 'visual field notes', we also used cameras as a photovoice project with the community researchers and residents on both estates. Photovoice is a specific research method used with the intention of giving participants an active role in the research process and an opportunity to influence the direction of the research.

Residents were invited to take three Polaroid photographs to illustrate what was important about their estate, what they wanted to change or what visual message they wanted to give to fellow residents or decision-makers. All participants were asked if they would like to write a message below their photograph as a way of contextualising

Figure 12 Sticker mapping outside the shops on Scholemoor, E.-J. Milne, March 2009



Figure 13 'What about more girls stuff?', anonymous, March 2008



Figure 14 'Loud and proud', Karen Hodgson, Scholemoor, 2008



or explaining it, and they also participated in a short recorded conversation which discussed the meanings behind the creation of each image. Residents were then asked to choose one photograph each for a community photo exhibition and were invited to participate in a visual focus group with other community members.

In total, 37 residents took part in the photovoice activity. Of these, 34 were residents on one of the estates and three were previous residents. The three who no longer lived on either estate still regarded themselves as part of these communities and continued to spend time there. Some of the photographers had lived on the estates their whole lives, while others were more recent residents. The youngest participant was eight and the oldest over eighty. There was a mixture of women, men, young adults, children and senior citizens. The photographers came from a variety of ethnic backgrounds including English, Slovakian, Roma, Pakistani, Irish, Sudanese and Afro-Caribbean. There was some hesitation at first, particularly among the

elderly, who felt they wouldn't know how to use the camera. However, once they saw their photographs, people liked the fact that they could see immediate and tangible evidence of their involvement in the research.

Figure 15 'This is a public walkway?',
Theresa Blythe, Scholemoor, March 2008



This is a public walkway?

Figure 16 'Slow down the speed!', Tibko,
Scholemoor, March 2008



Slow down the speed!

Figure 17 'I don't think it's a suitable place for a school and where are the kids going to play?',
Betti, Braithwaite and Guardhouse, June 2008



I don't think it's a suitable place

Figure 18 'Whinfield Luncheon Club', Derek,
Braithwaite and Guardhouse, June 2008



Figure 19 'Wher me and my m8ts [mates] leck [play]', Jai, Braithwaite and Guardhouse, June 2008



Wher me and my m8ts
leck (play)

Figure 20 'Lovely place to sunbave' (sic), Joel, Braithwaite and Guardhouse, June 2008



Lovely place
to sunbave.

Visual focus groups

The visual focus groups allowed us to develop further our relationships and conversations. Thirty residents took up the invitation to participate – twenty in two groups on Scholemoor (one for young people and one for adults) and eight adults and children in one group on Braithwaite and Guardhouse. The groups met at times and in places chosen by the residents. A Slovakian interpreter attended both events on Scholemoor to enable participation by the Slovakian and Roma residents, who told us that they wanted to participate but were unable to do so because they could not speak English.

The meetings of the visual focus groups followed similar formats, with the image chosen by each resident projected onto a screen while the group sat around in a circle. Each resident spoke for five minutes about their photograph, explaining the context and why it was taken. This was followed by a discussion about the image with the other participants, including the interpretations and meanings that they each placed on it. In our experience, residents were significantly keener to take part in this style of event than in consultations and discussions, because they had invested in it and were able to influence it. They felt that they were equal partners.

These focus groups led to some residents wishing to participate more on their own estates, and some people changed their views on particular issues. For instance, on Scholemoor one young

Figure 21 Braithwaite and Guardhouse visual focus group, Jo Kinsella, June 2008



man heard about security issues on the former sports field known as 'the Ashy', and volunteered to work with young people and to patrol the area so that the new facilities would not get vandalised. The Slovakian young people mentioned that they did not feel safe going to the youth club because it was for English people and they would not be welcome. The youth worker at the focus group agreed to organise an extra weekly event with a focus on Slovakian youth and music. Supportive English youth were invited so that they could get to know each other. The research team donated a keyboard and 20 Slovakian-Roma and white English young people met together the night after the focus group. The English girls made Slovakian and Roma flags to welcome the new communities to the centre, and the Slovakian youth gave the English people a Slovakian lesson so that they could communicate better. Unfortunately these evenings stopped after a few weeks because the youth worker was unable to run the sessions as a lone worker and the management at Integrated Youth Services were unable to provide additional staff.

Participatory video

One of the original aims of the research had been to use participatory video, in addition to the other methods outlined above, as a way of allowing residents to communicate their messages to local decision-makers. Our conversations with residents told us of previous experiences with filming on the estates. They felt themselves set up as objects by film crews and the media who, in their experience, relied upon external assumptions or the highly subjective knowledge of one or two local individuals with particular political views or agendas. Nevertheless, residents did have views that they wanted to communicate. They told us that they were 'fed up' with telling councillors, the council, MPs, Incommunities and other agencies about things that needed to be changed but never were, such as road safety issues or continual failure to carry out housing repairs. In their view they were not being properly consulted. They were ignored or looked down on because they were from housing estates. Petitions, letter

Figure 22 One of the Scholemoor visual focus groups, Jo Kinsella, June 2008



Figure 23 Participatory video workshop with students from Our Lady of Victories School, Braithwaite and Guardhouse, November 2008



writing, neighbourhood forums, community consultations and a variety of other means had been used by residents to communicate how they felt, but with minimal impact.

By offering a participatory space for individuals to come together and make films, we intended to provide an opportunity for residents to interact, sharing conversations and knowledge. Through these films they could educate, campaign or exchange views with other residents, decision-makers and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Participatory video demands no previous knowledge of film-making, script writing or editing. Instead it constructs a facilitated space where participants receive training in how to write, shoot and direct their own film and negotiate the subject, content and roles in each scene. It stresses equality in roles and knowledge rather than privileging one person above others. The aim is not to make a cinematic or documentary masterpiece; rather, it is about the value of the process of participation with other residents, the sharing and development of relationships, conversations and knowledge and the creation of a film for themselves or for others. We offered the opportunity to make participatory videos to every resident on both estates and to local schools, handing out information in English, Slovakian and Urdu, and advertising it through our leaflets, posters and word of mouth.

Figure 24 Film-making at Our Lady of Victories School, Braithwaite and Guardhouse



What we discovered was that residents did not want to make videos. We were told that childcare was an issue, as was the lack of translators (though the Joseph Rowntree Foundation kindly offered to provide extra funding to cover this). We took cameras along to community spaces so that residents could see the equipment, handle it, ask questions and practise with it in order to break down the fear barrier. However, the residents continually came back with the reasons why they did not wish to make films: fear for their own safety if they expressed views about the estate; lack of self-esteem and self-worth ('I've nowt to say'); cynicism about whether it would achieve anything ('they've never listened before'; 'it's all a waste of time'); and suspicion that it would be used and possibly manipulated by outsiders (the funders and university) for their own political ends and media attention, rather than used in the ways the participants intended.

In the end, we facilitated the making of just two films, both by students of Our Lady of Victories School on Braithwaite and Guardhouse. The school was keen to take part as a means to increase students' knowledge, involvement and participation within the Braithwaite and Guardhouse community.

Through this process of negotiating the use of participatory video as a research method, we

discovered that methods which we as outsiders thought would be attractive to residents proved not to be so.

Summary of methods

The research for this project involved an intensive 18-month engagement with residents on the two estates. In addition to the methods described, the team was involved in many informal conversations with estate residents as well as with local agencies, police, councillors and council officers; we also worked closely with community associations. In April 2008 we organised an open meeting, 'Bovvered?', at the Scholemoor community centre. We rapidly learnt, however, that being out and visible in places where people go or pass by on a daily basis was a better way of reaching those who shied away from community centres and public meetings. Although we made many efforts to reach people, we recognise that certain sectors of the population, particularly working-age men, figure least in our work.

The views of residents were summarised in two leaflets which we distributed on the estates. The leaflets included the views of some 80 residents in each community, and reproduced many of the images residents had taken. A draft had been discussed with residents and local agency staff before final publication. The aim of the leaflet was to encourage ongoing conversations and to be a 'talking point' for those working to improve life on the estates. We also facilitated a number of meetings and encounters. For example, we were approached by residents and local businesses to facilitate a meeting between residents, agencies and councillors on Scholemoor concerning safety and community problems. Many residents did not know who to approach when they had problems and had not met their councillors.

We organised a final workshop to discuss our initial findings and generate conversations between residents and Bradford decision-makers, also inviting women activists from Canterbury estate to comment on our findings. Finally, we worked with the Scholemoor Beacon (Community Association), who hosted an exhibition of the photographs taken. A similar event on Braithwaite and Guardhouse had to be postponed.

Our intense efforts to work in an interactive way often involved quite difficult situations and relationships. This is a much harder way to gather data! It is, however, much valued by residents, as one anonymous resident explained to us:

It is so nice to work with people who are researching, and being listened to and being allowed to affect the research direction. In the past, every researcher has come and taken information away about our community over which we have had no influence and it doesn't reflect us at all. We have other people researching our estate at the moment and I can tell you exactly what their outcomes will be because of how they have structured the questions and are carrying out their surveys.

We feel that through these methods, we did get 'under the skin' of life on these traditionally white estates, in a way that traditional research is not able to do. The following section will present and analyse our findings.

4 Research findings: community and participation on Bradford's traditionally white estates

'Doors weren't locked': the meanings of 'community'

A sense of solidarity and neighbourliness has not disappeared on these estates, but has been greatly eroded. Some long-term residents expressed their nostalgia for the past when community was a solid everyday experience:

My fondest memories are of growing up in Scholemoor. It was a community. People didn't lock their doors. We were in and out of people's houses. Everybody knew everybody. And it's all gone now.¹

Similarly on Braithwaite and Guardhouse:

There used to be a lot of community spirit. If someone asked for things you would never refuse. If someone was ill, neighbours would prepare meals for them. One time an elderly woman who lived on the street became bedridden. Her daughter had to stay up every night and look after her. It was getting too much for her. So neighbours would take it in turns to look after her mother throughout the night. Doors weren't locked. Everyone had respect.

Such views are reinforced by conversations with elderly and long-term residents on the estates. 'Leaving doors unlocked' does indeed imply a deep sense of security that has long since gone. However, this does not mean that neighbourliness and some level of pride and belonging have disappeared. The Scholemoor resident quoted above was still dedicated to the community she lived in and had become an activist:

Then I got involved as a volunteer and started up a community group here. Now I'm a worker and I fight for everything we can get. I do a lot of voluntary work too and I'm a resident who means to stay. I live and breathe Scholemoor ... we live here.

The death of a local youth in a tragic accident on Scholemoor in 2008 led to mass mourning on the estate. On Braithwaite and Guardhouse many residents praised the sense of neighbourliness on the estate, and there were many examples of mutual support. In the course of our research, when one family's house burned down residents collected money for the family. About 250 people attended a birthday party in the Keith Thompson Centre in September 2008 for a girl of 15 diagnosed with cancer.

One local resident also recounted how one of the residents on Scholemoor decided to move off the estate to a more 'middle class' and 'better' area. One day she returned home from work to find that her house had been emptied of everything. When she went to her new neighbours to see if they had witnessed anyone burgling her new home, she was told that a lorry had come earlier and that they had assumed she had not liked her new home so had decided to move away. The woman moved back to Scholemoor because, in her experience, on Scholemoor your neighbours would talk to you and if they saw something out of the ordinary they would get in touch with you and look out for you rather than you being an anonymous person in an area where people did not have any connection with their neighbours.

These apparent paradoxes are not so strange. Despair over 'lost community' and an ongoing striving for pride and belonging are really two sides of the same coin. Residents had a range of

responses – some had given up, others had opted to take action and others were passive but still hoped for leadership and direction. This simply reflects the natural spectrum of human action in the face of multiple stresses. It means that there is still plenty of goodwill to build on, as well as demoralisation to overcome. Like any other group of people, estate residents value social bonds and belonging. People on Braithwaite particularly valued the social activities at the two community centres.

‘It’s like Beirut’: physical appearances

There was a contrast in how residents perceived and described their own communities; some labelled their localities ‘crap’ and ‘like Beirut’, while others felt a deep pride in their neighbourhood and a long-term commitment to the estate. One new resident who was an asylum seeker took a photograph of the green spaces in the community and told us how nice, green, clean and quiet the area was and how safe she felt. Another resident took a photo of the house she would like to live in on Scholemoor.

The way the estates look has a huge effect on residents’ sense of self-respect and morale. ‘You’re embarrassed to bring people on the estate sometimes because of the old fencing, debris and

rubbish. It’s not inviting’, a woman from Scholemoor told us. Closed shops and empty, boarded-up houses depressed people. Housing repairs were often not of good quality. Some of the most frequent complaints on both estates concerned the state of gardens, for example rubbish and furniture thrown in them, and broken fencing, making it dangerous for young children to play.

Older and long-term residents tended to make an effort with their gardens where they were physically able, and got particularly upset when others did not. There are many reasons for this beyond the easily ascribed notion that new residents in these communities simply do not care about their gardens. Newer residents come into physically deteriorating locations; they often do not know that many still care about how the estate looks and, crucially, no one informs them about what to do with the rubbish, for example. At our ‘Bovvered?’ event on Scholemoor, an elderly couple blamed the new residents on the estate (asylum seekers and migrant workers) for the increase in rubbish around the estate. On investigation we found that the problem was that no one had explained rubbish collection to these families who were new both to the estate and to England. Single mothers at our visual focus group told us that they found it hard to keep up a garden – if they worked on their garden who would watch

Figure 25 ‘Nice and green’, Intisar, Scholemoor, March 2008



nice and green
سليم و اخضر

Figure 26 ‘Picture postcard’, Allyson, Scholemoor, March 2008



Picture post
- card -

their young children and ensure that they were safe? People also told us that they could not afford tools to cut their grass and maintain a garden, and some said they lacked the knowledge or skills to tend a garden and had no one to turn to for basic advice. However, one person we spoke to said that if she were given a house a little outside the estate (Scholemoor), she thought she might keep up the garden, suggesting that as well as time, money and skills, there is the sense that it is not worth bothering on the estate. Scholemoor is a small estate, and residents there feel that they have been the last to get regeneration money and attention. They often blame themselves: 'It's hard to convince funders to give us money to redevelop. But that's people on this estate. They don't have respect.' People's dignity is affronted when work on the estate is not done properly, reinforcing the sense that the estate is not worth the effort. One example is the new roundabouts on Scholemoor, built during 2007–8. These took a very long time to finish, and once they were complete, the workmen just left the rubble, and with it an ongoing sense of grievance.

Space, anxiety and insecurity: private and public

Insecurity and fear are rife on the estates, going beyond the usual focus on crime and impacting on space and on social relationships, although varying across generation and gender. Our social mapping revealed how people navigate invisible boundaries within the public space of the estate when they decide where to walk and at what time of day. Our attention was also drawn to the high levels of domestic violence in the private space of the home. The home is not always a safe space, particularly for women and children. This topic is not discussed very openly, but as our familiarity with estate residents developed, individuals did reveal some of their personal troubles. Domestic violence was high on the list. Mental health issues also loom large on the estates, some arising from experience of childhood violence.

The issue of sexual relationships, sexual abuse and 'grooming' is a very sensitive one, particularly on Braithwaite and Guardhouse. Burying the

Figure 27 Scholemoor roundabout, E.-J. Milne, December 2007



issue is equally problematic. On Braithwaite and Guardhouse, the grooming of young girls for prostitution became a politicised issue when it became clear that the grooming was being done mainly by Asian men to young white girls. The British National Party (BNP) worked to make political capital out of this by racialising the problem. Young people are expected to be sexually active early, and sex can be against their will or as a response to cultural norms in their localities. Residents made several allegations of rape and sexual assault during the research project. These were not always male on female sexual acts but also included cases where boys and young men were victims. Male rape is far less spoken about than female experience of sexual violence. These are taboo subjects, often hushed up, but leave a legacy of pain and resentment towards the perpetrator and his family. The attitude and language of some young men with respect to women is deeply misogynistic, causing women to have particular fears and anxieties.

Young men are caught up in the need to 'perform' to their peers, so that fights, verbal aggression and other forms of unruly behaviour are rites of passage of masculine identity, in order to be accepted 'as a man' and part of the community. Such behaviour generates intimidation among older people as well as young women, although the latter can also behave in problematic ways. Young people have a bad reputation on the estates, especially with regard to drugs and alcohol, both of which are in heavy use. In our experience, use of drugs and alcohol is more widespread and endemic among adults on the estates than among young people; however, young people's use is more visible as they live out more of their lives in public spaces. It is important to highlight that young people are also afraid. We were told on Braithwaite and Guardhouse that they fear going onto other estates and if young people from other areas come onto Braithwaite and Guardhouse they feel unsafe in their own neighbourhood. Young people from Scholemoor also fear going into the nearby Asian area or even to other parts of the estate. Parents worry about their children and the harm that might come to them or what they might be involved in.

In the public sphere, residents feel unsafe for many reasons. On Braithwaite, people told us

they felt uncomfortable walking in certain streets in the summer when people sit outside and drink. They feel unsafe because there are people with drug and mental health problems walking around. On Scholemoor, people told us that the local shops are very important to them, not just to buy things but also to meet others and chat. However, some residents do not like going to them after dark as lots of young people hang out there.

There are many problems of car theft, vandalism and burglary. These are well-known problems on estates and have led to measures regarding 'anti-social behaviour'. As well as these obvious sources of threat, residents on both estates complained about speeding, rat running and road safety. Crossing roads safely is a major issue, and people fear for their own lives and those of their children: 'I wouldn't want my brothers to hit someone. But they do speed. And if someone hit my little girl they'd be gutted.' We were told of and witnessed how residents lobbied and wrote petitions to try and make their roads safer. On Braithwaite and Guardhouse this concern is very real after several injuries and a death were linked to speeding cars. The residents told us frequently that their activism and attempts to achieve a tangible change for their own safety in their community were ignored at best, or dismissed, by the council and policy-makers.

When society as a whole pathologises estates, it is often forgotten that it is the residents who experience the problems directly. It will only be a minority whose behaviour is intolerable, but the impact is pervasive. A culture of anti-social behaviour has developed among young people, which is corrosive and difficult for them to evade without isolation and loneliness. However, the case of the Ashy on Scholemoor (discussed in the section on participation, below) is an example of how young people can behave differently.

One of the factors that make these insecurities difficult to address is the pervasive sense that residents face such problems alone and with little support from public authorities. Knowing how society regards them, residents ascribe to a belief in self-policing and not 'grassing' to the authorities. People do not trust the police to solve their problems, and this attitude filters down to the children. 'Kids have no respect for the police', a Scholemoor mother told us. Retribution is often

taken privately and becomes itself another source of fear. The family of the young lad who burnt down the pavilion on the Ashy on Scholemoor was forced out of the estate by other residents.

Resources and facilities

Frustration over resources and facilities is inevitable in contexts of such concentrated deprivation. The community centres on the estates face a constant need to generate funds, and this inhibits their potential role as catalysts for bringing about change and traps them into service delivery. Writing funding bids or doing paperwork to provide evidence to allow them to receive continuation funding takes community activists way from working in their communities. The Keith Thompson Centre in Braithwaite and Guardhouse can be more innovative as it is situated outside of council or agency structures, but it has also been hampered by lack of funding. In the case of Scholemoor, a lack of resources has led to long-term paralysis of the community centre, which is only able to open for limited hours. A lack of resources and staffing in the youth service has meant minimal provision and young people failed in Braithwaite and Guardhouse. In Scholemoor, youngsters spent a lot of time 'hanging around' outside the centre waiting for it to open, becoming more unruly and angry as it became clear it would not.

The most frequent complaint among residents was about facilities for children and young people. The lack of presence of the youth service on both estates was a real concern. People wanted constructive activities for young people, to keep them off the streets and out of trouble. On Scholemoor, people recalled two police officers in the past who had talked to the youngsters, sought out funding for football kit for them and played sports regularly with them. Now, they said, it was rare for police to build relationships with the children. There was anger on Scholemoor and lobbying of councillors and the Area Inspector of Police when a Scholemoor Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), who tried to re-establish this philosophy of relating to the youth, was replaced by a PCSO who previously worked there but had been unpopular because of his antagonistic treatment of residents, particularly

young men on the estate. There was also anger on Braithwaite and Guardhouse that a large play area and football pitch was appropriated for the new school build without proper consultation with the whole community or finding alternative provision. This reduced further the safe space for young people to play near their homes.

Self-esteem

The prevailing sense of powerlessness among estate residents means that they often display low self-esteem. On one occasion, while walking around Scholemoor, we asked a local woman if she would like to come to a meeting to look at the draft of our leaflet and give her opinion. Her immediate response was that she had nothing to say. She was, however, persuaded to attend, and it was then evident that she had a great deal to contribute. Women in particular feel themselves to be ignorant; men do too, but their lack of confidence can manifest itself in aggression rather than in self-effacement.

Most residents are bitter about the assumptions made about them in the outside world, but there is also disparagement within the estates themselves. Members of 'problem families' feel acutely that they are labelled by everyone else on the estate, and can never overcome this. There are quite a few teenage mothers on the estates, and they told us that they are afraid they will be judged when they go to parent and toddler groups.

Literacy and educational levels are very low on the estates, and literacy is arguably one of the most serious problems affecting people. The Keith Thompson Centre in Braithwaite and Guardhouse estimated that there might be as much as 20 per cent illiteracy on the estate, but people were too ashamed to admit it. They had noticed how people would ask them to read out questions on forms. At one time, they had tried to establish a scheme with Keighley College to offer literacy support for people in the privacy of their own homes. No one wanted to be seen at the centre or in the college learning how to read. However, the college staff member who had been interested in this scheme left. They had then tried to get third parties to identify those who needed help so that such people did not have to disclose themselves. Some people, they told

us, could not even go to Bradford because they could not read the signs for toilets or bus stops (field notes, meeting, 18 September 2008).

The combination of outside perceptions and internalised self-judgements, together with literacy and educational difficulties, has led many people on the estates to hold a very low opinion of themselves and their area. Our community researchers described this as 'estatism'. The impact of this on their relationships with other residents, and with incomers and newcomers and local agencies and services, is the subject of the next section.

Residents and 'others'

This section explores the various patterns of relationships between residents and other residents, new residents and outside agencies.

Relationships between residents

The context of life on the estates is not conducive to harmonious relationships, although these do exist, of course. As mentioned earlier, there is still a sense of neighbourliness among many residents and even pride in the estates, particularly when faced with criticism from outsiders. However, there are also multiple tensions, sometimes caused by the bad behaviour of young men and the problems of drugs and crime, but sometimes by other factors, such as problems between areas of the estates and between families. People who live in the Braithwaite area of the estate have tensions with Guardhouse and vice versa. There are divides between people who live in Braithwaite village and those who live on Braithwaite estate; the former are considered to be 'better off'. Conflicts between particular families or a dislike of a particular area pass down through the generations, and it is often forgotten why the distrust emerged in the first place.

Braithwaite and Guardhouse feel particular resentments about what they see as the 'dumping' of problem families. The estate also remains overwhelmingly white and borders on Asian areas of Keighley. More overt tensions have been generated in the past over drug deals and grooming (in which mostly men of Asian heritage are implicated). A BNP councillor was elected here, though there are residents and community workers who are proud of the anti-BNP stance

they have taken on a number of occasions. The BNP councillor for Braithwaite and Guardhouse eventually lost her seat after being defeated by Angela Sinfield – a local resident turned activist. The two community centres on Braithwaite and Guardhouse stood side by side in negotiating a ban on the BNP using either community centre for meetings or for their councillor surgeries.

There is a historic division between the Braithwaite People's Association at the Keith Thompson Centre (KTC) and the Braithwaite and Guardhouse Community Association (BGCA) which was located at the Whinfield Centre (until it was vandalised). A community development worker (funded by the council) is based with the BGCA, and is housed at the new school site. Both centres run important activities for residents, although the BGCA community development worker has been hampered by her isolation, having to work within council policy and structures, and by very short-term funding for the centre and her own position. This means that she has not been able to develop the centre's activities in the way she and the Community Association would like. In contrast, the KTC is the most frequented of the three centres we worked with. It clearly benefits from being an autonomous volunteer-led association. The centre is a thriving space, particularly the community café. It regards itself as the 'natural' and established association of local residents, although it should be noted that the two community centres on Braithwaite and Guardhouse serve different needs and community interests.

On Scholemoor, many people felt excluded from the Community Association – the Scholemoor Beacon. There is a high ratio of agency as opposed to resident involvement, and the residents who are involved are mostly members of the same family or social networks. There is a widespread (mis-) perception that only certain people can participate in its activities. Members of the Beacon continually make it clear that they would welcome other residents to help in local activism and community engagement. There is a disjuncture between what is being offered and how it is perceived by residents. One of the difficulties in getting residents to attend events at the community centre is its location within a building which is owned by Integrated Youth Services and which is only

able to open a few hours a week due to lack of funding for additional services. Some residents see the building as offering a facility exclusively for young people. Some also see the community centre as a 'whites only' space. Again, this is not how Scholemoor Beacon wants the centre to be seen. The problem is the lack of funding to enable the communication of services in different languages to different cultural communities and little money to run services at all – aside from youth provision. In January 2009, however, funding was agreed for a local resident and activist to become the full-time community development worker (temporary post), which boosts the services offered by the centre and makes them more accessible.

Community divisions are demoralising for some community workers and activists. One of the challenges is to recognise the origins of the animosity towards them among residents, who often feel that the most prominent activist residents become privileged interlocutors with the agencies working on the estate. A converse problem is one of dependency – residents begin to see activists as people who should be solving all their problems. The danger here is that activists accrue power through their ability to respond to these expectations, rather than encouraging more widespread involvement among residents in addressing problems and finding solutions. They easily become the 'usual suspects', with whom outside agencies always deal.

Relationships with 'outsiders' and 'incomers'

Given the sense of exclusion on the estates, it is not surprising that attitudes towards those who are 'different' can be negative and prejudiced. The 'othering' on the estates takes multiple forms, and is certainly not just about racism. Residents on Braithwaite and Guardhouse told us that people with mental health issues can be harassed, mocked, taken advantage of, or seen as 'entertainment'. There is resentment against families who have been 'dumped' on the estates because they have caused problems elsewhere, or who have been relocated after serving long-term prison sentences. Open expressions of racism are not uncommon, and innuendo more frequent. On Braithwaite and Guardhouse the BNP has been active and, as previously discussed, even

had a councillor elected for a period. At the time, we were told, people had complained that they were being told to vote for the BNP and were scared. We heard of young people expressing sympathies for the far right movement.

Scholemoor is a much smaller estate and has seen an influx of a much higher percentage of minority ethnic families than Braithwaite and Guardhouse. There are some 100 Asian British households on the estate and 50 Slovakian and Slovakian-Roma residents and a few asylum seekers. The tensions are more evident on this estate, although mostly the different families just occupy different blocs of housing. There are a few examples of real efforts to build friendships and overcome language barriers, but they are the exception. A young white mother talked of the Slovakian arrivals as 'nice, respectable people. I'd like to know my neighbours – know who they are and what they stand for.' At the young people's visual focus group on Scholemoor the white English young people explained how having windows smashed was not a racial crime against the Slovakian community, rather this happened to white residents as well. These youths suggested that if Slovak homes were attacked again they should come and speak to local youths about it and they would give them support. Long-term residents felt that they did not understand the culture and traditions of the Asian, Slovakian and Roma residents and would like the community centre to run some events so that they could learn more about each other. Resident activists on Scholemoor are also proud of their anti-BNP stance and told us how they had confronted a BBC team who turned up to film a piece on the rise of the BNP on Scholemoor. They requested evidence from the BBC for their claims and when the team was unable to provide any, they escorted the crew from the estate, asking them to carry out proper research before they portrayed Scholemoor as a BNP area in future (the BBC crew has not returned).

There are very few attempts to facilitate interaction, to help newcomers understand the estate and its customs or to help the existing residents understand the culture of the new families. Eastern European migrants have experienced petty acts of hostility. A Slovakian female resident told us that 'English and Asian

children throw stones at us'. Fights have broken out occasionally, such as one between Slovakian and English girls. Incidents of bad behaviour by individual members of incoming families led residents to blame all Slovaks or Roma. Language barriers are real; the Slovakian and Roma residents were desperate to learn English, but there was nowhere for them to do that. Government cuts in ESL (English as a second language) funding meant that community classes had been cut and the few classes running were at Bradford College. The Slovakian and Slovakian-Roma residents were unable to take advantage of these classes, not only through lack of knowledge of the courses and how to enrol and get transport to the college, but also because of their children. The Slovakian and Roma families that we spoke to recounted stories of racialised violence directed at their children, either at school or on the way to school. Attempting to work with the school had not led to a reduction in the incidents and so, reluctantly, the families had decided to keep their children at home for their own safety. The need for these families to look after their children during the daytime was another reason why they could not attend language classes.

Some Asian, Slovakian and Slovakian-Roma residents told us that they thought the community centre and the youth club were only for white people. There was no information in Slovakian or Urdu, so they did not know what was going on. We encouraged these residents to come to our events, and provided interpreters, but this was the first time some of them had entered the centre. It was mostly women and teenagers who took the first steps.

Our research on this point should be compared with that of two other JRF-funded projects on another Bradford estate, Holmewood (Illingworth, 2008; Orton, 2008). Illingworth also found evidence of racist attitudes, reflecting a district-wide problem in Bradford. However, he nuanced this finding, by unpacking the complex logics behind prejudices and calling for earlier intervention when newcomers come to live on estates, to give support to residents and new families.

Relationships with agencies

Both estates have been targeted by multiple agencies, such as social services, housing

agencies, benefit officers, utility companies, the police and others. On Braithwaite and Guardhouse, there is some recognition that agencies have not worked together well in the past, and there have been a series of initiatives aimed at building a common purpose between agencies. On both estates it was notable how few people understood what the agencies do or who can resolve particular problems. There are real issues of communication between agencies and the majority of residents. Often the agencies rely on the known interlocutors. For the reasons already discussed, these same interlocutors are easily construed by residents as people seeking personal power ('If you get involved you're one of them', a female former resident on Scholemoor told us) or as mediators who can solve everything. We found that people often thought that our researchers might similarly be a vehicle for solving problems.

At the same time, the heavy agency presence with their funding regimes has created a dependence on external funding for community activities and diminished the potential for more self-organising. Although the agencies do try to consult with people, they generally do so in very tokenistic ways. Meetings are not organised when working people can attend, or invitations are by letter, which some cannot read and many ignore. People often feel that decisions have already been made. This was illustrated in the anger generated over the new school build on Braithwaite and Guardhouse. In turn, agency personnel often feel blamed for everything that goes wrong on the estates and feel that they only ever get complaints. They often feel overwhelmed by community expectations of them. Some find it difficult to understand and communicate with estate residents, and do not have the listening and empathy skills to comprehend their difficult lives. Relations become too formalised, with insufficient everyday communication and interaction. Trust is easily lost and hard to recover. Nevertheless, the community development worker on Braithwaite and Guardhouse estate remembered a time when the Local Strategic Partnership, Bradford Vision, had generated more bottom-up neighbourhood action planning (field notes, meeting 8 September 2008).

Participation and change

In the course of our research, we gathered a lot of evidence about participation and non-participation on the two estates. In the leaflets we gave back to the communities, we summarised this evidence.

They are reproduced in Tables 1 and 2. They convey the sense of demoralisation, but also the constraints in terms of time, skills and confidence.

We had hoped to generate action through this research. However, we have learnt that there are too many obstacles for this to happen very

Table 1 Why don't people participate? Braithwaite and Guardhouse

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timings of meetings not always convenient (meetings could be repeated at different times) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputation and background can hold people back. For example, people might not be welcomed to a meeting because they are associated with a certain group or family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people don't know if they're allowed to go to meetings or if they're allowed to get the notes taken at meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions, fears or lack of knowledge about what is expected of the individual in that role (e.g. being liable if anything goes wrong)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of capacity (skills, confidence, support, energy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People thinking 'this is the way it is' (fatalism)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of real opportunity/incentive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't be bothered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People don't believe that things can change for the better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tried and given up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal hang-ups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People might be aware of issues and discuss them at length, and often, but do not take steps to change things for the better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People might participate in volunteering or paid work if they had more knowledge about how it would affect their benefits. Some people don't have information regarding how to work and maintain benefits. Hard to get information without putting themselves at risk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People don't want to or can't do things outside of work (tired, no time) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expecting that someone else will, can or should do it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people get more on benefits than they would working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy with the way things are. For some, Braithwaite is better than the place they came from

Table 2 Why don't people participate? Scholemoor

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People have tried and given up because nothing ever changes. They think that they are being asked their views to make the agencies look like they have talked to people without residents' actual views being used to make changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People think that certain people are the 'active' ones. New people are scared of getting involved because of how they might be seen by others or because they feel they are stepping on other people's toes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of skills, confidence and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People think 'this is the way it is'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputation and background can hold people back, for example not feeling welcomed to a meeting because they are associated with a certain group or family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People don't know if they're allowed to go to certain meetings or if they're allowed to get the notes taken at meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not believing that things can change for the better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't be bothered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal hang-ups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are aware of issues and discuss them at length, and often, but do not take steps to change things for the better. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community centre is always shut so people don't know what's going on
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People don't want to or can't do things outside of work (tired, no time) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People have questions, fears or lack of knowledge about what is expected of them if they were to volunteer (e.g. being liable if anything goes wrong)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People want someone else to do it instead of them and think that they will, can or should do it 	

rapidly. People have felt excluded and ignored for too long, or have become the passive targets of government programmes. Long-term and systematic support is needed for local change agents to build relationships, trust, hope and cooperation among residents. It is very important to support these local change agents; we found many individuals committed to giving their time to the estate and many more who would do so if encouraged. There is a need for agencies that are able to respond as people gain more confidence to articulate their views and become more able to think of the needs of the estate as a whole, rather than particular or individual interests.

There is one emblematic tale of participation which tells us a great deal about the difficulties and the potentialities of change on these estates. This is the case of the Ashy, the recreation ground on Scholemoor. The authors of this report have followed the issue concerning the Ashy since 2000, when young boys on the estate learnt that the sports and recreation facility was to be closed down. They read about this in the local newspaper; nobody had bothered to tell them. The boys had only recently gained access to the ground, through the commitment of a local police officer who had secured money from the Home Office to pay for use of the ground and some football

equipment. When we first came across the boys, we found a remarkable group of young men, who, rather than accept the decision or get angry, had become citizens attempting to influence the decision. Mathew Milne, a teenager at the time, was at the heart of these efforts and he wrote to the council. His letter is reproduced on page 42.

Teenage boys as citizens: the first step in the nine-year effort to save the Ashy on Scholemoor estate

Mathew received a curt and formal response from the chief executive. On 29 January 2001 he then wrote a second letter in which he sought a meeting with the chief executive:

We also want to discuss the state of our community at present ie rubbish, empty houses, the bad state of lived in houses on the estate etc. We are a group who do care about our environment and want to be able to be proud of that fact. We can only do this if people like you listen to us and try and work together on the problems. We would welcome a meeting with you and other members of the council who can offer some sort of explanation and maybe offer some resolve to the young people in the area ...

Figure 28 The Ashy, Scholemoor, Louise Kilburn, February 2008



We will happily make you tea or coffee + biscuits.

No one responded to this letter, although we were able eventually to get the chief executive to meet with the boys as part of the Ouseley Commission, which was taking place at the time, on the relationships between communities in Bradford. Yet nothing was done. The predictions in Mathew's first letter came true, and vandalism increased on the estate as bored youngsters got into further mischief and even into crime. Mathew, however, went on campaign. He worked tirelessly and against great odds to recruit other residents

to work with him, including, among others, Tamara McDonald, a former resident and the lead youth worker until November 2009, and Karen Hodgson, a local resident and now community development worker. Mathew also undertook an apprenticeship with the Bradford Development Youth Partnership to become a qualified youth worker and has recently been appointed the new sports development worker for the Ashy on Scholemoor.

Although Mathew was recognised by both the Local Strategic Partnership and the government for his outstanding achievements as a champion of the community, it took him and other resident activists many years to raise the hundreds of thousands of

*LETTER TO THE COUNCIL RE. THE ASHY
FROM MATHEW MILNE, AGED 16 AT THE TIME*

19 December 2000

Re – Scholemoor Recreation Complex

Dear Sir,

I am giving you points on why you shouldn't close Scholemoor Recreation Centre down! Scholemoor Recreation Centre has been open for 17 years; it is a very popular sports centre. It brings in a lot of money and with that money none of it has been spent back on the place, maybe just a few little bodge up jobs.

No attention has been spent on the place this is why it is like it is now. I see no workers working on it outside and it isn't that you have to climb over a wall, fence etc. The place could even pay a security guard. I think the council and recreation need to realise how bad the places are getting and that you need to start spending money on places instead of shutting them down!!

Moving on from the financial side of Scholemoor Recreation, we want to raise your awareness of the knock-on effects of shutting down the recreation centre would cause. Crime is common place in and around the area of Scholemoor estate and we think that shutting down the centre would only encourage more of this crime.

Below are a few positive points of how the recreation centre helps to keep crime at its average level: The recreation ground (outside pitch) creates an area for many youngsters to play football and by doing this, it keeps them off the streets.

The recreation area also encourages youth to socialise and keeping them from boredom, which obviously leads to activities that are somewhat against the law (i.e. mischief, often leading to heated disputes and a hostile environment, theft and criminal damage etc.)

The floodlights that line the recreation centre help to create valuable light needed in and around the central area of the estate, which makes the streets a little safer to walk. We feel that without this added light the estate is very dark, which leads to residents being very paranoid of walking public pathways alone. Without this light thieves and muggers are encouraged to perform their trades openly in the estate.

We are regularly told policing in the city is at a bare minimum and we again feel that with the shutting of the recreation centre more policing would be needed to patrol the area of Scholemoor and more incidents will occur needing police investigation, and the police obviously do not have the funding or resources to be investigating petty crime. The recreation centre does not only create money for Bradford Sports met [sic], but also creates a safer place to live for the residents of Scholemoor.

pounds to finally restore the recreation facilities on the estate. In the meantime, many lost faith in his efforts as decisions were delayed and little seemed to happen. Mathew faced a hard personal struggle to persuade his neighbours to keep supporting

him and believing in his goal. Mathew offers some of the simplest and most poignant words about participation on these estates, that residents can only care for their environment if the powerful listen and work with them to sort out local problems.

Figure 29 The nature trail next to the Ashy, Louise Kilburn, February 2008



Figure 30 New basketball court being built on the Ashy, Allison Blythe, March 2008



Figure 31 'I play here now. It's a good place where everybody goes', Ben, Scholemoor, March 2008 (photo of the Ashy after basketball court put up)



I play here now.
It's a good place where
everybody goes.

5 Conclusions and recommendations to policy-makers

There is no one solution or approach to the problems we have raised in this report. Nor is there a 'quick fix'; turning round the decades of neglect and paternalistic interventionism of the past may take more decades, as will institutional ways of working with residents from housing estates. The origins of many of the problems lie in the broader societal context outlined in chapter one. Factors include the decline of social housing as a respected solution to housing; the 'right to buy' and its effects on the social housing stock; the allocation according to need which has concentrated many social problems on estates and reduced social mobility; the inability of many families to overcome accumulated stresses; the concentration in estate areas of low educational achievement and unemployment but also the transmission of these features through generations, lowering expectations of individual progress; and the sense of worthlessness and low aspirations that society's portrayal of 'being at the bottom' inculcates.

However, the agencies and councils that work on a local level in these communities are also partially responsible. In many cases there is a mismatch between what is espoused in mission statements and policy documents about the relationships they have with communities and the change they bring about in these communities. There are many well meaning and hardworking individuals within agencies and the local authority. Yet we also found evidence that these bodies become part of the problem when they fail to engage in participatory and collaborative ways with communities and listen to residents and community activists as specialists in their own communities. Some of the senior managers within these organisations become complicit when they seek to maintain the status quo or the interests of their organisations, to defend their positions and carry out community consultations aimed primarily at

gathering evidence for the government, funders and internal evaluations. They often think that they know these communities well, but spend little time in the places where their actions have so much impact.

Despite these adverse circumstances, individuals do have choices, and a few exercise them. Some become activists and workers dedicated to building community well-being. But they often leave many others behind; those who have given up because of years of feeling dismissed (at worst) or being nominally placated (at best) by outside agency workers and council staff; those who are unable to make the big leap needed to overcome histories of disadvantage and stress, or who are victims of violence as families are not able to interrupt the inter-generational transmissions of abuse.

We found in our two estates examples of all the above. The patterns are clear. We found a strong connection between the chaos of people's lives; their lack of self-respect and confidence; the fears and anxieties they bear on a daily basis and their resentment of those who occasionally rise above it; their aggression towards the 'strange' (with conversely huge amounts of empathy for the vulnerable and those who fall on hard times); the blame they lay on incomers whether they be problem families 'dumped' in their midst, or ethnic minorities, migrant workers and asylum seekers; and prejudices and sometimes racist attitudes borne out of disadvantaged positions and narrow horizons and experiences. Hostility is often fuelled by petty things, such as rubbish, often resolvable by efforts to explain to newcomers how refuse collection works, and other aspects of estate life. More organised racism is rare, but prejudices are present and can be exploited. Generally people are disconnected from political life, whether right, left or centre, and do not know who to turn to in order to improve their

lives, having had few positive reactions to their previous attempts to engage with local agencies and council meetings. The community centres and youth workers play a positive role here, but, as we have shown, they need longer-term funding and direct support from managers in their organisations so that they can use their own knowledge and experience to meet the communities' immediate and longer-term needs.

Although no one solution or approach can overcome these challenges, some conclusions can be drawn. Our initial conclusions were put forward to a final feedback workshop we organised in February 2009 for policy-makers, agency workers, practitioners and residents who had participated in our research. The discussion confirmed many of our findings but also added new insights. It is possible to begin serious debate about the challenges facing traditionally white estates, but residents must be supported to develop their own analysis. They then need to be able to share this with the agencies, policy-makers and the council, who must take them seriously and be willing to enter into a discussion with openness and a willingness to hear, learn and change their actions. For change to happen, agencies and policy-makers (as well as residents themselves) must recognise the capacity of residents to change their lives and their own communities and the fact that they must be part of the solution and not just seen as the problem.

Notes

- 1 All quotes used have been kept anonymous. We have not dated them, but they come from conversations and photovoice sessions between October 2008 and February 2009.

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Braithwaite and Guardhouse

Braithwaite and Guardhouse Community Association (BGCA)

Community development worker

Keith Thompson Centre

Braithwaite People's Association

Town councillors

Two of the three present Keighley West

councillors and one former ward councillor

Incommunities (formerly Aire-Wharfe Housing)

Integrated Youth Services

Keighley Police

Our Lady of Victories Primary School

Guardhouse Primary School

Sure Start Children's Centre
The Rainbow Centre
The Luncheon Club (over-60s group)
The New Church

Scholemoor

Scholemoor Beacon
Community development worker
The three Great Horton Ward councillors
Scholemoor Community Centre
Scholemoor Youth Service
Bradford South Area Office (council)
Incommunities
Integrated Youth Services
Play Services
Bradford South Police
Lidget Green Primary School
Lidget Green Sure Start Children's Centre

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