

Chapter 3

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Power

Me, class and politics – notes from the wall at Laugharne:

Class is ... more than Marx's definition of relationship to the means of production. Class involves your behaviour, your basic assumptions about life. Your experience (determined by your class) validates those assumptions, how you are taught to behave, what you expect from others, your concept of a future, how you understand problems and solve them, how you think, feel and act.

Rita Mae Brown, *The Last Straw*, (quoted in bell hooks, *Class Matters*).

Judi: You have your Marxist informed view of the world and your notions that to shift things like important practices of power at a macro level, (which we can theorise at a macro level), need the enacted micro practices... You have your eye firmly on the political issues...

I think the other thing that's so important is that you are working within a broader analysis of politics of practices with values, as you were just saying, and you're using your talents and your positioning to be able to enact different forms of social organisation to occur than the predominant patterns which would most often fill the space. And standing on the threshold of working in an alternative paradigm where in the practice, in the lived practice you do, actually that's a demanding piece of work, and to be able to think about one's abilities to do that, one's life training for doing that but also one's practices and skills of doing it and reflect on them, is I think important.

(Reflective conversation with supervisor, March 2004).

In discussing my approaches to inquiry I have sought to be clear that the exercise of power within society affects both the contexts in which I work, and my approach to inquiry and facilitation. This chapter looks at the dimensions of power and the way that issues of power have affected the development of my practice. The chapter starts with a section on political context and power, particularly the ways in which the state's relationship to communities has changed over 40 years, and how this has affected the communities and the issues I work with. I include a brief opening section for each decade which outlines what was happening for me at that time.

I then go on to write about some key ideas and issues relating to power; I briefly outline theories of power which have influenced me, including the scope for empowerment.

As I write this chapter I occasionally include a (boxed) commentary on the way in which my development and writing of the section tracks my learning journey.

Introduction to 'Political context and power' section

Elsewhere in this thesis I have stressed the importance for my practice as a facilitator of understanding how I am *situated*; both by my biography and by being socially, historically and culturally situated. This being so I felt that the political context in which I have worked and continue to work was an important aspect and relevant part of this thesis, illustrating as it does the wider issues of power.

This section is about politics and the state – including the state's relationship to communities and individuals and how this has changed over the last 40 years. I describe how this political context has affected me (in Palatino 12pt), and so my professional practice, and ultimately how it relates to my learning journey.

I describe here my *lived* experience and the political and social changes over the 40 years, and it is this which has made me the person and practitioner that I am. I have been formed by this period – both personally and my practice, emotionally and intellectually. The feelings described here are the fuel that drives the engine of my practice. In describing these times I have become conscious of how what are lived-through seminal events for me are mere history to others and not shared by younger people working in the field. I wish to join up my situatedness and my evolving practice in this account.

The process of writing this section

I explored writing about this political context eighteen months ago, looking back on the early draft of this section (in 2005) I find that it illustrates an earlier writing style¹⁰⁷ - angry, impassioned, and really rather a rant at times. It exposes the rage and passion which motivated my move to work in these settings (with communities, in public service) and to be part of them; the *outrage* which transformed feeling into action, which puts my *rage* at social injustice *out* into the world in the form of my facilitation practice¹⁰⁸.

In learning journey terms this writing comes from my Tigers of Wrath moment (despite having been written in the last two years), pushing through into this current Pig and Deer moment. Earlier (when I only had access to my Tigers or Unicorn moments) I would have been either caught up inside the rage or apologising for my angry outbursts. Now I

¹⁰⁷ That is a style belonging to an early stage in my learning journey.

¹⁰⁸ I had a friend Ian who used the term 'outrage' well, his voice rose in tone and volume as he said it, and I notice now that he was not looking grim as he spoke but there was a brightness and almost a mischief in his face. The thrill of battle; 'I was outraged' normally began a story of a battle he'd had with some errant bureaucrat or supplier, and the story was an active one, Ian was not one to be deterred by opposition, he acted his rage into action to change the situation.

can start to value the outrage as a fuel which energises and drives me, and, because it is not locked away and incoherent but is expressed I can inquire into it and with it. In this way I have worked *with* the rage of my Tigers moment and the insecurities of my Unicorn moment to produce a different understanding of myself in the world and my ability to influence through my professional practice as a researcher and the author of this thesis.

I notice the way the issues and events described in this section mirror the more personal issues and events for me, and how the macro and the micro come together. It has been difficult to write, it feels like I'm trying to mix oil and water, and I'm seldom successful in achieving an emulsion. I think this struggle has produced something which is also hard to read as it reflects the experience of writing it in its unevenness, and I look back on the writing with some pain; finding it congested and incoherent in its anger. I'm disappointed and initially want to reject it, move on. But the challenge is to understand it, to identify the journey over the 18 months from incoherent and insecure anger to outrage which communicates out and into action.

I have felt very insecure when writing it, despite the fact that at times my writing has flowed hot and fast. Once I have stopped writing and it has cooled down I have been uncomfortable with my expression of my own knowing, unconfident, not least due to my largely autodidactic roots and approach, and I notice this has led me to lean heavily on the writing of others; so you will see great chunks of others' writing which I now think of as providing 'flaps' of text which threaten to obscure what I want to say, so that only the odd sharply pointed tail of *my words* shows from under the flap, and that often feels condensed and congested. The writing of this section has in its (micro) execution mirrored the (macro) issues of voice, who gets heard, confidence and self esteem.

In October 2004 I wrote:

I started to re-read the section I had written for my thesis on power and the context in which I work.

I'd worked on this section on and off between February and August 2003. Not so long ago I thought. I knew it had become a bit of a 'dump' for ideas and quotes about power and context, but I also remembered some passages I'd written with passion, I remember now getting hot with passion; the memories of the Thatcher years, the awful double binds strangling community groups as they strained to stay authentic to keep their integrity when the only funding available demanded more and more from them that felt unconnected to residents' needs or wants. The pain of the dispossessed, the acutely insecure, not wanted in the new world moulded by the Tories. My anger and pain at the failure of the Labour Party to reverse the discrimination, to make good the losses, to have the wit or the will to see what was being done to some people through accident of birth.

I can remember the heat of writing, the meeting of the pessimism of the intellect and the optimism of the will (Gramsci)¹⁰⁹. Because the words tumbled out over each other I felt there was a powerful coherence that would communicate, surely? At the same time I knew I had looked (too much?) to others for supporting information and opinion, and felt I was looking out from behind a barricade of others' writing, struggling to get my own view and needing to shout to be heard.

I didn't trust my view or my voice; I didn't know how to complain for myself. I was looking to others to sense-make for me, not because I couldn't but because I didn't think anyone would take notice of me¹¹⁰.

And again on 28.2.05 I wrote:

I notice every time I come to deal with this 'power' section I can't hold the connections between the wider picture and the points I wish to make.

I get lost into the (more general) political and lose a sense of what I wanted to say. This happens even when I try to 'join things up' by including my history for the period alongside the political points I'm making. It also happens when I try to look back on what I wrote from this later point in my learning journey – after a while I just find myself rewriting the stuff, rather than reflecting on it.

I also notice how reluctant I am to ask for help – what am I afraid of? Do I think Judi (my tutor) will 'make me' take things out, or will rubbish what I've written, or give up on me?

I notice I veer between being fired up (made angry) by the content, and depressed by it, all the energy draining away. No other part of this thesis has taken so long to write, and for so little effect.

I want to walk away from it (the chapter), it feels as if it can never be complete, will always lie there unfinished and reproachful. In this way I suppose it mirrors the struggle I had to practice as a social worker *and* be true to my values, and later the depressing leeching away of values in the NHS work as the organisation made it clear it did not wish to integrate the ethic of participation, but simply to adopt sufficient appearance of doing so to get by without challenge to the power holders.

¹⁰⁹ Antonio Gramsci famously called for "pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will": the one the spur to action, the other the resilience to believe that such action will result in meaningful change even in the face of adversity.

Or as Bonaro Overstreet wrote in a poem subtitled 'to anyone who doubts the worth of doing anything if you can't do everything':

Stubborn Ounces

You say the little efforts that I make
will do no good: they never will prevail
to tip the hovering scale
where justice hangs in the balance.

I don't think I ever thought they would,
but I am prejudiced beyond debate
in favour of my right to choose which side
shall feel the stubborn ounces of my weight.

Overstreet B W (1955) *Hands Laid Upon the Wind*. New York: W W Norton.

¹¹⁰As a child I was viewed as 'too much to cope with', overly demanding when my mother's attention was elsewhere. She was struggling to make ends meet on a single low wage, to cope with my father's moods and his anger, to control a child who was starting to be demanding rather than compliant.

Don't complain was the message.

On 4.3.05 I wrote after a session with SM¹¹¹:

I had dreamt of holidaying with friends, and of Fred pulling something wooden out of water (a stream, the sea?), and as I watch him behind me I hear a voice shouting 'right, right', and then I *really* notice the voice and I hear 'write, write' – an injunction to get on with writing this. I recognise the voice shouting, it's the voice used by Bruce Naumann in his video work showing two figures, both dressed like jesters, one reversed by being both upside down and in the colours of his clothing (red for green etc). The two figures are both jumping up and down as if in a tantrum shouting 'no, no, no...' Such rage.

I start to appreciate that not having my emotions 'met' as a child has left a sort of disconnection in my mind – there was no dialogue, and now we seek to establish a dialogue between us (SM and me) that can enable me to grow these connections. There is something about writing this part of my thesis, the anger and sadness it raises in me, which highlights my need to have my emotion met through dialogue with another. And writing alone, which I have been doing now for some time, has meant I have lost a sense of dialogue; I'm not speaking about the work and I can't imagine my reader (or I become afraid of them). I need to re-establish a sense of dialogue with my reader, the idea of co-creating this together. Speaking (writing) to myself alone leads me into old frightening territory, isolated and very insecure. I start to cling to the writing of others because I lose faith in my own, and so lose a sense of myself.

The process of reading – establishing dialogue

I have written from my frustration and anger (at injustice), and from my grief for what has been lost, and what could have been yet is not to be. It has only been through a process of speaking these feelings to my supervisor and my CARPP tutorial group that I have been able to start to establish a sense of a sort of dialogue-with-another, I need to feel that the writing is 'met' by being held and responded to. I intend that this process continues with you, my reader, and your response to both the factual matter described and to the stories, both of which I hope will help to make theory come to life in the reading and responding process as they resonate with you.

I'm including this writing here to illustrate this (current) writing, which draws its impulse from my Tigers moment, and me working with it now, questioning it.

¹¹¹ My therapist.

Political context and power

Freedom is not merely the opportunity to do as one pleases; neither is it merely the opportunity to choose between set alternatives. Freedom is, first of all, the chance to formulate the available choices, to argue over them - and then, the opportunity to choose. C. Wright Mills.

If I am not for myself, who is for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when? Hillel, 1st century. Mishnah14.

What I want to say about power and the contexts within which I work is rather multi layered:

- o I wish to include some descriptions or definitions of terms which I will use throughout the thesis e.g. community, empowerment
- o I want to paint a picture of some of the changes in and influences on the context in which I work, particularly the process of 'rolling back the state' by which I mean the changes in the underpinning beliefs about, and changes made to reduce, the welfare state, and how these affect the communities and organisations I work with
- o I want to show that these changes affect me – I want you to know where I stand, which values and beliefs I hold in relation to the welfare state, community, the individual and empowerment, and how my beliefs and values affect the way I practice as a facilitator
- o And I want to make connections as I write to theories of power including Foucault, Gramsci, Lukes and Starhawk.

I will sometimes quote from my original (2003) draft of this section to illustrate my learning journey as a practitioner, I will include these learning journey-related extracts in boxes.

The debates about community, empowerment and participation have come out from the shadows they previously occupied, largely the agenda of groups of activists and community workers, and into the bright light of parliamentary debate and international summits of world powers. However down on the street (still in relative shadow) some things have changed very little. I am interested here to describe what I see happening on a political level, and the effects that has on the groups, communities and organisations I work with. I am also very interested to understand how this political, social and cultural change relates to my practice, to the ways in which I work: my awarenesses, how to stay alert (and what to stay alert to), how I am affected, whether through personal 'stuff' being reactivated or more directly, how I sustain myself in the process, and how my clients can be sustained.

This (the street) has been the context for my work for the last 25 years, in my changing roles as social worker, community development worker, advocate, planning and participation manager, facilitator, researcher and consultant. My *Practice Accounts* seek to join my thinking about the political context in which I work to my more recent practice with my clients. In this thesis I am only going to be able to offer tiny snapshots of these work situations to illustrate how the political and cultural pressures affect me and those I work with and for, but I feel it is very important that this backdrop of institutional state power, and the hegemony and cultural pressures that temper the power of individuals and communities is at least touched on broadly here. Certain aspects will then come into focus in other areas of the thesis.

Working definitions

I often work with organisations whose role is community development or community organising. Sometimes these organisations are my clients (e.g. GNPN – see Children’s Commission and Governance practice accounts), and sometimes they are the organisations my clients wish to partner with (e.g. LPT – see *Practice Accounts*) or consult (e.g. LGA – see *Practice Accounts*). At other times I work for voluntary or public sector organisations that are providing services to communities and/or individuals (e.g. local authorities, charities or NHS Trusts – see Diabetic User Group practice account for an example). Empowerment, community, inclusion and participation are all issues for of my clients, and for me as a practitioner.

Empowerment

The power of the powerless lies in their combination.

Vaclav Havel, 1978.

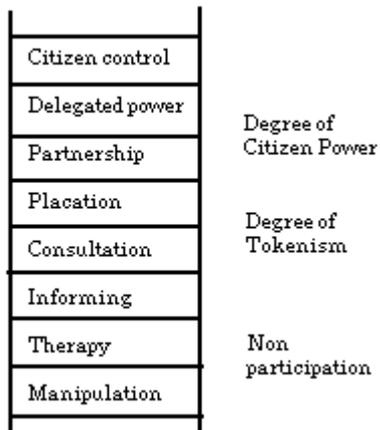
According to Steve Skinner (1997:39), there are three different definitions of ‘empowerment’ in the context of working with communities and voluntary organisations:

- a process of increasing influence and control
- a psychological experience and
- a process of analysing and understanding the causes of deprivation and discrimination.

I prefer to think slightly differently of them as the three *levels* of empowerment on which one can be working at any one time, indeed the most satisfying work is done when all three levels are in play together. Although these descriptions come from a community development context, participatory research too requires that change at all three levels *must* be occurring (Gaventa and Cornwall, 2001).

To enlarge a little on these definitions:

Empowerment as a process of increasing influence and control – In this approach, empowerment can be seen as a process of delegating power, enabling a group to have more direct control over its own resources. A further development of this, within a ‘ladder of participation’¹¹²(see Fig 3.) is where the group has an increasing degree of influence over decisions concerning not just its own resources but the allocation of resources and services locally (Wilcox D, 1994).



An example from my practice where this element of empowerment was particularly significant is the FairShares Timebank (see Governance practice account).

Fig 3. Arnstein's Ladder of Participation

Empowerment as a psychological experience – Here empowerment is defined as an enabling process that leads to the development of a strong sense of personal effectiveness. In this approach, practical empowerment could include efforts to remove the feeling of powerlessness and involve elements that specifically build up confidence and self esteem (Hopson & Scally, 1981). An example from my practice where this element of empowerment was particularly significant is the Diabetic Service Users Group (see DUG practice account).

Empowerment as a process of analysing and understanding the causes of deprivation and discrimination – This approach takes inspiration from popular education initiatives developed in many Third World countries, often influenced by the work of Paulo Freire. It can include exploring the dynamics of discrimination and how people internalise negative

¹¹² The ladder of participation was originally devised by Sherry Arnstein as a way of understanding levels on which participation was operating, or had potential to operate, between planning authorities and communities in the US. It has been much adapted and revised but is still common currency for those working for community participation and involvement. One of the biggest dangers is that it is sometimes used simplistically, that is that organisations feel they must aspire to the highest possible levels of the ladder (devolved power), which are not often possible or even desirable at least in the short term. In this way those making good incremental progress can feel failures and be tempted to devolve power at a faster rate than their organisations or the communities are able to develop the infrastructure to manage the power (see LPT practice account).

messages about their status and rights (Eade and Williams, 1995). Examples from my own practice where this element of empowerment was particularly significant are the Children's Commission, and the Stroud Community Planning Conference (see Practice Accounts).

Community

The definition [of community] is a shifting one as differing interests manipulate a term with multiple meanings to their own ends (Purdue et al, 2000: 2).

The term 'community' has been a political football over the last two decades. Later in this section I will go on to consider what we can learn from an understanding of the recent (the last 40 years) history of government relations with 'community', how this has been influenced by the growth of the power of global capital, free market thinking and individualisation, and how this enacts the political theories of writers such as Foucault and Gramsci. This sets the political context for most of my work.

The term 'community' can mean many things to different people. In the context of my work it is usually a geographical community e.g. Stroud Community Planning Conference, a community of interest e.g. people with diabetes, or what Jonathan Gosling (1996) calls 'a community of common sympathy' e.g. members of a timebank. However people seldom belong to only one community even when drawn together in a project – for example the Governance project¹¹³ participants were timebankers (a community of common sympathy) but also lived in the same geographical area (a community of ascription and geography) and were organised together (involved in community development and self management).

In each of these definitions, communities are arenas for organisation; of social networks, of social identity, of interest groups, of a social contract of rights and obligations (an ethic of justice and care). The community is seen as a summation of conscious goals. People in a community can identify a common interest and organise around it. More traditionally communities were seen as places of shared values – communities mediate disputes and enforce behaviours¹¹⁴.

Jonathan Gosling¹¹⁵recognises this complexity and points out that

Images of community are necessarily diffuse and ambiguous. Sometimes these images are crystallised into ideals, and act as ideological touchstones for political programmes. "Community" is, in reality, too complex, idiosyncratic and laden with unconscious

¹¹³ See *Practice Accounts*.

¹¹⁴ For a more in depth discussion of different types of community see *Appendix G*.

¹¹⁵ At that time a Senior Fellow at Lancaster University Management School, having previously founded the 'Newham Conflict and Change Project'; specialising in conflict transformation in the East End of London.

meanings to be captured in any single, theoretical or descriptive frame (1996: 145).

He is observing a trend for communities to be expected to become more organised. He looks at these trends in the light of attachment theory, for membership of a community is about belonging, security and attachment – as non membership is about exclusion from an 'in group', alienation and insecurity.

I attended the original Politics of Attachment conference at the Tavistock Clinic, London, in March 1995 from which arose the idea of the book of the same name. As a conference attendee I found myself excited by the bringing together of political science and developmental psychology; I was familiar with aspects of both but had often felt personally and professionally isolated when bringing understandings from one discipline to the other in my work in recent years (post working in social work and community development). Yet I was very conscious of the alienation and insecurity in the groups with whom I was working in 1995 as Planning and Participation Manager for a health authority, it was part of my role to find ways to engage all publics, including 'marginal people'¹¹⁶ in communities which were themselves marginalised and excluded. I was aware of the social costs of post-industrialism¹¹⁷ and the free market ethics of the right wing Tory government¹¹⁸; and the consequent loss of social capital (trust, good will, relationships). Margaret Thatcher may have maintained that there was 'no such thing as society' but I was aware that people were social animals, and that you ignore, or worse work to damage, the connections of relationship between us at your peril.

The conference was a real refresher for me; I was feeling weary from trying to work *against* the flow in a Tory reformed NHS and unable to find an authentic way to work with the flow. I might be a 'member' of the management of this organisation (the health authority) but I had little sense of belonging and felt insecure myself. From my own professional background I knew that if there was to be a better approach taken (which felt a possibility at that time as New Labour was seriously gearing up for possible victory at the next election) then there needed to be connections made between political and social science. As the Labour MP and then shadow cabinet minister Patricia Hewitt put it in her preface to the book *The Politics of Attachment*:

The rich tradition of developmental psychology and attachment theory – particularly well developed in this country since the 1950s – brings to

¹¹⁶ *Marginal people*, described by Harman as: the unemployed, the underemployed, the disenfranchised – people who lack what traditional society provided, a sense of belonging and of having a recognised role. Harman W.W. *Rethinking the Central Institutions of Society*, in *Futures*. 1993:1063-70

¹¹⁷ By which I mean the collective effect of globalisation, individualisation, and the economic and social changes.

¹¹⁸ In power in the UK since 1979 (the year I started my training as a social worker) until 1997.

an impoverished political debate the fundamental insight that we are, each of us, necessarily social beings, individuals created through relationships with others. The need for attachment, for an identity rooted in belonging, is about as far from 'no such thing as society' as it is possible to be (1996: xv).

Inclusion and attachment

Throughout this section I will be referring to inclusion and attachment in relation to a sense of membership and belonging to a community or group and the consequent sense of security experienced; or the lack of this membership and sense of belonging causing insecurity and alienation.

We may be more used to hearing *attachment* used in the context of individual's relationships (Bowlby), however I suggest it can also be applied to a group of individuals' relationship to a community, state or society. Membership, belonging, and security are normally considered desirable states, and attachment a positive experience (but may be more ambivalent). Most people desire to belong, choose to be members, and are made to feel insecure if they have insufficient attachment. They desire a recognised role in society. Such a (membership) relationship is a form of commitment, without which the good will and social capital upon which social order is dependent breaks down. My work has often explored the sense of alienation experienced by individuals and groups and has sought to find ways to build a (different) sense of inclusion, connection and commitment as a prerequisite for their empowerment.

To feel included we need to feel that we are members of a group and have a role. We have *some* power to assert our own membership of a community of geography and communities of interest, but in the case of many groupings membership is not a status we can choose for ourselves but one 'awarded' to us by others – either within or outside the group. Others judge whether we have the attributes of the group or community, in this way other people's beliefs and assumptions/ prejudices about us decide our membership. Some of these groupings which are ascribed to us may be desirable (e.g. being perceived to be a good neighbour) but other ascriptions can be pejorative and excluding from a more desirable group (e.g. being perceived to be a poor parent).

Not all groups are ones to which we want to belong. There has been a tendency to project onto some communities (and their members) a whole set of negative assumptions and undesirable characteristics which the more powerful part of society would prefer to disown (an example of this is so-called 'sink' estates, where whole communities are perceived to

be hopeless, helpless, feckless non-contributors to society¹¹⁹, as opposed to the 'hardworking families' identified by politicians as worthy of support). When this happens members of this community are further disempowered as it is others and not they themselves who characterise and define them (no wonder they may feel hopeless). In this way a whole group or community can be excluded from society and experience insecurity and alienation. It's worth noting that it is particularly difficult to work with these communities towards greater empowerment because *others* define them.

It's possible to conclude that it is a very insecure society in which we live, with the means of ensuring their own sense of belonging taken out of the hands of a significant proportion of the population most of the time, and for the rest no absolute security. As Gosling points out when writing about organisations, but which is a point which he might equally well make about the wider society in the UK in the early 21st century:

One might elaborate a clear distinction between being included and 'belonging', on the one hand, and excluded and alienated on the other. However every exclusion is by implication an inclusion of an 'out-group', even if one has not selected it as such; and inclusion in even formal institutions is insecure. It is as if one of the criteria for membership of a (post) modern organisation is the constant anticipation of withdrawal, an abiding ambivalence about belonging; an overt, heroic, tragic autonomy (1996: 149).

In theories of power this links to the dominant discourse, or in Gramsci's terms an hegemony – the status quo of frameworks of social, political and economic power which come to be accepted as non-contestable and legitimate despite not being in the interest of some groups¹²⁰, and Foucault's equivalent theory of 'consent', in which less powerful members of society ascribe to a hierarchy which is seldom in their favour (see later in section for discussion).

Participation

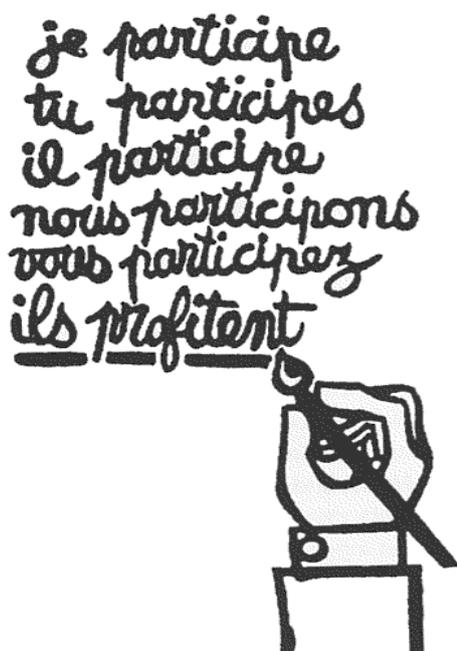
I am using the term participation to refer to a wide spectrum of activity which ranges from giving information, to communities taking the lead with traditional power holders acting in a supporting role. (This spectrum is well summarised in Sherry Arnstein's ladder of participation Fig 3). The

¹¹⁹ This projection is demonstrated in the number of TV programmes which focus on working class communities and individuals caricaturing them as feckless. For example the caricatures in the currently popular comedy Little Britain, which specialises in holding up to ridicule sharply observed and out of context pieces of behaviour clearly located in specific working class groups.

¹²⁰ Gramsci identified this when he described his concept of a *hegemony* being when the intellectual, moral and philosophical leadership provided by the class ... which is ruling, successfully achieves its objective of providing the fundamental outlook for the whole society (Bocock 1986:63¹²⁰, cited in Stewart Clegg 1989).

terms *empowerment* and *community participation* have become increasingly widely used, in both a local and a global context. As the global and more local recessions and subsequent restructurings hit states and continents there has been an increasing interest expressed in promoting community participation as a means of enhancing the development and recovery process and 'rolling back of the state'¹²¹, by governments and a wide range of development organisations. These range from the World Bank, the World Health Organisation and the IMF, to small NGOs and, in Britain the NHS and local government.

Over the last decade demonstrating community participation has become a prerequisite for many sources of government funding and consequently 'consultation' and 'participation' have become fashionable words as the state moves from a consumerism driven approach (Conservative values) towards 'active citizenship' (Socialist values). However in the UK the move towards participation and active citizenship needs to be seen in the context of continuing strong central government controls, particularly through target setting and monitoring regimes. Active citizenship has been less in the cause of full self determination than in the cause of pursuing the communitarian influenced New Labour agenda, which stresses community members' responsibilities over their rights¹²².



On a more positive note our (private and public sector) institutions are starting to appreciate that a lack of accountability breeds a lack of legitimacy and trust, and that society is now so complex that, to be effective, a range of stakeholders need to be involved in planning and decision making. There is however a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process. This difference is brilliantly captured in a poster painted

¹²¹ Rolling back the state is the term given to free-market, neo liberal, new right strategies to reduce state spending on welfare and health provision, and to increase dependence on private sector and self-help or NGO provision. Strategies initiated under a Tory government, which we have seen continued under the current Labour government in the UK e.g. Foundation Hospitals, and the selling off of local authority housing stock.

¹²² The New Labour government have been influenced by the communitarian ideas of Etzioni (Etzioni A. (1993) *The Spirit of Community*. New York. Crown) which emphasise reciprocal responsibilities and duties (as opposed to an ethic of care), as well as the thinking of others such as Robert Putnam¹²² (2000) on the revival of 'community'.

in 1968 by French students to explain the student-worker rebellion (Fig 4).

Fig 4. French student poster.

In English, "I participate, you participate, he participates, we participate, you all participate...they profit". Anonymous student, France, 1968.

The poster highlights the fundamental point that participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. It allows the power-holders to claim that all sides were considered, but makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit. It maintains the status quo.

The espoused values of power sharing and the transfer of power that underpin increasing participation are hard to sustain in use. I'm reminded of the activist slogan '*power can only be taken, not given*'. The temptation to retreat into the more comfortable distribution of power that constitutes the status quo is huge, and old patterns of behaviour reassert themselves when people and organisations are stressed. Real intent to increase participation needs to be embedded within organisations, and this requires changes in infrastructure and in ways of thinking and behaving – organisational development. It's a fundamental cultural change not a fringe activity.

Despite this new forms of participation and engagement are springing up and some people are becoming more directly involved in their communities and organisations; in their planning, their management and their impact on the environment. However there is a risk that it will be the usual loud and confident voices that are heard unless the approaches to participation are specifically designed to seek out and support the quieter voices and those without the confidence that they can effect change. As Zygmunt Bauman (1999:156) warns:

Civil society ... has its splendours and its less prepossessing proclivities. These are much more difficult to separate than state and society proved to be. The political indifference and apathy of the citizens and the state retreating on its obligation to promote the common good are civil society's unpleasant, yet legitimate children.

Yet participation is crucial in creating social capital; the network of social relationships that ties us into our communities, creating social norms and a sense of mutuality and reciprocity (Putnam). It is crucial because of the decline in many of the traditional forms of civic engagement.

When I drafted this section in 2003 I included this as an illustration of superficial approaches to participation. I include it here again in 2004 because the points it makes are still valid and pertinent: capacity building still needs to recognise the situatedness of peoples' experience and the basic survival needs for housing etc which need to be met before people are in a position to engage in what can otherwise feel like abstract activities such as learning (Maslow).

What I also notice reading the piece now is the final paragraph – my scepticism about the awareness of the reporter. It speaks my Tigers moment anger; explosive and untempered.

In 2003 I wrote:

Experience of the deprivation caused by disempowerment of communities within the political and economic system is necessarily situated¹²³. The current talk of ‘capacity building for community participation’ means little or nothing to local people unless other needs are met in parallel. And at the same time short term capacity building efforts have proved unsuccessful, and governmental short term targets for the organisations (NGOs and local government) tasked with effecting change in the form of regeneration of areas, militates against a longer term investment in capacity building, which we might recognise as conscientization and can have ongoing effects for communities, and all those who engage with them in dialogue.

“We need support without an agenda”, a wise person from a poor community in north Wales told me. “It’s hard to have your capacity built when there’s damp running down your walls and no smiles in your life. I think I would rather have the capacity of my house sorted so it’s liveable, then maybe I can sort all the other capacity stuff out” (Angela Elniff Larsen, *New Start magazine*. 31st January 2003).

What I notice here, apart from the obvious, is the resident’s namelessness – and wonder whether its indicative of another superficial approach to empowerment that leaves her nameless, without identity, as well as frustrated by being caught inside a programme determined by the priorities of others, others who do not have damp running down their walls, *and* reported by those who have little or no experience of what it means to be without voice or name. She may be anonymous for confidentiality reasons, but I have my doubts.

What interests and concerns me

Regeneration initiatives, building economic *and* building social capital, have tended to parachute professionals driven by external agendas into local communities. However a sensitive approach to building social capital has the potential to work more with existing local agendas through accessing local knowledge and supporting communities to build infrastructure such as community organisations and other interest groups. This latter approach can fit well with community development values, particularly in relation to empowerment. However the communitarian approach (Etzioni, 1995) also has the potential to shift responsibilities inappropriately onto the already vulnerable, and to transfer risks from the state sector to the community and voluntary sector¹²⁴.

As working with such communities is the context for much of my work I am interested in how one facilitates the balance between identifying community agendas and supporting community-led action for change –

¹²³ In this instance I’m using ‘situated’ to mean the experience is specific to time/history or geographical place, and class/hierarchy.

¹²⁴ There has been criticism of this approach in the regeneration press (e.g. *New Start magazine*), by think tanks (e.g. Demos and New Economics Foundation) and by some academics (e.g. Taylor, Craig and Mayo).

the community agenda, and the government agenda – which appears to seek to devolve as many services as possible whilst retaining considerable power and responsibility for system issues centrally, through setting targets and centrally controlling funding streams, with a view to saving money and reducing the risk to the state.

When not working directly in communities and NGOs I often work with public sector organisations (e.g. NHS Primary Care Trusts and local authorities) who are seeking greater stakeholder and community involvement and struggling to be more transparent and accessible (as well as maintaining their statutory authority for decision making and advice – a difficult balance). At the same time I see community based organisations wanting more influence over services and the ways they are delivered, and in some cases wanting to be funded to deliver these services themselves when they believe that this offers them added value e.g. self help and affinity groups, peer counselling projects, community owned and delivered care services.

Public sector contracts to provide services threatens the NGOs' advocacy and campaigning roles; in the contract culture the focus has to be upon those services specified in the contract, rather than upon broader 'watchdog' functions, let alone the advocacy and campaigning functions which historically have been central to genuine community participation. There is a concern about what happens if these functions fall into disuse as NGOs learn to partner rather than to protest. And a fear that if this happens the community sense of ownership of a project like Gloucestershire Neighbourhood Projects Network (GNPN) will start to fade, that active and conscientized community members may become passive service-users. This is not the transformation many of us have been working for.

The risk is that the agendas and the approaches have become blurred, that some on both 'sides' see devolution of many services to community organisations as highly desirable, but that 'responsibilities' come to count for more than rights and entitlements and potentially empowering situations start to become exploitative and only tokenistic, however well intended. As a facilitator in this sector I need to maintain a critical awareness which includes a scanning of issues at an individual, group, and wider political scale.

I now go on to describe in a series of pieces the last 40 years. I tell you where I came from and how I interpret the sociological context in which I'm situated. I show you how my life and my professional journeys and the constituencies I've worked with make certain parts/aspects of this period figural and important. In doing so I am writing both to *testify* and to *evoke* (see section on autoethnography). I had to inquire to create these pieces; with myself, with the literature, and in conversation with others.

Rolling back the state and other things

This section looks in parallel at what was going on for me personally and what was happening in the relationships between the state, communities and individuals across four decades.

I include this section because community work and working with communities is where my practice has its roots¹²⁵, and because I believe with Waddington that;

The future destiny of community work, like its present and its past, will be inextricably bound up with that of the state.

The headings for the decades between the 1970s and 1990s are taken from an analysis by Marilyn Taylor of the roles taken by community development organisations during this period; Opposition, Defence, Agency and Substitution. I have added 'optimism' to describe the 1960s.

¹²⁵ Social work and Community Development have a long history of schism, however I was lucky enough to train within an institution which still valued community organising as an aspect of social work practice. The history of the relationship between social work and community development in the UK is summarised well by Steve Clarke in his book *Social Work as Community Development: A management model for social change*. Avebury, Aldershot: 1996.

Optimism, the 1960s

The 1960s - Being a wild thing

The 1960s and early 70s was a heady time in which to grow up; a time of political and personal consciousness-raising for me, and it seemed for many around me.



I often felt like Max in Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*.

I found it frustrating to be still at school as the revolutions seethed around me; I wanted to be in Paris and Prague, I wanted to be listening to Joseph Beuys. But I became one of the early members of the school section of the National Union of Students, demonstrated against the Springboks rugby tour, and I made it to London in '68 for the Grosvenor square demonstrations against American involvement in the Vietnam War. I regularly walked tens of miles to raise money for starving people in the third world, and read a confusing mixture of Marx, Mao and Mahatma Ghandi.

I struggled as a bright working class kid in a grammar school; struggled with authority and mostly lost the fight, struggled with my identity and mostly got confused, displaced. Left home at 14, dulled the pain by getting stoned while I passed nine 'O' levels. I was hungry for learning and autonomy, hungry for influence and community.

At the same time I did a lot of drugs and sex, listened to a lot of music, read voraciously (key texts re transition: Peake, Alain Fournier), drew and painted for pleasure, acted in political street theatre, crashed parties, threw parties, was thrown out of parties, and hitched hundreds of miles to see friends, theatre, art, landscape and to listen to bands. Life was very rich; both bitter and sweet.

The 1960s had filled those working in communities with high hopes of communities coming into their power, and of power holders learning

about community. Both the totalitarian Soviet model and the 'never had it so good' paternalistic governments in the US and the UK were challenged by the Prague spring, civil rights movements, and feminism.

Here in the UK, the government funded the National Community Development Project (CDP) in an attempt to tackle the deprivation which persisted despite the growth of the welfare state. Community work flourished in the UK in the 1960s, this was a time when there was an almost universal acceptance of the principle of state responsibility for its citizens' welfare. Those who had been educated by the state now had expectations of the state and its role, and a political consciousness shaped by the revolutionary movements in Europe and the civil rights movement in the US.

Community organisations were formed with explicit agendas to challenge and tackle the welfare state, particularly in the form of the local state; local government, which was still growing in its influence and remit at this time. Their aim was to make the state work better on behalf of particular communities where there was deprivation, disadvantage and social disorganisation, and the foci included the built environment, homelessness, play or benefits.

In response to fears of more of the urban unrest exhibited in the racial tensions and social unrest of the mid 60s the government established the first state programmes to combat deprivation in the UK, including the Urban Programme (1968), Educational Priority Areas and the Community Development Project (1968-1973) was established. There were even early examples of local authorities involving local residents in the planning process (social engineering through planning).

Taylor (1995:101) observes that the models of community work by the end of the decade were overwhelmingly consensus models. In this climate of economic growth and optimism it was easy to conceive of community problems in terms of individual or community pathology, and that there might be

a society with no losers if only the 'disadvantaged' could be given assistance in making their case. Empowerment was scarcely on the agenda.

Towards the end of the decade the confidence of UK community development workers was knocked by the failures of the Community Organization school in the USA; mass action and direct confrontation seemed to be achieving rapid progress for those who were oppressed (e.g. civil rights actions), whereas social work orthodoxy (the Community Organization intervention methodology) did not have much to offer in the short term.

Opposition, the 1970s

The 1970s – finding my feet

As the 1970s started I turned sixteen, started in the sixth form and left school for the local technical college to take 'A' levels. I joined the Communist Party and was president of the college branch of the National Students Union. Marching for higher grants, for a woman's right to choose, in solidarity with strikers and the anti apartheid movement. My father declined to sign my grant application forms (to read politics and philosophy) and so I worked for three years to earn a grant in my own right.

Social work seemed to be a way to work with my values. At that time getting onto a field work course required one to gather residential social work experience – so I set about getting it; working with kids and later older people. Shift work left plenty of time for a full social life *and* regular periods of solitude – a pattern I've continued to this day (although I notice my taste for solitude is growing). Performing and exploring; free festivals and street theatre, the antics of Welfare State and Comtec (later to become the Centre for Alternative Technology).

A move to Brighton; the sea and a complicated relationship, more residential work, time spent on picket lines, music benefits for strikers and causes. And my first cat Charlie, a Siamese who used to walk with me to the pub and in the countryside.

1979 a move to Bristol to start my university social work course, the year both Regan and Thatcher came to power, what a time! Reclaim the night marches, on placement at a women's refuge in St Paul's the week after the riots.

In 1973 the oil crisis signalled an end to post war economic prosperity in the UK, and the sense of security it had created for those who had previously held power and made decisions secure in the knowledge that they could always dip into still growing public purses to buy-off the campaigns of the disadvantaged. Writing in the Community Work Journal Gary Craig argued that before this time

The interests of the state in engaging the potentially disposed and disaffected seemed to accord with those who were attracted by the political possibilities offered by working more directly in contact with working class activists at a neighbourhood level (1989:9).

But this consensus failed as global recession hit the UK and brought structural adjustment both nationally and globally. At home pressure increased on public sector budgets as a consequence; and the working class communities bore the brunt of the downward pressure of the recession in the UK as elsewhere.

Looking back on this example of the influence of global markets on national policy making one is forced to ask how local action alone could

ever hope to tackle the problems of poverty and deprivation which had their roots in national or global economic forces. But for the first time in Britain it seemed deprivation was being recognised by some radical thinkers, the CDP and some working in the Community sector as being structural in its causation; not seen as a function of community pathology, an accident of geography or even system failure, but as a function of the interests of international capital, and the state's role in securing those interests¹²⁶.

In response the CDP¹²⁷ urged community organisations to build alliances with others affected such as the trade unions, with which they shared a class interest and an analysis of power. This tactic was widely, but not universally adopted in the Community sector. Some found this class based analysis put forward by the CDP too political and preferred to continue to work with the system rather than organise against it. Peter Marris (1982) identified a paradox when he noted the growing frustration of community planners and workers who had found that their increased understanding of the wider forces affecting their communities made it more, rather than less difficult to identify any viable local strategy to tackle the resulting problems¹²⁸. A growing interest in political education for liberation and the ideas of Paulo Freire and in a feminist analysis linking the personal to the political enabled some to counter the helplessness and make sense of the situation. In the 1970s there were a growing number of Federations established at regional and national levels which enabled people to link their local issues to the wider structural analysis, these followed the 1960s precedents of the Association of London Housing Estates, Play Forums and, earlier still, the University Settlement Movement.

One view was that the state was moving to fund community development as 'pragmatic urban buffering or mediation' (Waddington, 1979) , but both Waddington and Craig came to see the motivation of the state as changing over time to attempted social control: 'managing deprivation and urban dissent' (Craig 1989:13). One wonders whether this differs substantially from the previous approach of buying off dissent through programmes of public works. In many ways it starts off feeling like a scaled down version of the same, turning later into a more focused, and fearful move to exert control and to limit damage as social unrest

¹²⁶ Although later the New Labour government of Tony Blair was to return to an image of deprivation as being predominantly geographically situated, with programmes focused on Neighbourhood Renewal and 'sink' estates. In this way the analysis of poverty as structural has been lost, and communities and places are pathologised again.

¹²⁷ Community Development Project - Established by the Home Office in 1968, an organisation consisting of locally based workers and researchers. Government disenchantment with the CDP led to it being disbanded after its first five year term.

¹²⁸ Or perhaps more accurately a system resonance, as we see the same phenomena in some communities overwhelmed by the global nature of issues of concern to them.

expressed itself more loudly on the streets as the decade drew to a close, exploding into riots in St Paul's, Bristol in early 1980¹²⁹.

¹²⁹ The St Paul's riots were not race riots. It can clearly be evidenced that there were no scuffles or disturbances between black and white residents or communities (Campbell, 1993). It was heavy handed and insensitive policing that was responsible for the St Paul's riots.

Defence, the 1980s

1980s – Compromise, me?

I finished at Bristol University in 1981, having married earlier that year, and started work as a social worker in a south London Borough with a mixed case load which included a large number of adolescent boys who kept me regularly in court as they offended their way through their teens. I came to know well several generations of displaced and alienated east end families living on troubled south London housing estates.

Two years later I returned to Bristol to live and work, discovered I had cancer, pursued holistic treatment and refused all allopathic treatment, and went into therapy.

The 1980s were punctuated for me by two very different political campaigns; spending time at Greenham (demonstrations, gatherings, benefits, night watches, vigils), and the Miners' strike (1984-5) and all that this struggle symbolised to a whole class and those of us who supported them, as the government galvanised the forces of the state (police, courts, banks) in an attempt to crush the miners at any cost. We collected food parcels, put on benefits, demonstrated and picketed.

Towards the end of the decade I moved to Gloucestershire, taking a policy based job rather than client based social work. This involved returning to live in the place I was born, a move I was ambivalent about having to co-exist with other people's memories of me.

In the following two years four of my friends and five of my cats died. Grief fills up a lot of the space of my anger.

The 1979 Tory government was committed to *rolling back the state*, and looked to the United States to provide models for privatisation of the welfare state¹³⁰, which it was to implement over the three successive terms it was in power.

In the meantime the sale of public housing stock and the 'capping' of local authorities budgets (and their autonomy) began. At this time local

¹³⁰ Students of New Labour in the UK will see similarities between this period and the lead up to and early years after Labours re-election in 1997, with the import from the US of the communitarian ideas of Etzioni, and the strong promotion of Community Development Trusts and networks of social entrepreneurs, such as the Community Action Network, based on enterprise and entrepreneurial models more familiar and less threatening to power-holders than the community development based organisations with their foundation in mutuality, solidarity and reciprocity.

authorities were besieged both by public dissatisfaction with the quality of their services (by residents acting into the new role of 'consumer' encouraged by the Tory government), and increasingly by central government determined to reduce their power. Many fought back by decentralising services (which had the effect of offering increasing opportunities for participation in local decision making) and through funding community organisations. The mode of operation moved from conflict to collaboration, with community organisations recognising that there were opportunities to work *through* local government. Taylor describes the 80s as the period of Defence, as community organisations struggled to defend both their own services and the very welfare state. Craig writes of this period that:

The political logic of this seemed clear, that of taking control of the local state and reshaping it to serve the interests of the working class (1989:15).

However an alternative view is put forward by Diamond and Nelson (1993) who argue that community workers in the UK of the 1980s were too optimistic and overestimated the room for manoeuvre in the local state, and that the growth of unaccountable quangos and blurred boundaries between public, private and voluntary only served to mask the sheer scale of central government control.

Active citizenship, in the 1980s as now, was only really discussed in relation to the 'responsibilities' of citizens. In the 1980s this was in stark contrast to the short lived focus on 'rights' in relation to the welfare state in the 60s and 70s. It also embodied a growing focus on the individual, rather than collective (or state) rights and responsibilities. *The key relationships in this increasingly privatised state were between the individual and the market.*

This focus on the individual goes further; its at this time we see an increasing use of the pathologising and individualising language of 'self esteem'¹³¹, and a denial of the structural nature of deprivation. Its use suggests that it's a psychological state (poor self esteem), rather than joblessness, homelessness or poverty, which affects the individuals concerned. This is then used to justify strategies based on therapeutic interventions – It was under the Thatcher government that those being made redundant as a result of the recession were offered counselling rather than paid work.

Kolb and Donnellon (1994) point out that the ideology of individualism reinforces the interpretation that individuals are the problem. For example individuals who are systematically penalised in organisations

¹³¹ The current (2000s) discussion of individual and community 'self esteem', in relation to deprivation suggests that it's a psychological state which affects the individuals concerned. This has been further institutionalised by New Labour in its approach to tackling the deprivation agenda, as evidenced in the language used; 'inclusion', 'exclusion', 'emotional literacy' etc which valorises good self esteem.

buy into this explanation and interpret their problems in terms of their own deficiencies. Such explanations preclude exploration of more systemic dynamics and, most important, examination of the various interests and groups who benefit from the status quo. More to the point, this explanation serves to keep conflicts underground or obscured – until pressures build up to an unbearable level.

The 1980s saw increasing numbers of uprisings and disorder across the country which told of what Britain had become. Riots in London, Liverpool and Bristol in response to the saturation policing¹³² in black areas which criminalised communities, caused new regimes of public order and community policing to be introduced after the public inquiry of Lord Scarman in 1981.

Scarman put his finger on the approach of the police as 'the spirit of angry young men', in which group he included the police themselves, who had 'failed to recognise the real signals and strike the balance between enforcing the law and keeping the peace'. He was writing of the Brixton riots but he could as well have been commenting on policing in St Paul's or Toxteth, or the policing of the growing number of picket lines where industrial disputes such as the miners strike led to angry scenes on streets as workers protested.

As Beatrix Campbell points out the medium of riot itself held a message of anger, despair and alienation:

The message in the medium of riotous assemblies showed us how the authorities and the angry young men were communicating with each other. The riots were the young men's way of speaking to their world... They show us something about the country in which we live, what people do with their troubles and their anger, *who gets hurt and who gets heard*... riot became routine. Its persistent resurgence demands that we ask new questions about community, solidarity, law and disorder among men and women living with desperate local economies (1993: x-xi emphasis added).

Under this Tory government – which was pledged to 'restore public order', the police were offered a new sort of political patronage which appeared to include structural immunity from public scrutiny. Yet they were still highly inefficient. As the criminologist Jock Young commented later writing of this period 'If the police were a private sector operation

¹³² 'Saturation policing involves the assignment of a great number of police to a specific area. It may be used for special occasions (i.e., an event that will bring protesters together, the presence of a dignitary or other individual or group that is likely to attract criminal activity, a search for a particular individual or individuals) or on a regular basis in response to a known pattern of criminal activity over time. For example, if criminal activity occurs with some regularity on Fridays in a certain park over a period of several weeks, the police may begin saturating the park area on Fridays to deter such activity as well as to make arrest when possible'. (Carlie M, Into the Abyss. Web based publication. 2002).

they would be hauled over the coals'¹³³. They failed to protect the public order, and they conspicuously failed to control themselves. Insensitive policing failed whole sections of the community and targeted others; both in black communities such as the wide spread use of 'sus'¹³⁴ and in the policing of industrial disputes such as the 1984 miners strike. But there was also a more general 'crisis of crime' as crime rates soared and detection rates declined. Campbell quotes Stuart Hall *et al.* on the effects on working class communities:

Professional crime was the fourth largest industry in Britain and the fastest growing business ... This had followed a boom of unprecedented conspicuous consumption... There had been a renaissance of the Conservative 'You've never had it so good' propaganda of the Fifties when the notion of *affluence* was 'essentially an ideology of the dominant culture *about* and *for* the working class, directed *at* them' Stuart Hall *et al.* argue that what mattered was not the passive remaking of the working class in the image of affluence, 'but the dislocations it produced [within the class] – and the responses it provoked' (1993:98).

All types of crime rose in this polarised economy, but it was what Campbell refers to as 'survival crime', the offences committed by the working classes; the poor and struggling who bore the brunt of the economic recession, which was most visible and vilified by the government, and most rigorously prosecuted by the police.

¹³³ In *Sunday Times*, 24th May 1991.

¹³⁴ The 'Suspected Person' law, allowing the police to stop and search anyone in the street. Used predominantly by young white police men to stop and search young black men – so repeating the historical demonstration of power-over through the exercise of the power of the dominant class to invasively handle the bodies of the underclass.

Agency and substitution, the 1990s

Trying-on pragmatism for size

For me the 1990s entailed a move of employer from social services to the health service, and a shift in focus from disabled people's services to enabling public participation in health service planning and delivery.

The changes made over the preceding ten years by successive Tory governments had changed social work from the relatively radical profession in which I trained to practice, into the compromised role of assessor of care packages and gatekeeper to diminishing streams of funding. As a friend Steve Clarke (1996:170) wrote at the time *'Despite the evidence of causal connections between poverty, the unequal society and the breakdown of the social fabric, social work is now preoccupied with issues of assessment and protection, rather than confront the structural issues which consign its 'clients' into financial and social poverty, and powerlessness'*. I was increasingly unhappy with the effect these changes had on my professional practice.

I too was infected with something of the zeitgeist and found myself repeating to myself and others that I wanted to know what it was like to have a career rather than to have a job. Moving to work for the NHS as Planning and Participation manager for a health authority seemed to offer the opportunity to explore having a career as a senior manager while doing work that aligned with my values by working to promote and support public participation in health planning and decision making. I failed to appreciate the conflict this would cause me as my personal self interest (in career and promotion) conflicted with my advocacy of the need to enable public and patient participation in decision making. I could be an agent for change (the conscience of the health authority as my CEO described me!¹³⁵) but it required constant compromise and the development of a high degree of pragmatism. I was a classic example of tempered radical (Meyerson and Scully) – that is I felt increasingly at odds with the organisation I was working for, wanting to act on my values and finding I was unable to do so or to express my whole self at work. I was walking a tightrope between conformity and rebellion in order to have some effect on the

¹³⁵ And only last week I heard the same phrase used again by a senior civil servant in Wales describing her assistant, who was of Indian origin, as her organisation's 'conscience' in relation to matters of diversity. I looked hard at the speaker, a woman whose abilities had impressed me, and wondered where had such an attitude come from? Surely she must realise that this was a superficial analysis, that it signalled her organisation's (and her own?) refusal to integrate diversity into its thinking, into the way it did business? What did the assistant think, as she smiled and moved away? Did the smile cover her helplessness, her inability to influence at a fundamental level? Or had she simply not noticed the implications of what was said. And how sensitised/super sensitised was I due to my own experience in the health authority, and due to my own symbolic role as the only physically disabled person in the group in a room with steps?

way the health authority did its business, and it was uncomfortable and I doubted whether I could sustain it. At the same time my average working week increased from 40 to 55 or 60 hours in an attempt to meet both the needs of the organisation *and* my needs to perform in line with my espoused values.

It was through my role with the health authority that I came to be involved in my local Agenda 21 group (Vision 21). This opened doors to new ways of working and thinking about things (facilitation as an enabling skill, systems thinking, participation as a social process - an aspect of sustainability, Future Search as a methodology), and led to another inquiry; how to balance work and the rest of my life.

In 1995-7 I practised these skills very close to home through my involvement with the Stroud Community Planning Conference (CPC) and came to explore myself as what Jack Whitehead would call a 'living contradiction' - e.g. I found that my espoused values of participation, disseminated leadership and emergent form were at odds with some of my behaviour, my rigidity and desire to be controlling. Also I wanted to take a 'holistic' approach but felt that I needed to exclude my own feelings and views when facilitating (see CPC practice account). I was supported in my inquiring by starting the diploma course at CARPP, and through individual therapy.

At the same time I lost the will to continue the struggle to promote change within a health authority which was itself becoming more conservative due to changes of both the CEO and Chair. During a time of reorganisation I opted for redundancy and started working for myself and through a small consultancy Sustainable Futures. I felt as if I had 'changed sides' again; I could work where my heart was with grassroots community development organisations like the Gloucestershire Neighbourhood Projects Network (see Children's Commission practice account).

It was also about this time I discovered that the symptoms I'd been experiencing for a while were due to Multiple Sclerosis. It is perhaps fitting that the most dramatic of these incidents occurred when I was part of the last large London demonstration in support of the last Miners strike. I became separated from my comrades and at the same time temporarily lost my eyesight, and then when it came back it was as double vision – the experience of trying to find my way back to friends through such a mass of demonstrators and hostile police while unable to see was terrifying. *I had to learn to trust to close one eye in order to see, when everything in me wanted two eyes to be alert.* This could be a metaphor for me in this decade.

As the decade drew to a close I was amongst the many who had celebrated the New Labour victory in 1997 but rapidly came to feel bitter disappointment in New Labour; its unaccountability, its abandonment of socialism and its embracing of conservative values, its focus on the middle classes rather than the working class, its accession to almost every demand of big business, its

repeated involvement in violent conflicts abroad, and its failure to develop or value what was left of the welfare state.

Agency and substitution, the 1990s

The nineties kicked off with a series of riots in 1991, which were a clear expression of the increasing insecurity and disaffection in working class communities largely as a result of the policies of the Tory government. Margaret Thatcher's statement that 'there's no such thing as community, only individuals' was acted out in this instance by groups of white youths on estates in Oxford (Blackbird Leys), Cardiff (Ely) and Tyneside (Meadowell). This alienation is examined by Beatrix Campbell in her book 'Goliath'. Campbell identifies contributing factors:

All the neighbourhoods which spontaneously combusted in 1991 are communicating a new kind of crisis... they are the effect of Britain's bitter but becalmed political culture. After Margaret Thatcher's new economic order was inaugurated in 1979, these neighbourhoods were doomed. They were evacuated by British business and the economic discipline of the New Right left them unable to make a legitimate living. They were largely abandoned by the main parliamentary political parties, left without representation. (1993:xi).

Writing of the relationship between the state and community organisations at this time Marilyn Taylor (1995) suggests that there was a choice of three roles for community based organisations like Neighbourhood Projects and Community Associations at this time.

A market development role – developing and supporting the capacity of communities to take on providing services as agents for the state¹³⁶.

A consumer development role – capitalising on the government vogue for (a consumerist model of) user involvement, and supporting user led organisations to develop their own services, and to make sense of the new institutional environment, to offer advocacy and to take up the new opportunities for involvement in service planning opening up in local government and the NHS.

The third role was *managing deprivation and urban dissent* – to participate in the growing number of government programmes aimed at addressing urban decay, crime and unemployment and so reduce the likelihood of the more explosive forms of dissent. To act as 'soft

¹³⁶ Or as one item on a list of 'Common Views Held by Policymakers', often found pinned on community development workers walls at that time says:

Conception – Local community action is good at mobilising voluntary labour, thus providing supplementary services cheaply.

Correction – Local community action is good at organising people's problem solving energies, thus reducing their dependence on services'.

(From *Out of the Shadows: Local Community action and the European Community*, a report by Gabriel Chanan for the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Shankhill, Co. Dublin.1992).

policemen' in much the same way as social workers had been co-opted into a similar role during the same period.

Time has proved that each of these roles has had its costs for the community sector. The *market development role* has been insecurely funded, requiring community based organisations to take-on increasing risks and meet ever rising standards, often set without consultation with either the community organisations or the end users of their services and the expense of which are not reflected in contract prices.

The *consumer development role* has positioned those using or requiring services as 'consumers', rather than individuals and groups with a *right* to decent levels of support from the state. Customer 'Charters' offered procedural rather than substantive rights, with nowhere else to take their 'custom' the model is unrealistic and anachronistic. And because the focus is on their *needs* individuals and groups are stigmatised and pathologised in the process. They are identified as a group defined by their needs, rather than viewed as having resources or solutions to offer. The very community organisations who could otherwise have supported people to envision and enact their own desired futures became complicit in a focus on need and disability, which held people in a place of having to constantly advocate for their needs and those of others. These same people often became worn out through engagement with long winded, divisive and badly designed consultation processes which seldom got off the bottom rung of Arnstein's ladder of participation¹³⁷– altogether a disempowering experience¹³⁸.

As Taylor (1995:106) notes 'Most of those doing the consulting are paid for their time. Those who are consulted are seldom compensated.' This disparity in resourcing the hearing of other voices is still an issue today. In addition local knowledge attained through such consultation processes loses the multi layered richness of meaning it had for those to whom it belonged, Mike Pedler compares this evocatively to capturing energy:

As electricity is hard to store and best used as it is generated, so any knowledge, extracted from the context in which it is created, quickly loses power and meaning. Stored and transported necessarily in a few words, which function mainly as an index, the indescribable mass of data essential to making sense of the situation is not recorded and is quickly lost. The problem with professional knowledge ... is that it is a generalised storehouse based on the resolution of past problems and lacking sensitivity to difference.

¹³⁷ Examination of the processes used at this time by both the NHS and local government shows designs which still rely on largely propositional knowing on behalf of participants, favouring the already traditionally vocal groups; the middle class; assertive, confident and well educated.

¹³⁸ See fig 3 for Arnstein's ladder.

Greenwood and Levin (1998:141) point out, writing about action research and community development in Herencia, La Mancha, it is a much better solution to teach local people research techniques than to struggle to teach visiting professionals about local conditions. They write of an action research approach which works with local people as co-researchers makes best use of the different knowledges of the professional researcher and the local resident.

Greenwood was impressed by the immense value and complexity of local knowledge as it is mobilised through participatory processes ... This community could be mobilised and was capable of developing plans that rival or better official, expert, outside plans for community development. What were in short supply were facilitation and research skills, but these can be learnt much more easily than outsiders can learn the details of local knowledge.

There were small pockets of important change in community care and health service practice, most notably around service provision for people with learning disability (including People First groups) and for some mental health service users (the Survivors and Hearing Voices networks are a continuing legacy), but as local government contracted further even 'model' services were reduced.

The role of *managing deprivation and urban dissent* proved the most seductive for community organisations, who often put their core activities of advice, advocacy and consciousness-raising in jeopardy in order to take on new, programme-funded services such as employment advice and training programmes, IT learning centres, play schemes and crèches, and more recently, healthy living centres. Programmes have been inconsistently funded, consuming vast proportions of the organisations' slim resources in developing applications to a growing number of programmes, normally competing against other similar projects and being judged by criteria which are seldom transparent and which they are unlikely to have been involved in developing. Service providing organisations are caught between partnership (at best) and advocacy; a desire to be a better, more responsive and locally informed and resident owned provider of services and so needing to partner with those controlling resources (NHS and local authorities) – with all the different behaviours partnership requires — conflicting with the desire to advocate for their communities through campaigning against those who restrict the flow of resources.

Widening the gap, the 2000s.

I stop worrying about work life balance as it all becomes inquiry!

I take an 18 month break from CARPP after an abortive attempt to transfer from MPhil to PhD and spend time clarifying what I want from the academy, and what I've got to offer. I return to complete my transfer to PhD. Self esteem is still an issue when it comes to teaching but I also discover how much I enjoy it¹³⁹.

My disillusionment with New Labour gets worse; I join a million others protesting against a second Gulf war and am ignored by the government. I start to consider whether to vote at all – and after my grandmother's generation fought so hard for the vote!

My MS is more challenging; my mobility declines quite steadily and more bits of me are confused by the misfiring messages typical of this condition. Just getting about and getting through feels like enough at times. I start to explore what it could be like to 'cope' less.

I had at this time a sharp apprehension not of what it was like to be old, but of what it was like to open the door to the stranger and find that the stranger did indeed have the knife.

Joan Didion, *The White Album*. Written of her diagnosis of MS.

My therapy sessions become a more reflective space, a regular place to consider my dreams and reflect on what's coming up through my work and in my life generally. I stop looking/hoping for a cure for my (emotional) pain and start getting more familiar with it, with me.

I buy two pigs, Maud and Sadie, who arrive in the back of my friend Diana's car. The pigs remind me of my grandfather and take me back to the secure part of my childhood. So much is expressed and explored through them (see reference to them in my learning journey moments).

¹³⁹ I began occasionally teaching students on the CARPP MSc in Responsibility and Business Practice and the PhD programmes. At first I was scared (caught between wanting to share ideas with them and feeling I should know 'everything' before teaching at all). As time has gone on I have come to enjoy these sessions more and more, although never losing my pre session anxiety about being found out as having little to offer (which mirrors my lack of confidence in my own knowing which I spoke of in the introduction to this chapter). A strange combination with my real passion for proselytising about participative and inquiring ways of working with groups and communities!

I leave Sustainable Futures, from whom I have grown apart, and start Research that Works with women with whom I want to work more.

I decide to move from Gloucestershire. I need more quiet, and more darkness at night.

The New Labour government, elected in 1997 was characterised by its cautious adherence to the previous Tory government's spending plans. Many had hoped that the sharp escalation of the social division (between 'haves' and 'have-nots') would be halted or even reversed, but in the first decade of the new millennium divisions between the rich and the poor in the UK continue to grow wider; financially and physically, as measured by indicators such as health status, and by the Office for National Statistics.

There has been a reduction in child poverty in the UK, but in 2005 there are still 3.6 million children living in households below the poverty line. Poverty remains high by both historical and European comparisons and there has been no reduction in inequality of income¹⁴⁰, in fact inequalities continue to grow under the New Labour government. Poor communities are marginalized and stigmatised, and we see those who can find the resources to move out of areas of deprivation and stress doing so as fast as they can, leaving those who have nowhere else to go to face the higher than average risks of becoming victims of crime, unemployment, failing schools and inadequate health service provision typical in these areas.

These disparities have been very apparent in the built environment and large scale regeneration schemes. The 2000s in the UK have been typified by flashy regeneration projects such as that in Gateshead. But for all the funding poured into cultural provision and heroic iconic buildings there is minimal penetration of benefits into nearby traditional working class areas¹⁴¹. Polarisation of communities, areas and social groups continues as it had under the Tories in the 80s and 90s.

Back in 1993 Harman described one of the main products of the world economy at that time as being

¹⁴⁰ Source: *Ten Steps to a Society Free of Child Poverty*. The Manifesto of the Child Poverty Action Group.

¹⁴¹ A friend recently travelled to Gateshead to see the new Baltic centre, he was curious as to whether there were benefits in other areas of the town. Walking around a housing estate 10 minutes from the waterside he discovered an Andy Goldsworthy sculpture surrounded by barbed wire. As Goldsworthy is one of the foremost makers of sculpture in and from nature the imprisoning of his work in an attempt to protect it from a presumably 'ungrateful' public seemed particularly tragic.

Marginal people: the unemployed, the underemployed, the disenfranchised – people who lack what traditional society provided, a sense of belonging and of having a recognised role.

The growth of new technology had not benefited this group other than to offer a small range of soulless and poorly paid jobs such as those in call centres, which are the very jobs which are now (in 2004/5) being relocated to even cheaper workforces in India and elsewhere in the third world, reinforcing a sense of insecurity in the workforce. And despite the introduction of the minimum wage Britain has such low wages that the majority of those now categorised as poor (with incomes below the poverty line) are actually in work.

The overwhelming theme of the mid 90s and early 2000s seems to be the further splintering of these disenfranchised and marginal people into isolated individuals; continuing the fracturing of community (and any remaining sense of mutuality and shared identity) that had typified the two previous decades and was so unedifyingly but prophetically captured in Margaret Thatcher's assertion that 'there is no such thing as society, only individuals and their families'.

Interestingly by European standards the UK public is uniquely misinformed about the extent and cause of poverty in the UK. Although Britain has almost the highest poverty level in the EU it has the least public recognition of it. Recent research by the Fabian Society¹⁴² and Eurobarometer, the EU opinion poll, found that people polled in the UK were most likely to think poverty due to 'laziness' and personal failings, with the fewest giving 'injustice' as the reason. This legacy of the previous decades of pathologising of the poor and disadvantaged has led to the belief that poverty is caused by behavioural factors – something captured in the strength of the negative stereotypes of the poor; those interviewed for the research think there must be something wrong with the parents of children who suffer from material deprivation. These are myths which discourage empathy and which have been at worst perpetuated by, and at best not been challenged by governments.

Writing about the Fabian Society report Polly Toynbee, herself a member of the Fabian Commission on Life Chances and Child Poverty, described the source of these misperceptions:

Their examples were drawn not from experience but almost exclusively from television. What casual damage is done by a few wicked programmes: *Wife Swap*, for example¹⁴³. It should be called class swap,

¹⁴²Research carried out by MORI for the Commission on Life Chances and Child Poverty and published as *Life Chances: What do the public really think about poverty?* The Fabian Society. 2005.

¹⁴³ The media, particularly TV provides a number of examples of working class lifestyles, speech patterns, dress codes etc being held up for ridicule and identified as symptoms of stupidity and fecklessness, e.g. Matt Lucas's character Margery Dawes in the comedy *Little Britain*.

choosing caricature working class "bad" mothers to swap with the most uptight middle-class women, inviting viewer smugness¹⁴⁴.

Yet the research group were shocked and moved by the conditions of children living in poor families when faced with the facts:

These hard facts surprised them: poor children are three times more likely to die, five times more likely to die in accidents and at higher risk of mental illness, and will have shorter lives. Statistics and "relative" poverty meant little, but they were stirred by the numbers of children without warm coats, holidays, schools trips or birthday parties¹⁴⁵.

At the same time the government has tried – with some success – to close the gap in school achievement between children in different social classes, and recognises the need to tackle health inequalities.

If the scale of change necessary to challenge inequality is to be made then there will need to be sufficient *public consent*, this is unlikely while the wider public and political debate is so misinformed and confused. Until then some children will still start with powerful and often inherited advantages – there is evidence that in 2005 it is becoming *more* difficult for children to progress from disadvantaged backgrounds. When helping people to 'get on' is seen as being about increasing the opportunities for gifted and aspiring individuals from 'poor' backgrounds, and about encouraging individual entrepreneurship, then as a strategy it fails to capture most of what is *morally* important about a fair distribution of chances in life.

A sense of personal insecurity and lack of support from the state has also been growing for those who are (relatively) more affluent through the impact on pensions and endowment mortgages of the global collapse of share values and the UK Chancellor's additional charges on pension schemes. The message from the government could be characterised as 'learn to fend for yourselves, and be sure to provide for your own old age', a message reinforced for young and old by the abolition of student grants and a refusal to re-establish the link between the state pension and earnings.

Local authority provision of care services for older, frail, and disabled people, which had been largely provided by the public sector since the 1960s, has been reduced so that local authority Social Services Departments largely operate a rationed and rationing care management service that restricts access to support to those with acute need. An effect of local authorities divesting themselves of the service provider role is that what little public funding there is, is directed largely to the private (for-profit) sector¹⁴⁶.

¹⁴⁴ Polly Toynbee. *The Guardian*. Friday March 4th, 2005.

¹⁴⁵ One in 50 children in 1999 went without a warm coat, one in 25 missed out on a birthday celebration.

¹⁴⁶ This pattern has continued with the introduction of the Supporting People programme of government funding.

Increasingly NHS hospital-based services are confined to active treatment only; so that care, rehabilitation and recovery services for the most vulnerable (older, mentally ill and disabled people) exist largely in the private or voluntary sector, and these have been devastated in the last few years by cuts in funding from local authorities and the NHS as budgets shrink. The post-war dream of the welfare state has been shattered.

I recognise these changes from my practice with groups of patients (DUG practice account), older people (Tewkesbury practice account) and young families from deprived areas (Children's Commission practice account), drug users and homeless families (SureStart research). I have heard, and we have worked with anxieties about insufficient influence and access to services and insufficient income. One of the benefits of AR with these groups has been the lessening of a sense of isolation and powerlessness as they inquire together e.g.

DUG members became able to advocate against reductions in chiropody services,

Older people in Tewkesbury – were able to demonstrate the advantages to agencies (including private sector) of working together,

The Children's Commission – were able to influence local government spend, and to participate in making changes in their own community, leading to a change in community self image.

In all cases personal insecurity was reduced and a sense of community established/strengthened, while contact (on their terms) was maximised for a range of 'marginal people' with decision makers.

Writing in 1995 Marilyn Taylor described a phenomenon she called *the privatisation of people's lives*, and cited entertainment and leisure pursuits as things once done collectively but now done in private. I think this phenomenon can also be thought of as a focus on the individual, rather than on community. It is too easy to romanticise the days when mutuality was a community way of survival, after all not everyone wanted the shared privations of public bathing that accompanied the shared benefits of allotment societies and trade unions. However this focus on the individual has driven out the ties that bound people into a *felt sense of community*.

There were both benefits and privations in living life in-community: Where once there were public baths there are now private bathrooms, but where there was a local skill exchange there is now 'do-it-yourself', the focus now is on creating our own private garden not on going down the allotments, and public transport is considered a poor second best to the private car.

There is little sense left of community, mutuality or cooperation as positive choices for many people, particularly Harman's 'marginal people' who

experience the financial insecurity, institutionalised messages to look-after and out-for yourself, divided communities, the privatisation of people's lives and the democratic deficit – the loss of most of that which constituted the dream of the post-war welfare state.

The significant, but numerically small exceptions are those who have started to organise on the basis of another sort of community – that of identity or affiliation (Gosling's elective communities of interest and commitment), rather than simply geography, broadening their analysis of power and discrimination beyond Marx's economic and class based analysis and organising around this *extended understanding of identity*. Examples of these groups are co-housing projects, credit unions, community land trusts, and sustainable village projects, offering a basis upon which to build a revitalised sense of community. More recently timebanks (Governance practice account) have become significant players; growing organisations based on reciprocity and a sense of shared purpose. These economic models share a basis of mutuality and so grow a sense of community. They are no longer based on class affiliation for shared identity, but on trust.

Scale would seem to be an important element in fostering or inhibiting a sense of community. Charles Handy, writing on fostering a sense of community in organisations, takes trust to be an aspect of a relationship between individuals, who can feel secure only in a network of people known to and answerable to each other. This suggests communities can only exist on a scale where members are *known* to each other. (1995:213)

Similarly Larry Ray argues that the need for this network arrangement is typical of the contemporary condition of *hyper-differentiation*, in which the collectivities to which each of us belongs are now categorised in increasingly minute classes: instead of referring to mass class/cultural groupings.

The process of breaking down membership boundaries to more detailed levels becomes 'hyper-differentiation' when the defining terms of such membership are constantly changed and hence reconfigured. In effect, the boundaries multiply to the extent that they explode and dissolve, leaving individuals to form their own networks of contacts with whom they have enough in common to share some degree of trust (Ray, 1996).

It seems that the cost of insecurity is the loss of large group or community affiliations (and vice versa). Our ability to form attachments to a wider community is impaired. Work to build community capacity needs to be mindful of these less obvious costs of consumerism and the cult of the individual. In addition Meekosha (1993) identified the risk that small affinity groups and those groups based on identity politics are prone to fragmentation and factionalism, and groups can become trapped in the role of the disadvantaged and of opposition and so be further

disempowered. These small groups can easily be subverted into acting as factions, each providing for its own kind or group, with community development becoming

a mode of work in which ever more tightly delineated minorities and sectors of society experiencing discrimination are channelled into organising the provision of specific, usually volunteer-operated services.

So substituting for the state. Or groups and communities are drawn into 'systems of participation where their separate interests are highly vulnerable to manipulation, dissipating their potential to take power' (Taylor 1995:108).

This suggests that the challenges for community development, and for all of us working to facilitate community based groups and partnerships, is to *reconcile the paradoxes between the values of solidarity and identity*. And that we (alongside the groups we are working with) need to develop a sophisticated understanding of power and how it is being worked in the system, and so to learn to work through new alliances and networks and in 'new' types of relationships e.g. reciprocity. I have certainly seen this when working with community organisations such as those making up GNPN. It has proved hard at times to hold into a network communities who are competing for statutory funding, yet collective bids for SRB funding led to a ground-breaking community led programme. It is GNPN's strength as a network that both commands respect from agencies and enables it to champion the cause of sub-communities within the neighbourhoods.

There is a need for new and better models of service provision, ones which *change the power relationship between provider and user*, recognising that service users are creators of their own welfare and not passive recipients. The newly emerging social enterprise sector promises to provide this type of alternative to both the state and the private sectors. And there is an opportunity at this time for imaginative and creative solutions which release new resources (such as the power of reciprocity), which may well come from community sources. Taylor writes sceptically of the current UK government interest in participation and community and the capacity of 'communities' and community development to deliver:

The commitment to participation suggests that the 'tacit' knowledge, resources and skills that lie in the most marginalised communities are at least being acknowledged as part of the solution to some of these problems; but how robust is this commitment to 'community' and can 'communities' deliver? ... Can communities, social capital and civil society achieve what states and markets have failed to do? (2003:12 - 15.)

There is a governance aspect to these changes. As early as 1993 Donnison wrote:

What we should be talking about is not just a few research programmes, not just community development. It is a new pattern of government replacing old patterns of government....[If this is to happen it requires new ways be found] to engage people and convince them that there is a point in making a commitment to a public sphere which they feel has failed them or is simply seen as irrelevant in a consumerist age.

This is a strong argument for better social processes: a better quality of facilitation, and a sharpened political awareness in all parts of the system in order to enable the growth of bottom-up change (see Governance practice account). There are different ways of meeting, speaking and listening from which we can learn; the discussion models advocated by Margaret Wheatley start to point us back towards what we knew before competing individual interests raised up fences and walls between us and so allow us to nurture the belief that 'they' are different from 'us'¹⁴⁷. Models based on meeting and talking together, allowing human contact to challenge our prejudices. Which are ways of coming together that require a mindful and *crafty* facilitation if the silenced are to be engaged.

Part of the remedy must be to enable people to better understand and therefore to care about others in society, which is why it matters that people think those in poverty are simply 'feckless' or otherwise inadequate. It is not too late to act to change public perceptions and engage public commitment, but there needs to be a government-led attack on the myths that discourage empathy and reinforce the divisions in UK society. The recent Fabian Society sponsored research identified that, once informed about the facts, a large majority of those interviewed *would* be prepared to pay more in taxes to tackle poverty and improve the conditions of the poorest members of society¹⁴⁸. They were prepared to see public services used to level up inequalities by deferring improvements in their own services to resource better support to those in greatest need.

My own experience in facilitating community events (e.g. CPC, Vision21) is that people *can* manage prioritising their needs and balancing their gain with those of others *if* they feel a part of the process, and *if* the process is well designed (this does not have to mean complicated) and

¹⁴⁷ Reminding me of ha-has; the device so beloved of some landscape gardeners which fool the viewer into believing they have access to the whole view, whereas they are brought up sharply by a hidden wall which cuts them off from the rest of the landscape. As a simile it works for me as the vision of a secure future is spoilt by the experience of being halted at the edge, looking on as some privileged others walk in what we had thought was a mutual, shared future. Looking on and fearfully looking back to see what might be about to overcome us from behind, and which the privileged others have the extra protection from.

¹⁴⁸ *Life Chances: What do the public really think about poverty?* Fabian Society, London. 2005.

facilitated (with awareness of inequality/power). An unmediated competition for resources just leads to the usual groups winning.

This seems to be a time at which UK society stands at a cross roads with the alternative paths being consumerism and privatisation, and mutuality and community. The New Labour government has encouraged the importation of communitarianism and individual enterprise/entrepreneur models of development from the USA, and other writers and thinkers advocate transferring the learning about community empowerment from South American successes. Personally I believe there is no beacon of an alternative model of citizenship, organising or democracy shining out from Europe, the US or elsewhere. Instead in order to go forward we might choose to also look back; to reflect on the lost mutuality of co-operatives, the welfare state of the 1950s and 1960s, trade unions and women's groups.

Up to date – community empowerment and policy making in the UK

Empowerment, and community development as one of the means to achieve it, were fashionable terms in the UK in the 1960s, when the growth of the civil rights, human rights and grassroots social movements brought the terms to prominence. Since then the terms have fallen out of fashion for some years – at least in government circles. However more recently there has been another change and community and community development seem to be coming back in style; in a Demos¹⁴⁹ paper (2003:10) the authors wrote:

The 1990s arguably marked the end of a period in which individualism and economic rationalism dominated the mainstream policy discourse, and witnessed the renewal of interest in ideas about community as a force for social cohesion. This was driven ... in part by a flurry of new thinking around the concept of 'social capital' and an emerging 'communitarian' agenda. These new ideas have particularly informed the development work of international institutions such as the World Bank¹⁵⁰, the IMF and the UN over the last ten years, but have also gained purchase with national governments increasingly occupied with rising inequality at home and the emergence of 'a south within the north'.

Demos as a think tank are very close to the New Labour government of Tony Blair, and one might be forgiven for thinking that this has influenced their willingness to believe that the days of economic rationalism and individualism dominating the policy discourse are over. However, whether or not one believes that they are insufficiently sceptical about

¹⁴⁹ Demos is a London-based left leaning think tank.

¹⁵⁰ But remember the World Bank's use of 'participation' and avoidance of 'empowerment'; having a voice is one thing – but having a voice that really changes the balance of power is quite another.

some aspects of the New Labour government, they do clearly outline the drivers and concerns for western governments (social cohesion, social capital, social responsibility, reducing inequality) which have led to investment in reviving governments' links with the community and voluntary sectors, and more specifically to investment in the empowerment agenda, encouraging a renewal of participative approaches.

For those of us involved in facilitating relationship building between public, private, voluntary and community sectors, this change in the attitudes of policy makers, however conditional, offers increased opportunities for dialogue, learning and the development of sustainable relationships.

In this section I have outlined the context for my work, particularly the 1990s and 2000s as the period covered by this learning journey. I have pulled-out key issues and attitudes relating to inequalities, community, and the welfare state which have a part to play in the background to my work described in the *Practice Accounts* that follow.

I will now go on to discuss the key ideas and issues relating to power which are significant for me.

Power – key issues

This section starts by looking at where I came from in terms of attitudes to and understanding of power. I then briefly describe some frameworks for conceptualizing power - not an exhaustive survey but those I feel are relevant to my practice and those that interest me¹⁵¹. I then go on to discuss how power relates to my practice via some specific issues; resistance and consent, empowerment, and finally I explore uncertainty/attachment in more depth.

Where I came from

What I notice through the process of analysing and writing up my learning journey, is that my own views regarding power have shifted somewhat. It's not so much that I have come to interpret the world differently and have shifted my fundamental beliefs, but more that I have become less sure, less dogmatic about some things, and more clear about others.

¹⁵¹ See also Appendix D *The politics of the research process*.

As a feminist I am concerned with issues of authority, knowledge, representation, and participation. As a woman and as a person from a working class background I am familiar with and have lived experience of 'otherness' (not being a member of the dominant group i.e. male, middle class). I consciously try to mediate between the positions of inquirer/researcher and researched, and to constantly ask 'whose voices, perspectives, theories dominate?'

I believe those of us who originally come from non-elite groups ourselves (race, gender, class-wise) would be unable to operate as we do if we were not *migrants* and had not stolen into the camp of the dominant group, and made away with some of that power through the *acquisition of knowledge* and our own *conscientisation*. This can create an additional burden for us of mourning for lost identity and a community of affiliation, which needs to be worked with mindfully by the practitioner/facilitator in order that it does not obscure the 'material' the group being worked with is generating.

In her book *Where we stand: Class Matters* bell hooks writes about her own sort of 'migrant' status that she has acquired as a successful academic, which threatens to distance her from her class, gender and race identities. As a working class woman I can empathise and am clear that what I bring to my practice is not only affected by my community of origin, but I am clear that used skilfully this *migrant practitioner* status is an asset, and used unskilfully could be detrimental to my practice. At one time I would have seen these origins as simply (simplistically) a point of empathy with the communities I work with.

Migrant practitioners are an increasing group, with potential to let down ladders to those who come after, or to make acquired skills seem so complex and alien that only those with bestowed prestige, the dominant group, can facilitate, consult or research¹⁵² ('organisational outflanking'¹⁵³).

It seems to me important for the practitioner, whether labelling their work research, facilitation or consultancy, to develop what Maslow has referred to as 'resistance to enculturation' (Maslow, 1987) in order that we can step outside/see through the accepted frameworks of cultural roles and values. Otherwise we carry into our work our own ideological

¹⁵² Bochner and Ellis (2000) describe a shift from a more traditional research approach of 'participant observation' to that of 'observing participation' as increasing numbers of the previously voiceless and powerless enter the academy. This change is influencing both the where, who and how of research, and leading to the valuing of different ways of knowing (other than the purely propositional), and the growing acceptance of a range of presentational forms.

¹⁵³ Mann (1986), see *Consent, compliance and resistance*, below.

assumptions, reflective of our class, sex, and position of power within the culture and subcultures, without questioning them and understanding their impact on our choices and sense-making – the way they repress us and lead us to repress others. Coming from a feminist-grounded research perspective Patti Lather challenges us to

develop a kind of self reflexivity that will enable us to look closely at our own practice in terms of how we contribute to dominance in spite of our liberatory intentions (Lather, 1991:150).

If we accept that power and knowledge are inseparable (as Foucault contends¹⁵⁴), and that we are simultaneously undergoing the effects of power and exercising power over others, then we are unable to take a simple, benign view of our own practices. As White and Epston point out, we are not simply able to assume that our practices are primarily determined by our motives, or that we can avoid all participation in the field of power/knowledge through an examination of our personal motives. Instead, if we accept Foucault's ideas about the dynamics of power, we must assume that we are always participating simultaneously in the domains of power and knowledge, and that we need to try to establish conditions that encourage us to critique our own practices to identify aspects of our work that might relate to techniques of social control¹⁵⁵. It is the commitment to this critique of my practice 'in the moment' that underpins this thesis.

I have travelled in this learning journey from being firmly in the Marxism-based approach to power which views it as a zero-sum, to viewing power as more fluid and web-like (Hardy and Clegg). At this point in time however I am unable to place myself firmly with any one power theory, but draw upon several to make sense. I experience inequalities as structural, rooted in economic and political actions (Marx, Weber), and I recognise that other forms of domination (e.g. silencing, discrimination on grounds of race and gender) are hugely important if one is to work with groups and individuals towards empowerment. I also experience power as 'energetic' as I work with and from a sense of our inter-connectedness (Starhawk, Macy).

Some frameworks for conceptualizing power

In their *Handbook of Organization Studies* Hardy and Clegg discuss key critical and functionalist ideas and literature, exploring a variety of

¹⁵⁴ Foucault (1980) believed power and knowledge to be inseparable, so much so that he preferred to write them as power/knowledge or knowledge/power. Foucault, M (1980) *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings*. New York: Pantheon Books.

¹⁵⁵ For examples of my moving-around self (cultivated to be watchful and to critique my own practice) see Chapter 5. *Inquiring about my practice*.

contradictory conceptualisations of power (1996). They identify two significant traditions in the last 50 years, Marxist/Weberian and organization/management studies, identifying that the

Marxist/Weberian tradition equated power with the structures by which certain interests were dominated; while the management theorists defined power as those actions that fell outside the legitimated structures, and which threatened organisational goals (1996:626).

Work done in the 1970s, which sought to refine the foundational thinking about power, was in each case built separately from these two bases. Hardy and Clegg point to there being little done in terms of bridging, attributing this to the reluctance and indifference of management researchers, sociologists and political scientists to 'look more widely at the broader body of social sciences of which they are a part' 1996:629).

Here I focus on Lukes' and Hardy and Clegg's work to identify dimensions of power, also the dimension of power from/with (Starhawk), and on Foucault as a significant contributor to thinking on power.

Lukes' three dimensions

Stephen Lukes challenges some conceptions of power when he writes

Power is a capacity, not the exercise or vehicle of that capacity (Lukes 2005:70).

Lukes (1974, 2005) extended the understanding of power as advocated by pluralist writers such as Dahl. Lukes (2005:73) quotes Spinoza who identifies two aspects to power; as *potentia* (the power to make something happen) and *potestas* (power over another).

Lukes' three dimensions, arranged in order of subtlety/covertness, can be summarised as:

1. (One-dimensional, pluralist view)

The ability to make decisions:

A has power over B – the power to command.

This exercise of power is observable, overt. The focus is on decision making, exercised in formal institutions.

2. (Two-dimensional view, of the pluralist's critics)

The ability to influence and manipulate the debate over the kinds of decisions that actually reach the stage of being made:

A dictates the agenda, excluding B's issues – the power to gate-keep. Potential issues and conflicts are not brought into the open, to the benefit of A and to the detriment of B. This exercise of power can be both overt and covert.

(Lukes notes this aspect has been ignored by classical pluralist writers).

3. (Three-dimensional view)

The ability to shape public opinion/thinking so that it reflects the interests of the powerful, securing consent or resignation:

B internalises A's conception of power without question or recognition – the power to mould the way other groups think about what is possible, against their latent interests.

The third dimension is the power of A to define what counts as a grievance, and to mould B's perceptions and preferences in such a way that B accepts that she/he does not have any significant grievances. The focus is on the systems of domination.

The power to shape people's thoughts and desires is the most effective kind of power, since it pre-empts conflict and even pre-empts an awareness of possible conflicts. This dimension of power can be played out for example in processes of socialisation, the control of information, and the control of the mass media.

(Lukes argues that pluralists over-emphasise the distinction between decision-making, public opinion and power).

In his recent revision of his 1974 book Lukes has defended his thesis and extended the argument for a three dimensional view of power. This concept of power as domination remains essentially contested by those (e.g. Hardy and Clegg) who claim power has a structural dimension.

A fourth dimension

We are also prisoners in a web of power that we have helped to create (Hardy and Clegg 1996:637).

Clegg (1994) saw power as flowing through systems, rather than being invested in any one elite group or elite individuals. He introduced the idea of *power to* – which releases people's potential to act. This theory sees power as dynamic rather than static, consequently there is the potential to shift the dominant discourse(s), these are open to being reviewed and revised. Individuals are not necessarily 'pawns of capital' but are capable of redefining the rules of the game.

Hardy and Clegg extended Lukes' framework to identify what can be thought of as a fourth *structural* dimension of *power as the medium necessary for responsible, collective action*. They describe power as 'a web of relations in which all actors operate, and from which the prospects of escape are limited for dominant and subordinate groups alike' (1996:681), and go on to assert that 'there is scope, then, for change, based on a productive, facilitative side of power' (1996 :691), and that

resistance and power... comprise a system of power relations in which the possibilities of, and tensions between, both domination and liberation inevitably exist ... [leading to] a reconceptualization of power from a duality (domination) or resistance (liberation) that had existed in sociological literature (1996:636).

They assert that 'power requires understanding in its diversity even as it resists explanation in terms of a singular theory' (1996:636).

Our systemic inter-existence and power

We need to dream the dark as process, and dream the dark as change, to create the dark in a new image. Because the dark creates us (Starhawk, 1982: xiv).

The boundaries of what we understand power to be/consist of are further extended by Starhawk, who contributes an understanding of what she identifies as *power with* and *power from within*, most specifically how this can contribute to a sort of earthed confidence, (which as a facilitator I believe I need to be able to distinguish from that confidence coming from an oppressive hegemony).

Starhawk describes *power with* (or *synergy* in 'systems' terms) as the power which comes through joining in-community (relational power). *Power-with* or *synergy* is not a property one can own, but a process one engages in. She also identifies *power from within* as that which can be described as spirit, immanence, or 'the power of the low, of the dark' (Starhawk, 1982).

The political issues of our time are also issues of spirit, conflicts between paradigms or underlying principles. If we are to survive the question becomes: how do we overthrow, not those presently in power, but the principle of power-over? How do we shape a society based on the principle of power-from-within? (Starhawk, 1982:4).

Both Starhawk and Joanna Macy make a strong case for the inclusion of the transpersonal and spiritual¹⁵⁶, both in developing a mindful practice and in our analysis of the political context and understanding of systems theory. As Charles Péguy the French poet and theologian wrote;

Everything starts in mysticism and ends in politics.

My work as facilitator is to create (and hold) opportunities for connection and community (*power with*), and to do that I need to feel in touch with *power-from-within* and alert to politics. Otherwise I am being naive and potentially colluding with the status quo, both in the way that power informs me and my practice (moment to moment), and the way that it enables me to keep a sense of our interconnectedness each with another, and with the earth (our profound inter-relatedness or deep ecology); a sense also informed by systems theory. This has been described by Joanna Macy as stepping into the role of the Shambala warrior¹⁵⁷.

¹⁵⁶ In my learning journey there has been an element of repossessing the transpersonal aspects of my life and practice, and this is evident in my 'writing as inquiry' using imaginal writing to explore meaning for myself.

¹⁵⁷ The coming of the kingdom of Shambala is the subject of a Buddhist prophecy (Choegyal Rinpoche of the Tashi Jong community and others); the prophecy says that

Foucault

I will admit it took me several years to be able to appreciate (hear) what Michel Foucault had to say. I think purely because I find his writing style dense and excluding in its use of language¹⁵⁸.

It's easier to understand Foucault's approach to theorising about power if you remember that he describes himself as an 'historian of systems of thought'. This means that his descriptions of the dynamics of power often refer to the past rather than using current terminology e.g. his use of the term 'gaze' a reference to Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon¹⁵⁹. He describes *discourses* as 'gazes' and the dominant discourse as the *dominant gaze* – power exercised through the dominance of a particular form or forms of knowledge expressed through disciplinary practices, e.g. the medical model of disability is a 'gaze' which has oppressed disabled people, who prefer to work from a social model of disability. *Will to power*, a term which Foucault takes from Nietzsche, refers to the notion that meanings, ideas, rules, discourses, knowledge, and 'truths' do not emerge naturally, but are produced in order to support, advantage or valorise a particular social group.

Foucault sees power as present in *all* social relationships. Power is not a thing that is held and used by individuals or groups. Rather, it is both a complex flow *and* a set of relations between different groups and areas of society, which changes with circumstances and time.

I find his proposition that power is embedded in the system (and can be characterised as arbitrary, invisible and pervasive) both stimulating and confirming of the ways in which some of my client organisations perceive

at a time when the whole earth is in danger, when the future of all sentient life hangs in the balance, the kingdom of Shambala emerges. This kingdom exists in the heart of what Choegyol calls 'warriors' who must go into the corridors of power where decisions are made to dismantle the 'mind-made weapons' threatening the future – meaning the dangers which have arisen from our own decisions, our own lifestyles, and our own relationships.

The tools or weapons of the Shambala warrior are compassion and insight – the recognition and experience of our pain for the world, and the recognition and experience of our radical, empowering interconnectedness with all life.

¹⁵⁸ There were (are) times when I have struggled to understand Foucault on a cognitive, intellectual level, but there have also been times when my anger at his lack of accessibility, what I perceive as his incongruent behaviour has made him unreadable. Accessible language is an issue for me. It is important to me to create a thesis which is as accessible as possible to readers, that does not require them to have been members of the academy. This is an example of the issue of congruence (between intent and espoused values, and action or values in use) which crops up throughout my thesis as a theme.

¹⁵⁹ A tower placed in a central position in a prison. From the tower guards would be able to observe every cell and the prisoners inside them would be unable to tell whether they were being observed or not. Prisoners would assume they were observed and behave accordingly.

their situation. As Deetz describes it (in a poetic description of a ruthlessly self-perpetuating system);

The force of these arrangements is primarily in producing order, forgetfulness and dependency (Deetz 1992).

But I believe it's simplistic and inaccurate to infer that therefore there is no potential for people to 'work' power for themselves, and as I understand Foucault he too saw this potential. Hence, for me, the importance of the potential role of empowering models of facilitation and leadership, and the need for them.

Foucault contends that 'ordinary' people cannot 'hold' power anymore than politicians, business people, or the military can (he views these groups as relatively ineffective and inefficient in their exercise of power, despite their position). Instead power moves around and through different groups, events, institutions, and individuals – but nobody owns it. Although power acts on people in a non-egalitarian way, at the same time it acts on *everyone* – the dominant as well as the dominated. It is not solely negative (working to repress or control people); it is also highly productive. He points out that part of the dynamic of power is that power produces resistance to itself; it produces what we are and what we can do; and it produces how we see ourselves and the world.

Foucault's theorising on power¹⁶⁰ could be summarised as:

- The seat of power has moved from that of the monarchy (past) to the empty seat of democracy (present), where power is 'owned' by no-one.
- The exercise of power has changed from brutality (e.g. torture) to hidden coercions (e.g. dominant gaze).
- 'Biopower¹⁶¹' plays a central role, controlling the bodies and minds of subjects – but, the rules by which some people are produced as normal or healthy, and others are excluded, ensures that opposition and resistance are built-in effects.
- The dominant discourse/gaze – power exercised through the dominance of a particular form or forms of knowledge expressed through disciplinary practices.
- Regimes of truth – 'the 'truths' and 'falsehoods' of particular discourses have been constituted historically; he [Foucault] showed that no assumption of reality can exist as anything more than its representation in language' (Hardy and Clegg, 1996:635).
- Power is operating wherever social relationships exist. Foucault's focus is on 'the way these power relations are organised, the forms

¹⁶⁰ It is a tribute to Foucault's continuing relevance that both Hardy and Clegg (1996) and Lukes (2005) give space to reviewing his changing thinking about power.

¹⁶¹ Biopower (and biopolitics) refer to the technologies, knowledges, discourses, practices and politics used to bring about the production and management of a state's human resources. Biopower analyses, regulates, controls, explains and defines the human subject, its body and behaviour (Danaher et al, 2000).

they take and the techniques they depend upon, rather than the groups and individuals who dominate or are dominated as a consequence' (Garland 1990:138).

Later, (1982) Foucault wrote that power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments may be realised (1982:221).

and in 1987;

the subject constitutes himself (sic) in an active fashion, by the practices of self.. not something the individual invents by himself [but] ... patterns that he finds in culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed upon him by his culture, his society and his social group (1987:11).

Working with power in my practice

The attribution of power to specific agents in my working context is relatively straightforward on one level e.g. decision makers, budget holders, but more subtle when it comes to the socialising messages (sometimes covertly) given and received of worthiness or stigma. A crafty facilitation practice is needed to work with a sophisticated understanding of the diversity of the expressions of power, and a scanning attention for the way it is expressed in the systems worked into. There are lots of edges to the term 'crafty', including 'the' craft – meaning witchcraft, a link to my use of my witchiness, the transpersonal/symbolic and imaginal. Another meaning is simple proficiency, and although I advocate here for a facilitation based on more than the use of tools and techniques, proficiency is a valued aspect for me. There is also the potentially degenerative use of the term crafty – meaning the shape-shifting nature of it, sometimes seen as being duplicitous. I contend that shape-shifting can be generative when in service of a positive end i.e. addressing inequalities and injustice. For me, the way in which I work with an awareness of power, means that I do need to shape-shift, to have in mind the diversity of ways in which power is expressing itself in the contexts in which I am working, between the individuals I'm working with, and within those systems¹⁶².

Earlier in this chapter (*Political context and power*) I have described where I came from in my largely economic-based understanding of power (Marx), and the journey towards a broader understanding of the diversity and multiple expressions which make up the web of power in

¹⁶² I discuss my model of crafty facilitation practice, including this aspect of shape-shifting, in *Chapter 6 Conclusions*.

which we are all ensnared (Hardy and Clegg). My parallel learning journey has meant that my facilitation practice has matured from a tempered 'down on the street throwing stones' approach (as I describe in *CPC Practice Account 1*) towards a more sophisticated facilitation practice which entails a degree of shape-shifting in order to engage with the whole system and to support all those I work with. I describe aspects of this more crafty facilitation practice in *Practice Accounts 4, 5, 6 and 7*, where you can see me working with a greater compassion and respect for radical interconnectedness. This increasingly entails supporting the powerful as well as the relatively powerless in order to develop the conditions for co-intentional education (Freire).

In each of the seven practice accounts my clients are trying to achieve very different things; for some it is about policy formation, others service development and review, others conscientisation. A crafty facilitation practice is alert to working on multiple levels at the same time when opportunity permits. For example policy development for the LGA (*Practice Account 4*) offered opportunities for developing learning communities amongst LGA staff. A service development agenda for agencies in Tewkesbury offered the chance to consciousness raise with groups of older people (*Practice Account 6*).

Conscientisation

When working with groups like DUG or the timebank¹⁶³ there is a process of conscientisation through action research;

learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality (Freire, 1993:17).

An interesting question to hold is what has the quality to begin to get into, and get to grips with, 3rd and 4th dimension issues of power for the stakeholders I'm really interested in? – I think this is not resolved, nor is it resolvable but Paulo Freire offers some qualities for facilitating this pedagogy, which ring true for me;

- o 'To achieve this praxis ... it is necessary to trust in the oppressed and in their ability to reason' (1993:48)
- o 'A revolutionary leadership must... practice *co-intentional* education' (1993:51).

In my practice I work with the assumption that participants hold the answers, but need facilitation to reach them/dialogue to find them. Making sense meetings, as we have developed them, work 2nd, 3rd, and 4th dimensions of power issues, bringing the system together to learn and act¹⁶⁴. This facilitation operates at both the structural and discourse

¹⁶³ See *Chapter 5 Practice Accounts*.

¹⁶⁴ We being me and my colleagues over the years. We took the basic design of Making Sense Meetings from the design of Rapid Appraisals and then adapted and extended them.

levels of power inequality (Clegg and Hardy) and can be seen in the Children's Commission and Tewkesbury practice accounts.

Clegg and Hardy (1996) distinguish between the way power difference is taken in at the level of *discourse* (way of framing one's existence), and the level of the *structural* (which they associate with Foucault and Gramsci), and say not only is it in the way one has been made to think, but its also structural; you can't undo it by the way you behave, or by thinking your way out of it.

So how futile is it to try to change/affect the system? Am I wasting my time and others' hopes and energy? Can my work really leave a group able to shift attitudes in the NHS (DUG) or affect the wider system's understanding (Children's Commission)?

Freire asks, and answers, similar questions:

[b]ut if the implementation of a liberating education requires political power and the oppressed have none, how then is it possible to carry out the pedagogy of the oppressed prior to the revolution? (1993:36¹⁶⁵)

And answering his own question distinguishes between

systematic education which can only be changed by political power, and *educational projects*, which should be carried out *with* the oppressed in the process of organizing them (1993:36 emphasis in original).

For Foucault freedom comes from exposing to view the anonymous historical processes through which any and all subjectivity is constructed, in questioning our inherited identities and values, and in challenging received interpretations of them (Hardy and Clegg 1996:637).

Freire advocates a reflexive practice leading to action (1993:48), and asserts

[T]o surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity. But the struggle to be more fully human has already begun in the authentic struggle to transform the situation (1993:29).

In these terms (and my experience), it does not ultimately matter how 'successful' specific campaigns or projects are; the process of conscientisation itself has begun the process and is, by implication, unstoppable/irreversible.

Working with compassion for power-holders

I think I/we have made a difference, even if it has not always been wholly sustainable. It's the reason why I have changed who it is I work

¹⁶⁵ Freire P (1993, revised edition) *The pedagogy of the oppressed*. London: Penguin.

with; now I try to work *both* with the community and with the power holders, and why I believe strongly in capacity building core skills in client groups e.g. research and inquiry skills, design skills.

The nature of the work I do, now at this (Pig and Deer) moment when I am willing to work with compassion with powerful clients and their positioning in systems (see Tewkesbury practice account), has more of the capacity to affect the wider system's understanding than simply working to stoke-up the advocacy of people whose voices may never get heard, and which may actually raise the resistance of the system.

Wartenburg (1990) writes about 'beneficent', *transformative power*, using power to empower another, by increasing the other's resources, capabilities, effectiveness and ability to act, he gives as examples motherhood (as described in some feminist writing), apprenticeship, therapy and teaching¹⁶⁶. To which I would add facilitating, mentoring and coaching. This is the power I hold, and the power I need to be mindful not to abuse.

Power and community organisations

In the earlier sections of this chapter I described how difficult it has been over the last 40 years for community and voluntary organisations to be funded and operate within the wider field dominated by the statutory agencies.

DiMaggio and Powell describe organisations as being coerced to conform through the process of institutional isomorphism¹⁶⁷ (1983) – in which the power over organisations held by powerful others such as funders affects behaviours, as do assumptions of 'the norm' and the mimicking of what are perceived to be the successful ways of operating of more mainstream and powerful organisations. We can see the effects of institutional isomorphism on the voluntary sector in its rush to take over service provision from statutory agencies, often without proper consideration of the consequences.

Can power be granted, or must it be taken?

Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift (Freire1970:29).

¹⁶⁶ Wartenburg undertook a study focusing on 'power over', he distinguishes between domination and types of 'beneficent' power.

¹⁶⁷ Isomorphic (different in ancestry but having a similar form of outcome/findings), or isoclinal (different starting points, and having the same slope or direction). The same qualities of isomorphism and isoclinalism were observed in the emergent in groups by John Heron, (1992).

There is a paradox around the idea of empowerment- for is it not necessarily true that if I give it to you then I can take it away again?

Taylor helpfully summarises different conceptions of power and their implications for empowerment:

Structuralist interpretations (e.g. Marx, Weber) imply confrontational strategies which can overthrow the power holders; *pluralism* implies a strategy that helps excluded groups to compete; *transformative* and *post-modern interpretations* imply more subtle understandings of the ... process and the windows of opportunity that can be found within it (2003:93).

If one views power as a fixed sum resource empowerment is problematic, as for anyone to gain power (possibly against the resistance of others) another must lose or be prepared to give up power. There is a direct relationship between those who have more power, and those who have less. As Freire describes it, it is a symbiotic relationship. From a Marxist perspective political power in a capitalist society cannot, ultimately be separated from economic power, therefore the 'empowerment' of the relatively powerless has inherently limited possibilities in a capitalist state. Tilly's theory of 'durable inequalities' (1999) contends that there are processes (in capitalism) which produce durable inequalities, and that these processes have the capacity to resist attempts to dislodge them, which suggests attempts to empower or to become empowered will be ineffective (e.g. the women's movement's gains, and subsequent losses¹⁶⁸).

But a positive-sum analysis abandons the idea of structural positions having ascribed interests attached to them fixed by the relationship of groups to the means of production, as in a Marxist analysis. Instead in Clegg's words it conceives power as:

A set of techniques, and disciplinary practices as well as more or less stable or shifting networks of alliances between wholly contingent forms of identity (1994:156-7).

It focuses on the practices and strategies by which people are 'recruited' to come to view their own interests in the way in which the power-holders wish them to. This links to Marris's definition of power as *the power to command* (1996:87-8), in which power is defined as the 'mastery of contingencies and the power to control uncertainty as much as control of assets'.

¹⁶⁸ Our recent experience of the gains made by the Women's Movement in the 1960s and 70s, being subsequently systematically undermined by right wing governments and squandered by an unaware younger generation, do not fill me with optimism that long term change can be achieved without either revolutionary change or a long and concerted campaigning that looks to make change sustainable ; reshaping institutions and cultures.

Consent, compliance and resistance

[Power is] the production of the desired effects.
Bertrand Russell.

Where there is power there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power (Foucault, 1980[1976]:95).

Power operates 'through' individuals rather than 'against' them and helps constitute the individual who is at the same time its vehicle (Garland 1990:138).

Why is there so little resistance to the exercise of power? Why do groups consent to their own subjugation? There have been many theories; these resonate for me (with examples from my practice in brackets¹⁶⁹):

Schattschneider explained non-participation by proposing 'whoever decides what the game is about also decides who gets in the game', (1960:105), his work informed Bachrach and Baratz's development of the concept of the second face of power – controlling the agenda/decision-making process (LPT – who gets invited to the partnership table).

Lukes (1974, 2005) argued power could be used to shape people's perceptions, and so avoid conflict, highlighting the issue of political quiescence – so explaining the failure of the proletariat to rise up (as Weber and Marx had predicted) and explaining the continued dominance of elite groups.

Gramsci describes hegemony as the dominant classes' ability to define 'reality' to support their privileged position as justified, so preventing resistance. Lukes, quoting Przeworski explores the material basis for hegemony;

The consent which underlies reproduction of capitalist relations does not consist of individual states of mind but of behavioural characteristics of organisations. It should be understood not in psychological or moral terms. Consent is *cognitive* and *behavioural*... [Consent] corresponds to the real interests of those consenting ... [there are limits beyond which it will not be granted] beyond these limits there may be crises. (Przeworski 1985:136, 145-6 in Lukes 2005:9).

Elster writes on the shaping of desires; *adaptive preference formation* – 'the trimming of desires to circumstances' (Elster 1983:116). Elster uses Aesop's fable of the fox and the grapes in which the fox, unable to

¹⁶⁹ See Chapter 4. *Practice Accounts* for details.

reach the grapes declares that they are sour, to illustrate the unconscious shaping of desires. (Tewkesbury older people – had no expectation of services to meet their *wants*¹⁷⁰).

Yet another perspective on the 'mystery' of lack of resistance is **Mann's** theory of 'organisational outflanking' (1986:7), which focuses on the relative power of the participants and identifies two aspects: One is *ignorance* – the absence of knowledge resources on the part of the outflanked e.g. strategy, rules, protocol, allies, so that resistance is isolated, disconnected and easily overcome. The 'underdogs' are also divided against or invisible to each other (Barnes 1988:101), for example an organisation ensuring actions are experienced in individual rather than collective ways e.g. competitive advancement programmes, sales targets or other 'mechanisms for constructing an egocentric environment' (Hardy & Clegg:628). (Children's Commission – tendency for deprived neighbourhoods to act in isolation or compete for resources).

The second aspect is ensuring that those who may have the *knowledge to act also are aware of the costs of doing so, and that these may outweigh the benefits/chances of success*. The onerous daily grind also reduces the energy to rebel. (LGA – passionate staff worn down by repeated reorganisation).

Freire likens liberation to a painful childbirth and writes

the oppressed, who have adapted to the structure of domination in which they are immersed, and have become resigned to it, are inhibited from waging the struggle for freedom so long as they feel incapable of running the risks it requires ...

They prefer gregariousness to authentic comradeship; ... the security of conformity with their state of unfreedom to the creative communion produced by freedom and even the very pursuit of freedom. (1970:29-30).

Foucault identifies the potential for what he terms *resistance*; arguing that the forces of power cannot do effectively what they claim to do; that is regulate and control human thoughts and behaviour. And that there is no *one* authoritative discourse, institution, or group in a state, but instead a number of competing discourses and groups which produce different versions of events. He contends that people recognise the 'effects of power' around them and so *can* resist them. As there is no 'final authority' (such as a belief that it is the word of god authorising these discourses), people are ultimately free to choose what they believe in.

Foucault argues that power produces things other than 'docile bodies'. An example of this resistance is the prison system, which is supposed to

¹⁷⁰ See Chapter 4. *Practice Accounts*.

produce compliant bodies and behaviour, but in fact the opposite happens. Prisons 'create' criminals in that prisoners become convinced that they are all the things (deviant, lazy, evil, useless etc) that the system says that they are. Prisoners can share ideas, experiences, and strategies and learn to be more effective criminals while in prison, and this is reinforced because the prison system treats them as criminals. So in this example power was successful in 'writing' people, but the effects are not what were intended, they are a form of resistance.

However I think this optimism about the potential for resistance needs to be linked to what we also know about the limited *capacity* of excluded and otherwise abused people to find the strength to make choices, rather than accept the forces of power (be docile bodies) through the dominant discourse (see below *Uncertainty, attachment, anxiety and depression*).

Clegg is more optimistic arguing that if power is embedded in ideas and language (hegemonic and dominant ideology) then it should be amenable to being reshaped (Clegg, 1989:17-18). Significant arguments for the potential of this reshaping are put forward by Giddens and Habermas. Giddens describes the role of active agency in the creation and maintenance of structures and meanings, and the possibility of 'transformative power' through reflexivity (Giddens,1990). In this latter his argument is similar to that of Freire (quoted earlier). And Habermas's concept of 'communicative action' emphasises the potential for collective dialogue to confront the 'reality' created by the powerful (1984).

Healey draws and builds on Habermas and Giddens to argue the potential of *social learning strategies* to shift power and remove hegemonic distortions through 'inclusionary argumentation', bringing into account diverse ways of knowing and valuing across stakeholders (Healey, 1997). I know from my own practice that groups coming together through processes like Making Sense meetings and LGPs which are carefully structured to facilitate social learning, can change their experience of their *power to influence*, to have *voice*, and to *create knowledge*. I am less able in many cases to identify a shift in their power to *decide, command/demand, gate-keep* or to create a *dominant gaze*. One can look back and identify that the Trade Union movement created a Labour Party which eventually won political power in government, but it could also be said that the same Labour Party's shift to New Labour is evidence of an inevitable loss of power from those working class roots organisations and the usual elites (ex-public school boys, lawyers, business) are exerting power through the vehicle of New Labour (Tilly's durable inequalities). For myself, I try to keep hold of the optimism of the will – the belief that meaningful empowerment is possible and sustainable, but the pessimism of the intellect is strong.

Taylor (2003) identifies different forms of resistance to power by the 'powerless' through parody (e.g. working to rule), refusing to acknowledge others' power games, alliances and social movements. She goes on to identify the risks inherent in taking an extreme (amoral) post-modern view – that we can 'pick and mix' our identities – with Freeman's tyranny of structurelessness (Freeman, 1974) in which the exercise of power does not go away but becomes invisible and unaccountable.

When I first started out on this learning journey (1996) I was asking myself questions about power and structure and naively, I think now, exploring working and 'organising' with a lack of prescribed form or structure (see CPC practice account). My search was for an approach which would fully allow participants to find their own form and voice, and which would challenge traditional forms of leadership and lead to disseminated leadership. It was only through the supported explorations of this learning journey (using my tutors and peer tutorial groups to inform my own inquiry into power, leadership and facilitation in my work with CPC and within Vision 21) that I came to appreciate the value of the option of taking hierarchical leadership (Heron, 1989) as a facilitator to frame a process and dialogue, and so to free participants to explore their relationship to power within the group and in the wider context.

Uncertainty, attachment, anxiety and depression

We know from studies of community development that mutuality, reciprocity, conscientisation, and collective action can enhance an individual's self esteem and sense of security. But what factors determine whether and how people engage in these processes in the first place? These factors would seem to include, but also to go beyond the structural to embrace the individual personal.

I believe that there is a need for a multi dimensional view of empowerment which recognises, but is not confined to, a structural analysis. Feminism offers a sense of what this is like and its benefits – the personal *is* the political. We need a view which encompasses not just the structures of power but also the *factors affecting individual power*.

Maslow (Maslow, 1943) told us that basic survival needs had to be met before 'higher' needs came into play and people could 'self-actualise'; meaning 'it's difficult to think about having your personal capacity built when there's damp running down your walls'¹⁷¹.

¹⁷¹ Quote from an anonymous community member in a regeneration area.

People also need the *psychological resources* to engage in processes based on co-operation. Peter Marris reminds us

As John Bowlby wrote, the strategies that a child develops in his or her relationship with attachment figures become the basis of the strategies that he or she will follow throughout life... Attachment theory is not only a theory of emotional development... but a theory of cognitive development. It is a theory of how we create meaning; how we make a world which is sufficiently predictable for us to be able to handle it and act purposefully (1996:192).

Marris sees what he calls 'the politics of attachment' as a circular relationship, where social circumstances partly determine the quality of attachment, and the strategies derived from the experience of attachment in turn determine how people will make the choices that they are able to make as adults in terms of rearing their own children, politics, and their careers. Marris goes on to point out that shifts in UK society from more co-operative to more competitive ways of managing uncertainty are socially destructive. Examples include changes in welfare provision, and employers' commitment to employees, undermining the conditions in which secure attachments can flourish. In addition behaviours on a societal level model that the *lack of reciprocity is a privilege of power* (e.g. the state shedding responsibility for free continuing care for older people, and employers such as James Dyson shedding responsibility towards loyal UK employees and moving their manufacturing business abroad to maximise profits¹⁷²).

We are faced with living in an uncertain world where the more powerful forces in society force the weaker to bear the burden of uncertainty in what Taylor calls

a chain of displacement (from central to local government; from employer to employee; from richer to poorer) which constantly shifts the burden of adjustment on to the most marginalised (Taylor, 2003:94).

Furthermore members of excluded communities with fewest resources to withstand this abuse are more likely to have suffered early loss of a primary attachment figure in their own lives, to have experienced attachment as insecure and to lack supportive relationships (here we see Marris's circular relationship ongoing from generation to generation). Evidence from bereavement studies tell us that these factors, together with vulnerability to sudden and traumatic losses, make recovery from loss more difficult and predispose people to chronic grief and depression (Marris 1996).

People can only defend themselves against this abuse, from the crushing anxieties of constant insecurity and fragile self esteem, by psychological withdrawal; by being as passive and indifferent as possible, or through

¹⁷² And at the same time buying for his personal use a stately home and estate built with the profits from the slave trade.

what appear to be 'irresponsible' or self-defeating acts of resistance such as moments of spontaneous pleasure and acts of emotional release, for example those found through drugs and joy-riding.

Resistance takes the form of a kind of irresponsibility, which the rest of society condemns, but which is closely related to self-respect, because it is the only kind of self assertion left to them (Marris 1996:107).

Marris argues that victims make sense of their situation in a way which makes it stable and predictable, but that this reinforces their exclusion. These are not the 'hard working families' so beloved of our politicians¹⁷³.

Coming from a family casework background Chris Warren (1996) argues that people cannot be empowered politically before they are empowered personally; identifying a journey in four stages, which would be very familiar to anyone working in community development, which he calls an 'empowerment journey':

- engagement and individual support;
- support/care from peer group;
- taking action;
- citizenship through participation.

Warren argues that this journey brings care and counselling perspectives in the early stages of the journey together with collective and political perspectives in the later stages. I believe that these stages are not as sequential as Warren suggests, but are often parallel processes which are also iterative. We are complex creatures and our support needs may be being met on one level allowing us to focus on participating and campaigning (as I did as a school student and throughout my adult life), but those enduring needs for security and attachment (and the strategies learnt at an early age for coping) can re-emerge when triggered by uncertainty and need to be addressed again (as I commit to doing through my therapy). I meet a similar parallel and iterative pattern in the groups I facilitate.

For example: The inquiry group I facilitated for the DUG project drew people together to share coping strategies for living with diabetes and to inform service change. My early conversations with people as I recruited to the group engaged people and offered some individual support, but right from the start of our meetings together conscientisation was happening alongside processes of support and care. A desire for action grew quickly within the group (second meeting) and they were taking action together advocating change to service planners (citizenship through participation) by our fifth meeting. The support and care members gave each other was present right up to and including our final meeting.

¹⁷³ Paul Abbot's TV series *Shameless* describes this resistance well and with respect. Abbot was himself raised in a similar community.

Warren compares and contrasts the working agendas of social workers and community workers in relation to this empowerment journey and group work. He presents social workers as seeing groups as having an expressive function and being concerned primarily with member's needs for emotional support and the group's capacity to nurture and offer this support to members. Whereas he characterises the community worker as seeing the group as instrumental, it's main concerns being external goals and matters of nurture and support being in-service to meeting these goals.

In my experience as both a social worker and working in community development I did not find these differences so pronounced in practice; neither in my own practice nor in that of many people working around me. As a social worker trained at the end of the 1970s I still saw a significant part of my role to be working on a political level (conscientisation) with clients, in an appropriate (to them) balance with their needs for individual support. And as a person involved in community work, particularly as a researcher/facilitator working with community groups, I have been very aware of the need to work with the personal in parallel with the political. In fact the personal has been very much the political; one is nested within the other.

Here I have explored the influences on the ways I have thought about and worked with power. In the next chapter I draw together examples of my practice since 1996 which illustrate my approach and demonstrate working with these ideas.

Chapter 4

WORK PROJECTS 1995 - 2004

<p><i>Projects and type of facilitation</i></p> <p><i>(i.e. directly employed, partnership facilitation, large group process, whole systems work, Co-operative inquiry, pragmatic action research, teaching)</i></p>	<p><i>My role</i></p>	<p><i>Key issues</i></p>	<p><i>How I was inquiring</i></p>	<p><i>Relationship to learning journey</i></p>
<p>Directly employed</p>				
<p>GHA (-1997) I worked for a health authority and planning and participation manager. This included working with communities (of geography and interest) to identify health needs and priorities for service design and delivery, and within the organisation to promote a culture of involvement and participation.</p>	<p>Employee Facilitator Partnership building</p>	<p>Tempered radical Power and powerlessness Muted voices Legitimacy, ways of knowing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workbooks • Journals • Writing as reflection • Tutorial group • Supervision sessions • Dream work and reflective therapy sessions 	<p><i>Tigers moment</i></p>

Partnership facilitation				
<i>Projects and type of facilitation</i>	<i>My role</i>	<i>Key issues</i>	<i>How I was inquiring</i>	<i>Relationship to learning journey</i>
<p>PRACTICE ACCOUNT 2 Locality Planning Team (LPT) (1997 –2000) During the period covered by this inquiry I spent three years working (on a part time basis) as the facilitator of a multi agency planning team. In this context I ranged between first, and second person inquiry. This included an (unsuccessful) attempt to initiate a co-operative inquiry group which included LPT members. Larger projects involved voluntary and community sector organisations, as well as statutory agencies in developing partnerships for regeneration and health projects.</p>	Partnership building Project developer Facilitator/ consultant Researcher	Power and powerlessness Muted voices Legitimacy , ways of knowing Systemic 'mirroring' Partnership development Conflict management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workbooks • Journals • Writing as reflection • Tutorial group • Supervision sessions • Dream work and reflective therapy sessions • Getting feedback from others 	Tigers to Unicorn moments

<i>Projects and type of facilitation</i>	<i>My role</i>	<i>Key issues</i>	<i>How I was inquiring</i>	<i>Relationship to learning journey</i>
<p>SRB 6 (2000). I facilitated the process of developing a multi sector partnership to make a bid for Single Regeneration Budget funding. This involved early research with black and minority ethnic (BME) groups into their needs and hopes for the project, as well as meetings with the statutory agencies working in the area and leading the bid for funding. The partnership inquired into its own formation (2nd person inquiry) and my reflections were largely a first person inquiry into how it was to do this work well and with integrity and self care in a distressing context of conflict, distrust, racism, rivalry and competition for influence and funding. Issues of how I was affected by the pain (due to experience of racism) of the black groups I was working with, how it affected inter-group behaviours, how I navigated around this.</p>	<p>Partnership building Project developer Facilitator/ consultant Researcher</p>	<p>Power and powerlessness Muted voices Legitimacy, ways of knowing Practical to propositional ways of knowing Sense of place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workbooks • Journals • Writing as reflection • Tutorial group • Supervision sessions • Dream work and reflective therapy sessions 	<p>Unicorn moment</p>

<i>Projects and type of facilitation</i>	<i>My role</i>	<i>Key issues</i>	<i>How I was inquiring</i>	<i>Relationship to learning journey</i>
<p>Gloucestershire Neighbourhood Projects Network (1998 – ongoing). Work with this network of eight community development projects has included developing a partnership to bid for SRB5 funding. Also the development of a bid for Healthy Living Centre funding – which has involved facilitating a partnership between reluctant and suspicious NHS partners and the eight ‘stropky’ community organisations. Current work includes facilitating a partnership and developing a learning set of the Healthy Living Centre projects and NHS partners. I have also used appreciative inquiry with the eight projects and their network organisation as part of a review of roles and the organisation. These projects have contributed both first and second person inquiries.</p>	<p>Researcher Partnership building Project developer Facilitator/ consultant</p>	<p>Power and powerlessness Muted voices Legitimacy, ways of knowing Practical to propositional ways of knowing Sense of place Ways of presenting knowing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workbooks • Journals • Writing as reflection • Tutorial group • Supervision sessions • Dream work and reflective therapy sessions 	<p>Tigers to Pig and Deer moments</p>

<i>Large group process design and delivery</i>				
<i>Projects and type of facilitation</i>	<i>My role</i>	<i>Key issues</i>	<i>How I was inquiring</i>	<i>Relationship to learning journey</i>
<p>PRACTICE ACCOUNT 1. CPC - Stroud Community Planning Conference (1995–1997)</p> <p>CPC was a community owned and led regeneration initiative in a small market town in the south west of the UK. As a local person I was involved with a group of activists in creating the initiative, and as a facilitator in designing and delivering the CPC process.</p> <p>The processes used included capacity building, information gathering, meeting design and delivery and the design and delivery of two large community planning conferences each involving several hundred people.</p>	<p>Project developer Facilitator in its most direct and usual usage Researcher</p>	<p>Power and powerlessness Muted voices Legitimacy, ways of knowing Practical to propositional ways of knowing Sense of place Ways of presenting knowing e.g. video, photos etc</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workbooks • Journals • Writing as reflection • Tutorial group • Supervision sessions • Dream work and reflective therapy sessions • Video of me working • Photographs of me working • Co facilitator reflection and planning sessions • Core group meetings • Design group meetings • Writing for and presenting at conference sessions • Getting feedback from others 	<p>Tigers moment</p>

<i>Large group process design and delivery</i>				
<i>Projects and type of facilitation</i>	<i>My role</i>	<i>Key issues</i>	<i>How I was inquiring</i>	<i>Relationship to learning journey</i>
<p>PRACTICE ACCOUNT 4 Large Government Agency (2000 – 2004) Working with the LGA on an area, regional and national level to embed an awareness of social policy issues and develop skills for social processes e.g. stakeholder consultation, involvement of incident affected communities in planning. This work has contributed to my first person inquiry, second person inquiry within the consultant team (including designing and piloting collaborative writing), and processes facilitated have included stakeholder involvement in policy development, and whole system events. The project includes introducing action research as a (social process congruent) tool into the LGA, and working with internal design teams and a project board.</p>	<p>Facilitator/ consultant Researcher Coach/ mentor</p>	<p>Power and powerlessness Muted voices Legitimacy, ways of knowing Practical to propositional ways of knowing Ways of presenting knowing Values espoused and in use Systemic mirroring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workbooks • Journals • Writing as reflection • Consultant team meetings • Collaborative writing • Writing for consultant and client team • Tutorial group • Supervision sessions • Dream work and reflective therapy sessions • Getting feedback from others 	<p>Unicorn to Pig and Deer moment</p>

Large group process design and delivery

<i>Projects and type of facilitation</i>	<i>My role</i>	<i>Key issues</i>	<i>How I was inquiring</i>	<i>Relationship to learning journey</i>
<p>Natural Resources Institute (1999). Third person inquiry process with the whole staff group of the NRI around developing a vision for future role for the Institute in a changing context, using Real Time Strategic Change and Future Search elements in a new design for a 200 person workshop. This included working with an internal design team to reinforce the co-operative inquiry and learning aspects.</p>	Facilitator/ consultant Coach/ mentor	Power and powerlessness Muted voices Legitimacy, ways of knowing Ways of presenting knowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workbooks • Journals • Design group sessions • Writing as reflection • Consultant team reflections, particularly travelling to and from project 3 hours drive away • Dream work and reflective therapy sessions 	Unicorn moment
<p>King's Fund Carers Impact Project (1997- 99). Involved designing and facilitating a third person inquiry process in three areas (Windsor and Maidenhead, Brighton and Hove, Surrey) into services to support Carers. Each area involved holding two day conferences (one of them over two days) based on Future Search influenced designs. Carers and service providing organisations were involved in planning the events and the follow up, as well as participating in the conferences themselves.</p> <p>Me relaxing about using specific tools (Future search) and exploring modifications. Enjoying co-working companionship.</p>	Partnership building Facilitator/ consultant	Power and powerlessness Muted voices Legitimacy, ways of knowing Practical to proposition al ways of knowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workbooks • Journals • Consultant team sessions • Carers Impact team sessions • Writing as reflection • Tutorial group • Supervision sessions • Dream work and reflective therapy sessions 	Tigers to Unicorn moments

Whole systems work with client organisations				
<i>Projects and type of facilitation</i>	<i>My role</i>	<i>Key issues</i>	<i>How I was inquiring</i>	<i>Relationship to learning journey</i>
LG Agency (2000 – 2004) See above outline.		See above	See above	See above
<p>Vision 21 (– 1999) This was Gloucestershire’s Local Agenda 21 (LA21) group. I was involved in the Facilitators Network, a capacity building group set up to the increased use of support participative and deliberative processes as part of the LA21 agenda.</p> <p>It was through this initiative that I learnt ‘formal’ facilitation skills and was able to practice them and start to develop my own style.</p>	Partnership building Facilitator/ consultant Researcher	Power and powerlessness Muted voices Legitimacy, ways of knowing Sense of place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workbooks • Journals • Writing as reflection • Tutorial group • Supervision sessions • Dream work and reflective therapy sessions • Facilitators learning network group meetings • Vision 21 Governing council meetings • Getting feedback from others 	Tigers moment
Co-operative inquiry groups				
<p>PRACTICE ACCOUNT 3 Diabetic services user group (DUG) (1998–2002) This group has been a three year co-operative inquiry, which I designed and facilitated. The group has been effective in influencing service review and development, and the implementation of the National Service Framework for Diabetes services in Gloucestershire.</p>	Facilitator/ consultant Researcher	Power and powerlessness Muted voices Legitimacy, ways of knowing Exploring self disclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workbooks • Journals • Writing as reflection • Tutorial group • Supervision sessions • Dream work and reflective therapy sessions 	Unicorn to Pig and Deer moments

<i>Projects and type of facilitation</i>	<i>My role</i>	<i>Key issues</i>	<i>How I was inquiring</i>	<i>Relationship to learning journey</i>
<p>PRACTICE ACCOUNT 7 Governance project (2003 – 2004) The Governance project was a Home Office funded project inquiring into the measures needed to support wider participation in the governance of community and voluntary organisations.</p> <p>A group of CARPP consultants were involved in facilitating co-operative inquiry groups of workers in a capacity building role to identify needs. I worked with a colleague on a co-operative inquiry with FairShares participants (members of a time bank) in the Cotswolds to identify their needs for congruent governance styles and develop (and enact) actions plans for a wider participation in the governance of their project.</p>	Facilitator/ consultant Researcher	Power and powerlessness Muted voices Legitimacy, ways of knowing Practical to propositional ways of knowing Sense of place Ways of presenting knowing e.g. mapping, diagrams, pictures, photos etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workbooks • Journals • Writing as reflection • Tutorial group • Supervision sessions • Dream work and reflective therapy sessions • Co facilitator meetings for reflection and planning • Photographs of me working • Getting feedback from others 	Pig and Deer moment

Pragmatic action research¹⁷⁴				
<i>Projects and type of facilitation</i>	<i>My role</i>	<i>Key issues</i>	<i>How I was inquiring</i>	<i>Relationship to learning journey</i>
<p>PRACTICE ACCOUNT 6 Tewkesbury Older People's Services research (2001 – 2002).</p> <p>A participative research project with older people, who worked as co-researchers to interview their peers about support needed to maintain independence. I was involved in designing and facilitating the second person inquiry process. Third person inquiry elements involved a 'Making Sense' meeting between older people participating in the research and a wide range of service providing agencies and voluntary organisations, at which plans and commitments were made for service developments. I also designed and facilitated the 'Making Sense' (of the data) meeting.</p>	<p>Partnership building Facilitator/ consultant Researcher Coach/mentor</p>	<p>Power and powerlessness Muted voices Legitimacy, ways of knowing Practical to propositional ways of knowing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workbooks • Journals • Research team meetings • Writing as reflection • Tutorial group • Supervision sessions • Dream work and reflective therapy sessions 	<p>Unicorn to Pig and Deer moments</p>

¹⁷⁴ I'm using this term to describe 'doing a research inquiry in as action-research-a-way as possible'. Rather than the slightly different, though related way in which Greenwood and Levin use the term (1998).

<i>Projects and type of facilitation</i>	<i>My role</i>	<i>Key issues</i>	<i>How I was inquiring</i>	<i>Relationship to learning journey</i>
<p>PRACTICE ACCOUNT 5 Children's Commission (2001 – 2002). Two of the second and third person inquiries undertaken with GNPN groups have been a series of Rapid Appraisals (participative and accountable needs assessment and planning), and the Children's Commission: involving working with children and their parents to identify their vision of play facilities for the neighbourhoods. Using video boxes, photography, walks guided by children, story telling to camera, and a series of focus groups.</p>	Facilitator/ consultant Researcher	Power and powerlessness Muted voices Legitimacy, ways of knowing Practical to propositional ways of knowing Sense of place Ways of presenting knowing e.g. video, photos etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workbooks • Journals • Writing as reflection • Tutorial group • Supervision sessions • Dream work and reflective therapy sessions • Video of me working • Steering group meetings • Research team meetings 	Unicorn to Pig and Deer moments
<p>Sure Start – hard to reach groups needs assessment (2002 – 2003) Sure Start is a government funded scheme to provide learning and play support for under 4s in specific areas of deprivation. I worked with colleagues to research the barriers to participation (use of the services, involvement in running the project) for members of a range of hard to reach groups including drug users, lone fathers, homeless families, and minority ethnic families, families with disabled or sick carers. As a research team we worked with project workers and a wide range of stakeholders to identify and reach members of hard to reach groups, gather and make sense of the data.</p>	Facilitator/ consultant Researcher	Power and powerlessness Muted voices Recognising different kinds of knowing The creation of empowered space Sense making in real time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workbooks • Journals • Writing as reflection • Tutorial group • Supervision sessions • Dream work and reflective therapy sessions • Research team reflections • Reflection with co-facilitator 	Pig and Deer moment
Teaching				

<i>Projects and type of facilitation</i>	<i>My role</i>	<i>Key issues</i>	<i>How I was inquiring</i>	<i>Relationship to learning journey</i>
<p>West Midlands Social Economy Partnership (WMSEP) (2003)</p> <p>WMSEP was a regeneration partnership set up to fund projects in the West Midlands. The chosen approach was action research and I worked with CARPP colleagues to design and deliver a series of learning group meetings with project workers (themselves regeneration practitioners) to support them as they learnt to use an action research approach to designing and delivering their projects.</p>	<p>Facilitator/ consultant Learning facilitator/ mentor</p>	<p>Power and powerlessn ess Muted voices Recognisin g different kinds of knowing The creation of empowere d space Sense making in real time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workbooks • Writing as reflection • Supervision sessions • CARPP consulting supervision sessions • Dream work and reflective therapy sessions • Getting feedback from others 	<p>Pig and Deer moment</p>