Pragmatism, Knowledge Production and Democratic Renewal: The E14 Expedition

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Abstract

Western democracies are characterised by a significant level of distrust and widespread feelings of disenfranchisement amongst ordinary citizens. The rise of populist political parties, figures and movements reflects the gradual development of a strong and increasingly vocal anti-establishment sentiment amongst millions of people who feel that the ideas and actions of political elites and experts are at odds with and do not represent their own lives. As sites where political elites are educated and socialised, universities (and the knowledge they produce) have a role in both causing and potentially solving this democratic deficit. There is a role for universities to alter their epistemological practices in ways that respect and give voice to the multiplicity of experiences, beliefs and issues in the world. There is also scope for universities to engage in civic education both on and off campus.

This thesis reflects on an experiment that attempted to do this, applying the principles of philosophical pragmatism and the democratic vision of John Dewey in a participatory research project in east London to convene publics of citizens around pressing social issues and develop their power to effect change. This experiment highlighted the importance of having an underlying, place-based, civic infrastructure comprising relationships and sociality to do this work. There were further challenges in adequately respecting pluralism in a diverse world, and building citizen power in a context where experts are deemed to know best. The thesis ends by examining the wider lessons of this experiment. It looks at the potential of community-university partnerships to act as vehicles for democratic renewal, arguing that universities have the potential to re-cast themselves as mediating institutions to facilitate democracy in their local communities.

Keywords

Democracy, community-university partnerships, epistemology, participatory research, place, pluralism, publics, pragmatism.

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Introduction: The Argument Being Made in this Thesis

This thesis has been written during a time of great political turmoil in western democracies. Within the past few years, formal politics has become animated by the rise in prominence of atypical political figures and the popular articulation of views and values that clash with 'mainstream' thinking. Political outsiders such as Donald Trump in America and Nigel Farage in the UK have made waves in the political establishment by challenging the status quo. Promising to 'make America great again' and helping to galvanise a vote for Britain to the leave the European Union, Trump and Farage respectively are the faces of a populist sentiment amongst citizens that has been characterised as right-wing, promoting national interests and national identity over a cosmopolitan vision of open borders and free movement (Goodhart, 2017). Yet elsewhere, figures such as Jeremy Corbyn of the Labour Party and Nicola Sturgeon of the Scottish National Party in the UK have too been elevated to positions of power on populist promises to put the people first, on a more left-wing platform.

Defining these various populist movements as left or right wing may be less helpful than identifying what is common to them. Many of the citizens who have backed outsider political figures and parties and propelled them to positions of power are asserting their own values and discontents as a challenge to the values and practices of the established political regime whose knowledge and actions are often argued to be at odds with 'ordinary' people. Against economic globalisation, the free movement of people and capital, and values of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism, millions of ordinary people have revolted, asserting the importance of tradition and putting the interests of themselves and their communities first (Inglehart and Norris, 2016; Goodhart, 2017).

The gap between political elites and ordinary citizens and the populist challenges that have exposed it were perhaps nowhere less understood or more unexpected than within universities. Data from Morgan (2016) combined with anecdotal evidence from those working in universities suggests that academics simply did not see events such as the election of Donald Trump or the British vote to leave the European Union coming. Moreover, the reactions of academics to these events since suggests at best a lack of understanding, and at worse contempt, for the views and actions of these citizens.

This thesis argues that these events reveal the role that universities play in maintaining the gap between political elites and ordinary citizens in western democracies.

Universities are the sites where such elites are educated and socialised, equipped with the knowledge and values upon which they will act in their future jobs in the media, civil service, government, business, consultancy and research. As such, universities are important mediating institutions of democracy. Shaped by the 'cult of the expert' that prioritises the abstract, systematised, universal knowledge found through rationalist inquiry and contained within books, the mediating role of universities tends to involve the creation of expert professionals (graduates) equipped with specialist knowledge and a particular set of worldviews and values from which they contribute to public decision-making processes that affect the lives of millions of ordinary citizens (Boyte, 2015; Goodhart, 2017).

In engaging in this process of knowledge production and consumption, universities generally reproduce the disconnect between political elites and ordinary citizens, and contribute towards the marginalisation of people's views by 'expertise' which has wider implications in engendering a situation of democratic malaise and citizen powerlessness, characterised by growing levels of disaffection from politics and rising citizen apathy (Crouch, 2004; Mair, 2013). To combat this, universities could play a key role in changing this by rethinking their approach to knowledge production, embedding academic inquiry in the experiences and issues facing communities outside academia, and allowing citizens to lead these inquiries in an attempt to amplify their voices and find solutions to pressing social issues that are ignored or mis-handled by formal political processes.

Such an approach to knowledge production within universities was pioneered by sociologists at the University of Chicago during the early 1900s. Drawing on pragmatist philosophy that stressed the multiplicity of truths, experiences and social worlds, these sociologists developed an engaged approach to research explicitly designed to contribute towards democratic renewal in 20th Century America (Harney et al, 2016). Inspired by the democratic vision of pragmatist John Dewey, this approach to research sought to act as means by which ordinary citizens could come together as publics to identify shared issues, develop solutions and attempt to effect change. These interventions took an explicitly place-based approach, working with all those citizens who inhabited a particular geographical area to conduct collective inquiries in which citizens, rather than outside experts, took control to address the issues that mattered most to them. This approach to research went on to shape the development of broad-based community

organising, an approach to democratic renewal that has been influential in the USA and UK since the 1940s.

The approach of the Chicago School speaks directly to contemporary uses of participatory action research (PAR) within the social sciences. With roots in a range of scholarly and activist traditions, these approaches have been widely used in the discipline of Human Geography, which has a long tradition of using academic inquiry not just to understand the world but to attempt to change it too (Askins et al, 2017). Geography has always been concerned with 'earth-writing', with its practitioners seeking not just to write about the world by mapping, describing and explaining the phenomena they observe 'out there', but by seeking to use their role as producers of knowledge to shape people's actions and re-write the world (Gregory, 2009).

The desire of geographers not just to understand the world but to change it has characterised the discipline since its inception, with a commitment amongst scholars to engage with various non-academic audiences to benefit Empire, trade, education and social planning (Wills, 2014). This commitment is also evident in the work of radical geographers, whose foray into disciplinary debates was signalled by the launch of *Antipode* in 1969. Often characterised as being dominated by Marxist accounts of the world, this work included anarchist, feminist and a range of other critical theory perspectives (resulting in the adoption of 'Critical Geography' as the title to encompass this range of approaches) over time. The Critical Geographical project has maintained itself as a 'New Left' political endeavour to produce knowledge as part of a strategy '*to discard the obsolete and to construct anew…systems which are consistent with our ideals'* in order to create *'a whole new geography based upon the precepts of equality and justice'* (Peet, 1969: 3-4).

Over the past 30 years concerns have been raised about the direction, ethics, utility and politics of this project. Debates have surfaced over the gap between academia and activism (Blomley, 1994; 1995; Tickell, 1995); the lack of (policy) relevance of our work (Massey, 2001; Martin, 2001; Martin, 2002; Dorling and Shaw, 2002); the threats and opportunities afforded by postmodernism and the lack of grand narratives to radical research (Chouinard, 1994; Mitchell, 2004; Amin and Thrift, 2005; Smith, 2006); the publics that benefit from our work and academics' status as 'public intellectuals' (Ward, 2007; Castree et al, 2008; Mitchell, 2008); the performativity of our knowledge

(Gibson-Graham, 1996; 2006; 2008); the impact of our research (Pain et al 2012; Slater, 2012; Philips, 2014; Conlon et al, 2014; Pickerill, 2014; Pain, 2014); and the relative strengths and weaknesses of more participatory forms of inquiry (Pain, 2005; Kinpaisby, 2008; Autonomous Geographies Collective, 2010; Fuller and Askins, 2007).

These debates have sparked a range of arguments and innovations within critical geography. What was once a relatively narrow field dominated by Marxist accounts of the world is now home to a range of complimentary and conflicting approaches to inquiry that all seek to change the world through engagement with a host of non-academic others.

This thesis situates itself within these debates. It argues that the recent populist challenge to the political establishment reinforces the project to ensure that Human Geography, as the discipline of earth-writing, change the way it produces knowledge. I argue that universities, through the process of knowledge production, can play a representative function in democracy by articulating the knowledge and experiences of ordinary citizens and bringing them into the public sphere. However, current approaches are inadequate in fulfilling this function, and are not allowing the diverse range of citizens in western polities to articulate their interests, address their specific issues and act upon their values and beliefs. Building on earlier arguments made with colleagues that there is a need for a more open-ended approach to PAR that is less pre-committed to specific sets of values, social identities and issues, this thesis reflects on the findings of an experiment that sought to practice 'process pragmatic' research over a two year 'expedition' in one postcode of east London (Harney et al, 2016).

Inspired by the work of geographer Bill Bunge (1969; 1971a; 1971b), the E14 Expedition was a participatory action research project that sought to convene publics comprising of ordinary citizens to explore shared issues and help build the power of these people to effect change. The project was intended to be open-ended, not presupposing any issue or prioritising specific social identities or communities as the focus of the activity. Instead, it started with a specific place and sought to respect the plurality of identities, issues and social worlds within it. The project was designed to test how PAR could be used to contribute towards democratic renewal, reconnecting citizens to politics through processes of collective inquiry, and in turn help it to cultivate a range of civic skills and capacities to enable the participants to play a greater role in democratic

life. Moreover, beyond Human Geography and the lessons of a particular approach to PAR, the thesis also seeks to reflect on the wider potential of universities to act as mediating institutions of democracy that can help connect citizens to politics by facilitating collective problem-solving action. Emerging community-university partnerships (CUPs) in the USA and UK were explored, with an eye on their potential to contribute towards democratic renewal and the barriers that might prevent this. As such, the research underlying this thesis sought to answer the following questions:

1. How can PAR be conducted in a pragmatic way so that it respects the experiential knowledge of communities, and the plurality of this knowledge?

2. To what extent can process pragmatism help build the power of publics to address pressing social issues and develop the capacity of citizens to engage in public work?

3. What is the role of place in facilitating this work?

4. How can universities support effective democratic renewal through institutional commitments that engage citizens in processes of collective problem-solving and provide an education for democracy?

In what follows, the seven chapters of the thesis outline the rationale for this project, explain what was done, the impact this had and the wider implications for thinking about epistemology and the development of Human Geography. Chapter One explains the current democratic malaise within western democracies and analyses the particular role that universities and their approach to knowledge production can play in maintaining a gap between the lives and experiences of ordinary citizens and the knowledge and actions of political elites. It argues that there exists an academic orthodoxy in knowledge and values which is at odds with the values and experiences of large numbers of citizens, and that this serves to marginalise these peoples' knowledge from public decision-making processes and debate.

Chapter Two presents philosophical pragmatism, the democratic vision of John Dewey, and the place-based approach of broad-based community organising as epistemological and ontological framings for engaged, participatory research that can help universities to reconnect the experiential knowledge of a range of citizens with democracy. It then goes

on to situate such an approach to research in terms of its potential contributions to existing PAR within Critical Geography.

Chapter Three provides an overview of the methods used in the E14 Expedition, as well as an account of E14 as a place and collection of communities. In the first of the empirical chapters, Chapter Four reflects on the ability of the expedition to bring citizens together in collective problem-solving action, reflecting on the importance of underlying civic foundations of relationships and sociality, as well as the role of place in helping to deepen these. It also exposes the challenges of respecting pluralism in PAR within diverse polities characterised by sharp differences and historical divisions. The chapter ends with a discussion about the challenges of building citizen power for change in contexts where politics and problem-solving have become professionalised.

Chapter Five focusses on the learning and personal development of participants in the expedition. It reflects on the development of a range of civic skills and capacities and argues that universities can use PAR projects in order to provide an education for democracy for citizens, to allow them to develop their individual and collective capacity to engage with democratic processes. In Chapter Six, community-university partnerships are explored as potential institutional vehicles that could help transform universities into mediating institutions of democracy. It questions the extent to which CUPs can play this role or whether they may simply serve to reproduce the professionalization of politics and maintain an orthodoxy in knowledge. Chapter Seven summarises the thesis by articulating the key lessons of the expedition, and its implications for the theory and practice of Human Geography, as well as reflecting on what this means for the role of universities within democracy. As such, it advocates for a particular type of Community-University Partnership to help enhance the mediating function of universities in democracy.

Chapter One: Democracy, Knowledge and the University

Introduction

In this Chapter I make an argument that the current populist challenge to the political establishment in western democracies can in part be related to the detachment of higher education institutions from the lives, experiences and worldviews of large numbers of ordinary citizens and that if this challenge is to be met and these citizens' views are to be taken seriously, then universities need to change the way they produce knowledge and train their students.

The chapter begins with a more detailed overview of the populist challenge in western democracies, before turning to an exploration of the idea of democracy. The democratic malaise in western democracies is then framed as a form of political decay linked to social, cultural and economic changes. Next the professionalization of politics is considered as a key cause of this decay, linking this to the rise of a 'cult of the expert' in politics. The role of universities and the way they produce knowledge in reinforcing this cult is then looked at, before turning to recent attempts to transform universities' role in democracy away from producing a class of elite experts and towards facilitating citizen action in collective problem-solving. The chapter ends by advocating for more of this work and the need for a suitable philosophical framework to guide it, which I argue should be pragmatic and open to a plethora of perspectives, and I make the case for philosophical pragmatism in the following chapter.

1.1 The Populist Signal to Western Democracies

These are interesting times for observers of western democracies. Recent events and developments have thrown the health of our established political system directly under the spotlight. 2016 was the year that shocked the political establishments in the UK and USA with the UK population voting to leave the European Union, in the 'Brexit' referendum in on the 23rd of June, and Americans electing political outsider Donald Trump as their next president. These two events, which sent shockwaves through the political establishment in both countries were the latest manifestations of longer term trends in these democracies.

Within the UK, voter turnout at local and general elections has been falling gradually for years and membership of political parties amongst citizens has long been in decline (Keen, 2015). Additionally, there has been a growing level of scepticism and distrust

amongst most people towards elected politicians and the political system they work within (Jennings et al, 2014). The UK General Election in May 2015 was one of the first obvious signs of an emerging and powerful anti-establishment sentiment amongst British citizens, acting as a precursor for Brexit, and a taster of the Trump win in America. Writing in 2015 Chwalisz argued that the results of the election reflected a 'populist challenge' to the established institutions, actors and processes of the UK political system.

Analysing these election results in light of new survey data conducted on the British public's satisfaction with the current political system, Chwalisz' (2015) argument presented a picture of the UK political scene in which the public has become distrusting of and detached from formal political systems and politicians, driving a surge in votes for smaller, non-traditional parties and politicians standing on a populist, anti-establishment platform. The number of votes cast for these parties, such as the Greens, Scottish National Party (SNP), and United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) rose in comparison with those cast for Labour, Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats (Chwalisz, 2015). Two of these parties, UKIP and the SNP, stood on explicitly populist platforms with their leaders Nigel Farage and Nicola Sturgeon claiming to speak for ordinary, working people and rallying against the 'Westminster elite'. For Chwalisz (2015: 14) these parties succeeded in gaining votes by 'tapping into a growing feeling…that political elites simply do not understand or care to understand the everyday experience of the population', with both presenting an 'attack [to] the status quo, the establishment, [and] politics as usual'.

Written before his election in November 2016, Inglehart and Norris' (2016) paper seeks to explain the popularity of Donald Trump and the reasons behind the 'Brexit' vote by situating them in wider trends across Europe. There has been a rise in support for populist parties across Europe, and they argue that this if for two reasons. Firstly, support for populist parties comes mainly from working class people, unemployed or those on low incomes, whose sense of themselves as economic losers of the globalisation project and experiences as living at the wrong end of the income inequality divide have bred an anti-establishment sentiment. These people feel aggrieved and ignored by the politicians elected to serve them, suffering from wage depreciation, underemployment and job insecurity, as well as feeling under threat from mass immigration promoted by open border policies. For Inglehart and Norris, this experience of economic insecurity is a key driver in support for populist parties.

Alongside this, they argue that another key factor in the rise of anti-establishment sentiment is what they term a 'cultural backlash' by once dominant social groups against a perceived transformation in the social and cultural values that are influential in society. These people, often older men who were born in the countries they still reside in, are said to be reacting against the values of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism, which threaten traditional values, identities and ways of life. As such, in voting for populist parties, these citizens are expressing discontent, and even rejection, of the values and worldviews which have become dominant in shaping the actions and policies of those who make up the political establishment.

Similarly, Goodhart (2017) has sought to frame the rise in populist parties and movements in the UK in terms of a divide between two 'value clusters' in these societies. He argues that the Brexit vote, for example, represents a backlash by large numbers of citizens against the dominance and values of a cultural and political elite. He argues that the latter hold a worldview that is welcome of change and 'progress', internationalist, and that values autonomy, self-realisation and individualism over stability, community and tradition. In contrast, the former hold more to a worldview that is not broadly welcome of change due to experiences of losing out, which places a high value on security and familiarity and has strong group attachments, both local and national. For Goodhart, recent populist challenges to the political establishment in western societies are driven by a revolt of large numbers of ordinary citizens, against the values of a smaller section of citizens who are fewer in number but disproportionately hold decision-making and opinion-forming positions in society and thus make up the political elite.

Inglehart and Norris (2016: 6) define populism 'as a philosophy that emphasises trust in the wisdom and virtue of ordinary people ('the silent majority') over the 'corrupt' establishment'. They argue that 'populism reflects deep cynicism and resentment of existing authority, whether big business, big banks, multinational companies, media pundits, intellectual elites and scientific experts, and the arrogant and privileged rich'. There are many populist movements and parties, and these are not characterised as populist according to a shared ideology, belief or world-view but by their anti-elitist stance, with rises in populist support reflecting feelings of powerlessness amongst citizens in their ability to shape the world how they wish through the established systems of democracy (Canovan, 1999).

As such, in Western Europe, America and the UK, populism has been driven by a dissatisfaction amongst large numbers of ordinary citizens with political elites who are held to be responsible for pursuing and mishandling economic globalisation, EU integration and increased immigration over the past 25 years at the expense of the wellbeing and wishes of the public. This populism has also been driven by conflicting worldviews between 'ordinary' citizens and political elites with feelings of loss, humiliation, fear and disappointment on the part of the former motivating a backlash against the latter (Goodhart, 2017). As such we have a range of populist parties and movements, which sit along the left-right wing continuum, with those on the left tending to make economic arguments and rallying against economic liberalism such as Syriza in Greece or Jeremy Corbyn and the Momentum movement in the British Labour party, with those on the right appealing more to cultural arguments about loss of identity and the pace of change, such as UKIP. In some cases, populist movements appeal to both, for example with Donald Trump in America (Goodhart, 2017).

Chwalisz' (2015) notion of the 'populist signal' suggests that the success of populist parties and politicians is linked to the inability of the current political system to accommodate and attend to the views, interests and experiences of all voters and the failure to engage citizens meaningfully in public decision-making. Chwalisz' report presents survey data showing that the majority of SNP, Green Party and UKIP voters believe that the system of governing in the UK 'needs a great deal of improvement', and that the majority of voters of these parties (and of Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat voters too) feel that their voice does not count in the decisions taken by national politicians. From this analysis, she argues that the success of parties like the SNP and UKIP reflects the existence of significant popular dissatisfaction and disaffection with the state of democracy in the UK, with people feeling that their voice is not being heard. In addition, her report highlights that there is a strong appetite amongst the public for reform of the *way* that politics is done in the UK to engage ordinary citizens more fully in decision-making processes and allow them to participate in addressing their issues beyond casting their vote.

Indeed, it is this populist signal and the pressure this has exerted on politicians, that has reinforced efforts to transfer greater levels of political power from established political systems to local communities and ordinary citizens. The UK government's Localism Act (2012) introduced a suite of legislative changes to devolve political power from central

and local government to citizens and communities in specific places. As part of this agenda, communities have new powers in the form of rights to take over the provision of public services, protect 'assets of community value' from purchase by private interests, and the right to veto rises in council tax (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011). In addition, a number of different mechanisms for engaging citizens in decision-making over their local area have been promoted, including neighbourhood planning forums, neighbourhood community budgets, and parish councils (Wills, 2016b). Whilst debate exists over the motives for doing this (Clarke and Cochrane, 2013; Featherstone et al, 2013), the localism agenda represents a significant move to decentralise political power from the state to the people (Wills, 2015).

As mentioned in the introduction, the divide between political elites and ordinary citizens has been reinforced by universities and the higher education system. As Goodhart (2017) argues, this system creates a class of professionals whose worldview and values are at odds with the values of large numbers of ordinary citizens. This divide has helped engender a crisis in the institutions of representative democracy, with the processes and institutions established to give citizens control over public decisions and ensure that their views are adequately represented in public action, not working as (perhaps) they once were. Citizens have become so detached from the formal political system and the people within it that the very legitimacy of this system is now in serious question. Runciman (2015) argues that democratic political systems have always been characterised by moments of crisis and low-confidence in their ability to meet the challenges of the day. These allow for citizens to articulate public discontent and for action to be taken to change ideas, practices and elites in order to adapt to changing circumstances. It seems today too that we are living in a time of heightened democratic crisis and malaise, which poses a number of threats but also opportunities for change. In order to understand these dangers and the role of universities in creating and potentially addressing them we first need to go back to basics and understand the ideals of democracy and how these have been put into practice over time.

1.2 Back to Basics: The Democratic Ideal from Athens to Westminster

Democracy is the most pervasive political system in the world today. Geographers, Clive Barnett and Murray Low (2004) define democracy as both the '*idea* that political rule should, in some sense, be in the hands of ordinary people' and 'a set of *processes and*

practices for translating this idea into institutional popular rule' (Barnett and Low, 2004: 1 emphasis added).

As an idea, or concept, democracy is 'a term with no single and agreed precise meaning' (Arblaster, 1987: 1) but at its core it reflects the notion of government by the people. From this basic understanding of a system of political rule in which the people have the power to make decisions, come a range of visions of democracy where the desirability and practicality of government by the people is reworked. However, central to all visions of democracy, as contested and changeable as they are, 'lies the idea of popular power, of a situation in which power, and perhaps authority too, rests with the people. That power or authority is usually thought of as being political, and it often therefore takes the form of an idea of popular sovereignty- the people as the ultimate political authority' (Arblaster, 1987: 8). As such, the essence of the idea of democracy is the 'norm of ordinary people participating in the actions affecting them' (Barnett and Low, 2004: 12).

If democracy can be considered as signifying some form of popular control over political decisions for a given set of people, the translation of this idea into practices and institutions is less simple, with a variety of actual and proposed processes taking place across time and in different places (Arblaster, 1987). The ideal of democracy has been pursued through the experimental development of political institutions and processes in different times and places, each responding to unique cultural, economic and political circumstances.

The most famous early example of these experiments took place Athens in 5th Century BC. Previously governed by unelected rulers, Athens was transformed into a system where large numbers of free, adult males were entitled, as citizens, to participate directly in public decision-making (Dahl, 1989). Going back to the original Greek meaning of the word Ober (2008) explains that 'democracy' comes from the words 'Demos' (the people) and 'Kratos' (power). Defining 'power' as the capacity to act, he asserts that Athenian democracy was a system in which the people (demos) had the collective capacity to effect change in the public realm.

In Athens this was translated into a system of government where recognised citizens participated directly in discussion about the collective matters of the city. Drawing on Aristotle's *The Politics* (335-323 BC), Held (2006) provides an overview of Athenian democracy as being based on the election of public officials from amongst the whole

citizenry, equal voting power amongst citizens, the disqualification of property owning status as a criterion for election to office, and short terms for officials in office. As well as the election of officials, citizens in Athens participated in decision-making processes by sitting on citizen juries to adjudicate over public matters, and engaging with the Assembly as the sovereign authority over public matters by attending regular forums and debates. The Assembly met 40 times each year and deliberated over all decisions to achieve consensus in order that decisions and questions reflected the will of the people. Discussion and deliberation was intended as a means to establish the common good, as opposed to self-interest, as the driver of political decisions (Dahl, 1989)

For the Athenians, democracy was justified as a means of developing the human virtues associated with citizenship so that people could separate themselves from animals. Engaging in association with one's fellow citizens in an attempt to establish and work towards the common good was seen by Athenians as the best way to ensure the virtuousness and happiness of everyone (Dahl, 1989). As such, whilst based on the exclusion of 'non-citizens', such as the young, women, immigrants and slaves, Athenian democracy was probably the first system of popular rule in the world, and its principles have travelled across space and time to shape notions and practices of democracy today.

The direct democracy of Athens, based on deliberation amongst all citizens at the Assembly coupled with the election of officials to enact the will of the people, differs significantly from the democracies in which we live today. Whilst direct democracy was easier to facilitate in Athens, with a strictly delimited citizenry and a population size of around 40,000, today, we live in democracies operating at the scale of the nation-state with the majority of adults living there enjoying full citizenship status (Held, 2006). This has led to the development of alternative political institutions that attempt to put the ideal of democracy into practice in large, complex polities.

Many of the key ideas about democracy that act as a template for democratic institutions in the Western world today come from the political tradition of liberalism, a heterogeneous collection of ideas that stress the value of individual freedom and political equality (Barnett and Low, 2004). The institutions and processes associated with liberal democracy and liberal democratic politics include the existence of territorially demarcated nation-states; regular and competitive elections; voting procedures to elect representatives of the people to government; the existence of political parties and special

interest/pressure groups; policy-making; lobbying; and legislation (Barnett and Low, 2009). Due to the dominance of these ideas and practices, most western democracies in the world today can be classed as liberal-representative democracies in which people-power is institutionalised through forms of 'popular representation, involving [the] periodic mass election of representatives to authoritative legislatures…under conditions of free speech and association' (Barnett and Low, 2009: 70).

As the dominant model of democracy in practice today, the institutions of liberal-representative democracy must be recognised as an important and valuable means for enacting the ideal of popular power in shaping society. Indeed, over time and in different places, liberal democratic arrangements have enabled a range of 'autonomous actors [to] engage with, act for, influence and remain accountable to other actors…folding together diverse interests, plural identities, and divergent world-views in patterns of collective action that are decisive but not certain, and always open to being challenged, revised and re-shaped' (Barnett and Low, 2009: 7).

However, as the preceding discussion of the state of western democracies has shown, it appears that at present that there is strong popular dissatisfaction with the institutions of representative democracy. Indeed, the 'populist challenge' to such institutions suggests that there is a sense amongst the people that they do not have the power to shape the world according their desires and interests.

1.3 The Democratic Malaise as Political Decay

Following Fukuyama (2014), the present day democratic malaise can be explained by the idea of 'political decay'. Political decay describes the situation in which political institutions stop functioning in the ways that were intended, posing blocks to the effective functioning of political systems. All political institutions are subject to decay, the source of which is the inability of the institution to adapt to changing circumstances, particularly the rise of new social groups and their political demands. Fukuyama argues that decay occurs because institutions, conceptualised as stable, valued and recurring patterns of human behaviour that facilitate collective action, are created to meet the demands of specific circumstances and when these change, institutions are too set in their ways to adapt.

Fukuyama identifies two main reasons why institutions fail to adapt. The first is cognitive, with people being slow to abandon or revise their mental frameworks of the

world, even when these frameworks' ability to make sense of the world becomes increasingly suspect. The second relates to the role of elites within political institutions. Those at the top of institutions have an interest in maintaining their power and position and thus utilise their privileged access to resources and information in the institution to maintain the status quo and resist challenges from outsiders.

As such, the democratic malaise in the West, evidenced by recent populist challenges to established political institutions, reflects the inability of these institutions to adapt to changes in society and amongst the people. Institutions such as political parties, parliament, government, elections and so on, are failing to adapt to changes in the experiences, identities and interests of the general public, and as such, the public feels that these institutions no longer adequately represent its will.

In the context of the UK, the decline in popularity and effectiveness of the main political parties and the two-party system reflects the extent of political decay and the impact on democracy[1]. As mediating institutions of democracy, the function of parties is to allow the people to articulate their interests into a coherent societal program, provide a mechanism for electing political leaders, and win power for these leaders to enact the program in government (Duverger, 1954; De Leon, 2014).

However, declining membership rates suggest that parties are becoming less and less able to fulfil this role. Mair (2013) suggests that this is because political parties and the two-party system in the UK are no longer able to adequately represent the diversity and plurality of social identities and communities within modern polities. He argues that the two-party system in the UK was based on coherent, stable identities existing within the British polity, which do not exist today. The Labour party being based on strong, working class communities situated across the country, linked by common experiences based on work, occupation, living conditions and culture, whilst the Conservative party was based on a similar electoral constituency, but linking middle class communities and culture.

However, due to societal changes these two constituencies have broken up and been replaced by a diversity of experiences, identities and forms of community, which the two

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[1] Although, the results of the June 2017 General Election raise questions over this, with the Conservative and Labour parties gaining the majority of votes at the expense of the smaller, non-traditional parties. The reasons for this are difficult to speculate on.

main parties have failed to adapt to and reflect. At the same time as these social changes occurred, Mair also suggests that rather than being attuned to their changing electoral constituencies, actors within the parties became more and more concerned with gaining state power and winning elections, in order to maintain their position and role in the parties and society at large. As such, there was a shift in these parties as control became gradually transferred from the party membership at the grassroots towards elected MPs and officials in party headquarters, so that party elites could maintain their access to power and influence (Katz and Mair, 2009). This process of elite capture further highlights how the main political parties and the two-party system have lost much of their representative function in democracy, with parties and citizens becoming detached from one another and existing in separate worlds.

As well as changing social identities, economic changes within western democracies have also played a part in distancing political institutions from the interests and will of the people. Crouch (2004) argues that economic globalisation and the concomitant rise in the power of corporations due to increased mobility and the ability this affords them to pit nation-states against each other in a competition for investment, has served to weaken the link between the interests of the public and elected representatives by making governments more beholden to the will of large companies than the electorate. Alongside this, changes to the working lives and leisure patterns of the majority of citizens wrought by neoliberal globalisation have reduced the amount of time available for people to meaningfully engage with democratic institutions. Precarious and low-paid work, coupled with the rise in a consumerist culture (Standing, 2014) has resulted in many citizens being unable or unwilling to invest the time needed to ensure that political institutions accurately represent their interests (Scott and Wills, 2017).

In addition to these social, cultural and economic changes, another reason for the decay of our democratic institutions is the historical rise of the 'cult of the expert' in politics, and the resultant professionalization of politics. Boyte (2004) argues that over time, various discourses around democracy have constructed politics as an elite activity to be carried out by various 'experts' on *behalf of* the people, rather than *by* the people themselves. This has led to the professionalization of politics in western democracies and the distancing or exclusion of the majority of ordinary citizens from public decision-making and collective problem-solving.

For Boyte, the cult of the expert has been key in contributing towards the political decay of established institutions; by detaching them from the lives of ordinary citizens it has prevented them from being able to adequately adapt to social, cultural and economic changes amongst the demos. But why are experts and political elites so detached from the experiences and values of citizens? In the following sections I seek to argue that this detachment has its roots, at least in part, in a rationalist epistemology that values the knowledge gained through book learning over the knowledge gained from personal experience as the basis of political decision, and in the role of universities as sites where political elites are trained in such knowledge.

1.4 The Professionalization of Problem-Solving

All systems of political rule require knowledge upon which to base decisions and address problems. This 'political knowledge' can be split into two types: moral and instrumental (Dahl, 1989). The former describes knowledge about the *ends* of politics, i.e. what sort of world do we want to live in and what issues do we want to address, whilst the latter refers to knowledge about the *means* of politics, i.e. once the goals of political decisions have been agreed, what are the best ways to achieve these?

If democracy is about citizens working collectively to solve their shared problems, then the way democracies in the West do this today is dominated by the cult of the expert. This cult champions the authority of scientific knowledge and technical expertise as the only valid form of knowledge to inform our decision-making processes. It has engendered a political system where elite experts bring solutions to the masses of ordinary citizens, who are viewed as ignorant, passive and needy. These citizens are encouraged to stay on the margins, as the experts have all the answers (Boyte, 2015).

The cult of the expert is a product of the Enlightenment and the associated development of European rationalist epistemology (Boyte, 2015). The Enlightenment was a pan-Europe intellectual movement that sought to disrupt the dominance of religion as the source of truth in European societies and undermine the authority of religious elites and monarchs associated with the Catholic Church (Williams, 2016). Rationalism was developed as an alternative epistemology that located the source of valid knowledge in man's ability to think and make reasoned decisions, rather than in religion. This Rationalism had a number of key precepts, which reflected a belief in an objective reality that existed separately to human thought and action, the existence of universal truths that

were independent and a priori to human thought, and the ability of human reason and logic to discover these truths. As such rationalism had a foundationalist theory of knowledge validation, in which claims to truth were judged against a priori facts or givens.

Enlightenment thinking and rationalist epistemology has long been criticised by philosophers who have sought to challenge its dominance and the associated notions of universal, absolute truths, objectivity and the power of reason. These include thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche (1887) who stressed that all truth comes from particular perspectives, and the work of the original American pragmatists at the turn of the 19th Century who made arguments about the multiplicity, contingency and social construction of truths that existed in the world (see Chapter Two). These philosophical developments sought to act as a counter-balance to Enlightenment thinking at the time that it was on the rise. However, neither was able to temper its ascendency and rationalism has been dominant in shaping our understanding of knowledge and truth ever since.

Indeed, the dominance of rationalist thought in western societies was the subject of an essay published by British philosopher Michael Oakeshott in 1962, who argued about its negative impacts on the practice of politics. For Oakeshott, the rise of rationalist thought was having negative impacts on the practice of politics. He identified a number of trends that rationalism had shaped, including the rise of experts and ideology in politics. For him, this represented rationalism's aversion towards people's opinions which were based on tradition and belief, rather than science and reason. He saw the growth of a 'politics of the book' where society's problems were identified and addressed through the application of rationalist methods and the technical knowledge contained in written forms. This replaced problem-solving and political decisions based on 'genuine concrete knowledge of the permanent interests and directions of movement of a society', with policies that were generated 'by 'reason' and satisfied according to the technique of an ideology' (1962: 27). At the time of writing, Oakeshott pointed towards a range of political developments, to which he attributed the influence of rationalism, including ideas about the self-consciously planned society, the civil service, a single tax, nationalism and the Beveridge report. For him, these national programs and prescriptions were based on rationalist thought, which saw the world as being made of universal laws, and a coherent logic, rather than being plural and disjointed.

From this observation, Oakeshott presented an analysis and critique of rationalism and rationalist inquiry. For him, rationalism is based on a pre-occupation with certainty in knowledge about the world. He traces the desire for certainty in knowledge to the work of Francis Bacon and Rene Descartes in the early 17th century. During this period, Bacon was concerned that knowledge of the human and natural worlds was not advancing. He laid the blame for this at the feet of inquiries that lacked a consciously formulated research technique, or a method with standardised and clearly defined rules. Bacon wanted to change this and equip people with a technique of inquiry that could uncover truths and develop a 'certain' knowledge of the world and replace 'natural reason', where people make up their own theories of the world based on informal inquiries, with a standardised means of generating ideas about the world. This was seen as crucial to obtaining a certain knowledge of the world, rather than partial and disjointed accounts. As such, Bacon developed a set of rules for inquiry that could be mechanically applied by anyone doing research, thus supposedly leaving the opinions, world view and values of the inquirer out of the equation.

Indeed, this quest for certainty was not just related to desires to establish reliable methods for inquiry, but had wider implications for securing the authority of an emerging class of intellectuals who gained material benefit from being in possession of the capacities to access the 'truth' of the world (Dewey, 1929). To do this, rationalism made a distinction between 'truth' and 'opinion', with the former discovered through the methods of rationalist inquiry, such as evidence, empirics and reason, and the latter being based in other, 'invalid' sources. As such, rationalism led to the conceptual division between valid knowledge and mere opinion, and championed the sovereignty of technique, where laws, rules and set methods trumped everything in determining what counts as true (Oakeshott, 1962).

For Oakeshott (1962) this division was highly problematic. He argued that there are two types of knowledge, which are required for any form of human activity. Technical knowledge refers to rules and procedures that can be written down, which tell someone how to do a task or how to perform a technique. Practical knowledge is knowledge involved in a task that exists only in practice. The difference between the two is that technical knowledge is susceptible to precise formulation, allowing it to be transmitted to people through written and verbal forms of communication. Practical knowledge, however, can only be shared through the act of doing. Oakeshott gives the example of

the knowledge involved in cookery. Recipes and methods can be learnt from books, but the ability to create a delicious meal can only be developed through practice.

For Oakeshott, the fact that technical knowledge can be formulated into rules and principles, and written down into books, gave it an 'appearance of certainty' (p.15), which practical knowledge, only expressible in specific practices, did not possess. Thus, it was this form of knowledge that gained credibility and validity through rationalism. In Oakeshott's words, 'for the rationalist [technical knowledge] and certainty are, for him, inseparably joined because certain knowledge is, for him, knowledge which does not require to look beyond itself for certainty' (p.16).

Oakeshott's thinking argued that the rise of rationalist thought and ways of seeing the world transformed politics with the view that public decision-making should be based on technical knowledge generated by rationalist inquiry, rather than the practical knowledge generated by direct experience of a situation or problem. Indeed, to make this distinction clearer it is useful here to re-term Oakeshott's 'practical knowledge' as 'experiential knowledge'. As such, rationalist politics favours the technical knowledge found in books over the experiential knowledge possessed by people living in specific situations.

Writing 36 years later and building on the work of Oakeshott, American political scientist James Scott (1998) argued, that in Rationalist thought the only valid forms of political knowledge are of a technical nature, taking the perspective of formal expertise possessed by professional experts, rather than the everyday, common sense, experiential knowledge held by ordinary citizens. Scott argues that modern state politics has become dominated by the application of technical knowledge at the expense of experiential knowledge. He points to a number of examples of state projects across the world in which abstract knowledge possessed by experts has been deployed over the heads of people living in specific places, leading to a number of social and environmental disasters. Due to the rise of the cult of the expert, with its roots in European rationalism, localised, experiential knowledge held by ordinary citizens has become denigrated over time and viewed as inferior to technical expertise, with people's opinions, experiences, beliefs and ideas being 'regarded as backward, static traditions, old wives' tales and superstitions' (Scott, 1998: 331).

Scott criticises the domination of modern politics by the idea that technical knowledge is superior to experiential knowledge with a powerful argument about the multiplicity of

realities. He argues that the reason why so many state projects have failed is because the formal expertise in which they are based cannot account for the uniqueness of specific realities. Scott suggests that every situation or place in the world is unique and complex, meaning that abstract, expert knowledge, based on universal principles and laws often fails to understand these specificities and thus rarely successfully solves the problem at hand. This is the problem of rationalist inquiry. In its search for certainty and universal truths, it creates laws and logics that that are meant to apply to all circumstances. Yet, if we believe that all circumstances are different, then these laws can only reflect the circumstance (in both time and space) in which they were created. As such, the technical knowledge contained in books is abstract knowledge, ideas which relate to specific circumstances that have been abstracted from that circumstance and treated as universal knowledge, applicable everywhere.

As Scott explains, this knowledge fails to adequately address problems in the real world because 'the environments in which [technical knowledge] is exercised are so complex and nonrepeatable, [that] formal procedures of rational decision-making are impossible to apply' (1998: 310). Giving the example of a ship's captain who navigates the waters of a particular ocean at a specific time of year on his own ship, Scott explains that localised, experiential knowledge is by its very nature specific to *this* place, and is difficult, if not impossible, to universalise. Such knowledge can only be acquired through practice and direct experience of the specific situation, and not through book-learning. Within this example, Scott argues that we would prefer the captain who has sailed that same journey, on the same sea, in the same ship a hundred times, to take the helm, rather than a physicist who has learnt the 'expert' knowledge required to navigate the sea based on the universal laws of physics.

In saying this, Scott highlights how experiential knowledge is always specific to particular environments, situations and circumstances. He critiques the rationalist notion of sovereignty of technique by suggesting that direct experience of a situation or problem should be the source of valid knowledge about that situation, rather than the application of the universal principles or 'facts' of science or reason. Thus, following Scott and Oakeshott we can state that in a democracy, all citizens possess experiential knowledge of their own lives, issues, interests and desires. This knowledge is specific to them, their family and the communities to which they belong. They are thus 'experts' in their own interests. Yet, given the influence of the cult of the expert in politics, with its roots in

rationalist epistemology, the majority of political decisions are made by various 'experts' who possess technical knowledge, which they have learnt through book-learning. This technical expertise comprises abstract and universal ideas, and as such, does not, or indeed cannot, represent the lives and interests of citizens adequately. This is dangerous for democracy as it prevents people's experiences and beliefs from influencing political decision-making, resulting in decisions and policies that fail to address issues or enact the will of the people.

Despite this, the cult of the expert is alive today and has characterised collective decision-making processes in western democracies since their inception. Within Europe, and later in America, key thinkers on politics and government developed various visions of political rule in which the decision-making power of the mass of ordinary citizens was restricted in favour of giving control to those who possessed various forms of 'superior' knowledge; be it rational, educated individuals; technocrats; ideologues; or scientists (Weber, 1919; Michels, 1911; Schumpeter, 1943; Lenin, 1902; Lippmann, 1925; Schattsneider, 1960). These visions coalesced into an influential political discourse of elitism and the championing of expertise which moulded the shape of democracy in Western Europe and America. Problem-solving has thus become the preserve of professionals, with the majority of ordinary citizens being reduced to passive actors, called upon to legitimise decisions every 5 years in the ballot box, but otherwise not given a role (Boyte, 2004).

What this looks like today is a system of decision-making where governments, political parties and public services base their decisions on the expertise presented to them by various professionals, including think tanks, policy advisors, consultants, scientists and researchers. This is seen in contemporary trends for 'evidence-based policy-making', and the dominance of specific ideologies in shaping government policy. For example, the popularity of neoliberal economics in the UK Conservative and Labour parties over the past few decades in shaping various aspects of their public policy illustrates how universal laws and abstract principles have come to rule over the lives of millions of people across the country, for good and ill. Equally, the historic centralisation of state power in the UK reflects an implicit distrust amongst politicians in the ability of ordinary citizens to make decisions for themselves, based on a devaluation of their experiential knowledge in relation to the technical knowledge available to elected representatives.

This centralisation of power, and over-ruling of people's experiential knowledge by technical expertise has served to turn citizens into clients, recipients of state actions rather than producers of public goods and services. Whilst most ordinary citizens do not have the time to engage fully in public decision making and the administration of these decisions, necessitating the need for professional public servants to engage in this work, the lack of active participation by citizens in formulating policy and engaging in public decisions has led to a situation where citizens have become passive actors in democracy, having things done to them by various experts, rather than setting the focus and agenda for political activity.

As mentioned earlier, in distancing decision-making power from the experiences and interests of ordinary citizens in favour of the technical knowledge held by experts, the cult of the expert plays a major role in contributing to the decay of our political institutions. When a disconnect exists between the experiential knowledge held by citizens and the 'valid' knowledge held by expert decision-makers, the institutions that these experts inform have no way of becoming better attuned to the needs and demands of the public. This damages their representative function and threatens the effective functioning of democracy.

Moreover, a lack of meaningful citizen engagement in politics poses other threats to the ideals of democracy. If people switch off from politics, in favour of leaving it to the 'experts' then elected representatives may make decisions that serve their own personal interests, rather than the interests of the electorate, or risk becoming corrupted by organised vested interests who invest time and money in political lobbying. There is a large body of literature arguing that the institutions of representative democracy need citizen interest and participation in politics to function effectively. Citizens can hold politicians and professionals to account through a variety of means, ranging from acts of 'negative citizenship' such as scepticism and distrust (Rosanvallon, 2008), to 'positive' acts such as co-production, participatory governance and deliberative processes, which involve citizens working with officials to feed into public decision-making and develop solutions to social issues (Cohen and Fung, 2004; Fung and Wright, 2003; Leighninger, 2006; Goodin, 2008; Fishkin and Luskin, 1999; Mansbridge et al, 2012).

Whilst new experiments in re-engaging citizens in political decision-making in ways that move beyond or seek to reform established political institutions are on the rise in western

democracies, the cult of the expert is still dominant in politics. Universities, as sites where technical knowledge is produced and the professional elite is trained, play a key role in maintaining this cult, and if the professionalization of politics and citizen disengagement is to be challenged, then universities must alter their knowledge production practices to support this.

1.5 The Populist Challenge to Universities- Explaining Academic Detachment from the People

Boyte (2015) argues that universities are 'anchoring institutions of citizenship'. Universities play a number of influential roles in democratic societies. They produce the 'credentialed knowledge' of technical expertise, which informs public decision-making, and they socialise people into professional identities and roles through degree programs that cultivate graduates with specific understandings of their role in society and conceptual frameworks to interpret the world. These two functions, the production of knowledge and the production of professionals highlight the unique role that universities play in contemporary democracies.

Yet, this function isn't particular to democratic societies, as universities have always been sites for the production of society's ruling elites through the pursuit and teaching of knowledge (Anderson, 1992). In medieval times, under the control of the Catholic Church, European universities trained men for positions in the clergy and nobility, through the conservation and pursuit of religious knowledge. These institutions shaped the moral outlook of social elites so their decision-making would fall in line with the goals of the church and to bring the wider society closer to God (Anderson, 1992).

In England, Oxford and Cambridge universities were under the influence of the medieval model until around the mid-1800s. At Oxford University, John Henry Cardinal Newman, set out his vision of the role of the university. In 1852, in his famous text, *The Idea of a University*, Newman argued that a university 'is a place of *teaching* universal *knowledge'* (p. ix) in order to 'train [students] to fill their respective posts in life better, and of making them more intelligent, capable, active members of society' (p. xii). For Newman, this universal knowledge was religious knowledge, and the goal was to maintain the authority of religion in society at the time.

Newman's book was published at a time of growing challenge to the Oxbridge university model, intended to be a defence against those who were seeking to challenge the

dominance of the religious elite. As the industrial revolution gained pace in England, a new class of merchants and business owners was growing. Inflated with money from the profits of growing industry, the new bourgeoisie sought to disrupt the dominance of the aristocracy and the universities that prepared their sons to maintain the status quo (Anderson, 1992).

To do this, and within a context of strong resistance from Oxford and Cambridge to reform, they established alternative higher education institutions where talent and merit would determine the position of men, not birth or good fortune. The founding of the University of London in 1832 was followed by the growth of new technical colleges in provincial cities. Occurring in the midst of a movement towards greater democracy in England (the Reform Act of 1832 expanded voting rights from those men who owned land or property to men who rented property over a certain value, and in 1867, the vote was extended to all working men), these civic universities in cities such as Manchester, Southampton, Newcastle, Sheffield and Leeds, were set up by local businessmen and professionals to train people for leadership positions in the growing industries and public services (Anderson, 1992; Goddard, 2008).

Thus, as society became democratised, the role of universities in producing knowledge and elites to administer society kept apace by training students to become the decision-makers of the future. However, what changed was the type of knowledge that students were given. Rather than religious knowledge contained in scripture, these students were trained in the knowledge generated through reason, evidence and rational thought. This was the model of scholarship associated with the Enlightenment outlined in the previous section (Williams, 2016).

As discussed earlier, during the time of the Enlightenment, the authority of the Church came under challenge. Thinkers around this time, including Rene Descartes, sought to relocate the source of true knowledge away from God by locating it in the ability of men to reason and make rational decisions. As part of a centuries' long epistemological struggle across Europe, Enlightenment thinking gradually came to establish evidence and reasoning, rather than faith, as essential in the pursuit of truth.

Joanna Williams' 2016 book *Academic Freedom in an Age of Conformity* provides an interesting account of how Enlightenment thinking transformed universities in the UK. She explains that Enlightenment thinking, and the rationalist epistemology it championed

did not take hold within English universities until around the mid-1800s. As the bourgeoisie developed its own universities to generate the knowledge needed to build and maintain its authority in society, it adopted the Enlightenment model of scholarship. Thus, it was within the new civic universities where rationalism took off, gradually effecting change within the Oxbridge institutions as intellectual cultures were transformed. This led to positivism and science taking hold within universities, with truth being legitimised by empirical inquiries rather than faith. This helped prepare the next generation of industrial leaders, equipped with the scientific knowledge and understanding to shape society for the better. These new universities had strong links to the professions, producing lawyers, engineers and architects to shape the direction of their local community.

During the late 1800s/ early 1900s, the British state played an increasing role in supporting these universities with subsidies to increase student numbers. A major driver of this was the desire to increase the efficiency of the state and the economy amidst increasing international competition for economic success and influence. The state acted to train even more people in the professions, in order to make the economy and its own operation more efficient. The drive towards efficiency was amplified by the onset of the First World War, and further increased after World War Two with the development of the welfare state and the demands of the national reconstruction effort. There was an ever-growing need to train people as planners, social workers, scientists and civil servants to help rebuild society (Anderson, 1992; Savage, 2011).

The role of universities in training people as professionals has been maintained since the 19th Century, with the move towards mass higher education increasing the number of citizens who are socialised into various professional or expert identities. In the UK over 500,000 people entered the higher education system in 2015 (UCAS, 2015). These numbers are significant, as graduates are more likely to be employed in professional roles, putting them in society's key decision-making positions (HESA, 2015). Indeed, for Goodhart (2017), the higher education system is, at least partly, responsible for engendering the value divide between large numbers of ordinary citizens and political elites that has driven populist challenges to the political establishment in the UK.

Goodhart argues that mass higher education plays a key role in creating a class of political elites whose values, experiences and worldviews are at odds with those of the

majority of ordinary citizens, due in part to the experience of mobility afforded to university students who primarily leave the places they grew up in to reside in different towns and cities with people from across the country and the world. This, he argues, decreases the importance of place-based roots and local, childhood connections and increases people's valuation of mobility and internationalism. This is further emphasised when graduates have to move to London or other big cities to find work in professional careers that are disproportionately found in these places. In addition to this, students' experiences of higher education also shape their values, with academics playing an influential role in cultivating particular worldviews and sets of values amongst students through their courses. These graduates then go on to take up influential roles as decision-makers and opinion-formers in British society, basing their actions upon a set of knowledge that is detached from the knowledge and experiences of ordinary citizens who have not attended university.

Goodhart stresses the importance of the experience of mobility in shaping the outlook of the professional class, over the content of academic courses. Yet, I want to argue that the class room curriculum is also important, as ideas and worldviews encountered during our transition to adulthood can have a significant impact on our values and outlooks. As such it is important to ask what, or perhaps whose knowledge is taught in universities, and the implications of this?

Writing specifically about the social sciences in the UK, Williams (2016) highlights that during the period from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s, the pursuit of knowledge in UK universities was dominated by the Enlightenment ideal of scholarship, with academic inquiry based on the pursuit of truth through the application of rationality. For Williams (2016) this culture was based on the principle of academic freedom, with the advancement of knowledge based upon the ability of academics to challenge existing ideas and propose new ones. For her, universities were a 'marketplace of ideas' where rival understandings of problems competed and conflicted in a context of open and varied debate. People would choose the ideas they considered to be the best based on their ability for reasoning and objective, rational decision-making. As such, universities engaged in the ongoing pursuit of truth by constantly testing and challenging the orthodoxy to advance human understanding.

Connected to wider national discourses of modernisation and progress, academic freedom was a means to advance and refine our understanding of the world in order to move society forwards. Within the social sciences, this saw positivism as the dominant intellectual force guiding academic inquiry, shaping the majority of research and teaching in UK universities. During this period, the academic orthodoxy was based around applying the methods of science and rationalism to identify and study social issues. According to Williams (2016), this orthodoxy was maintained until around the 1960s and 70s when social movements in western democracies triggered transformations in academia.

Protests against America's war in Vietnam, and the Civil Rights movement in the USA had significant effects on universities in the UK. These movements were about ordinary citizens rallying against the authority of political elites and the decisions they made. People were driven by their anger at the decisions being made by government and organised to amplify their voice so that those in power would hear their grievances. Whatmore (2009) argues that publics are moved to act in ways that bring their interests to the attention of political elites due to the existence of 'knowledge controversies'. Such controversies occur when the knowledge possessed by elites is at odds with the knowledge possessed by ordinary citizens, leading to decisions being made that go against the understandings and will of the people.

As such, the social movements of the 1960s can be understood as the product of various knowledge controversies where the technical expertise possessed by political elites, pursing their goals of social progress and modernisation, clashed with the experiential knowledge held by citizens over their own lives, including their beliefs on what a desirable society looks like. Universities played an important part in allowing the gap between the knowledge of ordinary citizens and political elites to arise through the way that they helped to produce the knowledge that elites were acting on.

Rationalism and positivism shaped academic knowledge production at this time. Yet, these modes of inquiry could not accurately represent the experiences and opinions of the public. Part of the reason for this is due to the way that truth is validated in rationalist inquiry. Going back to Oakeshott (1962), rationalism validates knowledge claims through the application of rationalist technique: reason, rationality, science, rather than by reference to people's experiences or opinions. As Oakeshott suggests, rationalist

inquiry cannot '[accept] the mysteries and uncertainties of experience without any irritable search for order and distinctiveness, [it has] only the capability of subjugating experience: [it] has not aptitude for that close and detailed appreciation of what actually presents itself…but only the power of recognizing the large outline which a general theory imposes upon events' (1962: 6).

Through its conceptual dichotomisation of 'truth' and 'opinion', rationalist epistemology turned away from validating knowledge claims in the experiential knowledge held by people about their own lives. Instead, what counts as 'true' knowledge is validated through rationalist technique. This led to the development of disciplines where academic inquiry generated technical knowledge grounded in the book, rather than in the experiences and opinions of people outside of academia. This served to create gaps between communities and universities, as academics had no recourse to communicate their ideas to the people outside to claim them as 'truth'. This resulted in the generation of expertise, passed on to students who made up the political elite in society that was detached from the issues, interests and opinions of ordinary citizens.

This detachment was recognised by university students at the time, who developed movements on campus to highlight the fact that the knowledge they were being taught in the lecture hall was out of touch with the experiences and beliefs of people fighting for social change outside. These students began to seriously question the relevance of their studies to the wider world. Similar to challenge of the bourgeoisie to the religious orthodoxy at Cambridge and Oxford universities in the 19th Century, these movements in the 1960s started to challenge the orthodoxy of rationalism in universities at the time, particularly in relation to the social sciences.

Williams (2016) argues that as students involved in these movements started to enter the faculty at universities, they gradually came to undermine and replace the rationalist orthodoxy. These emerging academics, shaped by struggles outside the academy, mounted a sustained critique to positivism, and to do this, they needed to articulate an alternative epistemology that would justify their concerns for the knowledge of previously ignored social groups. The turn to critical theory amongst academics at this time supported these efforts. The work of the Frankfurt School, who developed Antonio Gramsci's ideas on hegemony, proved useful for academics at this time. The idea that knowledge was not neutral or value-free, but linked to uneven power relations in society

helped academics to challenge the dominance of positivist inquiry, which constructed itself as an objective science able to generate true knowledge about the world. Positivism itself was viewed as supporting the interests of a capitalist class at the expense of other groups in society (Williams, 2016).

Thus, the notion of universal truths and objective science began to be called into question. This challenge to rationalist epistemology was ramped up by the introduction of post-structuralist philosophy to the social sciences. In particular, the work of Michel Foucault (1977), helped academics to argue that all knowledge is political, the product of specific sets of power relations. A range of academic movements developed from various philosophical perspectives to challenge rationalist inquiry and its notions of essential, universal truths and the possibility of objective, value-free inquiry. These included the work of neo-pragmatists Richard Rorty (1979) and Jurgen Habermas (1981) who sought to challenge the notion of rational human subjects and locate the source of truth not in rationalist technique but in intersubjective communication. Similar arguments came from French philosophers Deleuze and Guttari (1986) about the multiplicity of truths and experiences in the world, none of which were more valid than any other. For these thinkers, truth was not to be found out there in the world but was constructed by people through interaction, always in the process of becoming, always open to change.

Other arguments came from feminist and postcolonial writers who challenged the notion of value-free, objective inquiry and universal truths as hiding uneven power relations that structured different people's lives and experiences. Thus, the world was conceptualised as containing many 'truths', each reflecting the vested interests of differently positioned groups and individuals. The idea that all knowledge is political, allowed academics to open up universities to a variety of 'situated knowledges' held by various marginalised groups (Haraway, 1988; Spivak 1988). Another strand of critique of rationalism came from science and technology studies, which sought to highlight the contingent nature of scientific practices, and show how they are imbued with value-judgements, and shaped by different sets of power relations, rather than being objective methods to reveal truths (Latour, 1994; Law and Hassard, 1999).

These academic movements challenged rationalist inquiry and its notion of essential, universal truths, objectivity, and value-free inquiry. They have all sought to reveal that knowledge is partial, situated, and shaped by uneven power relations. For Williams

(2016) this has helped engender a new academic orthodoxy, replacing positivism with critical theory as the dominant model of academic inquiry in the social sciences. In effect, these developments were an attempt to validate the truth claims coming from universities in the lived experiences of those groups who had previously been ignored: the working class, women, and various racial, ethnic, and sexual minorities. As such, alongside the challenge of citizens to the political establishment, this represented a populist challenge to universities and the knowledge they were producing about society. Universities reacted to this, and transformed themselves to better represent the lives of ordinary citizens.

However, as already explained, today too we are experiencing a populist challenge to the political establishment in the UK and USA. People are angry that the decisions made by political elites, experts and decision-makers are not addressing their issues in ways that reflect their own experiences and sentiments. Again, universities play a key role here by producing the knowledge and graduates which fuel the current political establishment. Today's expert decision-makers come disproportionality from universities, with graduates participating in the ranks of the civil service, national media outlets, think tanks, consultancy firms, political advisors, research organisations and public servants. Equipped with the knowledge acquired during their degree, and supported with 'evidence' and ideas generated by their lecturers, these people make the decisions which affect the lives of ordinary citizens across society.

If Chwalisz (2015) is right, and it is disaffection with the decisions of the political elite that is driving the populist challenge to the political establishment, then universities have a major responsibility to address this, because once again there is a clear gap between the lived experiences, opinions and beliefs of the people, and the knowledge generated in universities. It is no coincidence that many populist parties have clear 'anti-expert' and anti-intellectualist sentiments in their discourses (Wodak, 2015).

Evidence of the gap between the people and universities comes from a survey conducted by Times Higher Education amongst faculty in UK universities (results presented in Morgan, 2016). The survey compares the voting intentions of faculty before the UK General Election (2015) and the UK referendum on membership of the European Union (2016), to the actual results of these elections. In regard to the general election, amongst university faculty 46% intended to vote for Labour, 11% for Conservatives and four

people out of 1019 for UKIP. This is compared to the election results of 30.4% for Labour, 36.9% for Conservatives, and 12.6% for UKIP. For the EU referendum, faculty voting intentions were 88.5% for Remain and 9.5% for Leave. The actual results were 48.1% Remain and 51.9% for Leave.

In explaining these, Morgan (2016) argues that the huge disparity in opinion and political views between academics and the general public reflects the different experiences felt by both, with academics generally having more money, autonomy and mobility than the majority of the general population. In short, academics and ordinary citizens tend to inhabit different worlds.

But why has this gap emerged? Weren't the student movements of the 60s and the development of critical theory within the academy meant to democratise the production of academic knowledge and make universities more representative of the world outside? Williams (2016) argues that these developments have established a new academic orthodoxy, where certain sets of values and the supposed interests and experiences of specific social groups have become commonplace topics in academia. Given the roots of this orthodoxy in the student movements of the 1960s, academic culture in the social sciences is predominantly left-wing in nature. Yet, as the survey results above show, and Inglehart and Norris (2016) suggest, part of the populist challenge to the political establishment today is a reassertion of values and sentiments which are considered to be more right-wing or conservative. This suggests that the current academic orthodoxy is out of touch with the opinions of large swathes of the general public.

Going back to Oakeshott, we can see that the reason for this is due to the way that the new critical theories developed. Introduced to universities as an attempt to challenge rationalist epistemology and inquiry by bringing in the voices of the oppressed and marginalised, these theories went some way to democratising knowledge production in universities. For the first time the experiences and position of women, working class people and racial minorities were being explored and taught through research and in the lecture hall. They thus replaced the 'stale, pale, male' objects of inquiry that were dominant under rationalist scholarship. However, following Oakeshott, they did not go far enough, as the new critical theories were still based on a rationalist approach to inquiry where knowledge is validated by rationalist technique in reference to the book,

and existing theories, rather than in the lived experiences, opinions and beliefs of the people outside of academia that they were attempting to represent.

In his famous essay, *Why has Critique Run Out of Steam?*, philosopher Bruno Latour (2004) argues against the routine use of critical theory approaches to inquiry within the social sciences. He suggests that by constantly deconstructing everything they study, academics using these approaches offer us very little prospect of moving forward and creating positive change in the world. He argues that critical theory has become a 'routine' in which the academic goes through the motions to debunk their object of study, with deconstruction being the goal of critique. Thus, rather than take people's experiences or beliefs at face value, critical theory approaches to inquiry treat the experiences of ordinary citizens as objects to be re-interpreted and deconstructed through reference to the orthodox ideas of specific critical theories. This has created a gap between the knowledge of academics and citizens.

With reference to Marxist approaches to inquiry, Bridge (2013) explains that rather than validating knowledge claims empirically in the experiences of ordinary people, by testing out their ideas and narratives through a dialogue with them, academics validate their claims in reference to existing Marxist theory through conversations with fellow academics who speak the same language. This means that critical theory inquiries are only grounded in the experiential knowledge of citizens to the extent that this knowledge is re-interpreted in order to justify and support a pre-determined world-view and political agenda. Thus, despite claims to the contrary, critical theory reflects the same approach to inquiry as rationalism, valuing the 'truth' contained within theories and the book, over the mere opinions of ordinary people. For its proponents, the people do not understand their own lives or situations, and the academics, equipped with the technical knowledge found in critical theory know better.

As such, despite wanting to embed academic inquiry and knowledge production in the experiences of ordinary citizens, the transformation of knowledge production in our universities, triggered in the 1960s, has served to maintain the gap between the experiential knowledge of communities and academic inquiries. Rather, the old orthodoxy of positivism has been replaced by a new orthodoxy linked to critical theory.

For Williams (2016), this orthodoxy is difficult to challenge due to its epistemological foundations. This is because the idea that all knowledge is situated and political allows

those who produce and teach it to easily dismiss challenges from conflicting ideas as coming from political opponents, preventing the need to engage with such ideas in a serious and fair way. This echoes the argument made by Lasch (1994: 12-13) that 'once knowledge is equated with ideology, it is no longer necessary to argue with opponents on intellectual grounds or to enter into their point of view. It is enough to dismiss them as Eurocentric, racist, sexist, homophobic- in other words, as politically suspect'. For Williams, this means that universities have become places where students are taught the values and worldviews of their lecturers, rather than being open to the experiences and ideas of people from outside of the academy and the academic orthodoxy. Following Horowitz (2007), she argues that this constitutes an abuse of their power in the classroom by academics who use their positions of influence to indoctrinate students in their favoured political causes, not those of society at large. This results in the cultivation of a generation of professionals and decision-makers whose understanding of the world is at odds with the sentiments of large sections of the wider population, creating a divide between two classes: an elite in control of knowledge flows and another deemed as ignorant or backwards. What's more, the class of elites are generally unwilling, or perhaps unable, to try to understand and debate views alternative to their own, believing that they know best (Lasch, 1994).

Demonstrating this, Williams points to an emerging campus culture of 'no platform' for those with unorthodox political views, and 'safe spaces' and 'trigger warnings' within political forums so that debate does not cause offence to people with certain social identities (see also Slater, 2016). For her, this culture reflects how students have become censors on campus, intolerant to different opinions and worldviews, and unable to engage in respectful dialogue with others over areas of common concern. This threatens the principle of free speech, upon which democracy is based.

Thus, the inability of critical theory approaches to inquiry to validate their knowledge claims in the experiences and opinions of ordinary citizens has resulted in a situation where the sentiments of these people have moved on, leaving academia left behind, stuck inside an intellectual orthodoxy which is reproduced through the generation of knowledge that validates itself by appealing to the ideas within this orthodoxy.

Within such a constraining academic culture, students learn the knowledge presented to them by their lecturers and to get high grades the students apply this knowledge in essays

and exams. Those with the highest grades, and desires to stay in academia, become faculty members themselves and carry out research and teaching activities that reproduce the ideas and worldviews they learnt as students. This reproduces the orthodoxy, leaving very little room for the consideration of conflicting ideas. This has led to the cultivation of professionals and decision-makers whose worldview and core values are often out of touch with those of ordinary citizens, resulting in public decision-making being done by people who at best do not understand, and at worst are intolerant of, the worldviews and opinions of the public. This, in part, explains the shock amongst academics at the vote for Brexit in the UK, and Trump in America. Academics did not see this coming as their knowledge production activities are detached from the worlds inhabited by citizens outside of the academy.

Thus, as western democracies are in a moment of crisis where the established political institutions are undergoing a process of decay, unable to fulfil their representative function, so too are our universities. This crisis has its roots in the rationalist approach to inquiry that still remain dominant in academia, where knowledge claims are validated by reference to the theories and ideas contained within the books and literature that make up the academic orthodoxy, rather than in the beliefs, opinions and experiences of ordinary citizens. Due to universities' role as mediating institutions of democracy, these two crises are interconnected and for the wider democratic malaise to be addressed, then the disconnect between universities and ordinary citizens must also be addressed.

Recognising the early existence of this disconnect, and the rise of an academic orthodoxy in knowledge that was at odds with the values and worldviews of many citizens in America, Lasch (1994) argued that the foundational truths of positivism have simply been replaced by another set of foundational truths linked to critical theory, in which various oppressions around race, gender and class are held a priori as givens, with academic inquiry employed as a means to 'prove' and reinforce these givens. He suggested that in order to challenge this, there was a need to shift our theory of knowledge validation away from foundationalism where claims are validated by reference to a priori 'facts' or givens, and instead see truths as contingent, open to change and constructed through communication and debate. This would compel academics and students to value all perspectives, respect alternative views and engage in meaningful conversation with citizens to jointly produce knowledge.

Universities are responding to this situation by developing alternative approaches to research and teaching that seek to close the gap between the knowledge held by communities and the knowledge generated in universities. Over recent years, various experiments in bringing the experiences and voices of ordinary citizens into universities have been growing. These experiments seek to redefine professional identities by connecting them to notions of citizenship, allowing students, academics and communities to work collectively to put their knowledge to use in identifying and solving common problems. More established in the USA, these experiments and practices have also been developed in the UK, including participatory research methods and the development of community-university partnerships.

1.6 De-Professionalising Politics: Universities as Site of Citizen Engagement and Civic Education

If the cult of the expert has reinforced the gradual distancing of the majority of ordinary citizens from political decision making and problem solving, and higher education, as the site where our 'expert' decision-makers are trained, has played a significant part in this, then universities can play a vital and unique role in re-engaging the people in politics and reversing citizen powerlessness. Indeed, a movement amongst higher education practitioners in the US is seeking to do just this. Articulating this movement, and urging for others to take up its cause, Boyte (2015) argues that universities can become sites of civic education for students and citizens in their wider communities can develop a sense of agency in the world, build relationships across partisan and other differences, and transform the role of citizens from clients of public services to creators of public goods.

The roots of this movement lie in the traditions of broad-based community organising, a political methodology that seeks to develop people's civic skills and capacities for addressing shared problems (this will be explored in Chapter Two). For Boyte, this approach to politics aims to engage ordinary citizens in 'public work', sustained and self-directed, collaborative efforts to create things of common value in response to pressing issues. Drawing on the lessons and framework of broad-based community organising, this approach to higher education and research challenges the detachment of academic inquiry and teaching from wider society and local communities, valuing the knowledge held by ordinary citizens about their own lives and seeking to build the power of this knowledge to have an effect in shaping decision-making and action. As such, the

movement for civic education and engagement within universities aims to: make academic work a site for public work; create new understandings of knowledge and whose knowledge counts by valuing 'lay knowledge; and re-place universities as part of their local communities (Boyte, 2015).

In America, this has taken the form of 'citizen science' and community-based action research initiatives, which explicitly seek to work with students and non-academic communities to address social problems and in doing so develop the skills and capacities of these people for public work. A key proponent of this approach to research, Romand Coles (2014), argues that action research with communities can help to re-join universities with a complex, plural, and dynamic demos to create transformative practices. Conceived of as a democratic pedagogical and political practice, action research thus becomes a means of 'generating the knowledge, practices, communications, and powers necessary to respond effectively to challenges…[via] a deep form of democratic engagement with communities' (Coles, 2014: 629).

This type of action research can be conducted through standalone projects, facilitated by lone academics, committed to the mission of democratic renewal. Or it can be facilitated through institution-wide arrangements, known as 'community-university partnerships' (CUPs) that connect universities with communities in their local area, and sometimes across the globe, to catalyse projects where citizens engage in knowledge production and collective action to address their problems. CUPs are permanent, institutionalised partnerships between universities and their local communities that involve a long-term commitment from to work with community organisations and citizens to collectively address pressing social issues, combining the expertise and resources of the university with the knowledge, resources and energy of local communities (Harney and Wills, 2016)

CUPs are long-established in the USA, growing out of the land-grant university tradition and the movement for service learning. Originally conceived in 1862 via government legislation as institutions to teach agriculture, military techniques and mechanic arts to working class people as part of a practical, liberal education, land-grant universities have become an integral feature of the American higher education sector. At the time of their inception, agricultural experimentation was central to the land-grant institutions' commitment to working for public benefit as well as individual development. There is

now at least one land-grant university in every US state, and today they aim to 'fulfil their democratic mandate for openness, accessibility and service to people' (Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, 2012: 2) by incorporating their three missions of research, teaching and service. Community-university partnerships have become well-established at these universities, and are notable for their size and scope.

The other tradition shaping American CUPs is the 'service learning' tradition. Service learning involves students working in partnership with local communities as part of the requirements of their structured education programmes. Based on a pedagogy of experiential learning rooted in the educational philosophy of John Dewey, service learning involves students undertaking work placements or supporting community projects as a means of acquiring the knowledge and skills required of them from particular courses. Service learning is multi-disciplinary and can be incorporated into a wide range of academic disciplines and learning experiences (Annette, 2005). Whilst traditionally carried out in ways that reproduce citizen powerlessness, with students applying their skills and knowledge to address problems *for* communities, there are growing attempts to develop service learning approaches that involve students working with communities to support problem-solving *with* and *by* communities (Boyte, 2015).

In doing this work, American universities practice a form of 'engaged scholarship', which links the intellectual assets of HEIs, including expertise and student talents, to public issues through teaching and research that is conducted in collaboration *with*, rather than *on*, communities (Boyer, 1990; Gibson, 2005). Engaged scholarship represents an alternative form of intellectual work by universities, where research and teaching are driven by public problems, rather than theoretical problems, and academic work is more grounded in the lives of non-academic communities. At present, American HEIs continue to work in partnership with local communities on a large scale. As well as the longer established work of land-grant universities, the research universities have been developing engagement strategies with communities as part of a renewed effort to reinvigorate the civic mission of their institutions. These universities are consciously taking responsibility for the social problems that exist in the real world, working with non-academic partners to generate knowledge for an optimally democratic society (Gibson, 2005). Indeed, it is this commitment to advancing democracy that underpins the vision and mission of the majority of CUPs in the USA, with universities casting themselves as 'mediating institutions' of democracy, facilitating the assembly of citizens

around shared concerns with the aim of acting collectively to address them (Boyte, 2015).

As such, community-based research, engaged scholarship and CUPs alter the function of universities in democracy from training political elites, equipped with technical expertise to solve problems for society, to valuing the knowledge held by ordinary citizens about their own lives and working to connect faculty and students with these citizens to co-create solutions to communities' most pressing issues. These initiatives thus provide localised sites for civic education through public work, combating citizen powerlessness by putting the knowledge held by citizens, and their skills and passions, back into politics.

Public work thus acts as a schooling in democracy (Boyte, 2015), building on a long theoretical tradition that stresses the importance of local opportunities for citizens to engage in politics. For Pateman (1970), without meaningful and deep citizen participation in decision-making, we will fail to live up to the ideals of democracy. She argues that participation, beyond voting for representatives, serves an educative function in democracy by teaching people the skills needed to make collective decisions. She argues that there is a need for more localised forms of politics and opportunities for engagement where citizens can work with others to address issues and create change. This is argued to generate a sense of commitment to democratic politics in citizens and develop a sense of belonging between the citizen and the polity. In short, participation in politics is seen as crucial for a healthy democracy because it breeds more participation and prevents elected representatives from pursuing their personal will against the will of the people.

Within the UK, there has also been a turn towards bringing the voices and skills of ordinary citizens into the university. This has taken the form of a rise in the use of participatory action research, as well as the recent establishment of a number of CUPs. Whilst not always explicitly driven by ideals around civic education and citizen empowerment, there is a rising level of activity associated with universities seeking to become more connected to non-academic communities, and working to give voice to those who are deemed to have been ignored by formal political institutions. This has been articulated in the recent popularity in the concept and methods of 'co-production' within academia.

Campbell and Vanderhoven (2016: 12) define co-production as a mode of co-operative inquiry 'between academic and non-academic communities, [which] assumes mutual respect, no hierarchy of knowledge forms, fluid and permeable disciplinary and professional boundaries and a normative concern for action, not simply a focus on systemic analysis'. Co-production is an alternative to traditional academic forms of knowledge generation, and it involves academics giving up some control over their research in order to collaborate with others over knowledge creation for action and change.

However, whilst these developments in the US and UK represent a shift in thinking amongst university faculty to reconnect citizens with universities and in turn, with democratic politics, there are dangers that the dominance of rationalist modes of inquiry, which value technical knowledge over experiential knowledge, and discourses which value the knowledge held by experts over the people as the basis for political decision-making, may prevent participatory research and community-university partnerships from effectively addressing the democratic malaise, and instead serve to reproduce existing hierarchies of knowledge and political power. In a previous paper (Harney et al, 2016) I argued with colleagues that to avoid this, and ensure that new forms of knowledge production *with* citizens adequately reflect the knowledge held by these citizens and allow this knowledge to be put into action, there is a need for a stronger philosophical and epistemological underpinning for this work. We argued that American Pragmatism, a philosophy based on epistemological pluralism, can provide this grounding.

The next chapter takes this up by tracing the development of pragmatism, its impact on Broad Based Community Organising, and its connection to the participatory research methodology developed at the University of Chicago's Sociology department at the turn of the 20th Century. The chapter then turns to consider what pragmatism and the participatory research practices associated with it can say about the use of participatory action research in the discipline of Geography, before setting out a pragmatic approach to research and knowledge that supports the articulation of the lived experiences of ordinary citizens as part of a process of civic education and empowerment.

Chapter Two: Pragmatism, Pluralism and Place

If universities are to reconnect with communities and produce knowledge that is grounded in their lived experiences, issues, interests and beliefs, then we need a new approach to academic inquiry that breaks with rationalist approaches where knowledge is validated by the book, and instead grounds it in ordinary people's lived experiences.

This chapter proposes philosophical pragmatism, and its approach to 'naturalistic inquiry' as a productive grounding for this project. The historical context and main tenets of pragmatism, and its impact on the development of community-based action research and broad-based community organising are explained in an overview of this philosophical and political tradition. Pragmatism is presented as an approach to academic inquiry that can underpin place-based experiments designed to reconnect people to knowledge production and democracy.

The chapter then focusses in more detail upon the debate within my own discipline of Human Geography on the rise of participatory action research (PAR). It assesses uses of PAR from a pragmatic lens to identify how pragmatism can make a unique contribution to this approach to research- focussing particularly on issues around pluralism and academic control over inquiries and securing change. Finally, the geographic expeditions of geographer Bill Bunge are presented as an early example of these possibilities for pragmatic geographical research that can inform future projects and the development of a process pragmatism, an approach to PAR that values multiple knowledges and seeks to build the capacity of citizens to shape the world.

2.1 Pragmatism

Pragmatism, as a school of thought, has developed through debates and conversations between its key proponents over decades (Talisse and Aikin, 2011). Among those who drove the development of classical pragmatism, Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey have been most influential. Operating after the American Civil War, these scholars sought to shift the focus of philosophical inquiry from abstract, metaphysical debates onto everyday, real world problems as experienced by ordinary people (Barnes, 2008).

These thinkers developed pragmatism as a conscious alternative to various absolutist philosophies that held to the notion of a single, universal truth of the world. The war

highlighted the dangers of such philosophical positions and helped shape their thinking on the nature of democracy, culture and ideas. With each side fighting for something they believed in, the war made it clear to the early pragmatists that ideas do not reflect an essential, transcendent truth, found in an external reality but are constructed by people as a means of coping with problems and achieving specific goals. The inability of philosophy to allow for a more peaceful, constructive melioration between the two sides in the war prompted the pragmatists to re-think the nature of American democracy as an emerging order of government and think about the ways in which it could be strengthened to deal with multiple truths in a plural world (Barnes, 2008).

As such, pragmatism was originally conceived as a philosophy to act as the means for national social advancement after the war, by acting as a device for dealing with people's problems and allowing societies to cope with conflicting ideas in a considered and less harmful manner (Barnes, 2008). Whilst differences existed between the three main thinkers, they were united by a common desire to shift the focus of philosophy from abstract theorising over the 'true' nature of reality to using thought and inquiry to solve problems and guide action. Indeed, the pragmatic notion of truth as grounded in people's experiences and in situated practices of problem-solving, rather than existing in an external reality and metaphysical space underlies their commitment to democratic practices of full citizen engagement in the decisions that affect their lives. At the basis of their democratic prescriptions lies a particular understanding of truth. Understanding the pragmatic notion of truth is key to understanding its proponents' visions for democracy.

2.1.1 The Pragmatic Notion of Truth

Pragmatism is often described as an 'anti-foundational' epistemology (Barnes, 2008), in which the truth of a statement is validated not by its ability to reflect an external reality accurately by describing some pre-existing thing and referring to a priori givens, but by its utility in allowing the people deploying it to achieve their desired moral goal (Lake, 2014). As William James (1907:25) states, 'pragmatism' is derived from the 'Greek word πράγμα, meaning action, from which our words 'practice' and 'practical' come'. He traces the introduction of this word into philosophy by Charles Sanders Peirce in 1878, who argued that all beliefs are rules for action and that the significance of a belief or idea is the action that it produces. In this sense, and anticipating postmodernism by over half a century (Bernstein, 2010), pragmatism was a novel challenge to philosophical thought at the time, attempting not to reveal the fundamental truth of the universe, but to

pay attention to the effects that different truths have in practice. For pragmatists, knowledge is inseparable from action, with ideas acting as tools to achieve specific tasks at hand.

This notion of truth is rooted in a specific ontological understanding held by the early pragmatists which centre on the relationship between people and their social and natural environment, and the role of problem-solving in allowing individuals to flourish and reach new levels of self-realisation. In *Experience and Nature* (1925), Dewey lays out a theory of human beings' 'continual remaking of the world', which explains the relationship between 'mind, knowledge and reality' (Godfrey-Smith, 2013: 2). In this book, Dewey seeks to explain how the relationship between thought and action allows human beings to be active agents in changing the world. Influenced by the work of Charles Darwin, Dewey saw human beings as biological organisms that exist in fundamental relationship to their environment and other organisms (Bridge, 2008; Barnes, 2008). He argues that human experience arises from our transactions with our environment. We develop thoughts in response to our experiences, and these thoughts lead to action. Action re-shapes our environment and leads to the generation of new experiences.

Godfrey-Smith (2013) states that Dewey's theory was centred on an understanding of the relationship between experience, cognition, and action. He saw human action as arising as a response to deal with problems that people encounter in their environment, and as being shaped by their understanding of that experience. Inquiry, for Dewey, is the means by which people attempt to deal with their problems through a process of perception, thinking, and theorizing, in order to make sense of their experiences and find solutions to the problematic aspects of them.

For Dewey, experience (the on-going process of being in the world) is a dynamic affair that is constituted by all modes of intercourse between a conscious being and their social and physical environment. This process is never determined by a central force or universal logic, but is emergent, uncertain and always unfolding. Experience is thus unique and the product of specific contexts. Like all pragmatists, Dewey held to a notion of radical contingency in which the world is a collection of indeterminate events that begin and end (Barnes, 2008; Cutchin, 2008). Pre-dating postmodernism by over half a century, the early pragmatists viewed the world in terms of emergence, networks and

relationships rather than structures, systems and determining logics (Jones, 2008; Bernstein, 2010).

Thus, the problems that people experience are not transcendent, universal problems experienced by everyone and engendered by the same root cause, but the products of specific sets of relations between people and things. As such, a 'problem' as experienced and perceived by one person or group of people may not be a problem for another group experiencing the same set of relations. In responding to these problems people generate ideas that help them cope and find solutions. Within this context, the truth or validity of these ideas is determined not by whether the ideas reflect an external reality accurately but whether the ideas help to address the problem at hand. Basing his definition on the early work of John Dewey, William James defines truth from a pragmatic point of view as those ideas that help people to make satisfactory links between different parts of their experience, which otherwise do not fit together and would cause the person to become troubled. This is an instrumentalist notion of truth: what is 'true' is whatever has the 'power to 'work'' to solve our problems and allow us to cope with an ever-changing world (1907: 30).

Summarising this pragmatic notion of truth, Sullivan (2002: 220-221) explains that it is grounded in an appreciation of people's lived experiences of specific situations and problems as the source of valid knowledge about those situations. She states:

> 'A judgement or belief is true not if it matches the state of affairs it attempts to report, but rather if, when acted on, it produces the transformation of experience that was desired by those engaged in the experience. In that way, truth refers to the future career of a judgement and, in particular, the ability of that judgement to affect an improved transaction between living things and their environment. Truth must pass the test of experience… when considering the truth of a claim, one is not asking whether it mirrors reality, but instead whether it satisfies [human] desires and needs'

Central to this understanding of truth is the role of communication in generating and validating knowledge claims. For Dewey, and pragmatists more generally, knowledge is a social product, generated through transactions between people and things. Geographer Gary Bridge (2008) explains that people do not generate ideas about their experiences on

their own, but rather develop ideas through communication with other people (and things) that share the same situation as them. Thus, inquiry, as the practice of making sense of situations and developing ideas to address problems is a social process, done collectively by those experiencing the problem at hand and it is often connected to place.

The role of communicative action in problem-solving is, thus, key for pragmatists. A key thinker on communicative action was George Herbet Mead, another pragmatist and a colleague of John Dewey's at the University of Michigan in the 1890s. The pair had a close working relationship and exerted a significant impact on each other's work (Morris, 1967). In *Mind, Self, & Society* (1934), Mead developed a theory of how human minds, intelligence and society developed over time through evolution. Morris (1967) sums up his basic argument as saying that minds and selves arise within human conduct, and that language provides the mechanism for their emergence. This occurs along the following steps: humans, as biological organisms, engage in on-going interactions with other people. During this process they converse via gestures. Over time, vocal gestures develop, and common languages are constructed. This language is internalised, which results in the emergence of individual minds and the self, whereby people use language to have inner conversations with their self.

Mead's theory is useful in enhancing our understanding of communicative action based on Dewey's work. Whilst Dewey makes us aware of the construction of knowledge through communication (i.e. inquiry) whereby people make sense of their worlds, Mead theorises about the process of communication itself and how it works within human societies. Mead starts with the premise that all biological organisms, if engaged in a social process with other organisms, communicate with one another through gestures. A gesture is a sign of the start of an action initiated by one actor in a given interaction. This sign causes a behavioural response in the other actor, which ensures that joint action occurs and that a social process takes place. Organisms communicate through conversations of gestures, whereby the act of one calls out a response in the other, and so on, until the social exchange is complete (Mead, 1934). Giving the example of a dog fight, Mead (1934: 42) states that 'the act of each dog becomes the stimulus to the other dog for his response'.

Mead (1934) distinguishes between communication through gestures and communication through significant symbols. The former operates on an unconscious level, with a gesture

not eliciting ideas in the mind of those responding to it. The latter is a more sophisticated means of communicating. A gesture becomes a significant symbol when it has a specific meaning attached to it, and arouses this same meaning in the other person. Significant symbols are gestures that signify the same meaning for the person using it and the person responding to it. Mead argues that the role of gestures is to make it possible for all individuals involved in acting around the same object (i.e. a situation, a thing, a person, an idea) to adjust their behaviour so as to keep it in line with the behaviour of others. This is vital for coordinated action, and thus human survival and development. He states that the use of significant symbols, such as verbal language, is the most effective way of facilitating this (re)adjustment because they call out the same meaning in each person involved. This makes everyone conscious of what the object means for others, allowing them to adjust their behaviour accordingly. Put simply, if you want to cooperate with someone around a specific task or issue, but you do not share the same meaning or understanding of that task, then taking collective action will be difficult.

Mead's theory of communicative action[2] was picked up and developed by his former student, Herbert Blumer (1969), a sociologist at the Chicago School of Sociology, who outlined a theory of symbolic interactionism. Drawing on Dewey and Mead, Blumer (1969: 2) defines symbolic interactionism as a theory of how human society works, which is based on three premises:

> 'The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them…The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters.'

Seeing the world as a product of symbolic interactions allows us to appreciate that between different settings and different communities there will exist different meanings for the same thing. These meanings will lead to very different sets of action in relation to this thing. For example, amongst a community of Jockeys a horse is for racing, whereas for French chefs, it is for cooking. Moreover, in recognising that human action is shaped

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[2] Mead's theory was also developed by Jurgen Habermas whose work sought to undermine the notion of rationality as the source of valid knowledge, and locate it instead in intersubjective communication (Habermas, 1981)

by meaning, Blumer argues that collective action around a specific object necessarily requires the creation of a shared meaning for that object.

As such, for pragmatists, truths (i.e. accepted notions of what reality is) are constructed *through* language and communication. Something is true not if it can accurately reflect an external reality, but when it helps to communicate intentions to other people so as to facilitate collective action. Thus, despite claims that the pragmatic notion of truth leads to epistemological relativism, basing the validation of knowledge claims not just in experiences but in inter-personal communication about those experiences, Pragmatists hold that all claims must be judged by a community of inquirers within the context of their utility in addressing specific problems to be held as valid or not (Lake, 2017).

Read together, Dewey and Mead's work locates the source of valid knowledge claims in experience, communication and language. This is in contrast to the rationalist understanding of truth discussed in chapter one, where knowledge claims are validated through reference to the use of specific techniques of inquiry, and to the knowledge generated by these techniques (which is contained in the book- see Oakeshott, 1962). In situating people's lived experiences as the source of truth, pragmatism challenges the idea of the detached, objective observer having privileged access to valid knowledge about the world through their careful application of rationalist technique. Instead, it is those who are affected by specific problems who are the experts about those situations. In doing this, pragmatism pluralises the notion of expertise, legitimising the ideas and beliefs of ordinary people and placing them on (at least) an equal footing with the ideas and beliefs generated by those possessing technical expertise. Indeed, the notion of plurality and multiplicity is key to pragmatic understandings of reality and knowledge.

2.1.2 Pluralism

Schlosberg (1998) argues that the work of the early pragmatists, and William James in particular, was used to reject philosophical and political absolutism and develop an epistemological foundation for pluralism. As mentioned earlier, pragmatism was constructed as an alternative to absolutist philosophies, which were seen to be partly to blame for the American Civil War, as well as for American imperialism abroad and the discrimination of African-Americans at home. For James, all of these processes were based on the idea that there exists one truth in the world, which should shape how everyone behaves. Rallying against this, he used pragmatism, and its understanding of

truth constructed through communication, to challenge absolutists by emphasising the diversity of experience and belief that existed in the world.

Arguing against those who sought to impose one logic and order on reality, James was one of the first philosophers to use the term 'pluralism'. In his 1896 [1979] book, *The Will to Believe,* he stated that 'there is no possible point of view from which this world can appear an absolute single fact' (p.6). Instead, the world consists of multiple visions, understandings and realities, and attempts to reduce these to one coherent logic or truth served to subordinate some groups to the will of others (Bernstein, 2010). For the pragmatists, rather than there existing one world with one set of essential truths, the existence of multiple truths was used to highlight the fact that not one world existed, but multiple worlds. William James, for example, conceived of the social world as a 'mosaic' of separate but sometimes connected and overlapping worlds, each with their own truths and systems of meaning (Schlosberg, 1998).

In this spirit, pragmatism was developed as a philosophy that focussed on the *means* of knowledge-production and truth-formation as well as the *ends*. Instead of providing an account of what a good and just world should be, pragmatism sought to explain how notions of good and evil came to exist. Through the process of inquiry, they hoped to show how all people, from various different worlds and with different beliefs and visions could engage with others to solve their own problems as they understood them and create their worlds more in line with their own desires.

Unsurprisingly, the more open-ended nature of pragmatism resulted in a critical backlash from those who subscribed to absolutist notions of truth, with many characterising pragmatism as a form of philosophical relativism, in which any idea on a specific topic is as valid as any other (Bernstein, 2010). This, it was (and still is) argued, can lead to extremist or harmful views being enacted and justified as pragmatism has no way of judging the ethics of specific inquiries due to its lack of foundational standards to guide any action (MacGilvray, 2000). This is said to lead to a subjectivist ethics, in which the moral value of particular actions is judged in terms of whether they allow the particular actor to advance their own vision of a desirable world, rather than against any fixed set of moral values.

Moreover, in line with critiques about the lack of ethical guidance provided by pragmatism, others have argued that the valuation of all viewpoints as valid means that it

provides no way of critiquing ideas. By judging the validity of an idea in terms of whether it helps its user solve their problem, rather than in terms of a value-judgement, pragmatism is said to justify all viewpoints and actions equally. This apparent lack of moral standards and values is argued to prevent pragmatism from being critical of prevailing norms, instead making inquiries acquiesce to the status quo (Mumford, 1926).

Pragmatists argue against these criticisms by stating that their notion of inquiry as problem-solving is not meant to be seen as a separate approach to other intellectual pursuits, but as an explanation of how all forms of inquiry operate. In this sense they argue against the idea that inquiry cannot be critical by highlighting the fact that traditional forms of 'critical theory' are forms of inquiry themselves, thus suggesting that within specific inquiries, various values and standards are employed to shape and guide their outcomes. Indeed, for pragmatists, all inquiries are 'moral inquiries', being shaped and guided by the shared values and moral compass of the specific community of inquirers (Lake, 2014). In this regard, pragmatism admits a degree of foundationalism that is robust enough to allay fears of ethical subjectivism, in which foundational truth claims and standards are established for the purpose of specific inquires (Gergen. 2015). What pragmatism argues that is different to absolutist philosophies is that these foundations must be validated by the community conducting the inquiry so that its practice and results are legitimate, rather than by appeal to some universal or transcendent reference point.

Moreover, pragmatists argue that morals and values are generated *through* inquiry, with the outcomes of specific actions being judged through dialogue with those affected by them. Arguing against the view that ordinary people cannot be trusted to produce their own knowledge about their problems for fear of creating 'extremist' or 'reactionary' ideas, pragmatists place the burden of justification on sceptics to explain why the experimental capacities of ordinary citizens should not be expressed. Indeed, rather than seeking to explain people's worlds for them in an attempt to avoid undesirable ideas and actions from emerging through inquiry, 'to be engaged as a pragmatist in normative political inquiry is… to be concerned with the problem of realising the experimental capacities [for knowledge production] of individuals to the fullest extent possible' (MacGilvray, 2000: 496).

In respecting the plurality of values, beliefs and visions of the good life, pragmatism speaks to wider debates in political theory about the relative values of consensus and conflict as democratic ideals to manage difference amongst the polity. Dryzek and Neimeyer (2006) characterise this debate as being divided between those theorists who advocate for consensus in public decision-making through processes of deliberation, involving free and reasoned argument amongst equals to arrive at an agreement of mutual benefit and interest (for example Habermas, 1981; Cohen, 1999), and those who argue for dissensus and conflict as ways of respecting incommensurable differences such as Mouffe (1999), Ranciere (2010) and Young (1996). In this latter sense, pluralism is managed not through consensus, which is argued to merely impose the interests of more powerful groups and perspectives over others, but through processes of dissent, conflict and agonism where difference is managed in a respectful way. Indeed, for these theorists of radical democracy, communication across difference is essential to preventing pluralism leading to violence between conflicting sets of truths. However, in promoting this type of communication, Dryzek and Neimyer (2006) argue that democratic theorists of conflict and dissent still hold to the notion of a 'meta-consensus' in which values, beliefs and preferences can be different amongst those in a polity, with agreement existing amongst all on the credibility of disputed beliefs, the legitimacy of contested values and the nature of disputed choices.

Pragmatism too holds to the possibilities and desirability of both consensus and conflict, recognising that all truths are contingent products, open to revision and change through processes of communication. Yet, what is important for pragmatists is not necessarily how pluralism can be managed in the abstract, but in the process through which citizens from all backgrounds and with different beliefs can address the issues and problems that directly affect them. It is to this process that I now turn.

2.2 John Dewey's Vision of Creative Democracy

Seeking to put pragmatic understandings of experience and communication as the source of truth, and the plurality of experiences, beliefs and realities into practice, John Dewey devoted his career to developing an approach to democratic decision-making, based on the active participation of all citizens in practical problem-solving efforts to address society's most pressing issues. Lake (2017) explains that Dewey's vision of 'creative democracy' was based on his belief that ordinary citizens, rather than specialist experts, are best placed to address their own problems, and that a means was needed to allow all

people, viewed as fundamentally equal, to collectively shape their shared worlds based on the understanding that each person's experiences in life gave them the authority to have an equal say in how their life should be governed.

For Dewey, the means to achieve this vision of democracy was through encouraging citizens to engage in collaborative inquiries into their shared problems as a means of developing new ideas and practices to solve them. In his 1927 book *The Public and Its Problems*, Dewey penned a passionate response to the prevailing idea at the time that American citizens were unable to make decisions about the governance of their lives, and that such public decision-making should be left to various experts, as argued by Walter Lippmann (1925). Lippmann argued that ordinary people could not be trusted to find solutions to society's problems and that the responsibility for this should be left to the specialists. Lippmann advocated a form of expert-led democracy based on a notion of inquiry as an expert practice, in which those with specialist knowledge and training were entrusted to inquire into social problems and prescribe the best ways forward for society.

Yet, whilst not denying the value of expertise in specific situations where it is impractical for everyone to acquire the knowledge to perform a specific task, Dewey argued that it has little use in the political realm when the decisions that have to be made are not merely technical, but moral, involving the negotiation of differing values. Indeed, quoting Dewey (1939: 22), Lake (2017) reveals how Dewey's belief in the capacity of all citizens to make sound decisions about their lives was based upon his understanding of experience as the source of valid knowledge upon which to make such moral decisions, arguing that 'democracy is the ability of human experience to generate the aims and methods by which further experience will grow in ordered richness'.

As such, Dewey's notion of inquiry was key to making moral decisions in a democratic way. He argued that the best way for people to address shared problems was for those people affected by the problem to apply their 'cooperative experimental intelligence in a continuous process of knowledge formation, testing, reflection and re-assessment' (Lake, 2017: 488-489). The practice of creative democratic inquiry involves bringing in the plurality of perspectives from all those affected by an issue, and engaging in conversations to develop solutions to the problem. This involves creating new narratives and ideas that allow the community of inquirers (what Dewey (1927) calls a 'public') to facilitate action for change (Lake, 2017). In this sense, the purpose of inquiry shifts from

being about uncovering fundamental truths that exist in an external world, and instead creating new and contingent truths amongst a community that allows those involved to address the issues at hand. As neo-pragmatist Richard Rorty (1979: 179-178), explains 'once the Enlightenment ideal of validating truth as accurate representation is replaced by the pragmatic criterion of efficacy in practice- once the question changes from 'Is it true?' to 'Does it work and is it useful?'- the verification of knowledge claims "reverts to the community as (the source) of epistemic authority" or, put simply, "what our peers will, ceteris paribus, let us get away with saying"' (quoted in Lake, 2017: 490)

For Dewey, scientific inquiry provided a model for his democratic vision. Yet, it was not the Enlightenment principles of universality, subject-object distance and the notion of laws and logics that impressed Dewey. Rather, he praised scientific inquiry's commitment to experimentation and the trial of ideas, in which problems are addressed through observation, assessment, correction, new observation and so on. This process generated ideas that were only ever provisional and thus laid the foundations for continuous inquiry. As such, there were no ends to creative democratic inquiry, just the means to address problems in collective ways (Lake, 2014).

Where the rationalist approach to inquiry and Dewey's notion of democratic inquiry differ, is the replacement of was the 'sovereignty of technique' (Oakeshott, 1962) as the source of validation for knowledge claims in the former, with the sovereignty of lived experience in the latter. As such, 'participation in science understood as a process of problem-solving is not merely the privileged province of the expert elite. The hallmark of science, as Dewey saw it, is its democratic character, an experimental practice open to all and dependent for its success on participation by multiple inquirers bringing multiple perspectives to bear in the inquiry' (Lake, 2014: 664). Democratic inquiry is still an empirical approach to problem-solving, using evidence to support knowledge claims. Yet access to this evidence is achieved through lived experience, rather than the methods of detached 'objective' observation (Lake, 2014; Cutchin, 2008). However, Dewey realised that his vision was not being widely practiced in his home country of America, identifying a number of barriers that prevented the creative democratic ideal becoming reality.

2.2.1 Barriers to Dewey's Vision Being Realised

Dewey (1927) argued that for citizens to come together and form problem-solving 'publics' around the issues that affected them, specific conditions were necessary. Dewey defined a public as a community of affected interests who gather together to form a common will to act around an issue of shared concern: '*The public consists of all those who are affected by the indirect consequences of transactions to such an extent that it is deemed necessary to have those consequences systematically covered for*' (15-16).

The process of public formation starts with the perception of issues by individuals, then there needs to be communication between these individuals so that they begin to construct these issues as shared concerns rather than private worries. Once this happens, a public can begin to inquire into the problem at hand and attempt to develop and enact solutions, often involving interactions with systems of government to effect change (Dewey, 1927). Indeed, Dewey's vision of democracy saw a role for the state and elected representatives, but very much placed these in the service of the public at large, and as levers of power that publics could seek to engage with in order to achieve their desired goals.

Yet, despite its apparent simplicity, the process of public formation is not easy, and Dewey outlined a number of pre-conditions that were necessary to support it. First of these was the existence of social ties between those experiencing a same situation. These relationships, or communities, formed the basis for communication over shared concerns. Dewey was a major advocate for the importance of associations for democracy, which provided the foundations for collective problem-solving by citizens. In *The Public and Its Problems* (1927), Dewey identified the effects of mass migration, the rise of an individualistic culture and the decline of regular, face to face interaction with others as influential in undermining the basis of his democratic vision. He argued for the 'great community' be created to replace the 'great society'.

In response to this Dewey called for attempts to recreate local communal life and associations as a first step towards engaging citizens in democratic practice. Echoing the work of George Mead, he asserted that communities only exist when they recognise themselves as such, and that this required the creation of meaningful symbols and signs to structure associations. It was only from communities, according to Dewey, that publics could emerge.

In addition to this, Dewey identified the lack of adequate skills and capacities amongst citizens to engage in collective problem-solving, as another barrier to the formation of problem-solving publics. He argued that people needed to learn the habits of thought and action to be democratic citizens. In this sense he called for 'education for democracy', in which citizens acquire and hone the skills and traits needed to engage with diverse others to develop creative solutions to their own problems. An advocate of 'learning by doing', Dewey argued that the best way to achieve this was to provide more opportunities for citizens to engage in collective inquiries (Dewey, 1939).

Dewey's notion of education for democracy was about expanding the public's capacity for reasoned and reasonable political engagement, rather than inculcating a particular point of view. This approach 'avoids the political project of indoctrination to a particular point of view and contrasts sharply with Foucauldian subject formation as a technique of governance' (Lake, 2017: 487). For Lake, subject formation enrols citizens as participants in politics and in the disciplines and control that politics entails, whereas education constitutes subjects as democratically competent political agents who can engage in collective problem-solving on their own terms. This is about teaching people the means of how to do politics to achieve their own desired ends, rather than telling them which ends were most desirable.

Thus, for Dewey (1939), democracy was 'a way of life' embodied in the efforts of ordinary citizens who came together to find shared solutions to common problems, and its survival as an ideal of government, could only be kept alive through the continuous and renewed practice of citizens in different places and over time. As such, Dewey's vision for democracy was less about designing institutions to facilitate citizen representation in public decisions and more about cultivating the attitudes and capabilities of people to engage in collaborative practices to find solutions to society's issues. Constant renewal is needed is keep democracy alive.

Putting ideas into practice, Dewey worked throughout his career to develop initiatives that sought to provide opportunities for citizens to learn the skills and habits of democratic politics. He was an influential advocate of the benefits of education for democracy in schools (Dewey, 1916), and also saw a role for universities, in particular the social sciences, in helping people to engage in politics by facilitating citizen-led inquiries into pressing social issues (Dewey, 1927). Indeed, Dewey's ideas were

extremely influential in the development of an approach to academic inquiry that put the concerns of ordinary people and a desire to inculcate democratic practices amongst citizens at its core. It is to this work, at the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago, that I turn in the following section.

2.3 The Chicago School of Sociology: Putting Creative Democratic Ideals into Practice at the University

Established in 1915, the new department of Sociology at the University of Chicago was heavily influenced by pragmatic philosophy and the democratic vision of Dewey. Indeed, the first head of the school, Albion Small, viewed sociology as a tool for democratic social change and ensured that its work was pervaded by Dewey's philosophy (Engel, 2002).

One of the key contributions of the Chicago School was the development of symbolic interactionism and the experimentation in 'naturalisitic' modes of inquiry (see Blumer, 1969). Sociologists at Chicago held to pragmatism's anti-foundational view of knowledge and truth. They recognised the existence of multiple truths and multiple worlds and sought to conduct research that could better understand the specific truths of different worlds, and find a way to solve the issues contained within each.

2.3.1 Naturalistic Inquiry: Challenging the Rationalist Approach

Addressing the practice of social scientific inquiry in the late 1960s, Herbet Blumer (1969: 47) argued that the facts of symbolic interactionism necessitate a '*down-to-earth approach to the scientific study of human group life and human conduct*' and in doing so '*lodges its problems in this natural world, conducts its studies in it, and derives its interpretations from such naturalistic studies*'.

Thus, following in the footsteps of the early pragmatists Blumer saw the point of scientific inquiry as a means of solving people's problems as they experience them. Explaining his notion of 'empirical validation', Blumer argues that this endeavour should be based on a methodology that takes seriously the social worlds of those people whose problems it is attempting to solve. Thus, Blumer asserted that *all* aspects of inquiry must be validated by the people whose experiences are being inquired into. These include the specific 'prior picture' or mental scheme of the empirical world under study; the questions asked of this world and the problems formulated; the selection of data to be

collected and the means of capturing it; the conception of the relationships between data; and, the interpretation of the findings. Blumer criticised social scientists for approaching inquiry with a priori theoretical schemes of how things are, formulating research questions based on a theoretical scheme or personal whim, and acting to bend the empirical world to their own premises, rather than allowing its own truth to speak. Echoing the sentiments of Michael Oakeshott (1962) discussed earlier, Blumer was articulating similar concerns over the effectiveness of rationalist social scientific inquiry to address the multitude of problems experienced by people in the world.

For Blumer the rationalist approach to scientific inquiry is problematic because it means that social scientists, as outsiders to the worlds they seek to study, can ignore the meanings that this world has for its inhabitants, and inquire into problems that may exist for the academic and the circles they operate within, but not for the inhabitants of the world they study. Reflecting William James' calls for philosophy to be grounded in concrete, real world problems, Blumer advanced a pragmatic critique of social science that is not grounded in the experiences and interests of the people it is studying, but in abstract theory and the interests of the academic. To counter this, Blumer argued for 'naturalistic inquiry' where the scientist would first explore a given social world, working closely with its inhabitants to gain a first-hand understanding of the meanings they ascribe to it and the problems that exist, and then inspecting data closely to allow the actually existing truths of this world to emerge. To do so, he advocated for social scientists to become closely acquainted with group social life through direct participation and observation. In doing so, Blumer was articulating an approach to research that had been pioneered at the Chicago School of Sociology during the early 1900s. The naturalistic inquiries of the Chicago School took two forms: the ethnographic approach, and the interventionist approach.

The first of these inspired a range of ethnographies conducted by researchers in the school, which sought to understand the meanings and customs that shaped specific social situations and communities. Based on a highly engaged form of participant observation, a range of studies were conducted that sought to analyse the worlds of others in terms of how people responded to problematic situations and adapted to cope with change. Explicitly trying to avoid the a priori imposition of macro-theoretical frameworks to their case studies, researchers focussed on the experiences, processes and actions that

characterised everyday life and social change for specific communities in particular locations (Gross, 2007; Harney et al, 2016).

Whist it is arguable whether participant observation can truly be a naturalisitic form of inquiry, given its reliance on the interpretive function of the researcher, it is interesting to note the pragmatic philosophy and intentions that lay behind this approach. Moreover, these works were not driven simply by academic curiosity but by a desire to understand the social world in order to change it. Indeed, in stating that '*the city [is] a laboratory or clinic in which human nature and social processes may be conveniently and profitably studied*', Robert Park (1925a:46)**,** one of the leading academics in the school, illustrates how the school was influenced by a pragmatic impulse for experimental action and intervention into unfolding realities in order to shape them for the better.

This impulse was translated into a blue-print for practical projects in the work of Park's colleague, Ernest Burgess, who developed the idea of the 'social survey' as a method for engaging communities in the process of identifying and attempting to solve their own issues. Outlined in a paper in 1916, the social survey was to be a scientific study of a community's conditions and needs for the purpose of constructing a program of social advance for its members (Burgess, 1916). Representing a more consciously interventionist approach to research, sociologists were to act as facilitators of this process by organising the different institutions of a community to design, carry-out and promote the survey movement locally so that ordinary people could identify their shared concerns and work out their own solutions to them. Speaking in Deweyan terms, for Burgess the social survey was '*the initial step toward the practical realisation of efficient and socialised democracy*' (Burgess, 1916:500). In this sense Burgess' survey can be conceptualised as a method for facilitating the formation of publics around issues of shared concern through the process of collective, critical inquiry led by those affected by the issues, rather than outside 'experts'.

In order to highlight the influence of pragmatism on the work of the Chicago School, myself and colleagues have previously translated Blumer's language of naturalistic inquiry into 'process pragmatism' (Harney et al, 2016). We argued that taking a process pragmatist approach to research places citizens and their experiences at the centre of academic inquiry. Moreover, process pragmatism incorporates a range of practices that compliment and facilitate effective citizen-led inquiry beyond traditional research. These

include relationship-building between citizens and academics, the formation of alliances of people to produce knowledge and take action, supporting education and self-development of all those involved in inquiry and building civic capacity and power to drive political problem-solving action. Process pragmatism thus acts as a framework for conducting engaged research and action that consciously tries to contribute towards democratic renewal through the formation of publics.

It is interesting to note here the parallels between the approach of the Chicago School and the ideas behind process pragmatism, and recent debates within Geography about the lessons for critical inquiry provided by various strands of assemblage thinking, inspired by post-structuralist philosophy from thinkers such as Foucault (1977), Deleuze and Guttari (1986), and Latour (2005a; 2005b). Jones (2008) highlights a number of similarities between pragmatism and assemblage thought, including a shared focus on the plurality of knowledge and realities, a relational ontology which sees the world as the product of interactions between people and things situated in networks or assemblages, and a shift away from producing representations of supposedly fixed realities towards generating ideas and action to create new realities as the focus of research. This has prompted recent calls by McFarlane (2011) for geographers to engage in deep, detailed empirical study of particular social issues in specific places, rather than assuming anything a priori about the causes and effects of particular problems and creating representations that locate specific issues as the product of universal categories such as 'neoliberalism', cast as all-pervasive systems.

Indeed, McFarlane's calls have prompted Farias (2011: 366) to draw on Dewey's notion of inquiry as an alternative to critique, in which the latter is conceived of as a practice conducted by academics 'in a theoretical mode' in order to 'debunk' social realities for the benefit of specific audiences. Instead, he argues that inquiry is a more open and exploratory form of engagement with the world, conducted by those affected by the issues at hand. In this sense, and reflecting the approach to inquiry developed by Burgess, Farias suggests that it is the academic's role not to debunk realities but to bring together those affected by an issue so that they may inquire into it and reassemble the relationships giving cause to it (see also Latour, 2004).

In this sense, the connections between assemblage thinking and pragmatism help clarify the process pragmatism's approach to inquiry which we can contrast with traditional,

rationalist approaches to inquiry. Process pragmatism is characterised by an open form of exploration of particular social issues by a community of inquirers made up of those people directly affected by the issue at hand. Inquiry seeks to identify the specific assemblages of relationships between people and things whose interactions generate the issue, as part of a process of developing strategies to reassemble these in order to find a solution. Process pragmatism is thus committed to empirics and participation, aligned to action and concerned not with creating representations of reality for their own sake, but for generating ideas to apply as tools to change realities (Lake, 2017).

In Chicago this approach to inquiry and problem-solving was further developed by Burgess, when in 1925 he set up the Chicago Areas Project (CAP), and employed fellow sociologist Clifford Shaw to lead it. Based on the idea of the social survey, the guiding vision for CAP 'was that each community could be organised to respond to its own problems through the development of its own leadership and programming' (Engel, 2002:60). Graduate students in the school of sociology were recruited to the organisation and sent out to facilitate projects with specific communities in the city. One such student was Saul Alinsky, who was hired by Shaw to work with young people in the Back of the Yards neighbourhood to find solutions to the problem of youth delinquency (Wills, 2012).

Alinsky went beyond his specific brief and worked with all the groups in this neighbourhood to form a broad-based 'people's organisation', the Back of the Yards Neighbourhood Council (BYNC), who worked as a collective to solve commonly held problems. Alinsky used the BYNC to unite a diverse range of communities across ethnic and cultural divides to act politically around shared campaigns. Despite being fired from CAP for going beyond his brief, Alinsky continued to work with the BYNC using the method of the social survey, to make progress in gaining various wins for the community by securing jobs and welfare services (Alinsky, 1941). Building on his experiences in the Back of the Yards, Alinsky went on to develop his model of broad based community organising (BBCO) and found the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the largest network of community organising alliances in the world (Wills, 2012). BBCO has been an influential political practice both in the USA and UK, being practiced by a range of local and national organisations in both countries, and impacting the practice of Government in each; former US President Barack Obama was a professional community organiser in Chicago before entering into party politics, and the approach has helped shaped the

localism agenda in the UK. As a method of bringing people together to identify and address shared issues, and rooted in philosophical pragmatism, BBCO provides useful lessons for re-aligning the practice of academic research towards engaging with the issues and interests of citizens and providing opportunities for ordinary people to engage in politics.

2.3.2 Places and Public Formation

BBCO is a distinctly place-based approach to politics, in which citizens are organised into alliances on the basis of their shared attachment to, or residence in, particular places. Indeed, work by a number of scholars helps illustrate the importance of place in public-formation.

Publics form through communicative action that builds mutual understanding, helping to form self-interests into issues of common concern. Following Dewey's notion of 'transaction', Bridge (2008) argues that this communicative action is not just discursive and includes a range of non-discursive elements too, and that this highlights the important role of space and place in public formation.

Bridge summarises Dewey's notion of transaction as a theory that human beings constitute 'body-minds' which transact with other bodies and body-minds in a constant process of becoming. Rather than two fully complete and individual beings interacting with other and making representations purely through discourse, the theory of transaction suggests that beings are mutually constitutive, and that communication has a constitutive function in shaping beings.

As such, the theory of transaction recognises the importance of materiality and environment in shaping the process of public formation. Due to the fact that people have bodies and not just minds, communicative action occurs not in a vacuum but in particular spaces and places which people inhabit. It is this notion of inhabitation as a way of being/becoming that highlights the role that space and place play in shaping the formation of publics. So, whilst publics do not need a fixed, territorial 'public space' in which to emerge (Barnett, 2008), different spaces provide different affordances and allowances for transaction, discourse and collective action.

Key to this is the importance of a pre-existing degree of familiarity and association between people. Publics form through a process of address and attention in which calls and claims are made by people in the hope that they resonate with others and galvanise

support for collective action (Barnett, 2008). In order for calls to resonate with people, they need to appeal to forms of common sense held by other citizens (Smith, 1984). This presupposes that those making the call have a degree of understanding and familiarity of the common-sense knowledge held by others, based on some form of pre-existing relationship with them. Moreover, for people to perceive their 'conditions of affectedness' as part of a shared issue rather than a personal worry, or as a normal part of life, then there is the need for a degree of pre-existing commonality amongst themselves and others (Barnett and Bridge, 2013). As such, Barnett (2008) describes publics as 'parasitical', emerging from pre-existing social connections and ties.

Work by sociologist David Studdert (2016) highlights the importance of everyday acts of sociality in helping to weave together social ties as a foundation for collective identification and action. Studdert advances an understanding of community as a verb rather than a thing. Community thus becomes the act of 'communing' through which collective meanings and action are created through intersubjective communication of various kinds. Reflecting the arguments of Mead (1934) that collective action is facilitated via the construction of common meaning and shared symbols, Studdert argues that at the basis of this process lie various acts of sociality. Studdert defines sociality as the totality of interactions with other people and things in one's everyday life, large or small, in any setting. These include every conversation and every interaction with people, objects, buildings and state apparatuses. Studdert (2016: 624) illustrates the field of sociality as follows:

> 'Everyday, everywhere, our lives are composed of social interactions,
> sociality of different strengths and meanings. It is the smile between
> two strangers, the groups chatting in the supermarket, or at work, at
> home or at the school gate. It occurs when fans sing team songs
> together at football matches…It occurs when people talk to each other
> or enter a 12th Century Cathedral or speak their mind about their job or
> give their opinions. It is the smallest of actions occurring infinitely in
> the largest arena: and again, in the smallest'.

Studdert argues that these acts help create a 'being-ness'; a provisional, temporary identity, shared as an outcome of the partial, incomplete perspectives of everyone present. As such, sociality is at the basis of all social identities, individual and collective,

with the 'truth' of these identities established and validated in the presence of others. Communication based on sociality helps create various 'meanings-in-common' that enable individual and collective action.

Moreover, sociality is necessarily place-based, occurring most frequently amongst those who inhabit the same geographical area, making shared place the context for acts of sociality (Wills, 2016a). The work of Alan Latham and Regan Koch illustrates how sociality can develop, or be hampered by, particular places and spaces such as streets, cafes, bars and restaurants. For them, and drawing on Bridge's (2008) understanding of inhabitation, such public spaces can offer forms of everyday sociality and togetherness by allowing bodies to come together in proximity, enter into dialogue and co-exist. Essential for allowing these processes of encounter or transaction to occur are the materialities and atmospheres that certain spaces possess and the opportunities for conviviality that they afford (Koch and Latham, 2012; Koch and Latham, 2013).

Indeed, these everyday spaces and practices are instrumental in helping to build public cultures that are necessarily place-based (such as along a high street, or on a housing estate). Such cultures are the means through which people can interact (or transact) with others to create common meanings and understandings. Such cultures form through the fragile networks of community and sociality that public spaces help build (Latham, 2003). These cultures always already exist prior to publicness as properly political, with cultures able to be transcended into forms of political will (Koch and Latham, 2012; Bridge and Watson, 2011)

This point was recognised by Craig Calhoun in 1983, who argued that communal ties and social traditions are far more important than political ideologies or the severity of issues in allowing publics to form and maintain themselves in processes of collective, political action. Seeking to explain the importance of pre-existing social foundations for political action, Calhoun argued that that people will only make decisions to take risky collective action when they have strong ties of connection and a sense of community with those they are acting with. This is because communities provide their members a form of 'social strength' from which to wage drawn-out and risky political battles based on a coherent sense of shared interests and shared enemies.

BBCO recognises the importance of place-based sociality, community and meanings for facilitating publics to form, and can be seen as an intentional means to transcend place-

based public cultures into forms of localised political will amongst citizens. It does this by seeking to transform various conditions of affectedness that people live with into notions of shared interests and issues to act around. Alinsky outlined his model of community organising in two influential books, *Reveille for Radicals* (1946) and *Rules for Radicals* (1971), the former reflecting on his experiences as an organiser with the BYNC and the latter providing a more detailed analysis of the tactics needed for people's organisations to achieve their goals. Alinsky sought to organise communities through the institutions that they were members of, such as schools, churches and clubs, and create alliances between them to build a democratic infrastructure that could allow citizens to identify and seek to solve shared problems.

Community organising alliances act as a loose infrastructure to allow ongoing conversations and relationship building between citizens, facilitating the gradual development of ideas and action to address emerging problems (Wills, 2012). Place plays a particular role in this form of organising, which following Mead (1934), can act as 'common object' through which to build relationships and initiate conversations to create shared understandings and narratives that facilitate collective action.

Martin (2003) argues that community organising taps into place-based social ties, associations and interactions to discursively construct neighbourhoods for the purpose of political work. As such, in a pragmatic vein, neighbourhoods do not pre-exist but are enacted by the people who live in them to serve specific purposes. These enactments are always local, the product of social interactions and events participated in by people who live and work in proximity to each other. As such, BBCO seeks to tap into people's place-based identities, based around narratives linked to their unique histories, cultures, and understandings of 'us' and 'them' (Paasi, 2003, and see Castells, 1983 for examples of such place-based politics).

This work of tapping into and re-constructing a place-based identity and narrative to facilitate localised civic action helps to weave together the multiple and overlapping worlds that intersect and touch down in any given geographical location (Massey, 1994; 2005), with place acting as the glue that can hold citizens together in a potentially democratic community (Wills, 2013). Community organising seeks to build relationships between people based on where their lives intersect and where common experiences

might form, and living and working in proximity to each other affords these commonalities.

As such, the place-based, local nature of public action cultivated by BBCO challenges arguments that place, locality and neighbourhood are becoming increasingly less significant in people's lives with processes such as globalisation and mass migration resulting in people's social connections becoming more stretched out over space, and attachments to local people and places being eroded by mobility (see Auge, 1995; Vertovec, 2007; Amin, 2010). It also challenges those who criticise place-based politics and the imagined boundaries that facilitate this for being reactionary, backward-looking, overly romantic and exclusionary (Harvey, 1989; Cresswell, 1996; Valentine, 1996; May, 1996).

In contrast, advocates and practitioners of BBCO maintain that place and locality still matter for the majority of citizens in the world today, and seek to build on this to cultivate commitment amongst people for public action. This resonates with Tomaney's (2013) argument about the importance of place-based notions of belonging and identity for facilitating civic action, and Staeheli et al's (2012) argument that local, place-based relationships and interactions play an important role in developing 'affective citizenship ties' between people which help to define people as a collective polity.

However, the placed-based nature of BBCO is often pulled up for being piecemeal and small-scale in its approach to social change. Moreover, and reflecting wider criticisms of Pragmatism, BBCO's lack of adherence to any particular political ideology is often identified as the cause of its supposed inability to make large-scale, 'systemic' change (Defilippis et al 2010; Dreier, 2007). But these criticisms miss the point. Not only is taking a place-based approach to politics important for allowing publics to form for the reasons already explained, the pragmatic ontology of relationality, plurality and radical contingency also points toward the importance of taking a localised, place-based approach to problem-solving by highlighting that problems are the product of specific sets of social relations, felt uniquely by people affected by those relations, and thus requiring unique responses. This view of the world highlights that problems are specific and contingent and that the best way to deal with them is to embed efforts to address in the control of the very communities affected by them.

Traditionally BBCO has operated through a conceptual framework that distinguishes between the state, the market and civil society. This often results in a specific approach to problem-solving that rests upon grass-roots organising to lobby politicians and business leaders to make changes in their decision-making to benefit a particular alliance, reflecting the way that citizens can hold the state and market to account (Chambers, 2004; Fisher and Shragge, 2007). This is the main model of BBCO still practiced by the IAF today, which also made its way to the UK through Citizens UK, a community organising alliance founded by Neil Jameson in the 1980s. Established in east London, CUK is an organisation that works to develop ordinary people as leaders in public life in the UK through training courses and campaigns that address the self-defined issues of their members. They have alliances of civil society organisations across London and the UK, with branches in Nottingham, Birmingham, Wales and Milton Keynes (Harney et al, 2016)

However, arguments are being made as to the limitations of using solely this approach to address public problems, with Boyte (2014) arguing for community organising to adopt the model of 'public work' discussed in Chapter One that brings together diverse groups and individuals to find solutions to common problems through a variety of strategies that may or may not engage the state or market in oppositional relationships with the people. Public work, Boyte argues, does not just rely on a politics of redistribution from existing decision-makers towards organised communities, but is focussed too on the creation of new public goods through collaboration and innovation. In this sense, community organising can encompass both the Alinskyian model of holding key decision-makers to account, and a more expansive approach to problem solving that encompasses the creation of (social) enterprises, projects for cultural change and the development of new ways of doing things.

As such, broad-based community organising represents a practical application of the ideas about collective inquiry and problem-solving contained within pragmatist philosophy and Dewey's vision of democracy. It is a form of naturalistic inquiry, carried out by communities of affected interests and rooted in practical, problem-solving action. It is this orientation towards action, rather than just knowledge production for its own sake, that drives BBCO's concern and sensitivity towards building power to effect change. It is to this notion of power, and the relational understanding of power held by BBCO that I will now turn.

2.3.3 Democracy, Power and Organising

Pragmatists understand power as something that makes things happen. Power tends to be seen in a positive light as enabling effective problem-solving action, and is viewed as a relational effect of social interaction (Allen, 2008). Community organising too employs this notion of power, and it seeks to build the power of citizens to address particular problems by building relationships. The IAF's notion of 'relational power' is two-fold: 1. Getting alliances to relate to *existing* forms of power (policy-makers, business leaders and other decision-makers), and 2. Generating relationships to build a *new* form of power. In the first sense it describes how community organising builds the power of ordinary people to effect change by developing relationships with key decision-makers in the state and market (Chambers, 2004). By doing this, community organising alliances have the ability to influence such people when they come to make decisions that affect the lives of their members.

In the second sense, it describes how, by bringing together a broad and diverse set of people around an issue to form a common will for change, community organising can build a new power base which allows previously ignored groups and issues to be taken seriously by decision makers, and for people to begin to address collective issues where previously they lacked the ability to do this (Warren, 2001). The importance of generating the power to make change is also part of the reason why Alinsky placed so much importance on the broad-based nature of his work. For him, diverse publics were likely to identify issues and develop solutions that resonate with the largest number of people, and are thus able to gather enough support for them to be able to enact their will more successfully by being taken seriously by decision-makers.

For Chambers (2004), relational power requires a give and take between different parties so that each one's interests can be met through the relationship. This is based on Alinsky's (1971) assertion that 'self-interest' is the way to influence the behaviour of others. If we are to get someone to do something for us, then there must also be something in it for them. Accordingly, negotiation is central to community organising. If you are to influence the actions of decision makers to benefit your alliance, then you need to appeal to their interests. Equally, if you are to convene a diverse public then compromise is needed to generate a shared vision of the common good to act around (Warren, 2001). Thus, whilst 'pragmatic' has become pejorative for being un-principled,

conservative or 'reformist' by many (see MacGilvray, 2000), if we are to take seriously its call for action, then a politics of compromise and negotiation is vital.

In order to build relational power, in theory at least, BBCO seeks to work with all citizens that inhabit a specific place. BBCO's place-based approach to building relationships involves seeking to form alliances between people of different ethnic, religious and class backgrounds in order to represent the social plurality of specific areas. Often this involves approaching and working with various civil society organisations to ensure that all of the communities within an area are represented in any alliance.

Once relationships have been built between citizens and communities in particular places, organisations such as the IAF and CUK promote the act of listening amongst their members in order to identify shared issues on which action can be taken. Coles (2004) describes how listening is a 'democratic practice' that allows relationships to be built and a shared vision of progress to emerge. In this respect, the main method used by community organisers is the 'relational meeting' or 'one-to-one'. The one-to-one is a face-to-face meeting where two people come together to attempt to build a public relationship that can act as the basis for joint political action in the future (Chambers, 2009). In a one-to-one people share stories about themselves and the area they live, revealing their motivations for political action and their immediate self-interest in order to generate 'democratic knowledge about an urban area and its people' that encourages people to see their issues and interests as linked to those of others (Coles, 2004: 686).

One-to-ones are thus a form of communicative action that aims to generate a collective political identity based around the construction of shared issues. This occurs in specific places where the social capital exists to allow people to develop a mutual understanding based on shared circumstances and trust (Putnam, 2000; Wills, **2013**). The collective act of listening helps to frame problematic situations in ways that generate shared meaning and a sense of shared issues, rather than private concerns. In this sense, community organisers have been described as 'applied symbolic interactionists' due to their role in facilitating the development of new symbols to guide collective action within communities (Reitzes and Reitzes, 1996**).**

Alongside building relational power, BBCO also seeks to increase the ability of citizens to effect change by helping develop their skills and capacities to engage in public work effectively. Drawing on Dewey's calls for 'education for democracy', Boyte (2003)

argues that for people to engage in politics as a form of collective problem-solving they must learn a variety of civic skills and capacities. Such an education would develop people's ability to negotiate diverse views, interests and power relations and take action to turn ideas into reality by cultivating 'political citizens' (Boyte, 2003).

Fung (2003) distinguishes between two aspects of political education: the cultivation of civic capacities, including habits of cooperation, toleration, self-confidence, and respect for others; and the cultivation of civic skills, including making speeches, constructing arguments, conducting interviews and building relationships (Boyte, 2003). The IAF seek to cultivate these skills and capacities by training their members at courses that develop such skills and by providing experiences for them to learn via their political campaigns. This is intended to develop people as citizens and fuel further public action in the future (Warren, 2001).

In this sense the role of the community organiser is to empower people to take action over their own issues and shape their own lives (Sabl, 2002). This requires a constant process of action and reflection in order to develop people's sense of themselves as influential and skilled citizens (Warren, 2001). Empowerment is so important for the IAF and CUK that the 'win-ability' of campaigns is a central concern for organisers; if campaigns are deemed likely to fail because they do not play into the self-interest of power players or the organisation does not have enough power to enact their ideas into reality they will not proceed with them as the risk of losing threatens to demoralise its members and prevent the expansion of democracy (Alinsky, 1971).

The impact of pragmatic thought on the engaged research practices at the University of Chicago and the method of broad-based community organising, provides a potential blue print for changing the ways that our universities currently work so that processes of knowledge production are more embedded in the experiences and interests of ordinary citizens, thus contributing towards efforts to provide new means for citizens to engage in public decision-making. In particular, the use of social (scientific) inquiry and the focus of place to engage citizens in collective problem-solving presents academic Geography with a possible model for engaging in this type of work today. The next section of this chapter will thus consider contemporary practices of critical Geographic inquiry, and how pragmatism and the methods of community organising can complement existing

engaged research in the discipline in ways that provide a response to the current democratic malaise.

2.4 Pragmatist Geography: Lessons for Engaged Research in Critical Geographic Inquiry?

The history of academic Geography provides a useful illustration of the argument made in Chapter One about the rise of rationalist approaches to inquiry within the social sciences in the UK (see- Williams, 2016). Speaking at the launch of the first ever British undergraduate course in geography at Oxford University in 1887, Halford Mackinder argued that 'a geography may be worked at which will satisfy at once the practical requirements of the statesman and the merchant, the theoretical requirements of the historian and the scientists, and the intellectual requirements of the teacher' (Mackinder, 1887: 159, quoted in Cloke et al, 1991). It is clear then, that from its early origins, the discipline of geography has always been concerned with addressing the problems and serving the needs of those outside of the academy, from governments, traders, and the education system (Wills, 2014).

Built on the two interconnected notions of environmental determinism and the concept of the region, early geography was characterised by a very specific approach to the study of the relationship between humans and their environment. Regional geography was the dominant mode of inquiry, with geographers producing very detailed descriptions of specific regions and places in order to understand and map the diversity of the planet. Idiographic accounts of regions, including their human and physical features dominated the practice of geographical inquiry for a large part of the 20th Century. This was until a challenge was posed by a group of young geographers who sought to bring positivist philosophy into the discipline in an effort to increase its relevance and perceived utility to policy-makers (Cloke et al, 1991).

In the context of post-WW2 America and the UK, in which national governments embarked upon a period of large-scale re-building after the war, a discourse of modernism took hold in intellectual circles, where academic inquiry increasingly became connected to goals of social progress and development. The growth of this modernist project saw the rise of positivist philosophy and a rationalist approach to inquiry in the social sciences, in which it was held that there were transcendent truths and laws that dictated how the world worked and how societies were ordered (Barnes, 2001). It was

the goal of social science to uncover these laws in order to inform policy-makers of the most efficient and effective ways to build for the future.

Within Geography, the quantitative revolution saw the rapid adoption of 'quantitative methods as part of a move towards the proper and rigorous pursuit of intellectual inquiry within a scientific framework. These involved the adoption of the view that there existed spatial laws and rules, which (if only geographers could uncover them) would prove to be at the root of all human existence' (Cloke et al, 1991: 12). Barnes (2001) explains how new concepts such as central place theory and location theory were introduced to the discipline and further developed by quantitative geographers. In testing these theories with new data and creating models that could predict spatial changes, geographers such as Berry and Garrison (1958), Bunge (1962) and Harvey (1969) sought to institute a new approach to geographic inquiry that spoke the language of decision-makers and increased the ability of the discipline to have an impact in shaping the wider world.

This paradigm shift within the discipline resulted in the re-fashioning of geography from an overly descriptive, idiographic discipline that had very little to contribute towards the modernist project, to a spatial science that was able to model and predict social development in order to shape it for the better. Fitting in with wider political trends around the cult of the expert, geographers recast themselves as 'experts' on urban and spatial development and planning, who could produce specialist knowledge for decision-makers.

Yet, as part of the student movements of the 1960s, geography students and new faculty members began to grow dissatisfied with the limitations of spatial analysis and its inability to account for or solve the various social problems and crises that were present in the world at the time. Just as in other social sciences, a critical reaction soon emerged towards rationalist spatial science amongst these young academics.

A challenge to the methods and principles of positivism was mounted by a number of geographers, with the loudest criticisms coming from those who had begun to explore the benefits of Marxist philosophy to geographic inquiry. Geographers such as David Harvey and Richard Peet turned to Marxism as a means of better understanding the phenomena they were encountering in the world at the time. They saw Marxism as more capable of providing an explanation of various social problems and for finding ways to do something about it (Cloke et al, 1991).

Thus, in one of the first challenges to the positivist paradigm within the discipline Harvey (1972) argued that spatial science was not a neutral, value-free, objective endeavour, but a political approach to inquiry that served the interests of a ruling capitalist class over the interests of others. Opposing what he saw as a conservative discipline that reproduced an exploitative status quo, Harvey put forward some principles for a Marxist geography based on 'revolutionary theory' that could reveal the class interests and mechanisms of oppression that underlay the surface appearances of society. Developing these ideas further, Harvey's Social Justice and the City (1973) became the key text of a new Marxist geography that argued for geographers '*to mobilise [their] powers of thought to formulate concepts and categories, theories and arguments, which [they] can apply to the task of bringing about harmonious social change*' (p.146). It was the role of Marxist geographers to reveal the *real* truth of the world so that people could recognise their oppressed positions and fight for revolutionary social change.

Harvey engaged in a public debate with spatial scientist Brian Berry, who advocated for the further application of the positivist method contained within spatial science as the best way to address the problems in wider society. Against Marxist calls for revolution, Berry argued that geographers could respond to social problems in ways that avoided the need for revolutionary action, by becoming part of society's decision-making structures and using their expertise for good. Indeed, in a direct response to Harvey, Berry (1972: 78) asserted that geographers should engage in 'an effective policy-relevant geography' that 'involves neither the blubbering of the bleeding hearts, nor the machinations of the Marxists. It involves working with- and on- the sources of power and becoming part of society's decision-making apparatus'.

Despite positioning themselves at the poles of a debate about the best approach to geographic inquiry, Lake (2014) argues that the differences between the spatial science promoted by Berry and Harvey's Marxism were actually fewer than appeared. Coming from a pragmatic perspective, Lake argues that positivism and Marxism only differed in so far as each approach to inquiry had different moral goals, whereas both approaches used the same methods of inquiry, which validated knowledge claims through the application of rationalist technique, rather than through a process of communication with the people whose problems both approaches were attempting to address (see also Bridge, 2013)

Both approaches championed expert-led problem solving, rather than trusting the ability of citizens to engage in their own inquiries to develop solutions to their own problems.

For Berry and Harvey, it was the specialist knowledge generated through the application of positivist science or Marxist ideology that had the answers to society's problems, not the people experiencing those problems themselves. As such, both were a far cry from the kind of democratic, naturalistic inquiry championed by people like Dewey and the Chicago School of Sociology.

However, during the time of these debates, an experiment in facilitating this very type of, collective, citizen-led inquiry was being developed by a geographer in Detroit. Working at Wayne State University in Michigan, Bill Bunge and the Detroit Geographical Expedition Institute (DGEI) pioneered a democratic approach to geographic inquiry in which he trained local residents in the methods of social scientific research and facilitated inquiries into the pressing issues identified by them and their communities.

The DGEI was a truly radical approach to research, in which the residents of a black ghetto in Detroit were trained in the skills of social research and encouraged to use these to delve into the problems that mattered most to their community. Interestingly, Bunge worked closely with Gwendolyn Warren, a resident and organiser of the Fitzgerald Community Council (FCC), an alliance of neighbourhood institutions operating according to the methods of community organising developed by Saul Alinsky (Heynen, 2013). Within this context, the 'folk geographers' of the DGEI conducted vital pieces of research into the pressing issues that affected their families, friends and neighbours. Studies were done on the quality and quantity of children's play space, the locations of child deaths to motorists and the routine flows of money from ghetto residents to external business owners (Bunge, 1971a; 1971b). The DGEI and FCC complimented each other, conducting research on, and then taking action to solve the self-defined issues of an organised community, getting playgrounds built, speed-limits imposed and addressing the issue of school re-districting (Bunge 1971b). At a time when radical geography was dominated by the grand narratives of class oppression and inspections into universal laws and logics, Bunge was very much grounded in the particularities of place, operating in the real world of people's lived experiences and struggles.

A number of geographers have taken inspiration from Bunge's work and sought to frame it in different political and epistemological traditions. For Merrifield (1995) the DGEI represents a pre-Harawayan valuation of the situated knowledge of ghetto residents, valuing the experiences and common-sense understandings of an oppressed community

and bringing these to light for the purpose of change. Linked to this, Heyman (2007) praises Bunge for democratising the knowledge production process through pedagogy so that people had the tools to address their own problems through research. In addition, Heynen (2013) draws parallels between their approach and the 'popular ethnography' of Miles Horton and the Highlander Folk School, where members of poor communities are encouraged to educate their peers and neighbours about their own problems so that a movement can emerge to address them. None of these interpretations are wrong, but in drawing these elements together and looking closer at the organising method used by the FCC, I want to argue that the DGEI and the expedition approach to geographical research has strong echoes of John Dewey's vision of creative democratic inquiry. Despite being a Marxist himself, Bunge facilitated processes of naturalistic inquiry through which the residents of Fitzgerald were able to frame their issues in their own terms and plan their own ways to address them. Bunge did not impose his Marxist views on the community, but rather respected the alternative views of his research 'participants', trusting them to come to their own conclusions.

However, Marxist geographers won out the debates at this time, and Bunge's approach came under criticism from his peers. Indeed, as Peet (1977) reflected, the relationship between Bunge's expeditions and a 'deeper, more all-embracing revolutionary movement was always tenuous at heart, whilst at worst [they might] be considered a liberal diversion of political effort '(p.248). In fact, as Harvey (1973) hints, Bunge's expeditions were seen as 'counter-revolutionary' and a form of 'emotional tourism' in which academics 'live and work with the poor "for a while" in the hope that [they] can really help them improve their lot…So what if we help a community win a playground in one summer of work to find that the school deteriorates in the fall? These are the paths we should not take. They merely serve to divert us from the essential task at hand' (p.145). With this, Bunge and his concerns for democracy became increasingly marginalised in the discipline.

The efforts of the Marxists paved the way for the development of Radical Geography as a dominant sub-discipline within the discipline, signalled by the launch of *Antipode* in 1969. Often characterised as being dominated by Marxist accounts of the world, this work included anarchist, feminist and a range of other critical theory perspectives (resulting in the adoption of 'Critical Geography' as the title to encompass this range of approaches) over time. The Antipode project has maintained itself as a 'New Left'

political endeavour to produce knowledge as part of a strategy '*to discard the obsolete and to construct anew…systems which are consistent with our ideals*' in order to create '*a whole new geography based upon the precepts of equality and justice*' (Peet, 1969: 3-4).

Arguably, and following the discussion of Williams (2016) in Chapter One, the emergence of Critical Geography, and the marginalisation of spatial science represents the establishment of a new academic orthodoxy within the discipline. The Marxist challenge to positivism in Geography paved the way for the introduction of a range of critical theory approaches to inquiry within the discipline.

Most notably, feminism, and the postmodern critique. Articulated through a number of thinkers, postmodernism began to enter critical geography from the late 1980s onwards. Engaging with the work of the French philosophers, including Foucault (1972) and Lyotard (1984), postmodern geographers mounted an attack on the dominance of Marxism (Cloke et al, 1991). Arguing against the ability of grand narratives to explain the complexity of the world, and suggesting that there did not exist one truth, or system of laws and logics but multiple truths contained in 'local knowledges' and linguistic communities, postmodernism opened up critical geography to consider a range of oppressed 'others', including racial and sexual minorities, exploited place-based communities, those with disabilities etc. (Cloke et al, 1991). Whilst some saw this new concern for multiple truths and difference as a threat to committed radical scholarship by giving geographers licence to study anything they wanted in whichever ways they chose to (see Chouinard, 1994; Smith, 2006), postmodernism has been used by some to expand the focus and develop the methods of critical geographical inquiry. These approaches have strong parallels to pragmatism, even if largely unacknowledged (although see Barnes, 2008)

Today, the populist challenge to the political establishment has come from those who hold different values and perspectives to those associated with the new left critical geography orthodoxy. The 60 million people who elected Donald Trump as president in America, and 17 million who voted for the UK to leave to European Union, apparently hold views that do not align with the dominant values in critical geography. Responses to these political events have been met with widespread disillusionment and incredulity. These popular political events, and the ordinary citizens who made them happen, have

very quickly been categorised as 'racist' or 'fascist', or 'ignorant' about their own interests and the consequences of their actions (Goodhart, 2017).

From a pragmatist point of view, this response from academics and students is unhelpful. The point-blank dismissal of the views and actions of significant numbers of ordinary citizens and their categorisation in terms as extreme and serious as being racist or fascist shows a failure to attempt to understand the beliefs, the truths, of others. Moreover, in holding that the people driving these populist challenges do not understand their own interests, academics are implying that *they* are the ones who know better. Not only does this deny the equal personhood of these citizens, but it reflects the endurance of a rationalist attitude in the current academic orthodoxy that values the knowledge held within existing critical theoretical concepts and world views over the knowledge held, and acted upon by masses of ordinary citizens.

This is because, as discussed in Chapter One, the new academic orthodoxy of critical theory did not challenge the methods of knowledge validation central to rationalist inquiry, they merely challenged the moral goals and character of that inquiry (Lake, 2014). As such, despite trying to represent the interests of a range of social groups who were ignored by positivist spatial science, the critical geography project failed to keep in touch with the changing experiences and beliefs of ordinary citizens as its method of inquiry did not feel the need to validate its knowledge claims in these experiences, but through reference to existing academic, critical theory. As such, geography graduates who become the decision-makers in society are taught ideas and values that do not necessarily represent the values held by citizens, illustrating how rationalist approaches to inquiry undermine the democratic function of universities as conduits for the knowledge of ordinary citizens to feed into and shape the political decision-making process.

This is a far cry from the naturalistic, democratic inquiry advocated by people like Dewey, Blumer, Alinsky and Bunge, where citizens are trusted to inquire into their own problems and generate the knowledge and power needed to address them. However, the recent participatory turn in Geography has begun to challenge the rationalist approach to inquiry by seeking to do just this and put ordinary citizens in control of knowledge production as part of strategies for collective social action.

2.4.1 Participatory Research and Pragmatic Inquiry

Academic geographers employing participatory approaches to research seek to work closely with non-academic communities to produce knowledge that is aligned to meeting the self-defined goals of ordinary people and/or creating new worlds in the here and now through projects that aim to have an immediate impact on participants and the wider world. In this vein we have activist geographies (Pickerill and Chatterton, 2006; Autonomous Geographies Collective, 2010), militant research (Brown, 2007; Mason, 2013; Halvorsen, 2014), and participatory action research (PAR) projects undertaken through feminist, critical race studies, and post-Marxist lenses (Cahill, 2007; Torre, 2009; Cameron and Gibson, 2005; Gibson-Graham, 2006).

Previously I have argued, with colleagues (Harney et al, 2016: 8), that participatory action research in geography can be categorised into two types, existing along a continuum. On the one hand there are 'ideological' approaches to PAR, which are 'characterized by advancing a pre-defined political project, such as those influenced by feminism or critical race theory in which the 'scholar-activist' can 'bring together their academic work with their political ideas to further social change and work directly with marginal groups or those in struggle' (Autonomous Geographies Collective, 2010: 246). Such scholar activists are found to be committed to a range of political persuasions including anti-capitalism, feminism and anti-racism, and their research is designed to pursue their personal political goals and those of the groups that they work with.'

On the other hand, there is PAR which is practiced with a more open-ended stance. Framing their participatory projects in such terms as 'public geographies' and the 'communiversity' (Fuller, 2008; Kinpaisby, 2008). This open-ended PAR tends to be less ideologically pre-committed, working with citizens to address problems in a range of practical ways. We argued that pragmatism offers a unique and valuable contribution to existing PAR within Geography by avoiding the limitations we perceive of ideological PAR, and providing an alternative philosophical grounding and democratic narrative to guide more open-ended PAR projects, that we call 'process pragmatism' (Harney et al, 2016).

As touched upon earlier, process pragmatism refers to an approach to PAR that is based on the democratic vision of Dewey. It involves the embedding of participatory research methods within a narrative of democratic renewal that combines the processes of

collective knowledge production with the community organising work that can facilitate the creation of publics around issues of shared concern. Process pragmatism not only helps generate collective understandings to guide problem-solving action, but also aims to build relationships between, and the skills of, ordinary citizens to enable solutions to be enacted. As we stated in 2016, 'the process pragmatist approach has significant implications for the place and role of the university, its academics and students. In this model, academics and students can be seen as part of broader social alliances whose members work together to explore shared concerns, formulate solutions and act upon those ideas. Rather than being the disinterested expert or the useful outsider who is able to help an existing cause, the 'process pragmatist' is an engaged practitioner skilled in the art of relationship building, listening, collaborating and acting with others. Research becomes part of an ongoing process of sustaining a local alliance of organizations working together for the common good' (Harney et al, 2016: 318).

Process pragmatism differs from ideologically-oriented PAR in its focus on the *process* of social inquiry, rather than on an a priori commitment to particular truths. Whereas PAR conducted through Marxist, feminist or critical race theory lenses take the pre-existence of particular foundational truths and narratives as a given in their work, process pragmatism aims to allow such truths and narratives to be generated *through* the research process. This is due to pragmatism's recognition of the plurality of truths that exist in the world, and the performative role that knowledge production (and communication) has in shaping the world.

Explaining the performative nature of knowledge, Gergen (2015: 291) argues that all approaches to inquiry end up producing knowledge that brings certain worlds into being, whilst preventing others from emerging:

> 'In a classic illustration of a performative: "I name this ship the "Queen Elizabeth", the act of naming has consequences for subsequent action. In the same way, as social scientists go about describing the nature of "aggression", "mental illness", "suicide", and the like, they are "naming" or "dubbing" those under study in ways that invite actions toward them'.

Drawing on the work of neo-pragmatist, Richard Rorty (1979), Gergen argues that (social) science does not merely reflect the realities it attempts to represent but, given

that the world is in constant flux and always in the process of becoming, our representations play a role in allowing certain realities to emerge and preventing others from being created and, as such, all forms of research are 'future forming' (see also the work of John Law, 2004). The future forming nature of research poses opportunities for pragmatists to use PAR as part of collective problem-solving efforts with their fellow citizens. Yet it also poses an important challenge, for if we are committed to respecting the truths of others, then our participatory research practices must be open to the plurality of truths and identities in the world. Given the performative nature of research, and the credibility that academic knowledge has in relation to other forms of knowledge, it is the democratic duty of the pragmatist to ensure that *all* citizens are able to engage in creating new narratives and ideas that represent their understandings of their experiences

It is this commitment to pluralism which distinguishes process pragmatism from ideologically-oriented PAR. The latter works with those people who share the personal politics and ontological outlook of the academic, or indeed involves projects that seek to change the ontological outlook of research participants to align them to the outlook of the academic, whilst the former seeks to give all people, regardless of their values and worldview, access to the potential benefits of engaging in collective inquiry through PAR.

An example of the latter and the process of ontological education in practice within Geography is seen in the work of J.K Gibson Graham and the Community Economies Collective (CEC). Drawing on the Freirean (1996) tradition of radical pedagogy through a Foucauldian lens, academics within the CEC use PAR to facilitate processes of 'resubjectification' amongst their participants to lead them from what they describe as hopeless capitalistic subjectivities that cannot see a world beyond capitalism, to more hopeful 'postcapitalist' subjects whose eyes are open to the range of (potential) noncapitalist economic activity in the world.

Working as part of this project, academics act as facilitators of 'resubjectification' amongst their research participants by getting them to reflect on their current economic situation and re-conceptualise their daily lives to see all of the non-capitalist productive activity that they do. From this, new economic discourses are constructed that are used to shape local economic development by engaging with policy-makers and community groups to set-up new schemes, with the ultimate goal that new economic subjects will

bring a new economic order into being (Gibson-Graham et al, 2013; Gibson-Graham, 2006). For the CEC, their PAR is part of a conscious attempt to shift the way we think about social change from a view of 'a revolution led by a vanguard of card carrying Marxists of a masculine kind who still consider that judging and disciplining are ways of enrolling support' towards an 'interest in everyday revolutions, or insurrection' (Gibson, 2014: 286).

Accordingly, the CEC holds 'a vision of a community economy, as a space of ethical negotiation and decision making' that can help people to re-think their economic status and place in the world as part of a project to 'smash capitalism by working at home in our spare time' (Gibson-Graham et al, 2013: ix). As such, their use of PAR can be characterised as a form of Freirean radical pedagogy that seeks to generate a post-Marxist political consciousness amongst research participants (Freire, 1996). For the CEC, PAR is used to further spread the ideas and concepts created by the academics, rather than allowing participants to produce their own knowledge of their situation. Conscientisation, rather than empowerment, is the goal of post-Marxist PAR. Indeed, describing the aim of their 2013 hand-book *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities*, Gibson-Graham et al state that it was born as 'a project of popularising these ideas' to a wider audience.

To illustrate, Cameron and Gibson (2005) describe a CEC project that they led in the Latrobe Valley in Australia. The academics chose to work in this area owing to its high rate of unemployment and deprivation due to deindustrialisation. Within this context, the authors engaged in a pedagogical project designed to initiate a process of resubjectification amongst participants, using their own concept of the 'diverse economy' that attempts to valorise and make visible non-capitalist economic activity in order to progress towards a post-capitalist economic future. They sought to do this in order to win funding and grants for non-capitalist economic activity from local development agencies.

The aim of the project was to work with people in this deprived area in order to generate a new language of the economy as a means of creating new, more hopeful representations of the situation and cultivate new economic subjects who would see the value in the activities that they were already doing and work towards to securing the conditions for these to be valued by local decision-makers. As a result of the

resubjectification process, participants developed a new way of seeing themselves in the world, which lead to the creation of over 60 ideas for new community and economic projects and the eventual implementation of new community enterprises, such as community gardens and training programs that provided jobs and training for local people.

Going back to Mead, we can see how this project was an attempt to create new shared meaning for a problematic situation amongst a community that could provide the framing for action. The academics facilitated a process of collective inquiry into a set of problems by the people experiencing them. However, evaluating this project against the principles of naturalistic inquiry, it is clear that the academics had a large degree of control over the process of inquiry. They set the problem to be addressed through PAR: capitalism in general, and de-industrialisation and unemployment more specifically. They then introduced their own theory of the world to their participants and worked to establish this as the framework through which their inquiry would be conducted- the diverse economies framework. This resulted in the generation of solutions of a particular kind: one's that fit within the academic's framework and align to their personal political agenda.

Regardless of whether we agree with the values and ideas of the CEC (and many criticisms exist- see Samers, 2005; Jonas, 2010), their approach can be criticised from a pragmatic perspective for being 'undemocratic' and failing to allow people to lead the inquiry into their own problems. Instead, the CEC employed PAR methods to advance their own political agenda. If the world is full of multiple truths and inquiry is a means of solving problems to remove blocks to human flourishing, then it can be questioned how much control academics should have over the nature of this inquiry. From a pragmatic perspective, people should be allowed to create solutions to their own problems instead.

Process pragmatism differs from this approach to PAR not through its lack of an ontological vision, but rather in how its pragmatic ontology shapes its approach to knowledge production. Pragmatism holds to an ontology of multiplicity and radical contingency. Realities are plural, dynamic and unpredictable. It holds to a world of situated and specific problems, affecting different people and needing different answers. This pluralist and open ontology shapes its view of knowledge production in which it is held that those people experiencing a particular problem are the best placed to identify,

make sense of and develop ideas to solve it. Within the context of PAR, this involves academics relinquishing control over processes of inquiry and taking their part as one voice among many in the conversation amongst a community of inquirers (Lake, 2017). Unless, of course, the academic who is facilitating the inquiry is not personally affected by the issue at hand, in which case their role may even be to take a back seat, offering their perspectives only when asked by the group.

Accordingly, process pragmatism develops subjects not by enrolling people into narratives with pre-set moral guidelines. The pragmatist tries to avoid telling people what is right or wrong, good or bad, and instead allows moral standards to be generated collectively through inquiry. Indeed, education for democracy involves developing specific skills and capacities amongst citizens for them to pursue their own version of the good life, rather than cultivating in them a specific world view. However, process pragmatism holds to a notion that the full participation of those affected by problems in developing and enacting solutions to those problems is desirable, and in this sense process pragmatism cannot avoid being shaped by its own moral agenda, but in this regard, process pragmatism stresses the importance of the means of democratic practice (citizen-led inquiry), rather than the ends.

As such, process pragmatism is more closely aligned with more open-ended approaches to PAR and the ideas and practices associated with the 'communiversity'. Sarah Kindon, Rachel Pain and Mike Kesby, writing under the pen-name of mrs kinpaisby, advocate practising a form of PAR 'that supports the joint construction and conduct of geographical research, teaching and other activities, with the goal of pursuing social change leading to greater social justice and equality' (mrs kinpaisby, 2008: 292). Resonating with Blumer's definition of naturalistic inquiry, this approach to PAR intends to involve the active participation of research participants in every stage of research, in order to achieve the 'priorities and needs of communities as *they* define them' (mrs kinpaisby, 2008: 294, emphasis added).

For mrs kinpaisby (2008), the communiversity is about engendering long-term commitments between academics and non-academic communities, conducting 'slow' research into complex social issues that respects the time needed to develop relationships across university/'real world' boundaries and to develop meaningful dialogue and mutual understandings. This way of approaching participatory research can avoid some of the

pitfalls of PAR projects that fail to embed knowledge production in communities of affected interests who can build on representations and ideas, taking action as part of long-term strategies for change (see Pain and Francis, 2003).

Indeed, for Lake (2017) the lessons of pragmatism and Dewey's democratic vision can help transform the practice of PAR within disciplines like Geography. For him, pragmatism challenges PAR to drop the epistemological perspective of a research project in favour of something more meaningful and all-encompassing, where the distinction between researcher and participant is removed and the power over the inquiry is given to citizens. He also urges a shift from projects that seek to create representations of the lives of various 'subaltern' groups towards action that helps create solutions for all citizens' self-defined problems. In this sense, PAR becomes something more than a research project. It becomes a vehicle for cultivating citizen-led inquiries and action to address long-standing social issues.

Indeed, I have made a similar argument before in relation to the idea of process pragmatism (Harney et al, 2016). As well as the characteristics identified by Lake, we argued that process pragmatism not only facilitates practices of collective knowledge production and problem-solving action around issues of shared concern but places as much emphasis on the need to develop and maintain the relationships from which publics can form, and in providing educational experiences that look to cultivate a range of political skills and capacities, which can allow citizens to achieve social change. Reflecting the insights of community organising, this is about being able to generate the power to effect change *as part of*, rather than in addition to, the process of inquiry.

The expedition approach of Bill Bunge and Gwendolyn Warren is an inspiration here. The DGEI helped to intertwine a long-term process of local relationship-building, civic education, community organising, citizen-led inquiry and public action all contained within (and in turn helping to build) a place-based community. In this sense the expeditions were far more than a research project, with knowledge produced through social scientific methods being just a small part of the process of civic engagement and action. More crucial in this process was the relational foundations of action, with community acting as the source of citizen power.

This kind of work is not easy and does not happen quickly, but it is essential for universities interested in contributing towards citizen-led politics and democratic renewal. In what follows I present the findings of an experiment in taking an expedition approach to citizen engagement in collective problem-solving in one postcode in east London. The E14 expedition was a two-year experiment designed to test whether and how academic researchers could contribute towards democratic renewal by laying the relational foundations of public work before facilitating the formation of publics of citizens around shared issues in order to develop and enact solutions through a process pragmatist approach. It also sought to understand how participating in such action could provide opportunities for civic education and the development of civic capacity amongst a diverse group of citizens. The expedition was designed as a means to help answer the following research questions:

1. How can PAR be conducted in a pragmatic way so that it respects the experiential knowledge of communities, and the plurality of this knowledge?

2. To what extent can process pragmatism help build the power of publics to address pressing social issues and develop the capacity of citizens to engage in public work?

3. What is the role of place in facilitating this work?

4. How can universities support effective democratic renewal through institutional commitments that engage citizens in processes of collective problem-solving and provide an education for democracy?

The next chapter outlines this experiment and the steps taken, before chapters Four and Five reflect on the lessons it provided for advancing the debates addressed in this thesis.

Chapter Three: The E14 Expedition

In this chapter I provide an overview of the methods and series of events and action developed as part of the E14 expedition. I also provide an introduction to the E14 area itself, centred around a story created through my engagement with and understanding of various accounts of the area. The chapter outlines the way in which the research data was collected and analysed in order to answer the questions at the core of this thesis, as outlined in the previous chapter.

3.1 The Expedition Approach

In setting out the principles of his expedition approach to geographical research, Bill Bunge (1969: 35- emphasis added) stated that:

> 'The purpose of the Expedition is to help the human species most directly. It is not a "nice geography", or a status quo geography. It is a geography that tends to shock because *it includes the full range of human experience on the earth's surface*; not just the recreation land, but the blighted land, not just the affluent but the poor, not just the beautiful but the ugly…*It is also a democratic, as opposed to an elitist expedition*. Local people are to be incorporated as students and professors. They are not to be further exploited. *Their point of view is given first place*.'

For Bunge, the expedition approach to research foregrounded the experiences of ordinary citizens, giving these 'first place' in the inquiry. Echoing Blumer's description of naturalistic inquiry, the expedition movement in Geography put non-academic communities in control of research so that it could serve their own goals and interests. As such, reflecting the expeditions waged by the great explorers of the past to accumulate wealth and power for different societies, Bunge's expeditions too were a means to serve the community leading the expedition. However, unlike in the majority of expeditions in the past, Bunge's (1969: 35) 'human explorations [were] "contributive" (resource contributing rather than resource taking)' rather than exploitative. Their goal was to help build the community's capacity to address the problems that it faced.

Indeed, just like expeditions of the past, Bunge's expeditions also sought to increase the power of communities, but not through plundering the natural resources and riches of

other societies or capturing humans as slaves. Instead, geographic expeditions of human exploration were a means to build the capacity of communities to collectively address their shared issues. As such, and reflecting the pragmatic approach to inquiry advocated by Dewey et al, the knowledge generated through the expeditions was intended as a power resource for communities, with stories, ideas and evidence acting as pragmatic tools for getting things done, with the expedition approach representing a radically democratic project (Barnes and Heynen, 2011).

It was in this vein that I designed the 'E14 Expedition'. Taking inspiration not just from Bunge but from pragmatic philosophy, the democratic vision of John Dewey, the action research of the Chicago School and the tools and methods of broad-based community organising, I developed an approach to geographical research that intended to bring together a diverse set of people from a pre-defined geographical area to identify shared issues and attempt to find solutions to these. Following in the footsteps of a number of other 'experimental geographies', this was my own experiment in trailing a novel approach to knowledge production which could identify new methods to meet the imperatives of pragmatic ontological and epistemological theories and what these meant for the practice of participatory action research (PAR). Indeed, the E14 Expedition was an attempt to 'push the limitations of current conventions in representation and knowledge-making' (Last, 2012: 708) in order to test whether PAR could be employed to re-engage ordinary citizens in public decision-making and collective problem-solving in ways that respected the plurality of the citizenry, developed people's capacity to act and power to make change, and provided opportunities for an education for democracy rather than resubjectification as a form of governance.

In this chapter I lay out all of the steps involved in the E14 Expedition, providing an overview of what was done, how, and why for each of the two phases of the project, linking all events and interventions to the pragmatic ontology and epistemology that underpin them. I draw on reflections from a field diary kept for the duration of the expedition to illustrate points when necessary. I also explain how data for this thesis was collected and how I have chosen to analyse it. But first I will provide a short overview of the expedition area: the E14 postcode of London.

3.2 E14: A postcode of conflict, change and community activism

In providing an overview of any place, it is always best to ask the people who call that place home; they are the experts. So, in a pragmatic vein, the following account of E14 draws on the stories from the people involved in the E14 expedition themselves. Most of the knowledge presented here comes from the stories written by participants on phase one of the expedition for their book *E14 Our Stories* (about which more will be explained later in this chapter)[3], selectively complimented with official statistics and more formal academic histories where useful. In particular, I draw extensively on Geoff Dench, Kate Gavron and Michael Young's informative and well-researched account of east London contained in *The New East End: Kinship, Race and Conflict* (2006) based on interview and survey data from a range of east end residents. Knowledge in this account also comes from my ongoing participation in the communities of E14 in a role held at Queen Mary University[4], and from the conversations I have had and continue to have with E14 residents. Finally, recognising my role as narrator and positionality as relative outsider to the area, the following account is my personal interpretation and understanding of the stories I have heard.

E14 is a postcode in east London, in the borough of Tower Hamlets. It incorporates the neighbourhoods of Poplar, Limehouse and the Isle of Dogs, as well as the financial centre of Canary Wharf (as illustrated in Figure 3.1). The area also matches onto the Poplar and Limehouse parliamentary constituency. E14 has a population of around 135,000 people, of which around 75% are aged 18 or over (*Who Shall I Vote For*, 2017).

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[3] I have footnoted reference to each particular story from the book for reference.
[4] Between September 2016 and March 2017, I was employed by the university to look into establishing a Community-University Partnership between the institution and communities in E14, involving on-going communication with residents and community organisations in the area.

Figure 3.1: Map of E14 Postcode
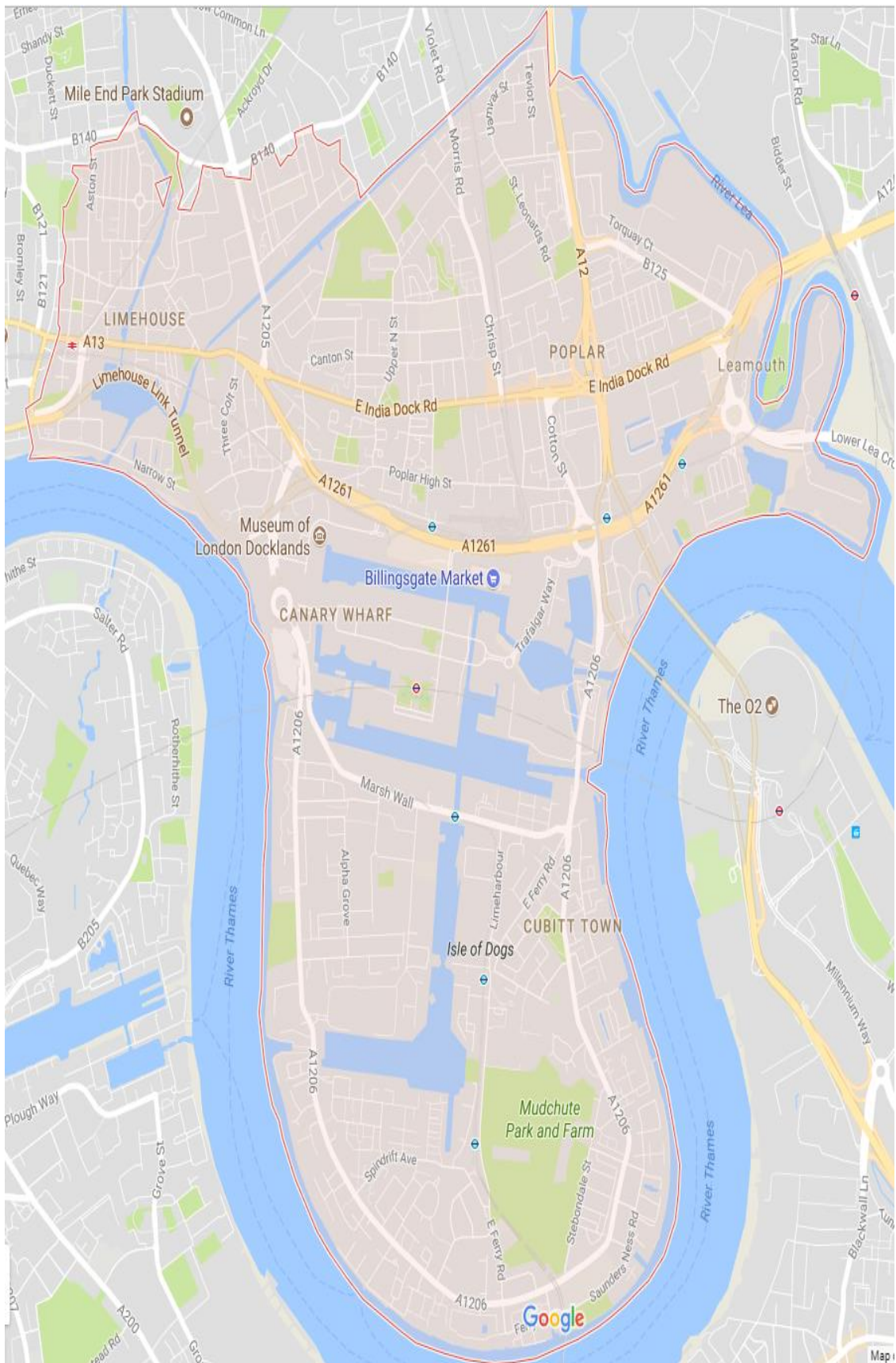
The area is one of extreme diversity in terms of wealth, nationality, ethnicity and religion. The area is home to some of the most economically deprived estates in the UK, with the Aberfeldy estate in the Lansbury ward of Poplar being in the top 5% most deprived areas in the country (Tower Hamlets Council Corporate Strategy and Equality Service, 2015). In contrast to this, areas of the Isle of Dogs are home to those who work in the financial sector at Canary Wharf, earning extremely high incomes. Indeed now, as always, the area is in a state of population flux with large numbers of young professionals from across the world and the UK relocating to the area to take residence in the new luxury apartments being built on the land that surrounds the Canary Wharf estate. The Isle of Dogs itself is at the forefront of the property development boom in London, with proposed building plans by developers for new office blocks and apartments promising to turn the area, colloquially known as 'the Island' into a 'mini Manhattan'.

Change is nothing new for this part of the world and as Foster (1999: 249) explains life in the E14 area has always had a distinctly 'conflict-ridden and contested nature'. Until very recently, the E14 area was known as London's Docklands. East London evolved in symbiotic relationship over centuries with the City of London. At first being the farmland that provided food for the emerging urban community, and gradually being the place where polluting trades were exported from the centre. Leather trades, clothing, furniture manufacturing and shipping were all established in the east, with the docks that connected London to the rest of the world by trade becoming the source of work for the majority of east-enders (Dench et al, 2006).

Given this, the area has traditionally been home to a majority of working class people, and has a proud history of being the site of large-scale working class activism for recognition, rights and an improved quality of life. Illustrated by the Dockers strike of 1889, the docklands was a fertile site for the establishment of new trade unions and the development of a Labour movement to fight for the interests of working class people (Dench et al, 2006; Butler and Hamnett, 2011). A key figure in the docklands labour movement at the turn of the 19th Century was Will Crooks. Born in Poplar, Crooks worked on the docks and gradually emerged as a passionate and influential local politician. He spoke publicly in support of the 1889 Dockers strike, and was voted to the London County Council that same year as a candidate for the Progressive Party. In 1990

he became the first mayor of Poplar, voted in as a Labour party candidate, a party formed that year (Raynsford, 2006).

Crooks went on to become a Labour MP and his story is still told in Poplar as an example to the current community about taking a stand for what they believe in. Another key figure in the labour movement in Poplar was George Lansbury. Perhaps the most famous Mayor of Poplar, Lansbury's presence in E14 is still felt today. We see this in the naming of the Lansbury ward and the Lansbury clock Tower at Chrisp Street market, known by many as the heart of Poplar. Lansbury was a key community activist and politician and he is most famous for leading the 'Poplar Rates Rebellion' in which he and his rebel councillors defied the orders of the London County Council (LCC) to charge local people the same rates as those paid for by residents of wealthier boroughs. These precepts were charged to residents and then used to pay for services provided by the LCC, Metropolitan police, and Metropolitan Waterboard. Lansbury and his council contested the idea that the people of Poplar, which at the time incorporated the Isle of Dogs and Limehouse, should pay the same amount as those in wealthier boroughs, such as Westminster. Thus, they refused to pay the precepts to the LCC and instead lowered the rates charged to residents and used the money levied to pay for poor relief, including the provision of health services across the Poplar borough (Booth, 2009).

This angered the LCC and caused a national storm as the Poplar council were taken to court and eventually sent to prison for their actions. Thousands of people protested the incrimination of these politicians and marched for their protection, with the councillors belonging to an organised and popular local labour movement in the area (Branson, 1979). For Butler and Hamnett (2011) the actions of Poplar council at this time were integral in developing a clear sense of collective working class identity, based around the notion of shared experiences and rights for people in the area.

Lansbury's legacy lives on in Poplar, and was imbued into the built environment with the development of the Lansbury estate by the post-war Labour government's welfare state in the 1950s. Given the firm grounding of the London labour movement and party in east London (Labour's Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, was MP for Limehouse), the area became a test site for the implementation of key policies of the welfare state (Dench et al, 2006). The Labour party and east London were heavily intertwined after the war. This was due to the party's roots in labour organising around the docks, and Labour's promise

to reward the efforts of an east end community who bore the brunt of the German bombing in the Blitz and became 'symbols of resistance to evil' to the national public for their resilience in the war effort (Dench et al, 2006: 192). It was east Londoners, and especially those living and working around the Docks who were perceived to be heroes in defending Britain from invasion by maintaining the country's link to the rest of the Empire and sending soldiers to fight in the battlefields.

As such, the east end became the initial site for the development of Labour's welfare state. Poplar became the place for the showcase of modern council housing to the rest of the country, with the first phase of the Lansbury Estate development forming the basis of the 'Live Architecture Exhibition' at the 1951 Festival of Britain (Hobhouse, 1994).

Todd (2015:168) argues that the Labour government's welfare state legislation and vision had a distinctly 'top down nature…with [an] emphasis on managers and planners', which she argues served to marginalise working class people from participating in addressing their own social issues, due to their perceived lack of education and expertise. This was evidenced clearly by the way in which the strong sense of ownership and pride amongst East Enders for the Labour party was quickly transformed into distrust and anger as political elites paved the way for slum clearance schemes that broke up entire communities by placing families in out of town estates and high-rise flats that transformed their lives for the worse (Young and Wilmot, 1957; Dench et al, 2006). In contrast to the mass mobilisation of local people around Poplar council in the 1920s, this trend towards the professionalisation of politics and problem-solving contributed towards the gradual distancing between the working class citizens of Poplar and the Isle of Dogs, and the Labour party that was meant to represent their interests.

During the post-war years of the 1950s and 1960s, the area experienced high rates of employment in the docks with strong trade union representation, and the effects of the post-war economic boom, ensuring relative levels of affluence for local people (Foster, 1999). During this time, the area became the site of new arrivals, as migration from commonwealth countries increased, with people coming most notably from Bangladesh (Dench et al, 2006).

The E14 area has long been the site of various waves of migration. The docks once served as the gateway to London for the rest of the world, and places like Poplar and Limehouse have historically been where migrants would first experience the east end.

First the Huguenots, then Jews, and finally Bangladeshis arrived when they came to London fleeing persecution, seeking work and looking for a new life. Chinese sailors also established a community in the area, with Limehouse being known as London's Chinatown from the 1880s until the 1960s (*Limehouse Chinatown Rediscovered*, **2017**).

The Bangladeshi community, which now makes up the majority ethnic group in most wards in E14, at around 30-40% of the population e.g. in Poplar, Limehouse, Blackwall & Cubitt Town, and Lansbury (London Borough of Tower Hamlets Corporate Research Unit, 2014a; b; c; d), first arrived in Tower Hamlets through the docks, as Lascars (Bangladeshi sailors) working on the ships of the East India Company. These men sought to take temporary residence in the area, working in Britain to build up money to improve their lot back in Bangladesh. This pattern remained into the 1960s, with these men staying in lodging houses specifically opened for seamen in Stepney and Bethnal Green before moving on for work in local hotels or in industries up north (Dench et al, 2002).

However, events in the 1970s caused the Bangladeshi male migrants to rethink their long-term plans. The civil war to gain independence for Bengal from Pakistan broke out in 1971, which encouraged many Bangladeshi men to bring their wives and children to east London. Pressures on housing supply and local authority rules and practices made it difficult, if not impossible, for these newly reunited Bangladeshi families to find places to live outside of the overcrowded flats in the private rented sector. This prompted families to become squatters of empty properties in Tower Hamlets, with the community mainly settling in the Spitalfields area.

Organising around their housing concerns, the Bengali Housing Action Group (BHAG) worked to lobby the Greater London Council (GLC) and Tower Hamlets council to rehouse Bangladeshi families in council homes. The organisation was influential in representing the interests of the squatters, and was handed a boost by the 1977 Housing Act of the British Government, which stated that council housing be prioritised for those in most need, i.e. the homeless. This allowed BHAG to lobby the GLC to agree to rehouse their families, with the organisation prioritising rehousing in the Spitalfields area due to fears for safety in other areas of the borough where the Bangladeshi community was less settled and where anger amongst the more established, white east End community was growing at the perceived pressure that the migrant community were placing on housing supply (Dench et al, 2006).

Indeed, tensions between the longer established white, working class East Enders and the newer Bangladeshi communities grew primarily around the issue of housing supply and allocation. Dench et al (2006) explain that the 1977 Housing Act shifted the principles of housing allocation in the borough away from a system where homes were given based on a person's length of time on the waiting list, to how much a person needed the home. In Tower Hamlets this led to Bangladeshi families gaining priority over white families for council housing, thanks to their larger family sizes and concomitant overcrowded living conditions. This caused genuine frustration amongst white communities who had a sense of entitlement to local housing stock based on the fact that they were 'born and bred' in the borough and that the benefits of the welfare state that they had in paid in for should go to them first. By the early 1980s, this led to a situation where Bangladeshis and whites had competing interests over housing.

These tensions posed a dilemma for the Labour council and caused a sharp split in the local party between those who aligned themselves more with the interests of the Bangladeshis, linking to 'anti-racist' sentiments, and those who were aligned to the interests of the older, white working class communities (Dench et al, 2006). This Labour split allowed the Liberal party (later to become the Liberal Democrats) to win votes in the north-eastern wards of the borough, which were white enclaves at the time, by listening to the grievances of white residents. The Liberals gained control of Tower Hamlets council in 1986 and set about developing strategies to address the concerns of white citizens.

During the period between 1986 and 1994, they introduced a new devolved system of government, splitting the borough into six 'Neighbourhoods', each of which was able to set its own housing allocation priorities. At this time Tower Hamlets council had control of 80-90% of all homes in the borough, due to the transference of council housing stock from the abolished GLC. Some neighbourhoods developed allocation policies that gave priority to white residents and their children, but the 1977 Housing Act still placed a burden on the council to house those most in need. This served to further frustrate white communities, who felt let down by the Liberal Democrats and increasingly voiceless and invisible in the area (Dench et al, 2006).

Violent clashes between the two populations were common throughout this period and the borough was divided geographically, with a Bangladeshi ghetto forming in the north-

west around Spitalfields, with enclaves of predominantly white populations in the east and south. Parts of Poplar and the Isle of Dogs were known as 'no-go' areas for Bangladeshi people, who would face violence and abuse from white street gangs. They fought back by forming rival gangs to police their area and keep their community safe[5]. Tensions came to the fore in 1993 during a local council by-election when voters in the Millwall ward on the Isle of Dogs elected British National Party (BNP) candidate Derek Beackon as their local councillor who ran on a 'Rights for Whites' campaign (Torode, 1994; Pile, 1995). This event further increased tensions between white people and Asian people on the Island and resulted in violent clashes between the two groups, which some remember as riots[6]. At the core of these clashes were conflicts over who really belonged to this part of east London (Wemyss, 2006), a question that still prevails in the area today.

Labour returned to power a year later in 1994, and over time the Bangladeshi population gradually spread from the North West of the borough, eastwards and down into the south as families were allocated council housing in other areas. The white enclaves of Poplar and the Isle Dogs gradually began to receive these incomers and these areas soon became sites of conflict and competition between communities who had different ideas about who these places were for (Foster, 1999).

Dench et al (2006: 213) argue that there has been a trend in Tower Hamlets party politics towards delegitimising the voice and experiences of white working class residents through the use of 'racist smear[s]' by political elites. They suggest that council officers and planners have made white residents objections to incoming migrants' increasing pressure on the housing supply 'look unreasonable by suggesting that what they are objecting to really is the fact that the Bangladeshis competing with them are *not white.* [This has led to] Whites resentful of the loss of local rights [being] discredited politically by being represented as pathologically inadequate, not capable of living alongside people different from themselves'. Further distancing Tower Hamlets council, and the Labour party that has traditionally controlled it from the white community who once identified so strongly with it, this trend highlights the growing levels of dissatisfaction between people in the E14 area and mainstream political institutions.

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[5] Mohibur Rahman's Story p. 78 E14: Our Stories
[6] Maium Miah Story p.74 E14: Our Stories

Indeed, local party politics in Tower Hamlets has been shaped by notions of race and racism since the 1970s. **Glynn (2002)** explains how Bengali residents became politicised in the face of challenges from existing communities when they first arrived in east London. Young Bengali activists involved in the squatting movement and in resisting violent attacks gradually entered the local Labour party and won seats as councillors on Tower Hamlets council. This strategy ensured that the Bengali community was able to represent itself adequately in formal political structures.

However, the perceived 'take-over' of the local Labour party by the Bengali community, and fears over a politicised Islam were causing tensions to brew both within the party and amongst local citizens. In 2010, the battle in the party between the two sides eventually resulted in Lutfur Rahman, a prominent local politician and former youth activist in the Bengali community, being chosen by local party members as Labour candidate for the new Mayoral position in Tower Hamlets. However, the party's National Executive Committee removed Rahman from the candidacy a few weeks later for alleged issues around the eligibility of voters. This prompted Rahman to break away from the party and stand for Mayor as an independent candidate. Rahman won the election on the 21st October 2010 (Hill, 2015).

Rahman served as Mayor until 2014, when he was removed from office for alleged corruption, including accusations that he disproportionately funded Bengali and Islamic organisations through council grants. Initiated by the petitions of a number of local residents, this episode reflects longer-term dissatisfactions amongst white residents that the council was primarily being controlled by, and run for the Bangladeshi population. Rahman was serving his second term as Mayor, standing in a new party of former independent councillors, Tower Hamlets First (THF), made up of majority Bangladeshi Muslim candidates. Rahman was removed from office by the UK government in 2014, with a by-election for Mayor seeing Labour's John Biggs elected to the post, albeit with stiff competition from the THF candidate Rabina Khan.

For many Bangladeshi residents and Rahman supporters, this represented a racist and Islamophobic coup, orchestrated by the local Labour party in collaboration with the British political establishment to regain power in the borough. Whilst, for many non-Bangladeshi voters, the removal of Rahman was seen as a step towards regaining control of the council from one community, and ensuring it represents the interests of all

residents. For both Bangladeshi and non-Bangladeshi residents, the ongoing drama, accusation of corruption and in-fighting associated with Tower Hamlets council and the local Labour Party further served to increase levels of distrust and scepticism over established political actors and institutions.

However, outside of political parties, local citizens and communities have sought to put politics in their own hands in E14. The area, like the rest of Tower Hamlets has a thriving third sector with a large number of community organisations working on the ground to improve life in the area. A number of organisations and people have been influential in sustaining this type of community-based public work. One of these people is Sister Christine Frost. Living on a housing estate along Poplar High Street which bears the name of Will Crooks, Sister Christine is perhaps the most well-known community activist in E14. She moved to the area around 40 years ago, sent by her religious order in her native Limerick in Ireland to serve the poor of the east end. Initially she worked as a primary school teacher before turning her attentions to community activism and organising.

Sister Christine has made the national press for her alleged heroism in taking down an 'ISIS flag' from the entrance gates on the Will Crooks estate and standing up against 'radical Islamists' (Bielenberg, 2014; Booth, 2014). In reality, her account of the story is that the flag was put up by young Muslim people on the estate who were protesting the situation between Israel and Palestine, and that she asked them to take it down before it caused a stir with the residents and local press, which they did accordingly. A neat example of the existence of multiple truths in the world, this event also goes to show the level of respect for Sister Christine amongst those in the local area. This respect, and Sister Christine's assertiveness, resulted in a string of interviews with national media outlets, including the Spectator (Kelly, 2014), in which she expressed her views about her community and the problems it faces. She is convinced that local people need to organise themselves to address issues around unemployment, a lack of affordable housing and inter-community tensions if things are to change, as she does not trust the politicians to do this for them. Quoted in the Spectator article, she states:

> "David Cameron does not have a clue about housing here,' she says.
> 'He's never spent even a day with the sort of people who live in

Poplar. I challenge him to come and live in one of our council blocks

for a week, with just £35 in his pocket. See how he survives."

On estates like Sister Christine's people live in conditions of economic deprivation. Unemployment rates are higher than average, most people live in social housing, and there are long-standing problems associated with young men, mainly of Bengali heritage, falling into gangs and drug crime (Glynn, 2002; Ali and Miah, 2008). Combined with living in these circumstances, her dissatisfaction with politicians stems in part from Sister Christine's experience of living in Poplar at the time that the old docklands were redeveloped into what is now known as Canary Wharf. Reflecting a popular sentiment in her community, she was, and still is, angry that 500 council homes were demolished and not replaced to build the infrastructure to support Canary Wharf (the Limehouse Link tunnel) and that her community has not benefitted from the incoming financial economic activity since[7]. Sister Christine is Chair of the SPLASH (South Poplar and Limehouse Action for Secure Housing) community organisation which first emerged as a resident-led campaign organisation to contest the development of Canary Wharf and has since become an essential component of the community along five estates the stretch along the Poplar High Street area, engaging in a wide range of activities to meet the needs of residents.

SPLASH was part of a group of organisations and activists who contested the development of Canary Wharf at the time, protesting and lobbying the developers and the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) for compensation[8]. The LDDC was established by the British government in 1981 as a new Urban Development Corporation to take responsibility for redeveloping the dis-used docks. The docks fell into decline during the 1960s due to a combination of factors. Changing international trade patterns; the perceived militancy of the Dockers and their unions; containerisation; and the rising cost of oil made it cheaper and easier for ships to dock at other sites, like Tilbury instead of London (Pile, 1995; Foster, 1999).

As such, in 1960 the trade supported 25,000 London workers but just 4,100 by 1981. On the Isle of Dogs in particular, the decline of the docks had a profound effect on local employment, with the number of jobs on the Island falling from 8,000 in 1975 to a mere

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[7] Sister Christine Frost Story, p. 103 E14:Our Stories
[8] Sister Christine Frost Story, p. 103 E14:Our Stories

600 in 1982 (Foster, 1999). For many in the area, the docks were allowed to run down and lose out to competitors by successive governments, resulting in the devastation of communities in E14. Sarah Castro, who moved to the Island in 1983 explains how times there were tough. He flat was repeatedly stolen from by local people, and she entered a community riddled with drug addiction and alcoholism[9].

In 1985 the LDDC approved plans for the development of Canary Wharf on the docklands site. A new vision for E14 had been developed: one of free enterprise and finance. Again, conflict came to the fore in the area. Many groups challenged the plans for Canary Wharf in ongoing protests and attempts to negotiate with developers and the LDDC to put their interests of the established communities at the heart of redevelopment plans (Foster, 1999).

The Association of Island Communities (AIC) was an influential organisation in these efforts. The AIC was a broad-based, pan-Island community action group that worked to solve problems faced by the community. Foster (1999) explains that the AIC played a role on the Island that bridged the gap between ordinary citizens and representatives in the local Labour party. She suggests that as the Labour party become more distanced from local people and more concerned with the national party machine (putting party before people), the AIC, along with other smaller local action groups, became the primary vehicle through which residents could express their interests and engage in collective action to advance them. Operating for around a quarter of a century before the LDDC came along, the AIC was an influential community organisation on the Island. They lead the opposition to the Canary Wharf vision on the Island and were successful in galvanising support from other groups on the Island and in Poplar (Foster, 1999).

Led by local resident Peter Wade at the time, the AIC was responsible for organising action to protest the LDDC's plan, which has gone down in local folklore. Quoted in Foster (1999:148), Peter Wade explained:

> 'We got wind…that the Governor of the bank of England, Sir Robin
> Leigh Pemberton, was coming down to Canary Wharf to turn the first
> sod and he'd invited bankers from all over the world, there was about
> 200 of them…they'd broken a bit of concrete to expose a bit of earth

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[9] Sarah Castro Story, p.99 E14: Our Stories

and they'd put a huge marquee up and champagne and all sorts…They
didn't think of security until 7 o'clock in the morning…but what they
didn't know was that 11'o clock the night before…we drove in 40
sheep in the back of our farm lorry and we let them out into a
warehouse on the wharf…[which] overlooked the marquee…At 6
o'clock in the morning we shipped in all our demonstrators up into the
warehouse…and when Leigh Pemberton started to speak I blew a
whistle and then all these banners dropped [proclaiming "Kill the
Canary. Save the Island"] …the lorry with all the sheep in…was driven
down…stopped the other end of the marquee…and all these sheep
came running down…and…charging up the side of the marquee"

The efforts of groups like the AIC and SPLASH were perhaps in vein, as the Canary
Wharf vision has taken hold in the area, bringing businesses and high-paid workers from
all over the world to Poplar, Limehouse and the Isle of Dogs. These businesses are key
players in the area, possessing a large amount of influence and being partly responsible
for new waves of migration to E14, such as the 'young urban professionals' seeking to
live near their work, and wealth investors from countries like China and those in the
Middle East who are buying, second, possible third or fourth homes, in this booming part
of London. This is causing more tension and conflict today as those who see themselves
as indigenous to the area (and this now includes Bangladeshi as well as white British
people) feel under threat from the influx of new people with money. Indeed, it is a
common concern amongst many residents of different ethnic and national backgrounds
that local and national politicians are not doing enough to protect longer established
communities from wealthy incomers, with major concerns that the development of
housing that is affordable to local people is being marginalised by the interests of private
developers who are building luxury apartments for the wealthy (Harney, 2014).

The history of the E14 area is one of diversity, conflict and change. The area has long
been the site of contest between different groups and communities all seeking to ascribe
their own meaning to the place and make it home. The area also has a history of
community activism, where citizens have come together and organised themselves in
many different ways to stake their claim on the place and solve their problems as they
have defined them. The plurality of identities and social worlds, the history of community
activism, the status of party politics, and the deep-seated-ness and complexity of social

issues in the area (plus its proximity to Queen Mary university) all served to make E14 an interesting site in which to experiment with the expedition approach to civic renewal. The site thus became the test-bed for the expedition that this thesis reports. The following sections provide an explanation of the trajectory of the expedition.

3.3 The E14 Expedition

Work for the E14 expedition began in September 2014 and came to a formal close in April 2016. The expedition aimed to work with a diverse group of people who lived worked or studied in the E14, facilitating a process whereby these people could identify and develop solutions to shared problems that mattered most to them. It also aimed to develop participants as leaders for change within their community with the skills and capacities needed to work with others to address common concerns. A timetable of events is presented in table 3.1. The expedition was run in two phases.

Table 3.1: Timeline of Events for the E14 Expedition

Event	Description	Date
Recruitment for Phase One	Meeting various organisations in the E14 area to discuss the project, generate interest and find potential participants.	September 2014- December 2014
Application Process for Phase One	Application forms distributed through network of contacts. Application forms submitted by January 15th.	December 2014- January 2015
Story-telling Project Training Session 1	First Leadership training session- introduction to project, building relationships	26th January 2015
Story-telling Project Training Session 2	Second Leadership training session- 3 types of story for leadership: My Story, Our Story, The Story	7th February 2015

Stories Gathered	Participants conduct one to ones in community and record stories	7th February-28th February 2015
One to Ones between project organisers and participants	All participants have one to one with a project organiser to build relationship	7th February-28th February 2015
Group Meal	Group meal with participants	19th February 2015
Story-telling Project Training Session 3	Third Leadership Training session- Creating the story of E14	28th February 2015
Story-telling Project Training Session 4	Fourth Leadership Training Session- Evaluation and Skills Audit	9th March 2015
Creation of Story book	Stories written up and collated into book with photos and professional designer	March- May 2015
E14: Our Stories Book Launch	Story Book launched at community celebration event	30th May 2015
Interviews with participants	All participants to be interviewed about experiences of the project	June 2015
Recruitment for Phase 2	Meeting organisations and individuals to expand participation for phase 2 course	June-October 2015
Phase 2 Course Session 1	Training on community organising principles and techniques	3rd October 2015
E14 Listening Campaign and Research	Participants conduct one to ones and group listening exercises in the area to identify specific issues and find others interested in taking	3rd -24th October 2015

	action. Research to identify specifics of each issue.	
Phase 2 Training Session 2	Group decide key issues to prioritise for action. Campaign teams created, and campaign strategy planned.	24th October 2015
Social Action Campaigns	Campaign teams to lead on actions to solve specific issues. Support from Liam through one to ones and group meetings.	26th October 2015- 11th January 2016
Phase 2 Training Session 3	Evaluation of progress made by teams so far and planning strategy for next few months	11th January 2016
Social Action Campaigns	Campaign teams to lead on actions to solve specific issues. Support from Liam through one to ones and group meetings.	12th January-31st April 2016
Phase 2 Final Training Session	Evaluation of action and learning over the course	31st April 2016
Interviews with participants	All participants to be interviewed about experiences of the project	May-July 2016

3.3.1 Expedition Phase One

Phase one ran between September 2014 and the April 2015. Phase one of the expedition was structured around a leadership development program centred on a story-telling project. The aims of this first phase were: to begin to develop relationships between citizens across the postcode; to build relationships between myself as researcher/organiser and local people; to develop a shared understanding of the E14 area amongst the group of participants; and to start identifying pressing local issues, which would be addressed in phase two of the expedition. Twenty-four participants were

recruited to a training course that taught them how to be leaders for change through the art of story-telling.

Participants were recruited by approaching local community organisations such as churches, mosques, housing associations, community groups and schools. During the period between September and December 2014, I approached the following organisations in the area:

- SPLASH
- Poplar Central Mosque
- Poplar Harca Housing Association
- Chrisp Street Children's Centre
- Isle of Dogs Children's Centre
- Teviot community centre (Poplar Harca)
- Aberfeldy community centre (Poplar Harca)
- East End Community Foundation
- Teviot Action Group
- Tower Hamlets Council Department of Public Health
- Poplar Salvation Army
- All Saints Church
- George Green's Secondary School
- Island House Community centre
- Chrisp Street Idea Store (Library)

Meetings were held with representatives from these organisations to inform them of the project, generate interest and access other contacts in the area. Working through a snow-balling process, I was able to move from one contact/organisation to another by gaining introductions from those I had already met. The recruitment process involved a lot of work and time being put in to set-up meetings, find new contacts, build trust and get buy-in for the project. This process meant that recruitment relied on gatekeepers at each organisation to allow me access to their members. This required me to quickly build trust with these people, which was difficult at times given the political nature of the project. For example, I approached Poplar Central Mosque to talk to their leadership about the program and was told that the Mosque does not get involved in politics. In hind-sight, this rejection probably reflects the risk associated in linking political activity with

religion in Tower Hamlets at the time, given the accusations made at Lutfur Rahman's mayoralty. Moreover, dependence on gatekeepers may have meant that some people were excluded from participating for various reasons (Valentine, 2005).

An application form was required from potential participants for them to participate. The form was intended to ensure that those who applied to take part were committed to the project and would not drop out before the project had started or within the first week. If someone had bothered to fill in the form, then it is less likely they would not turn up on the day. Yet despite ensuring a level of commitment from applicants, the form may have excluded some from participating if their written communication was not strong. As such, despite trying to ensure accessibility of the program to all, the application process had a level of selectivity built within it.

In total 35 forms were received, and 25 places were available. The criteria for selection was based on a number of factors. Firstly, attempting to stay true to pragmatic concerns for pluralism the selection process aimed to achieve diversity in the group. Thus, it was decided to get representation from men and women, people of a range of ages, nationalities and religions. This was reflected in my attempts to speak to a variety of organisations from September to December. However, whilst email contact was made with groups that represented different communities, it was only when introduced to someone by an existing contact that I was able to get my foot in the door of another organisation. This meant that the recruitment process was slower than intended, and that some communities were not reached.

In addition, as I worked through community institutions such as schools and community groups, it became clear that the people we were accessing were of a certain type. It was difficult to reach explicitly LGBT people, who lack the organisational representation in the area than other groups have, such as parents (through schools) and the Bengali Muslim population (through mosques). This is not to say that there are no LGBT parents or Muslims, but ensuring LGBT representation on the project was a case of hoping for the best. Equally, it was harder to reach those who work or live in Canary Wharf. These wealthier people tend not to make use of local community groups and services, so reaching them through these channels was unlikely. In addition, when the recruitment process started, my thinking was more along the lines of traditional Alinskyian organising in which the state and market are held separate from the community. This

meant that I approached the process seeing Canary Wharf less as another community to engage, and more as a target of future campaigns. Since starting the project and getting a better idea of what local people actually think about Canary Wharf, my thinking on this has shifted and attempts were made to engage those who live and work there in phase two of the project.

By the first training session I had recruited 25 participants. Three of these did not turn up on the day, and two more left after the first session. Of the three no-shows, two were teenage boys and one a middle-aged Bengali man. The two who left were a middle-aged Bengali woman and an Ethiopian woman in her twenties. The 20 remaining participants' details are in table 2.2. Each participant has been given a pseudonym to preserve their anonymity, as have all other people involved in the campaigns mentioned in the following chapters

Table 3.2: Participant Details Phase One

Name	Place	Age	Nationality	Gender	Institutional Affiliation	Description
Pam	Poplar	62	British	F	Newby Place Health Centre	Lived in Tower Hamlets whole life, works as a Health Trainer in Poplar.
Julie	Limehouse	50	Lithuanian	F	Poplar and Limehouse Health and Wellbeing Centre; Tower Hamlets Parent & Carer Council	Health Trainer in Poplar. Moved to the area from Lithuania with her daughter and husband 5 years ago.
Amara	Limehouse	26	British-Bengali	F	Aberfeldy Centre Poplar HARCA (ex-volunteer)	Lived in Tower Hamlets her whole life, works at Waitrose and Cineworld in Canary Wharf.
Arya	Poplar	44	British-Bengali	F	SPLASH	Volunteers for data entry at SPLASH community group. Mother of 3, lived in Tower Hamlets her whole life
Denise	Poplar		British	F	Salvation Army	Was made homeless and had to move to TH from south London to live in a hostel. Is a self-employed copy-writer.

Eniola	IOD	38	Nigerian	F	Roman Catholic Parish of St Edmund of Abingdon. Millwall	Mother of 4, originally from Nigeria. Currently unemployed but looking for work in education.
Guilia	IOD	16	Italian	F	George Greens School (GGS)	Sixth form student, lives in Hackney but has friends in E14.
Janice	IOD	51	British	F	George Greens School (GGS)	Community Development officer for GGS, lives in Tower Hamlets but originally from Lancashire.
Jenny	Poplar	27	Brazilian	F	Poplar Harca	Community organiser for Poplar Harca. Moved to London from Brazil 3 years ago.
Madur	IOD	43	Bengali-British	M	Millwall Community Association Millwall St Luke's Church –interfaith dialogue Christ Church (IOD)- interfaith dialogue	A Librarian at IOD Idea Store, and on the committee of his local mosque on the Isle of Dogs. Migrated to Tower Hamlets from Bangladesh as a child.
Nisha	Poplar	34	British-Bengali	F		Mother of 3, works with vulnerable families with Tower Hamlets

						council. Born and bred in Tower Hamlets.
Rafi	IOD	39	British-Bengali	M	Phoenix Heights Tenants and Residents Association	Father of 3, Bus Driver, and chair of his TRA. Moved to Tower Hamlets from Bangladesh as a child.
Sherry	IOD	53	British	F	Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Planning Forum	Mother, works for Poplar Harca, African heritage. Moved to Isle of Dogs as a young woman.
Tarika	Limehouse	22	British-Bengali	F		Grew up in Limehouse, is a Queen Mary University of London Law graduate.
Zalika	IOD	17	Kurdish, Turkish, Cypriot, German	F	George Greens School	Grew up in Cyrpus, but moved to Poplar (where her mum grew up) 5 years ago.
Marcel	Poplar		Burundi	M	SPLASH Community Centre	Works at SPLASH teaching ESOL but lives in Wembley.
Karren	IOD	70s	American	F		Moved to Tower Hamlets to work in the media at Wapping, originally from Texas. Retired now.

Zaida	IOD	16	Iranian	F	George Greens School	Sixth form student, lives on the Isle of Dogs.
Peggy	Poplar	60s	Jamaican	F	Aberfeldy Centre	Grandmother, Volunteers at Aberfeldy centre running a food co-op and café.
Lebona	Poplar	50s	South African	F	Tower Hamlets College	Teaches ESOL at TH College in Poplar, lives in Hackney.
Zamzam	Limehouse	20s	African	F		Lives in Limehouse
Shiria	IOD	41	British-Bengali	F	Culloden Primary School	Dinner Lady at Culloden School in Poplar. Lived in Tower Hamlets her whole life.
Rushanara	Poplar	38	British-Bengali	F	Robin Hood Gardens TRA	Born and bred in Poplar, a mother, and part of her block's TRA.
Mahim	Poplar	33	British-Bengali	M		Works in administration for Tower Hamlets Council.

Applicants were also favoured if they were members of a community institution such as a school or tenants' association. This stems from BBCO's understanding of relational power. It was decided that people who were part of a church or other organisation were more likely to be connected to others in the community, and this would benefit the project by allowing us to generate power to make change in the future. Those who are already in relationship with others in their community might be more able to build upon this for action in the future. However, this approach may have meant that those who did not have an institutional affiliation were unable to access the course. Yet, not all participants were institutionally-affiliated.

The project attracted more women than men, and despite attempts to recruit them, no young men took part. As such, even though the recruitment process was designed to cater to the diversity of the area and ensure participation by a diverse cross section of the local population, in practice this was difficult. Perhaps storytelling was perceived by men as a more feminine activity, which may have put them off from taking part. The project may also have excluded certain other groups, such as mums, due to the timings of training sessions. Evening and weekend sessions would have made it more difficult for mothers to attend if they could not find childcare during the sessions. I was also unable to organise a crèche in time for the sessions. Thus, in order to practice PAR that takes into account the plurality of experiences and worlds in any particular place, there is a need to invest serious time and attention to the recruitment process, working through the networks that different people associate through to access different groups.

The training sessions were based on the leadership theory of Marshall Ganz, a community organising academic who works in the organising tradition of Alinsky, and is now lecturer in public policy at Harvard University. Ganz (2011) defines leadership as the process of organising people voluntarily to achieve purpose under conditions of uncertainty. For him, leadership requires a challenge of the head and of the heart. The former means that leaders must be able to tactically plan actions to succeed in achieving the goals of their followers. For the latter, leaders must be able to motivate their followers to act in spite of apathy and hopelessness. To meet this challenge of the heart, Ganz advocates for leaders to become skilled story-tellers and learn the practice of translating someone's values into action. I chose to base the training on Ganz' theories as it seemed a productive way to experiment with beginning to challenge apathy amongst citizens in the area.

In a nutshell, Ganz (2011) argues that when faced with uncertainty, it is our values that equip us with the courage to take risks. He suggests that stories are an effective medium through which a leader can tap into the values of their followers and inspire them to act by triggering an emotional response. He uses this notion to put forward a theory of 'public narrative', which explains the three types of story that can be told to motivate people to act: the Story of Me; Story of Us; Story of Now.

Ganz argues that a good leader can communicate a public narrative that tells each story in a way that resonates enough with the audience to inspire them to act. The story of me allows leaders to communicate their own values and motivations and thus build trust between themselves and those they wish to follow them. The story of me tells others where the person has come from, where they want to go and why they want others to come with them.

The story of us follows on from this and communicates to people why they should act as a collective. It seeks to convince a group of individuals that they have a commonality, which can act as the basis of collective action (Ganz, 2011). Finally, the story of now communicates to people why they must act now. It aims to create a sense of urgency in which the challenges faced by a community are highlighted and the risks of not acting are emphasised (Ganz, 2011). Combining each of these three stories into a public narrative are seen by Ganz to be essential to motivating people to act collectively for change.

Ganz' theory was chosen for this project because it speaks back to the theory of symbolic interactionism and the work of Mead and Blumer. Going back to Mead (1934) we can conceptualise the story-telling project as a means of aligning lines of action to facilitate collective action. The story of us can be seen as a means of creating a shared meaning for a group or situation that acts as a significant symbol around which people can take coordinated action. The importance of resonating with the experiences and understandings of others through the story of us, requires that the story-teller has the ability to listen effectively to those people they intend to communicate with. In this sense, it is the role of the story-teller(s) of a potential 'us' to listen to the stories of a community and re-tell these in a way that highlights their commonalities.

All participants were asked to have one-to-ones with others in their community in E14 to find 'stories of hope' that highlighted the acts of ordinary citizens doing inspiring things

for the benefit of themselves or others. They were also asked to talk to people about key local issues. These conversations were recorded by participants in their own notes and written up as stories to go in a book, which would display them alongside a more general narrative that frames the character of E14 and the issues that its people currently face. The one-to-ones were a means of inter-subjective communication around the common object of E14. The narrative that was created through the project was intended to act as a significant symbol that can facilitate collective action around shared issues in the phase two of the project.

The training sessions were framed through a 'leadership arc', adapted from Ganz and Lin (2012), which is found in figure 3.2. The arc begins at the bottom with unorganised people, each with their own ideas, beliefs, hopes, desires and interests. It shows the stages needed to lead these people to achieve their self-defined goals. The process is the same taken by community organisers in the Alinskyian tradition. The first step in the process is to build relationships between people and gather them around a common interest or goal. The second step is to motivate this new group of people to take action by appealing to their interests and values. This is where story-telling comes in. The third step is to plan the strategy needed to turn a goal into reality. The fourth step is to take action to achieve the goal.

Phase one of the E14 expedition speaks to the first two steps. The story-telling project was a means of building relationships between people in the area to create a stronger and more connected community. It was also a way of developing the skills of participants in story-telling and listening, which can allow them to motivate others to act. Thirdly, the story-book, which contains around 60 stories from local people of them 'doing the right thing' for themselves or their community, was intended to act at as a public narrative to convinces people of the need to act collectively. The story-book also served the purpose of validating the experiential knowledge possessed by citizens residing in a particular place by giving a sense of prestige and permanence to this knowledge, and credentialing it through its 'production' via a project led by a university. We launched the book at a public event at George Greens School on the Isle of Dogs on the 30th of May.

Phase two of the project then focussed on the last two stages of the leadership arc, strategy and motivation, by teaching participants the skills of campaigning, problem-solving and action through workshops and practical experience in the real-world. The intention was that after completing phase one and two the participants will have had the chance to develop themselves as leaders in their community by putting each stage of the leadership arc into practice through collective projects and action. The breakdown of

each stage of phase one of the expedition is as follows. The training and work involved in facilitating these activities was carried out by the author, and three community organisers: Sotez, an organiser for Citizens UK at the time of the project, Caitlin, also a Citizens UK organiser and story-telling practitioner, and Sultana, a student at Queen Mary University studying a Masters in Community Organising. All training sessions in this phase were held at venues in E14 as opposed to the university in order to make the programme more accessible to people and remove the potential barrier that academic institutions pose to local community members.

3.3.2 Training Session One: Monday 26th January 2015, 6-8pm, George Greens School

In this session, participants were introduced to the course and provided with a framing of the programme. The session was designed to start building relationships and trust in the group and ensure that people felt willing and able to take part. The use of a 'rounds' question to open people up proved effective in developing a sense of connection between participants from the outset. Rounds questions are commonly used in community organising, and require everyone in the room (often sat facing each other in a circle) to think of answer to a challenging question and share this with everyone else. The rounds question for this session was: 'What is your most memorable act of human kindness?' Answers to this question were shared, one by one, by participants. As people shared their stories, myself and the other facilitators pulled out interesting points about leadership, which we posed back to the group for discussion and reflection. Through the rounds question we were able to provide an opportunity for everyone to contribute to dialogue on an even basis, encouraging the idea that everyone's experiences are equally valid. The sharing of unusual and personal stories also allowed for people to quickly develop emotional responses to each other, helping to lay the ground for relationships to be built.

3.3.3 Training Session Two: Saturday 7th February, 11:30-16:30, St Pauls Way Community Centre

This session focussed on teaching Ganz' three types of story and requiring participants to practice one to ones as a method of listening and gathering stories. We began this session with another rounds question: 'when have you stuck your neck out to do the right thing?' This question was intended to get people sharing their stories of when they had taken a risk to do something that they believed was right. This was about highlighting people's personal agency, no matter how 'mundane' they were perceived to be. The question was also designed to be neutral and to respect the plurality of beliefs in the room, to the

extent that as facilitators we did not define what 'the right thing' was but left this to participants to decide for themselves.

The stories shared helped to further develop connections between the participants. This worked through a number of ways. Firstly, the personal nature of the stories helped reveal the interests, passions and values of people. This intimacy allowed for people to feel closer to each other and appear lees like strangers. Additionally, many of the stories contained references to places and people in E14. This helped to spark connections between people, as sharing a common locale allowed people to relate more easily to each other. At the end of this session the project assignment was set up. All participants were asked to think of 5 people they could have a one to one with to gather their story. These people were represented on a map of E14 to illustrate the potential power that lay within the room and in the community, should all of these people be connected through new relationships.

We then facilitated a discussion around the concept of 'social justice'. Again, as facilitators we did not attempt to impart a particular vision of social justice onto our participants, but rather used the conversation to help frame our argument that no matter what your view of what a socially just world is in order to get there you need to work with others to move from the 'world as it is' (WAII) now to the 'world as it should be' (WAISB). The WAII-WAISB framing is a tool used in BBCO to help teach their theory of leadership in which people with shared problems must come together and act collectively to address them and move on. The framing helps re-frame concept of social change away from ideas of large-scale, systemic, or revolutionary change and towards the notion of addressing particular issues in the here and now, which help us move incrementally towards our visions of what a good life is (Alinsky, 1971).

After a shared lunch the facilitators taught the method of the one-to-one conversation as explained in Chapter Two. As part of this teaching, we explained the tool of the 'stickperson' (see Figure 3.3), which is used in BBCO as a way to support people with one-to-ones and to help individuals conceptualise their own self-interest. This tool is used in BBCO to record information gathered by organisers and others about the people they meet. What is of most interest in the organising context are: the most important relationships an individual has; any institutions or organisations they belong to; the defining moments in their life as expressed by the individual; the person's hopes and

ambitions; their main worries and concerns; and how they spend the majority of their money, time and energy. This information is not meant to represent the whole of an individual's personhood, but is thought to provide an overview of their key motivations and connections which can be useful for understanding their self-interest and how one might work with them on collective action.

Figure 3.3: Stickperson Tool for One-to-Ones

Relationships

Institutions

Defining Moments

Hopes, Dreams, Ambitions

Fears and Concerns

Spend

£:
T:
E:
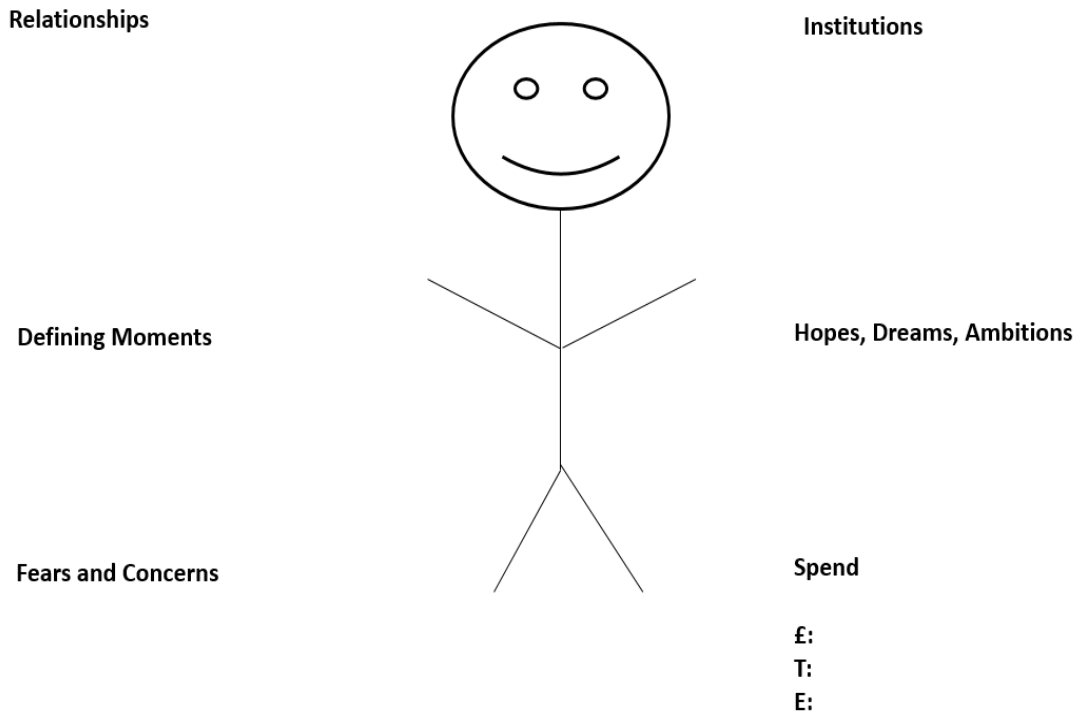
In the session, Sultana demonstrated how to use this tool by sharing aspects of her own life as an example. We then asked participants to have a conversation with another person in the room to try to learn these things about them in a manner that was non-intrusive and personable. Key to effective one-to-ones are the ability to listen to the other person and attempt to understand them in their own terms, as well as identify areas of common ground (Chambers, 2009). The one-to-one and stickperson were used to help participants think about their own personal stories as leaders (the Story of Me), and also provide them with potential tools to use to learn the stories of others, which would them create the shared story of E14 (the Story of Us).

After this, we presented the participants with a theory of what makes a good story. Following Ganz (2011) we argued that a story consists of three things: a protagonist, a plot, and a moral. We argued that stories occur when someone (the protagonist) attempts

to go about their normal business when they are presented with a challenge. This challenge gives the protagonist a choice to make, and this choice leads to an outcome. The sequence of challenge, choice and outcome is the plot of a story. Finally, the outcome teaches a moral lesson to those hearing the story as it communicates and taps into their values. A diagram of this theory is seen in Figure Y below.

We then challenged the group with their task for the programme. To have 5 one-to-ones with people in their community to find their 'story of hope' which shows them, or someone they know taking a risk to do what they believed was the right thing to do. We gave the group 3 weeks to do this, and asked them to arrive at the third training session having completed their one to ones. We provided participants with a template to help them document these stories, by adapting the leadership arc in Figure 2.1 and Ganz' story diagram in Figure 3.4. The template is seen in Figure 3.5 below. This was intended to help gather stories of individual and collective leadership/action from communities in E14.

Figure 3.4: Diagram of the Components of a Story (taken from Ganz, 2011)
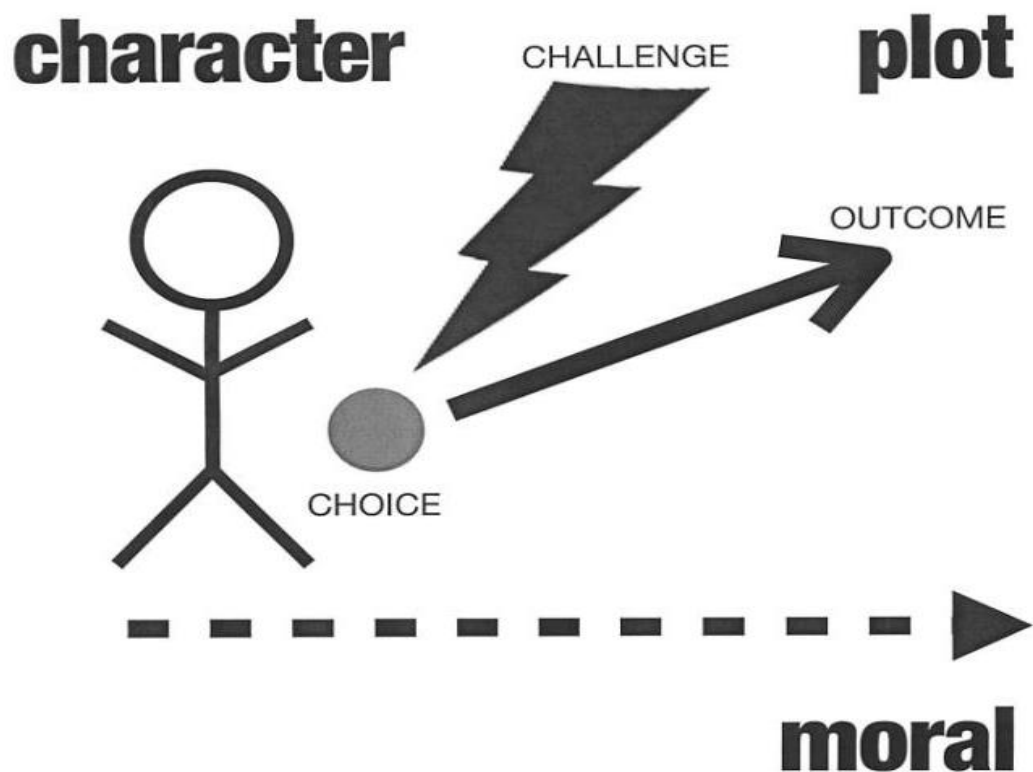
Date of One-to-One:

Relationships- who was involved in the action?
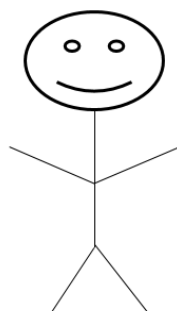
Motivation- why did they choose to act?

Name:
Postcode:
Strategy- what did they do?
Age:
Email:
Phone:
Short Bio:

Action- what did they change?

Key Issues for E14
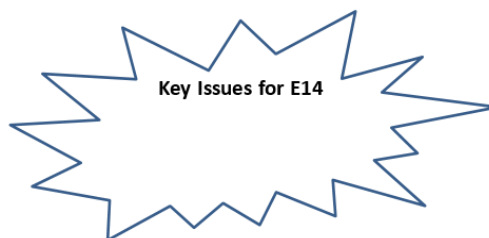
Setting- where was the story set?

Plot

What was the challenge?

What choice was made?

What was the outcome of this choice?

Moral- what does this story teach us?

The template was intended to help participants gather stories by finding out which people were involved in the action, why they chose to act rather than do nothing, the strategy they used, and the outcomes of that strategy. We also asked participants to think about what each of their stories taught them, allowing them rather than myself as an academic to represent the morality of each story. This was intended to give ordinary citizens

authorship over the stories of their own community, valuing and validating their knowledge in the inquiry.

3.3.4 The Stories Assignment

The purpose of the story-telling assignment was threefold. Firstly, is was to begin to build stronger relationships between the participants and those in their community by initiating one to ones to gather stories. Secondly it was intended to generate and give voice to knowledge of the local area that reflected the sentiments and beliefs of residents. This was in order to create a narrative of E14 which would resonate with the experiences and ideas of local people and help to support the development of local problem-solving publics. It was also a way of celebrating the organising and leadership that already exists in the community in order to value what has and is already going on, and avoid offending local people with the patronising idea of the university coming in to organise them to solve their problems as if they have just been waiting silently for them. Finally, it was intended as a means of starting to identify the issues that mattered most to local people, because as well as finding stories, the one to ones were also used to ask people about the issues that concerned them most today.

Over a three-week period, each participant met with people from their community to listen to their stories of them 'doing the right thing'. The definition of this phrase was left ambiguous and intended to allow for a range of stories and perspectives to come through the process. This was based on the pragmatic recognition of multiple worlds and multiple definitions of what is 'right'. In this sense, allowing people to decide what stories fit into this trope was an attempt to ensure the knowledge that was produced was done democratically, with minimal guidance from myself as an academic. As such by beginning the whole research process with a participatory listening exercise, the project was intended to be a form of pragmatic inquiry where issues emerge from the community, rather than being pre-decided by the academic. Again, by framing the stories loosely and not deciding what issues existed before we began, the intention was to avoid some of the limitations of participatory research in which the activities of participants are limited and circumscribed by a pre-existing agenda, despite a clear agenda driving the project (Cooke and Kothari, 2001).

Not everyone was able to have a conversation with five other people from the area. This was for a number of reasons, including constraints on people's time to arrange and hold

the one-to-one; a lack of local connections held by people; or a lack of confidence in approaching certain people for the project. Moreover, some people were unwilling, or hesitant to share their story for fear that making it public would have negative repercussions for them. This ranged from a Muslim community gardener not wishing to appear proud of himself by sharing his story, to a local LGBT campaigner being hesitant to have his details published in case it provoked homophobic abuse or attacks. Moreover, one woman withdrew her story from the book before being published as she felt being celebrated for her work to set up a nursery in her neighbourhood made her look arrogant or as if she was showing off amongst her friends and neighbours. In ethical terms, the story-book project contained a number of potential risks, which were distributed towards E14 residents rather than myself as a researcher, highlighting the need for careful negotiation of potential harm within PAR projects that necessarily contain risk for non-academics due to their impulse for real-world action. However, these risks were managed by giving participants the responsibility to explain how each story would be used, and encouraging them to present any story to the people they wrote about for edits and feedback before being published. Each person who shared their story for the project was also provided with a consent form, explaining their right to withdraw their story at any time before publication.

During this period each participant also had a one-to-one with one of the project facilitators. This was intended to build a meaningful relationship between the participants and the project that would ensure they committed to the end and felt willing to continue engagement with phase two. Initially, the thought of having these one-to-ones daunted me. I was concerned about the differences that existed between myself and the programme participants and whether this would inhibit our ability to relate on a personal level. The differences were many. I was younger than most of them, I came from Bromley in south London, not Tower Hamlets, I was not religious like many of them, and I was gay. Combined, this made the prospect of the one-to-ones daunting. I had pre-conceptions about how each part of my identity just described would stop me from connecting with people. For me, this seemed to be an amplified case of how the positionality of researcher and research participants can shape processes of inquiry (England, 1994).

For example, I believed that me being gay would be a problem for some of the Muslim participants. This was based on a common stereotype of Muslim people which is perhaps

unfair, but it affected my approach to the one-to-ones. However, despite my concerns, these differences did not prevent us from relating, but actually helped us to find common ground (see Katz, 1994). When differences appear so many, this can help to start conversations as people become interested to learn more. For example, in my one-to-one with Sherry she asked me why a young, white man from Bromley wants to get involved in community activism in Tower Hamlets. This opened up a conversation about our respective family histories of migration to London, and the hostility our relatives received (my Dad was a first-generation Irish migrant to London in the 1960s). I also learned about Sherry's gay brother and her passion for LGBT rights.

In other cases, conversations were less concerned with these traditional aspects of identity that are more visible (nationality, race, ethnicity, sexuality, etc.) and more concerned with shared passions, experiences and interests. I bonded with Eniola by talking about our families and what they mean to us, whilst with Pam we connected by talking about the 'old East End' and how it has changed; Pam has lived in Tower Hamlets all her life, and since moving to east London myself I have developed an interest in its histories, especially figures like the Kray twins and the decline of pubs in the area.

Aside from starting to build relationships with participants, these one to one's were also used as a way of beginning to develop participants' skills through the process of self-reflection and the affirming of progression. Often someone may learn a new skill or grow in their capacity to do something but unless they believe they have developed, they are unlikely to put these into practice (Warren, 2001). In this vein, we also asked each participant to have a one to one with a fellow participant. This was intended to start building relationships within the group that would generate a longer-term commitment to the project as well as helping to build new social capital within the local area.

3.3.5 Training Session Three

In this session all of the participants came having had their one to ones in the community. The purpose of this session was to create the narrative of E14 that would be contained within the book. The narrative was to communicate the 'Story of US' of E14 and would be based on the various 'Stories of Me' that people had gathered through their one-to-ones, as well as the issues and challenges that people face now (the 'Story of Now') (Ganz, 2011).

Seeking to respect the notion of pluralism, the aim of this session was to produce a place-based narrative that spoke to the multiple, and at times conflicting, experiences of the diverse communities that inhabit E14. As such, we sought to generate a consensus on 'the' story of E14. Given the history and diversity of the area, this would not be an easy task, but at the time I decided that it was possible to generate a shared narrative which would respect the views and hopefully resonate with all participants in the group, and even in the wider community. Cooke and Kothari (2001) argue that consensus-building in participatory research can lead to the reproduction of hegemonic forms of knowledge by silencing counter-hegemonic views, whilst Cahill (2007) argues that consensus can be built by allowing all positionalities to speak.

In attempting to follow Cahill's advice an hour-long deliberation exercise was run within the group. Deliberative democracy is the name of a model of politics developed by John Dryzek (2000) and based on the pragmatic notion of pluralism, in which it is recognised that communication and dialogue between different groups is an effective means of solving specific problems and promoting effective governance (Schlosberg, 1998). Deliberation consists of a collective conversation of people where the aim is to come to some common agreements over an issue or topic, whilst recognizing differences in experience and opinion. As such, despite recognizing the multiple truths within the room, this exercise was intended to create some common truths upon which coordinated action can be taken in the future.

The point of the session was to allow for everyone in the room to share their views and experiences as people who have been connected with the place for various amounts of time, as well as those of the people they had listened to in the previous 3 weeks. As such a wealth of local knowledge was brought to the table and a method was needed to allow for dissent, debate, negotiation and compromise. The group of 20 was split into 2. Each group of 10 sat in a circle with a facilitator to guide conversation. The conversation was based on four key questions, which were read out and projected onto a screen for the whole session:

1. **Where have we come from?** (what is our history; what characteristics make us who we are)

2. **What are we proud of and why?** (who are our local heroes from the past and present; what are our achievements)

3. **What are the key issues that exist within the E14 area?** (what challenges do we face; what risks exist)

4. **Where do we want to go?** (what are our hopes for the future; how can we realise them)

The facilitator lead conversations around each question and made notes on A3 sheets as people spoke. In order to ensure that all participants had the chance to speak, and that confident personalities did not dominate discussions a rule was made that only one person was allowed to talk at any time and that they must be holding the bunch of flowers that each group had. The facilitator worked to pass on the flowers to those who spoke less in order to ensure that everyone had an equal chance to contribute. This was a difficult task, as the group contained some very large and confident characters who had strong opinions on the questions being covered. Indeed, one hour was probably not enough time to meaningfully discuss these questions, with the session only scratching the surface. However, the session did provide an opportunity to document a sense of the sentiments held about E14 from those within the group, which shaped the narrative of the storybook.

Despite the dominance of certain individuals, quitter personalities did contribute their knowledge in the session. Potentially, the one-to-ones conducted between people within the group over the past three weeks, plus the rounds questions in the first two training sessions helped to create an environment in which all felt comfortable to speak by building up levels of trust within the group (Kesby et al, 2007).

Over the course of the hour both groups discussed these questions, reflecting on their experiences and opinions. The knowledge produced through this communication would represent the understandings and meanings ascribed to the 'object' of E14 by those who inhabit it. After each group deliberated simultaneously for an hour, they each had 15 minutes to code their conversations into five categories, which they would then present back to the other group. These were: local heroes; sources of pride; characteristics of E14; issues; and hopes for the future. Each group wrote these out on cardboard cut outs before sticking them on a blank base map of the E14 area. They did this whilst presenting their thoughts to the other group for consent and debate. This was to ensure that both groups agreed on the common themes to include on the map. In this sense the data from this stage of research was coded using emic codes in order to ensure that the

narrative was framed in the common-sense language and experiences of local people (Crang, 2005).

The content of this map and these presentations were later recorded by hand and used to shape the introductory and concluding pages of the storybook, which set out the general narrative of E14. I wrote these pieces myself in order to avoid conflict about any one person from the group having authorship over the book. My intentions were to include the perspectives of different communities in a way that highlighted their agency in the area. I tried to ensure that what I wrote was grounded in the ideas and opinions of the group by basing this on the deliberations. However, in hindsight, as a relative outsider to the E14 area this narrative was shaped more by my own understandings and world-view at the time than the understandings of the participants and efforts should have been made to collectively author these sections.

3.3.6 Training Session Four: 6-8pm George Greens School

The final training session involved reflecting on and evaluating the project thus far. A skills audit was conducted with participants to find out what they had learned and to affirm the skills that they had been developing (Warren, 2001). Following Fung (2005) the civic skills that were intended to be developed in the participants through this phase of the project were: relationship-building, listening, deliberation, public speaking, writing, time-management, and event-planning. The civic capacities that we sought to develop were: tolerance, respect for others, confidence, hope, and commitment.

3.3.7 Book Creation and Launch

After the first phase of training, the participants spent some weeks writing up their chosen stories to go in the book. All stories were sent to myself and edited for spelling, grammar and word length. Most stories came in at or under the specified word limit, but a few were cut down to fit on the page. Where possible the content of stories was not altered to do this. This is to ensure that I, as the academic, had as little power in representation and authorship of the story as possible by reducing the impact of my positionality (England, 1994).

The book was launched at a celebration event on the 30th May. This event was intended to promote the project's activities and help us recruit more participants on to phase two so that we can generate more relational power and work with more groups from the area.

The event was attended by around 100 people from the E14 area, including those who had shared their story for the book, plus the friends and family of the participants.

3.4 E14 Expedition Phase Two

After the first phase of the expedition, a break was planned before starting the next phase. The intention was that most of the participants from phase one would take part in phase two, allowing us to build upon the relationships, knowledge and shared narrative of E14 that had already been built to facilitate collective, problem-solving action by the group around key local issues. However, many of the original participants did not choose to take part in the second stage owing to a number of reasons. For some the story-telling project was all they intended to do from the outset, for others the commitments of work, family and other forms of activism meant they could not afford to dedicate themselves to the second phase, but were keen to still be kept in the loop and involved in future developments should it be something that interested them.

This meant that I had to recruit more new people on the expedition. This was easier than in the first phase as many of the original participants helped to recruit people through their social networks. In this sense, the first phase helped to build relationships in E14 that enhanced the expedition as a whole, laying the ground for future activity and providing a sense of continuity between the two phases. Table 3.3 shows the participants of phase two, highlighting how they became aware of the project.

In total, nineteen people started phase two of the expedition. In contrast to the first phase, the group contained more young people, and more young men in particular. This was due to the links to George Green's secondary school via Janice O'Sullivan, a participant on the first phase. This might also reflect the nature of the second phase and the way in which it was advertised to people. The second phase was marketed as another leadership training program for people who wanted to develop their skills and become leaders for change in their community. The project was designed to develop teams of people around specific local issues, and support them to develop their own campaigns or social action projects to address these.

Initially the project was designed to last between the 3rd of October 2015 and the 11th of January 2016. It was intended that there would be an initial training session on the 3rd which would cover different leadership skills and begin to identify priority problem areas for the group. Teams would be formed around these issues and then participants would

have three weeks to do some further research into these by talking to others in the community to find out more and refine the larger problems into more specific issues that could be acted upon within the timeframe of the project, ending with a debrief in January. The timeframe of just over three months was chosen to make the programme manageable and concentrate participants' efforts so as not to allow action to drag on and ensure that participants could fit in this work alongside all of their other commitments. However, as the programme progressed it quickly became clear that three months was not nearly enough time to begin to get to grips with some of the issues chosen, and the project was extended, with consent from the group, by another three months, to end on the 30th of March 2016.

The breakdown of each stage of phase two of the expedition is as follows. The training and work involved in facilitating these activities was carried out by the author, and just of the community organisers from phase one: Sotez. Due to a lack of funding available for room hire, all training sessions were held at Queen Mary University. However, smaller group meetings as part of the campaigns were held at venues in E14.

3.4.1 Training Session One: Saturday 3rd October 2015 10:00-16:00

In this session the group was welcomed and provided with an overview of the programme. The session then started with a rounds question, which was 'tell us a story of someone who inspires you from E14'. This was intended to provide a connection to the story-telling project and a way for all participants to participate equally in the group dialogue. The next activity was a negotiation exercise, which is used by groups like the IAF and CUK to begin teaching people about their understanding of power. The exercise involves setting up a table in the middle of the room and asking six people to sit either side of it (three on each side). Each side of the table is assigned a role based on a scenario provided at the start. The scenario for this session was that a group of concerned residents from the Isle of Dogs had called a meeting with representatives from Tower Hamlets Council and the Canary Wharf Group (the management arm for the Canary Wharf Estate who are also responsible for contracting building work) to discuss their concerns around the development of a new housing and office development on the Island. The residents called the meeting to attempt to secure a commitment from the council and Canary Wharf Group to ensure that jobs in the construction of this development are made available to local people first.

After setting the scene, the facilitator starts a timer of eight minutes and leaves it to those sat around the table to assume their roles and begin the negotiation. The rest of the group sits observing those in the middle. This exercised is designed to make participants think about the power dynamics involved in addressing any issues, as well as the tactics used to advance one's agenda in a situation of potentially conflicting interests. The role play exercise is supposed to allow participants to reflect on these points by putting themselves in the position of one of the two groups. At the end of each negotiation (we did four so that everybody could have a go) the facilitator asks for everyone in the room to reflect on how successful each side was and on the tactics that are used in real-wold negotiations.

After this exercise, myself and Sotez then facilitated a discussion around the notion of power. We built upon participants' reflections on the negotiation exercise to talk about what power is and what different types of power exist in society. We argued that power can be defined as the ability to influence or make a change, and suggested that a number of different things can provide this sort of power, such as money or violence. We then argued that for people in communities who do not have access to the levels of money-power that some wealthy people do and do not want to use violence to achieve their goals, another source of power is through relationships. In doing this, we made an argument to the participants about the value of relational power, and as such were framing leadership and social change in ways that were linked to a pragmatist ontology of relationality, and radical contingency: the power to change something is located in our ability to alter, end or develop new relationships to have different effects. This discussion seemed to make sense with most of the participants, with a general agreement on the notion that change comes from people acting collectively to address issues, and by building relationships with those actors whose actions are contributing towards specific issues existing.

After a group lunch, we taught the technique of the one-to-one and the stickperson tool again, for the benefit of those who were not on the first phase. This time, we framed the technique as a means of building relationships by understanding other people's self-interest, which is key to developing one's influence to make a change. After this, we facilitated a discussion on the difference between problems and issues. We asked the group to shout out all of the problems that they thought existed in E14. These included things such as 'joy-riding on the DLR', 'anti-social behaviour', 'unemployment' 'racism' and 'sexism'. From these suggestions, we argued that problems are big things

that seem impossible for people to change themselves, whilst issues are more specific things that we can get to grips with and take action on. We suggested that things like 'racism' or 'sexism' were too big to deal with, being problems, and that instead we needed to focus on more specific issues.

This was a contentious argument amongst the participants as it appeared that we were arguing that things like racism or sexism did not exist. This was not our point however, as indeed these problems came from our participants' suggestions, and thus if they believed them to exist then they did. Rather, we were trying to argue that the best way to deal with such problems was to break them down into more specific acts, events or processes, rather than view them as universal, transcendent things that dominate our lives.

Echoing the arguments of people like Bruno Latour (2005b), and Gibson-Graham (1996), this was an attempt to move away from seeing social problems as the product of hegemonic, disembodied, dominating systems, and towards viewing all social issues as the product of specific sets of relationships between people and things. In this sense, BBCO and pragmatic philosophy move away from the construction of social problems as 'Isms'; capitalism, sexism, racism etc. which can be linked to the rationalist concern for universal laws and logics, and instead construct such problems in ways that highlight their specificity and contingency.

After this discussion, we then asked the group to rank the top three problem areas in E14 through a vote in which everyone had two votes. The top three that were selected were; unemployment; poor health; and anti-social behaviour. We then asked participants to pick the issue area that they felt most passionately about and form teams around this. Each team was then asked to set a date for their first team meeting, which Liam would attend too. Before the session ended, each team was set the task of inquiring further into their issue area by talking to people in the community and refining the problems of unemployment, poor health and anti-social behaviour into more specific issues that they think they would be able to take action on.

3.4.2 Research and Listening

During the three weeks between the first and second training sessions, each team met to plan their research and think about their chosen issue in more detail. After the first

training session, Eniola, Amrana chose not to continue with the program for personal reasons. The three teams with the remaining participants were as follows:

Health: Pat; Rachel; Elizabeth; Fahim; Yamin

Unemployment: Veronica; Jeban; Amit; Ikram; Shahid; Younus

Anti-Social Behaviour: Justin; Akif; Dilawr; Zalika; Samiha; Shaheed

The health team met on the 5th of October at the library in Chrisp Street market. The team decided to focus on mental health rather than physical health as this is where they had most interest. We agreed that this is still a big problem rather than a specific issue and that more research was needed by the group to identify something that could be addressed within the timeframe of the project. Pam had local contacts with people working in mental health services due to her job at a local GP surgery. She also had connections to other people in the area with a passion about mental health in the community through phase one of the project, and I offered to put the others in touch with contacts I had made through phase one. As such, the group agreed to make contact and speak with Sherry, Sister Christine, Abi Gilbert (from Tower Hamlets Council's Public Health) and Tower Hamlets MIND.

The unemployment team met in the 7th of October at the Aberfeldy community centre, managed by Veronica. As the group was mainly students from George Greens School, they very quickly decided to focus on the specific issue of a lack of work experience placements in different industries on offer to their sixth form. For them, the problem of unemployment in E14 is not due to a lack of jobs, as Tower Hamlets as a whole has a high level of jobs in the borough, but the lack of work experience in relevant sectors which prevents local young people from accessing these jobs. The group agreed to carry out a survey of sixth form students at George Greens to assess what types of work experience they would like more of, to help them identify employers to target in their campaign. Not directly affected by the issue herself, Veronica was happy to support the young men's efforts throughout the project.

The anti-social behaviour team could not find the time to meet in the three weeks between training sessions one and two. However, during this period I was able to have a one-to-one with each participant in order to get to know them better and learn more about their motivations for joining the programme and what they hoped to gain from it.

3.4.3 Training Session Two: Saturday 24th October 2016, 11:00-16:00

This session began with another rounds question, before each team provided an overview of the findings of their research and conversations to the rest of the group. We then asked everyone in the room to take a pen and write down the names of people they knew in the area who could be a useful ally for each of the teams' issues. This was intended to tap into the relational power that already existed within the group, to help each team develop strategies to achieve their goals.

After lunch we facilitated a conversation about taking action, and the different types of action that can be taken to address local issues. this was intended to get participants thinking creatively about their projects and campaigns. We taught one of the principles of BBCO that 'every action has a reaction' (Alinsky, 1971), in order to emphasise that any actions taken as part of the group's campaigns should be considered in terms of the reaction they hoped to generate from them, rather than doing things for the sake of them. During this session we also discussed the WAII-WAISB continuum to help participants think about smaller actions that help them progress towards their vision of a better world.

Figure 3.6: Power Analysis Tool
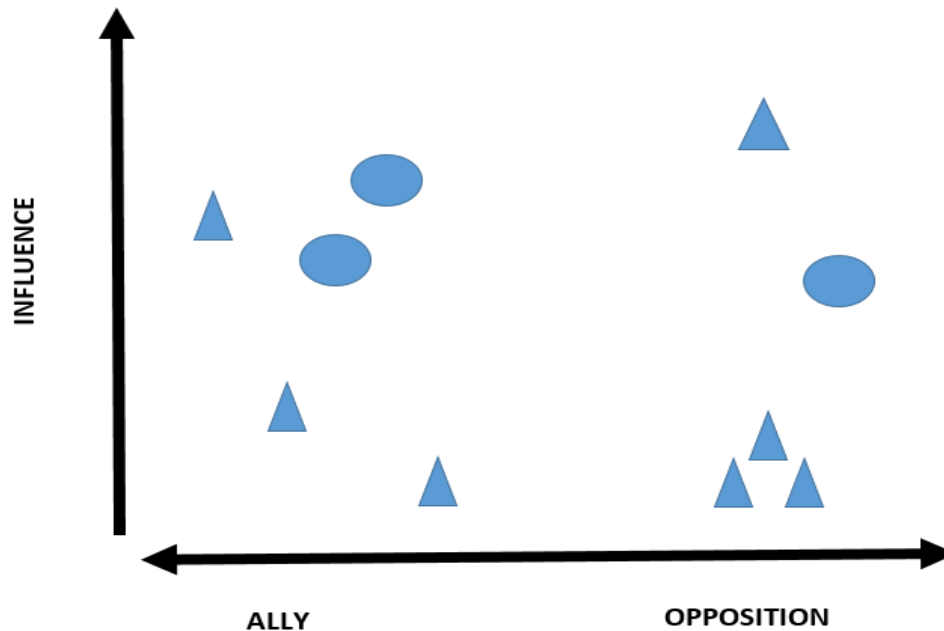
After this, we introduced the tool of the 'power analysis'. This is a tool used within BBCO to get people thinking about how to make change around specific issues based on the notion of relational power. Figure 3.6 shows the power analysis tool. It has two axes. The Y-axis represents influence or power, ranging from low to high. The X-axis

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represents the degree of support or opposition to the users cause. The circles and triangles represent organisations and individuals respectively. In community organising, this tool is used by groups of people who have a specific issue in mind to help them plan their strategy of action to address this issue. The tool helps to identify other actors who have some sort of influence in addressing the issue. These actors might be potential allies to the group, or opposition. Different actors have varied levels of influence in relation to the issue. The tool acts as a way for groups to conceptualise the relationships they have to develop in order to address their issue. Ultimately, the tool is a means of understanding the relative power or influence of its users in relation to their ability to address the issue at hand.

I demonstrated how to use the power analysis tool to the group, using the example of a previous campaign around housing in Tower Hamlets that I was part of in 2014 (for details of this, see Harney et al, 2014). I found this demonstration very difficult, as the example I gave was too complex for me to confidently present. However, this tool raised a lot of interest amongst participants as it provided a way of looking at problems that allowed them to see their source and potential for resolution in relationships (existing and potential). This proved to be a novel way of looking at social issues for many in the room.

We then gave each team the opportunity to draw up a power analysis of their own issues by mapping the actors involved. This was to help them further refine their issue and think about the action they could take to move forwards. We ended the session by working with each group to design the next stages of their campaign and setting out clear next steps. The next training session was scheduled for 9 weeks' time on Monday the 11th of January, with the idea being that each team work to come to some sort of resolution on their issue by then. What each team did in this timeframe is described next.

3.4.4 The Teams Taking Action: 26.10.15-04.01.16

3.4.4.1 The Health Team

After the second training session, the health team decided that they wanted to address the issue of a lack of information about mental health services for young people in the E14 area. They believed that they could be useful in raising awareness of these services to support young people in need through a website. The idea would be to create a simple website to showcase each service, with the team creating a short video of a person from

each service to humanise each one. The website would then be promoted through local youth centres, community groups and schools, using the networks that the expedition had helped develop.

Their first step was to contact each service and organisation providing these services in the local area. They scoured online health directories in the area to find out more, contacting any relevant service and organisation by phone or email. However, the team was frustrated to find that many of these services either did no longer exist or were unable to be contacted.

This led to them questioning whether there were even enough services in the area to support young people's mental health. The team then decided to contact to Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for Tower Hamlets to meet with them to find out more about mental health service provision in the borough. They managed to get in touch with Malcom Brown, the person responsible for commissioning mental health services.

Through correspondence with Malcolm, the team learnt that the CCG had its own plans to develop a website promoting mental health and mental health services for young people in Tower Hamlets, which was to be launched in the summer of 2016. He was keen to stress that the solution was in hand with the CCG and that there was no need for the team to continue with their own project. This caused frustration in the team who felt their efforts were being overlooked and uncomfortable with leaving action to others; the point of the programme was to take action so they were unwilling to leave it to the CCG at this stage. So, a meeting was arranged with Malcolm for late January 2016 to discuss their plans and how the team could work with them on them. In the meantime, the team continued to try to contact relevant services, and debated the relative effectiveness of setting up a brand new website, or working with the CCG on their own site. Further action was shelved until the meeting with Malcolm in January.

3.4.4.2 The Employment Team

The employment team left the second training session with a plan to meet with the teacher at their school in charge of work experience: Mr Kemp. They planned to present the findings of their research to him, which included the views of over 100 students on what work experience placements they would like more of, in order to gain his support for approaching local employers to negotiate more placements for students. The team

met to plan for this meeting, and then the sixth form students met with Mr Kemp themselves.

At this meeting the team received a set-back. Mr Kemp decided that the research they had conducted was not enough and that he wanted them to do another survey, online rather than on paper, and for them to get back to him with the results when they had completed it. We met as a group to discuss this and had a discussion about what this meant and how much attention they should pay Mr Kemp. My role here was to challenge the students on why Mr Kemp did not accept their initial research, and whether they should invest the time and effort in doing what he asked of them, rather than bypassing him and contacting employers directly. This proved to be a good learning experience for the participants (more on which I will discuss in chapter Five), with the group deciding that they would re-do their research to suit Mr Kemp. This would take up their time before the next training session on January 11th, where the team arrived with the results of a second survey which identified arts, medicine and technology as the top three areas that students wanted more work experience in.

3.4.4.3 The Anti-Social Behaviour Team

Meeting for the first time together as a group, the ASB team boiled down the larger problem of anti-social behaviour into the more specific issue of a group of young men and boys causing trouble and intimidating neighbours on the Brownfield estate in Poplar. This issue was chosen by Shaheed who was personally affected by it, as a resident of the estate. Justin was also a resident of the estate at the time, so the group decided that it made sense to focus their efforts there. Their next step was to talk to other people on the estate to find out more about the issue and identify potential allies to help them address it. Justin suggested that they do this by knocking on people's front doors to ask them about the ASB.

On Thursday 12th November we met as a group to do this. Justin, Zalika and Shaheed were present, whilst Akif, Dilwar and Samiha did not come. We focussed our door knocking on one block of flats on the estate, Carradale Block, as this was the one where the group of young people hung out outside of. We knocked on about 30 doors in the block, and spoke with residents for around 5 minutes each about the issue. For those not living in the area, this helped the whole team understand the extent of the issue, with people telling us about what the group of young people had been doing for months;

including taking drugs in the corridors, urinating on the steps, playing loud music, intimidating their neighbours and driving a motorbike at night time.

Whilst a success in canvassing local people's opinions on the matter, the door knocking also helped to shine light on the risks associated with process pragmatism. Myself and Shaheed were door knocking together, and one of the first doors we approached belonged to the mother of one of the boys involved in the ASB. Shaheed knew this and tried to warn me not to knock, but I thought he was just being shy, so I knocked anyway. We then had to talk directly to this woman about the problem. This was a major risk for Shaheed who lives in the area. The woman denied that the issue existed, and Shaheed was genuinely fearful of the repercussions of this incident. I felt incredibly guilty and stupid, but ultimately had little to lose from my actions as I did not live on this estate. This goes to highlight the risky nature of process pragmatism. The fact that issues are not abstracted from their social context means that those inquiring into them face more danger, as they are also part of that social context.

Indeed, the nature of PAR is inherently risky due to its goal of achieving social change. Following Brydon-Miller (2009), this means that projects generally extend the traditional ethical principles of respect for autonomy, beneficence and justice. The expedition as a whole sought to do this by respecting the agency of non-academics to produce their own knowledge of the world and take action to change it; using the process of inquiry to do good in the world, rather than just minimising harm (i.e. by facilitating the development of participants' skills for public action); and extending the notion of justice from ensuring the equal distribution of risks and benefits amongst participants and academics, to using research to achieve social justice as defined by the participants. In this sense, the episode with Shaheed was unfortunate, but perhaps inevitable due to the engaged nature of the project.

However, it also highlights the need for the academic, as facilitator or organiser, to be careful about the impacts of their actions. This raises the question of how academics who do not live in certain worlds can take their share of responsibility for the outcomes of engaged, pragmatic research, when the stakes for them are inevitably lower. Reflecting on Bunge's expeditions, Merrifield (1995) argues that Bunge practiced a form of engaged ethics because he lived in the neighbourhood he was trying to change, making him part of that social world. This is not to suggest that all academics trying to practice

this form of research must relocate to the neighbourhoods they are working in, but given that the risks of the inquiry are lower for them, this needs to be reflected in the distribution of potential benefits, and the degree of control that they take over the activities of the inquiry. At the very least, this requires the academic to make efforts to fully understand the situation at hand and what it means for people's lives before engaging in action.

After the door knocking, the team met to map out potential ways forward, using the power analysis tool. Present were Justin, Zalika, Samiha and Shaheed. Akif and Dilwar had effectively dropped out of the programme by this time. The group decided that key actors involved were the ASB team of the housing association that ran the estate, the police, local residents, the group of boys themselves, their leader Corey (identified through conversations with residents), and the estate's board. A debate was had about who had the most power to address this issue, and whose responsibility this should be. The police were deemed unable to solve the issue as they have tried and failed before. It was agreed that the ASB team and the local residents had the most potential to influence change. As such a plan of action was agreed in which the team would contact the ASB officer of the housing association and invite her to a meeting of concerned local residents, drawn from the people we spoke to when door knocking. Then the team would look to find a way for the residents to support the ASB team to deal with the group of boys.

Shaheed followed up with the ASB team to try to arrange a time for the meeting as he had already made contact with them before. Justin, Zalika and Samiha agreed to contact the residents from the door knocking who had given them their phone number. Shaheed made in roads with contacting the relevant people, but Zalika and Justin did not get in touch with the residents. I tried to meet with the team to work out what was going wrong but received no reply from Samiha or Justin, only Zalika. During this time, Shaheed had taken it into his own hands to pressure the ASB team to deal with the issue. We met to discuss the team's progress and he told me that the group of boys had not been seen for the past four weeks after the ASB team had raised the priority of the issue with local police resulting in an increase in patrols at night and the dispersal of the group. I questioned whether this was an effective long-term solution and if the group of boys would return when the patrols were reduced. Shaheed was unsure, but content that the issue appeared to be resolved for now.

3.4.5 Training Session Three Monday 11th January, 6-8pm

This training session was originally intended to be the final of phase two, with each team having come to an end of their campaign. In hindsight, this was naively over-ambitious and the result of wishful thinking on the part of myself and Sotez who designed the programme. Very soon in the programme, it was decided that we would seek to extend the end date to April 1st 2016 to give the teams more time to complete their campaigns. We got consent for this at this training session.

The session was split into 2 parts over 2 hours. The first half we asked the groups to spend 30 minutes reflecting together on 3 questions:

1. What has gone well so far?

2. What difficulties have you faced so far?

3. What individual or experience has challenged you?

Myself and Sotez worked with each group to help them tease things out and listen to their progress and frustrations. We tried to get them to think about things positively, seeing each point as something to learn from. This was intended as a process of collective reflection to learn from what we have done, see what went well and what could have been done differently. Everything was treated as a learning point, and this session has helped us to take stock, evaluate and then plan our steps going forward. Being open about all this is important in developing a 'reflexive intelligence' amongst citizens which is essential to being able to address complex issues in a radically contingent world shaped by uneven power relations (Harney et al, 2016).

The actions of all three teams demonstrated the difficulty of trying to address complex social issues as groups of citizens. Issues are never as simple as they seem, and trying to negotiate with and align action with those of other actors also addressing these issues takes a long time. All participants expressed their frustrations at this in different ways, be it through the health team's interaction with the CCG, the employment team with Mr Kemp or the inter-group dynamics of the ASB team. However, it was agreed that everyone would like another three months to attempt to come to a satisfactory conclusion on their issue, and so plans were made to make this happen.

The health team agreed to wait for the meeting with Malcom Brown at the CCG and see how they could collaborate with them on their own plans for a website. The employment

team agreed to approach employers in two sectors, based on the results of their online survey. They chose the arts sector and the medical sector. The identified the Space Theatre and the Barkantine Clinic on the Isle of Dogs as target employers. The ASB team, now just Zalika and Shaheed as the others had dropped out due to other commitments and not wanting to take it on for another three months, decided that they would try to bring residents together through a fun event and create an informal WhatsApp group so that they could better share their concerns and coordinate action should the group of boys return in future. The teams then engaged in various action before the final training session on March 31st.

3.4.6 The Teams Taking Action: 15.01.16-31.04.16

3.4.6.1 The Health Team

The health team's next move was to meet with Malcom Brown. This happened on the 26th January at his office at Mile End hospital. Present at the meeting were Pat, Rachel and myself as the others could not get time off work and college to attend. We all met an hour before the meeting to plan our approach. We agreed to keep the meeting fairly open in order to find out what the CCG had planned and where we might fit in. We also agreed that we could offer the CCG support in publicising their website and helping to design it, so it meets community needs. However, beyond this we entered the meeting with no clear agenda as we were still unsure on exactly what the CCG was planning.

We entered the meeting and were greeted by Malcolm and his colleague Laura Gray, who was responsible for developing the CCG's offer to young people in relation to mental health. Laura had to leave the meeting but invited us to attend her steering group meeting in a few weeks' time. We then began speaking with Malcolm and learnt that the CCG was commissioning a new website to support the mental health of young people in Tower Hamlets, including a directory of services and the creation of promotional material that they intended to distribute to youth centres, community groups and schools to promote mental health awareness in the borough. Malcolm took control of the meeting and asked if we would be interested in organising some of this work in E14 through our networks.

At first Pam and Rachel did not respond to the idea, so I suggested myself that this could be a possibility. This was a bad move as Malcolm then began to get us all to agree on writing a sentence summarising the goals of an event in E14 to promote the CCG's new

website. Malcolm really carried this idea forwards and we ended the meeting having agreed in principle to support an event if the rest of the team was interested. However, upon leaving the meeting Pam and Rachel felt that this was not something they were prepared to do as it would involve a big time commitment and they did not have the capacity for this. Reflecting on this, I perhaps should not have entertained the idea of supporting an event without the consent of the whole team, and could have waited for Pam or Rachel to fill the silence after Malcolm's suggestion. This mistake also reflects our lack of a coherent plan or agenda in the meeting.

We left the meeting feeling that we had been signed up for something we did not want to do. We agreed to mull over what we had learned in the meeting before we next meet in over a week's time. At this meeting Pam and Rachel expressed their concerns that they were losing faith in the project as they could not see what sort of effective action around the issue they could take in the remaining time. We discussed options going forward, and supporting the CCG's website did not appeal as it was planned to be launched in the summer when the programme had ended. After some head-scratching, the group was joined by Fahim who was late as he was on crutches after injuring his leg playing football at school. Fahim shared some news with us about his own efforts to look into mental health services at his school. Fahim had been working to find out who the counsellor at his school was, as tracking them down was providing difficult. He had spoken with different members of staff to find this out and eventually met with her to ask her about the services she provided. He challenged her that not many students know that she exists and that this could be harmful for those experiencing difficulties. He got her to agree to put posters up around the school with her details on them.

This story inspired the group, and everyone was impressed with Fahim's determination in making this happen. It was then suggested that we could do something similar, by making posters with the contact details of the good mental health service providers for young people in the borough and handing these out to youth centres and community groups to raise awareness for young people in E14 about what was on offer. We agreed this might be a satisfactory way forward, allowing us to do something that we felt could make a small impact on such a complex issue.

Next for the group was to attend Laura's steering group on the new CCG website. Only Pam was able to attend, and I joined her at the meeting at Mile End hospital. The

meeting was attended by local GPs, the CCG, local mental health service providers, and various community groups. The purpose of the meeting was to help generate ideas for the new website. At the meeting we learnt that the CCG had £17,000 to commission a new website and a range of hard-copy materials to raise mental health awareness amongst young people across Tower Hamlets. The aim of this intervention was to normalise mental health and remove the stigma of talking about amongst young people.

This meeting was interesting as for Pat, it confirmed the belief in the wider team that there was a lack of investment locally into mental health services for young people. Pam could see little point in developing a website to promote mental health awareness in the borough when not enough services existed to deal with potentially increased demand from young people. Pam intervened in the conversation to make this point, which disrupted the conversation somewhat. Her comments drew support from other community representatives in the room and visible annoyed others.

After this meeting myself and Pam talked about what this meant for the team going forwards. She stressed that given the CCG is making the website we ought to leave them to it and not make our own. She also suggested that there is perhaps little point in the team promoting good services with posters if these services do not have the capacity to meet increased demand. We also agreed that given the lack of funding available for mental health services not just locally but nationally (that same week, a BBC Panorama program exploring this lack of funding was aired on TV) the team lacked the power to meaningfully address the issue in the remaining time of the programme.

After this the team met once more and decided that given all they'd learnt the most satisfactory action they could take would be to write a letter to the CCG expressing their concerns over the lack of funding for mental health services in the area and suggesting alternative uses of £17,000 that could have a greater impact on young people's mental health in the borough than developing a website, such as training community groups to deal better with mental health in young people. This action was deemed the most acceptable to the principles of the group within the timeframe of the programme. A letter was drafted and sent to Malcom Brown and Laura in late March.

3.4.6.2 The Employment Team

Since the last training session, the employment team had emailed two health clinics on the Isle of Dogs asking about work experience opportunities. They also met the secretary

from the Island Health Centre who told them that due to NHS confidentiality rules under-18-year olds are not allowed to work with them. We discussed this at a team meeting. This was a set back and the students in particular were growing despondent with their campaign and the constant barriers to achieving their goals. We decided to leave health clinics and instead pursue employers in another industry. They decided to move on to the technology sector and resolved to make contact with firms in Tech City in nearby Shoreditch. Ikram had not heard of Tech City and seemed annoyed that they'd have to invest more time researching companies and making contact.

I understood his frustration but challenged him on why he should give up now when they've already much so much effort in. I suggested that myself and the students meet at the university in a week or so to make contact with a number of firms together. At the same time, they were also working on creating a presentation for Mr Kemp as he had asked them for this. Combined, the project was putting pressure on their free time.

On the 18th of February I met with the boys to make contact with firms in Tech City. We created an email to send to them that would hopefully grab their attention, as well as some local councillors who we thought might help boost our ability to get a response from certain firms via an endorsement. We sent lots of emails and waited for a response.

We next met on the 26th of February to see if we had made any progress. We had no reply from the tech firms, but did get responses from the councillors who offered their support. So, we agreed that we would follow up some of the tech firms to nudge them into a response. We also agreed to reply to the councillors with details of the firms we wanted to contact so that they could help us get noticed. However, given the time left for action, the efforts of this team fizzled out and no concrete 'win' was achieved by April.

3.4.6.4 Anti-Social Behaviour

The ASB team, which by now consisted of only Zalika and Shaheed, took a while to arrange their next meeting after the third training session. Zalika had left college for full-time work, and Shaheed too was working 6 days a week, with a role at Poplar Harca and a local Primark store. This meant we did not meet as a three until the 8th of March, a few weeks before the programme was due to end. We had to meet during Shaheed's lunch hour, with a twenty-minute gap planned (Zalika worked from home so was more flexible with her availability).

At the meeting we learnt from Shaheed that the trouble had returned to his block when the boys started to come back after the police patrols died down. Shaheed seemed quite despondent with the situation and his inability to address the issue. He spoke of feeling powerless and that the boys' behaviour was a symptom of deeper issues around unemployment and overcrowded housing conditions, which our programme could not possibly have addressed. We spoke of the idea of organising the residents in the block so that they are better prepared to deal with issues like this in the future, but Shaheed did not think that this would be popular with his neighbours. Zalika also agreed that the team should not try to do anything more around the issue. She said she had learnt a lot from the programme, being a participant on both phases and was glad she took part.

I left this meeting feeling disappointed in myself for not getting any resolution on this issue and for leaving Shaheed feeling the way he did. This whole campaign in particular was a steep learning curve for me, highlighting the amount of serious and long-term effort that is needed to solve social issues. All in all, none of the three campaign teams achieved their goal in the time allotted. This meant going into the final training session with a sense that I had got this phase of the expedition wrong. I was eager to find out what the participants thought of it themselves.

3.4.7 Final Training Session, 31st March 2016

In this Sotez and I facilitated an evaluation of the programme and the campaigns by the participants. We asked everyone to think about what went well, what could have gone better, what they learnt through participating and their thoughts on taking any of this work forwards in the future. We asked the group to do this evaluation individually, and then collectively. As a group we analysed the different challenges they faced, the successes they had, the skills they developed, and the experiences they had which helped them learn and develop. This session was intended to reaffirm any learning and personal development amongst participants, as well as provide lessons for myself in evaluating the programme as a whole. Each participant was presented with a certificate for taking part, and we ended the session by thanking everyone for their efforts on the programme.

This represented the official end of the expedition and the 19 months of work that had gone into it. I was relieved at this point to be finished as the work involved in organising the expedition, coupled with the work involved in writing my thesis had left me feeling jaded. The expedition work involved a lot of meetings in the evening and some weekend

sessions. The relational nature of the programme also involved a lot of investment of time to be out in the community meeting different people through group sessions and one to ones. These one to ones required a lot of emotional investment too, and the time involved in maintaining these relationships for the purpose of public work reduced the time available to invest in my own personal relationships.

However, I also drew a large level of satisfaction and fulfilment from developing these relationships, and grew in many ways as a person through this, gradually feeling more and more as part of the E14 area as the expedition progressed. Indeed, the fulfilling nature of this relational work and being engaged outside of the university in local communities actually made doing the more traditional academic work even harder as I felt frustrated and at times unhappy about being stuck at my desk doing the relatively isolating work of academic writing. This was a constant personal struggle throughout my PhD, which I'm sure other academics can relate to. Yet, ultimately, being engaged in the real world provided a sense of purpose and fulfilment that I am unsure a more traditional academic project would have provided me with, and was ultimately positive for my sense of self during the PhD (add Reference on sense of purpose through PAR). Once phase two had ended I then conducted interviews with most of the participants during the spring and summer of 2016.

3.4.8 Data Collection

This thesis is attempting to reflect on the following research questions:

1. How can PAR be conducted in a pragmatic way so that it respects the experiential knowledge of communities, and the plurality of this knowledge?

2. To what extent can process pragmatism help build the power of publics to address pressing social issues and develop the capacity of citizens to engage in public work?

3. What is the role of place in facilitating this work?

4. How can universities support effective democratic renewal through institutional commitments that engage citizens in processes of collective problem-solving and provide an education for democracy?

A number of methods were used to capture data to answer these questions. Firstly, I kept a field diary to record my account of the events and progress of the expedition, including

my experiences as a researcher. The diary focusses specifically on all activity from the initial recruitment stage of phase one, to the last round of interviews conducted with participants of phase two. Diary entries were framed by the above research questions, and they represent my personal thoughts as a researcher and organiser.

In order to understand the impact of participation on my research participants I conducted semi-structured interviews with 14 participants from phase one and 10 participants from phase two to explore their motivations for participating, their experiences of the training, story-gathering and campaign work, and what they thought they learned from the whole process. These interviews took place in two rounds at the end of each phase of the project. Valentine (2005) argues that interviews allow for a more in-depth analysis of certain events and experiences as they provide a means of exploring people's ideas, feelings and opinions. In this sense, the interviews allowed me to get a better understanding of how the participants perceived the project, in their own words. Table D shows the interviewees for each phase along with an idea of the topics covered in each phase of interviews.

Table 3.4: Interviewees and Topics Covered

	Interviewees	Topics Covered
Phase One	Julie	Thoughts on politics in the UK
	Madur	Connection to E14
	Rafi	Motivations for joining the programme
	Jenny	Thoughts on training sessions and methods used
	Karen	Experience of undertaking the storytelling project
	Zaida	Thoughts on the deliberation session
	Zalika	Skills development through participation
	Giuilia	Learning about oneself and others during the
	Pam	programme
	Lebona	Thoughts on the role of universities in their local
	Arya	communities
	Sherry	
	Janice	
	Eniola	
Phase Two	Shaheed	Thoughts on politics in the UK

	Rachel	Connection to E14
	Pam	Motivations for joining the programme
	Ikram	Thoughts on training sessions and methods used
	Amit	Why specific issue was chosen
	Yamin	Experience of setting up the campaigns
	Fahim	Skills development through participation
	Shahid	Learning about oneself and others during the
	Veronica	programme
		Thoughts on the role of universities in their local
		communities

Due to the fact that I designed and facilitated the leadership programmes myself, there was the potential for participants to be guarded about what they chose to reveal about their experiences in these interviews. It is conceivable that participants may not have wanted to share their negative experiences with me for fear of offending me. This may be the case, but efforts were be made to allow for positive and negative experiences to be explored by asking challenging questions and building upon the relationships already built through the project to create an open space for communication where participants felt able to express a range of their feelings (Dunn, 2010).

To ensure that the accounts given in interviews were credible, when conducting them the tone was be kept informal and open to allow participants to express their feelings and thoughts, rather than potentially imposing answers and ideas on them through the creation of pre-set questions (Laurier, 1998). The positionality of the research in relation to the interviewees is another potential factor that could shape responses and prevent people from opening up fully.

In pragmatist terms, each interview was treated as an inter-subjective exchange that produced common truths between myself and each participant based on our respective understandings of the events of the expedition (Silverman, 2011). In this sense, the interviews reflected a process of making sense of the expedition, generating a narrative about its impact and effects between myself and the participants. The narrative presented in this thesis is based upon these interviews, as well as my own thoughts contained in the

field diary, and as such, the validity of the claims made are found in the multiple experiences and accounts provided by everyone involved.

However, given that I did not conduct interviews with every participant from phase one and two, this narrative is shaped by absences, and the experiences and thoughts of those not interviewed was not able to shape the understanding of the expedition. Such absences are due to losing contact with some participants after the programme, such as Peggy and Marcel from phase one, and to my decision not to ask those who dropped out of each programme for an interview. This decision was made as I wanted to respect their decision to leave and not appear to be 'exploiting' them for data to benefit my thesis when they did not perhaps see a benefit for them to participating in the programme: I did not feel comfortable asking this of these people. Thus, the narrative contained in this thesis must be considered partial, as it always will be.

Another source of data for the thesis is the story-book produced in phase one. As the stories within it were created by participants in conversation with E14 residents, they represent knowledge generated through a form of naturalistic inquiry, in which my role as researcher was to facilitate these stories being created, rather than creating them myself. However, given that I decided that the experiential knowledge of the community would be represented through stories, the process of inquiry was not as naturalistic as Blumer (1969) defines the term as I still had a degree of control over the process of inquiry. As such, the stories are treated as accounts of E14 communities generated to a large degree by a naturalistic process.

Finally, in order to explore community-university partnerships and their potential role to act as vehicles for meaningful civic engagement and democratic renewal (as discussed in Chapter One), I conducted semi-structured interviews with academics and university staff working in 15 different CUPs to learn more about how they operate and the potentials and barriers that exist to them taking on this mediating function in democracy. Interviewees were selected through a process of trial and error. Initial internet research to identify CUPs in the UK and USA helped generate a list of 35 institutions to contact. I then sent 'cold' emails to various staff at each one explaining the purpose of my research and inviting them to an interview in person, via phone or via Skype. I received replies from around half of these people, and I also recruited some others through introductions from these initial contacts, which resulted in 16 interviews being conducted over the

summer months of 2016 after the expedition had ended. Table 3.5 provides a list of people interviewed and their CUP, and in contrast to the other interviewees, I secured consent to name these individuals here and the text where they are cited.

Topics covered in these interviews included: the rationale behind each CUP; how they operate in practice, including the projects they support, who they work with in communities and who governs their activities; how they are funded; how they engage academics, students and communities into collective, problem-solving action; the relationship of CUPs to university management; and the benefits and challenges of CUP work to different partners. Again, these interviews provided a way of accessing the knowledge gained from the experiences of interviewees in establishing and running CUPs in a range of institutional and community contexts. These accounts inform my argument in Chapter Six, along with knowledge generated from my experience of trying to establish a CUP at my own university from September 2016-June 2017.

Table 3.5: CUP Interviewees

Name	University	Name of CUP
Rachel Pain	Durham University	Centre for Social Justice and Community Action
Emma McKenna	Queen's University Belfast	QUB Science Shop
Karl Witty	Leeds Beckett University	CommUNIty
Mhairi McVciar	Cardiff University	Community Gateway
Heather Campbell	Sheffield University	N/A
Jenny Pearce	University College London	Centre for Community Engagement (No longer in existence
Jenny Lamb	University of Central Lancashire	Centre for Volunteering and Community Leadership
Bethan Prosser	University of Brighton	Community University Partnership Programme
Mark Charlton	De Montfort University	Square Mile Programme
Paul Chatterton	University of Leeds	Leeds Co-Production Lab/ Leeds City Lab

Ron Glass	University of California	Centre for Collaborative Research for and Equitable California
Caitlin Cahill	City University New York	The Public Science Project
Mary Brydon-Miller	University of Cincinnati	Action Research Centre
Bob Brown	Michigan State University	University Outreach and Engagement
Joann Weeks	University of Pennsylvania	The Netter Centre
Sarah Munro	University of Utah	University Neighbourhood Partners

3.4.9 Data Analysis

Crang and Cook (2007) describe data analysis as a creative, active process where knowledge is produced. Indeed, from a pragmatic perspective, data analysis is part of the process of truth-creation, rather than truth-revelation, and as such it is about telling a specific story to achieve certain goals. Given this, the author of this story has the power to represent events in certain ways and not others. Indeed, as the author of my thesis, I have the ability to tell a story about the E14 expedition that meets my own professional goals of advancing this particular approach to research over others. This poses the risk of the story I tell not accurately reflecting the experiences of my research participants as my own interests may shape my interpretation of the data (England, 1994). To address this, I have tried to ensure that my research was credible and that the story I tell is grounded in evidence to back it up, as well as tested against evidence that contests my claims (Baxter and Eyles, 1997). This involved reading the transcripts of each interview and coding them with themes drawn from the literature, as well as themes that appeared to emerge from the data. I made notes on each transcript, seeking to find commonalities between them, as well as instances of difference, in order to do justice to what I was told in the interviews.

In relation to the interviews with CUP practitioners, the data analysis was shaped by my own interpretation and interests, linked to the themes of this thesis. However, I produced a research report for the Mile End Institute at Queen Mary University as part of this analysis and circulated it to all interviewees prior to it being published. Each interviewee had the chance to respond to the claims I made in the report and contest points that they

felt did not represent their sentiments or experiences adequately. This feedback shaped the development of the report and my data analysis for this thesis. In the following chapters I present my analysis of the data, beginning with a discussion on place, pluralism and power in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four: Place, Pluralism and Power

4.1 Introduction

The expedition sought to bring together a diverse group of citizens in order to identify shared issues and work to address these, helping to build their power to make change and develop people's skills and capacity to engage in public work. This was about seeing how the university can play a role as a mediating institution of democracy to engage citizens in public work by facilitating a process whereby they could form publics around their self-defined issues and goals. The expedition also intended to respect the plurality of experiences, beliefs and identities amongst the citizenry by seeking to conduct this process in a pluralistic manner where all citizens, regardless of belief, could gain the potential benefits from taking part.

The first stage of this process, phase one, was to start building relationships between a diverse group of people, using the shared place of E14 to support this. The second stage was to build upon these relationships to facilitate teams of residents to develop solutions to their most pressing issues and act on the basis of their ideas. This chapter explores the lessons from the whole process of the expedition, focussing specifically on the value of community and relationships as a pre-cursor to public work; the challenges of respecting pluralism; and the difficulties of building citizen power to effect change around complex social issues.

4.2 Place as a Catalyst for Building Community

Outlined in Chapter Two, Dewey (1927), argued that in order to engage citizens more fully in democratic politics, America needed to replace the 'great society' with the 'great community'. For him, citizens could not form publics to address their shared issues when there was a lack of connection and association between people. As such, in order to lay the foundations for citizen-led, problem-solving action there was a need to build relationships and community first.

Indeed, as discussed in Chapter Two, publics form 'parasitically' from pre-existing social ties and connections where a degree of familiarity and shared social identity exists amongst citizens (Barnett, 2008). Recognising this, phase one of the expedition sought to tap into shared residence and experience of place as a resource to help build and strengthen relationships between participants and those in their wider social

networks, as a precursor for problem-solving action in phase two. What follows in this section is a discussion of this process and how place played an important role in facilitating the development of community.

4.2.1 The Desire for Community and Community Activism

Many participants on phase one of the expedition explained that their reasons for joining the programme were to build stronger relationships with people in their local area, and develop more community. When asked about their reasons for joining phase one of the expedition, three interviewees gave the following responses:

> Even if it was just an opportunity to meet up with other people, it was going to be a good thing. So, I jumped on the opportunity.
>
> (Eniola)
>
> I got involved in the E14 project because I thought it was a brilliant project, a great way to connect with people and get to know people as well.
>
> (Sherry)
>
> Well I just thought that it's nice to have some sort of collective thing going on where everybody's working as a team to produce something that is actually quite beneficial to society.
>
> (Zaida)

Eniola, Sherry and Zaida all explained their motivations for joining the first leadership training programme in terms of wanting to connect with other people in their area. This was a common theme amongst all interviewees, who deemed the opportunity to meet new people as one of the key benefits of taking part in the program. These three statements illustrate the existence of a desire amongst people to get to know their neighbours, build new local relationships and be part of collective action.

This shared desire points towards a key lesson learned from the expedition that a lack of community and local social ties is a major factor in preventing citizens from engaging in politics and articulating their experiences and issues to political elites. This point is further illustrated by Janice who said the following when asked her opinions on people's participation in politics in the UK:

I just really feel that people let it go, and we're governed by an elite,

you know, who makes decisions for us and if people want to change

they've got to be involved. But I think a lot of people just haven't got a

clue how to be involved and all of the civic networks and opportunities

for people to get involved in things, like trade unions, associations,

community groups, and to a certain extent, churches and mosques- lots

of those things are disappearing and people don't connect with them

anymore.

(Janice)

For Janice, people in her community have lost their tradition of self-organising and activism. She links this to the decline of mediating institutions of democracy such as trade unions and community groups, and to a wider loss of local communal relationships themselves. As such, the current distance between political elites and ordinary citizens in the UK was not seen as a new or recent phenomenon by the interviewees, with many expressing the idea that this is the way it has always been. Yet what was new for some is that, unlike in the past, people are less able to find ways to make their voice heard outside of the formal channels, such as political parties and elections, and as Janice articulates, there was a sense amongst interviewees that citizens have lost the ability to organise themselves to make their voice heard.

This view was also expressed by Arya who located the decline in community activism in the loss of face-to-face, 'physical' interaction and discussion about shared issues amongst people in her neighbourhood:

In the old days it was more physical, more verbal, and when you do it

like personal, one to one, face to face, you can see that person's

physical- what they're saying, what they're feeling- it comes across.

Whereas on email, you just see the writing, and if that person's good at

using the right words, that's good but not everybody's good at doing

that.

(Arya)

Again, Arya suggests that the reason ordinary people have become distanced and disaffected from politics in the UK is because they have become increasingly

disconnected from their neighbours, making getting involved in collective problem-solving action seem daunting and difficult. In this part of east London, it is common sense that political elites are not necessarily best placed to represent and act on the interests and will of local people. Yet in the past, community activism and self-organising was much stronger. As discussed in Chapter Three, the E14 area has a strong tradition of bottom-up organising to articulate the voice of local citizens. This tradition is rooted in the dockers' trade union movement around the turn of the 19th Century, the popular support and participation in local government by residents during George Lansbury's mayoralty of Poplar Borough Council, and more recently with the protests against the development of Canary Wharf. But today there is a feeling that the abilities of the community to organise itself to articulate and pursue its interests have been lost.

As discussed in previous chapters, the reasons for this are many, including the gradual centralisation of state power away from local authorities and into central government within the UK, as well as the professionalization of politics and wider social and economic changes. However, the thoughts of the expedition participants suggest that the gradual loss of community and local social relationships is another influential factor at play. If political elites have always made decisions that are at odds with the experiences and beliefs of ordinary citizens, then what is novel today is the lack of collective response to this disconnect by citizens. This either means that people have become more apathetic than ever before, which given the desire of participants to engage with the expedition I find hard to accept, or that the conditions for publics to emerge are lacking. I am arguing that it is the latter, and that the evidence from the E14 expedition highlights the problems caused by a lack of local, place-based community.

Following the discussion about the importance of place-based sociality and community as a pre-cursor to public formation in Chapter Two, I want to argue that in the past citizens in E14 were more effective at organising around their interests to articulate them to political elites, because local communal ties, solidarity and acts of sociality were perhaps stronger, deeper, and had different meaning than they do today. This helped create stronger local relationships between citizens through which shared issues could be more easily identified and publics formed around them, laying the foundations for political action as seen in the Dockers strikes and community mobilisation around Poplar Borough Council and the rates rebellion. Yet for various reasons the sociality of the present is not enabling this type of public work.

This lack of sociality and weaker community was partly considered before the expedition began, with phase one being designed to develop relationships between participants that already existed. However, reflecting on the interview data has highlighted just how much people feel community is lacking, and just how important this is for facilitating public work. What follows is a discussion of this and the role that place-based interventions to strengthen sociality can play in remedying this.

4.2.2 Building Community through One-to-Ones and Sharing Stories

Phase one of the expedition helped to build new and strengthen existing relationships between citizens in the E14 area. It helped do this by providing participants with a platform to have one to one conversations with their neighbours and colleagues, involving the sharing of stories, and through developing new relationships between expedition participants themselves. Illustrating the first point, my interview with Sherry revealed the power of sharing stories in deepening her relationship with her neighbour Fred:

> **Sherry:** The program gave me a reason to *approach* people, and an excuse to approach people, so I kind of had a cover story as to why I wanted to sit down and talk to them.

> **Liam**: So, were there people you had in mind, whose stories you wanted to find out, when you joined the program?

> **Sherry:** Yeah, Fred- the person who I actually interviewed. Because, actually I wanted to be able to sit down and have a *conversation* with him, and there was no way I could just go and knock on Fred's door and say, 'Hi Fred, can I have a chat with you?'-

> **Liam**: Why not?

> **Sherry:** Because it would have just been weird to do that, and he would have been suspicious of my motives, and it would have been a really awkward conversation. But having E14 Stories, gave me a reason to knock on his door, it gave me a cover story. It gave me, not an excuse, but there was a context as to why I wanted to have a chat with him, so yeah.

Liam: I completely understand that. So, did you know Fred well, before?

Sherry: I knew him, and I knew him well enough to go on some of his marches that he organised, some of his demonstrations, and go to meetings. But I didn't know him well enough to sit down and ask him personal questions.

Liam: And how did you find that, when you did sit down with Fred and asked him?

Sherry: He completely opened up to me, and I found out things about him that I didn't even want to tell in the story because they're highly personal. And I now see him in a completely different way. I've got a completely different idea of him now.

Liam: Was that common with some of the other people you spoke to as well?

Sherry: Yeah it was actually. Yeah, they told me things that I didn't know. But I'll tell you, for the benefit of this, I'll tell you that Fred- I wasn't even aware- that he suffers from terrible depression, to the point he's been hospitalised because of his depression. And that's all the time I've known him. So, this guy, who, you know, is suicidal 90% of the time is doing all this great stuff for the community. I had *no* idea. I had no idea that he was working through that level of sadness and mental illness, but he does all that great work.

Liam: And did having the one-to-ones with people like Fred, and you spoke to Lati as well. Did they change your relationship with those people?

Sherry: Yeah it did, it's brought me closer to them in a way, yeah.

Liam: And why do you think that's happened?

Sherry: Because they've shared very personal stuff with me, so, in a sense, they opened themselves up and were vulnerable, they exposed

their vulnerabilities to me. Which makes it safe for me to expose my vulnerabilities to them. It's a reciprocal thing isn't it?

Liam: Yeah, it's easier to connect. It's risky as well.

Sherry: It is, it is. I think we trust each other more. There's a trust there that wasn't there before. Before, it was just a knowing of one another, now there's a level of trust there.

Sherry explains how having a one-to-one with Fred and finding out some of his story has allowed her to feel closer to him. The whole process of sharing and revealing parts of themselves helped to build a level of intimacy between the two neighbours, which has deepened their sense of connection and engendered a level of trust and respect. Explaining his concept of social capital, Putnam (2000) argues that trust plays a key role in building community and facilitating collective action. Usually trust takes a long time to build and is difficult to develop instantly. However, the story-telling project allowed people like Sherry to develop a level of trust with people they already knew by engendering intimacy. As such, the one-to-ones, made possible through the 'vehicle' of the story-telling project, contributed towards developing and strengthening relationships and social capital in E14, which act as a potential power resource for citizens to tap into to address shared problems in the future.

A similar process occurred for Eniola, who was able to strengthen her relationship with Hadi, the handyman at her church and a local neighbour:

Liam: Whose stories did you listen to as part of this project?

Eniola: Hadi! I used to see him pick up his daughter from school, I used to see him go to church, but I never knew that he does all that. After speaking to him, that was when I *knew* him, because I've just seen him in passing and I didn't really know him, but after I interviewed him I started looking out for more.

Liam: And has having conversations with people like Hadi and Peter changed your relationship with them at all?

Eniola: It has, you know, a little bit with Hadi. Peter is a very busy person so once in a while I just say hello to him. But Hadi sees me, and

he was SO happy- he was telling everyone that I am a journalist, and he was surprised that we were making a book…So we have been in relationship now and when I see him it's not just like *that* person anymore [the anonymous person in passing]. We stop each other, and we say hello. And we spoke last about him going away on holiday with his family in the summer. So, I think I have a good relationship with him *through* this.

Again, Eniola was able to use the platform of the story-telling project to get to know someone who she was in contact with already and develop stronger relationships with them. Wills (2016a) argues that most people are already 'in community' with others owing to their everyday relationships with them, and that this highlights the importance of starting from pre-existing relationships, rather than seeking to create new ones, if we are to engage people in acting to do things together. The expedition did this with participants, tapping into pre-existing relations of sociality and strengthening and deepening pre-existing place-based relationships, no matter how weak or strong, in order to develop the conditions for further sociality, relationship-building and potential public work.

Moreover, the fact that the story-telling project was place-based meant that Eniola has been able to maintain this relationship beyond the duration of the programme as she sees Hadi out and about in their shared locale. This means they regularly bump into each other and can maintain and develop their bond through every day, face-to-face interaction. As such, whilst the expedition provided opportunities for local citizens to develop new or strengthen existing relationships, it is shared place, local proximity and the microsociality that it enables which allows these relationships to be maintained, thus helping build the capacity of E14 communities to address shared problems not just during the project but in the future too. As such, place acts as a 'container' of sociality and relationships that has the potential to harness further acts, affects and impacts from the original acts of one-to-ones and story-telling initiated by the expedition, in order to build stronger and deeper relationships (Studdert, 2016).

As well as develop existing relationships, the expedition also helped to create new local relationships, which a shared place has ensured can be maintained, as Eniola explains about her new relationship with fellow programme participant, Denise:

She's been fantastic, you know, she's been helping me with my applications, when I do my CV I give it to her and she proof reads and edits whatever needs editing, and she's always giving me- we met at Canary Wharf, you know after the program, we met at Canary Wharf for coffee and we stayed together for 2 hours just discussing and laughing in the library. And somebody had to tell us that 'this is a library!' [laughs]… Because we can actually call each other up and say, 'what's happening?' If I had not come on this course, I don't think I'd have ever met someone like Denise. It was after the programme that I saw her at TESCO's and she didn't actually have her phone on her then and I didn't have mine as well, so I emailed her my number, she emailed me back and after a few days we had arranged to meet.

(Eniola)

Eniola and Denise met on the programme but did not exchange numbers at the time. However, as they both live in the area they happened to meet in the local supermarket by chance. This allowed them to reconnect and start building a friendship. Again, the role of place as a shared locale was crucial in making this happen and ensuring that the expedition had a legacy of relationship-building. This highlights the importance of seemingly mundane sites, such as supermarkets, the street, parks etc. which act as 'spaces of appearance', literally where we can appear to others and them to us (Studdert, 2016), where sociality can be performed.

Yet, even when friendships or deep connections are not formed, the expedition also helped to deepen local sociality in other ways, as Janice explains:

Liam: Have you kept in contact with any of the people from the group?

Janice: Not overtly or obviously, but obviously I know where they are now, so I feel like I've got that resource, you know that I've been through a thing with them. And to be honest I haven't read all the book either, and I know there's people in there- I've met other people who are in the book that I didn't know were getting interviewed for the book, and they're involved, so it's knitted together- there are people like Sister Christine, who vaguely I know her because I've met her at meetings and we've connected with her in the past, but I know more of

her story because it's written down in that book now. Someone's told

her story, so I know a bit more of the background.

For Janice, the story-telling project was valuable in helping to 'knit together' existing contacts and social ties and strengthen the network of active citizens in the E14 area. This has not happened through one to ones between herself and people like Sister Christine, but by virtue of learning about Sister Christine's story through the book, Janice feels slightly more connected to her as she has a greater sense of who Sister Christine is and what she is about. Janice recognises Sister Christine from the book, and the story helped build on this recognition to strengthen her sense of connection to her.

This illustrates how the expedition and the knowledge it helped produce about the local area can shape future sociality. Janice now has a better understanding of Sister Christine through reading the E14 book. This understanding might help to break down a barrier between the two of them when they next meet and perhaps give Janice a reason to spark up a deeper conversation with Sister Christine, which could further help to develop their relationship. Indeed, knowing more about someone's story helps us to feel closer to them, as if we know them. This closeness is important as it alters the type of interactions we feel able to have with others, enabling us to transform weak ties into stronger ties over time (Henning and Lieberg, 1996).

The first phase of expedition was able to achieve these effects in a relatively short time-frame, with a handful of people stretched over a relatively large geographical area. Indeed, in hindsight E14 was probably too large an area for this project to have the best effects it could have as 'E14' contains a number of places, ranging from significant neighbourhoods such as Poplar and the Isle of Dogs, to smaller housing estates such as Aberfeldy in Poplar which many residents deem to be a separate 'village' or 'island' in itself within the E14 area. Yet, if the story-telling project was carried out over a longer time frame and in a smaller geographical area, such as a single housing estate, then it is possible to imagine the effects it could have in really strengthening local social relationships, transforming the local field of sociality by increasing conviviality and familiarity amongst residents, and deepening the range and content communication amongst people. A sustained effort to catalyse this could have the effect of laying a strong foundation for public work and the convening of publics around shared issues. However, alongside developing relationships through sharing stories and one-to-ones,

phase one of the expedition also attempted to create a narrative of E14 in order to coalesce relationships between diverse communities in order to enable collective, problem-solving action. The effects of this are discussed below.

4.2.3 Building Relationships through a Shared Story and Collective Identity

Following Mead and Studdert, the expedition sought to lay the basis for collective action amongst participants and E14 residents by creating a narrative that could align courses of action, and generate a 'meaning-in-common' that resonated with local people. The E14 book contained this narrative, which sought to weave together individual stories illustrating the agency of local residents into a story of E14 as a whole. Despite claims that the relevance of place-based community and identity is becoming increasingly irrelevant for social life and political activity (Urry, 1999; Vertovec, 2007; Amin, 2004), following Massey (1994), this was an attempt to construct a shared political identity by tapping into the meanings and symbols associated with specific places. As such, phase one of the expedition was an attempt to construct an imaginary neighbourhood of 'E14' to bring diverse communities together for collective political action (Martin, 2003).

Studdert (2016) argues that the creation of meanings-in-common necessarily occurs within a pre-existing common world. It is this world which is the 'common object' around which people can communicate and develop 'truths' for (Mead, 1934). For the expedition, the common world or object was the E14 postcode, and its constituent elements, including: buildings, location, speech habits, economic realities, customs, histories and affects etc. (Studdert, 2016; Walkerdine, 2016). These elements constitute various 'resources of place' around and through which a common narrative can be produced.

The first of these resources that the narrative of E14 was based around was shared, place-based issues. Paasi (2003) explains how place-based narratives help build relationships by allowing people to identify themselves as having shared interests with strangers who also inhabit that place. Realising shared interests involved identifying issues that people have in common by virtue of them living in the same location. The below comments from Eniola illustrate how the expedition provided a vehicle for participants to identify shared issues and begin to see themselves as having shared interests with strangers:

Liam: Ok, so we did the story part, and you know the third session when we come together as a group to talk about 'what is E14'- how did you find that? You were talking about the issue of segregated communities…

Eniola: Yeah, someone mentioned it, I think it came about through Canary Wharf, and how most people that live in E14 don't get an opportunity to work in Canary Wharf. They were talking about the people that work in Canary Wharf, they have these big coaches that take them back out. The only people that live in E14- they work in the cafes, the restaurants and the stores. So that was how the class thing came about so I said 'yeah, I know about that problem in my area', so I was able to contribute my own insight.

Liam: And have you- do you speak about that issue with other people from the area normally?

Eniola: I've never had any course to say that. You know, people just say 'Hello!', you know everything is 'Morning!' and bright and lovely so I think we don't really have time to- issues like that are issues that take deep conversations, and you have to know somebody to be able to say 'Oh, I feel like there is a kind of segregation'. So, I've not really had a platform to discuss things like that. And I know it, I already know it- I feel it, I see it around me. So, when the discussion came about, that was a good opportunity for me to add my own observations as well.

Eniola was able to relate her own personal concerns to those of others in the group through a discussion of local issues during session three of phase one. This helped generate an understanding of shared interests, which shaped the narrative contained within the story book. This sense of shared interests and common issues served to increase Eniola's passion for making change in E14, as illustrated by comments made later on in her interview:

Yeah, you know after this project, I feel more, more as a part of the community. I feel like I am more into E14, because when I talk about E14 now, I talk about it with a lot of pride. You I don't think about it like an area I'm *in*, but I talk about it like *my* area. These streets belong

> to E14 and we are passionate about this area. So yeah now I talk about
> E14 as if, yeah, this belongs to us! Let's fight and make it alright, you
> know?
>
> (Eniola)

This highlights how Eniola has grown more connected to E14 as a 'place'[10], seeing herself not merely as somebody who lives in it, but as someone who owns it. This sense of connection and ownership has resulted in Eniola re-conceptualising herself as part of an E14 community, with a desire to work with others in the area to fight for change. As such, the E14 narrative has potentially helped to lay the foundations for Eniola to develop more local relationships.

In addition to shared issues, other 'resources of place' that the narrative of E14 was structured around included elements of the area's past. As this comment from Madur during the deliberation exercise in session three illustrates, participants drew upon local historical figures and events to help create the narrative of E14:

> So, if we look at the history of the E14 area, George Lansbury was
> someone who changed the social circumstances of the area. If you look
> on the Internet you'll find all sorts of stuff about him, for good reason,
> and he stood out as a politician who broke away from his party in the
> 1930s…

As **Massey (1995)** argues, traditions and constructs of the past are strong elements of place that can be used to inform modern-day identities and political action. For Madur, George Lansbury, who was elected Mayor of Poplar almost 100 years ago, still represents something important for E14 residents today. I asked Madur why he thought this in our interview, and he responded as follows:

> The history of E14 is a working class area, we all know it, the docks
> and that. It's always been a working class area: the paddy power, from
> Ireland, came to build the roads and in other industries, then the
> Huguenots, then the Jews, then the Afro-Caribbean's, and

---

[10] However, as mentioned in Chapter Three, the expedition served to highlight the fact that E14 was not a significant place to everyone. Smaller neighbourhoods such as Poplar and Limehouse are more meaningful as places to most residents in E14, and E14 is more an administrative space.

simultaneously the Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. The Bangladeshis arrived here as Lascars in merchant navy ships. The existing Jewish and Irish communities lived there harmoniously. And they were both working class communities that had an agenda: the minimum wage, for example, came from Tower Hamlets, Toynbee Hall was where William Beveridge created his idea for the Welfare State in the 50s and before that, obviously, George Lansbury, was involved in the emancipation of poor people and making sure that working class people got the right wages. So obviously he represented working class populations and he is still important here because we are from working class backgrounds. Every time there is a cut, it affects us. Every time there is a tax, it affects us.

(Madur)

Academics tend to worry about the construction of place-based identities that draw heavily on tradition and notions of the past, characterising these as backward looking, closed-minded and reactionary (Harvey, 1989; Massey 1995; Amin, 2004). Yet for Madur, traditions from the past, represented by the significant symbol of George Lansbury helped him communicate a set of values and principles around an activist working class identity during the story-telling project.

Indeed, Madur's framing of George Lansbury within the context of waves of migration to the area and the contributions that these working class communities made, seems to avoid the supposed dangers of appealing to a place's past and creating a 'place-bound' political identity. Instead, he appears to be recognising the fact that E14 as a place was constructed through relations and activities that extended beyond its geographical boundaries, constituting Massey's (1994) progressive place-based identity. However, comments made by Madur later on in our interview suggest otherwise:

Yeah, people have been living here harmoniously although there have been lots of divisions since the LDDC came in and took over the land, building lots of flats and the special enterprise zone, but there has been very little done for poorer people and people in social housing…The LDDC, when it developed the area, they brought in all the yuppies. So, there's a division. For example, one of my relatives, who works in an

IT company, he lives in the posh flats, and on the other side of the road
I have another cousin who lives in social housing, in a 2 bedroom,
overcrowded, so there's these sorts of divisions. The tragedy is that the
land used to belong to Tower Hamlets council and now it's been
privately sold.

(Madur)

Madur's comments about the LDDC 'taking over' the land in E14 and bringing in 'all the
yuppies' can be seen to reflect more of a place-bound political identity and set of values
that construct such 'outsiders' as not welcome in the area. The difference for Madur
seems to be that those entering E14 since the 1980s have been middle class outsiders, as
opposed to the more 'worthy' outsiders of immigrant workers in previous decades. My
point here is not to pass judgement on Madur's ideas on who is and who isn't welcome in
E14, but to highlight, from a pragmatic point of view, how place's pasts provide
resources and symbols which can be used to help construct narratives that enable political
action in the present. For Madur, this might be the 'heroes' of George Lansbury and
working class migrants or equally the 'villains' of the LDDC and the yuppies.

Indeed, another element of places' pasts that can be used to construct narratives to enable
collective political action are certain affects or characteristics that get passed down
through generations. Walkerdine (2016: 700) argues that communities have 'affective
histories' whereby certain affects or attitudes are transmitted across generations to shape
people's embodied responses to present day situations, resulting in our 'present
experiences [being] shaped by the ghosts of past experiences'. This legacy of the past in
the present shapes meanings-in-common today. During the expedition, one of such affect
identified by the group was a 'toughness' or 'resilience', as Janice explains:

I think there are loads of local heroes and they're the people who have
kept going. The resilience of the people who have come here from
different parts of the world, you know, people who came were
incredibly resilient and the people who were here already were
incredibly resilient because of the things that had happened to them
already. When I first started at the school, I was just blown away by
how much heart there was here. It can be hard here, but people are
tough - I think 75% of the students are eligible for free school meals,

which is a really high indicator that people are living in quite a lot of poverty- but I think it's not a poverty of spirit. There is a really positive spirit here.

(Janice)

Whilst Walkerdine (2016) identifies local affective histories as potentially prohibitive for engaging people in collective action, on the expedition, the toughness identified by the group was used to help enable such action. Indeed, the front-cover of the story book displays a picture of a statue of Terry Baldock in Langdon Park in Poplar. Teddy was known locally as the 'Pride of Poplar' for winning a world championship in boxing during the 1920s, and his image was selected as a representation of the area's sense of toughness and resilience, portrayed in its positive, rather than negative, sense as a symbol to inspire political action.

A final element of place which enabled relationships to be developed and micro-sociality to be enhanced was its function as a shared locale for everyday life, and the existence of significant local sites amongst participants (Forest and Kearns, 2001). For example, a memorial garden on an estate on the Isle of Dogs, combined with a story created on the project, helped to forge a greater sense of closeness between Madur, and his neighbours Fred and Sherry. Madur describes the effects of reading Sherry's story about Fred Quatromini:

> **Madur**: After reading the book, I learned that Sherry was involved in the memorial garden at the end of Mellish Street towards Westferry Road, by the bus stop, and it's always been one of my favourite places here; it's always so quiet and peaceful. And last year on Armistice Day, I was one of the people who laid a reef of poppies there from the Docklands Community Organisation. So, Sherry was involved in creating this garden, and I didn't know that. It's really nice, like the Chelsea flower show, it's beautiful.
>
> **Liam**: So, does knowing the story behind the memorial garden change the way you see the place?
>
> **Madur**: Yes. To be honest I can see that there is a parallel experience. During the 1980s, Fred and Sherry, through the Barkantine

Management Team, got involved in changing the local area. They had a
concern that the LDDC was building huge flats for yuppies and rich
people but not for them, so they initiated this project, with the memorial
garden. And this is similar to us in 1993, but in this case, it was the
Bangladeshi and Muslim community creating a place for us to practice
our own cultural activities, so I can see the parallel
experience…through Sherry's conversations and her stories, I can see
there is a parallel experience: the struggle to find a place in the area.

Madur and Sherry live on the same estate, and Madur reported that he recognised Sherry
at the start of the project from the local area, but had never spoken with her before. Yet, a
story about a particular local site, the memorial garden, helped to forge a closer sense of
connection between himself and Sherry. Massey (1994) argues that place is important in
the formation of personal and shared identities, with such identities resting upon the
meanings and symbols associated with specific places. It is clear that both Madur and
Sherry's identities are associated with the memorial garden on their estate (for Madur, it
is one of his 'favourite places'). Thus, given this common site around which both of their
individual identities are formed, it is easy to see how reading Sherry's story about Fred
has increased Madur's sense of closeness and relation to her. The common site of the
garden allowed Sherry's story to resonate with Madur, leading him to view their
experiences not as separate things, but as linked. In this sense, shared place acts as a
shared experience around which individual identities can come together to form a sense
of collective, local identity.

Thus places, and people's sense of belonging and connection to them, provide a fertile
lens through which to engage people in collective, problem-solving action. They
'contain' a range of resources that can be tapped into to build relationships, narratives
and shared identities that enable collective action. This illustrates the argument made by
Tomaney (2013) about the value of place-based attachments for developing virtues of
commitment, loyalty and civility that are essential for public work. For Tomaney, the fact
that people dwell in places means that they engage in the practice of belonging, the
process of 'planting' oneself in an area. Phase one of the expedition was successful in
tapping into these attachments amongst participants and in turn this contributed towards a
deepening of belonging and sense of commitment to the area. Yet, despite this success,
phase one of the expedition was also challenged by the context of extreme social

diversity and pluralism in the area. It is to this pluralism and the difficulties of managing it that I now turn.

4.3 The Problem with Pluralism

The E14 expedition set out to be pluralistic in its approach to issue identification and problem-solving. Seeking to explore a model of engaged research and inquiry that was not pre-committed to any specific identities or communities, the expedition used the lens of place to attempt to work with a diverse group of citizens, from a range of communities and backgrounds to identify shared issues and develop solutions. In doing this, the expedition sought to reduce the power of the academic to select which people and issues could be addressed through inquiry, and open up the process to those whose worldviews and political interests do not necessarily align with those of the academic. In order to explore the effectiveness of the expedition in operationalizing this commitment to the principle of pluralism and to draw lessons for future work, this section focuses on the thoughts and experiences of four participants from phase one of the project, all involved in creating 'the story' of E14: Karren, Rafi, Sherry and Monica.

Phase one of the expedition worked with a diverse group of men and women who had as many as 11 different nationalities; Muslim, Christian and Jewish faiths, as well as no faith; an age range of 16-69; and people with different sexual identities. In this sense, by recruiting participants through the lens of place, rather than other aspects of individual or group identity (such as age, religion, or gender) the expedition gathered together a group representing the plurality of experiences and beliefs contained within this postcode.

Yet gathering together a diverse group does not respect the principle of pluralism alone, and the next test of the expedition was to allow each person to be able to freely express their beliefs and experiences. The following is an excerpt of the transcript from the hour-long deliberation discussion by one of the groups of participants from the third training session of phase one:

> **Sherry:** Your original question was- how do people feel about cohesion in the area? [to Liam]. And I just wanted to share with you. I think cohesion is pretty good when the chips are down. But, I'm obliged to put a Mezuzah on my door, it's part of my Jewish face. I've removed my Mezuzah because I want to hide from people, I don't want my neighbours to know-

Karren: - Why? Because of everything that's going on in the world?

Sherry: Yes, and I think blaming me for what's happening in Israel is the same as me blaming someone for what's happening in Syria; we have absolutely no control over it at all-

Rafi: -Sherry, sorry to disturb you, but you know last time we were here, what I have realised, Liam is doing Geography, yes? Look around us, look around the room, what do you see? I'm from Bangladesh, she is from Iraq, British? This is geography. If you look at us this is true geography. If we, all of us, from different parts of the world can get together and discuss these issues, we're not the one's creating this, there's something else. So, we have to- you know, me wearing this hat is not to provoke you, you putting a Mezuzah on your door, is not to provoke anyone.

Sherry: Sure, but what I wanted to say is that I've started to feel, as a result of having dialogue with you, and our other colleague other there [Madur], more comfortable and I want this dialogue to continue, I want us to keep talking after this, because I'm starting to feel that maybe it is ok to put my mezuzah on my door. Maybe because I was feeling isolated from the other spiritual people in my community, like yourselves, I think I wasn't comfortable to do that. And what I want to say is, I want this conversation to continue.

Rafi: Ok, let me tell you a story. I started wearing a hat from quite an early age, I wore it to school, college, I didn't put it down. Once, as an adult, there were two Turkish men, I was in Chrisp Street, and these two Turkish men, on a Friday and I was actually going to work. And we have Friday prayer, and these two approached me, just by looking at my hat. And they said, do you know where the local mosque is? And I looked at them, and Turkish people, they look just like English people, if you don't mix with them then you think they're English. And I thought 'What do they want with a mosque?'[laughs]

Sherry: BNP!

Karren: - Now, I'm going to pull you up on something [to Rafi]- you just made a judgement about somebody-

Rafi: -Yes, I know!

Karren: So, you're just as guilty as everybody else

Rafi: I know, and that was the past, but I've changed. But I realised that by wearing that hat, I let two men go to the mosque, and that's an achievement, maybe other people won't see that, but I have let two people go to the mosque and do their prayers. If they didn't see me, then they might not have gone.

Liam: - Can I just stop you there, and to play devil's advocate. Well, actually it's not devil's advocate. You talk about visibility and being able to express your culture in the area. From my experience, so I have a boyfriend, if I'm visible in Tower Hamlets, holding hands, I have received homophobic abuse, one of those was on Burdett Road, E14. So, I just wanted to share that with you. There's still battles to be won I think for different communities and I didn't want that to go unnoticed. But they were just two occasions and generally I feel quite accepted in the area, and I think an achievement of E14 is the ability to have that diversity and get along quite nicely with that.

Rafi: - And community cohesion needs to come to a tolerance, and we are not tolerant enough. You know, I was talking to Sotez yesterday about what is good and what is bad. What do we understand? How do we define good? How do we define evil? To me something is good and to her it could be evil, and vice versa, how do we find this, look at it, and take lessons from that? For you it's holding your boyfriend's hand on the street, to me it's 'Oh my God!' [angry]. To you, it's natural, it's normal but am I tolerant towards you? Is that evil? Is it wrong? Should it be wrong?

Pam: I think what evil is, is what causes harm to somebody, so if something doesn't harm somebody else, why should it effect you. If it's hurting you, then you should have a reason to object, but if it doesn't

hurt you, then it should be tolerated and accepted. Because it's not a bad thing

Sherry: And the same text that told us that was evil, also told us that eating shellfish was evil. So, if you think that's evil, then you need to stop eating shellfish as well. We need to do a whole load of other things: don't mix your meat and your milk, don't kill animals in a particular way. If we're going to use religion to say that homosexuality is evil, then by virtue we are hypocrites ourselves.

Pam: My granddaughter, when she was 18, realised she was gay, and she came up to me and went 'Nanny, I'm gay'. And I said. 'Ok, do I stop loving you? Does it make a difference?'

Peggy: I've got two mates that are gay, and when I first met her she didn't tell me the first time I met her, she told me three months later, and she said to me 'Oh, Peggy, I'm gay', and I said, 'So what you want me to do about?!?', I said, 'Listen, this is my body, this is yours, hold on to your own', that's it, you have to define how you are, and I could not turn around and say to her 'I don't wanna be your friend, because of that', you know, and I said to her, 'you're still my friend', and we've been friends for nearly twenty years now, and we're still friends.

Monica: Erm, can I just say something on this please. I actually understand what you said, because when I had my first girlfriend my mum was really [starts crying]

Karren: [consoling] We love you. *We* love you.

Sherry: That's ok, but breathe, because I want to hear what you've got to say. No one say anything until she's said what she wants to say.

Monica: [Through tears] She's Christian so, she probably doesn't really accept gay people…. So, when she found out she was sure that it was just a moment, but right now every time I find someone attractive in the street or if I have another girlfriend, I won't be able to tell my mum, because I know she would never accept me because it is a sin. So,

it's probably what you and Peggy said, everyone in your stories got
accepted, and I kind of wish that would happen to me.

The above excerpt is helpful in illustrating a number of points about how to respect pluralism in PAR. Firstly, I would argue that the expedition had some success in allowing people from different social worlds to come together to discuss their differences and express their beliefs in a respectful and open environment. Following from the discussion of Dewey's theory of transaction between body-minds in Chapter Two, it can be argued that Sherry's concerns about what her Muslim neighbours would think of her Mezuzah arose through her everyday transactions with them. Bridge and Watson (2011) argue that bodies and their appearance are important in transactions because they allow forms of pre-discursive communication based on the various meanings inscribed on them. Perhaps, Sherry's transactions with her neighbours were dominated by prediscursive forms of communication rather than dialogue, which meant that Sherry's concerns about what her neighbours *might* think about her religion were not able to be challenged by what people like Rafi (a Muslim man who lives a 10-minute walk from Sherry's flat in Millwall) actually did think about her. In this sense, the prediscurvie communication between inscribed bodies foreclosed dialogue and resulted in Sherry believing that her neighbours would not approve of her religious expression.

However, the story-telling project helped to change this understanding by providing a platform and reason for Sherry and Rafi to talk to each other. Sherry was able to articulate her worry that she is not welcome to express her Jewish faith in her neighbourhood due to fears over what her Muslim neighbours would think of her. Rafi then felt comfortable enough to challenge Sherry's worry by putting forwards his own opinion on the matter: that, like himself, she should be able to express her faith publicly in their community. Arguably, this reflects how bringing a diverse group together to facilitate a conversation about their shared place allowed for stereotypes to be challenged: Sherry's opinion of what her Muslim neighbours would think about her Mezuzah was challenged through speaking to Rafi. As such, the story-telling project appears to have had some success in facilitating dialogue and the creation of new understandings for those involved.

The second point I want to raise is about Monica's contribution to this conversation. Monica revealed to the group her experiences of expressing her identity in E14 as a

bisexual woman. Monica was able to share these experiences after I, as a facilitator, shared my own personal experiences of being a gay man in the area. I was extremely nervous before sharing this story as I was scared of the reaction I would receive from others in the group, particularly from Muslim participants as I believed at the time that Islam is unaccepting of homosexuality. However, I felt able to express myself due to the fact that I had already had a conversation with Sherry during our one-to-one prior to this session where we discussed homosexuality and I found out that she has lots of gay friends and a gay brother. This knowledge, and the relationship I had with Sherry made me feel comfortable enough to share an experience which I was worried about the consequences of. This illustrates the value of building relationships between people prior to engaging in conversations about controversial and contentious issues.

In my interview with Monica, I asked her what made her brave enough to share her bisexuality with the group, and she answered:

> You [Liam]. Because, I was thinking about it actually since the
> beginning of the talk, but I was unsure if I should say anything because
> I know that in some religions it is not accepted, so I was scared of
> judgement. It's bad to say but it's the first you think 'Oh, what if they
> judge me?' But after seeing how people were fine with it, with what
> you were saying, I actually related to you, and was like 'Wow, if
> they're like this with him, they should be fine in general', so I thought
> to myself 'why not?'

> (Monica)

This highlights how Monica only felt able to share her experience of how her sexuality affected her sense of belonging and safety in E14 after I had shared my experiences. This raises the question of what if I had chosen not to share my experiences in that conversation. Would Monica still have shared hers? If the answer is no, then this serves to highlight how even when bringing together a diverse group of people, the fear of judgement from others can result in minority experiences and knowledge being kept silent and excluded from the conversation. It also highlights the role of the facilitator in helping to ensure that these minority views can be articulated.

Yet, I did not choose to share my personal experiences because I knew that Monica was bisexual, rather, I felt it important to raise the visibility of LGBT people's experience in

the conversation, which I felt comfortable doing as an E14 resident at the time (I was living in Poplar during phase one of the expedition). This then raises the question of what other silences existed in the room during this conversation. What thoughts and experiences were not aired due to a feeling that they would not be welcome in the dialogue?

As it happened, one member of the group did feel that she could not express her personal beliefs and opinions in the narrative of E14. We had a conversation that explored this, in which I tried to explore *why* she felt she could not speak:

> **Karren**: I told you all along, every time we met I told you what misgivings I had, and I thought it was being hijacked, there was an agenda and I didn't agree with it, but I thought well I've signed up and I'm going to complete it.
>
> **Liam**: So how did you think that happened, with an agenda?
>
> **Karren**: I think you're too easy-going, and I think you're too soft.
>
> **Liam**: On the people in the room?
>
> **Karren**: On the people that were working with you. And also the people in the room …. like, Madur? He didn't know what the hell he was talking about- all he talked about was Bangladeshis, that's all he talked about when he opened his mouth. And it was like the Bangladeshis invented E14! And, like I say, I think it was hijacked by the Muslims
>
> **Liam**: I understand. What did you think about the politics of the project?
>
> **Karren**: Oh, very left-wing! Definitely, and I told you this before going in. I am a Tory. I'm Conservative with a capital C. I'm a capitalist. I have *never* been unemployed in my life, until now but I'm old so it's alright. I have never collected any kind of benefit. So, I am like totally the opposite to most of the people who were there, because the ones that do work, work in the public sector, except for Rafi, but that's kind of semi-public sector isn't it- they're in a union, so that's totally left-

wing. So, the politics of the project was- look, there were many times when I just kept my mouth shut.

Liam: Why did you choose to do that?

Karren: Well because I was totally outnumbered, totally outnumbered. There wouldn't have been a person there who would have agreed with me. Why would I put myself in that position? It's like putting the Christians into the Coliseum with the Lions, you know? I was not going to be a Christian, OK? So, there were many, many times when I just bit my tongue, through some of the *ludicrous* things people said and also just their political bent, and it's not the way I fly. It just wasn't worth it, I respect everybody's opinion, as long as they weren't trying to shove it down my throat

The above excerpt illustrates how on the surface one participant, Karren, appeared to be participating fully in the project, able to speak her mind and take part in the conversations that shaped the narrative of E14. Karren was one of the more vocal and confident members of the group and out of everybody involved it appeared that she would not be holding back on her contributions. However, during our interview she quite bluntly expressed that she felt unable to share her political views and opinions throughout the project, and felt that the E14 narrative was 'hijacked' by the experiences of the Bangladeshi Muslims.

Within diverse groups there is the potential for majority opinions, beliefs, values and experiences to dominate. This makes it hard, if not impossible, for those with minority views to speak up and challenge these due to the fear of being seen as different. Karren kept her right-wing political views quiet during the project and 'bit her tongue', thus revealing how the expedition failed to ensure that all knowledges and experiences could be respected and articulated through the process of inquiry.

Hankins and Martin (2013) argue that for place-based politics to avoid obscuring uneven power relations through the dominance of majority groups over minorities, there is a need for an openness that encourages the establishment of new relationships between different individuals and groups to facilitate dissensus and challenge existing arrangements. However, Karren's thoughts illustrate how difficult it is to facilitate this dissensus. This raises some questions about how to respect the principle of pluralism in

PAR. Is it possible to allow for multiple and conflicting views to be articulated amongst a diverse group of participants?

Studdert (2016) argues that meanings-in-common are created through repetition and acts of sociality. As such, in order to create a narrative that encompasses the views of diverse groups of people, there is a need for a basis of sociality and relationality so that levels of trust and respect exist to enable people to share contentious views without fear of repercussions. Within the context of the storytelling project, this relational basis did not exist between participants as people like Madur and Karren live in separate worlds within the E14 area. As such, Karren and Madur hold onto, or believe in, different truths about the E14 area, as illustrated by the following comments from Karren:

> I don't think there is that much mixing between communities, certainly not the Muslims- the Muslims don't mix with anybody…I mean there are some bursts of racism once in a while, but it's both ways. It's not always the horrible white people, it works both ways. Tolerant? I don't think so. They act like you're not there, I think that's what they want it to be. [The other participants have this] utopian vision [about different communities living together] but it's not like that, I travel enough around E14 to know that. They're dreaming. But it's a nice dream
>
> (Karren)

Arguably, these words illustrate how Karren is not in a place to be able to communicate freely and honestly with the Muslim participants in the group. As she says, there is little mixing between herself and Muslim people, and as such, no relationships to facilitate communication between different worlds. Moreover, it can be argued that Karren may not even be in a place where she *wants* to build relationships and communicate freely with the Muslim participants or vice versa. Following Walkderine (2016) this might reflect the legacy of the past shaping social interactions in the present. Perhaps Karren's experiences of her community changing over the past few decades, and the perceived role that the Bangladeshi Muslim community played in this means that her sense of distance and difference to these people is too strong to cross over during through the context of a 6-week leadership programme. As such, the expedition failed to give voice to Karren's 'hidden transcript', a minority view within the group which was the opposite of that she expressed publicly (see Scott, 1990).

This raises a number of questions about the practicalities and possibilities of respecting social pluralism in process pragmatist work: can people from different worlds with conflicting meanings and beliefs work together across deep, historical divisions? Do they need to? And if so (or not) how can academic-organisers respect the value of pluralism when the beliefs of some contradict their personal moral values?

These questions are difficult to answer, and I do not intend to provide definitive solutions here. Instead I will reflect on the challenges they pose. Firstly, given the fact that publics form between those with affected interests around particular issues, there is no need for people with different worldviews and conflicting beliefs to come together across deep divisions unless deemed by those people as necessary to help address that problem. In this, Karren had no incentive to build a relationship and share her opinions with people like Madur because there was no pressing issue driving her to do so. In this sense, people might cross deep divisions if they deem this as needed to build enough power to address an issue that affects them directly.

However, what is important here is whether people *do* deem this necessary. This is because whilst one might think that people from different social worlds are affected by an issue that transects those worlds, unless the people living within those worlds consider this to be the case, they will have no reason to build connections across those worlds in order to take action. Rather, inhabitants of different worlds might work on solutions with others from within their world and community to address their issue.

Another interesting point to consider is what happens when an issue is the result of actions from one world or community negatively affecting those in another world or community. In these cases, too, it is up to those affected by the issue to decide how they wish to address it. But, it is feasible that in order to do so inhabitants of each world may have to build a relationship and communicate with those of the other world. This would potentially lead to the creation of new shared understandings and meanings between those worlds that could enable different courses of action to solve the particular problem. However, as Karren's example has shown, this is not easy to achieve and would take real skills, commitment and a degree of luck on the part of many people to make it happen. Moreover, perhaps achieving such truths are not possible within pluralistic societies, with conflict, dissent and agonism being inescapable facts of democratic life (Fraser, 1990; Mouffe, 1995; Ranciere, 2010).

So, what does this mean for academic-organisers who wish to engage in process pragmatist work that facilitates citizen-led problem-solving whilst respecting the principle of pluralism? Should academics seek to bring together a heterogeneous group of citizens to identify and work on their shared problems, or should academics commit to working with more homogenous groups and support them to address their own particular issues?

Taken to extremes, the latter approach might involve an academic working with people who share similar views to Karren, developing a campaign to prevent Muslims from practicing their faith in an area, or to stop Muslim families from living in an area.[11] Quite clearly, this would be personally unacceptable for most academics to do, but if pragmatism means that we have to respect the views and truths of everyone, then this could mean supporting people like Karren to enact their truths into being through the creation of publics. As such, the challenge of pragmatism poses a serious moral dilemma for academic-organisers which deserves further consideration.

Iris Marion Young's (1997) notion of 'heterogeneous publics' provides a useful framework to help think through this dilemma. Young defines a heterogeneous public as a collective of people from various social groups, each positioned differently within uneven power relations. Within this public, all groups recognise themselves as part of the same society and attempt to act as a single polity united by a commitment to advancing social justice for every member. This commitment allows members to act together to address shared issues with external causes, and also to manage conflict within the public, where an issue for one group is perceived to be caused by the actions of another group. This is argued to occur by facilitating communication between groups that leads to the resolution of issues caused by inter-group relationships.

This ideal perhaps works better in theory than in practice, but the conversation between Sherry and Rafi, and Monica 's ability to share her experiences presented earlier provide an indication that such a form of pluralistic public-making is possible. However, the deeper divisions between communities illustrated by Karren's silences suggest that in some cases, creating a heterogeneous public is not possible. Despite this, I would argue that the ideal of the heterogeneous public is useful for helping academics practice a pluralistic form of PAR that helps articulate the experiential knowledge and beliefs of all

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[11] I am not suggesting Karen would approve of this herself, but some people would

citizens, and helps develop those citizens' capacity for acting upon that knowledge. This is because it potentially provides a way for academics to respect the principle of pluralism without compromising on their morals.

When this is not possible or effective, however, and common issues across different communities cannot be identified, perhaps there is a role that academic-organisers can play in facilitating conflict and dissent between communities. Chantal Mouffe (1995) argues that the public sphere needs to accommodate dissent and conflict as well as unity and consensus. In this vision of democratic life, we have multiple and conflicting publics each seeking to advance their own interests over those of others. She calls for a form of agonistic pluralism in which conflict between such publics is conducted in a respectful way between adversaries who are accommodating to otherness. Given this, academic-organisers might need to learn how to understand the truths of groups who share conflicting views to their own, practising the skills of listening and sympathy, and working with these groups to enable them to act upon these truths, perhaps altering their own beliefs in the process. Or, this might entail roles for academic-organisers as brokers of respectful communication between conflicting groups, siding with neither, but creating spaces for dissensus to occur. There can be no definitive answers to this, but pragmatism poses challenges to mainstream and accepted ways of working as academics. In the next and final section, I turn to more challenges to academic work, through a discussion of the difficulties and possibilities of building citizen power to effect change in the world.

4.4 Place, Relationships and Power

If phase one was about laying the foundations for public work by developing relationships in place amongst a diverse group of participants, then phase two of the expedition was about supporting the development of three publics to address issues around unemployment, anti-social behaviour and mental health. This section reflects on the difficulties of attempting to build the power of publics to address these issues and lessons for future work. First, I will reflect on the importance of relationships and community for facilitating effective public work.

4.4.1 Scale, Community and Affected Interests

The intention of the expedition was for phase two to act as a platform for participants to identify and begin to address the issues that directly affected them by building the

relational power needed to effect change. Yet, this did not necessarily work out in practice, as the example of the anti-social behaviour team illustrates, where only one of the members of this team, Shaheed, was able to take action on an issue that directly affected his life. Explaining the personal importance of the issue of antisocial behaviour on his estate, Shaheed stated:

> Personally, I had some negative effects on my life. For example, I see that school kids are having sex at the bottom of my building. I don't want to see that. If they want to do that, they can go to their own homes. I have a young nephew who visits, and if he sees these filthy things, he's going to learn isn't he? So, this affects me. Sometimes they use filthy words, so this affects me. Sometimes at night at like 2 o' clock they're shouting, banging car mirrors, so that affects me. I can't sleep and need to get up in the morning to go to work. They don't have any manners or consideration for others. So, this affects not just me, but about 89 families in this building.
>
> (Shaheed)

As such, in taking a pragmatic approach to inquiry, which allowed participants to identify the issues to be addressed *during* the project, rather than the academic deciding which issues to address before the project, the expedition allowed Shaheed to address a pressing issue affecting his life, suggesting that the expedition approach allowed for issues to emerge from the process rather than being determined prior to the expedition (Harney et al, 2016). However, the other members of Shaheed's team: Zalika, Samiha, Justin and Dilwar, were not directly affected by the issue on Shaheed's estate. Of these, only Justin lived on the same estate as Shaheed, whilst the others lived on other estates in E14 (and even for Justin, he had no direct experience of the anti-social behaviour that Shaheed was affected by as he lived in a different block of flats). Whilst they all shared an interest in developing solutions to anti-social behaviour and had all experienced this issue directly on their own estates at some point or other, their sense of self-interest was weaker. At first this was not a problem as the team agreed that they would work on Shaheed's estate to find a solution to his problem, learning from the process as they did so. Yet, as explained in the previous chapter, this team soon fell apart as the group began to take action.

One of the main reasons for this was the high level of risk associated with this issue. Reflecting on this risk, Shaheed explained:

> I was scared myself. Why? Because those boys hang out on the ground floor and if they know I'm doing this, maybe when I finish this project they will hurt me, because they don't care. They will do anything. Even after our door knocking, a month later, one day they caught me around 11 o' clock, midnight. I came from my brother's house and two of them, selling drugs, they stop me and speak to me in Bengali and ask me if I want to buy drugs. I said no, they said if I have a cigarette, and I don't. Then they swore at me in Bengali, they're not Bengali but they've learnt Bengali words. So, I'm affected because they know I'm involved in this. So, I'm involved in this campaign, and I'm worried for my security. Because these boys are organised and can do anything. You know, even if they kill someone, they kill them and what is the government going to do? They're children, so will be out of prison in ten years. Have you seen a couple of days ago, there was a man who lives round here who killed someone in front of these houses 15 years ago? They've now been released and now they are living here and working in a school...So, I'm worried. Even if we build a voice for the community, there is still the risk of something bad happening.

> (Shaheed)

For Shaheed, this issue was literally a matter of life and death. There was a very real level of fear about the consequences of the group's actions in trying to address this issue on his estate. As such, in order to commit to such action, the issue must really matter to you, it must affect you directly, and you would act only if you thought you could win. The ASB team fell apart because of this risk and the fact that only one member was directly affected by the issue at hand, and winning was hard.

This episode suggests that the expedition failed to achieve its goal of convening publics of affected interests around issues of common concern. Reflecting on the reasons for this a couple of arguments could be made. Firstly, only a minority of participants from phase one took part in phase two. This meant that the issues identified in phase one of the expedition could not be acted upon by the participants in phase two because they did not

identify them themselves. This resulted in a hasty selection of issues in the first training session of phase two, with people joining teams without properly considering the issue beforehand.

Secondly, and perhaps more significant, I think the expedition operated at too large a spatial scale to facilitate effective inquiry that could identify potential communities of affected interests. E14 is a large area and whilst issues like anti-social behaviour are experienced by many people within the postcode, given the relational underpinning of social issues discussed in Chapter Two, each issue is separate, the product of specific sets of assemblages, relationships and actions in particular sites (Latour, 2005b; Scott, 1992; Farias, 2011). Thus, the scale at which the expedition operated led to the creation of a pan-E14 team to address the very particular issue of anti-social behaviour, affecting residents of one block of flats on a particular estate in Poplar. This resulted in participants on the ASB team attempting to solve an issue that was abstracted from their lived experiences. On this team, the issue was Shaheed's and nobody else's, and so when the element of risk was realised, the team disbanded and the power of people like Shaheed to address this issue could not be built.

Reflecting on this it is clear that in order to conduct more effective inquiry there is a need to operate at a much more localised scale which should allow the academic-organiser to identify communities of people who are directly affected by the same issue. For example, if the expedition had worked solely on the Brownfield estate in Poplar, rather than across E14, a team of 20 residents could have been trained and supported to address the anti-social behaviour problem over the course of six months. This avoids participants working on abstract issues and is likely to have had a greater impact in achieving a solution to the problem by ensuring the commitment of more of those who are directly involved.

Moreover, the way that public work was operationalized must also be questioned. The E14 expedition was structured around two standalone programmes, and thus was not rooted in more 'natural' or everyday ways of living and being for people in E14. Would the expedition have been more successful in identifying communities of affected interests if it was more embedded in existing community institutions such as schools or churches? And what else could have been done to build relationships between members

of the two groups over the two years? The time involved in really laying the relational foundations of public work may be more than traditional academic work allows for.

Another reason for the team breakdown on the ASB campaign could be associated with the lack of prior community between members of the team. Again, following Studdert (2016) the idea that sociality and relationships underpin collective action, means that collective inquiry and problem-solving works best when it is built upon pre-existing community and relationality between citizens. This provides a foundation of varying strengths of trust and mutual understanding to facilitate collective action in a context of high risk. Indeed, comments from Zalika about the breakdown of the ASB team serve to highlight the importance of such relationships and ties of connection as the basis for public work:

> **Liam**: Has the project taught you anything about teamwork?
>
> **Zalika**: It taught me that I flourish when a team actually wants to do something. But when they don't, I don't really know what you can do. Because Shahid was like very enthusiastic but ultimately there wasn't really a proper team or a culture that had been developed. So, I feel like I don't really think we could have had an outcome that would actually make a change.
>
> **LH**: How would you try to develop a culture?
>
> **Zalika**: First to just get to know each other as people. And separate it from any of these issues or even politics itself. Just get to know each other as people. Just develop like a friendship type vibe. And then from there go on to how the issue affects everyone and share stories. But just finding a ground of relatability. That would be the main thing. Just anything that will evoke emotion and create bonds. From there, people will care I think and wouldn't want to let each other down as well.

These words illustrate that in order for citizens to commit to acting together to address common issues and take risks to do so, they first need a degree of commitment to each other (see Calhoun, 1983; Barnett, 2008). Zalika believes that the reason her team fell apart was because of a lack of strong relationships between members. This reflects the

importance of community as a foundation of public work. People need to have some degree of familiarity, bond and connection with others to engage in risk-taking action with them. Otherwise, the fear of the risk will outweigh the desire to act. Additionally, it also suggests that citizens will only invest the time to develop relationships with each other for the purpose of public work, if the issue is important enough to them to make this worth their while. Otherwise, people have other things to be spending their time on. Given the large spatial scale, and the lack of participant 'transfer' between both phases, phase two of the expedition failed to adequately build from existing sociality and relationships in E14 to convene problem-solving publics from. Thus, the expedition failed to build the power to effect change as it was not sufficiently embedded in the lives of citizens and their communities.

In addition, the episode with Shaheed also highlights an ethical dilemma inherent within pragmatic inquiry. When working on such important issues, and engaging in social worlds where these really matter to people's lives, there is an inherent element of risk involved. As an outsider I was naïve to this when starting the expedition and engaged in action that put Shaheed at risk, while leaving me in no danger at all. Equally, those team members who were not from Shaheed's estate, or less embedded in local social networks also faced less danger from their actions, as Shaheed makes clear in his comments on Justin:

> Justin, he doesn't live here either. He was here for 2-3 months
> then has moved on. I'm a community person, I live here and work
> here every day. So, Justin is not at that much at risk. I am very at
> risk, because I have to pass these boys each day.
>
> (Shaheed)

Following Merrifield's (1995) assessment of the ethics of Bunge's geographical expeditions, this further illustrates the need for academics seeking to engage in process pragmatist work to work solely with communities of affected interests as this should ensure that all participants involved face a more or less equal level of risk when engaging in problem-solving action. In this 'ethics of affected interests' it is up to all those involved, *excluding* the outsider academic-organiser, to make a collective decision on what action to take (or whether to take action at all) within the context of specific issues.

This could help to ensure that collective inquiry and problem-solving is conducted in a responsible way.

Thus, relationships, trust and a sense of mutual interest are essential foundations for public work. This is highlighted by the breakdown of the anti-social behaviour team, compared to the relative strengths of the mental health team who persisted with their campaign, despite setbacks, due to the existence of an issue that all felt invested in, and the unemployment team which benefitted from pre-existing relationships amongst most of its members who all attended the same school. Yet, as the following section shows, even when stronger teams of citizens do exist, generating the power to effect change around their issue is no easy task.

4.4.2 The Professionalisation of Politics: Building Citizen Power with Little Status and Time

In trying to build their power to have an effect in addressing their chosen issue, participants on phase two of the expedition had to engage with various other actors involved in their 'issue-assemblage'. Inevitably, this involved trying to engage with various professionals and decision-makers. As outlined in Chapter Three, the mental health team tried to engage with the local NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) as part of their campaign.

The team did this as they believed that to improve the availability and awareness of mental health services for young people they had to engage with the body responsible for commissioning these services. During their campaign, the team met with Malcom Brown, the lead for mental health on Tower Hamlets CCG. Reflecting on their meeting with Malcolm, Rachel said the following:

> **Liam**: How did you find that meeting with Malcom Brown?
>
> **Rachel**: Very frustrating.
>
> **Liam**: Yeah, why was that?
>
> **Rachel**: For lots of reasons… it felt almost like he was trying to use us in a sort of way to potentially to reduce his workload, but also to make you feel like he was engaging with the local community, and like okay this is something that I've got to do. And he didn't really seem that

passionate about his local patch, or actually wanting to make genuine

change, he just wanted to tick boxes.

Rachel's frustration with the meeting is twofold. Firstly, she felt that the team was unprepared for the meeting to begin with, and this was a problem linked to inadequate preparation (which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five). Additionally, she had a sense that Malcolm was trying to use her and her team to serve his own agenda by reducing his workload and making it appear that the CCG was engaging with the local community. This stems from the fact that during the meeting, Malcolm tried to get the team to agree to run a community event to promote mental health awareness and the new website being developed by the CCG. For Rachel, this illustrated that Malcolm was more interested in 'ticking boxes' demanded by his role than achieving real social change.

It is interesting to note how Rachel contrasts the actions and intentions of her team against those of Malcolm. For her, the former is interested in making real change, whilst the latter was concerned with maintaining the status quo. Following Whatmore (2009) this contrast highlights a 'knowledge controversy' where the knowledge and actions of professionals are at odds with the knowledge and actions of citizens. Whatmore argues that citizens form publics around issues when their experiential knowledge of an issue clashes with the knowledge held by those making decisions about that issue. Having worked in the mental health sector, lived in the local community and conducted research into mental health services in the local area, Rachel's team was driven to action by their own understanding of mental health service provision in the local area. They considered that existing services, and information about these, were lacking and sought to take action to address this.

However, when attempting to raise these concerns with the professionals responsible for commissioning these services, the team struggled to be taken seriously and instead, the professionals attempted to use them to suit their own agenda. The issue of citizens not being listened to by professionals is serious, as it prevents the experiential knowledge of people being used to shape public decisions which can lead to the wrong decisions being made. Pam provides an illustration of this when she reflected on attending a steering group meeting to develop the new mental health website for Tower Hamlets by the CCG:

Pat: At the meeting, I brought up the point that even though it was very commendable to go to the next stage and promote all this, what extra services had they actually put in place? And the room went quiet.

Liam: Yeah, it did.

Pat: And they wasn't very happy about that until two other people then said, "Well that's true," and they worked on the smaller projects, they weren't mental health professionals, but they were working with the youth their selves and knew that there was no way they could send these kids forwards. So they were obviously dealing with this on a daily basis. So, they knew that this was a fact and yet the other members round the board from the CCG were dismissing it totally.

Liam: Yeah, so what did you sort of take away from that?

Pat: It was the powers that be and the hoi polloi coming along saying, "This is what we'd like," and totally not being listened to yet again.

Liam: Yeah, but I suppose you said your piece at the meeting and I thought it was really good 'cause it literally silenced the room and was one of the stand out points of the meeting, and I thought it was really important for you to say.

Pat: Well yeah, it was just a *basic point*: what is the point of promoting something that you haven't got? I mean it's just fundamentally stupid.

Liam: But yeah, the professionals in the room-

Pat: - Didn't see that.

This episode further illustrates how the expedition provided a means for participants to express and articulate their experiential knowledge of an issue to the 'powers that be' in an attempt to address that issue. Pam communicated the 'truth' generated through her team's collective experience of mental health service provision in the local area to those with decision-making power around that issue. This was a significant moment in the meeting and it silenced the room before drawing response from others in the meeting who also believed that this was true. Yet, as Pam explains the concerns of herself and the others (the 'hoi polloi') were not taken seriously or listened to by the professionals.

The actions of Pam's team highlight how there is value in combining the experiential knowledge of citizens with the knowledge held by professionals, decision-makers and experts when it comes to finding solutions to shared issues. Pam brought to the meeting a perspective from the grassroots which challenged and disrupted the perspective held by the professionals. If taken seriously, this could have been brought into dialogue with the knowledge held by professionals to provoke an ongoing conversation about the best way to address the issue of poor mental health service provision in the local area. It is through the combination of different knowledges of those affected by the same issue that the most effective and creative solutions can be developed. However, the professionals were not open to this conversation, instead holding onto the notion that they, as 'experts', know best and seeking to use the energy, knowledge and skills of citizens not to inform their decisions on an equal basis but to help serve their own agenda.

Writing on the gap between the professional class and ordinary citizens, American historian and social critic, Christopher Lasch (1994: 117) argued that:

> 'If elites speak only to themselves, one reason for this is the absence of
> institutions that promote general conversation across class lines. Civic
> life requires settings in which people meet as equals, without regard to
> race, class, or national origins. [Yet] thanks to the decay of civic
> institutions ranging from political parties to public parks and informal
> meeting places, conversation has become almost as specialised as the
> production of knowledge. Social classes speak to themselves in a
> dialect of their own, inaccessible to outsiders'

Lasch's comments reflect, to a large degree, the current state of public decision-making in UK society in which professionals make decisions through conversations with fellow professionals, rarely letting ordinary citizens contribute to this conversation on equal terms. Instead choosing to engage with them hierarchically and tokenistically through surface-level 'consultation' exercises that serve mainly to tick boxes than engage in meaningful debate and dialogue where the knowledge of ordinary citizens is listened to and treated as equally valid as the knowledge held by professionals (see Arnstein, 1969)

This is a problem as professionals hold the most power when it comes to addressing social issues, due to their position as expert decision-makers. Yet citizens often have access to valuable knowledge and experiences that can help make these decisions more

effective. However, given their relative position of power, if professionals do not take the knowledge of citizens seriously, this knowledge becomes excluded from public decision-making processes. The fact that many experts choose not to take the knowledge of ordinary citizens seriously, instead viewing them as incapable of grasping the complexity of issues or making critical judgements, points towards the pervasiveness of a cult of expertise, in which the professionals know best (Lasch, 1994). This points towards the need for citizens to build their ability to be listened to and taken seriously. Within the time-frame for this project, the expedition failed to achieve this for the mental health team, and also for the unemployment team who were ignored by local employers when trying to secure work experience places for their fellow students.

In hindsight, and following Boyte (2003), the expedition could have helped to amplify the voices of participants more effectively by using the status and perceived validity of academic research to 'credential' their experiential knowledge and increase its status amongst professionals. Reflecting on how this might have helped her team, Pam explained:

> It's that clout [laughs] that you need behind you when you go forward, 'cause they'll listen to you. You've got respected doctorates and things like that and people that know about these things, yeah, so they will listen more. And if you just use the locals to accumulate the knowledge and then you do the rest of the work. The university does the rest of the work from what they've gathered, so you send out the locals to gather the knowledge for you and bring in feedback, and then they can analyse it, they can put it into the way it should be used.

> (Pam)

There was thus potential value in running the expedition through a more traditional PAR approach, validating the experiential knowledge of citizens through formal research methods and using this as a way to start a conversation with decision-makers. This may have helped build the power of the group to make change more quickly, and suggests that there is a role for formal research methods as part of a process pragmatist approach if they can be used to build the power of citizens to be taken seriously. However, where formal research methods serve to detach citizens from public action,

abstract them from their issues and their experiences, and empower academics instead, questions must be raised about their suitability for reconnecting citizens to politics.

Indeed, as Pam's comments also suggest, there is a danger that approaching citizen-led problem-solving through the lens of academic research, including PAR, could serve to reproduce the cult of the expert by implying that the views of citizens can only be taken seriously when presented in the language of formal expertise. As discussed in Chapters One and Two, this could serve to maintain the power of academics to determine the focus and outcomes of inquiries into social issues, and prevent certain issues from being focussed on at all. For example, whilst academic credibility would have been useful for addressing the mental health issue, for the ASB team, this credibility would have been totally irrelevant in trying to stop the group of boys from intimidating their neighbours. This raises questions about the relative uses of a broad, process pragmatist approach to citizen engagement in politics based on embedded inquiry and action to address social issues through more informal processes of knowledge production, such as conversations coupled with community organising methods, versus a narrower, traditional PAR approach in which the epistemological perspective of a research project is retained.

Whilst Lake (2017) argues against the latter in favour of the former, there is pragmatic (practical) value in tapping into the epistemological clout of academic research to help empower citizens to achieve their goals by increasing their status in relation to professionals. Comparing the E14 expedition to a previous project in which I helped gather survey evidence to support a Citizens UK campaign around housing in Tower Hamlets (Harney et al, 2016), it is clear that both approaches have value. When seeking to gain the attention of decision-makers, academic knowledge can help credential the claims of organised citizens, but at the same time if academics take the lead and produce knowledge for and about citizens, this can be a barrier to organising itself. Moreover, some issues such as the problem with the gang on Shaheed's estate cannot really be addressed through traditional academic research. A balance of approaches is thus needed, one that puts the primacy of citizen-led action and self-organising first but employs the contextual credibility of academic research when in the service of organised citizens when they deem it useful in achieving their aims.

A further barrier to building power is the lack of time available to most people to engage in public work. The gap between professional experts and ordinary citizens reflects how

the cult of the expert in politics has created a division of labour in public work. On one side, we have paid professionals whose full-time job it is to make public decisions. On the other, we have ordinary citizens who work to earn money to survive, leaving them little time to engage in politics and public work. The professionalization of politics means that the majority of ordinary citizens are resigned to playing a limited role in decision-making, restricted to voting in elections, scrutinising decisions and holding decision-makers to account. The availability of time to engage in politics and public work was a common concern amongst all of the expedition participants.

In the same vein, participants on phase two of the expedition all reported that they felt a lack of time to engage in public work was a major limitation in relation to their ability to address their chosen issues through the campaigns. When asked if he felt his team had enough time to do their campaign, Fahim responded:

> I don't think so because we were all doing it in our spare time. That's why I found it hard; I was still in school, so I was still studying, I was also working, everyone was working, and I think if we were like--, not full time but if we had like a large amount of time, not a large amount, maybe even a full day a week where everyone was free. We were all trying to fit it around our own timetable, so my school, people's work, so we weren't able to find a time where we were all free. Only once were we all free but that was like one out of the five or six meetings that we actually had.

> (Fahim)

Trying to fit public work around other time commitments such as paid work, family responsibilities and social lives was difficult for the expedition participants. The experiences of people like Fahim highlight how most ordinary citizens lack the time to do politics and as such choose not to participate, even when they have concerns that they feel they ought to act on.

Responding to this issue, Boyte (2015) argues that there is a need to realign paid employment towards public ends, rather than solely private ends. For him, this would allow more citizens to engage in public work through their day job rather than as something separate to it. In theory this is a noble idea and indeed there are many jobs which those doing them perceive to have public ends, beyond making profits for

employers and earning a salary. However, for most people earning a living is a priority and a job is a job as long as it pays the bills. Thus, in the absence of more jobs that allow citizens to engage in public work whilst getting paid, there is a need to think about how citizens can use their limited spare time to engage in politics around the issues that matter most to them.

Within the context of the phase two of the expedition, it is clear that the limited time of participants was not used wisely. Firstly, in allowing participants to pick their three priority issues to act upon, the structure of the programme served to increase the workload and decrease the time available for those involved. The original group of 25 represented a significant number of people who had the potential to all work together to address the same issue. Tasks could have been spread between the group, allowing those with different skills, energies and passions to do what most appealed to them. This would have worked to 'spread the load' between everyone and decrease the amount of time needed from each individual to operate the campaign. Potentially, this may have helped increase the chances of success by increasing the creativity of ideas and capacity of the group to solve a problem.

Secondly, the six-month time limit imposed on the project also served to limit the amount of influence that the teams could have. Pam explained how the time limit was a limiting factor for achieving success because '*it needs to be ongoing, it can't just stop at an end of a period, you have to go on until you get a result and that takes a lot of dedication to churn over the same stuff again and again and again until you've come through at the other end with some sort of light at the end of the tunnel*'. Indeed, given the complexity and deep-seated-ness of the issues addressed through the expedition, the relatively short period of time available to address them appears, in hindsight, extremely naïve. Taking a long-term approach to addressing these issues could have allowed the power of the participants and their communities to address them gradually over time, employing different tactics and strategies to do this in a sustained attempt to move towards change. This is where permanent community organising alliances such as Citizens UK are effective as their permanent presence in an area allows them to build the power of their members in a gradual process over a long-period of time, bringing in different people at different stages to engage in public work in a localised division of political labour.

4.5 Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, the E14 expedition raised a number of challenges and questions for academics who wish to use their work to engage with non-academic communities for social change and democratic renewal. Firstly, there is a real need to invest in activity that can strengthen, re-build and create new community and sociality amongst citizens. This activity can, and perhaps must, build upon the resources provided by place. This process will be long-term and will 'move at the speed of trust' (Russel, 2017).

Secondly, the issues around pluralism and how to respect diverse views must be taken seriously. If recent populist movements and revolts have been driven by a sense that certain sections of the citizenry have been ignored and marginalised from mainstream political and cultural practices for too long, then academics and universities need to respond to this responsibly. The plurality of the citizenry poses serious challenges to academics wishing to use their research to support the interests of non-academic communities. It points to the need for more conversations on how we can open up the potential benefits of inquiry and the resources universities contain to all citizens regardless of their values and worldviews. These conversations will not be easy, but are essential, and incredibly timely. Perhaps a first step towards meeting this challenge could be the gradual development of relationships between those in universities and those who inhabit different worlds in order to open up meaningful communication and opportunities for mutual understanding.

Finally, a shift in approach from short-term, standalone research projects towards long-term partnership work to address complex social issues between universities/academics and citizens is needed to help build the power of citizens to effect change. It is clear that efforts to engage citizens in public work and contribute towards democratic renewal will require a long-term and sustained approach from universities, and I return to this in Chapter Six. However, despite the limitations of the expedition in achieving change around the issues of participants, it was still successful in providing opportunities for an education in democracy where participants could develop various civic skills and capacities. It is to this that the next chapter turns.

Chapter Five: Education for Democracy: Cultivating Civic Skills and Capacities

The focus of this chapter is the different ways in which participating in the expedition helped participants to develop a number of civic skills and capacities which have the potential to allow them to engage more effectively in public work in the future. John Dewey (1939) argued that the ideals of democracy must continuously be fought for to be put into practice. Key to this, for him, was the cultivation of citizens who possessed the necessary skills and attributes to engage in democratic politics, defined as engaging in processes of collective, self-directed problem-solving in situations of social, epistemological and material plurality, and radical contingency. Dewey advocated for an education for democracy, in which citizens had opportunities to develop their political skills through practical experience in working with each other to inquire into shared problems, develop solutions and enact these into being. Indeed, it was only through this form of experiential learning that ordinary people could hone their skills and understanding of how to effectively engage in politics.

As explained in Chapter Two, a pragmatic education for democracy seeks to develop the skills and capacities of citizens to engage in public work in order to progress towards their self-defined goals and visions of a good life. It is not intended as a form of political governance or indoctrination, in which citizens are cultivated into subjects around a particular narrative about what a desirable world or end point looks like (Lake, 2017). In this vein, education for democracy seeks to cultivate a number of civic skills and capacities amongst citizens (Fung, 2003). The former refers to specific competences that people can develop to engage in political work which can to a certain degree be taught, such as relationship-building, speech-making and organising meetings. Whilst the latter refer to things that cannot be explicitly taught but are acquired through practice and experience that enable effective public work, such as a respect for others and self-confidence.

The expedition sought to provide opportunities and experiences for its participants to develop such skills and capacities. This chapter reflects on how the expedition supported this, exploring the learning and development of participants in their own words, and the impacts of this education for wider democratic practices. It begins by focussing on the skills, covering communication, relationship-building, public speaking, teamwork, time-

management and negotiation. Then, various individual and collective capacities are explored, including conceptualising of relational power, a relational sensibility, confidence in oneself and others' ability to make a difference in the world.

5.1 Cultivating Civic Skills

5.1.1 Communication, Relationship Building and Public Speaking

As explained in earlier chapters, pragmatists believe that truths are created through intersubjective communication. In this, communication is the medium through which social realities are given meaning, identities formed, and collective action made possible. Within the context of public work, communication is essential to allowing people to come together to make sense of their shared situation, identify and give meaning to common issues, and decide on collective action by aligning interests and agendas (Mead, 1934). The majority of participants on the E14 expedition named communication as one of the main skills they thought they developed through taking part. For example, when asked about how she had developed her communication skills Zalika said:

> I think a lot of the time when you're having a conversation with
> someone it's very shallow and you don't really dig deep into their life
> story or anything like that, which I understand can be painful for some
> people, but this has helped to really learn about the personal stuff. It's
> like helped me to manipulate, but in a positive way… manipulate
> conversations and try to get information out of a person to get to know
> them better, so that's what it taught me really.
>
> (Zalika)

This quote illustrates how Zalika developed her communication skills through participation in phase one of the expedition. Similarly, Rafi explains how learning the technique of the one-to-one and putting this into practice during the story-telling project has developed his communication skills. He stated that the one-to-one technique:

> Gave me a better understanding of the people I spoke with. It gave me
> more of their inner person. I had more knowledge about that person, his
> personality or his relationship or point of view of the area. I had a more
> in-depth understanding.
>
> (Rafi)

Chambers (2009: 14) regards the skill of a one-to-one meeting as 'revolutionary in its conception, its execution, and its results [and] if enough people actually learned and practiced it, we would change completely how we relate to one another and conduct our public lives'. For Chambers, the one-to-one meeting helps people move away from talking to others about things and tasks, and instead about themselves. This is revolutionary because it goes against the way that most people tend to talk to others in public life. Through sharing stories, one-to-one meetings allow those involved to understand what each person values and holds dear and what really matters to them. Thus, an effective one-to-one meeting 'brings up stories that reveal people's deepest commitments and the experiences that give rise to their core values. In fact, the most important thing that happens in good one-to-one is the telling of stories that open a window into the passions that animate people' (Chambers 2009: 21). However, these meetings are not 'silver bullets' that can create deep relationships in an instant, but are to be sustained over long periods of time to gradually develop a meaningful relationship between two people.

For both Zalika and Rafi, it is clear that the technique of the one-to-one meeting has provided them with a tool to get to know people in more depth and develop a better understanding of them. As Zalika said, it allowed her to move beyond the usual shallowness of most everyday conversations and enabled her to 'dig deep' into a person's life. For Rafi, the tool enabled him to get a sense of the 'inner person' of the people he spoke with, implying that the conversation went beyond what people normally choose to present on the surface. The one-to-one meeting is a tool and skill that takes constant practice to hone, as personal conversations can be difficult to hold, not least because people are often guarded when such conversations are initiated (Chambers, 2009), however, through asking people to share stories about how they have acted to change things in the community, the story-telling project provided participants with a safe vehicle through which to get a taste of using this skill.

The purpose of the one-to-one is to help people build strong public relationships with each other. Indeed, communication and relationships are inseparable as effective communication can only occur when people are in community with each other (Mead, 1934). In order for people to be able to communicate with one another to develop a better understanding of each other they need to be in relationship. Equally, effective, honest and open communication can help to strengthen existing relationships, paving the way

for even more effective communication. Ultimately, the joint processes of communication and relationship-building, facilitated by one-to-ones, enable citizens to engage in collective action to address shared concerns. Talking about her use of the one-to-one during phase one of the expedition, Jenny reflects on how it helped her to strengthen her relationships with people:

> The intimacy and the proximity has increased because once you share stories that are private, the closeness, the intimacy, it was breaking some ice eternally, forever, between me and this person. Because I think once you share stories in such moments it can be quite emotional and intimate and yeah, in some stories they were concerned about what was going to happen to it and who was going to read it- like, am I going to frustrate a certain person if they read it and should I change parts just in case, you know? So, they have to trust you. And I love that, it's amazing to build trust with people. And I think culturally, here, this might be even more difficult. I don't know, I'm not English and I don't have a British culture, but I feel that there it takes a little longer to do that. So, it was good to see this approach where you get more from a bond, which has helped strengthen my skills, so was very useful.
>
> (Jenny)

Jenny was working as a community engagement worker herself whilst she was on the programme and she engaged in lots of meetings and conversations with residents of the estate she worked on. However, the one-to-one approach taught on the expedition was different to her usual approach and helped her to develop a greater level of intimacy and trust between herself and the people she spoke to, which she believes contributed to strengthening her skills in relationship-building.

Communication and relationship-building are key skills for citizens to acquire to support them in public and collective problem-solving. Yet, a third skill is also needed to allow citizens to work with strangers to attempt to address common problems: public speaking. Barnett (2008) argues that public action is enacted through the process of 'discoursing', the throwing together of words, signs and symbols, and that publics are convened through a process of address and attention. This means that publics form when

individuals or groups make an address that resonates with strangers and gains their attention, allowing people to come together with the intention of acting collectively.

As such the skill of addressing strangers, or public speaking, is a key skill for citizens to develop in order to form publics of affected interests around the issues that matter to them. The expedition sought to develop this skill amongst participants in a number of ways. Firstly, during each phase of the project, each training session began with a 'rounds question'. As explained in Chapter Three, rounds questions involve one question being set for everyone in the group to answer, with each person given a minute to share their answer to the rest of the group. The questions are designed to challenge people to share stories from their life through their answer in order to reveal some of the values that they hold. The quotes from Zaida and Lebona below illustrate the effect of the rounds questions on participants' public speaking skills:

> Yes! They were useful. Like in the beginning I was thinking that I wasn't sure because I'm nervous, I don't know what to say, should I say this much? Your heart is pounding, and you want to pick the exact words in the right way. But when it got to the next sessions, all of that had gone and I generally wanted to say something that I felt I learnt in response to what somebody else had said- I thought that was great. It was, it was productive
>
> (Lebona)

> Oh God! Those rounds! They were difficult- just thinking on the spot was quite hard. Some of them were alright, for example when we had to think of a time when we stuck our neck out, and we all have a time when we did that but when you're put on the spot and have to think, it's just really hard. But it was nice. I felt uncomfortable when it first started but over the sessions we got used to it and came more prepared.
>
> (Zaida)

At first the rounds questions made Lebona feel nervous; she had to think on the spot of a story that would communicate her values and passions to a room full of strangers. This was difficult for her because she was unsure of how much of herself to share, and how to communicate her story in a way that would resonate with others so that they understood

her in the way she intended them to, using the 'exact words in the right way'. Similarly, for Zaida, the rounds questions made her feel uncomfortable and under pressure, unsure how to best address people that she did not know. However, for both Lebona and Zaida, their nerves and discomfort reduced as they received warm response from the rest of the participants and participated in future rounds questions in later sessions. As such, the rounds questions helped train participants in the skills of public speaking, challenging them to overcome their fears and thus get used to addressing strangers.

Whilst the rounds questions were carried out within the relative safety of the training room amongst a group of people who had all signed up for a leadership development programme, the expedition also provided opportunities for participants to develop their public speaking skills in 'real-world' situations. During phase two of the project, participants were encouraged to practice public speaking as they engaged in their campaigns. For example, Pam spoke publicly at Tower Hamlets CCG's steering group meeting about mental health service provision:

> **Liam**: Okay, and what about public speaking? So, you did a bit of that in the CCG meeting.
>
> **Pat**: I'm not very good at it and I probably don't say things the right way, because it had to be done correctly as I said to you, especially if you come and you've got a Cockney accent and you're--, you get all your words in the wrong place and then you stutter. Like the lady when I was trying to make a point about funding Toynbee Hall, she didn't let me get to the point I was trying to make, she stopped me and said, "Toynbee Hall don't deal with that." Well I didn't know that when I made the phone call to Toynbee Hall, that was the idea of making the phone call. But because of the way she cut me down mid-sentence and everything else I felt quite silly, so they have that in their favour, they knew how to shut you down, and then your lack of confidence seems to come through.
>
> **LH**: Would you say that--, okay, that's interesting. So, like a lack of confidence in that situation dealing with professional sort of types?
>
> **PQ**: Yeah, because you can't always grasp the right words that will make it sound really effective, you know, you find you're floundering

for the right word you want to put in place there, and then not, and then you lose the flow of what you're saying, and so then it doesn't have the impact that it should have had. It can be intimidating.

Pam explained how she felt uncomfortable speaking publicly in the meeting. As discussed in Chapter Four, Pam was making a point to those in the room that there was little point in funding a website to promote mental health services in the local area when there was a severe lack of these services available. Pam's address was received by some in the room negatively and certain people tried to 'shut her down'. This knocked Pam's confidence and made her feel silly, unable to use the 'right words' to make her message resonate with the professionals in the room and be taken seriously. This highlights the difficulty that many citizens have in public speaking, especially when addressing professionals and decision-makers.

However, as mentioned in Chapter Four, Pam's address did resonate with certain other people in the room, with two people who worked in the community agreeing with Pam's point and speaking up to support her claim. One of these people was a representative from Health Watch Tower Hamlets, a resident-led health watchdog in the borough, who approached Pam after the meeting to arrange to meet separately to discuss how they could work together to address the issue locally (this meeting took place but due to the time constraints Pam and her team chose not follow-up on joint action with the person). This illustrates that despite Pam's feeling of intimidation at public speaking, she was successful in articulating a message that resonated with strangers and had the potential to lead to collective action with them. As such, Pam was able to practice her public speaking skills in a real-world setting with success. Indeed, I asked Pam whether she would speak out in a meeting like that again, given how she was made to feel by the woman who shut her down. She replied:

> Yeah, if I felt as strongly as I did at that point then I'd still say, even if it wasn't articulate or that they were still not listening, but I would still have to say, "But you're not looking at the problem as it is, you're not looking at the bigger picture. You're looking at your picture but you're not looking from our side.
>
> (Pat)

Thus, Pam's confidence in her public speaking skills was perhaps increased through participation on the expedition, honed through practice, with her skills being affirmed by her success in resonating with some of those she addressed. Coupled with communication and relationship-building, public speaking makes up part of a vital skillset that can allow citizens to engage in effective public work. On top of these, the expedition helped develop another set of skills that help people work collectively to address shared problems: teamwork, time-management, and negotiation.

5.1.2 Teamwork, Time-Management and Negotiation Skills

Teamwork is an important skill-set for citizens to hone if they are to collaborate with others to address shared concerns. At the basis of working as team are good communication and relationship-building skills, but on top of this are other skills such as working with different personalities and viewpoints, holding team members to account and ensuring that teams can stay committed to their goal and to each other. The expedition provided participants with the chance to develop their own sense of what effective teamwork looks like, most notably during phase two.

Reflecting on her experiences in the mental health team, Rachel made the following comments about teamwork:

> I guess the things you're united by, is the passion to do something, I'm talking about particularly Pam in this particular sense. She's very passionate about changing the local area and she felt really on it, with a good ownership about it. But then also sometimes it was quite difficult because, like in our own conscience we have ideas like 'okay this person is from a certain way of life, and therefore we need to give them more power in the group' Does that make sense? So, I felt sometimes a little bit like because I'd gone and had an education, I think that was actually talked about a few times, that what I said was being held onto a bit more, which I didn't think was justified at all. I felt that people who had far more experience of the local area should have had more say. But I think there's still the power dynamics that play and obviously the obvious one, if you're younger you're taken less notice of. And so, I think that was the difficulty with the diversity that people's roles came into play or were enforced on them, so like I say, like I felt like why are

people listening to me a bit more, just because like I went to university, which to be honest probably means I have far less life experience than the majority of people [laughs].

(Rachel)

Rachel's comments illustrate the difficulty of collaboration within teams of diverse people. Due to the plurality of experiences and viewpoints in society, with E14 acting as perhaps an extreme example of this, citizens may have to work with people who are positioned differently to them. This means that people have to learn the skills of respecting this difference and finding ways to accommodate it so that no one viewpoint or perspective dominates. In Rachel's case, she felt that her status in the team as the only person with a University degree meant that other team members, such as Pat, valued her contributions and ideas over their own. This was frustrating for Rachel as it prevented an equal flow of communication within the team, and put unnecessary pressure on herself.

Alongside managing different viewpoints, participants also reported difficulties in organising teamwork and ensuring that everyone stuck to the tasks they agreed to do. Shahid reported on his frustrations dealing with this in his team:

I think what we could have done better was being a bit more organised, meeting deadlines and making sure everyone else in the group knows what they're doing and when they have to do it by. Because I think at some point we were relying on other people to do stuff for us, but because we didn't really communicate well with them, we didn't know whether they'd written the email or written the letter, so we had to wait on them. I think that sort of wasted time as well, time and energy, I think, yeah, with communication between ourselves

(Shahid)

Shahid is reflecting on the difficulty of holding people to account and communicating effectively within a team whilst engaged in collective action. Coordinating the activities of different people to achieve a common goal is not easy, however learning from these difficulties allowed Shahid to develop his own ideas about what effective teamwork could look like, which he may be able to put into practice in future:

I think we should have sort of like given out different roles, so given--,
not just people, "Oh, you go off and do that, you go off and do that,"
but giving them extra roles and giving them a bit more responsibility so
they feel like they have a lot on their plate and then they have some sort
of drive to do it. Because I think if we've got one person who's in
charge and the rest of them are doing something else, I think they all--,
so they didn't seem unmotivated to do it, but if you get every one of
them to look at something specifically and then give them each a
specific role--, it's like we can have one person in charge but you can
have someone else in charge of making sure emails are sent, and then
another person who's in charge of making sure they know what to say
when they go for interviews, stuff like that

(Shahid)

Zalika was also able to develop some ideas about what makes effective teamwork by
reflecting on the inability of her team to stick together and commit to their task. When
asked what she learnt about teamwork through the anti-social behaviour team, she said:

Zalika: It taught me that I flourish when a team actually wants to do
something. But when they don't, I don't really know what you can do
in that sense, in that case. The thing is ultimately there wasn't really a
proper team or a culture that had been developed

Liam: How would you try to develop a culture? How could you get
people to commit to each other?

Zalika: First to just get to know each other as people. And separate it
from any of these issues or even politics itself. Just get to know each
other as people. Just develop a friendship type vibe. And then from
there go on to how the topic affects everyone and share stories. And
then just finding a ground of relatability. That would be the main thing.
Just anything that will evoke emotion and create bonds. From there,
people will care and wouldn't want to let each other down as well.

Thus, through experiencing the decline of her team on the expedition, Zalika
was able to develop an understanding of what could help build a strong team

in future. For her, this would involve building relationships between team members prior to any work being done so as to create bonds between people that would ensure that they would commit to working with each other when things got difficult.

In addition to teamwork skills, citizens who want to engage in public work also need to develop their ability to manage their time. As discussed in Chapter Four, most ordinary citizens have limited time to engage in politics due to their other commitments. Time management skills are thus essential tools for citizens to acquire. Participants on phase two of the expedition reported a development in their ability to manage their time more efficiently. For example, Ikram said:

> I think before I was a person who couldn't really … do lots of things at the same time. I thought I was a person that could only focus on one thing. But actually, this programme has showed me that maybe I'm able to do it, different things. Because I was revising for the exams, doing the homework's and essays, and then the additional work of the project, which for me was a big project. So, it really told me that if I tried to be--, tried to commit to something I can actually try to balance my time, even though sometimes it was a bit hard to do.

> (Ikram)

Ikram's comments are reflective of many of the younger participants' experiences on the expedition. Unlike the older participants, who are used to balancing work, family life and other commitments, for younger participants like Ikram, the expedition helped to hone their time management skills by challenging them to develop strategies to cope with increased commitments. In Ikram's case this has led to a realisation that he *is* capable of managing different commitments, thus illustrating how his sense of personal capacity has been increased through participation on the programme.

This may seem mundane, but the ability to manage one's time is an important civic skill. As an example, during the expedition Ikram, Amit and Shahid turned up 50 minutes late to a meeting they had organised between themselves and Veronica. Understandably, this was a huge inconvenience for

Veronica who had left work an hour earlier to meet them. The young men were apologetic when they arrived, and I challenged them to explain why they were so late. Veronica was understanding of the young men and the meeting began as intended, but if someone else was in Veronica's position they may have been less forgiving and left before the young men arrived. This would have meant that the meeting did not take place, resulting in a delay in action amongst the team. If events like this are common within teams of citizens, people will feel let-down by others and may grow disillusioned with their collective work, resulting in teams breaking down and public action not being taken. This highlights the importance of developing time management skills and the sense of duty to turn up, if people are to work effectively with others.

A final skill-set that the expedition sought to develop amongst participants is the ability to participate effectively in negotiation situations. During phase two of the expedition, participants took part in a training exercise around negotiation technique, and two of the teams (mental health and employment) were able to practice these techniques in negotiation settings through their campaigns. The comments below from Yamin and Veronica illustrate what they learnt about negotiation technique:

> The one that had the biggest influence on me actually was the negotiation training that we did. I was an observer in one part of it when another group was doing it, so to look at, I could actually sit back and look at the dynamics, so that was really interesting. And then being a participant in that session as well, feeling it from a personal background in so much as you go in with all good intentions and a really strong connection with your team and you're just blown out the water by the people who've got the power.

> (Veronica)

> I learnt something in the negotiation exercise, about time, how time is very important. So, say you've only got five minutes, you've got five minutes and, you know, obviously I saw how they were taking pictures and all of this, like just all excess. You come for one reason but--, you

go there, you come for ten different reasons, when those ten different reasons are irrelevant. I think time is a big thing, because time--, you know, life's too short, you can't really be wasting time

(Yamin)

The negotiation training exercise stuck with Veronica, and the role play allowed her to get a feel for being in a situation where one side has more power than the other, and the difficulties of trying to negotiate something from those people. For Yamin, this training helped him to assess the effectiveness of a meeting he was party to between representatives of his mosque and Tower Hamlets council to secure a renewed lease for their site in the face of complaints over noise from some local residents. Reflecting on the lessons from the expedition training, he criticised the actions of some from his mosque at the meeting, such as taking pictures as the meeting began and not concentrating the meeting on their sole objective of securing an extended lease. As such, the training has supported Yamin to develop his negotiation techniques, which may be useful for future public work in his life.

These civic skills are all important for enabling citizens to engage in public work. The expedition helped develop, uncover and hone these skills amongst its participants, but like any skill they are best developed and refined through continuous application and use. As well as these more tangible skills, the expedition also contributed towards the development of less tangible, but equally important civic capacities amongst participants. These capacities are the focus of the next section.

5.2 Cultivating Civic Capacities

5.2.1 Conceptualising Relational Power

As discussed in Chapter Four, the expedition sought to build the power of participants to address their self-defined issues. For reasons discussed previously (time-frame, lack of community before campaigns, difficulties in forming communities of affected interests), this was not achieved during the period of the expedition. However, the expedition also sought to provide participants with opportunities to learn about power. In doing this, the expedition employed the notion of 'relational power', using this conceptual framework to teach participants about how they could affect change around the issues that mattered to them.

In order to teach this concept, the power analysis tool described in Chapter Three was used. As a reminder, this tool helps people to identify all actors and agencies involved in creating or affecting a specific issue. The tool is intended as a means to allow citizens to identify the relative influence of these different actors in potentially addressing the issue and thus the relationships that need to be built to effect change. It is worth noting that in choosing to teach about power and social change through a relational framework, the expedition was imparting and making the case for a specific ontological outlook amongst participants. However, in contrast to forms of ideological PAR discussed in Chapter Two, the concept of relational power and the power analysis tool was not about trying to convince participants what the focus and goals of their problem-solving action should be, but rather trying to convince them of the value of conceptualising and approaching this action from a relational ontological perspective.

As discussed in Chapter Two, pragmatism has parallels with various strands of assemblage thinking which hold to a relational ontology and a view of the world as being made up of multiple assemblages of people and things, always in the process of becoming, which produce effects, connect to other assemblages and create realities, varying in spatial and temporal scope. As touched upon earlier, McFarlane (2011: 209) emphasises the value of approaching social issues through such an ontology:

> 'In its focus on process and emergence, the assemblage approach is not to describe a spatial category, output or resultant formation, but a process of doing, practice or events produced through different temporalities and contingencies…This has implications for critique…e.g. the analytics of assemblage offer one possible route for conceiving neoliberalism not as a universal coherent project, or even as a generalised hegemonic process characterised by local contingencies, but as a loose collection of urban processes and logics that may or may not structure urban change in different places'.

McFarlane employs assemblage thinking to criticise the notion of 'neoliberalism' as a universal system or hegemonic process. Instead he argues that viewing issues that are usually characterised as being one-and-the same as neoliberalism through a relational, assemblage ontology can heighten our political sensitivity by allowing us to see exactly how problems are produced through old and current relationships between people and

things. This helps identify how these relationships can be changed. This argument is similar to that made by J.K. Gibson-Graham (1996) about the hegemony of 'capitalocentricism' as a way of conceptualising capitalist economic practices. For them, viewing the problems associated with capitalist economic processes and practices as 'capital*ism*' serves to construct them as a dominant, monolithic system that requires a complete revolution to solve. Instead, they make the argument for a relational framing of what we know as capitalism to identify the specific practices and networks of capitalist economic production, alongside all of the other non-capitalist processes and practices of production. For them this helps to identify alternative modes of production to capitalist ones, and inspire a politics of expanding and creating post-capitalist ways of living.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the naturalistic inquiry advocated by pragmatism is committed to detailed empirical study of specific issues to find out what is happening on the ground. This is in contrast to rationalist forms of inquiry which seek to explain phenomena through the application of pre-existing theories and supposedly universal laws and truths, with empirical findings often being analysed through the lens of existing theories rather than on their own terms (Oakeshott, 1962). Yet, pragmatist inquiry is not about pursuing and revealing universal truths and laws, for these do not exist. It is about addressing issues, finding solutions through a combination of communication, new ideas and activity, and enacting these into being. As such, the relational framing of social issues employed by pragmatism helps to empower inquirers by allowing them to see issues not as the products of hegemonic, insurmountable systems, but as the outcomes of very particular sets of relationships and interactions, constantly being reproduced, and thus able to be changed. As such, the relational ontology of pragmatism and the relational framing of social issues acts as a lens to facilitate action for citizens.

However, unlike Gibson-Graham and those working in the Community Economies Collective, who deploy a relational framing of capitalism in order to help their research participants to adopt a particular pre-conceived idea of a desirable society or end-point of action (that is postcapitalist), the expedition deployed a relational framing of social issues in a more open manner, providing it as a tool to help participants take action to reach their own, self-defined goals. In doing this, framing issues through a relational ontology, using the power analysis tool, was intended to empower participants to pursue their own ideals and desires, rather than indoctrinating them to a specific set of ideals and visions. The relational framing was also used as a means to start with empirics rather than

representations when inquiring into issues: in this sense the idea was to identify the assemblages causing issues rather than re-assert supposedly foundational truths of grand narratives as explanatory factors for specific issues. This form of education about power was warmly received by participants of phase two. For example, when asked what she learnt about power and social change through participating on the expedition, Zalika replied:

> It showed me how important or like how effective you can be as a
> nobody in a sense, or like as someone who's not involved in politics
> like formally, how you can actually get heard. And when you organise
> a community or a group of people in an effective manner and you're
> able to like properly pinpoint and source who the necessary people are
> to connect to in the most efficient manner. It showed that like you can
> make a difference when you have these particular skills. So, for me it
> was just very--, I don't know. It feels kind of enlightening and
> refreshing really for me to see that--, 'cause I've always thought you
> can make a difference as an--, like as a normal person. But I just didn't
> really know how to do it. And yeah, it just opened my eyes really
>
> (Zalika)

Zalika reports how the programme, and the conceptual framing it employed, made her feel more able to engage in politics and make a difference about the issues she cares about. The concept of relational power was 'enlightening' for her as it showed her how she can go about addressing these issues by pinpointing the specific people involved around them and then building relationships to influence their actions. This 'opened Zalika's eyes' by showing her how social change is possible, challenging the idea that she, as a 'nobody', could effect change in the world. Equally, the concept of relational power proved to be useful for Rachel:

> The power analysis tool was really good, it's definitely stuck with me
> and I talk about it a lot actually. I remember talking about it on Monday
> for example: I live with my sister and her boyfriend and they're
> wanting to reconvert the house and they want permission to include the
> garage next to us which is completely empty and local residents can't
> access. But going through the normal process they just keep hitting a

brick wall and nobody's getting back to them, nobody's communicating with them. And literally we were just talking about needing to go directly to somebody who has the power to do something, and so just, even with a tiny little issue like this, it gives you a different way of thinking about why your current approach isn't working and how to approach it than just the normal route- for any different issue. I think also it made me feel a little bit more empowered for the fact that I especially with Occupy it was very much put in your head, or it's very true that money equals power, and that meant that big business leaders were more power than the government, and actually talking about people power and the potential to actually make change through making relationships not only with people high up, but also just other normal people- it was really good.

(Rachel)

Rachel found the power analysis tool useful for helping her identify the best way to address issues. The tool and approach have stuck with her as evidenced by her example of using it to help her sister gain permission to access the garage next door as she converts her house. This is a seemingly mundane and private issue, yet the point is that the relational framing of issues and power has provided Rachel with a different way of seeing how to achieve social change and solve problems. Moreover, framing power as the product of relationships that enable people act, the expedition also helped to make Rachel feel more 'empowered' as she now sees that the ability to influence decisions in the world does not just have to be linked to money, but can be built through building connections with fellow citizens. This is important, as Rachel may now be in a position where she is able to work with fellow citizens to address shared problems than she was before the expedition. In this sense, the expedition contributed towards developing a relational sense of power amongst participants that has the potential to increase their capacity to engage in public work.

Linked to an understanding of relational power is another capacity that the expedition cultivated amongst participants: being 'relational' and working with difference. These two capacities are essential for allowing citizens to be able to build relationships with other citizens in order to build their capacity to make a change.

5.2.2 Being Relational and Working with Difference

If the basis of public work and collective problem solving is relationships and community, then in order for citizens to be able to collaborate to address issues they must be open to building relationships with strangers who share those concerns. It is this openness to building relationships that I refer to as 'being relational' and which is a key capacity needed to facilitate public work within communities. Phase one of the expedition helped develop this sense of openness amongst participants as the comments from Eniola below reveal:

> When I was going out to interview people, like the first lady I spoke to, Joanne, I have never really talked to her before, just said to her 'Morning, morning!'. So, when I spoke to her she was telling me, and I didn't realise that she has so much going on in her life and the attention she gave to me I wouldn't even think she could give me that attention. And when speaking to her I realised that yeah, sometimes people are there, and you think they don't really have time. But if you don't approach them then there is no platform for you to come together. They are not just another person on the street. They are people that have got the same thing, some of them might be going through the same struggles, just like you, you know? They have the same pain, they have the same joy. You share a lot of things in common with people that you wouldn't know until you have a platform to sit down and talk. That was when I realised that. It does actually change you. It does change the way you see people generally. Especially when people, on something like this, where you have people from different communities and backgrounds. You know, we might be from different cultures, but we are still the same, we are still human. We go through struggles together, so you people go through the same thing. And somebody who passes you on the street, you see differently, it gives you a different mind-set. So, the people who I have known through this program, they have taken me as their very close person and I wouldn't ever have hoped to get something like that, so I've learnt that. You need to work on that-how to treat someone, and how to know they are not just another person.

(Eniola)

Eniola explains how through the process of getting to know her neighbours she has realised that other people have more in common with her than she initially thought. By having a one-to-one with to Joanne, Eniola was able to see that they both share things in common, which surprised her. Eniola was also surprised that Joanne was willing to sit down with her to talk. This realisation served to transform the way that Eniola views other people, strangers, in general. Instead of seeing people as disinterested individuals too wrapped up in their own life to want to connect with her ('just another person on the street'), she now sees them as people who may be similar to her, who have something to offer and something to be valued.

This sentiment was echoed by Rafi, who told me the following about what he learned about other people through participating in phase one of the expedition:

> If I could sum it up: you can't judge a book by its cover. That would sum it up. Because you can't just look at a person and have a view of them unless you start discussing and getting involved, then you really start to know them and understand how this person is. Just by looking at someone we shouldn't make a judgement, that's very wrong. The first day when I was in there, I look around the room and see different people and we can just look at someone and this, that, and this about them because they look a particular way. But we shouldn't base our opinion on this, it says a bit about a person, the way they look, but it's not 100%, it won't give you a full picture of that person

(Rafi)

Through getting to know a diverse group of strangers, Rafi had learnt 'not to judge a book by its cover'. Indeed, this phrase was used by a number of participants in interviews to describe how participating in the programme had changed their view of other people. This illustrates how participating in the project helped develop an openness to strangers amongst participants by cultivating a sensibility that values the unique personhood of every individual and gets beyond pre-conceptions and stereotypes which often prevent people from wanting to connect with different others. This capacity was developed through the sharing of stories amongst a diverse group of people, and is an important enabler of further community building, laying the foundations for public work. As Julie

put it, the capacity of being relational can increase the desire to build relationships with other people and increase the value that citizens place on community. When Julie was asked what she learned, she replied:

> **Julie**: What did I learn? That it's good to be around people, when they are surrounding you.
>
> **Liam**: How do you mean?
>
> **Julie**: Well if you were on your own with a parrot on your shoulder it would be difficult. That's why we need to go outside and meet people, I liked this course because I met people and they were all different, so I can look what's different and hear something new, because people are not so open when you don't know them, only when you know them do they open up, and it's good.

In addition to being open to relating to strangers, another key civic capacity is the ability to work with people who are different to you. As touched upon in Chapter Four, in pluralistic societies, this capacity is crucial as it facilitates communication between those who inhabit different worlds and have different sets of experiences, ideas and beliefs. The ability to work across these differences is essential to allow citizens to address issues that might affect people from different worlds, facilitating the creation of diverse publics. It is also important for allowing communication between those in different worlds to address conflict between those worlds (Dryzek and Niemeyer, 2006). The following comments from Yamin and Zalika illustrates how the expedition enabled participants to develop the capacity to work with and across differences:

> **Liam**: How did you find working with different people?
>
> **Yamin**: Well, it was alright. It was quite tough obviously, being from mainly a Bangladesh community, they [other people on the team] don't really mix with people like me, and obviously I found that tough. But obviously with me, obviously as each session happened I got used to it. At first maybe not, but obviously the more I hang around with them, it sort of changes.
>
> **Liam**: How did that happen? How does that work? What's changed?

Yamin: I just got more used to it because we did more of the sessions and I think the more we did them, I think I got more comfortable. Especially if you live round here, it's hard because there are so many, like Bangladeshis, especially where I grew up, in Stepney Green, and I don't think I had any non-Bangladeshi friends, so obviously it's tough. But at the end of the day, you know, it's not only just Bengalis that are here--, it's more than just Bengalis. You just get used to it, don't you?

Yamin explains how he gradually got used to working in a team with people from different backgrounds and communities to him. He did not have much, if any experience, in mixing with and collaborating with people who were not Bangladeshi, such as Pam and Rachel. As such, he found it difficult to do this at first but over time he become more and more comfortable. Thus, simply through sustained contact and communication with different others, Yamin developed his capacity to work with people from different worlds to him. This is an important capacity for Yamin to possess, and for wider democracy, as it gives him the potential to engage in public work with different people to address issues that they may have in common. Thus, the capacity to work across difference increases the ability of citizens living in areas with diverse communities to address their most pressing issues. On top of increasing people's sense of comfort in working with different people for a shared goal, the expedition also helped develop participants' levels of respect and tolerance of difference, as these comments from Zalika help illustrate:

This has made me realise to be less judgemental and accept things for what they are and what people have achieved, rather than think in my head of something that I've done, which is better than that. So valuing people's participation, valuing what they're saying. So yeah, it's helped me try and be a bit less judgemental and realise that everyone has value in what they're saying

(Zalika)

Zalika reveals that through participating in the project, and hearing stories of other people who are different to her, she has become less judgemental of others. She has learnt to value the experiences and contributions of other people, accepting them 'for what they are' rather than ranking them against her own experiences and contributions. This acceptance and value for other people's achievements and contributions, and the

decline in her desire to judge, hints at the development of a greater sense of tolerance in Zalika for different viewpoints and perspectives. This is an important capacity in pluralistic societies: the ability listens to different viewpoints in a non-judgemental way, in order to understand them on their own terms and recognise the value that those expressing these viewpoints hold in them. This may lead to consensus on values or ideas, or conflict, it does not matter. What is important is the cultivation of an attitude of being open to conversation with and respecting the legitimacy of the positions of others (Dryzek and Niemeyer, 2006). By no means is this capacity fully developed in Zalika, or indeed any citizen. But her comments highlight a slight change in her attitude towards the viewpoints of others becoming more respectful of them, which is important for allowing meaningful communication across difference in pluralistic societies.

5.2.3 Empowerment, Emotions and a Sense that We Can Make a Difference

Through developing new skills, understandings and relationships participants on the expedition reported a growth in their self-confidence. Many of them overcame fears or obstacles through participation on the programme, helping to develop their confidence in their ability to act effectively as citizens to address the issues that matter most to them. Drawing on John Dewey (1938), Lynch (2016) defines empowerment as a realisation amongst individuals that they are able to impact their own reality, triggered by experiences that provide the knowledge that this is possible. As such, confidence in one's agency in the world reflects a sense of empowerment amongst the expedition participants.

The expedition helped to empower participants with the belief that they could make a difference in their lives in a number of ways. The primary way of doing this was through the story-telling project on phase one of the expedition. Ganz (2011) argues that stories can be powerful tools in helping to overcome the following inhibitors to action for citizens:

- **Inertia** (habitual patterns of behaviour, routine, autopilot mode) can be overcome by a sense of **Urgency** (a sense of commitment and energy for change)
- **Apathy** (a lack of concern or interest) can be overcome by a sense of **Anger** and indignation when our values are violated
- **Fear** of acting to make a change can be overcome by a sense of **Hope** that change is possible

- **Isolation** and its associated feeling of powerlessness can be overcome be a sense of **Solidarity** in which one feels part of a collective with a shred identity
- **Self-Doubt** in one's ability to make a change can be overcome by a sense that **You Can Make a Difference (YCMAD)**- happened through overcoming challenging tasks

Ganz argues that in order to overcome these barriers to citizen action, public narratives or stories can help by translating values into the motivation to act. The E14 expedition served to help some participants overcome some of these barriers during phase one of the project. For example, the following quote from Sherry illustrates how the process of sharing and creating stories about E14 sparked a sense of urgency for change in her:

> **Liam**: Has doing the project changed the way you see the area?
>
> **Sherry:** It has. I'll tell you what it's done. It's made me a bit panicky. It's made me panicky that the area is changing so fast and that these people are being lost and their stories are being lost. Although what it's made me realise is that this is just one group of people. How many other stories are there out there that we didn't get to hear because there wasn't enough time to. You know, we should have had *10* each, it was hard enough getting 3, but you know, all those other stories that are out there but aren't being heard. So that's what it made me think, that this just scratched the surface really

Sherry felt more 'panicky' after participating in the story-telling project as it heightened a sense that the area is undergoing change which is leading to the loss of the types of people who were included in the book. This reflects a sense that the change occurring in E14 is not being driven by those people, leading to a re-focus of desire for Sherry to gain control over this change. As such, participating in the programme appears to have reaffirmed Sherry 's commitment to the area, as illustrated by her desire to find the stories of even more people in the area and build upon the work of the expedition which only 'scratched the surface'.

Another way in which the story-telling project helped empower people with a sense of confidence in their ability to make a change was by challenging fear and apathy with a sense of hope that change is possible. For example, Janice revealed how participating on the expedition inspired her to run for shop steward at her workplace union:

Janice: So, with Pat's story about being a parent governor, it was all about you know, not feeling good enough and her story was all about overcoming that and stepping out of her comfort zone, and actually she said at the end 'if nobody did anything then nothing would ever get done', you know and that's really inspired me, because it's made me, I suppose, it has made me feel much more politically hopeful and you know I've always been quite political anyway but rather than not do anything I actually feel more inclined to take action. So, I've been elected as the shop steward here for Unison!

Liam: Have you?

Janice: Yeah! Because I think partly to do with the project, it just made me sort of think, and you know I've always been involved in the tenant's stuff on my estate, I just thought, you know I've got to that point in my life where if *I* don't do it, no other bugger's going to do it. You know, you've got to get up and *do* something, and just the thing like it doesn't have to be a big action, it can be something small but if it makes a difference it's really, really important that people stand up and be counted. Especially now- so it has, you know, even a jaded old community worker like myself has been inspired by it!

(Janice)

Janice reflects on how hearing the story from her colleague Pat, at George Greens School, about how she overcame fear and self-doubt to become a parent governor at the school inspired to overcome her own sense of fear or self-doubt about being shop steward for her union. Pat's story helped motivate Janice to overcome these fears by providing an example of somebody just like her who had done something similar. This highlights how the stories created during phase one of the expedition acted as a source of hope for participants, and underlines the importance of having relatable characters within stories in order to realise their potential to effect an emotional response in the audience (Ganz, 2011).

Indeed, this ability to relate is key to realising the transformative impact of stories. Ganz (2011) argues that stories only work in motivating action if the audience are able to identify with the protagonist. The act of identification allows the audience to experience

the emotional content of stories through empathy, which can help move us to act by tapping into our core values. Following Ganz, the emotional aspect of stories is key in allowing them to inspire action amongst citizens because emotions and emotional sensations are the medium through which people experience their core values. As such, emotions provide information about the way we ought to live our lives, which people can choose to act on or not, as our decisions are ultimately based on our values.

However, lessons from applying Ganz' ideas in E14 suggest that he might overemphasise the transformative power of stories to facilitate public work on their own, when in practice it is the relationships that sharing stories helps to initiate and strengthen that have a bigger impact on peoples' sense of agency. This is illustrated by a quote from Eniola:

> I've discovered a lot of things in me. That I'm empowered, I've got more confidence, you know. I think I'm more than what I used to be before, so I'm very happy that I got to do the course. It has made me realise me hidden potentials that I didn't know I had. I have learnt a lot about myself, you know, if I begin to say things that have happened to me lately. You know, if I had not got onto this course I would not have been able to sort myself out. Like meeting you, just imagine that you were not in the equation, you know with the series of things that happened, I don't know how I would have got through that. You know when I called you, immediately you wanted to see me, and I saw you, we talked about things, the way you sat down and tried to make sure that I was OK, tried to sort me out, took a lot of time. So, I just feel like I have more people now, it is not just myself and my family. I have people that actually have my best interests at heart, so just makes you think 'Ok, if people care so much about you, why don't you care about yourself, and try and make people treat you right?' And I realised, yeah- I can actually be whoever I want to be. Because people believed in me, I didn't know people believed in me or cared so much. So, everybody who I've spoken to that I've met on this course, they have given me that. And that is what has made me survive in what has happened to me lately. And I think about it sometimes, like 'Oh, I am strong!' and I'm often stronger than I think.

(Eniola)

Eniola is referring to difficulties she had been having in her personal life over the past few years. These difficulties centred around her marriage and her relationship with her husband. From personal correspondence Eniola made it clear that she was unhappy with this relationship and felt trapped within it, lacking the independence and respect that she thought she deserved. Shortly after phase one of the expedition ended, Eniola decided to leave her husband and move with her children to a women's shelter. Thanks to the relationship that we had built through our one-to-ones I was able to support Eniola as she made this decision by sparing the time to listen to her and help think things through. This was not something I had ever envisaged happening and as a 23-year-old man I felt hugely out of my depth, but out of respect to our relationship I felt obliged to provide a helping hand, even if this meant just listening to Eniola's concerns. For Eniola, this helped her see herself as stronger, owing to having more social connections that could enable her to do the things she wanted to do. Thanks to the relationship she built with myself and others during the expedition, Eniola felt empowered to make the difficult decision to leave her husband and follow a path that could lead to a better life for her.

Whilst this is an example of action inspired by participating in the expedition taken from someone's personal life, this incident helps to illustrate the value of relationships for contributing towards people's self-confidence in taking action to change their reality. Eniola felt stronger through the relationship she developed with me, which allowed her to take risky action within a context of fear, self-doubt and uncertainty. Moreover, building new relationships with people helped to challenge her sense of isolation, having only her family to talk to about her personal issues where perhaps the opinions of those outside the family would be more beneficial. These relationships provided the support to enable Eniola to make a difficult decision and take a course of action which previously she deemed too difficult to take. Within public life, this illustrates how having more, and stronger relationships with fellow citizens can contribute to one's sense of capacity to act and make change as these relationships make us feel stronger and powerful.

Finally, the expedition helped to contribute towards the empowerment of participants by challenging self-doubt in one's ability to make a change with a sense of 'you can make a difference' (YCMAD). Ganz (2011) argues that people develop a sense of YCMAD when they overcome challenging tasks and begin to develop an awareness of their

capabilities and potentials. The expedition helped develop this amongst participants by providing them with a number of challenging tasks to test their abilities through. For example, when asked how he developed through participating on phase two of the expedition Amit stated how his confidence in his ability to speak with other people and communicate effectively with those who have more authority grew:

Amit: I think I've got more confident as well.

Liam: Confident?

Amit: Yeah, in speaking to other people.

Liam: How did that happen?

Amit: Because of meeting up all the time. I think we met up at least every few days, and trying to tell everyone our points, and what we'd been doing helped. Also meeting with people that have more authority than us, this helped to develop my confidence because I started to speak with people that I didn't know, and I had to try to show my points in a clearer way.

Liam: Ok, and you ran for head boy, didn't you?

Amit: I did.

Liam: Why did you do that?

Amit: Because again I wanted to represent everyone's voice. But eventually I didn't get it, I just got the deputy position

Liam: Deputy, that's good still, very good. Did you always plan to run for head boy?

Amit: I didn't have this as the plan, I just did it, when they said it who wants to do it I thought maybe I could do it. But I wasn't planning this because I'm more of a science-y person so I'm not normally doing that. I think also being involved in this project helped me a bit, because it made me think that I can actually do something like this, and also that I really enjoy doing stuff like this.

Amit's words highlight how through overcoming challenges, such as speaking with new people, helped develop his sense of self-belief that he was able to engage in this sort of public work effectively. The expedition thus provided Amit, and the other participants, with the opportunity to test their skills and capacities and gain a sense of their potentials. For Amit, this resulted in him running for Head Boy at his school, something he had not originally planned to do but was in part enabled to through the confidence developed on the expedition. This experience helped to generate new knowledge for Amit about his own capabilities, which he is able to act upon to engage in other forms of public work.

Following Ganz, I want to argue that the sense of YCMAD, as illustrated by Amit, can be with a sense of 'we can make a difference' (WCMAD). Given the collective nature of public work, WCMAD describes a belief in not just the agency of oneself, but the *collective* agency of citizens. On the expedition a sense of WCMAD is seen in the belief amongst participants in the capacities and potential of their fellow participants, as the following quotes from Rachel and Shahid illustrate:

> My opinion of the abilities of someone at school to make change and
> to really be passionate about wider issues than just their groups of
> friends at school, it's changed my perspective on that a little bit. I
> think that's a general problem in society that we don't take the word
> of other people seriously enough. I think the most important thing I've
> seen is that people have lots of passion to actually do something,
> yeah, and that came from everybody like--, it didn't really matter
> somebody's background like that, that came in different ways and
> different forms from different people
>
> (Rachel)

> At first, before starting the project, I didn't think there would be that
> many people coming to address any situation or anything like that, but
> to see the numbers, like more than eight people, was quite--, I think it
> was quite hopeful to see that there *are* other people who have
> identified different issues in the local community
>
> (Shahid)

For both Rachel and Shahid, taking part in the expedition has helped them to see that other people, aside from themselves, are passionate about making change in their community. This was somewhat of a surprise for both participants, but it has contributed to a sense that other citizens are willing and able to get involved in addressing local issues. This perception of others is important as it challenges ideas associated with the cult of the expert that most fellow citizens are too lazy, ignorant or apathetic to get involved in politics, and contributes to a sense of WCMAD based on the notion of potential collective agency.

To conclude, the expedition helped develop the civic skills and capacities of participants in a number of ways. It helped develop a number of useful skills needed for citizens to engage effectively in public work to address shared problems, such as communication, relationship-building, public speaking, teamwork and time-management. It also contributed towards the development of individual and collective capacities which enable citizens to act collectively for change, such as an understanding of relational power, based on a relational-ontological framing of social issues; an openness to relating to strangers and working with different others; and a sense of individual and collective empowerment.

As such the expedition helped to cultivate democratic political citizens, equipped with the skills and capacities to engage with others to address shared problems and attempt to shape reality to meet their own values, desires and visions of the good life. In doing so, the expedition made a contribution towards addressing the democratic deficit by providing the means through which a group of ordinary citizens could develop the skills and belief needed to engage more fully in public life and stake a greater claim in the decisions made that affect them and their communities. This was a small contribution, working with a handful of citizens in one postcode of London, but the impacts for these people were significant. This points towards the need for other interventions across the UK where citizens can come together to develop their skills through real-world, hands-on practice.

This is essential for the health of democracy in the UK, as this type of intense, small-scale work has impacts that stretch beyond those directly worked with in particular projects. This is because when citizens are 'activated' through these projects they are likely to apply their skills and beliefs in wider society, sharing them with others and

inspiring more people to engage in public work. The examples of Janice becoming shop steward and Amit becoming deputy head boy go to illustrate this. Yet, these are just two examples as other participants also took more of a role in public life after taking part in the expedition programmes: Eniola joined her children's primary school parents' association; Rafi became chair of his workplace trade union; Shahid became head boy at his school; and Yamin and Fahim played a part in a campaign to save their local mosque from closure. This goes to show how the development of just some citizens can have a knock-on effect for others as people enter into public life, working with others to achieve common goals, continuing processes of learning and self-development.

5.3 Conclusion

To conclude, in spite of the difficulties encountered with the expedition approach to research as discussed in Chapter Four, this Chapter has helped to reflect on the more positive aspects of a process pragmatist approach to research and efforts to foster civic engagement. The learning amongst participants highlights the value of local opportunities for people to engage in public work, inquiry and collective problem-solving. This value is for individuals, communities, and wider democracy, by allowing individual citizens and communities to develop a range of skills and capacities that can help them become more effective democratic citizens in their futures. This type of learning is about enabling people to develop tools to use to help pursue their own specific interests and those of their communities, and enact their own vision of a good life into being. This is in contrast with much of the educational aims seen in other forms of participatory research within disciplines like Geography, where the goal of education is to create subjectivities that align with pre-existing ontological outlooks and political projects and goals. I hope the discussion above shows the potential of a different type of education in which learning the *means* of social change or problem-solving are of more importance than learning or buying into a set of *ends* of this change.

In providing an education for democracy, rather than education as a form of governance, the process pragmatist approach also helps to illustrate ways in which social pluralism can be respected through PAR and engaged research interventions. If such interventions can help all involved develop useful skills to help them re-make the world, regardless of social identity, political views or ontological outlook, then perhaps this means that those with different ideas about how the world should be can use these skills to engage in dialogue, cooperation, conflict and dissent with their fellow citizens in order to fuel a

healthy democratic culture in our societies. The E14 expedition shows how such an education can be practiced, although it was by no means perfect and further experimentation and application of the methods and ideas used here can help to illuminate other, perhaps more effective ways of cultivating effective democratic citizens.

Indeed, standalone projects like the E14 expedition are not sufficient to contribute towards democratic renewal through citizen skills development alone, and as discussed in Chapter Four, a more holistic, long-term approach is needed. Following the lessons of Chapter Four, the need for strong relational foundations for this type of work is essential, and if universities are to play a role in transforming themselves into mediating institutions of democracy then perhaps their most valuable contribution might be in helping to build community, sociality and trust in collaboration with those citizens and institutions who share their local place. Moreover, the difficulties of respecting pluralism in this work require serious attention from universities. On the one hand, academics/organisers might need to find ways of facilitating meaningful discussion and dialogue between those with conflicting worldviews and values if they aim to respect social plurality by bringing different people together. On the other hand, if we feel that historical divides and differences are too big to try and dissolve or cross, then those working in universities will need to rethink their relationship to those many citizens whose values sit outside of, and at times at odds with, those of the academic orthodoxy. This itself requires a long-term commitment to building relationships with citizens and communities, around shared interests in the places they inhabit, in order to facilitate the possibility of listening and mutual understanding. Finally, such a long-term and relational approach is needed in order to help build the power of citizens to be able to have an effect in solving complex and deep-rooted social issues in the world.

It is these lessons for universities that are addressed in the next and final empirical chapter. Chapter Six reflects on conversations held with academic practitioners at a range of community-university partnerships in the UK and USA. These conversations were sparked by an interest in assessing the potential of these institutional partnerships between universities and (in the majority) their local, place-based communities. These initiatives are designed to help universities act as mediating institutions of democracy by contributing towards building community and embedding universities in community with citizens, taking a long-term approach to collective, citizen-led problem-solving and

helping to transform the culture of higher education to challenge the cult of the expert and the dominance of an academic orthodoxy in knowledge that is detached from the lived experiences of many ordinary citizens.

Chapter Six: Institutionalising Process Pragmatism: Community-University Partnerships as Vehicles for Democratic Renewal

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter Four I argued that sociality and community are essential foundations for citizen-led public work and the development of problem-solving publics. Pre-existing relationships, regular interaction, familiarity and a sense of shared identity were all important factors that can facilitate public work. I also argued that shared place plays an important role in this by acting as a common object and context around and through which citizens can relate to each other and develop shared meanings to facilitate collective action. I suggested that one of the key reasons preventing citizens from working together to address shared problems is the lack of sociality and community existing in specific places, and argued that in order to address this, sustained, intentional work to deepen sociality and local ties between people was needed.

Additionally, the chapter highlighted the difficulty of respecting the principle of pluralism in pragmatic inquiry and pointed towards the need for universities to reach out and listen to those with alternative, and perhaps challenging, worldviews and beliefs. This work is not easy or comfortable but would require a long-term investment in relationships with those we (as academics) deem to be different to ourselves to facilitate respectful communication and attempts at developing understanding.

Finally, I argued that within a context of the professionalization of politics and a culture of expert decision-making, it is extremely difficult for citizens to generate enough power and influence to effect change around deep-seated and complex social issues within a time-limited project. I argued that building power effectively requires identifying and then creating communities of directly affected interests to tackle specific issues; amplifying citizen voice and increasing the status of citizen's knowledge to combat the power of professionals; and finding the time for ordinary citizens to engage in public work.

In Chapter Five I sought to show how, in spite of the limited effects achieved by the expedition at addressing social issues, participation in public work can help to develop the civic skills and capacities of participants, enabling them to play a fuller role in public life and participate in collective, problem-solving action. I thus argued that universities

have an important role to play in providing opportunities for citizens to develop these attributes by providing an education for democracy. As such, I believe that the lessons from the expedition highlight the potential for universities to become mediating institutions of democracy and contribute towards civic renewal.

As explained previously, this work is less effective when contained within standalone research projects such as PhD projects. In order for universities to realise themselves as more civic and democratically-oriented institutions, there is a need for a long-term commitment to partnering with citizens and the communities they live in, as part of a strategic effort to generate the relational foundations of public work and build the capacity of ordinary people to address the issues that matter to them. As discussed in Chapter Two, universities in the UK and USA are beginning to develop such strategies through the establishment of community-university partnerships (CUPs). These bodies are long-term, institutionalised partnerships between universities and communities (variously defined by place, identity and interest- see Hart et al, 2009; Mulvihill et al, 2011) that seek to facilitate teaching, research and student volunteering opportunities for mutual benefit that seek to address the social issues identified by ordinary citizens (Harney and Wills, 2017). CUPs' activities tend to be based on the principle of reciprocity, involving the two-way flow of knowledge, information, resources and benefits, and as such represent potential vehicles for developing the problem-solving capacity of citizens and bringing unorthodox voices into the academy (Pearce and Pearson, 2007).

This chapter reflects on the potential of CUPs to help turn universities into mediating institutions of democracy. It does this first by looking at how CUPs invest and embed themselves in local places to build relationships and community over the long-term. I then turn to the question of whether CUPs help to empower and build the capacity of citizens to act to solve their own issues, or simply serve to reproduce the cult of the expert and citizen powerlessness by doing things *for* them. Thirdly I consider how CUPs can bring in alternative knowledge into the academy to challenge the academic orthodoxy and provide those citizens who feel marginalised from mainstream politics and culture with opportunities to articulate and act upon their own worldviews, experiential knowledge and values. In order to do this, I draw on an analysis of 16 original interviews with academics and staff working with 15 different CUPs in the UK and USA (see Chapter Three).

6.2 Bridging the Gap: How CUPs can Embed themselves in Communities and Places to Develop Relational Foundations for Public Work

In a recent report published on CUPs (Harney and Wills, 2017), I argued that the way that these bodies initiate relationships between people in universities and ordinary citizens is an important factor in determining the impact they can have on civic renewal. The report identified three models of engagement employed by the CUPs I interviewed: 'front door'; 'networked'; and 'embedded'. The first of these refers to CUPs where the primary mode of initiating relationships between the university and communities is via a 'front door' that has been created for the community to make inquiries of the university. The second of these, 'networked', describes CUPs that are built around a limited number of pre-existing relationships between academics and community organisations, with CUP staff working to nurture and support these relationships The third categorisation, 'embedded', refers to CUPs that embed staff members in particular geographical areas to play an organising role in which they work to build relationships with citizens, identify common issues, train people in leadership skills and connect them to those with similar interests within the university to facilitate collaborative projects.

For CUPs to play an effective role in contributing towards democratic renewal in modern societies, I want to argue that the embedded approach to engaging with citizens yields the best results. To illustrate, compare the following quotations from Bethan Prosser at Brighton University's Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP) and Bob Brown from Michigan State University's University Outreach and Engagement (UOE) team:

> The help desk was part of the original model. If we want to work with communities if they've got an idea, or if people want to access the university in some way, how do they go about that? So, the helpdesk assumes that kind of certain point of access for people to come and have a conversation at the staffing point. And that's pretty much what it still is: it's a place where people can bring ideas.

> (Bethan Prosser, Brighton University CUPP)

> I build relationships here in Flint with institutions, with grass root organisations, and with residents. And through those relationships and that work that I do, we build a community with people here that I'm able then

to engage the university into. So, it's all relationship based, and it revolves round trying to have the resident voice be a full voice in the effort. The other type of engagement work is all possible, but you then have to find really good community navigators to partner with because you're doing all the work with them off of their social capital, in a community that you're not really entrenched in or know about that much, you're just coming in from the outside. It's possible but it's a different form of engagement.

(Bob Brown, Michigan State University UOE)

Brighton University's CUPP reflects the front door approach to initiating partnerships between the university and citizens. The CUPP has a helpdesk model where Bethan and her colleagues are employed to respond to queries and advances made by citizens. The helpdesk acts as a contact point within the university and is a place where citizens are encouraged to bring their ideas for potential collaborations. In contrast, the UOE team represent an embedded approach to developing community-university partnerships. As Bob explains, this approach is all about the university intentionally going out into local communities to build relationships with citizens. In this sense, the CUP staff play a similar role to that of community organisers, working to build communities of affected interests around particular shared issues in order to find solutions, then engaging the appropriate people within the university to support the problem-solving process where necessary.

The difference between the two approaches is stark. On one hand it is expected that citizens will come to the university with a clear sense of the issues they wish to address and ideas about how the university can support them with this. On the other, it is assumed that citizens may not be in a position to approach the university for support in problem-solving and instead the need for the university to help organise citizens around shared interests is recognised. Whilst, the front door approach goes some way to opening up the resources of universities to support citizen action for change, as Fischer et al (2004) argue, when civil society organisation is weak, these models do not go far enough to help address ordinary citizens' issues. Indeed, Wills (2016b) argues that a community's capacity to come together to address social issues rests upon the combination of human capital, organisational resources and social relationships and when these elements are

weak it is difficult to proceed, and more organisation is needed. This means that front door approaches may only serve the interests of the most organised elements of civil society, or established charities and third sector organisations who claim to represent the interests of particular groups of people.

As such, from the perspective of civic renewal, it is clear that the embedded approach offers the most effective model for CUPs to operate. This is because they recognise the relational foundations of public work and the need to develop these foundations in order for larger numbers of citizens to be able to work collectively to identify and address their common concerns. As Bob's comments illustrate, embedded CUPs invest the time and energy to build relationships and social capital in a particular place, rooting its staff and the university as an institution in that social capital in order to build the capacity of ordinary citizens to act.

Resonating with the arguments made in Chapter Four, place plays an essential role for embedded CUPs, each of which aims to root itself in relationships within a defined geographical area. The following quotes from Mark Charlton from De Montfort University's Square Mile programme illustrates the importance of taking a place-based approach to developing CUPs:

> During the first year I was doing this it felt like going to work and getting punched in the face, going back to work and doing it all over again but then by year 2 or 3 you are so warmly received because people trust you and people understand you. You know, and it is very much my opinion that when we went into this community and started to say we're going to do lots of his stuff, some of which was quite cool and quite noble, trying to help people get into jobs etc., lots of people just thought that here's a multi-million pound organisation wading into our community with all these projects, and they're going to want us to pay for it, they're going to take money from us, somehow, and they're going to over-run the area with their own agenda.
>
> (Mark Charlton, De Montfort University Square Mile Programme)

Mark illustrates the importance of building trust between citizens and people from universities. Reflecting the disconnect between universities and ordinary citizens, at first, Mark was regarded with suspicion from local people who thought that the university was

there to take advantage of them. People did not understand the university or its intentions and this made the initial year of setting up the CUP extremely difficult. However, Mark explains how this suspicion was overcome:

> It was actually going out and becoming familiar faces in the community that enabled us to get champions and enabled a flow of communication. If you try to ring a university as a member of the public to try to get hold of anyone, it's a nightmare, they wouldn't know where to start. But if they can stop you in the street and say 'Hey, I went to that thing and didn't like it, or you should be doing this for our kids', and you go back to them in 6 months' time then you can make attempts to respond to the community. But it was a very grassroots attempt…the benefit of doing it in a small concentrated area is that you will be become known in that area, and be able to demonstrate impact and outputs in that area.

> (Mark Charlton, De Montfort University Square Mile Programme)

Following Studdert (2017) and Calhoun (1983), Mark's comments highlight the importance of sociality, familiarity and regular face to face contact in facilitating collective action. Mark entered the community in Leicester as an outsider from the university and it was only through coming back to the area and being present that he was able to develop a flow of communication with local people. By focussing on just one place, rather than seeking to work in a wider geographical area, Mark was able to focus his efforts on a limited number of people and thus quickly build up the trust and mutual understanding needed for the university and community to become partners.

This focussed, place-based approach has paid dividends for Mark's team and De Montfort University. The Square Mile programme is widely respected locally and has garnered much national and international attention. This is because, as well as tapping into the sociality and networks that already existed in the area, the Square Mile also helped to deepen and create new acts of sociality through being an active, and regular presence in the area. The following comments from Mark illustrate one way that this was achieved:

> Once you get through that really difficult patch, the trust starts to grow, the projects start to grow, the recognition starts to grow. We bought all the students bright pink t-shirts with square mile on them too, we made them

bright pink so that when we go to family fun days, or when they're running classes in the community etc. we're instantly recognisable in crowds and things like that. They've became a real thing that people connected with and recognised immediately that they're from the university and here to help. So, having an identity was quite important…

(Mark Charlton, De Montfort University Square Mile Programme)

All students who volunteer on Square Mile projects in the community are provided with bright pink t-shirts to wear, this raises the visibility of the university in the community, allowing local residents to recognise them regularly and see them in a positive light. This in turn helps promote the development of relationships between university students and residents, deepening levels of sociality in the area and embedding university people into this sociality and local social networks. Thus, the act of being recognised by local people has helped further embed the university into the local area, enabling it to have a significant impact.

Another benefit of taking an embedded, place-based approach to developing CUPs is that it enables the identification of issues that really matter to people and for the creation of communities of directly affected interests to address those issues. The following exchange with Bob Brown illustrates this:

Liam: How do the issues from the community get articulated and identified? What sort of processes are there?

Bob: So, there's not a formal process that we go through to do that. One of the things is when you're deeply engaged in a community you know all the time what the issues are, and across Michigan and the mid-West and industrial cities that a lot of the industry has gone away, they're real similar…. so, when you know those things it becomes, what is the more critical thing that people are talking about? And where do we see opportunity, not for research but opportunity to make a difference to the community collectively as university people, as businesses, what are we going to try to do next? And when you're engaged in a community and if you get the time to become part of various community groups, these things come to the surface. So, with us there's never a problem of identifying issues, it's the other way around, there's too many issues and the problem

is trying to find all the resources, you know, to be able to work on all the things that need to be worked on.

In contrast to the E14 expedition, which operated at too large a spatial scale and thus was not embedded enough in any one area to properly get a sense of the issues that were affecting people directly, Bob has become much more deeply embedded in communities in Flint. Bob is firmly part of local social networks, having worked in the area and volunteered in his spare time for over 18 years, having many strong relationships with local people. This means that Bob is more able to help identify the issues that matter most to local people and work out exactly who is affected by the issue to enable him to build a team of people around it to begin to address it. It is this place-based, long-term approach that has allowed Bob to be in this position, which points towards the need for a long-term, embedded approach to make process pragmatism work. Moreover, Bob's work at Michigan State expands the role of the university beyond research and teaching, transforming the institution into a part of the local community, who can use its resources to make a difference in whatever way the community requires, helping to build civic capacity (Boyle, 2015).

As well as allowing a more meaningful way to identify issues to take action on, a long-term, place-based approach to this work also allows for more effective action to be taken to effect change around these issues. Mhairi McVicar from Cardiff University's Community Gateway explains why this is the case:

> We've got one focused group of community partners who are quite broad, from individuals to organisations. So, when somebody comes to us, such as next week I'm going to have a meeting with somebody from the Pharmacy department who wants to run a project with students about young carers in the community, we already have contacts for them and we already have projects that deal with mental health and wellbeing that they can link into, and so if we have a mental health and wellbeing day within the pavilion that we've rented they can be part of that. So, you can start to pull together resources, you can start to develop longer term identified partners who could start to work with others, let them know about other similar projects that could inform what they're doing. We're also finding that year on year work starts to build on each other…because you're

focused in one area you start to see the tangible results build. For example, the biggest project we're working on is supporting the community in renovating the old Sports Pavilion. It's taken us two years to get a license to be in the building and so we're physically in the building now and we've managed to renovate it temporarily, but we're supporting the community and trying to do a community asset transfer to take it over…So it's taken time to build those contacts, but the geographic focus of this meant that you've got continuity amongst a core group of people, but also as they start to change and you've got new groups of people coming in, I think it's been hugely beneficial to say we're only working in this area, it's a very criteria to cut off, and you can start to build on the relationships with actual people rather than it being a more abstract notion

(Mhairi McVicar, Cardiff University Community Gateway)

Mhairi highlights how taking a long-term, place-based approach to addressing social issues can allow for problem-solving action to be built up incrementally over time. The approach of Community Gateway has helped build networks of local people and university staff and students to develop projects and interventions that seek to address particular local issues. These projects build on each other over time, making gradual advances towards addressing social issues. In this sense, the CUP acts as a vehicle for facilitating creative and experimental efforts of citizen-led problem-solving, allowing those involved to learn from the lessons and mistakes of previous attempts and adopt a flexible and reflective approach to problem-solving (Lake, 2017; Harney et al, 2016). Moreover, containing the problem-solving effort within a specific place allows for a core group of organisations and citizens to develop to carry work forwards, illustrating how place-based CUPs can developing strong public relationships that help build the capacity of citizens to act collectively for change.

Indeed, this reflects the important role that universities can play in building civic capacity and enabling ordinary citizens to tackle shared issues. Universities have a range of resources and assets that they can bring to bear in doing this, such as the energies, skills and knowledge of staff and students, as well as potential money and time to invest in community organising efforts. Combined with the knowledge, skills and passions of citizens, these assets can be used to help develop innovative solutions to deep-seated and

complex social issues. Yet, within CUPs there is a delicate balance to be achieved between providing services and attempting to solve problems *for* citizens and opening up university assets to help address problems *with* citizens. It is to this balance that I now turn.

6.3 Service vs. Empowerment: Solving Problems With or For Citizens

Universities have resources that can be of use to citizens for addressing social issues. These include expertise on specific issues and staff and student skills and time. Other resources include standalone participatory action research projects that can help organise processes of collective inquiry and facilitate the formation of publics (Coles, 2014), as well as more tangible resources linked to the university's role as an anchor institution in their local area such as the ability to procure services and develop land, and thus impact the local job and housing markets (Goddard, 2009). These resources can be utilised and applied in different ways and by different people to address pressing social issues, and it is the way that they are applied by CUPs which shapes the extent to which these partnerships can contribute towards civic renewal or serve to reproduce cultures of expert-led decision making and citizen powerlessness.

In order to illustrate this difference, I will reflect on two CUPs which take different approaches to problem-solving: the University of Utah's University Neighbourhood Partners (UNP) and De Montfort University's Square Mile Programme. The following quote from Mark Charlton illustrates the kind of ways that De Montfort University tries to help address issues in its local area:

> We do all the university's widening participation commitments, and
> that's all the work we do with local schools, and also through IT skills
> and English language skills and things like that. Everything we do is
> free. We do some action research projects, not as many as we'd like,
> we'd like to do more. But we do lots of things around teaching and
> learning in the community. Lots of health projects where we're
> applying our undergraduate health skills- lots of free hearing tests, free
> blood pressure tests, things like that where people can just come along.
> Every now and then we do a One Stop Health Shop where all our health
> students come together, and you can get your hearing done, your blood
> pressure tested all under one roof, diabetes and all that kind of thing.

We've done a lot of research around diabetes and we've had around 400 people come forward and identified 120 people with type two diabetes who didn't know they had it, so we've done lots of things like that with positive outcomes like that.

(Mark Charlton, De Montfort University Square Mile Programme)

The Square Mile Programme offers a wide range of services to the local community. It engages hundreds of students each year to share their skills in order to address local issues and needs around health, employability and education. For example, the university's medical students were able to share their skills and specialist knowledge to help diagnose local people with diabetes, referring them to NHS health services to access further support. On one level, this type of activity has clear benefits for the communities and residents that the university has partnered with, and the CUP is fulfilling an important role as a provider of much needed services.

However, if we contrast the approach of the Square Mile programme to that taken by University Neighbourhood Partners (UNP) at the University of Utah we can begin to identify an important distinction in how different CUPs partner with citizens in order to address social issues. Sarah Munro explains the role of UNP in relation to the citizens of its partner communities:

We focus more on political voice and civic engagement, the idea that historically in marginalised communities there has been an absence of representation and voice in decision-making that affects those communities, so that the university needed to play a role in not addressing those concerns *themselves*, but in building the skills and opportunities of resident leaders to have that political voice.

(Sarah Munro, University of Utah University Neighbourhood Partners)

Sarah's comments illustrate how UNP takes a different approach to addressing the issues identified by citizens to the one deployed by DMU Square Mile. Whilst the latter seeks to engage students to address problems for communities by applying their specialist skills and knowledge to provide services in the community, the former attempts to build the ability of citizens to address their problems themselves by

developing their political voice and problem-solving capacity. In order to facilitate this, the UNP runs an annual leadership training programme for residents of its partner communities in the Westside of Salt Lake City. The Westside Leadership Institute trains cohorts of local people through classes that are taught jointly by University faculty and local community leaders. It has the goal of equipping citizens with the skills to take civic action in their community and connecting people to local decision-making bodies, sources of funding and other forms of support to enable public work. Sarah explains the ideas behind, and the impacts of, the leadership institute below:

> Going back to that second category of community leadership and civic engagement that we were talking about and the idea of creating more opportunities for people to have a voice in decision making that affect their neighbourhoods. So, our first partnerships worked on that level, really looking at the level of neighbourhood activism, and what people were passionate about. So, we created an infrastructure for them to build their skills around, really, community organising. From that work that's been going on for 14 years almost now, you know, every year 20 to 45 people graduate from that leadership institute with ideas that they wanted to work on that they saw in the neighbourhoods. And to be honest we've struggled over time with what the next step should be for them in this partnership model, and part of that had to do with kind of an absence of interest in city government and other policy arenas, so we focussed more on the neighbourhood level of decision making. There are things called community councils in Salt Lake that are connected to city government, local non-profit boards etc., and we have people run for the state legislature and the school board and city council who have gone through the leadership institute. So, we did through individuals going on to that policy level and representing their neighbourhoods, and the way that changed the flow of resources, so that's a kind of an individual level connection

(Sarah Munro, University of Utah, University Neighbourhood Partners)

As Sarah's comments illustrate, the leadership institute acts as a mechanism for developing the skills and capacities of local citizens for public work. UNP uses the

institute as a means to facilitate local community organising and the development of effective, active citizens. This approach has been successful as evidenced by the existence of institute graduates engaging in future public work and participating in local democratic structures of representation and decision-making.

The two models of partnership work practiced by DMU Square Mile and the University of Utah's UNP represent very different approaches to solving social problems. On the one hand, the Square Mile programme engages university students in activities that attempt to solve problems *for* local citizens, providing services and running projects where students share their knowledge to get things done. On the other hand, UNP works to allow citizens to address problems for themselves, directing its resources to help build the capacity of its partner communities to develop their own solutions and build their political voice and influence to effect change. In this model, the university acts as a vehicle for community organising, only bringing in the skills and knowledge of its students and staff where these are useful in supporting the self-directed actions of citizens.

Both models are valuable in helping address social issues. DMU's model illustrates the value of technical expertise in helping to solve specific sorts of problems, such as diagnosing people with diabetes and ensuring they receive appropriate medical support. Yet, as the example of UNP illustrates, achieving civic renewal means valuing the experiential knowledge of citizens and developing ways for it to be articulated to effect change on its own terms, helping develop the skills and capacities of citizens to take public action in the process. Indeed, the danger of favouring the approach taken by DMU is that CUPs may serve to reproduce the cult of the expert, in which those equipped with technical expertise and specialist knowledge are deemed best placed to address social issues, reaffirming the notion that professionals know best and should do things for, rather than *with*, citizens. With the DMU example, it is clear that only those with medical expertise are able to diagnose people with diabetes, but perhaps there is a wider argument to be made about how the 'service-provision' approach to problem-solving practiced here contributes towards disempowering citizens by constructing issues like diabetes as something to be dealt with by experts rather than citizens themselves. In contrast, UNP may deal with the issue of diabetes in a different way, developing teams of citizens to develop their own solutions to diabetes risk, drawing on the support of medical expertise from the university where needed.

Thus, following Boyte (2015), for CUPs to challenge the reproduction of the cult of the expert, rather than merely reproduce it, the experiences, knowledge and skills of ordinary citizens need to be placed at the centre of their activities. Only by engaging citizens productively in addressing their self-identified issues can CUPs begin to transform notions of democracy from something that is *delivered to* citizens, to something that is *done by* them. However, this is difficult to achieve as universities have a primary responsibility to the students they teach, and as such face pressures to provide learning experiences for them to develop *their* skills and employability, rather than those of local citizens (not to mention the difficulty in changing political cultures). This means that CUPs are under pressure to provide opportunities for students to apply their specialist knowledge to problems in local communities, rather than allowing those affected by those problems to articulate their own knowledge as a means to solve them.

In this vein, working at the Centre for Democracy and Citizenship at Augsburg College in Minnesota, Boyte (2015) has developed an approach to service learning and student engagement with citizens which aims to cultivate a new type 'civic professionalism' amongst students by developing their ability to become organisers and catalysts of public work in society. The 'Public Achievement' program involves undergraduate students being trained as facilitators of public work, developing these skills through practical projects working with local secondary school students to develop grassroots campaigns and solutions to their self-selected issues. This is intended to act as a counter to service learning programmes where students apply their 'expert' knowledge in communities in university-led problem-solving efforts. This is deemed necessary to avoid reproducing the cult of the expert. Instead, students become 'expert' in the processes of relationship-building, communication across difference, organisation, motivation and facilitation, all key to supporting public work in wider society that engages ordinary citizens in politics.

Thus, my research indicates that CUPs are not predisposed to contributing towards democratic renewal, and as such it seems that in order for CUPs to support efforts for democratic renewal and the development of civic capacity of ordinary citizens, there is a need for a clear vision to shape this work and prevent CUPs becoming vehicles for the reproduction of the cult of the expert. This can help ensure that academic knowledge and capacity are not given precedence over the knowledge and capacities of ordinary citizens within CUPs. An example of how this can be achieved is seen in the work of Michigan State University's UOE team, as illustrated by Bob Brown:

Flint is a food dessert in certain parts of our city, all of our big grocery stores have moved out, they're no longer here, and a lot of people, they don't have good transportation so wind-up shopping at convenience stores and because they don't have fresh produce usually and their foods are high in salt and high in sugar. And with our lead problem with the water, fresh fruit and fresh vegetables, lean meat, those are all lead mitigated foods. So, there's some faculty members, so these are tenured folks, trying to work on a phone app that might allow people to know where the freshest food is from where they're living on any given day. So, they're working with local residents just trying to figure out right now whether people would use that, but the larger issue that drives this is we are looking at a food dessert here, and what can we do to bring better food into our community?

(Bob Brown, Michigan State University UOE)

UOE has led the development of an initiative to address the problem of a lack of fresh food and poor diet in the City of Flint. As Bob explains, the CUP helped broker relationships between local citizens and university academics to combine knowledges to develop innovative solutions to complex social issues. This has involved academics from the Computer Science department working with local citizens to develop an app that shows people where they can buy the freshest, healthiest food on any given day. As such, this illustrates how technical, academic expertise can be combined with local knowledge in a form of co-produced inquiry 'between academic and non-academic communities [that] assumes mutual respect, no hierarchy of knowledge forms, fluid and permeable disciplinary and professional boundaries and a normative concern for action' (Campbell and Vanderhoven 2016: 12). This way of working can contribute towards democratic renewal by putting citizens in the driving seat of problem-solving, yet allowing them to access and benefit from the perspectives, skills and specialist knowledge possess by academics and students to develop creative solutions to issues, combining knowledges to facilitate action.

This model of partnership work within CUPs seems the most promising way of valuing the insights provided by specialist knowledge and technical expertise without favouring it, and elevating the experiential knowledge and expertise held by citizens to, at least, its

equal. Yet, aside from the approach taken to partnership work, CUPs struggle to ensure that the interests and knowledge of citizens are not subordinated to those of academics in other ways, most notably linked to the way they are funded. The following quote from Mary Brydon-Miller illustrates the pressures CUPs face in ensuring that the interests and issues of citizens are at the heart of their work. When asked what challenges CUPs face, she replied:

> Finding money, finding money to really do what people need and want to have done. I was on the advisory board of an organisation called Harmony Garden for several years …And you know, they probably could have gotten a huge National Institute of Health grant to study diabetes because we're all about diabetes, you know, and it's important, we're all overweight and under exercised, and diabetes is particularly a problem in the African American community in the United States. But if you ask people in the community what the important health issues are they would say sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancy and gun violence, right? Could we find money to do that? No, so the organisation folded…. we just couldn't find money to do what people wanted, and I think that that's often times the case with community-university partnerships, is that my university wants us to be bringing in big bucks because you know, state funding is decreasing. I understand--, I don't like it, but I understand my administrator's talking about having to bring in huge grants, but it's huge grants to sort of maintain the status quo, you know, you don't get like huge grant money to mess with the system, you know? So, funding is a problem.
>
> (Mary Brydon-Miller, University of Cincinnati Action Research Centre)

This quote highlights how the activities of CUPs are shaped by funding. Money is essential for allowing CUP work to take place, meaning that those who possess money are in a position to influence what issues CUPs can address and for how long. Mary's comments illustrate how, too often, funders are in control over what types of activities can be done through CUPs. Given the differential access to financial resources between universities and community organisations, the funding for CUP projects often comes

from academic sources, with initiatives being resourced from core university budgets or research grants (see Harney and Wills, 2017). This results in academic partners often having greater levels of control than citizens in directing CUP work. When this work is funded through academic grants, the interests, issues and values of academia and academic trends have a major role in shaping CUP activity.

Academics also tend to have more power to set the agenda of CUP work due to the fact that they are deemed as having more to offer than ordinary citizens within particular partnerships. Academics and academia have two main resources which make them attractive to community partners. The first of these is access to credentialed knowledge that can be of value to citizens and community organisations in achieving their goals; such knowledge is often deemed as able to boost the ability of these organisations to gain credibility themselves and access further funding for their work or amplify their political voice (Duncan et al, 2014). The second resource is capacity; academics often have more control over their own time to engage in collaborations with citizens and community partners, as well as access to students who can support the work of community organisations (Tableman, 2005; Pearce and Pearson, 2007). As such, the potential benefits of CUP work are greater for citizens than universities. This imbalance gives academics more power than community partners when it comes to deciding which issues get addressed and which projects go ahead as there is no obligation for the former to work with the latter, as the following comments from Rachel Pain illustrate. When asked who decided which projects get the go ahead and which do not in her CUP, Rachel responded:

> We don't decide that because we're not funding the projects, which is a
> problem by the way, because obviously what projects need is like a
> small start-up fund. But because we don't sort of say, oh yeah, go
> ahead, or don't go ahead, you know, it's really just up to them. And so,
> what happens is, you know, they meet, and they talk and they either
> decide to work together or they don't. I mean obviously, you know,
> lots of times it just doesn't work out for whatever reason, you know, it
> just fizzles out or you know, they realise they're not exactly on the
> same page or--, and that's often because the academic or the postgrad
> actually wants to do something a bit different.

(Rachel Pain, University of Durham Participatory Research Hub)

The above quotation illustrates the power of academics and those within the university to decide which issues get taken up in CUPs. Community partners often approach universities with little or no money to fund projects. This means that they are relying on the good will of people within universities to offer their time and access to research funding to make things happen. This gives academics greater power than citizens to decide what issues CUPs address as the academic can decide which project or partnership to progress with, based on how much it fits with their own personal or academic interests. This is an issue for CUPs, as it promotes the reproduction of academic orthodoxies and subordinates the interests and issues of citizens within their activities, thus reducing the ability of universities to play a meaningful role in re-engaging different people into democratic processes and public decision-making around the issues that matter most to them.

Whilst this is a problem with many CUPs, others have found ways to manage this by creating structures to increase citizen's voice and representation in CUP decision-making through governance structures that give community partners influence over CUP activities. A good example of this in practice is at Cardiff University's Community Gateway. Community Gateway is a ten-year collaborative partnership between Cardiff University and residents of Grangetown, an electoral ward in the City of Cardiff. As part of their initial funding package from the university, Community Gateway secured £90,000 to support CUP projects in Grangetown over the first three years of the partnership. This money is ring-fenced solely for CUP projects, with additional money secured to fund the wages of full-time engagement workers to build relationships in the university, the community and between the two. The £90,000 is kept as a pot to which people from within the university and in the community, can apply for grants to support their collaborative project ideas. A steering group made up of university staff and Grangetown residents makes decisions on which projects receive funding. Mhairi McVicar explains this process below:

> We do a monthly highlight report that then goes to the engagement
> team and the oversight board, so the steering group sign off on the
> three-monthly highlight report that identifies what we've been doing,
> what's been the result of what we've been doing, what the issues and

the risks are, so we just raise some of those, anything that is identified as issues raised there. They sign off on funding applications, so partners come to us, anything over 1,000 pounds has to be signed off by the steering group, so they sign off funding applications. And we'll typically--, we have a meeting, it's once every three months of a steering group and we'll try and do half of it looking at the paperwork side of things, and signing off on funding applications, the other half we open up core questions, so one of them has been about how can we improve our communications and one of them has been about the pavilion project itself and, you know, we'll probably start to move into how do we start to turn the pilot projects into bigger projects and stuff like that.

(Mhairi McVicar, Cardiff University, Community Gateway)

The steering group plays a key decision-making role within this CUP. It decides what activities to fund; deliberates about the potential risks of projects and initiatives; and sets an overall direction for CUP activity, overseeing its long-term development. By placing citizens at the centre of decision-making processes in the CUP, Community Gateway illustrates how the interests, issues and passions of non-academic communities can begin to play a part in shaping university activity. Moreover, by ring-fencing a budget which is purely for CUP activity in Grangetown, Community Gateway gives citizens a form of power that enables them to choose which academics to work with, rather than the other way round, allowing them to decide how best to employ the skills and knowledge possessed by academics and students to meet the interests of their community, rather than risk having their own skills and knowledge used to meet the interests of academics and academia. The power given to citizens by the Community Gateway model is further illustrated below in the ability afforded to residents to fund projects that are genuinely beneficial to them and their communities:

Once we had funding secured, we then sent out a completely open call to the community saying, 'tell us your ideas, how can we work together with the community', and invited ideas both from community and from university. The criteria for supporting an idea was that it had to be mutually beneficial to community and to university. It had to both be

open to broader range of people as possible and anyone proposing had
to be willing to possibly work with other projects that were similar.
And that that sort of really did it in terms of criteria, you know, find
something that's mutually beneficial and be as open as possible. So,
and we just sort of put it out this very broad call and just started getting
responses back of people who wanted to do things like setting up a
choir or tackling mental health or setting up a café or sports activities
for kids. And we follow the energy so that if we get an idea from a
community member and we're able to partner them with somebody in
the university and they're all willing to run and take it forward and take
off, then we go with it.

(Mhairi McVicar, Cardiff University Community Gateway)

However, the effectiveness of ensuring representation of ordinary citizens (as opposed to academics) interests in CUP decision-making is dependent on the spatial scale at which the CUP is operating. Writing about the issue of representation within community-based research, Stoecker (2003) argues that taking a grass-roots approach is the most effective means by which to ensure that the interests of ordinary people are adequately represented. Echoing Dewey's notion of affected interests, Stoecker argues for the 'community' within community-based research to be defined as 'the people living with the problem [at hand] and those organisations that they democratically control' (p.41). As such, it is only by working with those affected by an issue and the organisations they feel in control of that CUPs can align themselves with the interests of ordinary citizens. This is difficult to achieve as the nature of social issues is that people are differently affected by them. However, by working at the grassroots level, academics and CUPs can work with those living with particular issues, rather than those who claim to represent communities but who are not directly affected by the issue. This point helps illustrate the difference between CUPs such as Cardiff's Community Gateway, which operates at a small spatial scale to ensure more grassroots representation and participation, and those operating at a wider scale, such as the University of Sheffield. The following quote from Heather Campbell from Sheffield illustrates their approach to CUP work:

And so, in terms of a sort of major sort of strategic planning initiative
that's what we've been working through with, I mean we've had events

with more than 400 people, both with people inside the city, there's
nine local authorities in addition to 70 chief execs and political leaders,
but also ministers in central government, civil servants, big investors,
understanding how they see the regional priorities. So, it's quite a
different type of initiative and positioning for the university. And so,
what we would be looking to do- because regions that transform,
transform because all the institutions and the community come together
to work together to make things happen- and if you're not working
together and you're continuously falling out with one another then
you're not credible really.

(Heather Campbell, University of Sheffield)

Heather's comments on her work to help turn Sheffield into a Civic University illustrate
the importance of spatial scale in ensuring CUPs can contribute towards democratic
renewal. Heather and her university are working at the 'city-region' scale, seeking to
develop positive, collaborative relationships with a range of organisations and actors
within that region to re-align some of the university's activities and outputs in order to
increase its contribution to the social and economic development of that region. This is
valuable work, reflecting the calls of Goddard (2009) to re-embed universities in their
local regions to help generate prosperity and wellbeing. However, by operating at such a
large spatial scale Heather has had to engage with those actors who are also deemed to be
operating at that scale, such as local authorities, business leaders and government
ministers. These people are the professional decision-makers who already have access to
decision-making power and make up part of the national and regional political
establishment. As such, by operating at the scale of the region, Sheffield University has
had to engage with the bigger political players at the expense of engaging with those
citizens who have been marginalised from political processes by these very people. The
issue here is that if CUPs are to contribute towards democratic renewal, they need to
engage with disenfranchised citizens, rather than (or as well as) more established political
actors who are perhaps detached from the experiences and interests of ordinary citizens.
As the work of Community Gateway in Grangetown shows, this necessitates taking a
grassroots approach and operating at a strictly delimited, smaller spatial scale, or else
CUPs risk being dominated by the interests of professionals and the political elite.

Thus, ensuring grassroots citizen participation and representation in CUP activity has the potential to bring voices and experiences into universities that have traditionally been marginalised. In doing this CUPs can open up the resources of the university to support the problem-solving efforts of ordinary citizens. Yet, given that effective CUP work involves the mutual flow of knowledge, benefits and risks, this can also lead to academic orthodoxies being challenged by views from outside. It is to this aspect of CUPs that I now turn to below.

6.4 Challenging the Academic Orthodoxy through Bringing in Marginalised Viewpoints?

As discussed in Chapter One, if part of the reason that the political establishment and professional class are making public decisions that are at odds with the interests, experiences and beliefs of large numbers of ordinary citizens in modern democracies is due to the fact that those entering this class are educated in knowledge contained within academic orthodoxies at universities, then in order to change this there is a need to allow the experiential knowledge of citizens to enter universities on their own terms and shape the education of the next generation of political elites. Pearce (2013) argues that meaningful co-production of knowledge involves both academics and ordinary citizens being open to questioning themselves and their understandings and being willing to make connections across different worlds. As such, CUPs have the potential to give voice to alternative worldviews, values and beliefs within universities, helping to broaden the range of ideas that university students are exposed to through their courses.

Whether or not CUPs are able to promote this is dependent on a number of factors. One of these factors is whether CUPs take a place-based approach to developing partnerships or approach the development of partnerships through a commitment to specific sets of values and worldviews. The following quote from academic geographer Caitlin Cahill helps illustrate this point. Caitlin has experience of working on projects as part of two different CUPs in the USA, the University of Utah's UNP and the Public Science Project (PSP) at City University of New York, and when asked about the difference between the two, we had the following exchange:

> **Liam**: When you get approached by organisations do you ever find yourself turning some organisations away or choosing not to work with them?

Caitlin: Definitely, because you only have so much capacity, so sometimes you can't do it or sometimes you recommend other people who can do it. Also, we ask does it fit with the mission? Because we're not that many people. So that's why University Neighbourhood Partners is different; it's like a coalition of folks who might not share *commitments* but who share a *geographic place*. It's more like how the university is serving *this* neighbourhood… [Whereas] we have very particular social justice commitments, so it's not geographically specific. Public Science Project is much more committed to doing participatory work with a *social justice orientation*, and so our work has really grown out of relationships with community based organisations [who share that commitment]

(Caitlin Cahill, City University New York Public Science Project [emphasis added])

Caitlin's words highlight two different ways that universities can focus their engagement and partnership work with non-academic communities through CUPs. The first of these, as seen in the model employed by UNP (as well as Cardiff University's Community Gateway and De Montfort's Square Mile Programme) is a place-based approach in which partnerships are built with citizens and organisations that inhabit a particular geographic area with the goal of providing public benefits for all residents of the place. The second approach, as used by PSP, is a value-based or issue-based approach in which universities seek to form partnerships with citizens and organisations who share a commitment to a particular set of values or an issue to be addressed (Harney and Wills, 2017).

The way that universities structure their partnerships with citizens is important because it helps shape the kind of knowledge that can be brought into the university from the outside world. Caitlin illustrates this importance by contrasting the place-based approach of UNP with the value-based approach of PSP. The latter involves academics building relationships with people and organisations who share 'very particular' commitments around 'social justice'. Looking into the work of the PSP reveals that what Caitlin means by these social justice commitments are a set of values, issues and identities associated with left-wing politics and radical/critical academic ontologies, with the CUP facilitating a number of projects around anti-racism, gender equality, the lives of migrants and LGBT

people[12]. In contrast, UNP facilitates the development of relationships between academics and students and those citizens and organisations who live and work in the Westside neighbourhood of Salt Lake City.

In theory, the place-based approach has the potential to open up universities to a wider range of knowledge, perspectives and experiences than the value-based approach. This is because partnerships are formed not around a shared set of values, but a shared geographical location. When partnerships are formed around shared values, people within universities maintain their power over the production of academic knowledge by working only with those citizens and citizen organisations who share their commitments. As the example of the PSP shows, and particularly in relation to social science research, this helps maintain and reproduce academic orthodoxies in knowledge, listening to the experiences and views of those social groups and identities (often constructed as the 'oppressed') who are already deemed worthy of listening to and taking seriously. As such, some CUPs fail to bring in experiences and points of view that have been excluded from academia or constructed as invalid or wrong. These might include the views of those millions of citizens in the UK and USA who respectively voted to leave the European Union and elected Donald Trump as president. These are the 'ignorant', 'stupid', and/or 'racist' citizens whose experiences and beliefs and personhood are likely to be over-looked, side-stepped and mis-represented by a value-based approach to partnership development within CUPs.

In contrast, a commitment to working with all those who inhabit a particular place has the potential to give such experiences and views a fairer hearing by academics and students. Taking a place-based approach to developing partnerships does not guarantee this, as academics can still choose to work with those who share their values within the particular place, but it encourages it more so than a value-based approach. The following quote from Jenny Pearce illustrates the potential of place-based CUPs to challenge academic orthodoxies and bring in a diversity of alternative, subordinated knowledge and experiences into universities.

> So, I'm seeing something about where knowledge has gone, because
> people who voted Brexit aren't stupid, you know, they voted for good
> reasons, I don't know what you voted but anyway, I'm very strongly

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[12] For examples, see the PSP website here: http://publicscienceproject.org/research/projects/).

remain but I totally understand why people voted Brexit, in the circumstances. And it feels like to me so many people in universities are disconnected, from where that opinion emerged and why it took the form it took.

(Jenny Pearce, Bradford University)

Jenny's words illustrate that CUPs which make a commitment to listening to, and attempting to understand, the beliefs of those that academics might disagree with can begin to build bridges between the experiences of ordinary citizens and the knowledge produced and consumed within universities. Indeed, the acts of listening and understanding are essential democratic practices in pluralistic societies, and must be woven into the commitments of CUPs if universities are to re-invent themselves as mediating institutions of democracy that help represent the will of ordinary citizens and facilitate public action around this will. However, as Mary Brydon-Miller highlights, these acts are not easy to practice:

> **Liam**: Do you know of researchers doing PAR who have been in situations where their own personal politics, their own personal ethics or morals completely clashes with the communities they were meant to be facilitating to go out and pursue their own agenda with.

> **Mary**: Yeah, that actually happened to me here when I was doing a project. I was brought in on a longer-term project up in Newcastle in a neighbourhood called Benwell, which is a very low-income part of Newcastle, and we were talking about social housing, and the way in which the people who attended the meeting were talking about the Roma community just- I mean it was more *blatant* racism than I hear in the United States about African Americans, it was really kind of like *staggering* to me, you know. And so, I'm trying to sort of like facilitate this meeting and realising I am a *complete outsider* here, you know. I mean not only am I from the university, I'm not even from this country, I don't even live here, where do I get off telling people that they're wrong? And it was interesting because at some point one of the women who was part of that group started really challenging people saying, "You can't say that that's--," you know, I was

fortunate that within the group there were differences of opinion and like with some facilitation it was possible to sort of have both sides heard from peers, which I think was really good, but sometimes you know, you really are working totally across purposes.

(Mary Brydon-Miller, University of Cincinnati Action Research Centre)

Mary highlights just how difficult it can be for academics (like all people) to work with and try to understand the views of those they disagree with. Mary was staggered by the views of her research participants about the Roma community, which she thought amounted to racism. This directly clashed with her own worldview and set of morals. Yet, she had to overcome this in order to respect the experiences and truths of these people. She did this by recognising that as an outsider, as someone who does not live in the same worlds as these people, she was in no position to tell them that they were wrong. Instead, with the help of others in the group expressing alternative views about the same issue, she was able to facilitate a conversation that respected different views and allowed multiple beliefs and understandings to be aired.

Mary has a long and successful career in doing this kind of engaged, participatory work and has developed the skills and stance to be able to approach it in a respectful way. Yet, even for her this situation was difficult. This goes to show the craft needed to open up universities to alternative views, resting on a deep commitment to pluralism and the cultivation of skills of listening, tolerance and understanding. It also goes to show the potential that place-based CUPs have for promoting the development of these skills amongst academics and students, and opening up spaces for alternative views and experiences to be articulated within academic spaces. In this sense, CUPs may be able to begin to challenge the reproduction of academic orthodoxies of knowledge, providing the means through which subordinated knowledge's can be articulated through credible channels and influence public decision-making by shaping the education of students, the content of academic knowledge and contributing towards public work facilitated by CUPs. Important in this is place as a shared bond and commitment that might force academics and non-academics to listen to each other, take alternative views seriously and develop respectful, on-going and meaningful flows of communication.

Thus, CUPs have the potential to contribute towards democratic renewal and changing the culture of universities, yet a number of barriers to their effective development exist. The next and final section looks at these barriers as well as identifying a number of opportunities for CUPs to grow within the context of the UK HEI sector today.

6.5 Making CUPs Work: Barriers and Opportunities in the UK HEI Sector

In comparison to CUPs in the UK, CUPs in the USA have been established for a relatively long period of time, fitting in to institutional agendas around service and service learning as part of the land-grant universities, and aligning with a wider national discourse around democracy, citizenship and problem-solving (Gibson, 2005). In the UK, CUPs are less well supported by their institutions and wider higher education policy (although this is changing) and face a number of blocks to their growth. The first of these concerns a lack of adequate funding available to support CUP work.

For CUPs to be successful, financial investment is needed in the work of maintaining long-term relationships outside of specific projects (Campbell and Vanderhoven, 2016). This means finding the money to pay for staff to build relationships which may or may not lead to research grants or improved learning experiences for students. As such, many universities are reluctant to commit to funding the core costs of CUPs, with senior managers being unwilling to take the risk to invest in activity that is deemed outside of the core mission of the university. Due to this, CUPs in the UK remain underfunded, with many hiring staff on a part-time basis to do core work and relying on funding from grants linked to specific projects, rather than receiving core money from the university to support their work. Rachel Pain highlights the importance of securing funding to support all of the work that goes into making CUPs a success:

> Staff time is important; we had a two and a half day a week post
> initially, and it wasn't enough, it just wasn't enough…it takes a lot of
> time, it's really kind of labour intensive work…. [a fulltime staff
> member] would be amazing, or maybe share the hours with a
> secretary. But it's very low level, you know, it's mailing lists,
> bulletins, organising events, you know, you need somebody to do all
> of that. But the higher-level work is the mentoring, the going out and
> visiting organisations, actually running the training itself. And so,
> what happened is Sarah and I tended to take on all of those tasks, and

obviously you know, we've got like loads of other things to do, so it's been pretty busy. I mean I've loved it, you know, I would love to do that work full time myself, but you need to make sure there's somebody really good there, who's going to be able to do that higher-level stuff.

(Rachel Pain, University of Durham Centre for Social Justice and Community Action)

Rachel highlights the amount of work that goes into facilitating community-university partnerships. This ranges from administrative tasks such as organising events, creating mailing lists and information bulletins, to intensive work to mentor partnerships, train academics and community partners in research methods etc. and developing strong relationships. This takes a large amount of time, and Rachel believes it needs at least one full time member of staff, rather than being done by academics on top of their other work, as was the case with Rachel and a colleague before they found the money to create a post for their CUP. Amongst UK CUPs interviewed for this thesis, the most common source of funding for this work came from grants from external funding bodies, with very few CUPs receiving core funding from the university. This is potentially damaging to CUPs because being reliant on grant-funding means that often there can be very little time to engage in the important work of building relationships with a diverse range of citizens, as Bob Brown explains:

A lot of our work is grant driven, but the core of the centre is all general funds from the university. If I was 100% grant-funded, I wouldn't be able to do the building the relationships, and working on different issues of the community to build those relationships because I'd be tied to the grant. You know, I might be able to use that money to fund other things, so I think that model of a few of us being general funded to be able to do the non-fundable work, because nobody wants to fund building relationships

(Bob Brown, University of Michigan University Outreach and Engagement)

As Bob explains, if reliant on grant-funding, CUP staff's time is spent doing the work required by that grant on specific research projects. This leaves them little time to do the

relational work in communities, which is very unlikely to be supported by grant makers due to its long-term nature and lack of visible and immediate results. As such, core funding from the university is essential for allowing CUPs to develop in ways that allow them to engage with citizens on a meaningful level, taking time to build trust and develop strong flows of communication and mutual understanding, and pursue issues and agendas that come from the bottom-up, rather than being determined by funders.

Key to securing this funding is gaining support in the CUPs goals and purpose from senior management within universities. Indeed, the unwillingness of management to back CUPs is another major barrier to their development. As mentioned earlier, UK universities have no institutional commitment to working with their local communities as many American universities do. This makes it difficult to convince them that CUPs are worth funding. A lack of support and funding from university management makes developing CUPs extremely difficult, as Karl Witty from Leeds Beckett University's CommUNIty illustrates:

> The biggest issue is getting that commitment and clarity from the
> university. We still haven't really got a clear offer from the university
> to the community. Which makes it difficult to approach community
> based organisations as we're not clear as to what we can offer. It
> makes the whole kind of exchange process really inefficient, as we've
> got to do a lot of internal lobbying to access a resource. There are lots
> of ways we think we could more meaningfully engage with the
> community and lots of resources we feel we could offer, but we
> haven't' got that clear offer from the university. So, we do things a
> little bit on the side and in an official way, or else they don't get done.
> But that makes it really difficult to progress and grow our work

> (Karl Witty, Leeds Becket University CommUNIty)

Lacking institutional support and direction, those seeking to develop CUPs face the challenge of engaging with non-academic communities without a clear sense of what the university can offer them. This makes working as part of a CUP very difficult and risks preventing the required levels of trust and a sense of mutual benefit from developing between universities and their neighbouring communities. In these cases, many CUPs manage to cobble together a range of interesting partnerships and collaborations that

have benefits for all involved, such as with CommUNIty, but this work is often piecemeal, under-resourced and lacking the long-term stability needed to have an impact in helping citizens address deep-seated social issues. The unwillingness of university management to support CUPs is thus a major barrier to unleashing their potential.

However, UK CUPs have been developing a range of ways to gain support for their activity from senior management by tapping into institutional interests and wider policy agendas in higher education. One of the primary ways this is happening is by highlighting the role that CUPs can play in increasing research impact and tapping into the Research Excellence Framework's (REF) impact agenda. Rachel Pain explains the success of taking this approach at Durham:

> I think you should use the word impact as much as possible. I mean that's basically how, you know, how we've got the funding we've had for the last 18 months from the university's impact money, and you know, it just so happens now that Durham's realised that doing things in a different way, so participatory action research, is you know, a valid way of doing research with impact… I think the key argument is to use the impact agenda. So, what we argued to get the funding for the participatory research hub was not just that it would lead to individual projects that would then have an impact, which the university can claim that impact and create impact case studies on, our argument was also that you can't just leave it down to individual projects, you have to have what we call infrastructure. So, you know, we have to--, just as the university's got infrastructure for working with business and you know, various other sorts of infrastructure, you have to have this for working with the third sector, you know, you can't just do it as a kind of piecemeal thing. And that argument has been quite successful.

> (Rachel Pain, University of Durham Centre for Social Justice and Community Action)

Rachel explains how she was able to access funding for her CUP by tapping into institutional interests around the REF and the need for more impact to come from research. Pain et al (2015: 3-4) define impact as "the social, economic or environmental

changes that result from a particular intervention". Conceptualising impact from the perspective of co-production and engaged research, rather than seeing impact as a discrete outcome of research, they argue that impact is 'a collaborative, transdisciplinary *praxis*, that involves collaborators from different backgrounds coming together to undertake research with a common purpose'. Impact is thus a collective effort to reflect and act critically and creatively on reality in order to transform it.

Given this understanding, Pain et al (2015) present a number of things that characterise impact. They argue that impacts occur at a variety of scales, ranging from effects in individual attitudes and skills, to community-level benefits, through to wider policy change. Impacts also occur during the research process, rather than at the end, and that impact is mutual, with benefits flowing between universities and communities in a reciprocal fashion. They also argue that impact takes *time* to achieve, as the complexities of bringing people together for collective action does not happen quickly. Impact is also serendipitous, with impacts occurring through chance encounters, unintended consequences of actions and in response to changing circumstances. Finally, they suggest that impacts rely on good relationships, and that meaningful impacts are hard to achieve where strong relationships of trust and mutual understanding do not exist.

Thus, CUPs can help to achieve meaningful impacts for universities and communities by providing a vehicle for the praxis of impact to unfold. As permanent bodies at universities, which operate outside of time-frames imposed by grant funding and academic cycles, CUPs allow for impacts to be developed over long periods, with effects from individual projects building on each other to begin to address complex and deep-seated issues (Beacon North East, 2011). As Rachel went on to explain:

> "It really does have to be long term as well. It's really not the kind of thing that can be done in a six month project, but if academics, either individually or collectively through these centres that we're talking about, have those long term relationships with certain charities for example, then the impact doesn't finish but we're constantly talking, trying different things, helping them out, going to conferences with them, they'll do something for us, and then suddenly they'll phone up one Monday morning and say, "Can we name you in this press release?". It's those kind of long term relationships really isn't it?"

The long-term approach of CUPs to facilitating impact means that relationships between the university and community are maintained over time, beyond the time-frame of any individual project. This allows for impact to be on-going, and open to serendipity, with members of CUPs organised in a way that allows them to take advantage of new opportunities as they arise as part of an ongoing effort to address community issues. As such, CUPs go some way towards shifting the institutional infrastructure and culture of universities to address the differences in time, openness and relationships required for engaged scholarship to reach its full potential (Pain et al, 2015).

Another key agenda linked to higher education policy that UK CUPs are beginning to tap into is the growing interest in students' experiences of teaching and learning. The UK government is developing a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) to help measure and evaluate universities based on the quality of the education they provide according to their students. Coupled with the REF, this will have a major influence over the rankings of universities in league tables and their ability to recruit students and secure future funding. Emma McKenna from Queen's University Belfast's Science Shop described her CUPs drive towards positioning themselves as enablers of good quality teaching and learning for students:

> Our focus now is very much trying to look into teaching and learning domains and look at the kind of values of science shops in supporting students learning and student competence even and so on. You know, so those--, it's that thing of trying to find the strategic drivers that you can pin things to because that's when it starts--, you know, that's when you get central university support

(Emma McKenna, Queen's University Belfast Science Shop)

Through their role as brokers of relationships between the university and the community, CUPs are key in generating interesting opportunities for students to apply their skills and knowledge in real world settings as they work with organisations to develop solutions to pressing issues. This gives students the chance to learn outside of the lecture hall and essay-writing, opening them up to new worlds and providing them with the chance to develop a host of interpersonal skills that are less nurtured by traditional academic work.

In turn, this equips students with experiences that can go on their CVs, and wider social networks that can help boost their employability and career prospects in a competitive graduate job market, as Emma explained:

> The thing that I would always say, is that the experience that students have in doing research with communities can be a nice story in an interview. You know, it can be a very nice, accessible story if you've done your degree in a subject area that can seem a bit nebulous for employers, like geography or sociology. If you say, 'Well actually I did a piece of research for Cancer Focus Northern Ireland and this is what I did, and this was the outcome', it seems more like something people can understand. And they can see it is very much tied to what you did in your degree. You know, so it should be a way of you demonstrating some of the values of what you learned in your degree"
>
> (Emma McKenna, Queen's University Belfast Science Shop)

As such, CUPs can garner support from university management by playing into their interests around student satisfaction and employability, whilst also helping to develop the capacity of citizens to address shared problems.

6.6 Conclusion: CUPs and the Promise of Democratic Renewal

In tapping into the emerging policy agendas around impact and placement based learning, as well as and the institutional interests of university management, CUPs may be able to secure the support and funding to allow them to develop as central arms of a university's operation. This can provide the secure foundations upon which to develop long-term, meaningful relationships with citizens and their organisations in order to support citizen-led, collective problem-solving and capacity-developments. This also opens up the door for alternative knowledge to be brought into the university, helping shape the education of students and the next generation of citizens and decision-makers in ways that develop their capacity for tolerance and understanding and helping provide a means through which the experiential knowledge of ordinary citizens can shape the public decision-making process.

In order for this to be as effective as possible, CUPs should take a place-based approach that opens them up to the plurality of world views, identities and social issues that exist

in any given area. They need to embed themselves in their local areas in order to foster a commitment from people in universities to the citizens that call that place home. In doing so, CUPs can help lead a challenging and gradual process of change that roots the production of academic knowledge in specific contexts of citizen-led problem-solving and provides opportunities for students to help generate and acquire the knowledge and skills needed to engage in this kind of public work, developing themselves as 'citizen-professionals'.

However, not all CUPs are created for these purposes or to pursue this agenda, and there is a danger that some CUPs simply serve to reproduce the cult of the expert and citizen powerlessness by having students and academics do things for communities rather than with them. This is dangerous as it risks replicating the way that much local democracy happens today with local government acting as service providers to citizens, marginalising them from productive public work and the relationships, skills and capacities that participation in such work can help develop. This risks maintaining some of the causes of our democratic malaise.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

Summary of Thesis and Research Questions

In this thesis I argued that universities can play an important role in reinforcing the gap between ordinary citizens and political elites. This gap has been revealed by recent populist challenges to established political systems, policies and actors, illustrated by popular support for political outsiders such as Donald Trump in America and the UK public's decision to leave the European Union. I have suggested that these events can be seen as a backlash to political elites and the values, worldviews and ideas that they possess, as well as the wide-ranging and influential decisions they have contributed to.

Universities have played a role here by virtue of their function to educate and 'produce' the graduates who make up the ranks of the political elite. These people comprise the professionals and decision-makers who make up this political class, securing jobs in government, the media, policy, planning, and so on. Their actions disproportionately affect the lives of millions of ordinary citizens in western democracies.

In Chapter One I argued that part of the reason why the knowledge and actions of political elites is at odds with the needs and desires of many ordinary citizens is that a lot of the knowledge generated and taught within universities is not validated in the opinions, beliefs or experiences of these citizens, but rather through reference to existing academic theories and worldviews. I suggested that this approach to academic inquiry stems from the dominance of European rationalism in universities since the mid-1800s, which constructed the knowledge acquired through direct, lived experience of a situation as inferior to the knowledge generated through the application of rationalist technique. This promoted the values of universality, objectivity and certainty of knowledge over specificity, partiality and contingency.

Such an epistemology reinforced the distance between universities and non-academic communities and contributed towards the construction of politics and problem-solving as an expert activity, the preserve of those with access to various kinds of specialist knowledge upon which to make decisions on behalf of the majority of ordinary citizens. This understanding of academia and politics came under challenge during the 1960s and 70s as movements inside and outside of the academy sought to voice the experiences, issues and demands of various groups who felt ignored by formal politics and academia.

Within universities, these movements gradually transformed the focus of academic inquiry to incorporate the experiences of various groups deemed to have been marginalised or oppressed by the previous academic orthodoxy. Yet I argued that the transformation in academia did not go far enough, and merely served to replace one orthodoxy with a different one grounded in critical theory approaches to knowledge production and the set of values, social identities and political projects associated with these (Williams, 2016). I suggested that the present-day challenge to political elites from ordinary citizens reveals the failure of the critical theory academic orthodoxy to be attuned to the interests and opinions of many ordinary citizens, and that an alternative approach to academic inquiry (especially within the social sciences) was needed to respond to this. Such an approach needs to ground inquiry in the lived experiences of ordinary citizens and allow them to articulate and act upon their values and beliefs to effect change in the public sphere and influence public decision making. Recognising efforts to do this, such as community-based research, participatory action research (PAR) and community-university partnerships, I stressed the importance of a strong epistemological foundation for these in order to avoid the reproduction of 'cult of the expert' in politics, public life and knowledge production (Boyte, 2015).

In Chapter Two I advocated for philosophical pragmatism to provide this foundation. I argued that pragmatism's ontological and epistemological frameworks lend itself well to this. Pragmatism holds to an ontology of multiple and overlapping social worlds, continually being constructed through relationships between people and things and characterised by radical contingency. For pragmatists, realities are socially constructed rather than determined before social action and, as such, claims to 'truth' cannot be judged by how well they reflect an external reality, but rather by how well they enable the people generating the ideas to cope with problems in their own realities.

This epistemology pluralises the notion of expertise, locating valid knowledge about the world in the experiences and beliefs of ordinary citizens living in their particular worlds, rather than in the abstract, universal knowledge produced through rationalist technique. Thus, pragmatists argue that those experiencing a problem are best placed to generate the knowledge and action to attempt to solve it.

Pragmatist epistemology informed a vision of democratic politics developed by John Dewey, who saw citizens taking the lead to inquire into their shared problems and

forming publics around these to effect change. Knowledge production was to be embedded within such problem-solving action, being attuned to the specificities and uniqueness of issues existing in a multiplicity of social worlds. Dewey saw a key role for universities, especially the social sciences, in supporting the development of publics by facilitating citizen-led inquiries into their self-defined social issues.

Chapter Two then traced this vision into the participatory research of the Chicago School of Sociology in the early 1900s and the development of broad-based community organising. I conceptualised these initiatives as methods to facilitate the formation of publics of ordinary citizens who could identify, develop solutions and take action to address their collective problems. Drawing on literature from sociology and human geography, I also highlighted the importance of place as a space of shared inhabitation and experience in providing the foundations through which publics could be convened, (Calhoun, 1983; Barnett, 2008; Bridge, 2008; Barnett and Bridge, 2013; Koch and Latham, 2012; Studdert, 2016).

From these traditions, as well as ideas associated with assemblage thinking, I reinforced a definition of process pragmatism introduced in a previous paper (**Harney et al, 2016**), as an approach to academic inquiry characterised by an open form of exploration of particular social issues by a community of inquirers made up of those people directly affected by the issue at hand. Such inquiry seeks to identify the specific assemblages of relationships between people and things whose interactions generate the issue, as part of a process of developing strategies to reassemble these in order to find a solution. Process pragmatism is thus committed to empirics and participation, aligned to action and concerned not with creating representations of reality for their own sake, but for generating ideas to apply as tools to change realities.

In addition to this, I contrasted process pragmatism to approaches to PAR that have been practiced within Human Geography. Unlike ideological forms of PAR, in which academics seek to work with those citizens who share the same political values or ontological outlooks as them to effect change, process pragmatism seeks to respect social pluralism and empower all citizens to be able to act upon their particular sets of experiences, beliefs, values and interests. Process pragmatism takes an open-ended approach to research and action that seeks not to advance a pre-determined moral or political agenda, but to identify issues through research and develop the relational power

to address these. In this sense, I argued that process pragmatism can help to avoid the reproduction of knowledge contained within academic orthodoxies, and use education not as a means to subject participants to the values of the academic, but rather to help develop citizens' individual and collective skills and capacities to engage in their own version of public work.

The E14 expedition, as outlined in Chapter Three, was thus an experiment in putting the ideas behind process pragmatism into practice. The thesis also sought to reflect on the potential for institutionalising the ideals of process pragmatism as a means to help transform universities' role in democracy away from producing detached political elites and towards facilitating citizen-led inquiry and action to address social issues. As such, the thesis has sought to provide insights to address the following questions:

1. How can PAR be conducted in a pragmatic way so that it respects the experiential knowledge of communities, and the plurality of this knowledge?

2. To what extent can process pragmatism help build the power of publics to address pressing social issues and develop the capacity of citizens to engage in public work?

3. What is the role of place in facilitating this work?

4. How can universities support effective democratic renewal through institutional commitments that engage citizens in processes of collective problem-solving and provide an education for democracy?

In order to reflect on these questions, I presented an analysis of data collected through this project (contained within Chapters Four, Five and Six). Each Chapter considered different aspects of the questions and in what follows I will draw out the main conclusions from each chapter and consider what they might say about civic renewal, the process of pragmatic knowledge production and the relationship between universities and ordinary citizens.

The Importance of Pre-existing Community for Public Work

The discussion in Chapter Four highlighted the importance of community, relationships and sociality amongst citizens as a pre-cursor for public work. The importance of this has been acknowledged in the literature, as evidenced by the popularity of Putnam's (2000) concept of social capital, and Dewey (1927) makes reference to the need for community

to enable the public, or publics to emerge. Indeed, the importance of pre-existing relationships and associations have also been identified by literature on publics and public-formation (Barnett, 2008; Barnett and Bridge, 2013).

Despite this however, much of the literature on publics and pragmatism tends to focus on the process of inquiry and its importance in citizen-led problem-solving (see Lake, 2014; 2017; and Bridge, 2013). In contrast, the E14 expedition served to highlight the equal, if not greater, importance of community and sociality as a pre-requisite for citizen-led inquiry and collective problem solving. Evidence from the expedition suggests that the lack of such associations between people can foreclose the possibility for publics to form and for citizens to be able to identify, articulate and act upon their collective problems. This has major consequences for democracy and the prospect of universities engaging citizens more fully in public work.

On this note, the expedition also served to illustrate the value of intentionally trying to build, deepen and strengthen relationships, community and sociality as part of strategies for civic capacity-building and democratic renewal. In particular, the story-telling project used in phase one of the expedition provided a number of lessons for how this work could be conducted and the potential impacts it can have. The acts of listening to and sharing stories amongst the participants was useful in helping to develop greater levels of trust, understanding and intimacy between citizens, which helped to build a greater sense of connection and community between them.

The importance of place as shared residence and experience in supporting the process of relationship building must be highlighted here. The shared place of E14 acted as a container of relationship-building and sociality during and after the story-telling project. The residential proximity of participants afforded instances of bumping into one another in everyday life, allowing relationships to be maintained and developed. Equally, the shared memories, histories, affects, and locales of E14 helped to bridge connections between participants and cultivate a sense of shared identity. The expedition suggests that, despite arguments about the decreasing significance of place to people's social networks and identities, place really can be the glue that binds people together (Wills, 2013).

Given this, future Process Pragmatist research and action should seek to experiment with ways of enhancing place-based community and sociality, as civic and democratic goods

in their own rights. This has implications for the practice of action research. Rather than enrolling participants into projects that inquire into issues as part of strategies for action, projects might be of more use (in the long term) if they seek to contribute towards laying the relational foundations for public work. This might involve rethinking the role of universities in their local areas and society at large, shifting the focus from 'research' as traditionally conceived towards a range of interventions that seek to build community over time periods that make sense. Indeed, whilst phase one of the expedition operated over a relatively short period of time and over a fairly large geographical area, there is scope for similar work to be done over longer time periods and in more 'natural' places, such as neighbourhoods and housing estates. Following the work of Koch and Latham (2012; 2013) and Studdert (2016), it could be envisaged that universities play a role in working to create more convivial, social spaces and places as part of a mission of civic renewal in their neighbouring communities. This would apply lessons about sociality and community to action, playing a potentially vital role in helping to rebuild the social infrastructure that underlies public action.

The Challenges of Pluralism and Moral Dilemmas

Chapter Four also highlighted the difficulties faced when trying to respect pluralism through process pragmatist research. Whilst phase one of the expedition showed that it is possible to gather people from different backgrounds together to discuss shared issues, it is extremely difficult to do this in a meaningful way. This difficulty is even more pronounced in societies of extreme plurality with histories of deep division and difference, such as in east London.

The expedition helped highlight the importance of prior relationships between citizens to facilitate open discussion and dialogue. It also revealed the difficulty of building these relationships across different social worlds. In reflecting on the existence of such differences, I would argue that it is not an academic's place to seek to bring groups into conversation with each other if they have little or no desire to do so. There is value in 'leaving things be' if people do not want to enter into dialogue with each other.

However, when such differences are causing issues that citizens identify themselves, and an academic is involved in trying to support processes to address these issues, this poses a moral dilemma for the academic that can be managed in a number of ways. Firstly, the academic could attempt to remain neutral and facilitate open dialogue between different

groups as part of an attempt to address the issue at hand. This requires a skillset that is not included within undergraduate or postgraduate training (at least in Human Geography), and would need some serious attention. This also requires an attitude towards understanding the views of others, even if those views conflict with one's own. Again, such an attitude is not currently cultivated within undergraduate and postgraduate education, with the critical theory academic orthodoxy preventing students from being exposed to a range of competing and conflicting ideas, values and worldviews and encouraging practices of deconstruction and critical interpretation of ideas, rather than listening to a range of 'truths' (Williams, 2016; Latour, 2004). In order to begin to respect pluralism, universities (and the social sciences in particular) would need to start taking knowledge that sits outside of the academic orthodoxy seriously and devise methods to foster respect for the views of a range of citizens.

Yet, when facilitating dialogue and discussion between two 'sides' is not possible or desirable amongst citizens, the pragmatist academic has an even starker choice. Which side should they choose to support? At first, the answer to this question seems obvious. Rather than go against their personal morals, the academic should not get involved at all (which in many circumstances is probably a wise choice), and leave people to sort it out themselves. However, if we believe that universities have something to offer citizens wishing to effect change (i.e. through the production of credentialed knowledge to amplify their voice, or the time and resources to facilitate community organising efforts and solve complex problems), then doing nothing might not be an option. In this case, academics might consider supporting groups with conflicting values and morals to themselves, for the good of democracy.

Consider, for example, an academic conducting a PAR project with some of the 'racist' citizens who voted for Brexit. If an academic does indeed think that these citizens are racist, then working with them would seem reprehensible. However, the point I am trying to make is that often, conflicting worldviews come from a lack of communication between different people, rather than the existence of insurmountable value clashes. As such what might be in order first of all is a widespread attempt amongst academics to try to understand the views of 'unorthodox' voices to help foster increased understanding. This may sound vague and/or obvious but this type of listening and attempt to understand others is not easy, nor widely practiced within the social sciences today. Research and teaching initiatives that aim to disrupt, question or even suspend ideas and

values contained within the current social scientific academic orthodoxy would be a welcome step forward in this way.

The Difficulties of Building Citizen Power to Effect Change

Another challenge of process pragmatist research highlighted by the expedition is the difficulty in building citizen power to effect change within a political culture that values the opinions of professionals and experts over those of ordinary people. Moreover, the lack of time available to citizens to engage in public work was revealed as a major issue preventing this kind of work from being a success in future.

Chapter Four highlighted a number of ways to ensure that citizen power can be more effectively built through process pragmatist interventions. Firstly, it is important to identify communities of affected interests around issues that really matter to people. This can help to ensure that teams stay committed to public work when action gets harder or becomes riskier. The expedition struggled to do this in the way it was structured, and I would argue for future work in this vein to take a more embedded approach to issue identification, investing the time to find out the most pressing issues for people and build communities of inquirers around those. This requires a lot of time in relationship building and getting to know communities, which is not necessarily conducive to the career success of academics who have teaching and publishing responsibilities to think of. However, it is vital to doing this sort of work effectively, and broad-based community organising approaches could be employed usefully here (Alinsky, 1946; 1971; Chambers, 2004).

In addition, in order to amplify the voice of organised citizens in relation to professionals there is value in utilising the credibility of academic research to credential the experiential knowledge of citizens. As Boyte (2015) argues, such 'credentialed knowledge' can be a source of power for citizens to effect change. However, as Lake (2017) argues, in order to empower citizens and raise the status of their knowledge to political elites, it is necessary to move beyond approaches to PAR that operate solely through the epistemological perspective of a research project, as these can reproduce existing hierarchies of knowledge and influence. The expedition did not employ social scientific research techniques during the citizen-led inquiries, and perhaps this reduced the influence that each group was able to have. I would advocate for future process pragmatist research to think more instrumentally about the role of academically-

produced knowledge in supporting citizens' problem-solving efforts, but coupling this with a commitment to community organising, civic capacity building and a civic education for participants. In this sense, process pragmatism should look more like the expeditions of Bill Bunge and Gwendolyn Warren, which combined all of these aspects to great effect (Heynen and Barnes, 2011). Indeed, taking such an approach to partnering with citizens to solve problems can help universities broaden the scope of their activity away from pure research and teaching, to re-cast themselves as mediating institutions of democracy: realigning the resources they possess and capacities of students and staff to re-engage citizens in public work and contribute towards democratic renewal. Central to such a role would be creating a movement for civic education within universities.

A Movement for Civic Education

Chapter Five of the thesis highlighted the potential value of explicitly trying to provide opportunities for civic education through engaged research projects. I argued that it is possible to provide an 'education for democracy' through PAR, in which citizens have the chance to cultivate, enhance and reflect upon a range of civic skills and capacities that are important for allowing them to participate in public work within a context of social plurality and radical contingency. I have sought to contrast this approach with that taken by ideological PAR, in which education is used more as a means of subjectifying citizens into the pre-determined ontological view of academics (Lake, 2017). Instead, education for democracy seeks not to persuade (or worse, indoctrinate) people to accept particular moral positions, but to help them improve their ability to take action to achieve their own goals and visions of a good society.

As far as possible, such an education should be focussed on teaching the means of social change, rather than the ends. As argued previously (Harney et al, 2016), this helps to advance thought and practice within PAR (especially within Human Geography) by shining a critical light on existing approaches to working with citizens. The thesis builds on this argument by providing evidence of the impacts of this kind of education in practice. These included the development of various skills that are valuable to public work, such as relationship-building, communication, public speaking, time management and team work. Whilst these may appear every day and mundane, the importance placed upon opportunities to develop these by the participants themselves has served to highlight the value of these to individuals and society at large.

In addition to these, the expedition also helped develop various civic capacities amongst participants. Less tangible than the skills mentioned above, these individual and collective attributes are no less important for civic life. Such capacities included a sense of being open to building relationships with fellow citizens; the ability to work with people who are different to oneself; having a relational conception of power; and having confidence in one's own and others' ability to effect change. Some of these capacities were consciously cultivated through the expedition, whilst others occurred anyway, without explicit design.

The expedition provides evidence for the value of specific tools and frameworks for civic education, such as place-based story-telling and campaign teams. Each had different effects and varying levels of success. The story-telling project yielded more obvious positive results than the campaign teams, and one could challenge the use of the latter as a means of providing a civic education if action does not result in any tangible 'win' for participants as it has the potential to undermine citizens' confidence in their ability to effect change. As such, there is the need for future experiments and interventions to develop alternative means of cultivating the civic skills and capacities listed here, as well as focus on others that this expedition has not covered. So, whilst just a start at looking at this type of PAR within Geography, the expedition highlights the value and potential drawbacks of convening 'prototype publics' for training citizens to become more involved in public work, and raises questions about different ways of doing this.

The Role of CUPs in Institutionalising Process Pragmatism and Contributing Towards Democratic Renewal

Reflecting on the questions that this thesis sought to address, I argued in Chapter Six about the potential role that Community-University Partnerships (CUP) could play in institutionalising process pragmatism, acting as vehicles through which to allow diverse citizens to articulate and act upon their experiential knowledge to address the problems that matter to them, in ways that make sense to them. I argued that that in order for CUPs to do this, they should have a commitment to place.

I suggested that universities should seek to connect with citizens through the lens of place, rather than identity, issue or values. Doing this can help prompt people within universities to engage in conversations with people from a range of backgrounds, not just those who share the same worldviews. A shared commitment to place, rather than values

or belief, can help to open up the potential value of university resources to a wider range of citizens than are currently catered for through existing PAR. This goes some way towards respecting the plurality of social life outside of academia. Moreover, place can help to bring those with contrasting views and values into conversation with each other, acting as a common object around which to facilitate communication between those within universities and those without.

As already argued, such conversations will be important if we are to challenge the academic orthodoxy in knowledge in the social sciences and connect universities to the wide range of knowledge held by citizens. This is essential for helping to transform the mediating function of universities in democracy, moving the process of education away from creating cohorts of political elites and decision makers who are detached from the experiences and beliefs of large numbers of ordinary citizens. In place of this, universities can become institutions that enable all citizens to act upon their knowledge, developed in response to the specific issues and situations experienced in their social world. In addition, they can become sites where students are exposed to the plurality of knowledge and experiences in the world, rather than a limited set of theories and values contained with the academic orthodoxy. Opportunities for students to communicate and work with people in the local community around shared issues and interests in forms of public work can help to cultivate future decision-makers who are more connected to the dynamic plurality of citizens' lives, and open to collaborating with them in future to address public problems (Boyte, 2015).

A commitment to place is also important for allowing CUPs to tap into and in turn help strengthen the relational foundations of public work. Evidence from the expedition highlights how place acts as a container of relationships and the work of relationship-building. As such, rather than universities seeking to work with different citizens across the world in disparate and standalone projects, place-based CUPs can promote the gradual building of relationships between people in universities and people in communities. Building the levels of trust and mutual understanding to facilitate collective problem-solving and action takes a long time and is a fragile process. CUPs can consciously cultivate this by focussing on particular geographical areas and investing resources and energy in these.

Chapter Six also argued about the need for CUPs to prioritise building the power of citizens through their activity. Evidence used in Chapter Six highlighted the tendency of some CUPs to solve problems for citizens, rather than enabling them to address problems themselves. Often, this is not the intention of CUPs and results from various factors. However, if universities are to play a role in contributing towards democratic renewal in western societies, then they must seek to empower citizens, rather than maintaining the cult of the expert which has helped lead to the distancing of many people from public decision-making.

As discussed previously, building citizen power to effect change is a difficult task and cannot be done overnight. Taking a long-term approach to building power is thus needed, and CUPs, as long-term institutional arrangements are well placed to support the development of civic capacity. Chapter Six highlighted a number of ways that CUPs can help to do this, rather than maintaining the division between 'expert' and ordinary citizen. The first of these revolves around the governance of CUPs and the need to ensure that ordinary citizens have the ability to make decisions over CUP activity. Good practice in this area involves creating boards of citizens and academics to oversee CUP activity. Another way of enhancing citizen power in CUPs is for universities to provide 'no strings attached' funding for CUP activity so that decisions on what issues to address are guided by the needs and interests of citizens, rather than academic funding criteria and trends. Again, this is essential to empowering citizens and helping to make sure that 'unorthodox' knowledge and views held by people outside of academia are not side-lined by the reproduction of academic orthodoxies.

Building citizen power also involves long-term relational work within communities and in universities (and between the two) to develop collaborations where localised, experiential knowledge of particular issues can be combined with technical expertise to develop innovative and effective solutions to social problems. CUPs can play an important role here in ensuring that multiple forms of knowledge can be productively brought to bear to solve problems, thus expanding the creative problem-solving capacity of both universities and citizens alike (Dewey, 1927; Lake, 2017).

In addition, as discussed earlier, universities can help amplify the concerns and ideas of ordinary citizens in the eyes of professional decision-makers by credentialing them through association with academic credibility (Boyte, 2015). Further to this, the localised

and long-term nature of CUPs can also start to change local political cultures, in order to build the capacity of citizens to effect change. Embedded within a particular place, CUPs have the ability to become key parts of local decision-making networks. This allows the ability to connect citizens into these networks through appropriate training and capacity building (as is the case with Utah University's UNP). It also allows CUPs to build relationships with key players in these networks to re-define processes of politics and decision-making in the local area. Over time CUPs have the potential to change the way that professional decision-makers value the knowledge of citizens, growing its credibility and ability to effect change. Both of these amount to a gradual changing of local political cultures in which ordinary citizens play an increasingly more central role in public work and decision-making.

This thesis has argued that the potential for CUPs to play such a role in democratic renewal is significant. Yet, it has also shown the precarity that many CUPs face as bodies within their institutions. Especially in the UK, CUPs are by no means central parts of HEIs, and they face uncertainty over their long-term future. I hope that framing the value of CUPs in terms of their contribution to democracy can make a stronger case for their support within universities, and more research on the role of existing CUPs in relation to citizenship and democracy would be welcome. However, given the instrumental nature of much decision-making by management in UK HEIs, it may be equally important for academics to develop CUPs on the ground. I have suggested that the REF impact agenda as well as the TEF provide useful avenues for doing this, with CUPs being well placed to generate meaningful impact through research and to provide fulfilling learning experiences for students.

Indeed, the role of place in all of this should not be understated. Place can act as the glue that binds citizens together, providing the social foundations for public work and the common object around which to develop narratives to promote collective action. CUPs that realise this, and invest time in becoming part of (and in turn helping to build) their local, place-based communities, are able to reap the rewards. If seen as part of place-based efforts for democratic renewal and civic engagement, rather than public relations or achieving 'impact', CUPs can become vehicles to help transform universities into mediating institutions of democracy. In this sense, inspiration might be taken from the sentiments of the Chicago School sociologists, illustrated in the words of Robert Park (1925b: 114-122) who described the efforts of him and his colleagues as follows:

Our political system is founded on the presumption that the local community is the local political unit. If the local community is organised, knows its own interests, and has a mind of its own, democracy prospers… We are seeking to do, through the medium of local community organisations, such things as will get attention and interest for the little world of locality. We're encouraging a new parochialism, seeking to initiate a movement that will run counter to the current romanticism with its eye always on the horizon, one which will recognize limits and work within them'

With our concerns for place and making the world, rather than just describing it, geographers are well placed to lead on just such a mission. Future experiments in putting this into practice could help move this mission forwards.

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